

Balkanfila



News *letter*

No 15, June 2026

Editorial

Changing the rules

This is a period even for most philatelists that FIFA World Cup, better known as Mundial, dominates our days watching football teams competing through fair play with the aim of getting a medal.

Similar is the case during International Philatelic Exhibitions, the exhibitors compete in a fair play to receive through their exhibits a medal which is rather a “moral” reward than anything else. Boston2026 an overall great philatelic exhibition was impaired by a rather unfortunate decision that had to do with changing the rules during the exhibition and in consequence causing havoc with point grading and medal awarding.

Hopefully, this unfortunate event would be rectified or if it does not it may put in jeopardy the most important factor –not only– in organized philately, which is “trust” among exhibitors, jurors, organizers and Federations.

The current of Balkanfila Newsletter includes reports from Philatelic exhibitions and events, an exemplary thematic seminar, various articles propaganda and phantom stamps, to everyday life in Ottoman Empire to the class that adds colour to philately and presentations of new editions as well as new postal issues.

Summer is usually the vacation period for the majority of people and for philatelists it could be a time to re-organize their collections, to catch up with reading and writing an article on subjects that could provide more information to the potential readers.

Please remember that Balkanfila Newsletter is a collective effort for promoting our region’s philately to broader audiences and it definitely requires your written contributions in order to keep going and slowly but steadily becoming better by just following a simple but essential rule : “the quality of the input is the quality of the output”.

“101” : setting a new starting point beyond a Commemoration



Title of a National Philatelic Exhibition – sponsored by the Hellenic Philatelic Federation – that stood out for its organizational innovations, it was a simple, three-digit number.

The exhibition venue, being emblematic in modern Greek history since it was the detention center of the Military Police during the Dictatorship, nowadays known as “Athens Municipality Arts Centre” hosted from June 2–7, the exhibits of Greek and foreign philatelists as well as that of Organizations, Jurors and other institutions.





The Opening of “101” took place on June 2, with addresses from current M.P, former Minister of Culture and philatelist Mr. Pavlos Geroulanos, the President of the Hellenic Post Mr. Daniel Benardout, the Vice-President of the Hellenic Philatelic Federation Mr. Nikos Andriotis, the President of the Hellenic Philatelic Federation and of the “101” O.C Mr. Antonis Manoloudis and Mr. Costas Chazapis FEPA Director.



The hybrid “101” combined a physical display of one frame of each exhibit, regardless of its actual number of frames. The visitors were able to see the entire exhibit –that was the case for exhibits larger than one–frame– by scanning a QR code positioned at the top left of each physical frame.

Additionally a website was created to host the virtual exhibit not only during “101” but being available online in pdf files for a long time at : <https://hps.gr/2026/en/exhibits/>

101									
ALL EXHIBITS									
<small>Narrow theme (1-, 2-, or 3-frame) exhibits were awarded points only. However, all exhibitors were entitled to the HPS 101st anniversary medal.</small>									
Search: <input type="text"/>									
VENUE	ONLINE	FRAMES	EXHIBITOR	EXHIBIT	CLASS	A (?) / B1	PDF	POINTS	MEDAL
1	YES	YES	1	Varelas Dimitrios	The Postal Use of the Administrative Handstamps in Greece 1833–1835	PH		 87	
2	YES	YES	8	Mylonogiannis George	The Greek Preadhesive Period	PH	B1		LG

The exhibition was both competitive, under Patronage of the Hellenic Philatelic Federation, and non-competitive giving the exhibitors to decide for themselves in which way they did prefer to display their philatelic collections and exhibits.

“101” in numbers

A total of 134 exhibits presented on 507 frames, with a prominent participation of Italian exhibits as well as other remarkable foreign exhibits.

It is worth-mentioning the exhibits of eight distinguished exhibitors who contributed eleven outstanding exhibits –six Postal History and five Traditional ones– to the Court of Honour, were as follows :

- Andreadis Stavros : “Kassandra Collection” of Large Hermes Heads
- Bauer Wolfgang : “Greece: Incoming and Outgoing Mail (1821–1875)”
- Chirescu Ion : “Foreign Posts in the Romanian Territories 1811–1878”
- Christou Akis : “Cyprus : the Overprinted Stamps of Queen Victoria”
- Fanchini Louis : “The Fabrication and Postal Usage of the Large Hermes Head of Greece (1861–1901)”
- Hackmey Josef : “Ottoman Post Offices in Bulgaria”
- Hackmey Josef : “Ottoman Post Offices in Greece”
- Hackmey Josef : “Ottoman Post Offices in the former FPR of Yugoslavia”
- Karagiannidis Anestis : “The Small Hermes Heads of Greece”
- Karagiannidis Anestis : “Greece: The 1896 Olympic Issue”
- Morani Vittorio : “Mail Exchanged Between Tuscany and the Countries facing the Mediterranean Sea 1836–1875”

All Court of Honour outstanding exhibits can be seen at :

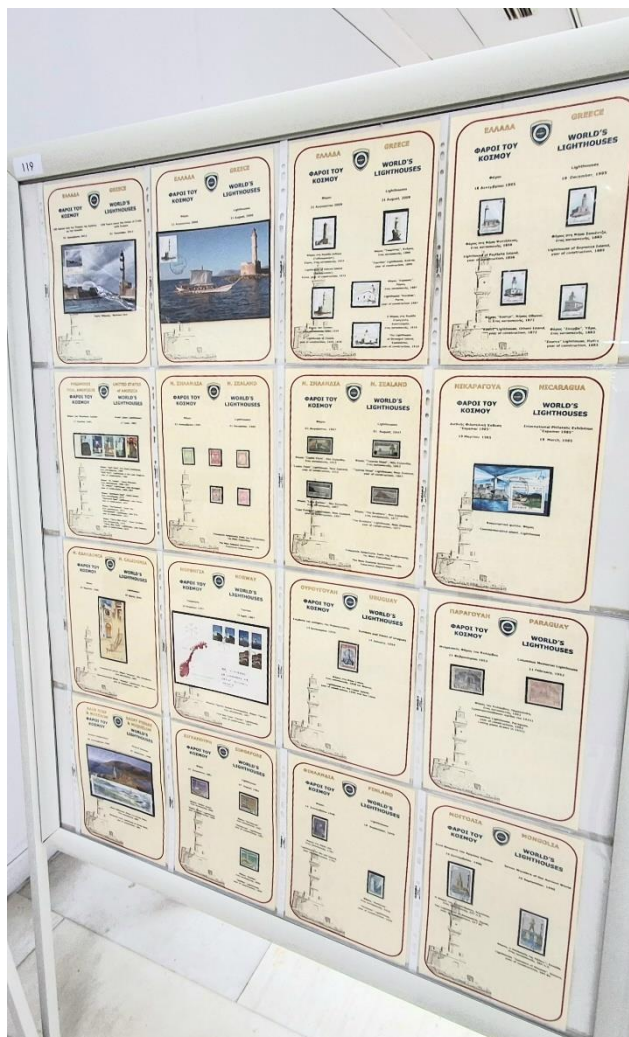
<https://hps.gr/2026/en/court-of-honour/>

Philatelic exhibits

There were displayed 21 New Exhibits whilst 6 exhibits received felicitations :

- for Rarity : “Greece to Sweden 1851–1912” by D. Boukaras,
- for Originality : “From Imagery to Collective Memory — The Emergence of the Commemorative Stamp (1850–1896)” by S. Perantonis,
- for Material : “The Italian Civil Post in the Dodecanese 1912–1945” by G. Perin,
- for Choice of Material : “The Glorious Greek Campaign During the Balkan Wars of 1912–1913” by Ch. Bastas,

- for Material “Landscape Issues 1927 and 1931–35” by A. Christou,
- for Variety of Material : “To the Foot” by V. Apostolopulos



“Lighthouses” a non-competitive exhibit by the Maritime Museum of Crete



Philatelic Literature exhibits

In “101” 11 literature exhibits took place either competitive or non-competitive. Six of the literature exhibits were periodicals and 5 were philatelic books.



Among the Literature exhibits the book of John Daes : “The Greek Postal Rates (1828–1875)” in English (published 2022) was Grand Prix Candidate and that of Athanasios Spanos : “An Alternative Method for the Classification of the Large Hermes Head Stamps of Greece (published 2024) LG 93p. stood out.

Another book on Large Hermes Heads : “The Large Hermes Heads of Greece” by D. Papitsis was not in competition.

A philatelic exhibition with a twist

What differentiated “101” to past philatelic exhibitions in Greece was the fact that it went well beyond the limits of an exhibition and became an actual commemoration – for the 101 years since the establishment of the Hellenic Philatelic Society – full of memories and intense emotions marking a path of uninterrupted presence while creating philatelic knowledge by highlighting new aspects and unknown of social and historical events.

The Palmares



The Awards Dinner in the main hall of the Armed Forces Officers Club was held on Friday, June 5, 2026 in a festive mood during which the Board of Directors of the Hellenic Philatelic Society honoured its long-time members who had joined the Society up until 1981.



The President of H.P.S presents the commemorative medal to long-time Society Members and Prominent Greek Philatelists George Sotiropoulos (on the left) and Stephano Calliga (on the right)

During the Palmares a video was shown with wishes for the H.P.S Anniversary from distinguished philatelists : <https://hps.gr/2026/>

The Awards Ceremony was followed by the announcement of :

The Grand Prix of the exhibition awarded to Andreas Nikolaidis for his excellent "Postal history of Pontos up to 1923".



the Grand Prix of Classe d'Honneur was awarded to George Mylonogiannis for his exhibit "The Greek Pre-philatelic Period".

“101” was a milestone of innovation in a commemoration of a century of common pursuit by incorporating a systematic and passionate study and research of the Greek philately.

This national exhibition highlighted a special moment in which the past has met with the present and it has become a starting point for the future of Greek philately.



*A. Manoloudis H.P.S & “101” O.C President,
A. Nikolaidis National Grand Prix Winner,
M. Koutsounakis “101” General Commissioner
and A. Galinos Jury President (left to right)*

*A. Galinos and the Editor
K. Choudalakis of “PHILOTELEIA”*



*The Best of the Old –but still Active– Guard :
A. Giannokopoulos, I. Daes and A. Virvilis (left to right)*

Joint Issue of Slovenia and Serbia 2026

Queen Maria Karađorđević and Franja Tavčar on a Postage Stamp

by Janez Cerkvenik, Ph.D. & Gregor Cerkvenik,
Lovro Košir Philatelic Society Škofja Loka, Republic of Slovenia

A Tribute to Two Great Humanitarians

On June 12th, 2026, Pošta Slovenije (Slovenian Post) and Pošta Srbije (Post of Serbia) issued their third joint commemorative postage stamp issue (Joint Issue Slovenia–Serbia). This edition is dedicated to two exceptional women who profoundly influenced the humanitarian and social life of the former Yugoslavia during the first half of the twentieth century – Queen Maria Karađorđević of Yugoslavia (1900–1961) and her Lady-in-Waiting, Franja Tavčar (1868–1938).

This joint issue is not merely a philatelic event but also an important cultural and historical testimony to two personalities united by the values of humanity, charity, and care for the most vulnerable members of society. Between 1925 and 1938, Queen Maria and Franja Tavčar jointly supported numerous charitable initiatives intended for the sick, orphans, impoverished children, war veterans, and socially disadvantaged families. Following the death of Franja Tavčar, Queen Maria continued her humanitarian mission until her own death in London in 1961.

Philatelic Characteristics of the Issue

The joint issue was released in the form of a souvenir sheet containing a single stamp. The artistic design of both souvenir sheets was created by the Serbian designer Nadežda Skočajić, M.A., Head of Publishing Activities at Srbijamarka, the philatelic division of the Post of Serbia.



Fig. 1 and 2: The Slovenian and the Serbian postage stamp of the Serbia–Slovenia Joint Commemorative Issue.

The Slovenian stamp bears the letter denomination "C" (€1.96), while the Serbian stamp has a face value of 160 Serbian dinars. The Slovenian souvenir sheet measures 90 × 60 mm and was printed by AKD Printing House in Zagreb in a print run of 18,000 copies. The Serbian souvenir sheet measures 100 × 67 mm and was printed by Forum Printing House in Novi Sad in a print run of 10,000 copies. Both souvenir sheets were produced using four-colour offset printing.

Simultaneously, a Slovenian First Day Cover (FDC) and a Serbian First Day Cover (FDC) were issued, together with two first-day commemorative postmarks. The Serbian cancellation was available at Post Office SR-11101 in Belgrade, while the Slovenian cancellation was issued at Post Office SI-4221 in Škofja Loka.



Fig. 3 and 4: Slovenian and Serbian FDC – Front Side.



Fig. 5: Commemorative Cover Issued by the Lovro Košir Philatelic Society of Škofja Loka – Front Side.

Joint issues of two or more postal administrations rank among the most highly regarded philatelic releases. Their appeal lies in their limited print runs, international dimension,

and symbolic message, often serving as significant documents of cooperation between nations and their postal operators.



Fig. 6 and 7: VIP Commemorative Folder with Both Issued Souvenir Sheets in Diplomatic Format – Front and Back Cover.

Presentation at the Royal Palace in Belgrade

The first official presentation of the joint issue took place on June 16th, 2026 at the Royal Palace in Dedinje, Belgrade, under the patronage of His Royal Highness Crown Prince Alexander II Karadordević. The ceremony was hosted by His Royal Highness Hereditary Prince Filip Karadordević.

