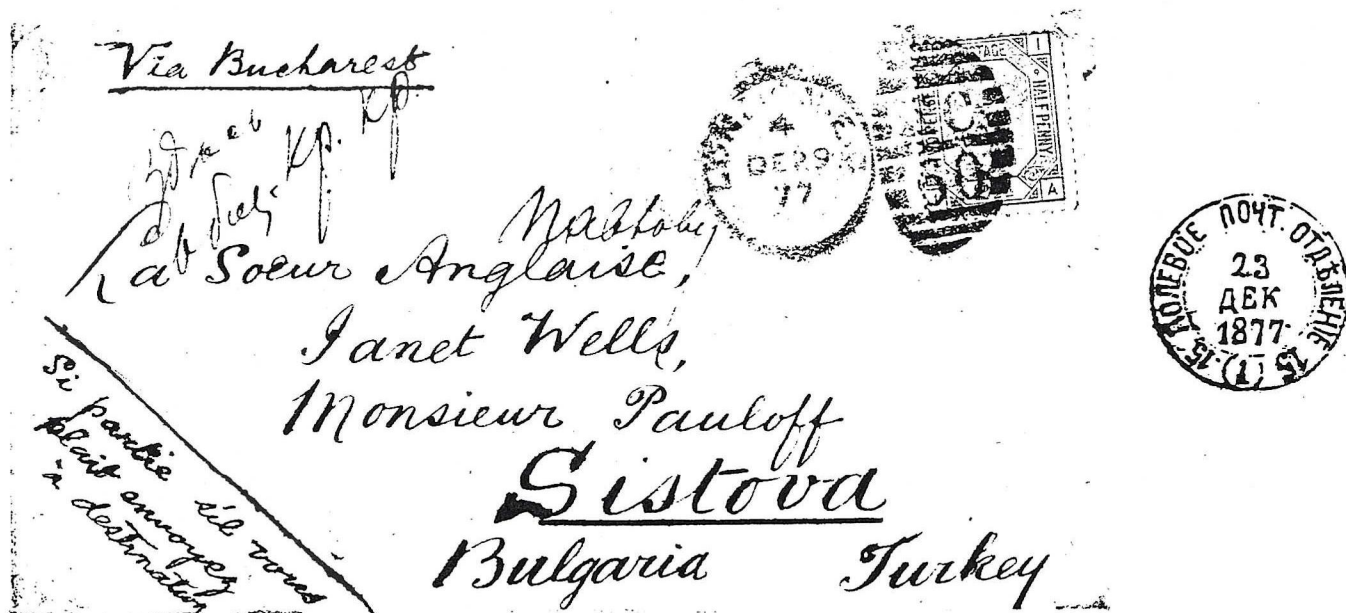


THE EXPANSION OF BULGARIA 1877-1944

This exhibit tells through contemporary postal material the history of the birth of Bulgaria as an independent entity following the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-1878 and its struggles to include all of its ethnic brothers in Eastern Roumelia (South Bulgaria), Thrace and Macedonia within its borders. Such efforts brought the Bulgarians into conflict with their neighbors (Greece, Romania, Serbia and Turkey) in a series of wars starting with the Serbo-Bulgarian War of 1885 and extending through the Balkan Wars as well as World Wars I and II. Although the Bulgarians managed to occupy most of the desired territory during the latter three conflicts, they ended up on the losing side each time and were forced to give up their temporary conquests.

The Bulgarian postal material shown here is presented chronologically, with the historical context of each war or other significant event being represented as a separate chapter. Overall, the time period covered embraces all of the conflicts noted and what has emerged is essentially fashioned as a marcophily exhibit showing the postal markings used in each separate area that was occupied. Within the territories administered during the time period covered by each war, the markings are essentially in alphabetical order.



