

# SOME SPECIAL FEATURES OF THE 1913-ISSUE<sup>1</sup> by Drs. E. van der Vossen et al.

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## 1. The Victory Issue from 1913 (Hellas 340-355, Vlastos 307-322)

It is not generally known that a number of values of the so-called "New Greece Issue" or "Victory Issue"<sup>2</sup> from 1913 occur on two types of paper, namely on a smooth white paper (paper A) and on a somewhat grey tinted porous paper (paper B).

Although when comparing the different types next to each other, recognizing both types does not present any problems, it is also very easy to make a fast and adequate identification for single copies (especially for unused ones): when looking at the back of the stamp, it is perfectly smooth for paper A and rough for paper B. In addition, the values printed on A-paper on the front of the stamp make a glazed impression, which also stands out when using ones fingertip on the front: a smooth, resistance-free surface is then felt. The B-paper, on the other hand, feels rough.

Both types of paper can also be found in the well-known 1912/1913 Hermes and Iris issue in litho printing, the successor to the so-called engraved (recess) issue from 1911, as well as with the postage due stamps from 1913. Not all stamps from the Victory Issue were printed on both types of paper. The A-paper is used for all values (including the two colours of the 2 lepta), except for the 20 lepta and the 1, 2 and 10 Drachma.



Fig.1: 10 Drachma (Papier B) and 25 Drachma (Papier A)

The B-paper is used for the 1 lepton, the 3, 5, 10, 20 and 40 lepta, besides the 1, 2, 3 and 10 Drachma. One can therefore find the 1 lepton, the 3, 5, 10 and 40 lepta and the 3 Drachma in both types of paper. The 1 Drachma would also have been printed on type A-paper, but I have not been able to verify this so far. Generally, in those cases where the same value occurs on both types of paper, a slightly larger proportion of the total printing seems to have been carried out on A-paper than on B-paper.

Furthermore, the so-called vertical perforation  $10 \frac{1}{2}$  forms an interesting curiosity of this emission. The stamps were printed in sheets of 50 pieces (5 rows of 10 stamps). Between the stamps 46 and 47, resp. the stamps 4 and 5 (the latter when the sheets came into the perforation machine "reversed") the zig-zag or saw tooth perforation has been considerably broader at a part of the print run, caused by a machine defect, which gives the effect of a rather rough perforation, size approx.  $10 \frac{1}{2}$ .<sup>3</sup> Especially in mint condition the vertical left or vertical right perforated stamps are rather scarce.

This perforation  $10 \frac{1}{2}$  can be found with the values of 2, 3, 5, 10, 25, 40 and 50 lepta.

According to the literature, the values of 1 lepton, 2 (orange-red), 3, 5, 10, 20, 25, 30, 40 and 50 lepta and all Drachma values can be found imperforated. The 2 lepta (orange-red), 3 and 10 lepta exist also vertically unperforated, while the 2 lepta (carmine red), 10 and 40 lepta are also known with a double perforation. The 10 lepta also exists with a single



Fig.2: Perforation  $10 \frac{1}{2}$  (left)

<sup>1</sup> This article has been published previously in Hermes, Periodical of the Hellenic Philatelic Society of the Netherlands, nr.1 (1969) pp.12-14 and nr.2 (1969) pp.1-6, with additions from "Uitgiften van de Griekse regering voor Noord Epirus" from R. Feenstra, "Epirus – Officieel, semi-officieel of nep Deel VII" in Hermes 64 (1989), pp.21-23, "De postzegels van de Heilige Gemeenschap" from J.Mascini, "Mount Athos, de Heilige Berg" in Hermes 108 (2000), pp.23-24, corrected and expanded (parts 6-9) and illustrated by J. Meyer;

<sup>2</sup> Also "Campaign 1912";

<sup>3</sup> See also Kohl-Briefmarken Handbuch (11<sup>e</sup> ed (1928), part II, pg.356 and R. Feenstra "De  $10 \frac{1}{2}$  afwijkingen in de Aspiotis doorsteek" in Hermes 69 (1990), pp.8-12;

sided horizontal perforation of 10 ½.