The choice of the Royal Palace as the venue carried profound symbolic significance. Queen Maria Karadordević remains one of the most beloved members of the Yugoslav Royal Family, and her charitable work left a lasting legacy throughout all regions of the former Yugoslavia.

During the ceremony, representatives of both postal administrations, officially represented by Mr Marko D. Jelić, Director of the PTT Museum of Serbia within Pošta Srbije, emphasised that this joint issue represents a bridge of friendship between Serbia and Slovenia and pays tribute to the enduring values of solidarity, compassion, and humanity.

Among the distinguished guests were H.E. Slobodan Šešum, Ph.D., Mr Ambassador of the Republic of Slovenia to the Republic of Serbia, and H.E. Zoran Stevanović, Mr President of the National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia, accompanied by three members of the Slovenian Parliament. Mr Stevanović also delivered the keynote address.

The initiator and coordinator of both presentation events in Belgrade and Ljubljana, the Lovro Košir Philatelic Society of Škofja Loka, organised a philatelic exhibition entitled

Queen Maria Karadžorđević and Her Lady-in-Waiting Franja Tavčar. The exhibition was prepared by Janez Cerkvnik, Ph.D., a distinguished long-standing member of the Society, and Mr Nani Poljanec, owner of the private Royal Collection of the Karadžorđević Dynasty in Rogaška Slatina's Museum of Folk Heritage.



Fig. 8: Official photograph from the presentation of the joint commemorative postage stamps issue of Post of Serbia and Post of Slovenia in Belgrade, published on the official website of the Royal Palace. The Royal Family of Serbia <https://share.google/67gtCzwRHD4mTuXAr> Photo courtesy of: The Royal Palace, Belgrade, Serbia.

During the guided tour of the exhibition at the Royal Palace, Mr Gregor Cerkvnik, the Society's event coordinator, expressed particular satisfaction that the joint issue stamp of Serbia and Slovenia would travel around the world on letters posted in both countries, thereby spreading the story of these two remarkable humanitarians.

The Royal Palace in Belgrade, together with the Lovro Košir Philatelic Society of Škofja Loka, financially supported the production of a VIP commemorative folder containing both souvenir sheets in a diplomatic presentation format.



Fig. 9: Philatelic Exhibition at the Royal Palace in Belgrade, Serbia.

Presentation in Škofja Loka

The second presentation took place on 18 June 2026 in the chapel of the Škofja Loka Museum at Škofja Loka Castle under the patronage of the Mayor of the Municipality of Škofja Loka, represented by Deputy Mayor Ms Tina Teržan. Both postal administrations, Post of Serbia and Post of Slovenia, were represented by Ms Simona Koser Šavora, M.Sc. from the Executive Office of Post of Slovenia.

The event held particular symbolic significance because Franja Tavčar, affectionately known as "The Lady of Visoko", is closely associated with the Škofja Loka region and is regarded as one of the most important Slovenian public figures of the first half of the twentieth century.

The Loški Museum complemented the ceremony with a guided tour of its permanent collection dedicated to Ivan Tavčar, Ph.D. and Franja Tavčar, curated alongside the museum collection at the former Tavčar's Manor in Visoko in the Poljane Valley near Škofja Loka, with special emphasis on Franja Tavčar's humanitarian activities.

On this occasion, the Lovro Košir Philatelic Society of Škofja Loka also prepared accompanying philatelic material – a commemorative postmark and a special commemorative envelope dated June 18th, 2026, the date of the presentation – thereby ensuring that the joint issue was appropriately documented from a philatelic perspective.

The presentation in Škofja Loka highlighted another important dimension of philately: its role in preserving local historical memory. Through this postage stamp, Franja Tavčar has once again been accorded a place in Slovenia's collective memory, while her life's work has simultaneously been introduced to the international public.



Fig. 10 and 11: Glimpses of the Presentation of the Joint Postage Stamp Issue in the Chapel of the Škofja Loka Museum.

Philately as a Carrier of Cultural Memory

The joint issue *Queen Maria Karađorđević and Franja Tavčar* represents far more than merely a new postage stamp issue. It is an excellent example of contemporary philately successfully linking history, culture, and international cooperation.

Even in the digital age, postage stamps remain important carriers of historical messages and effective instruments of cultural diplomacy, as demonstrated by both presentation events in Belgrade and Škofja Loka, which brought together the postal operators of Slovenia and Serbia, Slovenian and Serbian philatelists, contemporary political representatives of both countries, and, in a broader sense, the Slovenian and Serbian peoples.

Through this joint issue, Post of Slovenia and Post of Serbia have honoured two extraordinary women whose guiding principles were philanthropy and service to others. Consequently, this stamp will remain not only a collector's item but also a lasting document of a shared historical and cultural space still united today by the values of solidarity, charity, and mutual respect.

As Queen Maria Karađorđević once stated: *"The good you do from the heart remains forever"*.

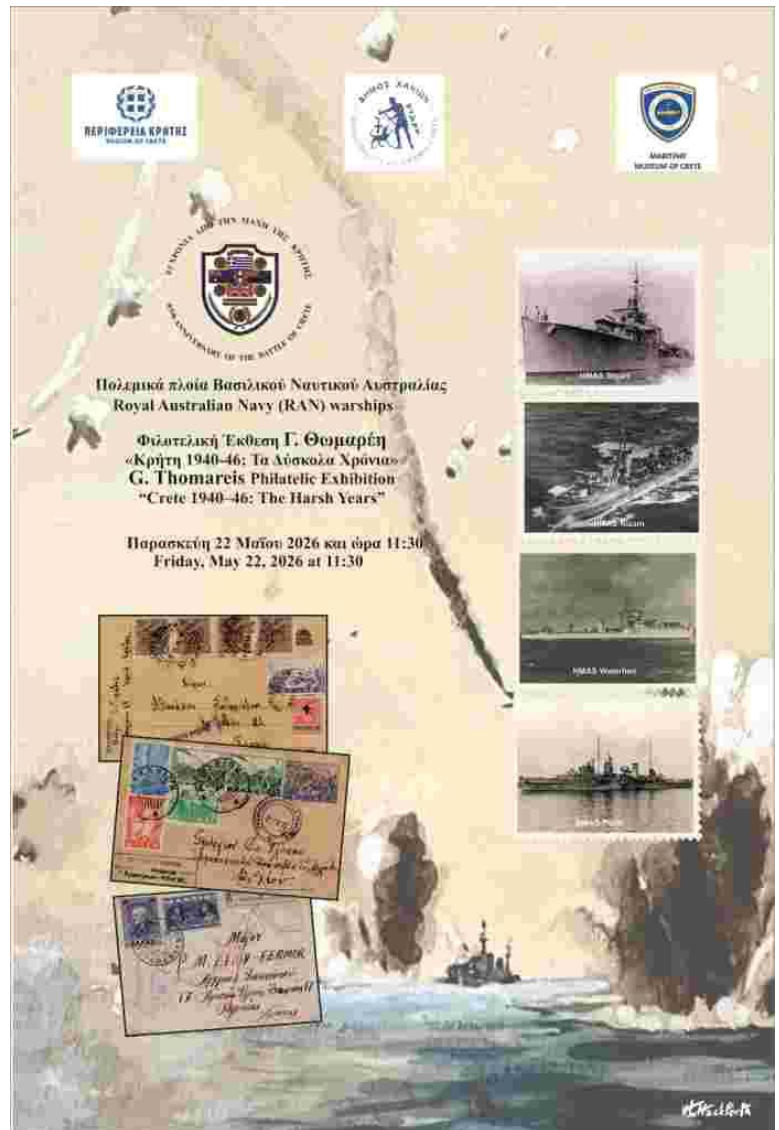
Note: All photographs are courtesy of the archives of the Royal Palace in Belgrade, Serbia and the Lovro Košir Philatelic Society of Škofja Loka, Republic of Slovenia.

Commemorating the 85th Anniversary of the Battle of Crete through a philatelic perspective

The Historical Background

Crete was of vital, strategic importance to both the Allies and the Axis forces, due to commanding shipping lanes to the Black Sea and the Middle East. The war plan of the Nazis was to make use of their aerial superiority and decided to exploit its advantage by seizing the island in a mass assault by elite parachute troops.

The airborne assault by Nazi Germany on the Greek island of Crete during WWII took place between May 20th to June 1st, 1941. Crete was defended by British and Commonwealth troops and Navy warships. The local population had an active role in the defense of their homeland.



The failure of the Allies to defend three airports in Crete led to transportation of more Nazi troops to the island which was decisive for the outcome. Both sides had considerable losses, so did the local population after the capture of Crete by the Nazis as a reprisal for their resistance.

The Cretan Resistance caused significant damage to German morale because until that time the Nazi forces seemed to be invincible.

Commemorative Stamps of the Battle of Crete

The significance of the Battle of Crete was underlined by commemorative stamps issued by the Hellenic Post as shown below :



1947 from "Victory" issue



1950 "Battle of Crete" issue



1991 issue on the 50th Anniversary of the Battle of Crete



The 85th Anniversary of the Battle of Crete

Maritime Museum of Crete (MMoC) is exceptional, not only because it is housed in an emblematic Venetian Fortress but also due to its innovative approach of presenting exhibitions linking historical events with local society whilst appealing to an international audience.

The Museum has a number of philatelic collections in regard with Navigation, Lighthouses and Marine Resources aiming to introduce its visitors to philately from marine-oriented starting point.



On May 22–24th the M.MoC invited and hosted two exceptional visitors –in relation with the 85th Anniversary of the Battle of Crete, during WWII– her Excellence Ms. Alison Duncan, Ambassador of Australia in Greece and her HRH Princess Anne of the UK. Crucial role of the Battle of Crete was due to the participation Australian, New Zealand and British troops aided by the local population.



The visit to the M.MoC of her Excellence Ms. Alison Duncan, Ambassador of Australia in Greece was to commemorate the 85th anniversary of the Battle of Crete. During the Nazi German invasion, eight Australian warships played a significant role in the defense of Crete. Ms. Alison Duncan offered to the M.MoC a panel depicting these eight Australian warships with descriptions. The President of the Museum Mr. Emmanuel Petrakis, Navy Commode (retired) thanked Ms. Alison Duncan and offered her a set of two personalised stamp sheets depict the eight Australian warships.

85η Επετειοή της Μάχης της Κρήτης

Η Μάχη της Κρήτης ξεκίνησε στις 20 Μαΐου 1941, όταν ο στρατός καταρτίστηκε για να αντιμετωπίσει τον κίνδυνο να εισβάλει ο στρατός στην Κρήτη. Η μάχη της Κρήτης ήταν η τελευταία μεγάλη μάχη που διεξήχθη στην Κρήτη και η τελευταία μάχη που διεξήχθη στην Κρήτη.

Μεταξύ των ναυτικών που συμμετείχαν στην άμυνα της Κρήτης ήταν οι ναυάρχους: ο ναύαρχος Αλέξανδρος Κωνσταντίνου, ο ναύαρχος Αλέξανδρος Κωνσταντίνου, ο ναύαρχος Αλέξανδρος Κωνσταντίνου, ο ναύαρχος Αλέξανδρος Κωνσταντίνου, ο ναύαρχος Αλέξανδρος Κωνσταντίνου, ο ναύαρχος Αλέξανδρος Κωνσταντίνου, ο ναύαρχος Αλέξανδρος Κωνσταντίνου, ο ναύαρχος Αλέξανδρος Κωνσταντίνου.

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85th Anniversary of the Battle of Crete

The Battle for Crete began on 20 May 1941, when German airborne troops launched an attack on the strategically important island. As well as the British, Australian and New Zealand troops, and the local population, the island was defended by the Royal Australian Navy. Eight Australian warships played a significant role in the defence of Crete.

The ships, which included transporters, supply ships, and escorts, were used to transport supplies and ammunition to the island. They also provided fire support for the troops on the ground. The ships were also used to transport the wounded and the dead.

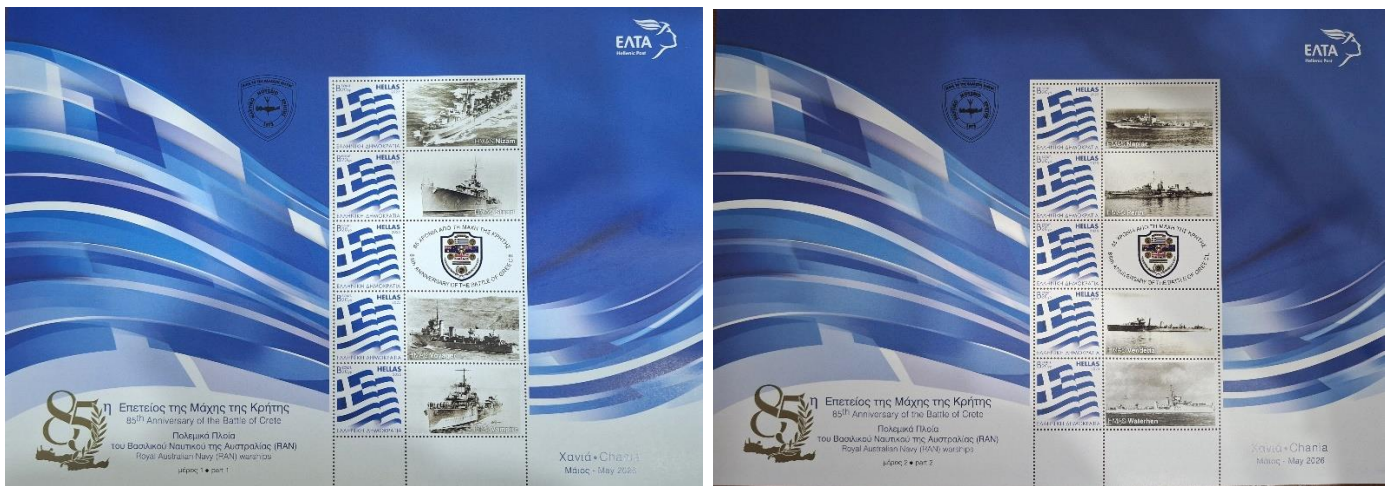
The ships that participated in the Battle of Crete were: the HMAS Perth (L 80), the HMAS Sydney (L 81), the HMAS Hobart (L 82), the HMAS Brisbane (L 83), the HMAS Melbourne (L 84), the HMAS Adelaide (L 85), the HMAS Darwin (L 86), and the HMAS Cairns (L 87).