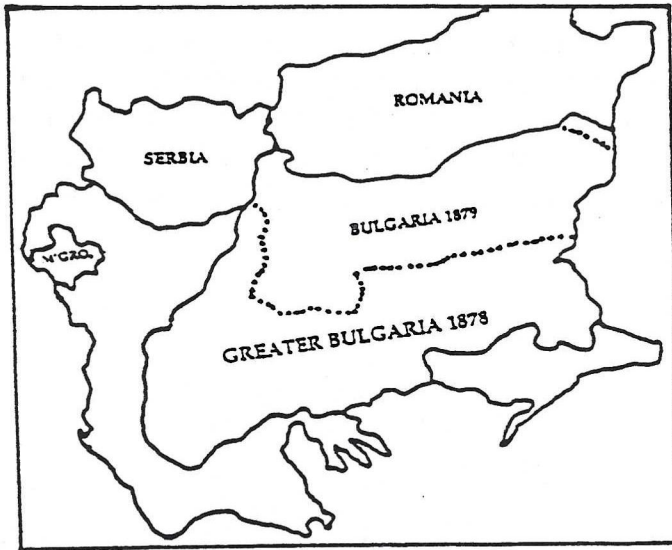
Cover addressed to an English nursing sister at the Red Cross hospital in Sistov, Bulgaria. Mailed from London via Bucharest, Romania, it has a transit marking of the Russian FPO 15 dated 23 December 1877 (Julian style, 12 days earlier than the Gregorian calendar used in the West). This FPO was then located at Zimnitsa, a small town on the Romanian side of the Danube, used as a forwarding center for mail between Russia and the occupied areas of northern Bulgaria. Tschilinghirian states that "No postal material from this office appears to have been recorded."

The material shown in the exhibit is not readily available, especially in the U.S., and many of the markings from the smaller towns should be considered distinctly elusive. In fact, what is shown has been assembled over the span of several decades of search, mostly in Europe. A special effort has been made to find the postmarks used on special classes of mail, rather than normal covers and postcards. Thus, there is a very heavy representation of more difficult to acquire items such as registered mail, parcel post address forms and money orders.

RUSSO-TURKISH WAR

The liberation of Bulgaria from Ottoman rule was a key aspect of the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-78. Following an unsuccessful revolt by the Bulgarians in 1876, Russia supported its Slavic brethren and declared war on Turkey in April 1877. After a successful campaign, culminating with an overwhelming victory over the Ottoman army at Shipka Pass, Bulgaria was confirmed as an independent principality by the Treaty of San Stefano.

Field Post Office 1
13 September 1878



The Treaty of San Stefano signed on 3 March 1878 was designed to create a Greater Bulgaria (shown in solid lines on the map). The other Great Powers objected to such a powerful Russian client state and convened the Congress of Berlin, which subsequently authorized a new Lesser Bulgaria (dotted lines).

Мѣсто бывшаго Норманна емер



N 1438

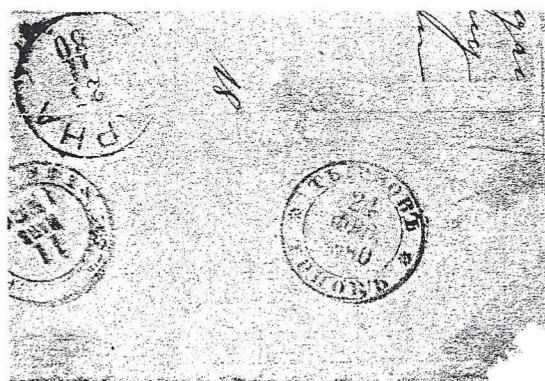
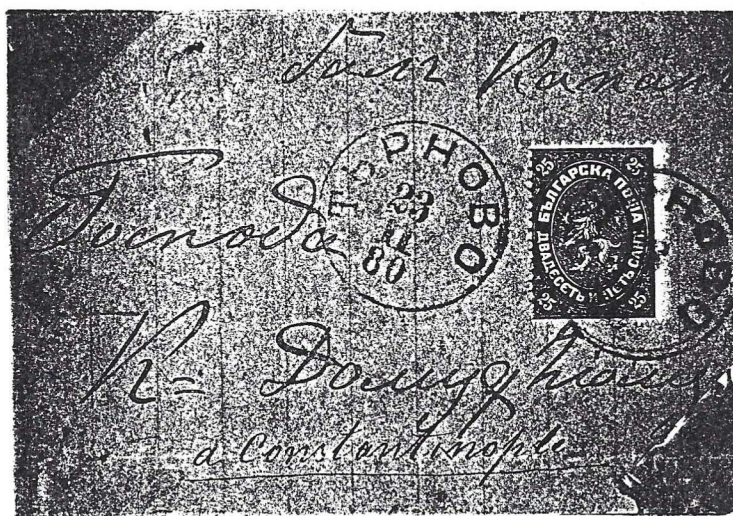
*Временно Службено уга
Норманно емер бѣ Тимово*

В. М. М. М. М.

Even after the fighting was over, the Russians maintained a significant military presence in Bulgaria pending the negotiation and implementation of the territorial decisions of the Great Powers at the Congress of Berlin. Cover shown above was official mail sent to the postmaster at Timovo through FPO 1 by a postal inspector.