In addition to the historically interesting specialization with regard to cancellations, the Victory Issue certainly deserves our interest regarding the paper and perforation differences described above. To make reference more easy, a "checklist" follows, in which X indicates that the variety mentioned in the relevant column occurs with the value indicated.

Stamp value	A Paper	B paper	“perforation” 10 1/2	imperforated
1 lepton	X	X		X
2 lepta (orange-red)	X		X	X
2 lepta (Carmine)	X		X	
3 lepta	X	X	X	X
5 lepta	X	X	X	X
10 lepta	X	X	X	X
20 lepta		X		X
25 lepta	X		X	X
30 lepta	X			X
40 lepta	X	X	X	X
50 lepta	X		X	X
1 Drachma	?	X		X
2 Drachma		X		X
3 Drachma	X	X		X
5 Drachma	X			X
10 Drachma		X		X
25 Drachma	X			X

It is also worth noting that the 1 lepton, 3, 5, 10, 25, 40 and 50 lepta also occur with a glossy white gum, which was used in a reprint in 1914 and which clearly deviates from the thick smooth gum on the paper A stamps and the thin, yellow-brown gum on the paper B-stamps.

The Victory Issue has been used for three different overprints. This started with the special issue for Northern Epirus (Hellas 96-107, Vlastos 66-80). Then, in 1917, the social welfare stamps (Hellas C16-C18, Vlastos C 23-C 25) and finally in 1923 the Epanastasis or Revolution overprints (Hellas 439-448 and 460, Vlastos 395-404 and 416).

In these issues too, both the paper differences and the perforation deviation 10 ½ can be found.

## 2. Issue of the Greek Government for Northern Epirus (Hellas 96-107, Vlastos 1-11)

At the end of 1914, North Epirus came under the rule of the Greek government and as a result, on November 30th, 1914, the Greek stamps of the Victory Issue from 1913 appeared with the overprint Β. ΗΠΙΕΙΡΟΣ (N. Epirus).

Fortunately, the high values from 2 to 25 Drachma were not overprinted. As with the original stamps, the 2 lepta value exists again in two colours, namely orange-red and carmine. Hellas and Vlastos do not give the numbers of circulation, but Kohl gives the following numbers: 1, 3, 5, 10 and 25 lepta each 85,000 pieces; the 2 lepta orange-red 70,000 and carmine 15,000; the 20 lepta also 15,000 pieces; the 30 lepta 25,000 and finally the 40 and 50 lepta and the 1 drachma each 20,000 pieces. The stamps were printed in three separate editions and for a part of the editions here again the vertical perforation 10 ½ can be found; to be precise: in the case of the 2 lepta orange-red and the 5, 10, 25 and 50 lepta.

Inverted overprints occur on the 1 lepton, 2 (both colours), 3, 5, 10 and 20 lepta and 1 Drachma.

Double overprints occur in the 1 lepton, the 2 (both colours), 3, 10 and 20 lepta and 1 drachma. Double overprints with one print inverted also exist of the 1 lepton, 2 (orange-red) 3 and 10 lepta.



Fig.3: inverted

The sheet size is 50 pieces, 10 wide and 5 high. The printer's name is usually in the bottom, at the left in Greek and right in French. In some cases the printer's name can be found on the sides instead.



Fig.4

In parts of the printing, a number of typesetting errors occur:

1. Missing point behind the B (position 15);
2. A small, barely visible point in the B (position 24);
3. A broken O (position 18) that resembles a C;
4. The distance between B. and H is 3.75 mm. Instead of the normal 2.8 to 3 (position 10);
5. A damaged B, which makes it look like a P (position 35);
6. A "fallen" Σ (position 33);
7. A dot on the "E" (position 33).

In the article by A. Karamitsos, translated by K. Mostert,<sup>4</sup> there is an overview of the numbers sold. Adding the numbers remaining that were burnt (together with many other stamps) under official supervision in 1930 it is possible to determine the correct quantities of stamps sold at the post-office counters. The protocol of the official incineration was published at the time in Philotelia<sup>5</sup>, and if you compare that list, adding the numbers of Karamitsos to the numbers of Kohl, there remain a few differences, as you can see in the following table.