The ships were commanded by the Commodore of the Royal Australian Navy, the Commodore of the Royal Australian Navy, the Commodore of the Royal Australian Navy, the Commodore of the Royal Australian Navy, the Commodore of the Royal Australian Navy, the Commodore of the Royal Australian Navy, the Commodore of the Royal Australian Navy, the Commodore of the Royal Australian Navy.

Προσφέρθηκε στο Ναυτικό Μουσείο Κρήτης από την Πρέσβη της Αυστραλίας, την Αυτή Εξοχότητα Alison Duncan, εκ μέρους του Αρχηγού του Βασιλικού Ναυτικού της Αυστραλίας, Αντιναύαρχου Mark Hammond AO RAN, προς τιμήν της 85ης Επετειοής της Μάχης της Κρήτης

Presented to the Maritime Museum of Crete by the Australian Ambassador to Greece, Her Excellency Alison Duncan, on behalf of the Chief of the Royal Australian Navy, Vice Admiral Mark Hammond AO RAN, to commemorate the 85th Anniversary of the Battle of Crete

Κρήνη, Μάιος 2024



The two personalized stamps sheets depicting the eight Royal Australian Navy warships at the Battle of Crete

During the 85th Anniversary of the Battle of Crete, the MMoC hold a temporary philatelic exhibition of FIP juror and collector Mr. George Thomareis that presented his “Crete 1940–1946 : The Harsh Years” exhibit which through outstanding philatelic material “narrates” the time just before WWII started, during and shortly after the Axis occupation of Crete.



Collector and FIP Juror George Thomareis, introducing the exhibit to Nikos Kalogeras – Regional Vice Governor of Regional Unit of Chania, Alison Duncan – Australian Ambassador in Greece and Pangiotis Simandirakis – Mayor of Chania city (from left to right).

Among the top items of this exhibit is a postcard of a Cretan villager to his relative living nearby written in German for facilitating censorship. Therefore, all written communication by Post was compulsory to be written in German until May 1942, apparently with the assistance of a German-speaking person and not the sender himself. What came to the attention of both HRH Princess Anne, who visited the MMoC on May 24th, as well as the Ambassador of Australian Mrs. Allison Duncan, was a letter posted to Patrick Leigh Fermor, the British Officer who had successfully abducted on February 4th, 1944 the Chief Military Commander of Crete, Major General Heinrich Kreipe.



H.R.H Princess Anne
with the President of the M.MoC
Mr. E. Petrakis who introduces
FIP Juror Mr. George Thomareis and
Christos Gikas, President of the
Hellenic Philatelic Federation.

A number of other philatelic material included in this exhibit are documents of “talking history” that are significant of presenting history and society from primary sources.

The current Board of the Hellenic Philatelic Federation has coined the motto “Philately matters to All” as its core communication motto and action plan.

The commemoration of the 85th Anniversary of the Battle of Crete in co-operation with the Maritime Museum of Crete offered the Hellenic Philatelic Federation a significant opportunity to take a step forward in its effort to fulfil its perspective plan.

Serbia and Mexico Mark 80 Years of Diplomatic Relations with Personalized Stamp

On 16 June 2026, Post of Serbia and the Embassy of Mexico in the Republic of Serbia jointly celebrated the 80th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Serbia and Mexico with the official presentation of a personalized postage stamp at the PTT Museum in Belgrade.



The philatelic issue commemorates eight decades of friendship, cooperation and mutual respect between the two countries while reaffirming their commitment to strengthening political dialogue and expanding economic, academic, cultural and sporting exchanges.

The design features two prominent cultural landmarks: the National Museum of Serbia in Belgrade and the Palace of Fine Arts (Palacio de Bellas Artes) in Mexico City, symbolizing the rich cultural heritage and enduring ties between the two nations.

“The personalized stamp is more than a commemorative philatelic product, serving as a lasting symbol of the strong and friendly relations maintained by Serbia and Mexico since the establishment of diplomatic ties in 1946.”

Great Success for Serbia at BOSTON 2026 : Three Exhibits, Three Gold Medals

At the BOSTON 2026 World Stamp Show in the United States, the most important international philatelic exhibition of the year, Serbian exhibitors Vladimir Milić, Aleksandar Boričić, and Ratomir Živković achieved outstanding success in competition with some of the world's finest exhibits.



The exhibition featured nearly 800 competitive exhibits from dozens of countries, representing the highest level of international exhibition philately. Serbia was represented by three exhibitors, and all three exhibits received gold-level awards:

Vladimir Milić — *Serbia 1880–1915: Three Kings* — **Large Gold Medal and Felicitations of the Jury**

Aleksandar Boričić — *Postal History of Serbia 1733–1915* — **Gold Medal**

Ratomir Živković — *Development of International Airmail Services in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia 1923–1941* — **Gold Medal**

A particularly remarkable achievement was the Large Gold Medal with Felicitations of the Jury awarded to the exhibit *Serbia 1880–1915: Three Kings*, one of the highest distinctions in international competitive philately.

The fact that all three Serbian exhibits were awarded gold medals confirms the high quality of Serbian exhibition philately and its strong reputation on the international stage. These results continue the successful performances of Serbian exhibitors at major international exhibitions and provide further evidence that Serbia ranks among the countries achieving top-level results in world philately.

The Union of Philatelists of Serbia also announced that the 16th National Philatelic Exhibition “SRBIJAFILA” will be held in Belgrade in October 2026, bringing together the largest number of domestic and international exhibitors in Serbia during the year.

JOINT ISSUE · SERBIA – SLOVENIA

Joint Serbia–Slovenia Stamp Issue Honouring Queen Maria Karađorđević and Franja Tavčar Presented at the Royal Palace

A joint commemorative stamp issue of Post of Serbia and Post of Slovenia dedicated to Her Majesty Queen Maria Karađorđević and her lady-in-waiting Franja Tavčar was officially presented at the Royal Palace in Belgrade. The event also included an accompanying exhibition highlighting the lives and humanitarian work of these two remarkable women.



The presentation was hosted by His Royal Highness Hereditary Prince Filip. A message from His Royal Highness Crown Prince Alexander was read during the ceremony, expressing support for the initiative and emphasizing the importance of preserving the memory of Queen Maria and Franja Tavčar as symbols of humanity, compassion, and the longstanding friendship between the Serbian and Slovenian peoples.

Among the speakers were Zoran Stevanović, President of the National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia, Nadežda Skočajić, designer of the stamp and Head of Publishing Activities at the Srbijamarka Department of Post of Serbia, and Marko Jelić, Head of the PTT Museum Department.

The joint issue consists of a commemorative souvenir sheet produced by both postal administrations, each containing one postage stamp, as well as first day covers issued by Post of Serbia and Post of Slovenia with accompanying texts in their respective national languages and in English.

Visitors also had the opportunity to view a special exhibition prepared by Janez Cerkvnik, which was presented by Gregor Cerkvnik on behalf of the “Lovro Košir” Philatelic Society from Škofja Loka.

“Joint issues are regarded as the highest form of cooperation between two national postal administrations, reflecting mutual respect and a shared commitment to promoting common historical and cultural values.”

In their addresses, the speakers underlined that the joint issue represents a symbol of cooperation and friendship between Serbia and Slovenia while paying tribute to the humanitarian legacy of Queen Maria Karađorđević and Franja Tavčar.



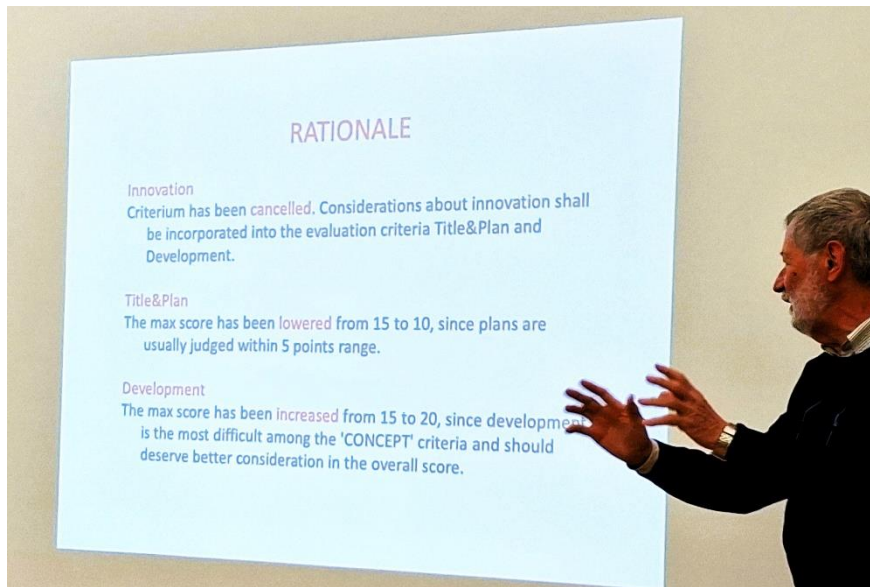
The event was organized through the cooperation of the PTT Museum of Serbia, the Union of Philatelists of Serbia, the Philatelic Association of Slovenia, and the “Lovro Košir” Philatelic Society from Škofja Loka. A second presentation of the issue is scheduled to take place on 18 June at the Loški Museum in Škofja Loka, Slovenia.

THEMATIC SEMINAR

SREV & GUIDELINES : a Brief Introduction

At the History Museum of Pernik, on May 1st, 2026, an exemplary Seminar took place with Peter Suhadolc, FIP Director and Menachem Lador a FEPA Thematic Juror as speakers.

At the beginning, Peter Suhadolc referred to the existing and the New Evaluation Criteria and Scoring in Thematic Philately.



Evaluation criteria and scoring in TH Philately (valid up to July 1, 2026)

1. Treatment	35	
Title and Plan		15
Development		15
Innovation		5
2. Knowledge, Personal Study and Research	30	
Thematic		15
Philatelic		15
3. Condition and Rarity	30	
Condition		10
Rarity		20
4. Presentation	5	
Total	100	

Evaluation criteria and **NEW** scoring in TH Philately
(valid from July 2, 2026 onwards)

1. Treatment	35	30		
Title and Plan			15	10
Development			15	20
Innovation				
2. Knowledge, Personal Study and Research	30	35		
Thematic			15	
Philatelic			15	20
3. Condition and Rarity		30		
Condition			10	
Rarity			20	
4. Presentation		5		
	Total		100	

RATIONALE

Innovation

Criterion has been **cancelled**. Considerations about innovation shall be incorporated into the evaluation criteria Title & Plan and Development.

Title & Plan

The max score has been lowered from 15 to 10, since plans are usually judged within 5 points range.

Development

The max score has been increased from 15 to 20, since development is the most difficult among the "CONCEPT" criteria and should deserve better consideration in the overall score.

RATIONALE

- **Thematic Knowledge**

Remains at 15 points max

- **Philatelic Knowledge**

The max score has been **increased from 15 to 20**, since philatelic knowledge is more difficult to acquire and should be better rewarded.

- **Condition, Rarity and Presentation**

Remain at the “normal” score adopted by all other classes.

RATIONALE

In this way also the first three criteria

TITLE & PLAN

DEVELOPMENT

THEMATIC KNOWLEDGE

can be related to the **CONCEPT** of the exhibition.

The next three ones

PHILATELIC KNOWLEDGE

CONDITION

RARITY

are related to the **Postal MATERIAL** that illustrates the story presented in the **CONCEPT**.