RUSSO-TURKISH WAR

Timovo
24 February 1880



In the aftermath of the war, a few post offices were set up by the Russians to get the mail service functioning. Some of these remained in operation even after the Bulgarian postal system started. This example shows Bulgarian 25 centimes stamp on large portion of a wrapper cancelled by Bulgarian "Timovo" cds; reverse shows marking of the Russian "Timovo" post office and Bulgarian "Varna" as transit marks, plus Constantinople arrival.

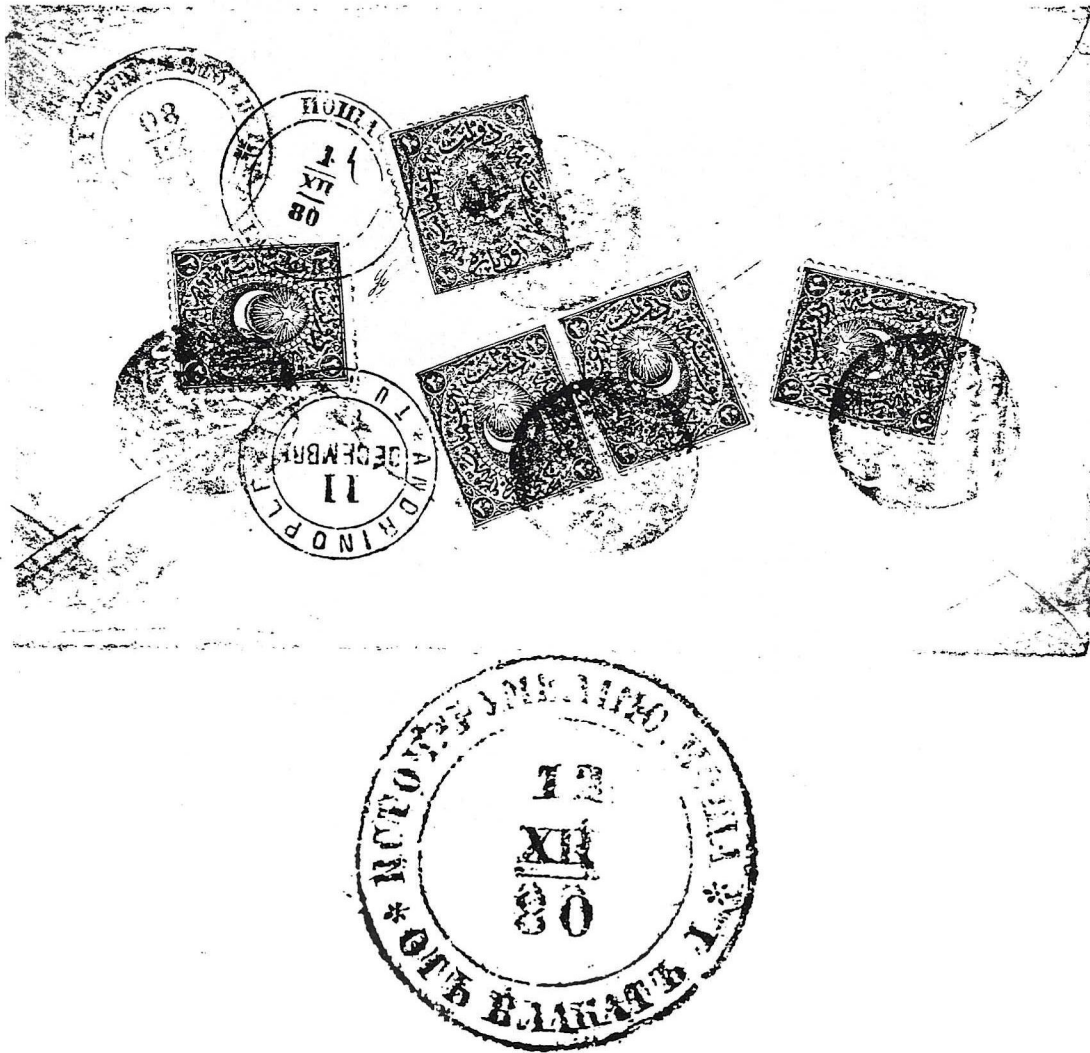
EASTERN ROUMELIA

For political purposes, the Great Powers decided not to require Turkey to give up title to the territory occupied predominantly by Christians lying to the south, including the area of the Rhodope Mountains and the upper Maritsa River valley. However, this area was given a degree of autonomy as the Villayet of Eastern Roumelia.

