

## PRINCIPALITY

On 7 March 1914, Prince William of Wied, who had been selected by the European Powers, arrived at Durazzo and was duly installed as the ruler of Albania. In the end, the Prince's reign was quite brief as he abdicated and left the country on 4 September 1914, just a month after the outbreak of World War I.

Shkoder  
7 March 1914



*Erntägiger Goldstempel von Skutari*



Phot. Dr. C. Tücher - Zürich.

*Herrn*

*Josef Majer  
Böfmeister*

*Skutari, den 7. III. 1914.  
Lieber Herr in Gaffner'scher!  
Vielen Dank für die freundliche  
Annahme der Briefe und die  
der künftigen Zukunft.*



Alleinverkaufrecht bei A. & J. Münzer,  
Buch & Papierhandlung in Skutari.

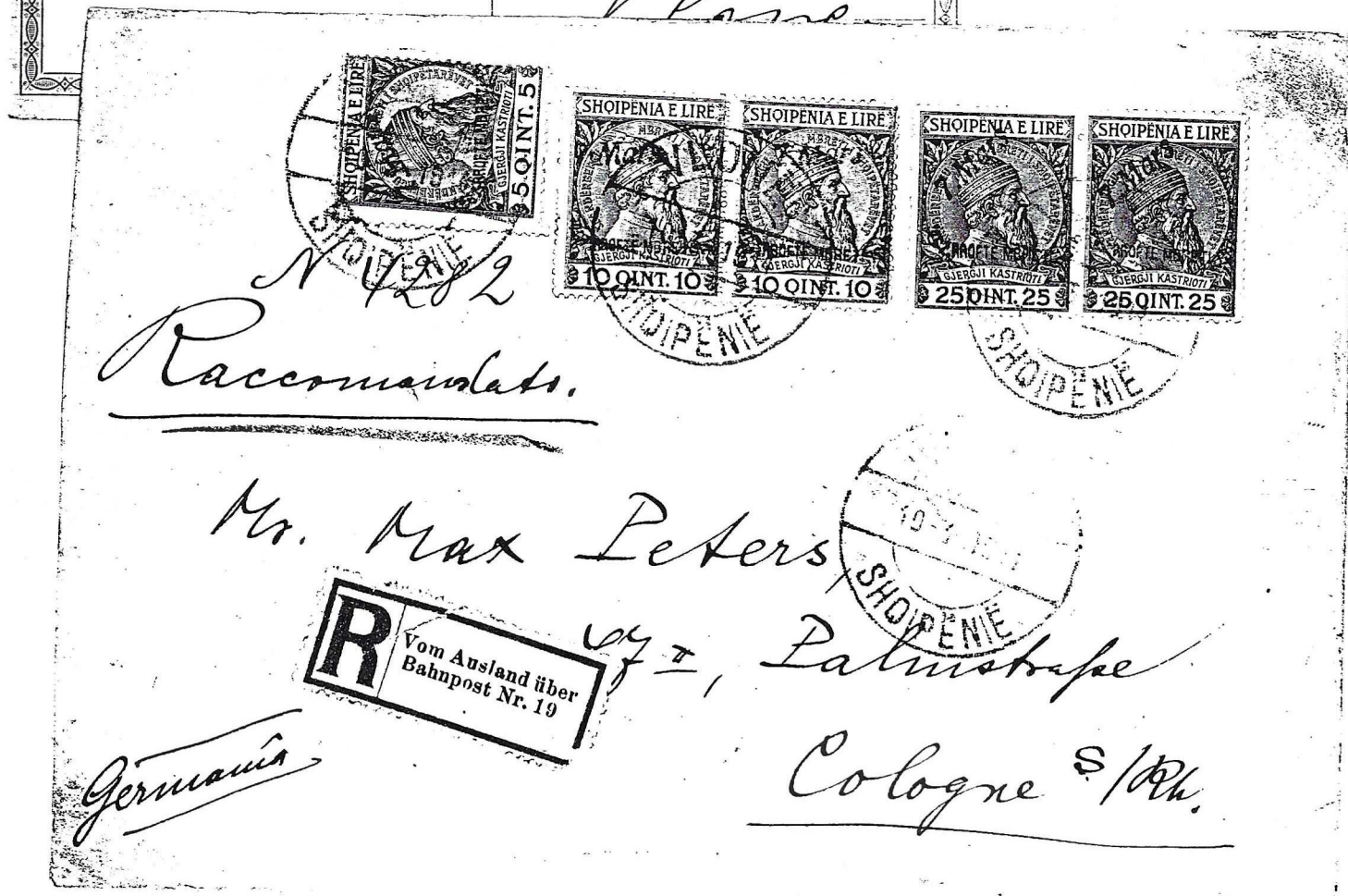
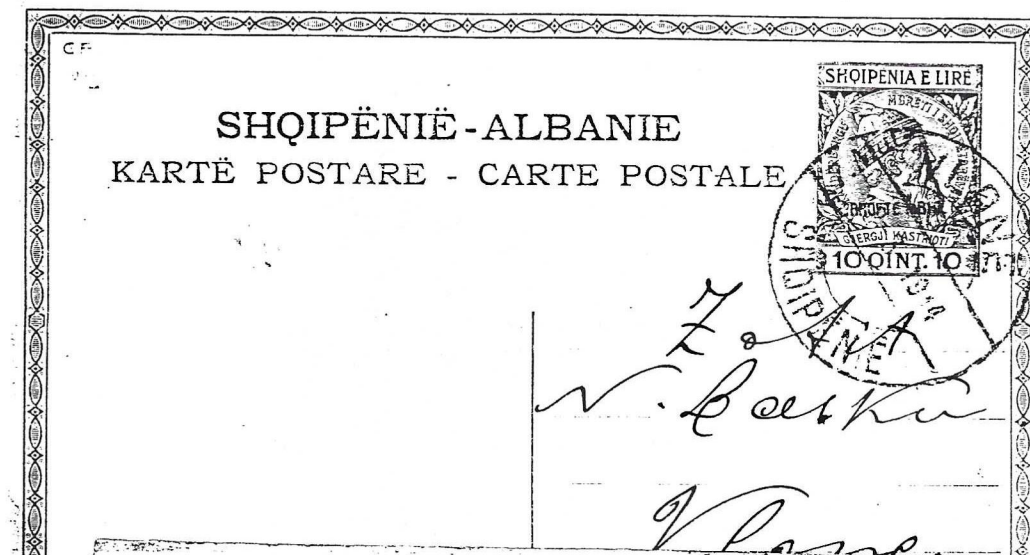
*Edmund Tücher.*