ALTERNATIVELY,

RATIONALE

the Presentation being part of the **CONCEPT** might lead to the following simplified order of judging criteria:

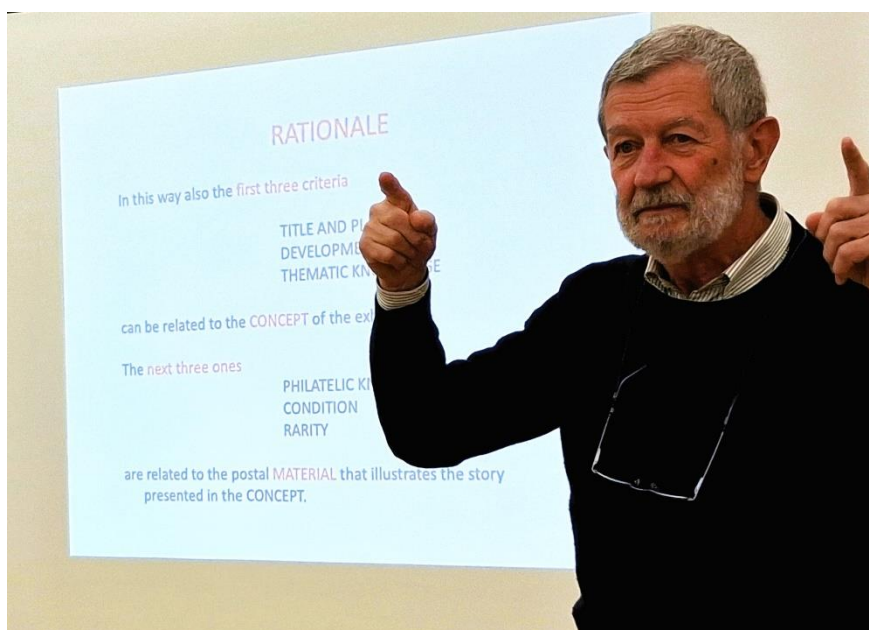
CONCEPT

Title & Plan	10
Development	20
TH Knowledge	15
<u>Presentation</u>	<u>5</u>
SUBTOTAL	50

MATERIAL

PH Knowledge	20
Condition	10
<u>Rarity</u>	<u>20</u>
SUBTOTAL	50

Which provides a perfect equilibrium between the Concept and the Material!



Acknowledgments

the roadmap to come to these new points distribution for thematic judging criteria have seen the strong contribution also of Damian Läge, Jonas Hällström, Paolo Guglielminetti.

HOW TO PREPARE A THEMATIC PHILATELY EXHIBIT

some Guidelines by Menachem Lador, ISRAEL

ladorm@gmail.com

Following a presentation given during Balkanfila, I was asked to summarize it and present a short article for the larger philatelist community in the Balkans.

A thematic exhibit has two essential properties: a **STORY** which is illustrated with (appropriate) **PHILATELIC MATERIAL**. One can think of writing an article on his theme for a Popular Science Magazine, but the illustrations will not be photographs but rather philatelic material. Thus, this article/exhibit needs to have:

- A **CONCEPT** - the message the writer/exhibitor wants to convey to the reader/visitor. What story do you want to tell? And of course, in order to be of interest to the audience, it should be innovative: you want to present something new (like a new approach or a different emphasize) rather than something that we have already read/seen many times;
- Since we are philatelists, and this is our beloved hobby, the article will be illustrated with **relevant philatelic material** (as defined in the Regulations and Guidelines of each philatelic class - Thematic, Open Class, etc.);
- It would of course be better for the article/exhibit if the **items** shown are **linked well** to the specific aspect that we are describing just now. More than that: it would be boring to see only stamps: it will be much more interesting to include a large variety of philatelic material: the stages of a stamp preparation, cancellations and meters, proofs, booklets, various stationaries and so on. But be careful to use only items that follow the regulations: for example, cachets (picture on the left side) of First Day Covers are not allowed (even if they were issued by the Postal Authority) - they are irrelevant to the Postal work and the transportation of the item from sender to addressee;

MATERIAL

There should be as much variety as possible
(both within the whole exhibit and on the single sheet)!

- **In the TYPE of material:**

Stamps, cancellations, postal stationery, covers, proofs...

- **Spatial:**

Material from ALL OVER the world

- **Temporal:**

Material from ALL PERIODS from pre- to modern-philately

– And of course, we want the **PRESENTATION** to be nice, clear, well arranged on the page so we read a continuous story.

Let's concentrate now on the first point – **CONCEPT**. As in every article one writes, he has to prepare a plan – for himself and for the reader/visitor – of what he wants to present. By that we mean that the exhibit must have a **TITLE** which defines well what the story will be about. The title should not be too wide, because then we won't be able to cover all aspects that come under that title. Olympic Games (or even summer/winter Olympic Games) is too wide. 1936 Olympic Games is much more specific, or as we have seen in Pernik: "**Organizing** the Olympic Games" or "I run, I throw, I jump" – a narrower theme.

Along with the title, the exhibit must have a **PLAN**. There are many ways to show an exhibit on The Dog or The Horse: the exhibitor must present his approach and this is done in the Plan. The Plan describes the main aspects of your story, how it is built and what you are going to tell us. First, we must emphasize that a thematic exhibit **MUST** have a plan: otherwise, the reader/visitor will not understand what he is going to see and will most probably jump to the next exhibit (or throw right away the article to the garbage). Not having a plan in a thematic exhibit will be heavily penalized by the jurors.

A better Plan: The main chapters tell a STORY

THE CONQUEST OF THE UNPROFITABLE WORLD / History of mountaineering

	Sheets		
0. PLAN	1-2	8. THEN GOT ORGANISED AND BECAME POPULAR	52-66
1. MOUNTAINS ARE MUCH OLDER THAN MEN	3-4	8.1 The mountaineering organizations	3
1.1 The earth beneath our feet is moving...	1	8.2 Dangers, safety and rescuing	3
1.2 ...and this movement causes also mountain building	1	8.3 Roads, railroads and cable cars allow an easier and faster access	3
2. BUT AT FIRST FEAR PREVENTED MAN FROM ASCENDING MOUNTAINS	5-12	8.4 Mountain cabins provide shelter near peaks	4
2.1 Mountains as the seat of gods	3	8.5 Alpine journals and telephones in cabins	2
2.2 Fear of evil creatures	2	9. AND STARTED TO EXPAND TO ALL CONTINENTS	67-77
2.3 Worshipped rocks and humans turned into stones	3	9.1 The Americas	5
3. ALTHOUGH LATER ON HE WAS FORCED TO APPROACH THEM	13-18	9.2 Africa and New Zealand	4
3.1 Military expeditions	3	9.3 The Caucasus - A playground for future expeditions	2
3.2 Subsistence motivations	3	10. REQUIRING NEW TECHNIQUES TO CONQUER ALL MOUNTAIN FACES	78-84
4. AND HE STARTED TO KNOW THEM BETTER	19-27	10.1 The revolution in the Eastern Alps	4
4.1 Religious motivations	3	10.2 The "last" problems in the Alps	3
4.2 Trade routes	3	11. AND EQUIPMENT IMPROVEMENTS THAT PERMITTED THE "IMPOSSIBLE"	85-96
4.3 Scientific motivations	3	11.1 Equipment improvements	3
5. THEIR BEAUTY STIRRED HIS IMAGINATION AND HE MADE HIS FIRST ASCENTS	28-34	11.2 Artificial climbing, winter and ice ascents	5
5.1 First influences of mountains on art and literature	4	11.3 "Impossible" ascents throughout the world	4
5.2 First known ascents	3	12. LEADING TO THE CONQUEST OF THE GIANTS	97-116
6. AND LED TO THE BIRTH OF MOUNTAINEERING AS DISCOVERY OF NATURE	35-42	12.1 First attempts in Asia	6
6.1 Mountaineering forerunners	2	12.2 Conquering Mt. Everest - world's roof	5
6.2 Birth of mountaineering: Triglav and Mont Blanc	2	12.3 The giants "fall" one after the other	9
6.3 Mountaineering's first steps	4	13. AND TO PRESENT CLIMBING TRENDS	117-124
7. BUT SOON MOUNTAINEERING BECAME A CHALLENGE TO ONE'S LIMITS	43-51	13.1 Clean and free climbing, bouldering	4
7.1 The golden age of Mountaineering	5	13.2 New trends on the highest mountains	2
7.2 Mountaineering without guides	4	13.3 Where is mountaineering heading to?	2
		14. THAT SHOULD RESPECT AND PRESERVE THE MOUNTAINS FOR OUR SUCCESSORS	125-128
		14.1 National parks	2
		14.2 Limits to climbing	2
		Total	128

"All said here is relevant also to Open class exhibits
as well as maximaphily and postcards that are thematically oriented".

But the Plan should also be **EFFICIENT AND WELL STRUCTURED**. It should:

- Be **CONSISTENT** with the Title – the story can't deviate too much from the borders defined in the Title;
- Be **ADEQUATE** – efficient for understanding the structure of the exhibit/article – i.e. your personal approach and story;
- **COVER ALL MAIN ASPECTS** of the title chosen so that the reader/visitor will get a fair overview and understanding of the chosen theme;
- **CORRECT, LOGICAL and BALANCED**: you want your story to be correct (scientifically, historically...), you want the story to be logical in the way it is presented and you want it to be balanced: within the limited area (pages/frames) that you were allocated, the story can't be half the area on one aspect and the other half dedicated to five other aspects. That doesn't make sense – the story should be balanced.

A technical aspect of presenting your PLAN on the first page of the exhibit: it is not a Table of Content as in a book.

A Plan should be presented with 2 levels (1. Chapter Name; 1.1 First aspect; 1.2 Second aspect,... 2. Chapter name; 2.1 ...).



NO STORY
An old "motive" exhibit
NOT THEMATIC!

Stojšavjević, 2005



Still no story ...
... but at least two types of material ...

Stojšavjević, 2005

An even better Plan:
Balanced, structured, tells ONLY the STORY!

In the plan keep Chapters and Subchapters only, the rest should go on the single sheets

This exhibit tells the amazing story of the slow conquest of the highest parts of our world's territory, the mountains, a mostly unprofitable world, conquered by man for exploring it, for curiosity, for its natural beauties and to overcome one's limits.

	Sheets
0. TITLE and PLAN	1
PART I	
THE STORY FROM MAN'S FIRST TIMID APPROACHES INTO THE REALM OF MOUNTAINS ...	
1. MOUNTAINS ARE MUCH OLDER THAN MEN ...	2-3
2. ...BUT AT FIRST FEAR PREVENTED MAN FROM ASCENDING MOUNTAINS ...	4-12
3. ...ALTHOUGH LATER ON HE WAS FORCED TO APPROACH THEM ...	13-18
4. ...SO HE STARTED TO KNOW THEM BETTER ...	17-24
5. ...THEIR BEAUTY STIRRING HIS IMAGINATION, SO HE APPROACHED THEM FOR PLEASURE ...	25-28
PART II	
...TO THE BIRTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF WORLD MOUNTAINEERING ...	
6. ...THE BIRTH OF MOUNTAINEERING BEING AT FIRST A DISCOVERY OF NATURE ...	29-34
7. ...BUT SOON MOUNTAINEERING BECAME A CHALLENGE TO ONE'S LIMITS ...	35-40
8. ... THEN GOT ORGANISED, BECAME POPULAR ...	41-52
9. ... AND STARTED TO EXPAND TO OTHER CONTINENTS ...	53-59
PART III	
...AND TO ITS MATURE PHASE, AT THE TOP OF THE WORLD AND LOOKING BEYOND ...	
10. ...REQUIRING NEW TECHNIQUES TO CONQUER ALL MOUNTAIN FACES ...	60-64
11. ...AND TECHNICAL IMPROVEMENTS THAT PERMITTED THE "IMPOSSIBLE" ...	65-72
12. ... WITH THE CONQUEST OF THE HIMALAYA AND KARAKORUM GIANTS ...	73-84
13. ... FOLLOWED BY PRESENT CLIMBING TRENDS THAT STARTED IN THE AMERICAS ...	85-93
14. ...THAT SHOULD RESPECT AND PRESERVE THE MOUNTAINS FOR OUR SUCCESSORS	94-96
Total	96

Thematic text in normal font.
Bold font indicates connection to material.
Phonetic text in italic and smaller font.
(Source and rare material summarized by Ilika Ilić)

There is no need in the Plan to go into third level details – those will be shown on the specific pages as 1.1.1, 1.1.2,... 1.2.1, etc.. We would like very much to see a story within the Plan – how the story is developed within each chapter and from one chapter to the next.

Examples of development

3.2 Subsistence motivations

Mountains were visited by men looking for crystals, especially quartz for jewelry making (Col des Cristaux near Aiguille Verte in Mont Blanc massif). Iron was also looked for in mountain environments. Gold (El Dorado) and silver prospectors and colonizers crossed the Rocky mountains during the gold rush.

Prospecting for gold ...

... and silver

Iron Mountain
Zemstvo stamp, Biala administration

Quartz crystals

Prisoner of war concentration camp STALAG VI J mail, Germany 1942

Thematic text mainly in a block on top

3.2 Subsistence motivations

Sheep could venture on much steeper ground, where and special shoes had to be devised, and men looked for quartz crystals and minerals on steep mountain peaks.

The shepherds could not always rely ...

... on their mountain shepherd dogs ...

... and when the sheep got lost, they climbed the steep mountain peaks.

... with primitive shoes fitted with iron nails.

Men visited mountains searching for quartz crystals for jewelry making.

Prisoner of war concentration camp STALAG VI J mail, Germany 1942.

Col des Cristaux in Mont Blanc massif, the quartz mountain!

Pen cancelled 1858 cover, handwritten postoffice name and date. Mineral Ridge (1864 - 1913), Iowa.

Iron Mountain, Zemstvo stamp, Biala administration.

In mountain environments also minerals like iron were looked for.

BETTER:

Appropriate thematic text positioned near each item – Story line runs through the page

I know this is not easy, but this makes the exhibit much more interesting, much more readable and understandable, much more exciting.

Use of thematic text in development

Block text on top or in the middle

8.3 Roads, railroads and cable cars allow an easier and faster access

The interest for mountains grows and traffic increases. During 1810 - 1830 most of the roads over the Alps passes are built, some Alpine roads even much later. The road over the Grossglockner is inaugurated in 1835.

