

Balkanfila



News letter

No 14, April 2026

Editorial

As Balkanfila XXI came to a grand finale, the next one was announced

Balkanfila XXI in Pernik was a regional philatelic exhibition to be remembered for the quality of exhibits they were displayed, as the Jury Committed has acknowledged, as well for the enjoyable surrounding of Pernik itself. Sasho Hadzhikhrstov, General Commissioner of the first Balkanfila in 1965 reported *that "Varna, which demonstrated the possibilities for holding major philatelic events outside the capital"*.

As ever, the Palmares was not only an enjoyable occasion for everybody but also a significant one as four outstanding exhibits received the Balkanfila, International, National Grand Prix and the One-Frame Special Prize.

The philatelists- visitors at the "Palace of Culture" had also the chance to see a noteworthy private collection of Salvador Dalí's artwork that was exhibited at the time of Balkanfila. In this issue there are four interesting articles on "King Peter at the Battlefield", "Cape Treport & Cape St. Janji", "Italian Post in Scutari of Albania" and "Carol Göbl, Institute of Graphic Arts", that our readers would appreciate.

An anniversary stamp issue of a Football Club, is not worth-mentioning in most cases. The case of Panetolikos F.C though is quite different, since its educational contribution of organizing "Night Schools" for thousands of local children from low-income families surpasses its accomplishment in Sports.

Finally, during the Balkanfila Working Group Meeting in Pernik, Mr George Grigore, National Commissioner of Romania announced that Balkanfila XXII will be organized next May in Bucharest.



BALKANFILA from VARNA...

1965 VARNA the starting point of a philatelic journey



The concept of organizing a major international exhibition in Bulgaria, was “sown” in 1936 by 22year old Simeon Charykchiev – a young philatelic dealer with flair and bold ideas – publisher of Bulgarian Stamp”, a new philatelic magazine.

This innovative concept of Charykchiev took 29 years to bear “fruit” in the form an exhibition “Balkanfila — Varna 1965” that was a “significant event in the development of philately in our country and in the Balkans” as Sasho Hadzhikhrstov, General Commissioner of the Exhibition, wrote in the magazine “Philatelic Review” (issue no 10, 1965).

The exhibition provided opportunities for the exchange of experience, ideas, and materials among philatelists from different countries. It laid the foundation for future joint events and strengthened international cooperation in the field of philately.

Of particular importance was the participation of philatelists from countries outside the Balkan Peninsula, which broadened the scope and significance of the exhibition. This showed that “Balkanfila” could evolve into an international philatelic event with even wider participation.

Equally important is the fact that the exhibition was organized in a provincial city — Varna, which demonstrated the possibilities for holding major philatelic events outside the capital. This is an example that could be followed by other cities in the country.

...to PERNIK

61 years later and 479 km away from Varna,

the exciting Balkan philatelic journey continues larger and stronger in Pernik



The BALKANFILA XXI JURY REPORT

“The Balkanfila XXI 2026 Jury has completed the evaluation and is pleased to present this report.

The jury evaluated a total of 127 exhibits and 19 literary exhibits. The jury members found the quality of the exhibits presented to be at a very high level.

We awarded 15 large gold medals and 17 gold medals. We are pleased to note that many exhibits have improved significantly since their presentation at previous exhibitions”.

BALKANFILA XXI – PALMARES

On May 2nd the Balkanfila XXI Palmares took place at the “San Marco” Restaurant that was filled with the exhibitors, national commissioners, jurors and above all the persons who made possible to host another Balkanfila exhibitions.

The President of the Union of the Bulgarian Philatelists, Spas Panchev referred to the people and the organizations such as the Pernik Municipality, Pernik District Administration and “Bulgarian Post” as well as to the individuals that managed to put together this important F.I.P–sponsored philatelic encounter possible.



Igor Pirc, FEPA Secretary General and Balkanfila Working Group Secretary holds his Diploma of Appreciation for his long-term contribution to Balkanfila organization from Spas Panchev, President of the Union of Bulgarian Philatelists



Group photo of the Jurors at the Palmares



Group photo of the National Commissioners at the Palmares

During any Palmares the highlight is the official announcement of the Grand Prix and the subsequent award ceremony.