*Bludenz  
Korallberg.*

To commemorate the arrival of the Prince in Albania, a special postmark in gold ink was used in some of the larger towns on that date. Only a small quantity of covers, mostly prepared as souvenirs for dignitaries, were serviced with the gold ink cancels.

PRINCIPALITY

Vlone  
12 March 1914  
10 March 1914



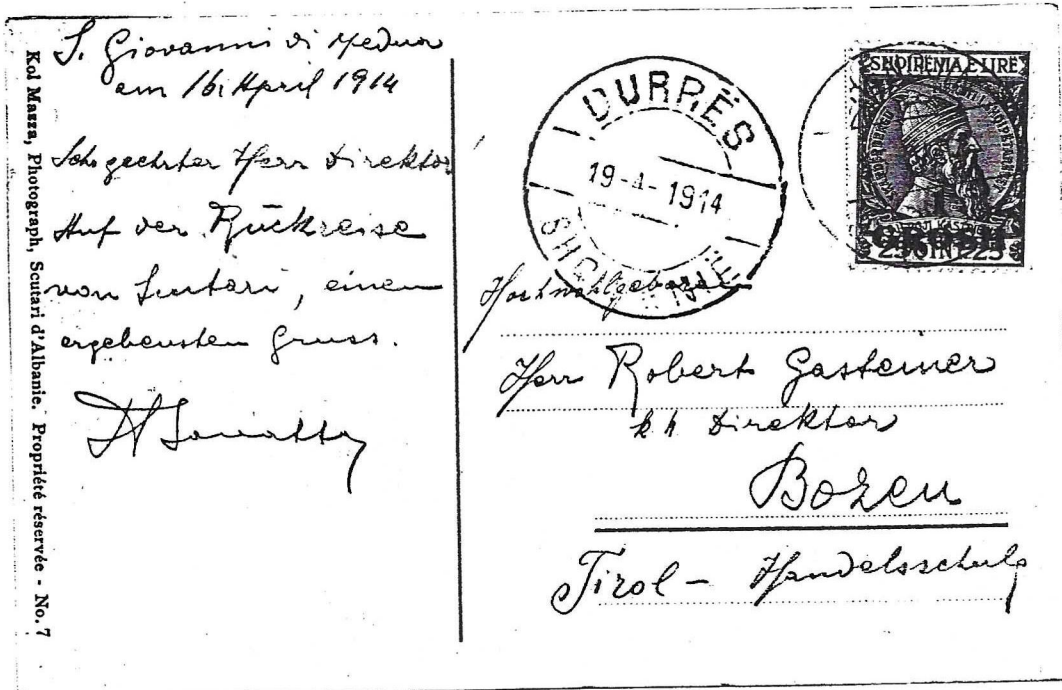
The arrival of Prince William to serve as ruler provided the occasion for the first Albanian commemoratives on 7 March 1914. These consisted of suitable overprints on the Skanderbeg definitive stamps and postal cards.