Building roads

Road through the Areuse Schlucht

Inauguration of the Grossglockner road

Flexenstrasse

Julferrpass-Autofahrten wegen Unwetter um einige Tage verschoben

Sometimes even today roads are closed due to bad weather...
Road from Julferrpass to St. Moritz, waded, due to bad weather, two day in Chac, before being delivered.

8.3 Roads, railroads and cable cars allow an easier and faster access

The interest for mountains grows and traffic increases, new roads are built ...

During 1810-1830 most of the roads over mountain passes are built.

Harsh terrain involved also the building of many bridges ... so that public transport, coaches and later buses, allows a rapid access to mountains.

Booklet of postal cards, Switzerland, 1928

Right stamp: Variety "S" instead of "S"

The Grossglockner road over the massif is built in inaugurated in 1835.

Sometimes, even today, roads are closed due to bad weather conditions.

Mail from Julferrpass to St. Moritz had to wait for two days in Chur, due to bad weather conditions, before being delivered.

The Flexenstrasse over the Flexenpass in Austria was built between 1885 and 1909.

BETTER if connected to the items, according to your story !!

INNOVATIVE THEMATIC USE OF PHILATELIC ELEMENTS

Intelligence is a complicated task it starts with a clean table, collects information and slowly understands the capabilities of the enemy, strategic and tactical goals, how his forces are built and so on - building a puzzle, complete as it can be. An analysis of the enemy's (strategic) intentions is added in order to get an always-partial picture...

Of what material and with which tools is the lace made? What does the design mean?



Missing lace image



Another aspect is numbering the pages: we much prefer to have next to each Chapter Name the number of pages in that chapter (so we can see if the exhibit is balanced) rather than have the number of the page where it begins (as in a book's table of content).

Menachem Lador – Israel – Large Vermeil Medal

A Guided Tour of the 2nd Oldest Profession – Intelligence Services Museum



Hello Dear Visitors

My name is Nony Moose and I will be your guide today visiting our Museum. I am not a retired spy - I am the Museum's curator.

Our mission here is to educate (not train...) the public about intelligence and espionage in an engaging way and to provide context that fosters understanding of its important role and impact.

A nation's Intelligence Community (IC) is responsible for the collection, analysis, and exploitation of timely information about the capabilities, intentions and activities of foreign powers (generally enemies but not always), organizations or persons in support of national security, military, foreign policy objectives and law enforcement (that we'll not deal with).

What will you see here? The Entrance Plaza describes the Mission, Theory, Early History and Organization of Intelligence Services in various countries. From that Plaza split several halls, describing the different intelligence disciplines. Each hall may have internal rooms that tell specific stories. As in any Museum, exit is through our shop, where you'll find literature, films and paintings. Where relevant, a 3D barcode refers you to more information!

TAKE CARE!

We are watching every step of yours! Have a thorough look at this exhibit!



Entrance Plaza: Missions and Organization - You Can Never Know Enough (20 p.)

1. IC Missions and Importance
2. Old Profession - Bible and Ancient Times
3. IC is Organized Differently in each country
4. The Diplomatic Pouch

Hall 1: Human Intelligence (HUMINT) – The Everlasting Discipline (16 p.)

1. Basics of human spying
2. HUMINT Through the Ages
3. Women Hall of Fame
4. Political Intervention: Does the Regime Suit Me?

Hall 2: Visual Intelligence (VISINT) – Where is Your Enemy? (12 p.)

1. Land Reconnaissance
2. Air and Space Imagery (IMINT)
3. Maritime Reconnaissance
4. Mapping your enemy

Hall 3: Signal Intelligence (SIGINT) – Hear and Read your Enemy (24 p.)

1. From Vocal Messages to Electronics
2. Cryptanalysis – Reading your enemy's Messages
3. Cyber Warfare

Hall 4: Important Information may be Open (OSINT) – Just pick it Up (12 p.)

1. Journals, Radio and TV, Internet
2. Technical & Scientific Warfare
3. The Atom Room
4. Industrial Intelligence

Hall 5: Psychological Warfare (Psyops) – Enemy's Mind as a Target (8 p.)

1. Deceiving Your Enemy
2. Philately and leaflets are legitimate tools
3. Dr. Zhivago Room

Hall 6: Counterintelligence – You Must Always Protect Yourself (14 p.)

1. Censorship – Don't transfer secrets
2. Sh!!! The Enemy is Listening
3. Protecting the Leaders
4. 20.7.1944 Room
5. Fighting Terrorism
6. False Accusations

Museum Shop – Books, Films, Art (4 p.)

1. Books, Art
2. Radio Dramas and Films



The Museum shows only well scientifically documented facts and stories (The Secret World, C. Andrew; Spybook – The Encyclopedia of Spying, Polmar & Allen; Her Majesty's Secret Service, C. Andrew; A Century of Spies – Intelligence in the 20th Century, J. Richelson) as well as many Internet sites:

- <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/collection/stargate>
- <https://www.warhistoryonline.com/>

Main thematic text – Gadugi 12; Detailed Thematic text – Bahnschrift Condensed It; Philatelic Text – TNR 11

Significant thematic items Rare items Expertized items

Yoram Lubianiker – Israel – Large Gold Medal

Chess – the Game of War

Chess is known as "the game of war". When invented, nearly 2,000 years ago, it was meant to imitate war. This exhibit follows the story of chess – its invention, its components, the rules, the path to victory and the various types of tournaments. At each step along the way we present **corresponding specific examples of military history**. These examples highlight the remarkable similarities (despite some inevitable differences) between actual war and the game of war, known as chess.

Exhibit Concept

Chess	War
Invented to imitate war.	Existed since the dawn of times.
Requires pieces, two players and a set board.	Requires two armies, two commanders and a battlefield.
Has clear and fair rules for the beginning of the game, the way it is conducted and its end.	Is far more chaotic in all aspects, and the price to pay is significantly higher.
Victory is achieved using methods of attack and imaginative tactics.	Victory is achieved using methods of attack and imaginative tactics.
Competitions exist on all levels.	Battles exist on all levels.
Has not changed in the last 150 years.	Changed dramatically in this time span.



Field Marshal Hindenburg checkmating Grand Duke Nicholas of Russia, commander of the Russian army in WWI. Both men are being assisted by their allies.
An Austrian postcard from World War I.

Exhibit Plan

Prologue	3	4. Winning Tactics and Strategy	19
1. How It All Began	8	4.1 Defensive measures are required...	
1.1 Games imitate life...		4.2 ... and attack methods are implemented...	
1.2 ... and war is a part of life ...		4.3 ...while strategic advantages enhance the winning chances...	
1.3 ... so chess was invented to imitate war.		4.4 ... enabling some great masterpieces.	
2. Before the Game / War Starts	20	5. The Theaters of Chess & War	22
2.1 The different military units ...		5.1 With the help of organizers ...	
2.2 ... form two armies.		5.2 ... skirmishes occur on various scales...	
2.3 ... each with its own commander...		5.3 ... and the greatest winners get to rule the world...	
2.4 ... on a set battlefield...		5.4 ... but sometimes teamwork is required.	
2.5 ... and a supporting infrastructure.		6. Chess and War Part Ways	6
3. The Rules of Fair Fighting	17	6.1 Warfare has seen many changes in modern times ...	
3.1 One side starts ...		6.2 ... and new games present alternatives for chess.	
3.2 ... and then progress is slowly made.			
3.3 There are casualties along the way...			
3.4 ... and time limits to face...			
3.5 ... until eventually it all comes to an end...			
3.6 ... with spoils for the winner.			
		Thematic text – 11, regular	
		Philatelic text – 10, italic	
		Auxiliary text – 10, regular	

Joshua MAGIER – ISRAEL – Open Class - Gold Medal + Felicitations

Russia 1921-1923 Famine – Background, Causes, and Efforts to Save the Starving

Introduction.

In the years 1914-1923 Russia experienced WWI, revolution and a civil war. The 9 years of war resulted in massive displacement of population, destruction of transport system, widespread food requisition from peasants, economy degradation and hyperinflation. Moreover, in 1920-1921 an awful drought overcame large parts of Volga and Don basins, Ukraine and Crimea. Those calamities contributed to the severity of the 1921-1923 famine disaster in Russia. Part 1 of the exhibit describes the background and causes of the famine.

The number of Russians affected by the famine exceeds 30 million, of them about 10 million died from starvation and diseases. Millions of children became orphaned, abandoned and homeless. Part 2 of the exhibit describes the efforts done by the RSFSR authorities and the international relief organizations and societies to facilitate the fate of the starving and homeless and to save their life.

Under the leadership of V. Lenin, the All-Russian Central Executive Committee established in July 1921 the POMGOL* Commission headed by M. Kalinin. Its function was to coordinate all related to the famine.

The needs were tremendous, but the financial possibilities of the Soviet State to provide help to the famine victims were limited. On 13.6.1921, the Russian writer M. Gorky has appealed for help to H. Hoover, head of the American Relief Administration. On 23.6.1921, Hoover agreed to help, which was followed by massive supply to Russia of food and other commodities and of medical aid.

Initiatives to help Russia to overcome the 1921-1923 famine were undertaken also by the International Red Cross Commission headed by the Norwegian Fridtjof Nansen, and by other relief institutions and societies. The aid of the international organizations saved millions of Russians from starvation and death.

In October 1922, POMGOL was replaced by the Posledgol** Commission. Its policy was to eliminate the famine effects in all branches of the economy. Its care for the homeless children and war invalids continued.

Death from starvation.
Dutch 1923 bronze medal of the Dutch Nansen Committee to the Russian famine relief, design of L. Zijl



Russia Recovery.
1922 poster stamp with 1922 design of Alfons Mucha

References: – H. H. Fisher. The Famine in Soviet Russia, 1921-1923. The Macmillan Co., NY, 1927.
– B. M. Patenaude, J. N. Stevenson. Bread and Medicine: American Famine Relief in Soviet Russia, 1921-1923. Hoover Institution Press, Stanford University, U.S., 2023.
– J. A. Stevens. Children of the Revolution: Soviet Russia's Homeless Children (*Besprizorniki*) in the 1920s. Russian History, 1982. Vol. 9, No. 2/3. Published by Brill.
– D. Smith. The Russian job – the forgotten story of how America saved the Soviet Union from ruin. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, NY, 2019.

*The name POMGOL is an abbreviation of the Russian terms POMoshch (= help) and GOLodajushchym (= for the starving).

**The name Posledgol is abbreviation of the Russian terms posledstviya goloda (= consequences of hunger).

Plan

		No. of pages:
Introduction and Plan	2	1 – 2
Part 1. Background and causes of the famine		
1. Devastating impact of WW1 on the Russian economy	10	3 – 12
2. Russia 1917 Febr. and Oct. revolutions; internal strife and political disorder	9	13 – 21
3. The Russian 1917-1922 Civil War – impoverishment of the whole country	14	22 – 35
4. Forced farm-collectivization and forced requisition of food by the government	2	36 – 37
5. Collapse of the Soviet Russia economy; hyperinflation	3	38 – 40
6. 1920-1921 awful drought overcomes parts of the Soviet State; the famine begins	4	41 – 44
Part 2. Efforts to save the starving		
1. The tragedy of the starving and establishment of the POMGOL Commission	9	45 – 53
1.1. POMGOL efforts to raise funds in favor of the famine victims		
1.1.1. RSFSR POMGOL 1921 "Help the hungry of Povolzh'ye" stamp issue	3	54 – 56
1.1.2. RSFSR 1922 stamps with "For the starving" (of Povolzh'ye) overprints	6	57 – 62
1.2. Soviet State 1921-1923 "For the starving" non-postal issues	3	63 – 65
1.3. RSFSR POMGOL 1922 "For the starving" (transportation means) stamp issue	3	66 – 68
2. 1921-1923 international aid to save the starving in Russia		
2.1. Famine relief aid to Russia by the American Relief Administration (ARA) headed by Herbert Hoover	14	69 – 82
2.2. Saving the starving by the International Red Cross Commission headed by Fridtjof Nansen	8	83 – 90
2.3. Aid to the Soviet State provided by affiliated relief organizations and societies	14	91 – 104
3. RSFSR Rostov on Don and Transcaucasian SFSR "Help the Starving" campaigns	5	105 – 109
4. Efforts to save homeless children, and, "Philately for the Children" stamp issue	5	110 – 114
5. Establishment of Children's Commissions, and, Makarenko's "Pedagogical Poem"	3	115 – 117
6. The starving in Ukraine, and, Ukraine SSR 1923 "Help the hungry" stamp issue	5	118 – 122
7. The Posledgol Commission against consequences of the famine	6	123 – 128

The 1938 “Economic Propaganda” series, a story with unexpected twists

by George Dechev:

The 1938 “Economic Propaganda” issue remains unique in the history of Bulgarian postage stamps. Created under the pressure of deadlines, marked by a linguistic error and developed under the influence of technical limitations, it unexpectedly becomes a field for philatelic innovations. And its finale – with an attempt at organized speculation and urgent intervention by the state – sounds almost like a plot from a crime novel.

The beginning: between idea and execution

The story of the 1938 “Economic Propaganda” issue is not just a story about the creation of a postal series. It is a kind of chronicle of administrative decisions, technical challenges, curious mistakes and even... almost criminal situations.