In Balkanfila XXI in Pernik were three Grand Prizes awarded as follows :

Grand Prix Balkanfila

Ion Chirescu (Romania) : *“Foreign Posts in the Romanian Territories”*



*Romania National Commissioner George Grigore
receives the Balkanfila Grand Prix on behalf of the winner Ion Chirescu*

Grand Prix International

Alan Mellaart (Türkiye) : “*The Registered Mail of the Ottoman Empire 1840–1923*”



*Türkiye National Commissioner Murat Hazinedaroğlu
receives the International Grand Prix on behalf of the winner Alan Mellaart*

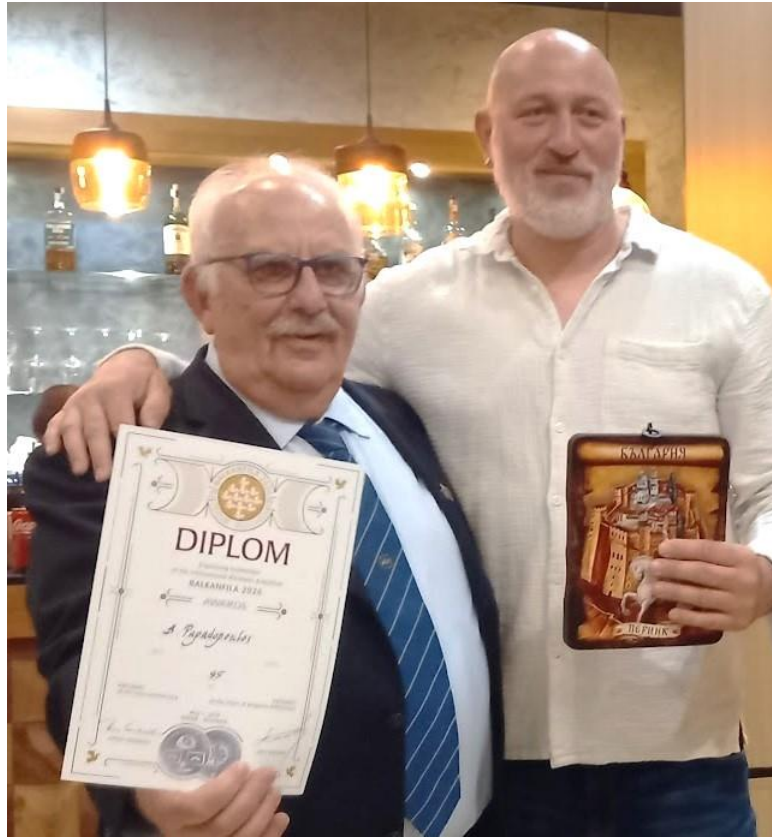
Grand Prix National

Guido Craveri (Bulgaria): Bulgaria: *The 1879–1881 Lion Issues*



Guido Craveri receives the National Grand Prix

The **BALKANFILA XXI Special Prize** was awarded to **Alexios Papadopoulos**
for his one-frame exhibit *“South American Flights”*



*Greek Juror **George Thomareis** receives the Special Award
on behalf of the winner **Alexios Papadopoulos***

After the Grand Prizes were awarded the joyful evening went on and on....



Lesvos Philatelic Society

receives the 2025 FEPA Certificate of Appreciation

During Balkanfila XXI Palmares, Igor Pirc FEPA Secretary General presented the 2025 Certificate of Appreciation the President of the Lesvos Philatelic Society who came to Pernik to visit the Exhibition.

The Lesvos Philatelic Society was founded in August 1944, shortly before the liberation of Lesvos island from Nazi occupation. One of the Society's initiatives was the proposal on September 10th to the Prefecture of Lesvos for the issuance of a four-stamp series with the overprint "Free Lesvos" on the previously issued "Landscape" stamps.

The journal "Philatelic Lesvos" has been published continuously since 1976 by the Philatelic Society of Lesvos, Greece. In recent years, it has appeared quarterly, comprising 32 semi-color pages. Published in Greek, it occasionally includes bilingual articles in Greek and English, and features both philatelic research and news in regular sections. "Philatelic Lesvos" has received a Vermeil medal in Balkanfila XXI.

The Society being one of the most active in Greece organizing Exhibitions and events promoting Philately few times every year.