As with the underlying issue, most of these stamps were used philatelically. Thus, the properly franked cover to Cologne with 75 qintar postage (double weight UPU rate plus registry fee) represents a very unusual usage.

PRINCIPALITY

Shengjin  
15 April 1914

Durres  
6 April 1914



Because the Skanderbeg stamps were printed in a proposed currency involving qintar and francs, for which no banknotes yet existed, the public was very confused. Thus, on 2 April 1914 the authorities surcharged the stamps in the familiar para and grosh, producing the final stamp issue prior to the outbreak of World War I.

# PRINCIPALITY

Durres  
8 April 1914  
4 June 1914



Durazzo - Le hh. MM. sul pontile di sbarco



DURAZZO - Le LL. MM. traversano il Bazar

Picture postcards of the arrival of the Prince and Princess at Durazzo. Upper card has the cachet of the Austrian warship *S.M.S. Huszar*, which took part in the celebration. Lower card shows the royal couple riding through the bazaar; it was mailed to a sailor on board *S.M. Torpedoboot 31* at the Austrian naval base in Pola.

## NORTH ALBANIA

Another example of a period when there was a weak central government (or none at all), thus requiring local leaders to assert control, occurred in the area around Scutari between the departure of Prince William in September 1914 and the arrival of the Montenegrin occupation troops in June 1915. By mid-1915 the administration of Scutari was in the hands of a local committee headed by Prenk Bib Doba, which was fending off the pro-Turkish Moslem insurrectionists.