The Language Paradox: From “Bulgaria” to “Bulgarie”

On August 6, 1937, the General Directorate of Posts, Telephones and Telegraphs (DG PTT) made the last clarification before commissioning the printing of the postal series “Economic Propaganda”. In letter No. 78155, it informed the Ministry of Finance (the then publisher of Bulgarian postal issues) that the submitted designs were not fully satisfactory, since in some of them the artists had made mistakes in the Latin inscription of the state name – instead of “Bulgaria” it was written “Bulgarie” or “Bulgarien”. Based on a protocol decision of the commission that examined and reviewed the designs, the postal department insisted that when commissioning the printing at the State Printing House, the inscription in all designs be ordered to be standardized in the correct form “Bulgaria”.

The order of the Department for Government Securities at the State Printing House was issued with the same date – No. 17088 of August 6, 1937. It specified the technical requirements and circulations as follows: 10, 15, 30 and 50 cents – 2,000,000 pieces each; 1 leva – 1,500,000 pieces; 2 leva – 2,000,000 pieces; 3 leva – 500,000 pieces; 4 leva – 1,000,000 pieces; 7 leva – 500,000 pieces; 14 leva – 100,000 pieces. However, a significant error was made in the text of the application: after the note on changing the values of the 1- and 2-lev stamps, it was written: “Also in the text “Bulgaria” the last letter “a” should be replaced with the letter “e.” This administrative misunderstanding predetermined the unique fact that the series appeared with an inscription in French (“Bulgarie”), unlike all other Bulgarian postal issues.

Slow start and administrative tension

Towards the end of 1937, concern arose in the General Directorate of the PTT due to the lack of progress in printing. With letter No. 81867 of December 6, 1937, the Directorate addressed the Department of State Securities, which the next day (No. 2783 of December 7, 1937) addressed the State Printing House with the following request:

"...to put under seal and print by the end of the year at least two postage stamps from the series for economic propaganda, namely the 1 and 2 leva stamps, with the circulation of these two stamps being the maximum production of the intaglio copper printing machine..."



The limitations of intaglio printing

With response No. 13653 of December 13, 1937, the State Printing House declared its readiness to fulfill the order, but indicated that the work would be completed as early as January 1938. Regarding the circulations, a principled position was expressed: due to technological limitations and "philatelic interest", no more than 1 000,000 copies of one type with one cylinder. It is emphasized that the production of a second cylinder would lead to differences in the nuances and line of the engraving. In conclusion, the printing house proposes:

"If the good circulation falls below one million, the second million from the second cylinder will have to be printed with a different color as a separate circulation, which will also increase the timbrophile value of the total circulation."

The color revolution in the series

The archival materials (CDIA, f. 159, op. 7, a.e. 12) lack explicit instructions on this proposal, but it is clear from the subsequent correspondence that it was accepted. In letter No. 50982 of 7 February 1938, the General Directorate of the PTT to the Ministry of Finance stated:

"Since the 2 leva stamp [...] has already been printed in two colours, an occasion [...] has been created [...] please order all types of stamps [...] to be printed [...] with the latter being divided in half and each half being printed in a separate colour".

A detailed distribution of the circulations by colour and ink for each denomination follows, which confirms the practice of two-colour variants as separate philatelic objects.

Controlled circulation

The supplement to the initial order was sent on 22 February 1938 (No. 4604). At the same time, the Bulgarian National Bank was notified (No. 4542) that the 2 leva stamp, described as "*representing a rose with a small standard canister of rose oil [...] in two colours - red and garnet red*", was about to be put into circulation.

The initial date for the release into circulation was set at 25 February 1938, with the emphasis being that the stamps would be sold until they were exhausted and would be distributed evenly among the bank branches.

By letter No. 11209 of 11 May 1938, the State Securities Department regulated the phased release of the series

The Phantom Stamps of War: The Mystery, Propaganda, and Philatelic Intrigue of the Ottoman "Cihad-ı Mukaddes" Issues

by Murat Ibrahim Çelebi

President of Ankara Philatelic Society
Board Member of Turkish Philatelic Federation

Introduction

Among the many unusual items in Ottoman philately, few have sparked as much debate as the Cihad-ı Mukaddes (Holy War) stamps issued during the First World War. Although they resemble postage stamps, they were never used for mail. For over a century, collectors have asked a fundamental question: were these stamps an official Ottoman propaganda tool, or were they a private, speculative creation intended to fool stamp collectors? Regardless of their origin, they remain one of the most fascinating "Cinderella" (unofficial) issues of the Ottoman Empire.

Historical Background

In November 1914, shortly after joining the First World War alongside Germany and Austria-Hungary, Sultan Mehmed V Reşad proclaimed Cihad-ı Ekber (The Great Holy War) against the Allied Powers. The Ottoman government hoped this declaration would encourage Muslims living under British, French, and Russian rule to support the Ottoman cause, particularly in Egypt, India, North Africa, and the Caucasus.

At the same time, the Ottoman Fourth Army, led by Cemal Pasha, prepared an ambitious military operation to capture the Suez Canal—Britain's vital communication route to India. Financing this campaign placed a heavy burden on the weakened Ottoman treasury. In this atmosphere of mobilization and political propaganda, the Cihad-ı Mukaddes stamps appeared. Most researchers believe they were designed to raise war funds, promote the idea of a pan-Islamic jihad, or both.

Design and Symbolism

The Cihad-ı Mukaddes series consists of eight distinct denominations (ranging from 5, 10, 20, and 40 para to 1,2, 5, and 10 kuruş), indicating a structured fiscal plan rather than a simple decorative issue. The visual composition is highly loaded with Ottoman-Islamic military symbolism. At the center of each stamp appears the Green Banner of Jihad, framed

within a sharp crescent motif. In Ottoman tradition, this banner is closely associated with sacred military mobilization and imperial authority. In some types, the design is further enriched with additional imperial and regional symbols. Alongside the crescent–star emblem of the Ottoman state, certain values include references to Egypt, particularly through stylized flag elements or symbolic color compositions, clearly pointing to the strategic focus of the Suez Campaign. The inscriptions are written in Ottoman Turkish using Arabic script, and prominently display the phrase:

“Cihad-ı Mukaddes” (Holy War)



Figure 1 : 5 Para, 1 Kurus, 2 Kurus and 5 Kurus denominations

Unlike regular Ottoman postal issues, the stamps do not include any reference to Postes Ottomanes or imperial postal authority. They also lack standard postal formatting elements such as cancellation fields or official validity marks. This strongly supports the interpretation that they were never intended for ordinary postal circulation. For this reason, most researchers classify them as propaganda stamps, fiscal cinderellas, or semi–official war fundraising issues, rather than true postage stamps. Unlike regular issues, these stamps lack any reference to the official Ottoman postal authority (Postes Ottomanes) and possess no fields for cancellation. This strongly suggests they were never meant for actual postal circulation. Consequently, most scholars classify them as propaganda, war–fundraising labels, or private fantasies.

The German Connection

One of the most widely accepted theories concerns the possible involvement of Germany. By 1915, wartime conditions had largely cut the Ottoman Empire off from its traditional European security printers. Yet the Cihad-ı Mukaddes stamps were printed in multiple colours and demonstrated a quality exceeding the capabilities of most Ottoman printing facilities of the period.

Several researchers have therefore suggested that the stamps may have been produced in Berlin. Particular attention has focused on Baron Max von Oppenheim, director of the German Intelligence Bureau for the East (Nachrichtenstelle für den Orient). Oppenheim

strongly supported the use of Islamic solidarity and jihad as a political weapon against the British and French Empires.

Some historians believe that the stamps formed part of a broader German–Ottoman propaganda campaign intended to spread the message of holy war throughout the Muslim world.

Although no definitive archival document proving this theory has yet been discovered, the quality of printing and the political circumstances make German involvement a plausible explanation.

Failure and Non-Issuance

The First Suez Offensive ended in failure in early 1915. Ottoman forces could not capture the canal, and the expected mass uprising among Muslims under British rule never happened. As the campaign's strategic purpose vanished, the need for these stamps disappeared. No evidence exists that they were ever distributed through post offices or officially put into use. If they were an official project, they remained unissued.

The Forgery Theory

Many philatelists argue that the Ottoman government never authorized these stamps. Researchers like Adolf Passer noted the total absence of official government decrees, treasury records, or postal regulations regarding them. Because of this, some scholars argue the stamps were produced privately by a stamp dealer hoping to profit from the public's fascination with the declaration of jihad. In this view, they were printed in Europe and marketed as "rare, unissued propaganda stamps." Such speculative items were common in the Levant during that era.

Further Evidence Against Official Origin

Turkish researcher Ekrem Türkay noted that in over a century of study, no "genuinely used" example has ever been found on a letter or postcard. Türkay also pointed out that the Ottoman Post Office had already prepared a separate, official stamp issue in Vienna for the occupation of Egypt. Since an official issue already existed, it is highly unlikely that the government would have simultaneously commissioned a second, unrelated "Holy War" set. Atilla Dirim and other modern researchers share this view, concluding that the stamps were likely a private, commercial venture.

Philatelic Legacy

Whether official propaganda or a commercial invention, these stamps occupy a unique place in history. They illustrate the intersection of politics, religion, and warfare during the final years of the Ottoman Empire. They provide insights into psychological warfare and international relations during World War I. For many, the mystery behind their origin is what makes them so attractive. More than a century later, the Cihad-ı Mukaddes stamps remain highly sought-after items that continue to spark scholarly debate.

Conclusion

The Cihad-ı Mukaddes stamps stand on the boundary between history and mystery. They may represent an abandoned Ottoman-German propaganda project, or they may be one of the most successful speculative creations in philatelic history. Regardless of their true origin, they remain remarkable artifacts of a dramatic era. Their powerful symbolism and uncertain past ensure their place among the most intriguing issues in Middle Eastern philately.

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Everyday Life in the Ottoman Empire Through Postcards

Street Life and Occupations in the Late Ottoman Period

by Refik Erdal TANIL

INTRODUCTION

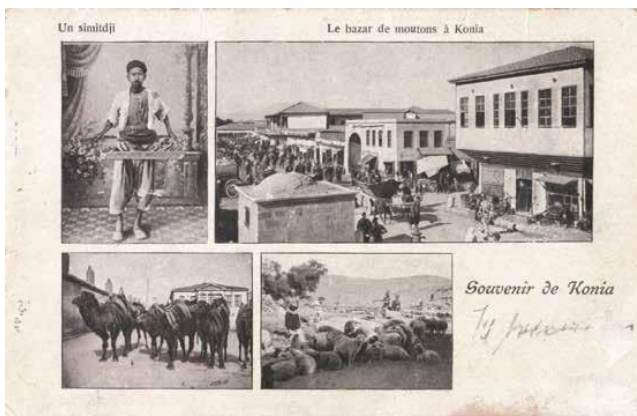
The last quarter of the nineteenth century and the early years of the twentieth century marked a period in which visual culture spread rapidly throughout the Ottoman Empire. With the development of photographic technology, advances in printing techniques, and the expansion of international postal networks, postcards became important visual documents of everyday life.



Initially depicting mainly city views and monumental architecture, postcards soon evolved into visual sources documenting the daily life, street culture, occupations, and social diversity of Ottoman society. Published by editors operating in centers such as Constantinople, Smyrna, Salonique, Beyrouth, Jerusalem, Samsun, Trabzon, and Adana, and printed by European printing houses, these postcards have survived not only as means of communication but also as visual testimonies to the social life of their time.

This study examines how everyday life was represented through postcards of the Late Ottoman period. Particular attention is given to street vendors, artisans, service occupations, and production activities as reflections of the visual memory of Ottoman urban life. In addition, the technical production processes of postcards, editor-printer relationships, and printing techniques are discussed in order to demonstrate that these materials possess not only aesthetic value but also considerable historical and documentary significance.

THE GLOBAL CIRCULATION OF THE OTTOMAN IMAGE



During the Late Ottoman period, postcards were not merely postal items circulating between cities; they also became the visual face of Ottoman society presented to the world. Postcards produced in Ottoman cities quickly reached various

European countries, allowing millions of people to become familiar with Ottoman everyday life through these small images.

This characteristic distinguishes postcards from ordinary photographs. While photographic albums generally remained within private archives, postcards entered circulation, were reproduced, and were viewed repeatedly across different geographical regions. Ottoman streets, occupations, clothing, and urban life thus became part of international visual culture.

For European audiences, perceptions of Ottoman everyday life were often shaped through postcards. Fruit and vegetable sellers, coffee vendors, barbers, simit sellers, and artisans circulated both as genuine elements of daily life and as images that reinforced contemporary Orientalist perspectives.



For this reason, Ottoman postcards should be regarded as important sources not only for local history but also for understanding the international circulation of Ottoman imagery.

Postcards were also part of a broader culture of travel. During the Late Ottoman period, people moving between ports, railway lines, steamship routes, and major cities shared images of the places they visited through postcards. Consequently, postcards were not merely representations of cities but witnesses to a geography in motion. This circulation was not limited to city views. A postcard depicting a street vendor published in Constantinople could reach Paris, Berlin, or London within a short time, making scenes of Ottoman daily life part of international visual culture. Today, these networks of visual circulation can be traced through postally used postcards.

Many postcards depicting Ottoman everyday life also take the viewer on a visual journey. Extending from the streets of Constantinople to Anatolian towns and from ports to bazaars, this circulation created a narrative linking different occupations, social types, and scenes of daily life. In this respect, postcards also preserve the visual memory of travel experiences across the Late Ottoman world.



