

There are many ways to collect Greek stamps. One of the options is a thematic approach: collecting stamps with an image of one or more Greek stamps. And there are quite a few of them. Greece itself as well as a number of other countries have issued stamps with an image of Greek stamps. In this article you will find an overview.

1. Greek stamps on stamps issued by Greece itself

a. The Large Hermes Heads (LHH)

The first series of stamps with images of LHH dates from 1961 (Hellas 894-900). On the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the first Greek stamps, the seven denominations of the "Paris printing" (Hellas 1-7) were displayed on a neutral background. The images are so true to life that occasionally a cut-out copy is sold as a "genuine" stamp. The series was printed by Aspiotis-Elka in a print run that varied from 3.4 million (2.50 Dr) to about 260,000 copies (10 Dr). A designer is not known, but it will probably have been A. Tassos who designed almost all stamps for the Greek Post in that period. Oddly enough, the release date was December 20. This while the original LHH stamps officially (some earlier used copies are known) appeared on October 1, 1861. There are also copies with different colours. Known are a 20 lepta that has a grey centre (colour brown is missing), the 2.50 Dr with a yellow centre (see image below) and the 10 Dr where the colour yellow was not printed. However, experts are not entirely in agreement as to whether these are real anomalies or "chemical creations".



In 2011 the 150th anniversary of the LHH was celebrated. Again, seven stamps were issued with an image of a LHH, but without a value indication and with colours slightly deviating from the original stamps (Hellas 2681-2687). A sheetlet (F65) was also issued. This time the date of issue corresponded to that of the originals: October 1st (2011). The stamps were printed at Giesecke & Devrient Matsoukis S.A. Printed numbers varied from one million to 150,000. 100,000 numbered copies of the sheet were published.

The design, highly praised by the Greeks (LHH experts were often less enthusiastic), was made by the engraver Ioannis Gourzis.



b. The Olympic Games of 1896

In 1996, the Greek Post issued three sheets, each with four images of stamps from the 1896 issue (Hellas F13-15) on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the 1896-Games. The sheets were packaged in three separate folders. They were printed at Alex's. Matsoukis S.A. in an edition of 250,000 pieces each. The design was by Myrsini Vardopoulou.



c. The 1906 Olympic Games

On April 7, 2006, two sheets appeared, each with four images of stamps from the 1906 issue (Hellas F46-47) on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of these “Intermediate Games”. The sheets were printed at Alex's. Matsoukis S.A. in an edition of 120,000 pieces. The design was by Anthoula Lygka.



d. The “Republic” issue of 1933

On November 15, 1975, a stamp was issued on the occasion of Stamp Day, with an image of the 100 Drachma stamp of the “Republic” issue showing part of the image of the “Young Man of Marathon” (Hellas 1332). The stamps were printed at Aspiotis-Elka in an edition of 989,921 copies. The design was by P. Gravalos. Incidentally, it would be the last stamp to be issued on the occasion of Stamp Day for a while. For the earlier issues relating to Stamp Day (and a later issue) see further below.



e. Europa stamps

On January 28, 2006 a sheetlet (Hellas F45) appeared with an image of a Europa stamp from 1978 (Hellas 1430) and a Europa stamp from 1983 (Hellas 1629). That year, it was the fiftieth time that a Europa stamp was being issued by the participating countries. The sheets were printed by Alex. Matsoukis S.A. in an edition of no less than 650,000 pieces and it was designed by Myrsini Vardopoulou.