Autonomous Administration

Karlovo
1 December 1880

Forerunner Cover Transported by Russian Railway Post Office



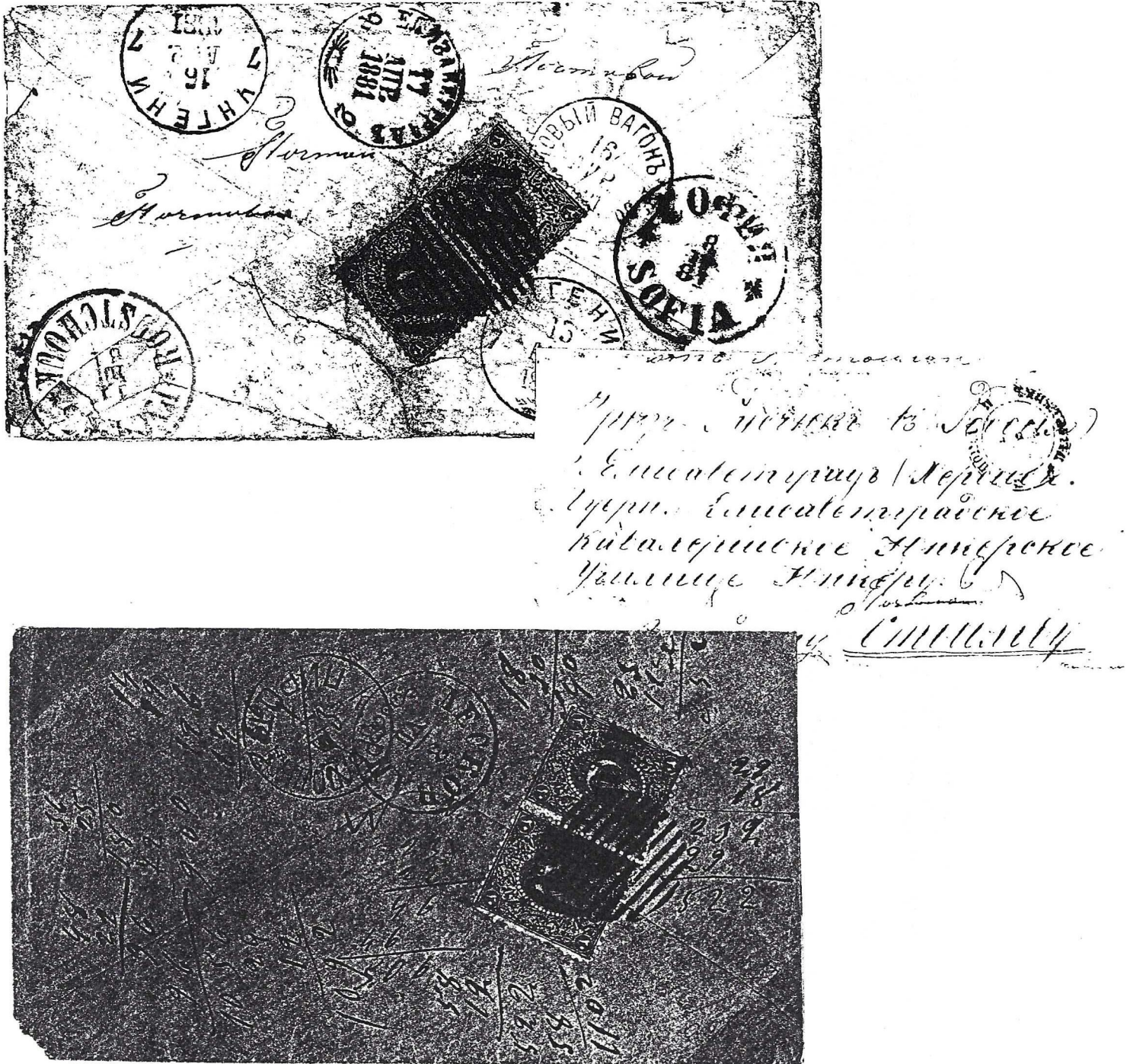
When the Russian army occupied Eastern Roumelia in early 1878, they provided postal wagons for the railway line. For mail processed on board, a special TPO marking was used. It was inscribed in Cyrillic "Eastern Roumelian Post/from Train 1." Such a marking was used as a transit mark dated 12 December 1880 on the cover shown above, which was being sent from Karlovo to Koprivshtitsa. Note that in 1880 special stamps had not yet been issued for the province, so normal Turkish ones were used. (The TPO cancel, shown above enlarged from the backstamp, is described in the Tchilinghirian & Stephen handbook where it is rated as RRR.)