THE DEVELOPMENT OF POSTCARD CULTURE IN THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE

The widespread use of postcards in the Ottoman Empire accelerated after 1895, paralleling developments in Europe. Improvements in photograph-based printing techniques enabled postcards to become visual products accessible to broad audiences.

During this period, numerous editors operating throughout the Ottoman Empire played an important role in postcard production. However, editors were not merely publishers; they were also individuals who selected and visually constructed representations of Ottoman everyday life. Decisions regarding which occupations, costumes, or urban scenes would be depicted were largely shaped by editorial choices. Editors based in Constantinople, such as Max Fruchtermann, Ludwigsohn Frères, Au Bon Marché, and M. J. C. Moïse Israelovitch, collaborated with major European printing houses to publish extensive series portraying Ottoman cities, people, and daily life.



A significant proportion of Ottoman postcards were printed in Germany, France, and Austria. Recent technical studies have shown that some Ottoman postcard editors maintained long-term collaborations with specific European printing houses. In particular, the close relationships between Constantinople-based editors and printers in Leipzig, Dresden, and Munich demonstrate that Ottoman postcard production developed within an international publishing network.



Various printing techniques were employed during this period, including collotype, chromolithography, halftone, and photolithographic halftone processes. The diversity of these techniques not only affected visual quality but also continues to provide a basis for the historical classification of postcards today.

EVERYDAY LIFE AND VISUAL ANTHROPOLOGY

Ottoman postcards offer more than aesthetically appealing images; they also serve as visual anthropological sources documenting the details of everyday life. The methods of carrying goods, tools and equipment, body language, clothing, and interactions between workers and customers can all be studied through these postcards.

For example, the way a simit seller carried his tray, the equipment used by a water carrier (saka), or the tools employed by a lamplighter provide valuable insights into the rhythm of urban life in Ottoman cities. Likewise, porters, boatmen, and street vendors reveal patterns of labor organization and economic activity within the city.

Consequently, postcards should be regarded not only as collectible visual objects but also as historical sources documenting everyday behavior within Ottoman society. A postcard depicting a water carrier, for instance, can provide detailed information about urban services before the introduction of modern water networks through the water containers, cups, and carrying equipment shown. Similarly, lamplighters, porters, and boatmen serve as important visual witnesses to the urban infrastructure and working practices of the period.



EVERYDAY LIFE AND STREET OCCUPATIONS



One of the most striking aspects of Ottoman postcards is their depiction of scenes directly reflecting everyday life. Street vendors in particular provide valuable visual evidence for understanding urban life during the period.

Simit sellers, sherbet vendors, water carriers, liver sellers, arena vendors, flower sellers, coffee vendors, and itinerant food sellers were introduced both to local populations and to European audiences through postcards.

These postcards do not merely portray occupations; they also reflect the rhythm of Ottoman cities, the street economy, and social interactions. Many scenes highlight the relationship between vendors and customers, as well as the equipment, methods of transport, and clothing associated with these occupations.

Postcards depicting simit sellers, for example, reveal not only aspects of food culture but also the role of family labor and the everyday structure of street commerce.

ARTISANS AND THE CULTURE OF PRODUCTION

Postcards portray not only street vendors but also production processes and artisans. Shoemakers, blacksmiths, carpet weavers, wool workers, tobacco workers, and various workshop laborers appear in scenes documenting the productive structure of the Late Ottoman economy.



Such postcards function as visual documents that make labor visible within Ottoman society.

Open-air workshops, small-scale production sites, and traditional working methods provide valuable insights into pre-industrial and early modern production cultures.

Some postcards document not only occupations but also the organization of production itself. Scenes of wool processing or agricultural labor, for example, illustrate economic chains extending from the processing of raw materials to their transportation and distribution.

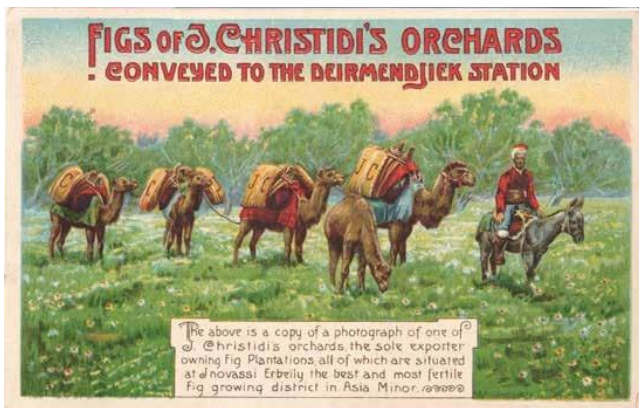
THE DOCUMENTARY AND HISTORICAL VALUE OF POSTCARDS



For many years, postcards were regarded primarily as nostalgic or collectible objects. Today, however, they are increasingly recognized as important primary sources for urban history, social history, visual culture, and the study of everyday life.

Postcards from the Late Ottoman period contain valuable details concerning architecture, clothing, labor, and social relations. Moreover, postal markings, correspondence, and circulation data recorded on the cards demonstrate that postcards are important documents not only of visual culture but also of communication history.

Postcards from the Late Ottoman period contain valuable details concerning



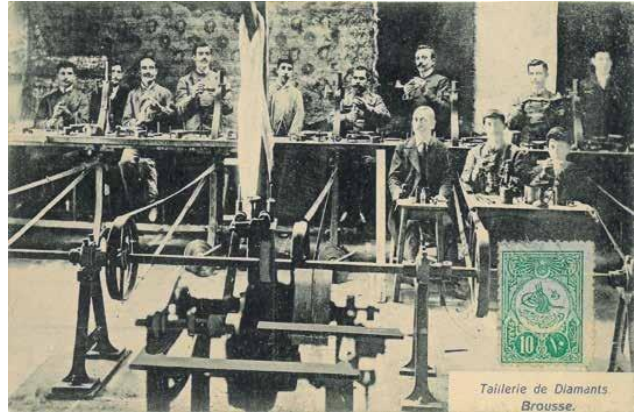
Postally used postcards are particularly significant because they reveal international networks of circulation. Postcards sent from Constantinople to France, Germany, or England demonstrate the place of Ottoman cities within global visual circulation.

At the same time, postcards reflect contemporary modes of visual representation. While some scenes document everyday life in a relatively natural manner, others were deliberately composed to appeal to the interests and expectations of Western audiences.

At the same time, postcards reflect contemporary modes of visual

POSTCARDS AND MODERNIZATION

The spread of postcards was closely linked to the modernization process of the Late Ottoman period. The development of photography, the expansion of international postal networks, and the integration of European printing systems into the Ottoman market enabled postcards to achieve widespread circulation within a relatively short period.



Railways, port cities, and international commercial centers played a particularly important role in the development of postcard culture. Constantinople, Smyrna, and Salonique became not only commercial hubs but also major centers of visual production.

In this sense, postcards can be regarded as an integral component of modern Ottoman urban life. Functioning both as means of communication and as objects of visual consumption, postcards illustrate the relationship between Ottoman society and modern visual culture.

TECHNICAL ANALYSIS AND PRINTING HISTORY



One of the factors that makes Ottoman postcards especially important is their production technology. Most postcards were printed by specialized European printing houses, and the techniques employed reflect the technological capabilities of the period.

Collotype prints are notable for their high level of detail and smooth tonal transitions, while halftone and photomechanical processes enabled larger-scale production. Chromolithography was particularly common in multicolored postcards.

Today, high-resolution visual analysis allows printing techniques to be examined in greater detail. Dot structures, ink distribution, color layers, and surface textures provide valuable evidence for identifying the methods by which postcards were produced.

Editor-printer relationships also offer important insights into Ottoman postcard history. Some editors maintained long-term partnerships with particular printing houses, providing valuable clues for the historical classification and study of postcards.

CONCLUSION

Postcards from the Late Ottoman period are far more than aesthetically appealing collectibles. These small visual documents preserve everyday life, street culture, occupations, production relationships, and urban experiences, bringing them into the present as valuable historical sources.

Postcards depicting street vendors and everyday occupations provide particularly revealing insights into the rhythm of Ottoman society. At the same time, they demonstrate the place of Ottoman cities within international networks of visual circulation and highlight the emergence of modern visual culture during the period.

Today, studies based on postcards contribute not only to collecting and philately but also to social history, visual anthropology, urban history, and the history of printing technologies.

For this reason, Ottoman postcards should be viewed not merely as nostalgic images of the past but as historical witnesses preserving the visual memory of Late Ottoman society.



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Maximaphily: The Class That Adds Color to Philately

by Muzaffer ARDA

Maximaphily, one of the most aesthetic and eye-catching classes in the world of philately, is based on the principle of bringing together a postage stamp, a postcard and a postmark in maximum concordance. In this respect, maximaphily is not merely a field of collecting; it is also a distinctive philatelic discipline that combines visual memory, historical narrative, and artistic integrity.



The origin of maximum cards dates back to the late nineteenth century, with the emergence of illustrated and picture postcards and postage stamps. At that time, since the reverse side of a postcard was reserved solely for the recipient's name and address, the postage stamp was affixed to the picture side of the card, namely the front side containing the image or illustration. (1)

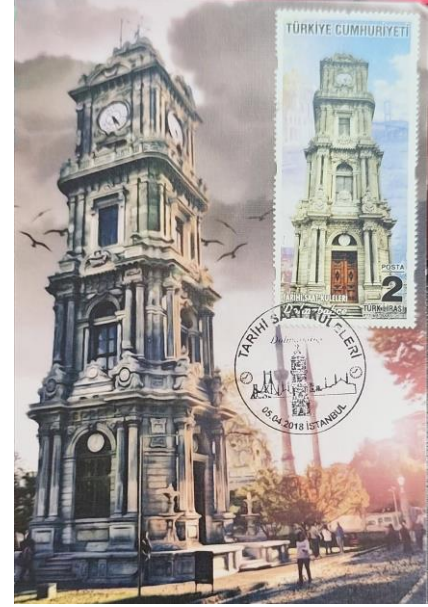
“Maximaphily did not develop into an organized structure until after World War II. Before then, maximum cards were mostly novelty and souvenir items prepared by tourists. Today, maximaphily is closely associated with thematic or subject-based stamp collecting, and many thematic collections are enriched with suitable maximum cards.” (2)

Over time, maximaphily evolved and was accepted as an official exhibition class within the Fédération Internationale de Philatélie (FIP), acquiring its own evaluation criteria. The principle of “maximum concordance,” which forms the basis of a maximum card, aims to achieve the highest possible level of thematic, temporal, and geographical harmony between the stamp, postcard, and postmark.

Although maximaphily is now regarded as one of the most colourful and publicly appealing classes of philately, it has not yet fully attained the position it deserves, either in Türkiye or on the international stage.

My personal connection with this class extends beyond collecting. I currently serve as the Turkish delegate to the FIP Maximaphily Commission and devote considerable effort to promoting, popularizing, and expanding awareness of this field in our country.

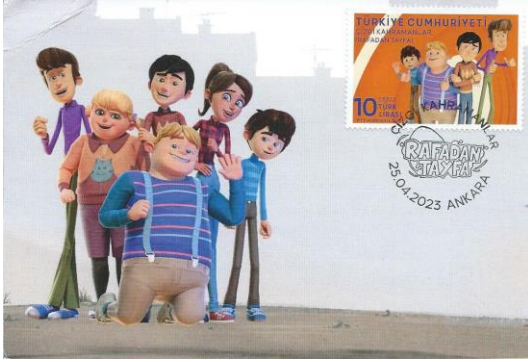
In particular, I share information through social media about the annual “Best Maximum Card” competition organized by the FIP Maximaphily Commission, encouraging collectors to participate in the process. These posts not only contribute to voting and evaluation activities but also help introduce maximum cards produced in different countries.



Indeed, Türkiye’s first-place achievement in this competition in 2019 with a maximum card featuring the Dolmabahçe Clock Tower marked an important turning point in increasing interest in this class. This success encouraged many philatelists to turn toward maximaphily and begin building collections in this area.

At the same time, it is important to consider the generational development model observed in thematic philately when evaluating the progress of maximaphily. When the approach presented by Vojtech Jankovič in his article “The Generations in Thematic Philately,” which examines the evolutionary process of thematic philately, is adapted to maximaphily, it can be said that this class is still in the transitional stage toward the third generation. This indicates that maximaphily is evolving from a traditional approach of accumulating material into a structure requiring deeper analysis and narrative construction.

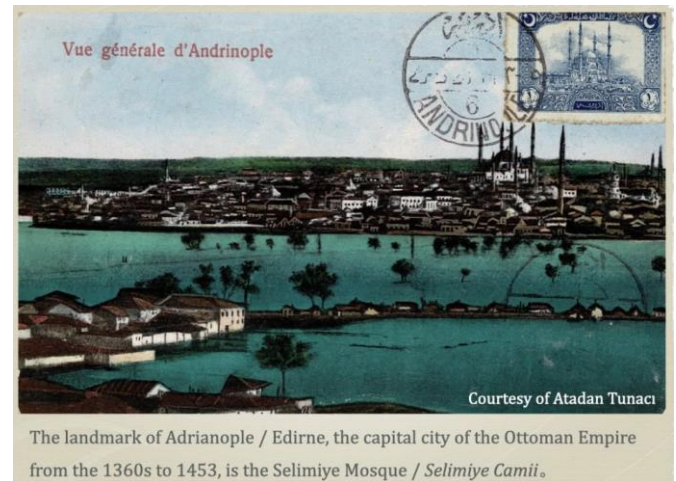
In the case of Türkiye, the insufficient production of maximum cards by PTT over many years negatively affected both the visibility and accessibility of this material among collectors. This deficiency in the spread of maximum card culture naturally limited participation in competitive exhibitions.