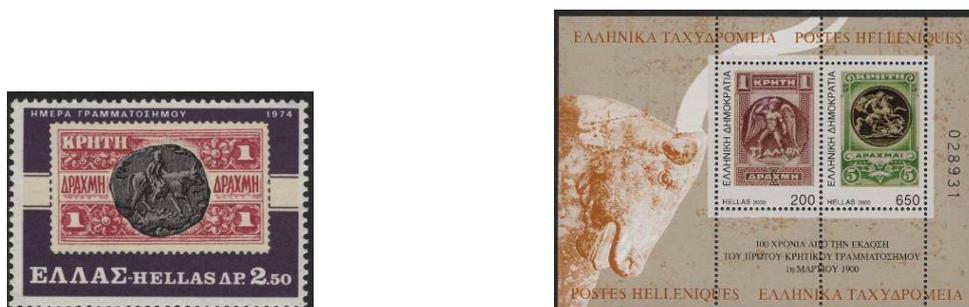
f. The Dodecanese

The oldest stamp on stamp from Greece dates from 1947. In that year a series appeared on the occasion of the transfer of the Dodecanese Islands from Great Britain to Greece. On the stamps of 500 Dr. (Hellas 689) we see a slightly altered image of the provisional issue printed in 1912 for the Dodecanese, the so-called "Koinon Nisioton" issue, a stamp which would never be used officially because the Italians occupied the islands group and forbid its use (Hellas 3, 1 -3). So, "stamp on stamp" may be stretching things a little in this case. In this series (which was adapted a few times to the rapidly changing postal rates) a stamp of 450 Dr with the same image (Hellas 687) appeared in 1948, followed in 1950 by a copy of 1300 Dr (Hellas 695).



g. Crete

Some postage stamps from Crete are also depicted on Greek stamps. The first was a stamp that saw the light in 1974 on November 15, on the occasion of "Stamp Day" (Hellas 1292). This stamp shows the 1 Drachma stamp of Crete of the 1905 series (Hellas 3, 30). The stamps were printed in an edition of 1,058,812 by Aspiotis-Elka after a design by P. Gravalos. In 2000 another sheetlet with two stamps of Crete followed, this time from the 1901 series (Hellas F17). Depicted are the 1 and 5 Drachma (Hellas 3, 7 and 9). The sheets were printed at Alex's. Matsoukis S.A. in an edition of 100,000 pieces. The design was by Myrsini Vardopoulou.



h. Find the hidden stamp!

Sometimes it takes a little more detective work to find out whether and if that's the case which specific stamp is depicted on a stamp.

The first example is Hellas 1410 (left). If you look closely, you will see a used copy of Hellas 1382 (right) on the envelope! The stamp was printed by Aspiotis-Elka in an edition of 2,000,000 as part of a series of five stamps on the theme of "dispersion of the Greeks around the world". Both the depicted stamp and the stamp itself were designed by P. Gravalos".



A magnifying glass is also required for one of the stamps issued on March 14, 1983 to promote the use of the postal code (Hellas 1627, left). If you look closely, you will see the 9 Drachma value of the National Resistance series from 1982 (Hellas 1614, right) on the envelope.

The stamp was printed in an edition of 6,000,000 copies and was designed by Vassiliki Constantinea. The design of the depicted stamp was again by P. Gravalos.



A mystery to me are the two stamps issued for Stamp Day in 1972 (Hellas 1237) and 1973 (Hellas 1274). Who knows which issue(s) the young people are looking at? Please let the author know.



i. Two more issues to finish...

We have come to the end of the series of stamps on stamps from Greece, but not before taking a look at the last two issues.

On May 15, 1975, the Greek Post issued four stamps, three of which are stamps on stamps (Hellas 1425-1427). On September 25 of that year a sheetlet with the same stamps (Hellas F1) followed. The stamps were issued on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the Greek Post. Depicted are a LHH, the 25 lepta stamp from the 1896 Olympic Games issue and the stamp issued for Stamp Day in 1972 respectively.

The stamps and sheetlet were printed by Aspiotis-Elka and the design was by P. Gravalos.



Finally, there is the sheetlet from 1990, issued on December 14 in an attempt by the Greek Post to revive Stamp Day in Greece as well (Hellas F8). It shows (admittedly not on the stamp but on the edge of the sheetlet) no less than seven stamps; the 10 Dr. from the 1896 Olympic Games series, the 1 lepta from the 1901 Flying Hermes series, four values from the 1935 Airmail series (Mythological scenes) (1, 2, 30 and 100 Dr) and a stamp from Crete (Hellas 3, 32). A whole collection!