<sup>4</sup> Published in Hermes nr.63 (december 1988) pp.4-18; being a translation of the first auction catalogue of Karamitsos from november 1988;

<sup>5</sup> Philotelia nr.73-76 (1931);

Hellas.nr.	value	colour	Numbers printed Kohl	Burnt acc. to protocol	Sold acc. to Karamitsos
96	1 lepton	Brown	85.000	17.800 <sup>6</sup>	67.200
97	2 lepta	Orange-red	70.000	24.950	23.850
98	2 lepta	Carmine	15.000	26.150	10.050
99	3 lepta	Orange	85.000	63.400	21.600
100	5 lepta	Green	85.000	1.050	83.950
101	10 lepta	Rose-red	85.000	-	85.000
102	20 lepta	Bright Violet	15.000	3.800	11.200
103	25 lepta	Pale Blue	85.000	47.850	37.150
104	30 lepta	Green	25.000	12.749	7.251
105	40 lepta	Indigo	20.000	13.400	6.600
106	50 lepta	Deep blue	20.000	11.302	8.698
107	1 drachma	Dull purple	20.000	16.650	3.350

The numbers of the 1 lepton, 3, 5, 10, 20, 25, 40 and 50 lepta and 1 drachma are exactly right. Regarding the 30 lepta, Kohl's number of 25,000 would be incorrect, that would be 20,000. With the 2 lepta in two colours the case becomes more complicated, because it is impossible that of the 15,000 stamps of nr.98 26.150 would be burned. The subdivision of Kohl in the two colours of this 2 lepta is therefore not correct.

If we accept the "sold" figures of Karamitsos as correct and we add the "burnt" figures, we get a circulation of 48,800 for nr.97 and 36,200 for nr.98, so 85,000 together again.

Finally, it should be mentioned that according to Karamitsos the 1 drachma exists on two different types of paper.

Hellas 108 to 111 (Vlastos 12-15) show the 1, 2, 3 and 5 lepta with a red overprint with the remark "never published". In my view, these are pure fakes and I think that some clever person saw an (private) opportunity to overprint sheets of the lowest four values with the original type-setting in red.



Fig.5: red overprint with left variety "C" instead of "O"

### 3. The K.P. overprint 1917 (Hellas C16-C18, Vlastos C 23- C25)

Three values from the Victory Issue from 1913 were overprinted with the K.P. imprint (an abbreviation for ΚΟΙΝΩΝΙΚΗΣ ΠΡΟΝΟΙΑΣ, Social care); the 25, 40 and 50 lepta, all with three-line text "K.P. - lepton - 5". The capital letters K / P. are 2.75 mm high and executed in a narrow, fine font; there is a clear point both behind the K and behind the P.



Fig.6

With regard to the numbers printed, the opinions of Briault-Garas (from 1921) and Kohl (1927) differ:

	5L on 25 L	5 L on 40L	5L on 50L
Numbers acc to Briault	450.000	450.000	450.000
Numbers acc. to Kohl	400.000	400.000	200.000

Based on the fact Kohl generally has reliable information, I tend to prefer his numbers.

<sup>6</sup> Of which 150 with an inverted overprint;

We saw that the 25, 40 and 50 lepta values of the Victory Issue exist with a vertical perforation  $10 \frac{1}{2}$  instead of the usual perforation, at a frequency of two stamps per sheet of fifty. We find this "perforation  $10 \frac{1}{2}$ ". also with the copies of the K.P. overprints. A simple calculation tells us that at most 16,000 of such specimens can occur at the 25 and 40 lepta and at most 8,000 of the 50 lepta. In reality, these numbers are lower, if not considerably lower, since only a part of the original printings showed this perforation variety. Unused copies of the K.P. imprint with vertical perforation  $10 \frac{1}{2}$  on the right or on the left are rare.

Furthermore, in the previous article we have pointed out that the 40 lepta occurs both on smooth and on porous, somewhat rough paper. We also encounter this phenomenon with the 40 lepta with K.P. overprint. But there is more! Not only are all of the values known for both inverted and double prints (including stamps with one normal and an inverted overprint), but in addition the 25 lepta, the 40 lepta on smooth paper and the 50 lepta exist with triple overprint, of which those on the 25 and 40 lepta occur with one normal and two inverted overprints and the 50 lepta with two normal and one inverted overprint. It seems to me that the three-double prints will not number more than 100 pieces, and of the top and double prints probably several thousand pieces exist.