EASTERN ROUMELIA

Autonomous Administration

Tatar Pazardchik
8 April 1881

Plovdiv
27 June 1881



In 1881, the first provisional stamps were provided for Eastern Roumelia. These were current Turkish issues handstamped with a large blue RO, signifying "Roumelie Orientale." Upper cover sent to Elisavetgrad, Russia, where it was received on 17 April 1881. Transit markings are of Sofia, Ruschuk, Ungeni (on the border with Romania) and a Russian TPO. Lower cover sent from Plovdiv (Philippople) to Leskovac, Serbia, where it arrived on 3 July. Transit markings of Sofia and Pirot. These stamps on cover should be considered as extremely elusive.



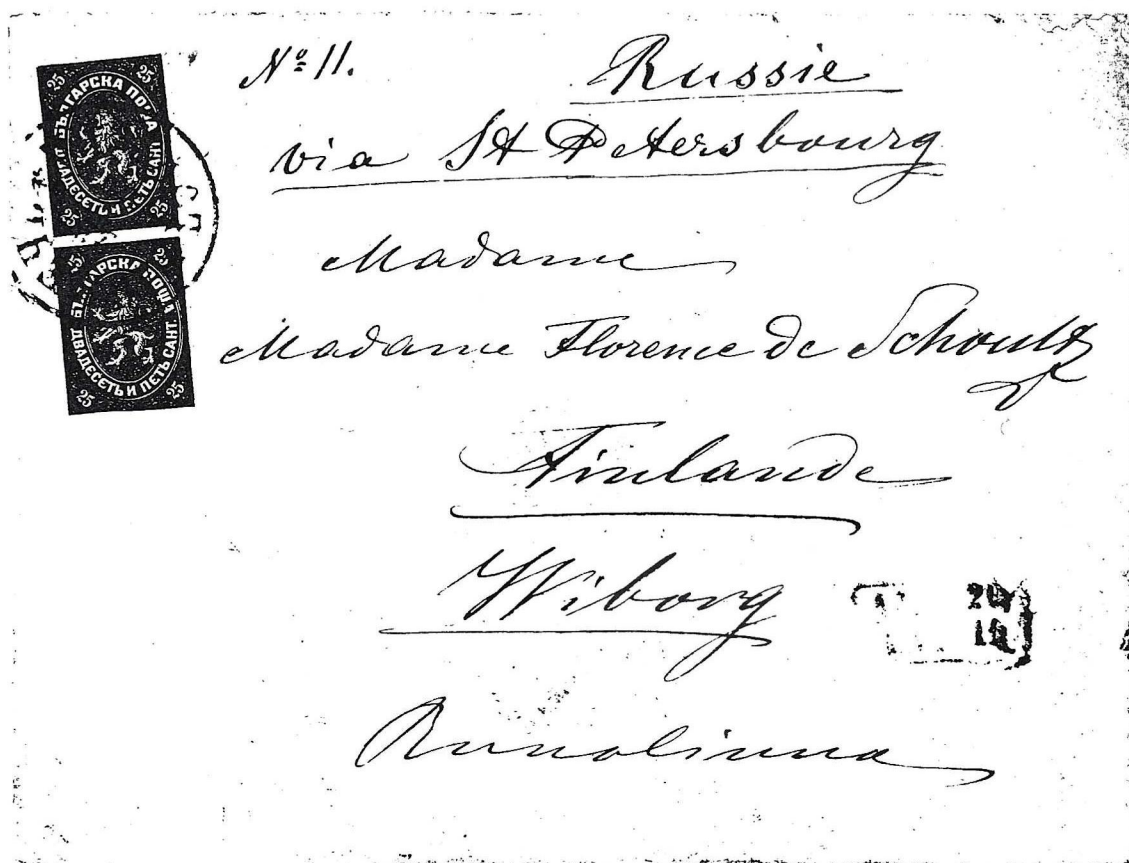
In 1881, the first definitive stamps were issued for Eastern Roumelia. These are customarily found used on special formula post cards as shown above. However, the upper example showing TPO cancel is exceptional.

PRINCIPALITY OF BULGARIA

At the Congress of Berlin, Bulgaria was confirmed as an independent principality. However, its borders were sharply reduced from those which had been proposed by the Russians. In fact, the Bulgarians ended up with limited territory which excluded many of their ethnic brethren to the south in Eastern Roumelia, as well as in Macedonia and Thrace. Thus, this decision by the great powers sowed the seeds for future conflict.