The sheets were printed by M.A. Moatsos Graphic Arts Ltd. in an edition of 110,000 copies. The design was (again) by P. Gravalos.



All in all, we can conclude that the Greek stamps are wonderful treasure trove for those who collect stamps from Greece on stamps!

2. Greek stamps on stamps from other countries

Greek stamps on stamps are also a favourite subject for foreign postal administrations. So far, I found no less than 22 issues from all corners of the world. Here's an overview.

As far as I know, the oldest foreign stamp with an image of a Greek stamp was issued by Haiti in 1969. Strictly speaking, it is not a correct stamp on stamp because the colour of the stamp has been changed from black to brown, but still. The stamp was part of a series that was issued in memory of the winners of the marathon at the Olympic Games from 1896 onwards. That is why "our" stamp bears the name of Spiridon Louis.



With this stamp we immediately can see the main theme for the reproduction of Greek stamps by other countries, the Olympic Games. As far as I know, a total of 18 issues have been issued with images of one or more stamps from the 1896 Olympic Games series (Hellas 109-120). These stamps are sometimes single stamps (usually part of a series), but often also blocks, which vary in size from modest to page-filling. Here are a few examples.



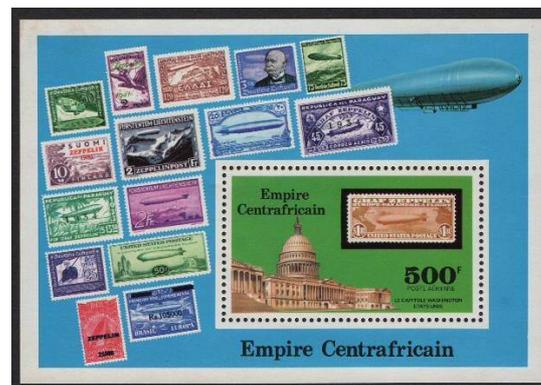
The large gold (!) stamps of Gambia from 2012 are worth a special mentioning. Not only do they have a striking appearance, it is also the only series of "stamps" on which every single stamp from the 1896 issue is depicted.



The Olympic Games were not the only theme that led to the reproduction of Greek stamps on issues from other countries.

In 2005 the Central African Republic issued a series of stamps on the theme of 50 years of Europa stamps. On the stamp with a value of 150 Francs we find Hellas 891 from 1961. The stamps appeared in perforated, imperforated and sheetlet form.

Already in 1977 a series of stamps on the theme of "Zeppelin flights" appeared from the same country. On the block with a value of 500 Francs, not on the stamp itself but on the border of the sheetlet, Hellas A7 from 1933 flies by.



Remarkably enough, the Large Hermes Heads are not a frequent theme on foreign stamps on stamps. Until now I only came across one stamp and a block from Ecuador from 2004.

Additionally, on the occasion of its Jubilee in 2011, the Hellenic Philatelic Society of The Netherlands issued a special personal stamp with a LHH 80 lepta stamp from the 1873 edition (Hellas 29).



In the following table I present an overview of all known Greek stamps on stamps from other countries.