All three values may also show deviations with respect to the points placed behind the capital letters K and P. These deviations are:

1. (field 22) two points behind K, no point behind P (K..P)
2. (field 7) high point behind P (K.P')
3. (field 19) fat point after K (K.P.) (\*)
4. (field (45) no point behind K (K P.) (\*)
5. (field 3) no point behind P (K.P) (\*\*)

(\*) not mentioned in Hellas or Vlastos, but in Kohl.

(\*\*) not mentioned in Hellas, Vlastos or Kohl (for this specific issue). Kohl does describe this error in a general way for the 1917-issue. The missing points (4 and 5) do exist but not on all sheets, as Kohl has established.



Fig.7: K.P. with high point (left) and K.P. double, one inverted

The maximum number of specimens with the above-mentioned varieties is relatively small: of the 25 and 40 lepta, at most 8,000 examples can exist per variety (of which the 40 lepta has to be split between the two types of paper), on the 50 lepta at most 4,000 pieces per variety. All in all, we have a very interesting series here, so, armed with a sharp eye you can come to an attractive specialization.

#### 4. The Epanastasis 1922 overprints (Hellas 439-448 and 460, Vlastos 395-404 and 416)

There are many reasons to add an overprint to postage stamps (even a football championship can give cause to do so), but as to the reasons which the Revolutionary Government of Greece used to create the Epanastasis 1922 issue, there was certainly one, which is unique. After the replacement of King Constantine by his son George, the government decided the constitutional reform also needed to be given philatelic attention. A three-line overprint "Epanastasis (= revolution) 1922" followed by the new value-indicator would inform the people and the world about the triumph of the revolution. In itself this is a not unusual reason. Somewhat more peculiar was the decision not to place this overprint on all stamps, but only on the residual stocks of some older Greek issues. The current definitive stamps therefore were not provided with the overprint. Even more remarkable was the thought to include the remnants of stamps from the island of Crete (unified with Greece since 1913) in the overprinting exercise. Although the return of Crete to the motherland had been commemorated with a special

stamp ten years earlier (Hellas 356; Vlastos 324), there was still a lively demand for the stamps of Crete from collectors and speculators. By means of the overprint, the government wanted to put an end to that demand! One could argue the demand could also have been finished by the destruction of the stamps, but that was probably too little a business solution. Now all Creten stamps with the new overprint were smoothly sold off, albeit that the original face value was rather reduced in totality. Since the purchase value had been nil at the time, a large profit eventually still resulted! I will make some more remarks on this part of the Epanastasis manipulation in a future article.<sup>7</sup> The order to the National Printing House in Athens was issued in September 1922, but only in early May the stamps with the overprint were delivered to the Ministry of Finance. (The proceeds from sales had thus already been channelled into the right direction!) In the meantime the stamps had been counted and on May 5th, 1923, a special commission from the Ministry did this work all over again. A protocol was then drawn up, in which the quantity of approved stamps per type as well as the quantity of misprints to be destroyed were stated very accurately. We therefore know exactly the numbers issued of each stamp separately.



Fig.8

The stamps were available at the post offices around May, 8th. The specific numbers printed of the stamps had, however, become known to insiders, and clever postal workers also kept the "small" print runs from sale! This came to the knowledge of the Ministry and they immediately stopped the sale of all stamps. All post offices were instructed to return their unsold stocks to the Ministry. Subsequently, the Ministry decided that only the stamps, whose printing total was greater than 3,950 pieces, could be sold; all stamps with an issue-number smaller than 3,950 pieces had to be destroyed. The extra check produced another surprise when it turned out that one stamp of Crete of 5 Drachma had been overprinted with a value of 50 lepta instead of 5 Drachma (in no less than 13,600 copies!) (Hellas 457, Vlastos 415). "Destruction" was the order. The Ministry then compiled 3,930 series and sold 2,000 of these directly to traders and collectors in Athens. The rest were gradually distributed through the post offices.

It is without doubt, not all post offices returned their stamps. Kohl reports, for example, that concerning a stamp of Crete, the 1 lepton 1900 with a 5 lepta overprint (Hellas 456, Vlastos 412) Kavalla and Crete reported that everything had already been sold (sic!).