Issue of 1879

Lovtcha
1 November 1881



On 1 May 1879, Bulgaria issued its first stamps as an independent entity. This "large lion" series consisted of 100,000 sets and was denominated in French currency of centimes and francs. This example bears a vertical pair of the 25 centimes value used to send a registered letter (manuscript No. 11) to Finland. Backstamps include Roustchouk and St. Petersburg transits on 2 and 7 November 1881, respectively.

BULGARIA
1879 Issue

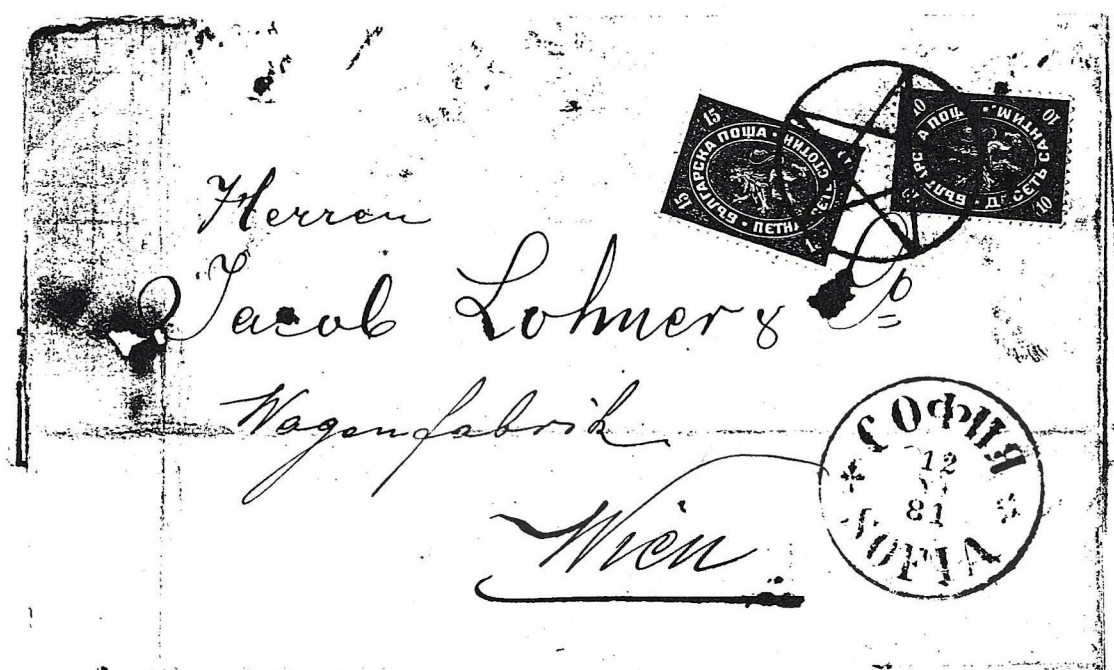
Lom Palanka
13 March 1881



Most of the French denominated "lion" stamps are quite difficult to find on covers. This example of a cover with a 1 franc denomination (with a 50 centimes stamp on the reverse) is extraordinary. It paid the quadruple weight UPU rate for a registered letter to Bavaria.

BULGARIA
Mixed Franking of Centime & Stotinki Issues

Sofia
12 November 1881



The first stamp issue, denominated in French currency of centimes and francs, had been placed on sale in 1879. However, it was considered desirable to replace these with new Bulgarian denominations in stotinki and leva, which took place on 10 April 1881. However, mixed franking of the two issues was permitted for a brief period. Above cover franked with stamps of 10 centimes + 15 stotinki to pay the international letter rate to Austria.

Съoupon du bulletin d'expédition.
Отрѣзка отъ записката за испровожданіе:

Bulletin d'expédition.

Записка за испровожданіе

№ 88

int: un colis portant l'adresse ci-dessous:

едно отъ настоящето се испровожда единъ колетъ отъ до

Nombre de déclarations en douane:

Количество на митарскихъ деклараций:

Lieu de destination: *Lebanon*

Мѣсто назначения:

Timbre du bureau
Колѣкціята на мѣсто-происхожденіе

Timbre-poste
и indication de
taxe perçue
еиска марка
показаніе
въ такса.

№ 88

int: un colis portant l'adresse ci-dessous:

едно отъ настоящето се испровожда единъ колетъ отъ до

Nombre de déclarations en douane:

Количество на митарскихъ деклараций:

Lieu de destination: *Lebanon*

Мѣсто назначения:

Nom et domicile de l'expéditeur.
Име и мѣстожителство на подателя.