*From left to right : **Mihalis Vaitis** – President of Lesvos Philatelic Society, **Igor Pirc** – FEPA Secretary General, **Peter Suhadolc** – F.I.P Europe Director and **Christos Gikas** – President of the Hellenic Philatelic Federation.*

15th BALKANFILA Representatives Meeting in Pernik



The 15th BALKANFILA Representatives Meeting took place at the Regional History Museum in Pernik, Bulgaria, on the occasion of the BALKANFILA XXI Exhibition, on Friday, May 1st, 2026, from 11.30 – 12.30.

21 participants from 11 Balkanfila Member Federations took part on the Meeting. The list of participants is at the end of the article.

Igor Pirc, BF Secretary, welcomed all present participants and proposed the Agenda, sent out with the Invitation in January 2026. The Agenda was unanimously accepted.

Agenda of the Meeting

1. Confirmation of the Minutes of the 14th Balkanfila Meeting in Thessaloniki
2. BALKANFILA YEARBOOK 2026 – rating after two editions.
3. Other collaboration options (BF Video Meetings, BF NL, website, FB, video meetings, etc)
4. Evaluation of the XXI Balkanfila Exhibition in Pernik,
5. Election of the new President, possible organizer of the XXII Exhibition
6. Other topics and/or question to be discussed (and the group photo)

Ad. 1. Minutes of the 14th Balkanfila Meeting in Thessaloniki were unanimously accepted.

Ad. 2. The Balkanfila Yearbook 2026 was compiled and edited to the best of its ability and distributed just before the XXI Balkanfila exhibition. Therefore, a content assessment was

not possible. However, the editor Ch. Gikas emphasized that not all members managed to submit their presentations or cooperate with the articles.

The conclusions were as follows:

- The third BALKANFILA YEARBOOK will be issued in the spring of 2027,
- Members who have not yet presented themselves will do so this time (one page presentation).
- The list of correspondents is supplemented with Moldova and corrected for Serbia
- The layout rationalization is addressed through the prescribed article formats. Technical assistance to the editor is sought!

Ad 3. In November 2025 we held a productive **BFWG Video Meeting**. The result is the YEARBOOK 2026, and 13. and 14th BF NL. Two tasks remained unfinished: the list of FIP and FEPA judges by class and BF Country (now in the appendix to these Minutes), and the list of successes of Bakanfila exhibitors at FEPA and FIP shows from 2025 onwards (V, LV, G and LG level) – to be done until June 2026.

The BF website offers a lot of information about our past activities, including Meeting minutes and palmareses. However, it does not have news from the work and events from the Members. Therefore, those present are asked to forward news for publication to the editor Francis Ambrus.

Facebook is an excellent tool for promoting Balkanfila's activities and for recruiting new philatelists.

The newsletter also has many possibilities for both announcements about the activity, as well as presentations of members and content areas of philately (promotion of exhibition classes, other narrow themes etc.)

The **next Balkanfila Video Meeting** will happen in mid-September 2026. Proposals for the Agenda items welcome (Balkanfila Yearbook 2027, etc).

Ad. 4. **Balkanfila XXI in Pernik 2026** was evaluated as a succesful event, with the high level of exhibits, good condition for the work of the Jury, and a friendly host (evaluation with the applause!).

Ad 5. In accordance with the provisions of the Balkanfila Agreement, those present thanked **Mr. Ioannis Refanidis** for his presidency and unanimously elected **Spas Panchev as President** for the period until the next Exhibition. Mr Panchev thanked me for the trust and instructed Igor Pirc to continue performing the duties of Secretary.

Representatives of Romania announced the imminent official invitation of the Romanian Federation to organise **BALKANFILA XXII in May 2027 in Bucharest**. This information was accepted with great joy by all present, as it ensures continuity of cooperation and meetings at exhibitions.

Ad. 6. The FEPA Secretary gave the information on the FEPA whole year campaign **Philately Forward**, and the first part – competition for the best idea for attracting new collectors (leaflet in the attachment).

Secretary Igor Pirc

Updated list of Country contacts – BF website, Newsletter...

Christos Gikas for Greece	xgikas@gmail.com
Mehmet Akan for Turkey	mehmetakan.wordpress.com
Julian Demeti for Albania	julian.demeti@gmail.com
Francisc Ambrus for Romania	franambrus@yahoo.com
Boncho Bonev for Bulgaria	bnb11@abv.bg
Capt. Slavoljub Katančević for Croatia	katensjeme@pu.t-com.hr
Svetislav Jelić for Serbia	svetislavjelic@gmail.com
Igor Pirc for Slovenia	ipirc711@gmail.com
Radenko Radanović for BiH (both entities)	radenkoradanovic@gmail.com
Andrei Adam for Moldova	ufm@mail.com



Group photo was taken at 12.30, after the conclusion of the Meeting.