Correctly used on letter, all stamps of the Epanastasis 1922 issue are scarce; especially regarding "Athens" cancellations one should be extremely suspicious.

<sup>7</sup> This article unfortunately never has been published;

After this long introduction, let's return specifically to the Victory Issue. The following values were overprinted in the following amounts:

<b>Stamp value:</b>	<b>Numbers overprinted:</b>
5 lepta on 3 lepta	636.850
10 lepta on 20 lepta	132.000
10 lepta on 25 lepta	215.650
10 lepta on 30 lepta	83.250
10 lepta on 40 lepta	109.300
50 lepta on 50 lepta	73.300
2 Drachma on 2 Drachma	7.650
3 Drachma on 3 Drachma	20.000
5 Drachma on 5 Drachma	20.000
10 Drachma on 1 Drachma	37.300
10 Drachma on 10 Drachma (*)	3.000

(\*) From this last stamp, four sheets (200 pieces) escaped from destruction, to be distributed later in an illegal way to the philatelic market.

Again with these stamps, we encounter stamps with the two paper types (smooth paper and porous, rough paper), namely the 3 lepta and the 40 lepta. So far, from the 1 Dr. to date, I only saw specimens on the porous paper. We would expect the vertical perforation "10 ½" with the 3 - 25 - 40 and 50 lepta stamps, but so far only the 3 and 25 lepta varieties have actually been noted.

Given the sharp check on misprints, only very few inverted and double prints could have escaped from destruction. We know, however, inverted overprints exist of the 5 lepta on 3 lepta, the 10 lepta on 20 lepta, the 10 lepta on 25 lepta and of the 50 lepta on 50 lepta stamps, as well as a double overprints on the 5 lepta on 3 lepta and 10 lepta on 20 lepta. Of the 3 Dr. on 3 Dr. one single sheet (50 pieces) came into circulation.

To summarize: the quantities of Epanastasis overprints on the Victory Issue put into circulation (no matter how questionable the Epanastasis issue in itself may be) make it possible to pursue an interesting specialization of unused copies on paper types, perforations and misprints. Collecting of correctly used copies on letters certainly is no less interesting.

In addition to the official stamp-issues involving the stamps of the Victory Issue, there are also two never-officially recognized varieties, the overprint for Mount Athos and stamps for the island of Castellorizo.

## 5. The never-issued stamps for Mount Athos (Hellas 14-39, Vlastos 14-38)

In the course of W.O.I, when Macedonia was transformed into a battlefield with thousands of deaths and the Greek sovereignty over the northern areas of the country only existed in Theory, for diplomatic reasons Greece used values of the Victory-issue and current Postage Due Stamps for the overprint I.Κοινότοπος Αγ. Ορους.

These stamps reached Thessaloniki, but from there they were never transferred to Mount Athos, because Russia had already capitulated because of the Revolution and as a result the pressure on Greece ceased to exist.

The stamps were returned to the warehouses of the sealed paper.

Of the stamps of the Victory-issue, the following values were provided with the overprint

(with a new value designation in lepta and drachma):

1 lepta on 20, 25, 30, 40 and 50 lepta and on the 1 drachma; 15 lepta on all values of the set and 20 lepta on the 2 lepta, as well as stamps with no new value indication, being the 1 lepton, 2 and 3 lepta and 2 drachma.



Fig.9

This overprint has formed the target for counterfeiters, of which the following anecdote is curious enough to mention: in 1930, the commission charged with the burning of the old stocks of stamps in the warehouses discovered a sheet of false 25 drachma of the Victory Issue with overprint. It was apparently the work of a smart person, because he fabricated the fake sheet and provided it with the false overprint. With the assistance of a staff member from the warehouse, he removed a real sheet and placed the counterfeit sheet on that spot.

The total number of stamps destroyed in 1930, according to the statement in Philotelia, is as follows:

Stamp value	Destroyed
1 lepton	50350(*)
2 lepta (orange-red)	110000
2 lepta (carmine)	- -
3 lepta	837300
5 lepta	14900
10 lepta	-
20 lepta	9950
25 lepta	93850
30 lepta	9950
40 lepta	130000
50 lepta	24802
1 Drachma	50000
2 Drachma	44246
3 Drachma	43500
5 Drachma	4493
10 Drachma	13400
25 Drachma	13150

(\*) the statement is not completely clear; it seems there was also an extra batch of 34900.