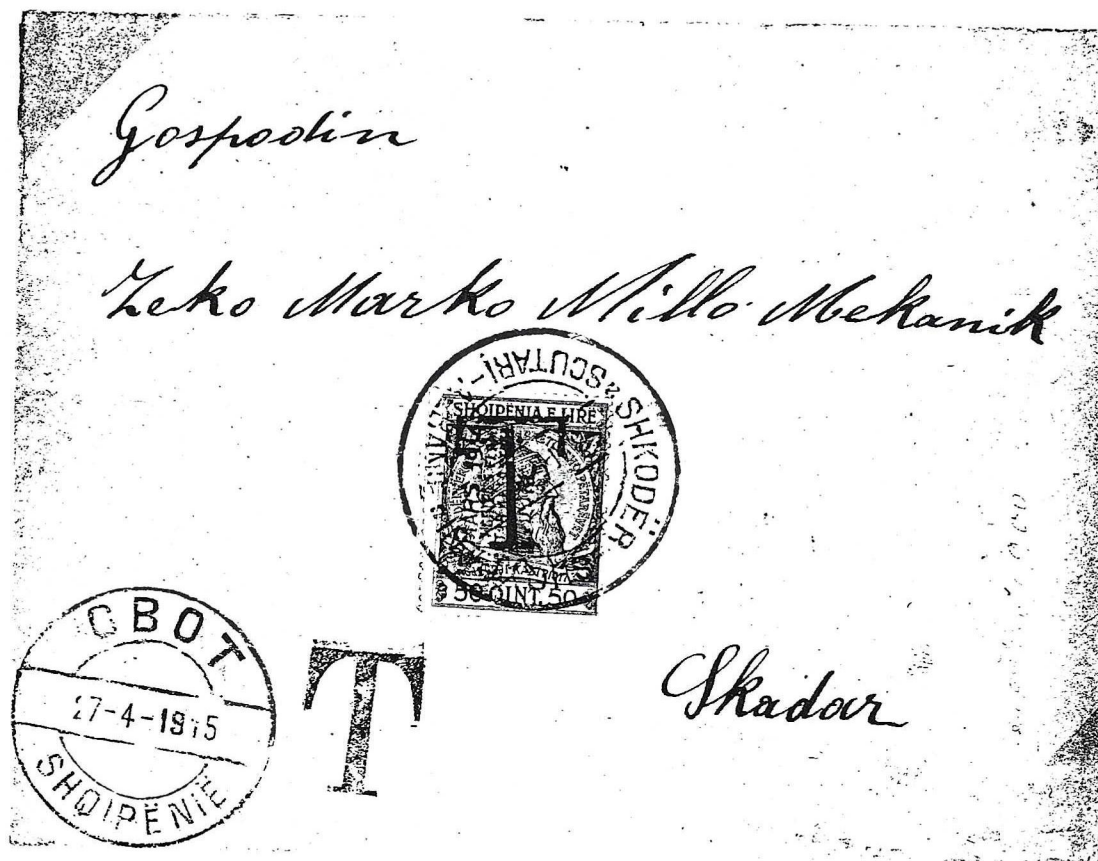
Shkoder  
19 March 1915



Only one set of stamps was issued during this period, consisting of overprints on the Skanderbeg series commemorating the first anniversary of raising the Albanian flag over the fortress of Scutari on 19 March 1914. A cover cancelled on the first day of issue is shown above.

NORTH ALBANIA

Shkoder  
28 April 1915



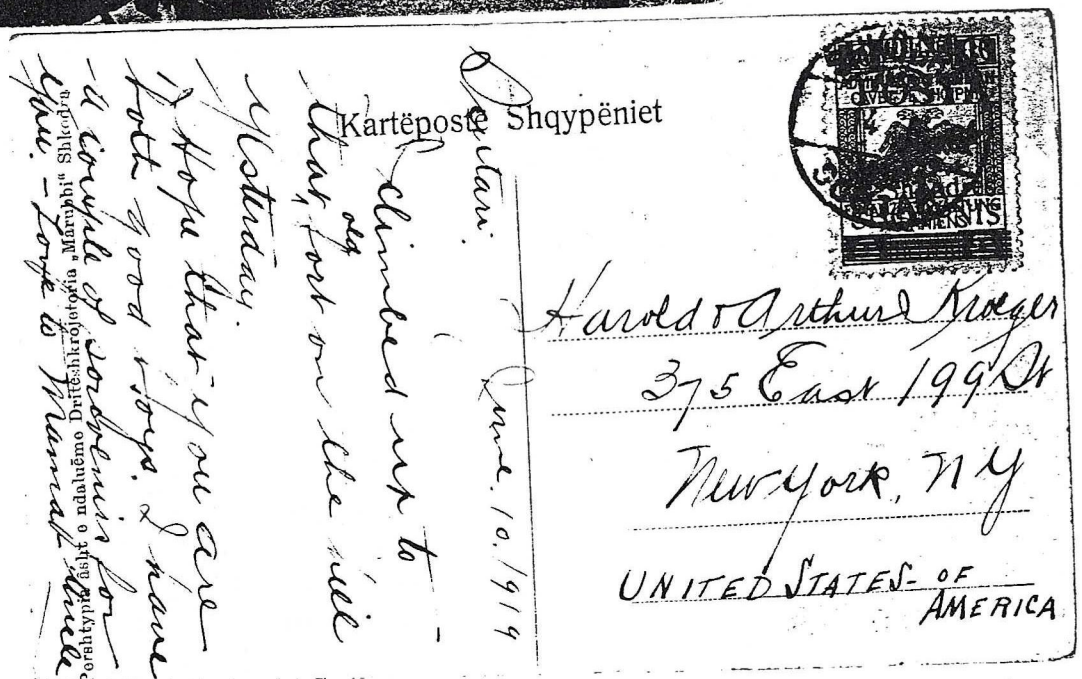
Some of the first anniversary commemorative stamps were converted into postage dues by the application of a large "T." The above cover shows such usage as it was mailed unfranked from Obot to Scutari. This is the discovery example of the Obot postmark from this period, not previously recorded.

## NORTH ALBANIA

A second chaotic period in Scutari occurred after the withdrawal of the Austrian occupation forces in November 1918 and before a new central government began to function. The post office was reopened on 15 January 1919, and the first stamps were overprints on fiscal stamps that had been issued by the Austro-Hungarian occupation authorities. Due to fears of counterfeits, control markings were also applied to the stamps, mostly in the form of comets struck in red or purple, although sometimes in blue or green.