Overview of foreign stamps with images of Greek stamps

No:	Year of issue	Country	Michel nr.	Depicted stamp(s), Hellas no.	Remarks
1	1969	Haiti	1028	116	Colour brown instead of black
2	1970	North Yemen (YAR)	1209	169	Part of a sheetlet of six stamps
3	1977	Central African Republic	493, Block 18	A7 (on the border of the sheetlet)	Sheetlet issues perforated and imperforated.
4	1979	Uruguay	1538	109	Printed in sheets of 6x4 stamps, part of a series of 4 stamps
5	1987	Congo	1105	117	Part of a series of 4 stamps
6	1990	Paraguay	4445 - 4448 (also in stripe of four and a sheetlet)	109-112, 115-120	The sheetlet has four vignettes depicting Greek stamps
7	1991	Idem	4531-4534 (also in a stripe of four)	115 and 118-120	Same stamps but with silver imprint
8	1996	Micronesia	494-497	112, 113-114 and 120	Block with 4 stamps; issued together with the Marshall Islands, see below
9	1996	Marshall Island	708-711	111, 115-117	Block with 4 stamps; issued together with the Micronesia, see above
10	1996	Dominican Republic	1797	110	
11	2002	Kyrgyzstan	281	117	Part of a block
12	2004	Romania	5808 and block 338	117	idem
13	2004	Ecuador	2786 and block 177	1	Part of two se-tenant stamps and in the border of the sheetlet
14	2005	Central African Republic	2916 and block 679	891	Issues perforated, imperforated and as a block
15	2008	China	3989	119	One of two stamps
16	2008	China	Mi 3991 and block 149 x en y	119	Issued in block on common and silk paper.
17	2008	China	block 149 I t/m V	119 (and on block 149 I also 110, 112 and 118 on the border of the block)	Special issue during Olympex
18	2008	Grenada	5998	115	Issued in a block
19	2008	Grenada	6058	109, 112, 114-115, 117-120	idem
20	2008	Bangladesh	911	109	Issued in a block with 3 other stamps
21	2012	Gambia	6651 - 6662	109-120	Golden stamps
22	2015	St. Vincent & Grenadines Canouan	447 - 454 (and Block 70 and 71)	110-111, 114-115, 117-120	

Insofar as not yet shown above, see the following illustrations. The numbers refer to the numbers in the table above.



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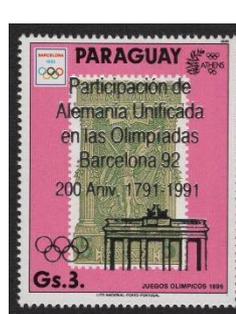
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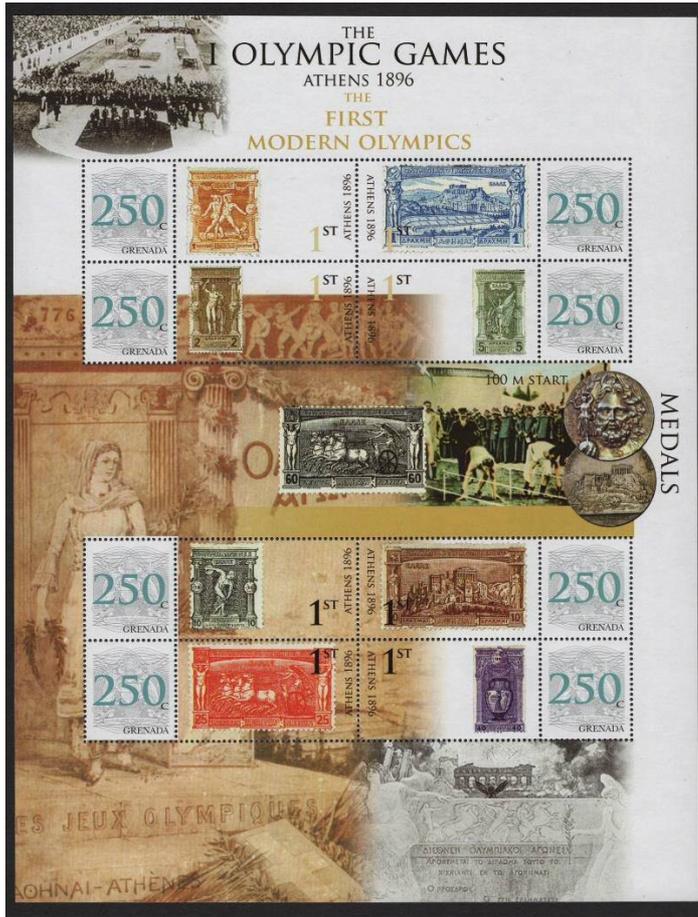
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