In recent years, additional factors have emerged that have complicated this situation. In particular, the high taxes imposed on philatelic material purchases from abroad have made access to foreign maximum cards more difficult. This has become a significant

obstacle limiting collection diversity. Furthermore, the occasional perception of maximum cards by jury members in thematic philately exhibitions as “secondary” or “undesirable” material has created a psychological factor that has reduced interest in this material.

Despite these challenges, the decision of PTT Inc. in the post-pandemic period to regularly include maximum cards in thematic series has been an extremely positive development. This policy change has contributed, within a short period, to a visible increase in participation in the maximaphily class at national exhibitions.



More recently, the achievement of distinguished philatelist Atadan Tunacı, who won a Large Vermeil medal at the Boston 2026 World Stamp Show with his collection entitled “Maximum Cards of the Ottoman Period,” has been recorded as an important success that increased Türkiye’s international visibility in this class. I believe that achievements of this kind will increase interest in maximaphily in both national and international competitive exhibitions.

In conclusion, maximaphily possesses the potential to occupy a stronger place in the future of philately thanks to its aesthetic power, narrative capacity, and multidimensional perspective on collecting. To realize this potential, the production policies of national postal administrations, collector education, encouraging jury approaches at exhibitions, and international cooperation are all of great importance.

The positive developments observed in Türkiye in recent years are encouraging for this field. My hope is that maximaphily will reach the level it deserves both in our country and in the international philatelic arena through steadily increasing participation. To achieve this goal, it is the responsibility of all of us to support this beautiful and colorful class and pass it on to future generations.

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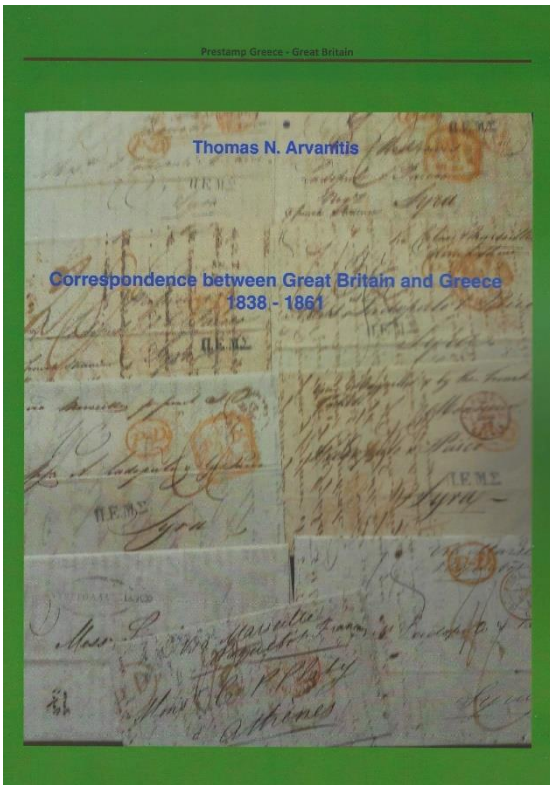
A maximum card which was prepared with the 20-krş value of the stamp series issued in commemoration of the 400th anniversary of the opening of the Süleymaniye Mosque, cancelled with the first day post mark of the series.



New Publication

Correspondence between Great Britain and Greece, 1838–1861 a Comprehensive Study of Pre-UPU Postal Relations

The author of this book, Thomas N. Arvanitis is a collector and awarded exhibitor that has been studying and researching thoroughly the pre-philatelic period of Greece



Philatelic literature on Mediterranean postal history has been significantly enriched by the publication of Thomas N. Arvanitis's latest study, *Correspondence between Great Britain and Greece, 1838-1861*. This important work offers a meticulous examination of the postal relations between Great Britain and the newly established Kingdom of Greece during the complex pre-stamp and early stamp era.

Navigating the Pre-UPU Postal Network

Covering the period from 1838 to 1861, the book explores the intricate maritime routes, postal agreements, and accounting systems that governed international correspondence before the standardization introduced by the Universal Postal Union.

Arvanitis analyzes the competition among the Great Powers for control of the Levant mail market through three principal postal channels:

- **The Austrian Route (via Trieste)**

A detailed study of the Austrian Lloyd steamship network and the Greco-Austrian Conventions of 1838, 1845, and 1852. The author clarifies complex accountancy markings, including the *W.L.20 (Weiterfranko London)*, and examines the effects of the Austrian currency reform of 1857 on postal rates and accounting procedures.

- **The French Route (via Marseille)**

An examination of the French Mediterranean packet services (*Paquebots de la Méditerranée*) and the evolving Anglo–French postal conventions. Particular attention is given to French *Ambulant* railway markings and the Greek “Paid to Borders” (Π.Ε.Μ.Σ.) cachets.

- **British Maritime Initiatives**

The work documents the short–lived British steam mail services of 1840–41 (via Falmouth) and 1847–48 (Marseille–Malta–Patras), which ultimately failed to compete with the well–established continental networks.

Research Depth and Postal Rarities

One of the book’s greatest strengths lies in its presentation of exceptional postal history material illustrating the practical application of contemporary regulations.

Among the highlights are:

- A dedicated section on **sanitized mail processed at the Malta Lazaretto**, including examples with fumigation slits and quarantine markings reflecting contemporary fears of epidemic disease.
- Documentation of the **only two recorded covers** from the inaugural British P&O sailing of 2 September 1840.
- Presentation of the **highest recorded foreign letter rate of the pre–stamp period**, amounting to 12.80 drachmas.

An Essential Reference Work

Supported by detailed rate tables, extensive archival research, and high–quality illustrations of rare covers, this publication constitutes an essential reference for collectors and researchers specializing in Greek postal history, British foreign mails, and maritime communications of the nineteenth century.

By combining rigorous historical analysis with technical philatelic research, Arvanitis succeeds in illuminating a complex and previously fragmented field of study.

Publication Details

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Commemorative postage stamps “Myths and Flora 2026”

After the death of the Illyrian King Agron, power was assumed by his wife Teuta, who ruled Illyria from 231 to 227 BC in place of her minor stepson, Pines. In 229 BC, she entered into a war with the Romans due to Illyrian piracy in the Adriatic.

There are many legends about Teuta and her courts. Among other things, it is mentioned that she stayed on Šolta and Hvar, in Ploče, and in Jezero near Jajce. In the Široki Brijeg area, it is said that King Agron built her a summer residence in Borak near the source of the Lištica River, where the remains of a fortress can still be found today.



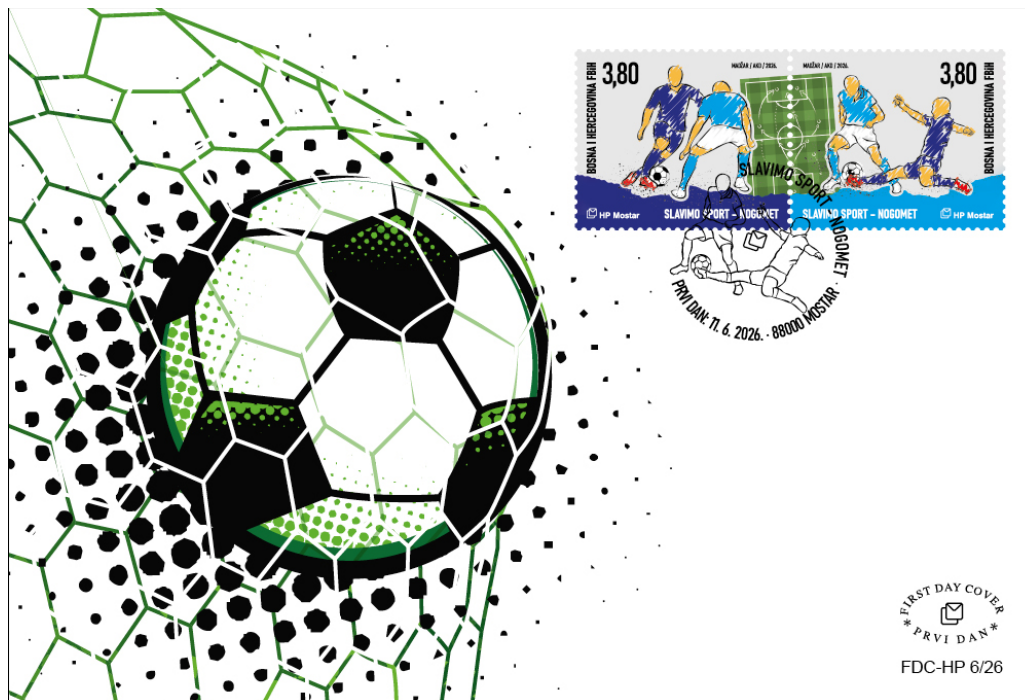
Also, one of the legends says that after her defeat, the queen retreated to the fortress of Rhizon (Risan in the Bay of Kotor). Surrounded by Roman forces and unwilling to fall into their hands, she chose death by jumping from a cliff above Risan. From the cave that bears her name flows Sopot, a spring that appears only twice a year, which according to legend was created from Teuta's tears shed while watching the Romans conquer her kingdom. Groves of wild oleander, called Queen Teuta's flowers, grow in Risan. Legend says that they were brought to this region by Teuta's warriors who protected the fortress. They coated the tips of their arrows with the poisonous juice of the oleander (called “zlojesina”), which caused coma and death.

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Commemorative postage stamps “Let’s celebrate sports”

Today, sport is an integral part of the culture of modern society, while the beginnings of sports competitions reach far back into prehistory. Initially, running, throwing, wrestling, swimming, shooting, etc. had a completely military character. With the development of civilization, games with various objects such as sticks, balls, spheres... appeared, as well as specially built arenas or playgrounds.

The modern sports movement originated in England in the mid-19th century with the aim of achieving the best possible results, regardless of the amount of mental and physical effort expended during the work. Numerous studies on the popularity of sports have shown that football is the most popular sport in the world. It unites different people in the spirit of sport and creates a strong sense of community, and anyone can play it, without special conditions.



Events like the World Cup erase differences between people because everyone shares the same passion cheering for their teams. The World Cup – North America 2026 is the first World Cup organized by three countries: Canada, Mexico, and the USA. The opening ceremony will take place on June 11 at the Azteca Stadium in the Mexican capital, Mexico City. The final will be played on July 19 at MetLife Stadium in New York. (Željka Šaravanja)

Croatian Post Ltd. Mostar issued 2 commemorative postage stamps in a sheet of 8 stamps + 2 vignettes, a postmark and a first day cover (FDC). Stamps and accompanying materials can also be purchased online at www.epostshop.ba

GREECE

Hellenic Post circulated the commemorative stamp series “Museums of Contemporary Art” on 27 May 2026, featuring works from the **National Museum of Contemporary Art (EMST)** and **MOMus Thessaloniki**. These museums are the vibrant pulse of Greek contemporary creativity, offering bold exhibitions and fresh perspectives that give art voice, space and power — places where inspiration meets the present and the future takes shape.

Purchase the new EMST and MOMus stamps and showcase two of the country’s most dynamic hubs of contemporary creation — small works of art worth sending out into the world.

Postage Stamps depictions as follows :

€1,20 : Nikos Kessanlis (1930–2004), **Compressed Cotton**, 1961 Wooden press and cotton cloth, (43,5 x 60,5 x 40,5 cm), Donated by the artist, 2001, Inv. No.129/01, Collection of the **National Museum of Contemporary Art Athens**.

€2,00 : Theodoros, sculptor (1931–2018), **Ares**, 1965 Metal (70 x 29 x 29 cm), Theodoros’ sculptor Inheritance, Inv. No. 1344/21, Collection of the **National Museum of Contemporary Art Athens**.



€1,20 : **Opy Zouni** (1941–2008), **Corner-Space**, 1983 Acrylic on wooden construction (170 x 246 cm), Donation of Alexander Iolas, **MOMus** – Museum of Contemporary Art–Macedonian Museum of Contemporary Art and State Museum of Contemporary Art Collections.

€2,00 : **George Zongolopoulos** (1903–2004), **Untitled**, 1993 Bronze (46 x 26 x 8 cm), Alexander and Dorothy Xydis’ donation, **MOMus** – Museum of Contemporary Art–Macedonian Museum of Contemporary Art and State Museum of Contemporary Art Collections.

Hellenic Post celebrated the contribution of the Stavros Niarchos Foundation (SNF) with the release of the commemorative stamp series “Stavros Niarchos Foundation” on June 24, 2026.

The Stavros Niarchos Foundation has long supported initiatives that improve quality of life and create meaningful social impact. Through major donations in the fields of health, education, culture, and social welfare, it contributes to building a better and more accessible future for all.

Postage Stamp Denominations

€2,00 Education

€2,00 Art and Culture

€1,20 Health and Sports

€1,20 Social Welfare



Commemorative Cancellations

TRAVELLING in GREECE
27 MAY 2026

HELLENIC NEUROSURGICAL SOCIETY
12 JUNE 2026

200 Years ERMOUPOLIS
24 JUNE 2026





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