15 th Balkanfila Meeting in Pernik, Bulgaria
 Friday, May 1, 2025 at 9.30, Exhibition venue, Jury room

LIST OF PRESENCE

Name	Balkanfila country	Signature
1 Vladimir Melic	SERBIA	
2 KLOTISLAV JECI	SERBIA	
3 ZAFIROV STANKO	N. MACEDONIA	
4 ADAM ANDREI	MOLDOVA	
5 GEORGE THOMASIS	GREECE	
6 IOANNIS REFANIDIS	GREECE	
7 CELO DAVORIN	Bosnia and Herzegovina	
8 Atakan Tuner	Turkey	
9 Mehmet Esip Ağaoğlu	Turkey	
10 Greece Gargira	Romania	
11 Salade N. ...	Romania	
12 JULIJE MARAS	CROATIA	
13 IOAN BRAȘU	SLOVENIA	
14 VERA SUTANCI	ROMANIA	
15 FRANCIS ANDRAS	ROMANIA	
16. BONCHO BONEV	BULGARIA	
17. JULIAN DEMETZ	ALBANIA	
18. CHRISTOS GAKAS	GREECE	
19. Mihail Miorov	BULGARIA	
20 Ign Gin	SLOVENIA	
21. Spas Pauclov	Bulgaria	

W.G BALKANFILA XXI LIST of FIP & FEPA JURORS

BULGARIA

BONEV Boncho: PH
LASAROV Lasar: TH, YO
PANCHEV Spas : PH

CROATIA

NOVAKOVIC Damir: PH
MARAS Julije: TH

GREECE

GALINOS Alexandre: PH
PAPADOPOULOS Alexios: PH (FEPA)
THOMAREIS George: TR, PH

MONTENEGRO

KATURIC Tomo: PH

ROMANIA

BARTOC Alexandru: AE, AS
AMBRUS Francisc: RE, OP
SAVOIU Emanoil: TR

SERBIA

LJUBICIC Nikola: PS
STEPANOVIC Zoran: PH
MILICH Vladimir: TR

SLOVENIA

BRAČIČ Bojan: OP (FEPA)
FERANT, Veni: OP, PP (FEPA)
PIRC Igor: PS
SUHADOLC Peter: (TL) TH, PS
VESELKO Gustin: PH

TURKEY

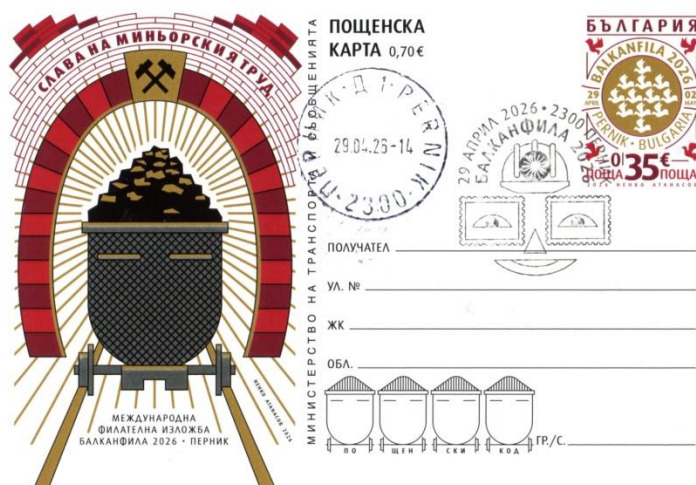
AGAOGULLARI Mehmet Edip: TH (FEPA)
AGAOGULLARI Ziya: PH
ARIKAN Arman: PH
AKAN Mehmet: PH
TUNACI Atadan: PH
TURGUT Turhan: (TL) TH

New philatelic items launched during Balkanfila XXI

At the lobby of the “Palace of Culture”, a temporary Post Office of the Bulgarian Post was set up in order to serve the visitors that wanted to buy not only the new philatelic items launched during Balkanfila XXI but also philatelic items previously issued still available.