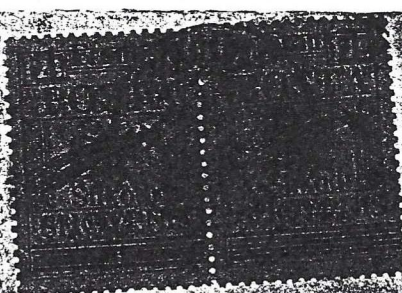
Shkodre  
15 February 1919  
14 June 1919



The basic overprint is inscribed "Albanian Posts at Scutari" and new values are added in Albanian currency rather than Austrian. These picture postcards of Scutari were sent to Eindhoven, Holland and New York City, respectively. The upper card is franked with the set of overprints with the comet going to the left. The stamp on the lower card shows the comet moving to the right.

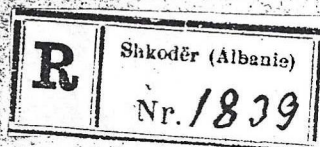
NORTH ALBANIA

Shkodre  
17 July 1919  
13 June 1919



*Mademoiselle  
A. Vaisiere*

*(gr 35)*



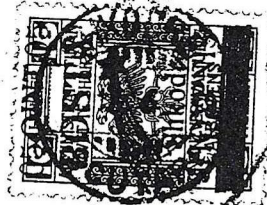
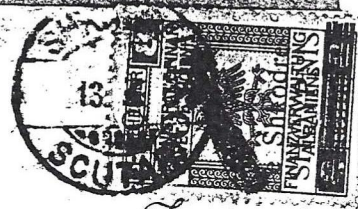
*Ismail Fratelli Shurdha*

*Skut*

*Signor 8150*

*H: Stamatooblo = per Tias*

*Shurdha*



*Alexandria  
d'Egypte  
rue Amienne bouani*

*49*

Covers with the overprinted fiscal stamps and comets moving to the right. Usage of these stamps to France and Egypt are quite uncommon.

NORTH ALBANIA

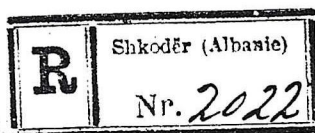
Shkodre  
1 September 1919



*Mademoiselle  
A. Vaissiere*

*Paris - 16 -*

*100. Rue Longchamps N° 100.*



One final issue for Scutari was made later in 1919 when remainders of the 25 qintar Skanderbeg stamps were overprinted "Shkodër - 1919" above the portrait.

## CENTRAL ALBANIA

During several episodes when there was a weak central government (or none at all) local warlords took control of substantial segments of the country. One of the most powerful of these local authorities was Essad Pasha, who was an important leader in Durazzo and much of the surrounding area. On 12 October 1913, he organized the Senate of Central Albania, which functioned until he came to terms with the Allied Control Commission shortly before the arrival of Prince William. After the abdication of the Prince in September 1914, Essad Pasha again created a functioning government for Central Albania.

