

Late usage of some early issues of the large Hermes head postage stamps

By Yiannis Peristanoglou
and Michalis Tsipides

A. Introduction

The stamps of the large head of Hermes are classified, as is known, into twelve successive editions, the last of which (1880-1886) is twenty years apart from the first (1861). After the transfer of the plates from Paris to Athens in 1861, their printing was undertaken by the national printing house with the exception of the first 30 lepta and 60 lepta which were printed in 1876 in Paris. From the national printing office, the stamps were sent to the local public funds which in turn made them available at their nominal value to the locally authorized clerks and pharmacists for retail sale.¹ The supply of the funds by the national printing office and then of the retail sales officers from the cashiers and the public from the retail sales officers, it was usually done

with stamps of the latest issue. Therefore, the dates of the sealed mostly

they fluctuate within the time period of each stamp's issue and shortly thereafter. That is, stamps of the definitive editions usually bear dates between 1862 and 1868, while on others of the 1875-80 edition the dates of the stamps are between 1875 and 1881. Hence the not so frequent appearance of large heads of Hermes is striking, used many years after their publication. This fact and the reasons that caused it are the subject of this article.

B. The retail sale of the stamps to the public. The obligations of sales managers.

On September 15, 1861, on the eve of the

circulation of the first Greek stamps, the General Directorate of Posts (GDT) issued a multi-page manual consisting of ninety-five articles entitled "Instructions on the application of the law on my postage" and communicated it to the authorities established for the retail sale of stamps. The purpose was to inform

1 According to article 12 of the Stamp Ordinance of 10 August 1861 (Government Gazette no. 40/17.8.1861) the retail sale of stamps was allowed to be entrusted to the foremen of post offices, to the postmen who were in charge of distribution and receipt (and where they did not exist, to the civil servants who exercised postal duties, to the mayors and special paredros) and to the pharmacists.

of the latter for the implementation of the orders whose object was the movement and management of the newly launched means of payment of postal fees, the stamp. From these instructions, I quote those that are directly related to our topic, translated by the cleaner into modern Greek:

Articles 14 and 15

The affixing of the stamp to letters and other objects addressed to the interior and to those sent abroad with a prepaid fee is done by the sender. In the case of letters coming from abroad and subject to postal charges, delivery is made by the employees of the post office.

Article 27

The GDT, taking into account the personnel and the internal regulations of each office, determines in accordance with article 17 of September 5, 1912 (4) Vasil. By order the employees who are entrusted with the sale of my correspondence. 2

Article 28

The officials in question [taking into account the quantity determined by the GDT in accordance with the previous article]³ must always be provided with stamps as follows:

- (a) Residents in cities where there were state funds, with a letter

at least a week's worth, repaying every third or fourth day what had been sold. (b) Residents in cities of Peloponnese and Central Greece where there were no cashiers, with stamps of at least two weeks' worth, replenishing every week what had been sold afterwards. (c) Residents in islands where there were no cashiers, with at least two months' worth of stamps, replenishing every month what had been sold.

- (d) Municipal officers with one-month stamps, replenishing every fortnight what had been sold.

- (e) Those established at Boucurês, Ivraïla, Galazion, and Alexandria, with one and a half months' stamps, making up every month what had been sold in the meantime.

- (f) Those established in Constantinople, Smyrna, Thessaloniki, Larissa, Arta, Preveza and Ioannina, with one-month stamps, replenishing every fortnight what had been sold.

If one or more types of stamp are about to be exhausted before the expiration of the time fixed for their replenishment, the above-mentioned officials must procure the exhausted items in time. **Article 29**

The applications for the supply of letters

2 The original wording of article 27 also included a second paragraph according to which the GDT once a year determined the monthly quantity of stamps that each postal and municipal employee charged with selling them had to procure (article 17 (4) of Royal Decree). The mandatory supply of a certain quantity every month was not provided for in the mentioned decree and any literal application of the directive would create problems. The error seems to have been noticed in time and the second paragraph in question was withdrawn. In the reissue of the instructions on September 15, 1864, where section 27 was restated as hereinbefore stated. **3** The lines within [] are omitted from the reissue of the instructions on September 15, 1864.

of stamps are always made for a certain quantity of any kind which is usually used in the place of residence of the sellers of the stamps.

Article 30

The postal employees, who are based where the state treasuries are, will accept any supply requests of their other colleagues and municipal employees, which they will process in a timely manner at the state treasuries. They will be constantly vigilant (!) for the regular supply of stamps to the municipal employees and will guide them, as well as the municipal clerks, with regard to the application by the municipalities of the payment of fees with stamps. Also, domestic postal officials will accept orders for the supply of stamps

from foreign postal officials and send them at their own expense.