## 6. The never-issued stamps for Castellorizo (Hellas 1-12, Vlastos U1-U12)

Between January, 1st 1913 and the end of 1915, the island of Castellorizo had a semi-independent status, seeking unification with Greece. Therefore, Greek stamps came into use. According to the Hellas catalogue, in July 1913 a local postal official decided to overprint the existing stamps of the Victory Issue with the text "Castellorizo". However, the issue was not authorized by the local authorities and the stamps did not officially come into circulation. Kohl concludes they are a "reinste Spekulations-erzeugnisse", a product of pure speculation.

The values of 1 lepton, 2 lepta (orange-red), 3, 5, 10, 20, 25, 30, 40, 50 lepta and 1 and 2 Drachma were overprinted.

The numbers issued are not known, but they will not have been big.

In addition to "Greek" overprints on stamps of the Victory Issue, there are also two issues in which these Greek stamps were overprinted by "foreign" powers. It concerns stamps issued by the Administration of Autonomous Western Thrace and the Republic of Koritsa.



Fig.10



## 7. Autonomous Western Thrace (Hellas 22-24A, Vlastos 26-28)

After Greek troops temporarily occupied Western Thrace during the Second Balkan War, they had to transfer this area to Bulgaria. In order to curb the administrative chaos that arose during the transfer-period, local authorities in the area established a temporary administration and issued their own stamps. In October 1913, among others, the 1 lepton of the Victory Issue was overprinted with a blue overprint "Autonomous Administration of Western Thrace". Three values appeared; 10 and 20 para and 1 piaster. A fourth value (2 piaster) apparently was printed but not issued. The 1-piaster exists both with paper A and paper B, the remainder only on paper A.

Kohl again has his reservations about the official nature of this issue despite decrees that had to confirm this. In any case, it seems that the stamps were not accepted for postal use outside of their own region.



Fig.11



Fig.12

## 8. An outsider (Hellas 139, Vlastos 2)

Then there is the issue of the French military administration of the Republic of Koritsa (South Albania). At the end of 1916, five Greek stamps of the issues overprinted with B. ΗΠΕΙΡΟΣ (see section 2.) were crudely overprinted by the French administration with an Albanian two-headed eagle and a value indicator in centimes. One of the printed stamps was the 2 lepta (orange-red) of the Victory Issue. The new value was 10 centimes. The number printed of this stamp was only 368 copies.

## 9. Tax stamps

Stamps of the Victory Issue have also been used as Greek tax stamps. Probably already in 1913 the 5 lepta and 10 lepta were overprinted with the diagonal text "ΧΑΡΤΟΣΗΜΟΝ" (Tax Stamp).

Around 1920, stamps were overprinted with a vertical three-line print "Χαρτοσημον Δικαστικών Λεπτών .." (Judicial tax stamp ... value designation). They were a value of 10 lepta on the 25 lepta blue, 10 lepta on the 30 lepta green, 50 lepta on the 25 lepta blue and 50 lepta on the 30 lepta green.

Finally, in that same year, a stamp of 25 lepta blue was overprinted with the overprint "Χαρτοσημον – Συμβολαιο – Γραφικον – Δραχμες 1" (notary),, with a value of 1 Drachma.



Fig.13

## Conclusion

The Victory Issue is a fascinating collection area. It is possible to build up an interesting specialization of unused copies on paper types as well as overprints, perforation varieties and misprints.

## Literature:

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Mascini, J, “De postzegels van de Heilige Gemeenschap” uit “Mount Athos, de Heilige Berg” in Hermes 108 (2000), pp.17-24.

### Other consulted literature:

- Hellas catalogue 2018, Part I and III;
- Vlastos catalogue 2003-2005, Part I and III;
- Kohl-Briefmarken Handbuch (11<sup>e</sup> dr (1928), Part I, pp.573-574, Part II, pp.357-358 and Part III, pp.300-313, 344-346 and 1015;
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