



**Book review Ruud Verberne, chairman Postzegelvereniging Griekenland of  
“Large Hermes Heads, printings and shades” by Stavros Andreadis**

At the end of last year, a unique large format book (36 x 26 cm) about the Large Hermes Heads (hereinafter: LHH) was published. It is written in Greek and English and compiled by Stavros Andreadis, and consists of 160 pages. Everything is beautifully edited on eye-catching matt satin light cream paper, and contained in a luxurious linen hardcover with the highlighted Hermes medallion in gold print.

The author, Stavros Andreadis, is a renowned collector and exhibitor of the LHH. His collection got him much appraisal at exhibitions all over the world. With good reason, he has been honoured twice with the publication of a book in the well-known Edition d'Or series: No. 28 in 2011 and No. 60 in 2021. With the current book he shares with us his fascination for this beautiful, inexhaustible collecting area and he aims to help the LHH collector to distinguish between the different printings and colour varieties of each separate value of the LHH. In doing so, he also shows himself to be the passionate collector he has always been.

The reason for the many varieties, which many collectors have been studying for a long time and had them often puzzled – still intrigues today. Next to the type of paper used, there are the pigments, mixed by hand, used for the printing of each colour, things about which we unfortunately know nothing in detail.

We are of course aware of the different printing methods, which had an equally influential effect. All issues, as currently classified in the Hellas catalogue as individual numbers, are covered - with a few exceptions: H6c, H12IIc, H22a, H22d, H41g and H49d.

The author also discusses the various printings chapter by chapter in a brief explanation. Each stamp illustrated is enlarged in every variety (+ 50%) and, if available, depicted five times in colours that are as true to life as possible. The edges of each stamp were made even using advanced photoshop techniques. Although this is somewhat artificial, it looks impressive and makes the colours, the primary purpose of this book, stand out beautifully. And not only the front of the stamps is shown, but the back is also illustrated directly below the front in the same enlarged format. Because the colour of the paper and the control numbers (CN) also play an important part in the classification of most LHH.

Knowing that at least four members of our Study Group already have the book in their possession, we have convened a Teams meeting. Together we have looked more closely at the contents of the book. And in particular we looked at the scarce varieties, of which only one or a few examples are shown in the book, and discussed them.

There are for instance the variations of the 5 Lepta Parisian edition (H 3), of which the variety designated here as olive green in our opinion classifies rather as dark grass green.

Furthermore, we have discussed the provisional issue in Prussian blue 20 L (H 8Ia) with the quadrille background and its deep blue variant (H8IIa) and the dark ultramarine version (H 8IIb), both with the solid background of the medallion.

There also exists a lighter colour variant of the latter, see right. Yes, of course without CN....

In the subsequent series of provisional prints, we missed a variety with the characteristic halo behind the head of the chocolate-coloured 1 Lepton (H 9Ia). We show this copy here, see image on the left).



In relation to its brothers, in the colour variants of the fine print (H 9II, a, b and c) we found the pale chocolate 'non typical impression' - see this block of 4, the relief is missing on this stamp - which according to us in the next Hellas catalogue should be reinstated again as 9 IIcb



– just as before.

The colour of H 20IA is also notable; in the Hermes catalogue this is called “Light mauve on blue”, but in the book a darker than dark mauve copy is depicted.

In addition, we believe that the emerald green 5 L without CN (H 55a) is actually an H 49e, of which the CN is missing.

And of the orange-red 10 L with CN on cream paper (50c), there exist stamps with the CN in brownish red, which is officially registered as a separate colour under the H 50c.



The orange-vermilion 10 L on lavender-coloured paper (H 40d) in reality appears more like light grey paper.

Of the orange-red 10 L on blue paper (H 40e), we like to mention one from one of our collections that has been printed on flawless bright blue paper.

The last “bronze” on blue (H 42Ic) shown in the list of five (page 113) appears to us to be more of a light aubergine colour.



One of the most difficult stamps is the (light) olive green, the last in the row of five (H 49c, page 130) and more generally the distinction in colour between the depicted H 49c, 49e and 49g.

But it is precisely these discussions that make classification of the LHH so much fun.

Finally, we would like to introduce an additional variety of the red brown with short beard (H 15e). A very light print, in which the frame lines have almost completely disappeared, on bright white paper.

Our opinion of this book is unanimous: it is not only the most beautiful, but also the best book about the colour of the LHH that we have seen so far.

Not only highly recommended but also a MUST for every LHH collector. Because in practice the book is an enormous user-friendly colour chart in no less than 1144 different colour-shades. It is available from the Karamitsos e-shop and costs €170 including shipping costs.