Durres  
12 October 1913

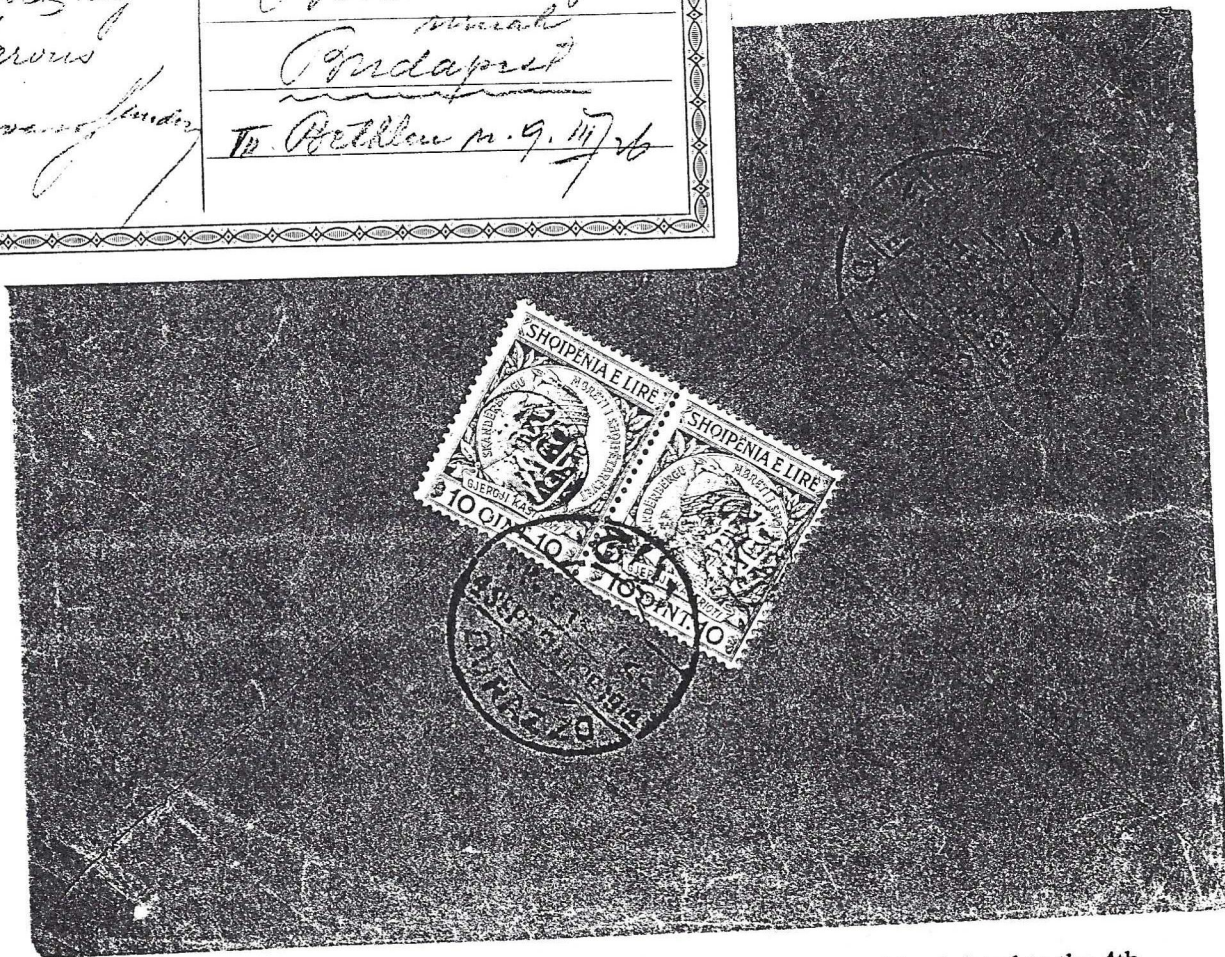


There were no stamps issued during the first period of the Essad Pasha government. However, one philatelic reminder of this period was a commemorative postmark honoring the establishment of the local Senate. This special marking was struck in red on the founding date, 12 October 1913. Above example used on a cover to Trieste, where an arrival backstamp was applied on 6 November 1913.

## CENTRAL ALBANIA

With the departure of Prince William and the subsequent disintegration of central authority, Essad Pasha again took control of the central part of Albania in October 1914. Postal service was restored by the local authorities on 9 January 1915, lasting until the Serbian occupation of Durazzo at the beginning of 1916.