L. C. Blumberg

Mr. Frankenstein

Acheminement.
Оплатване.

199

28000

Отрѣзка отъ записката за испровожданіе:

Bulletin d'expédition.

Записка за испровожданіе

№ 88

int: un colis portant l'adresse ci-dessous:

едно отъ настоящето се испровожда единъ колетъ отъ до

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Mr. Frankenstein

Acheminement.
Оплатване.

199

28000

BULGARIA
1882 Issue

Roustchouk
24 September 1890

Address form for
a parcel sent from
Roustchouk to
Sevlievo. It is
franked with 25
and 50 st. values.
Backstamped for
receipt three days
later.

Свѣдѣніе за изпращане. Отрѣзка отъ свѣдѣніе за изпращане.		Bulletin d'expédition. Заявка за изпращане. № 88	
Timbre du bureau d'origine Клеймо на мѣсто произхода на писмата 25 50		Timbre-poste ou indication de la taxe perçue Почтиска марка или показаніе взятата такса. 25 50	
Nom et domicile de l'expéditeur. Име и мѣстожителство на подателя. <i>D. M. M. M.</i> <i>г. Русчук</i>		Ci-joint: un colis portant l'adresse ci-dessous: Заедно съ настоящето се изпраща единъ колетъ съ долинна адресъ: <i>г. Севлиево</i>	
Quantité de déclarations en douane: Количеството на митарственитъ декларации: <i>1</i>		Lieu de destination: Мѣсто на назначения: <i>Севлиево</i>	
Signature <i>г. Русчук</i>		Acheminement Оплащане. <i>№ 48</i>	

Г. 1895

БРОЙ 52

Via Yamboli—Kotel
св. Ненчо М. Далакчиевъ, с. Медвенъ

ИНИ



ЛИТЕРАТУРЕНЪ И ДУХОВЕНЪ

Всичко, що се отнася до вѣстника и до неговата администрация, ще се изпраща до Редакцията: *Constantinople, Pera—Rue Kabristan, N. 38*
Ръкописи не се връщатъ назадъ.

Цѣна на обявленията:
За всѣко печатане на четвъртата страница единъ грошъ, или двадеонть стотинки на редъ за първото обнародване, и 20 пари или 10 стотинки за всѣко послѣдующе обнародване.

на свѣта.
отъ къмъ морето сж 26 метра на дълбоко, а отъ къмъ сушата 16 метра—и съ това е образувана здрава

ВЪТРЪШЕНЪ ОТАДЪЛЪ

On 1 January 1887, the first 1 lev stamp was issued. It was printed in black and red and an example is shown here used on a parcel form. An additional 50 st. stamp (along with a 10 st. on 25 st. revenue) were used on the form.

COUPON DU BULLETIN D'EXPÉDITION. Отръзка отъ записката за испровожданне. Timbre du bureau d'origine Клеймото на мѣсто происхождение писанище Nom et domicile de l'expéditeur. Име и мѣстожителство на поателя <i>Високопрепорученъ на</i> <i>г-нъ Давидовъ.</i>	Bulletin d'expédition. ЗАПИСКА ЗА ИСПРОВОЖДАННЕ. № 88. <i>Ci-joint: un colis portant l'adresse ci-dessous:</i> Заедно съ настоящето се испровожда единъ колетъ съ дошлия адресъ: <i>Nombre de déclarations en douane:</i> Количество на жителственитъ декларации: <i>M. Г. Др. Давидовъ</i>	<i>Lieu de destination: Селенцево</i> Мѣсто на назначението:	<i>Apr. 27</i> <i>Acheminement.</i> <i>Apr. 27</i> <i>Опактване.</i> <i>5613, 5614</i>
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SOUTH BULGARIAN UPRISING

Following a successful revolt by its Slavic inhabitants, the Turkish province of Eastern Roumelia was annexed by Bulgaria on 1 September 1885. A week later the first stamps were issued for the new "South Bulgaria" with the Eastern Roumelia issue being overprinted by a Bulgarian lion.

