

**Vladmir Davydov, Russia
Mount Athos Monastery Cat
by GREG BALAGIAN**

Mount Athos, or “Holy Mountain,” is a mountain and peninsula in northeastern Greece and an important center of Eastern Orthodox monasticism. Under the direct jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, it is governed as an autonomous entity within the Greek Republic.

The twenty monasteries in Mount Athos possess invaluable medieval treasures. Many of these treasures appear on stamps specifically issued for use only on outgoing mail from Mount Athos.

In 2017, the Hellenic Postal Service issued a set of six stamps for use in the area of Mount Athos with beautiful watercolor paintings by Russian artist Vladimir Davidov.

Davidov’s 0,72 € stamp of the Megisti Lavra Monastery features a lovely white cat in the foreground, sitting on a short brick wall.

Cats are prevalent residents of the monasteries for the sole purpose of ridding the

**Megisti Lavra
Monastery, Mount
Athos 201 (2017)
& enlargement of
the tiny white cat.**



interiors and grounds of rodents and snakes; cats are not considered as pets.

According to Trekearth.com, cats were brought to the mountain about one hundred years ago after a ban on female cats left them without a continuing population.

Vladimir Davidov (1871-1906) was born into a prominent Russian aristocratic family, the favorite nephew of the great Russian composer, Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky. From his earliest years, Davydov showed an aptitude

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for music and drawing. He was not a professional artist, and the paintings of Mount Athos most likely were made during his pilgrimage to this religious site.

A Russian post office was established at Karyai in the late 19th century. A series of stamps overprinted “Mont-Athos” were issued in 1910. Mount Athos has issued local postage stamps since 2008.♣