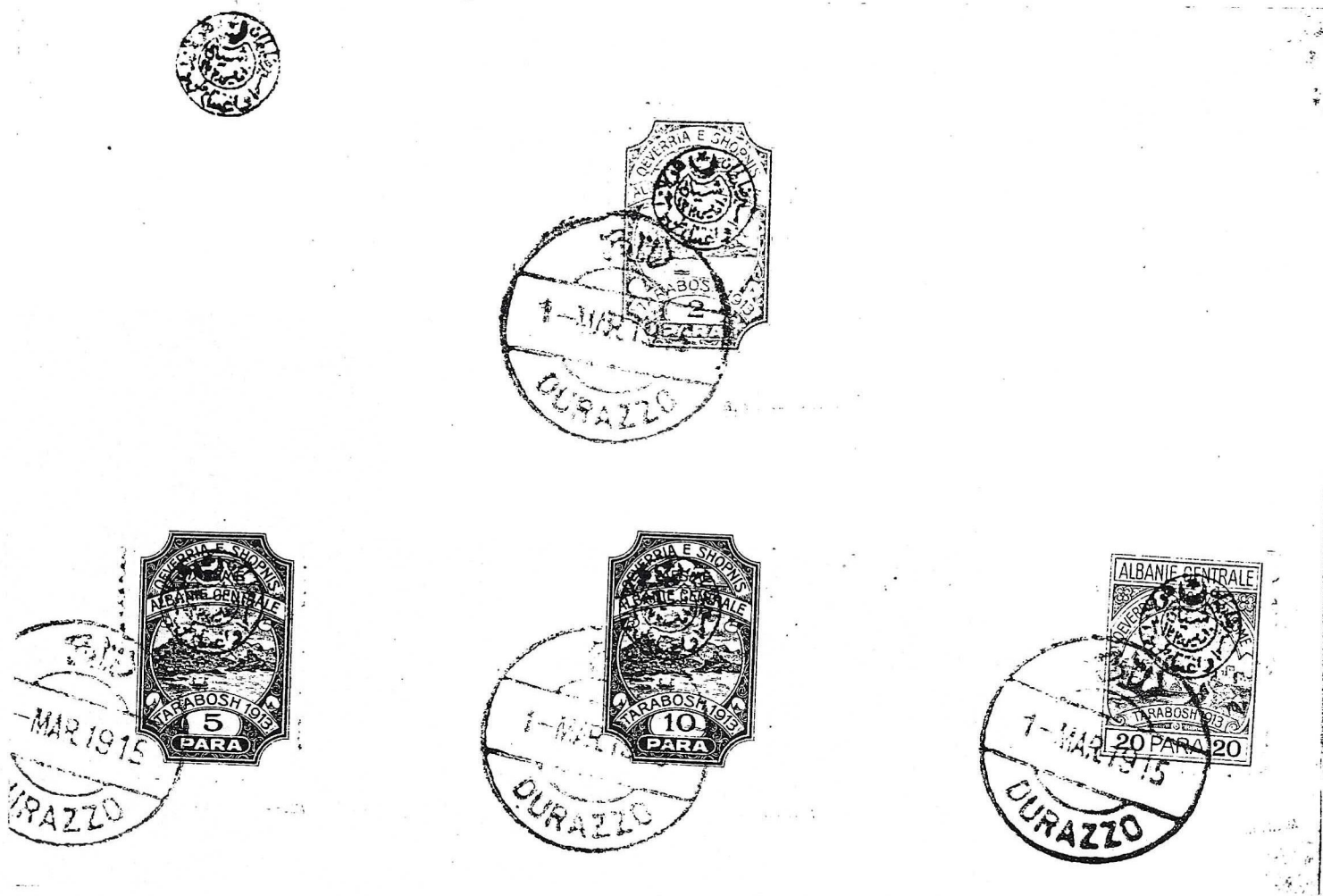
Durazzo  
4 September 1914



The initial postal artifact of the second Essad Pasha period was the a commemorative cancel backdated to the 4th of September 1914, the day that Prince William abdicated his throne. This cancel was similar to the old Ottoman cds, with "Draj" in Arabic at the top and "Durazzo" in Italian at the bottom of the dial. It obviously was not used until some months later, but the above card and cover do not have receiving marks so cannot be dated.

## CENTRAL ALBANIA

Durazzo  
1 March 1915



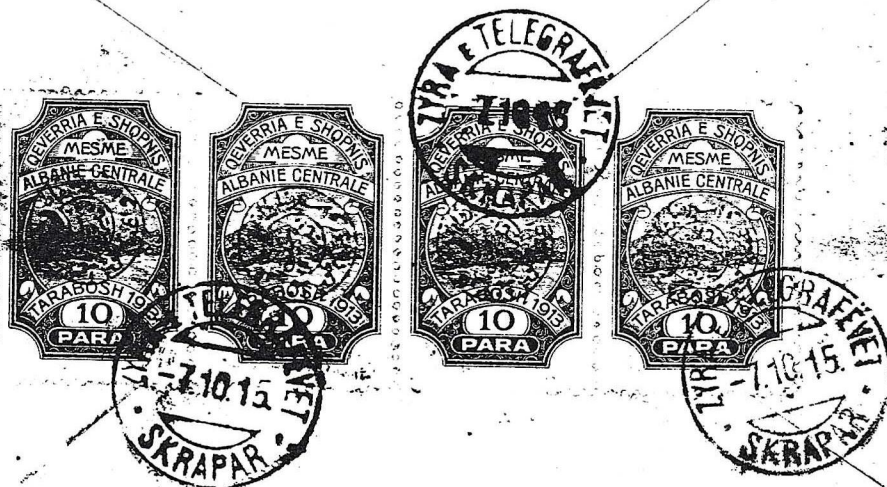
The new Central Albanian period allowed Essad Pasha to utilize a set of stamps that had been printed in Italy but not issued by the first regional government. These were inscribed "Central Albania" in French and Albanian and were now overprinted with Arabic wording within a double circle. They were issued on 10 February 1915.