Pechtera
21 September 1885

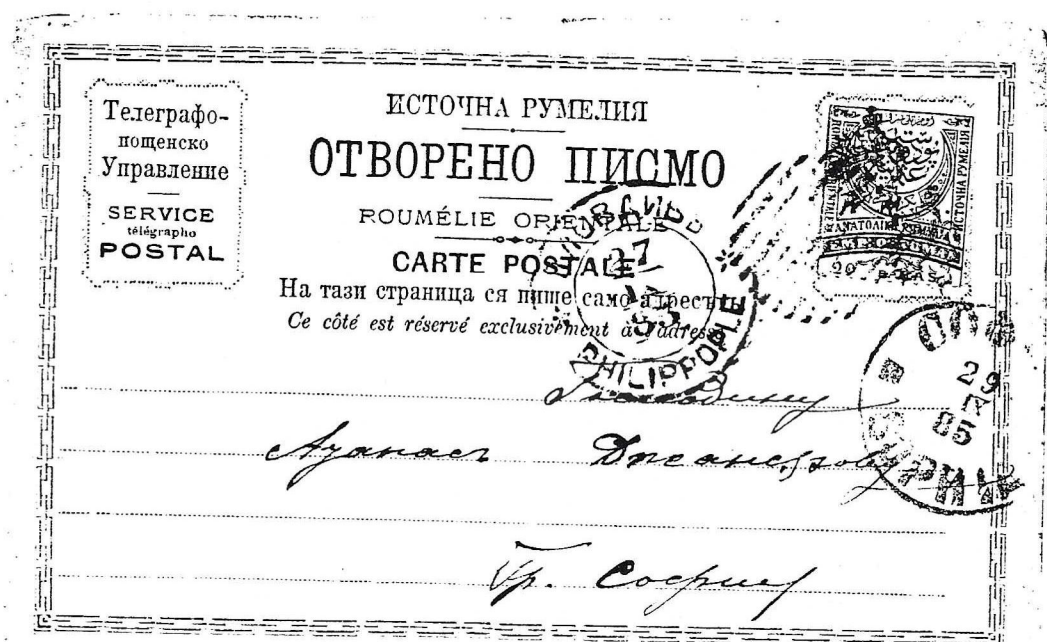


This provisional issue was in use for less than a month, being replaced by regular unoverprinted Bulgarian stamps as of 1 October 1885. The use of these stamps on covers as compared to postcards is quite unusual.

SOUTH BULGARIA

Tchirpan
17 September 1885

Philippople
27 September 1885



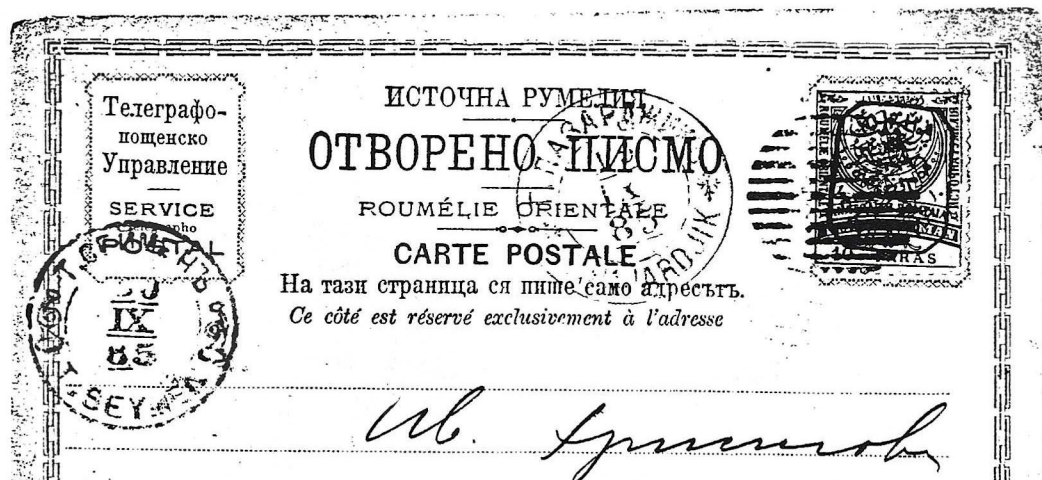
Formula cards franked with first overprint stamps. The upper example was sent registered from Tchirpan to Tchepeleare in September 1885. Note that receiving mark is dated one day before the despatch mark (and the manuscript date shown on reverse of the card), presumably due to negligence on the part of the postal clerk. Both markings from small villages are elusive.

SOUTH BULGARIA

Hadji Elles
25 September 1885

Pazardjik
19 September 1885

Aitos
16 September 1885



On 11 September 1885, a new set of overprints was issued, this time with the Bulgarian lion inside a frame and the wording "South Bulgaria.," more clearly designating the change in administration of the territory. This second provisional issue was in use for barely three weeks. Most of these stamps were used on the Eastern Roumelia formula postal cards; use of (top portion of) a reply card, especially registered, is extraordinary.