

Greece

Founder member of the UPU.

1879–1887

International Bureau Circular 41/4322 dated 4 February 1879 states that ‘Greece has already sent postage stamps to many administrations of the Union and intends to send collections to countries newly entered in the Union as soon as they desire the same.’

The first distribution by the International Bureau was in April 1879; this contained postage and Postage Due stamps, but the Circular does not specify which items were included.

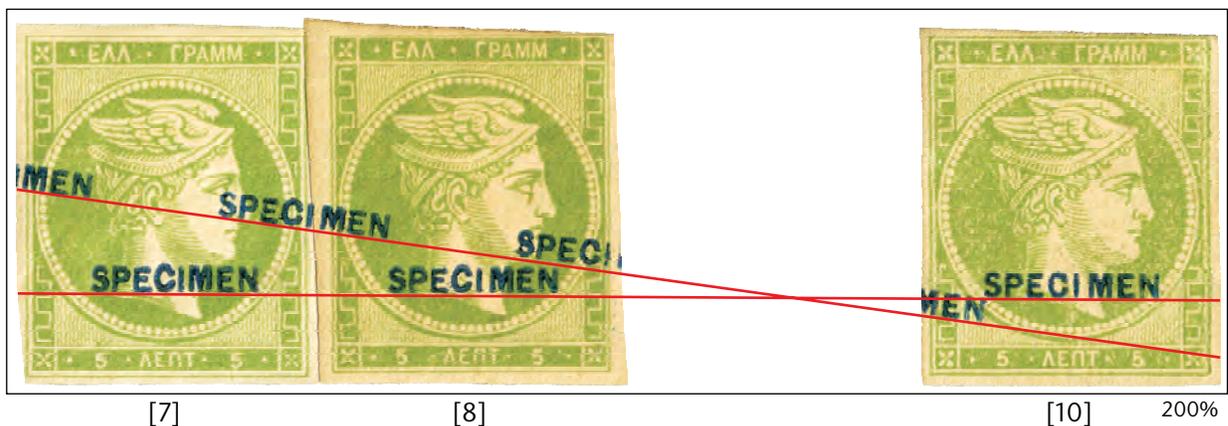
It appears that some members received stamps both directly from Athens and also via the International Bureau. As a result, official collections that have been examined differ from one another and some contain duplication.

The first stamps to have been overprinted ‘SPECIMEN’ prior to distribution were circulated in July 1887 and comprised triple collections of postage and Postage Due stamps then current. By this date the 30 and 60 lepta Large Hermes Heads were no longer in use, the colour of the 20 lepta had been changed to comply with UPU regulations, and the 25 lepta, 50 lepta and 1 drachma Small Hermes Heads had been issued.

The Large and Small Hermes Heads were amongst the few imperforate stamps of any country sent to the UPU and difficulty was experienced in dividing the sheets into strips of three suitable for distribution. As a result, it is not easy to find specimens with clear margins on all sides.

The ‘SPECIMEN’ overprint was applied row by row, that is a setting of 10 subjects printed 15 times on the sheet; the large ‘C’ is constant.

At least three examples of the Large Hermes 5 lepta with ‘SPECIMEN’ overprint double are known. One impression is normal, the other is shifted *c.* 10 mm to the left and slopes 8° down from the horizontal. It appears that the sheet was inserted incorrectly into the press and that when the mistake was noticed it was re-inserted and a second (correct) impression was printed.



Stamps [7] and [8] fit together perfectly both as to the cut between them and the overprint where a tiny part of the top of the ‘I’ falls on [8]. The third stamp [10] does not show ‘SPECI’ and must therefore come from the right side of the sheet. The sloping red line in the diagram shows that [9] is missing.