Essad had some of these stamps affixed to the Prince's notepaper and cancelled in gold ink on 1 March 1915, presumably to be distributed to dignitaries as souvenirs of the new government.

CENTRAL ALBANIA

Skrapar  
7 October 1915

Durazzo  
21 March 1915



Covers franked with Central Albania stamps that actually went through the mails are elusive. Backstamps on the upper example show that it transited Berat on 8 October and was received in Elbasan on 12 October 1915. Lower cover has a receiving mark of the Italian Post Office Abroad in Valona of 23 March 1915.

CENTRAL ALBANIA

Elbasan  
9 December 1915

Lesh  
29 October 1915



Zotënië

Kola Matis Kols Trush  
Palinës

Shkoder

Additional examples of mail from the Essad Pasha period. The turmoil of the times is shown by the tiny cover which originated in the Serbian post office in Elbasan, was franked by an Albanian stamp 13 days later at the local Essad office and finally delivered at Pequin nearly a month after that.

## SOUTH ALBANIA

Between the departure of Prince William in September and the arrival of the Italian occupation troops at the end of December, a new set of overprints was made and placed on sale by the postal officials in Valona. The overprints were inscribed "Albanian Posts" in Arabic and French in a double circle with a star in the center. The date of issue is given in Michel as 15 October 1914.

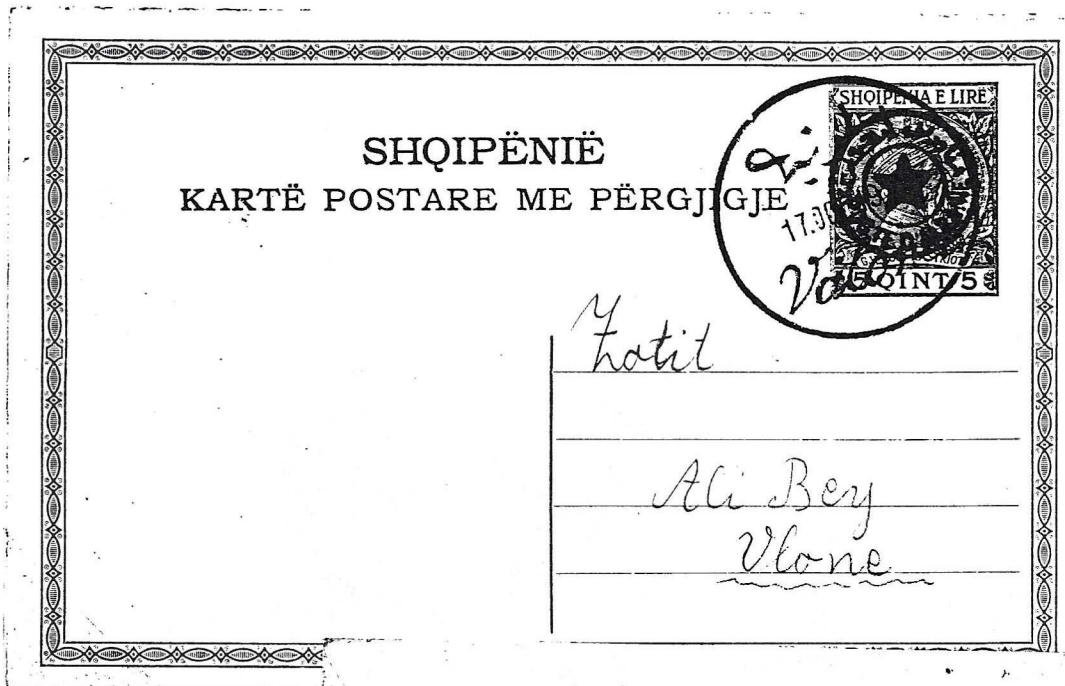
Valona  
17 October 1914



The above cover addressed to Santi Quaranta in "Autonomous Epirus" was franked with the complete set of South Albanian Skanderbeg overprinted stamps surcharged with new denominations in para and grosh. (The unsurcharged stamps were also overprinted.)

SOUTH ALBANIA

Valona  
16 October 1914  
17 October 1914



Skanderbeg postal cards were also overprinted for use in South Albania. Note registered cover addressed to Corfu and paying the proper rate of 50 qintar; it appears to be a commercial usage. It was backstamped when transiting Brindisi on 20 October and has the receiving mark of Corfu dated 14 October (in the Julian calendar, which is 27 October by the Gregorian calendar used in the West).