Article 32

Every postman, or municipal official, or druggist who is permitted to sell stamps by retail shall enter by type the quantity he procures from the fund and its total value in book no. 7. At the end of each month, he deducts the quantity he had sold and carries over the unsold to the next month. It follows from the context of Articles 28 and 32 that the word type

means value (class in today's terminology) and therefore the meaning of the directive in Article 28 is that the replenishment was made with stamps of the same class. That is, forty 2 lepta were replaced by an equal number of others, and not by eight 10 lepta, or four 20 lepta, or two 40 lepta, or one 80 lepta.

C. Problems of cooperation between those responsible for the retail sale of stamps and cashiers. The given solution.

As sometimes happens with the implementation of new rules, problems of cooperation between those responsible for the retail sale of stamps and the cashiers soon arose. What exactly was happening is explained by the circular of the Ministry of Finance of November 28, 1861 to the state treasurers, which at the same time also provided the solution.

According to the Ministry of Finance, the GDT, having the obligation by law to determine once a year the quantity of stamps which each postal and municipal employee charged with their retail sale should have in his possession, is responsible in view of the local needs and in some places he determined large quantities, in others small and insignificant ones. and according to information which had come to his knowledge, some cashiers had refused to give postal clerks stamps, because the latter were unwilling to accept whole sheets of any value, asking only for a few pieces, which he had prescribed for them the DGT.

The Ministry, recognizing that the supply of a few items was a laborious and difficult (!) act for the service, but unavoidable, admitted that in places where the mail was not sufficiently developed, it was not possible to compel poor postmen and above all municipal people, to procure whole sheets of gram two stamps, and indeed of forty or eighty cents whose price was exorbitant. In this spirit, the Ministry, through its circular, defined the minimum quantity of each stamp value

which the Funds could dispose of.⁴

The same quantity was specified by the under no. 54 circular of December 7, 1861 of the GDT to those in charge of the retail sale of postage stamps and municipal employees which followed and is as follows:

About the method of procurement of the stamp

"We notify you for your information that the Ministry of Finance has ordered by circular of all the State Treasurers not to interfere with the sale of the stamp; for your convenience we therefore warn you that you must arrange the supplies your applications, as follows.

For the one and two cent stamps the whole sheet, for the 5, 10 and 20 at least 1/3 of the sheet, i.e. five rows, each of which contains ten pieces, i.e. all 50.

Finally, for stamps of 40 and 80 cents, the minimum term was set at 1/15 of the sheet, i.e. a row containing ten pieces.

This measure was taken as a result of our request, made for the purpose of making it easier for the Mayors, etc., who are unable to supply themselves with a large quantity of stamps, and we also inform the State Treasurers of the circular issued to this effect by the Ministry of Finance" .-

It is not known until when the GDT circular was in effect. However, it is included in the third edition of the manual "Odis

concerning the application of the Stamp Act' of October 5, 1871.

The instructions of September 15, 1861 and especially the obligation to continuously maintain a certain minimum quantity of each value, combined with the fact that in some areas the postal movement of items for the fees of which required 2 lepta, 5 lepta, 10 lepta, 40 lepta and 80 lepta (e.g. magazines, multiple weight, registered, etc.) was nil to very sparse, to some extent explains why these values piled up in the drawers of those in charge of their retail sale and were used many years after their issue. This phenomenon is rarely seen in 20 lepta, apparently because twenty lepta was the basic fee for sending letters within the country and therefore the depletion and replenishment of 20 lepta was faster than the other values. The images are

indicative
cases of those described.

D. The 2 lepta

According to the manual of September 15, 1861, two lepta was the end of sending newspapers and periodicals weighing thirty to fifty grams, and four lepta the end of catalogues, programs, notices, circulars, invoices, music forms and other related items, weighing up to ten grams, increased by two lepta for each additional five grams. A two-minute stamp was also needed to complete the fee for sending first weight letters

according to the terms of the Greece-Italy postal agreements of 17/29.7.1861 (112 lepta) Greece

4 The original text of this circular is found in the third reprint of the instructions for the implementation of the Stamp Act of 5 October 1871.

of Great Britain of 25.11/7.12.1868 (92 lepta) as well as the fee for the transfer of forms as defined in the Greece-France postal agreement of 29/11-

11/12.1866 (7 lepta and 14 lepta). Enough

it seems that they had been surplus since 1865 and in the Athens Treasury, which in turn channeled them to the central post office in the 1890s.



2 lepta 1865
AEGION
5 FEB. 74



2 lepta 1865
LEFKAS
23 JAN. 83



2 lepta 1862
DUSK
28 NOV. 88



2 lepta 1865
LEFKAS
5 FEB. 89



2 lepta 1869
Lake
19 JAN. 86

2 lepta 1865
ATHENS
14 DECE. 90



E. The 5 lepta

The 5-minute alone, or in combination with 10-lepta filled the twenty-minute end where the 20-minute had temporarily run out, as well as the ten-minute end, or collectable end (until 28 February 1875). They also supplemented the fee for sending letters (25 lepta) by Austrian steamers from one Greek port to another according to the

Greece - Austria postal contract of 5/17.4.1867. They were also needed for the sending fee (45, 55, 65, 75, 85, 95, 105 115, 125, 135 145, 155, 175, 185, 235, 265, 275, 375 405 lepta) of letters by Greek or foreign steamers from Greek ports to various worldwide destinations on the basis of postal agreements that Greece had signed from time to time with third countries.



5 lepta 1863
SPARTA
29 APR. 74



5 lepta 1864
CORINTH 11
APR. 82



5 lepta 1865
LEVADIA
26 JUN. 75



5 lepta 1861/62
NAUPLION
18 OCT. 66



5 lepta 1872
HERMIONE
17 OCT. 83



5 lepta 1864
PAXI 28
NOV. 81



5 lepta 1865
CONSTANTINOPOLIS
12 SEP. 73



5 lepta 1872
KETHYRA
9 JAN. 84



5 lepta 1872
IT'S CLOSING
11 SEP. 83



5 lepta 1872
GALAXIDION
13 AUG. 83



5 lepta 1865
SKIATHOS
6 OCT. 83



5 lepta 1864
I CALL 20
SEP. 73



2 lepta 1863
KEA
MARCH 4. 81

F. The 10 lepta

The 10 lepta covered the simple fee for sending letters within the same city, as well as the fee for samples of goods with open cover and movable tape, paperback or bound books, and newspapers or magazines in a bundle which allowed the contents to be checked,

rus up to 100 grams. They also paid the fee for sending letters from Greek ports to various destinations abroad with Greek or foreign steamships (see more in the chapter on 5 lepta) and until February 28, 1875 the fee collected.



10 lepta 1865
PAROS
11 APR. 74



10 lepta 1865
MESSOLONGION
4 APR. 70



10 lepta 1863
APPLE
26 FEB. 78

G. The 40 lepta

Forty lepta was the domestic delivery fee for double-weight letters (15-30 grams) and single-weight systems. Also, the internal fee for double-weight letters to and from abroad and the fee for single-weight letters (up to 15 grams) to and from the Greek post offices and distribution offices of the Ottoman autocracy and the dominions of Dacia.



40 lepta Parisian
VYTINI
... 74



40 lepta 1863
AEGION
MARCH 26 84



40 lepta 1866
LOBSTER
17 JAN. 88



40 lepta 1866
LANGUAGES
MARCH 24 89



40 lepta 1868
RIVER
26 JAN. 8...



40 lepta 1871
SKIATHOS
26 APR. 84



40 lepta 1873
ARGOSTOLION
20 JAN. 83



40 lepta 1872
ATALANTIS
5 AUG. 82



40 lepta 1872
KYRI
9 DEC. 82



40 lepta 1868
MESSOLONGION
NOVEMBER 13 87

40 lepta 1868
MESSOLONGION
MARCH 26 89



40 lepta 1868
CORINTH
3 FEB. 84



40 lepta 1868
KATUNA
3 FEB. 91



40 lepta 1868
LEONIDION
31 OCT. 92



40 lepta 1868
SPARTA
17 APR. 90

H. The 80 lepta

The 80 lepta had, as is known, limited use. They covered the cost of sending letters of a quarter weight (45-60 grams) domestically and also supplemented the cost of letters to and from abroad, etc. That is why the cases where the use of older versions was observed are few.

The 40 lepta also covered the tax fee for Greece's postal contracts with third countries.



80 lepta 1872
CORFU
16 AUG. 81



80 lepta Parisian
Monopoly
MARCH 25 89

ÿ. In Memorial

This article had begun to be written in collaboration with my good friend, a distinguished philatelist and researcher of stamps of the great head of Hermes, Michalis Tspidis, who honored the philatelic space in many ways with his presence and work. He left us unexpectedly on September 20, 2020, leaving a void that cannot be filled. For years he collected stamps of the large head of Hermes stamped long after they were issued, which he made available to me, knowing my concurrent involvement with the subject. A large part of the illustrated stamps is the product of his research.