During Balkanfila XXI the following new philatelic items were launched :

- on April 29, took place the Validation of the illustrated postal stationery "BALKANFILA 2026 – Glory to Mining Labor" as well as the circulation of a M/S celebrating the 100th Anniversary of F.I.P (World Philatelic Federation) and in addition the validation of a limited edition block with BALKANFILA Logo.



- on April 30, was the Validation of the edition "Fauna. Snails" as well as the Validation of the edition EUROPE 2026 with a limited edition version.

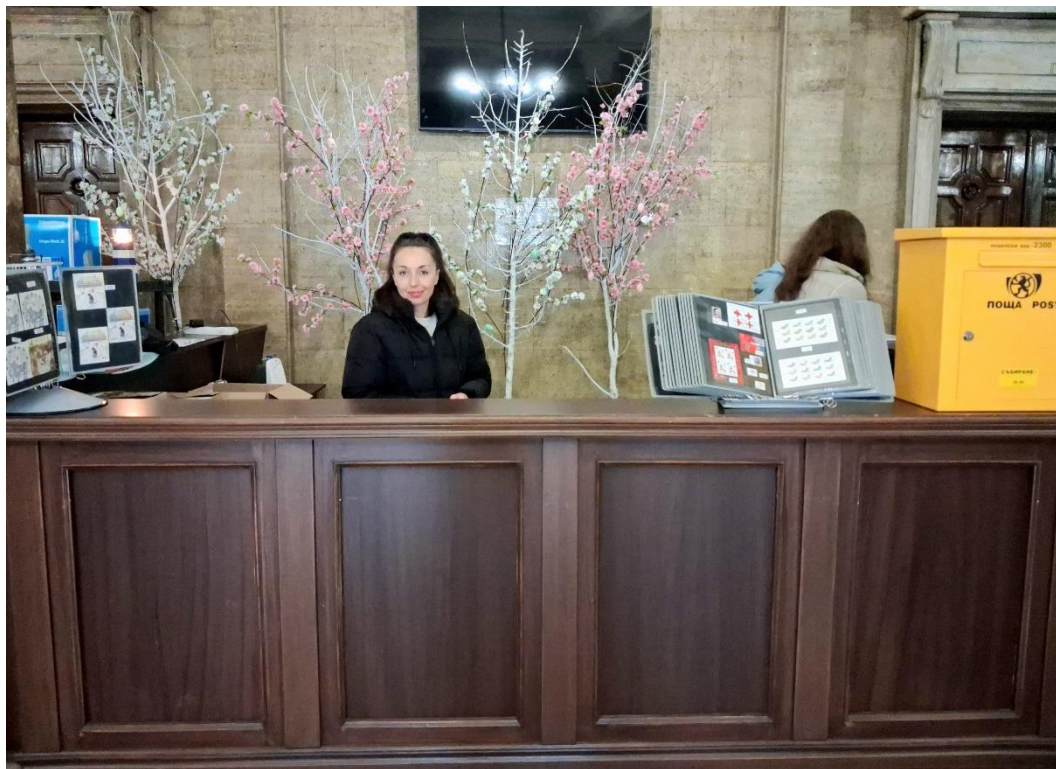


- Later on the day the Validation of an illustrated postal stationery on "100 years of Bulgarian airmail" concluded the schedule of philatelic events during the Exhibition.





Igor Pirc, Secretary General of FEPA posts a letter



It is worth mentioning the fact that the Bulgarian Post employees during Balkanfila XXI, assisted the philatelists not only efficiently but with smile too !

Salvador Dalí in Balkanfila XXI, Pernik

The “Palace of Culture” in Pernik hosted not only Balkanfila XXI but also the exhibition “*Salvador Dalí – The Triumph of Imagination*” displaying an impressive collection of over 300 works by the iconic Surrealist artist, including more than 100 originals. Among the highlights are some of Dalí’s most recognizable surrealist motifs: the iconic lips-shaped sofa, the enigmatic *Woman with Drawers*, and the towering *Cosmic Elephant*. These works capture his fascination with the subconscious, where logic dissolves and imagination takes over.

What makes this event stand out is its scale – and its context. For the first time, such a comprehensive collection of Dalí’s work is presented in Bulgaria, turning Pernik into an unexpected cultural destination. Running from April to early September 2026, the exhibition offers a rare opportunity: to trace Dalí’s evolution across different periods and immerse yourself in a world where art challenges perception at every turn.

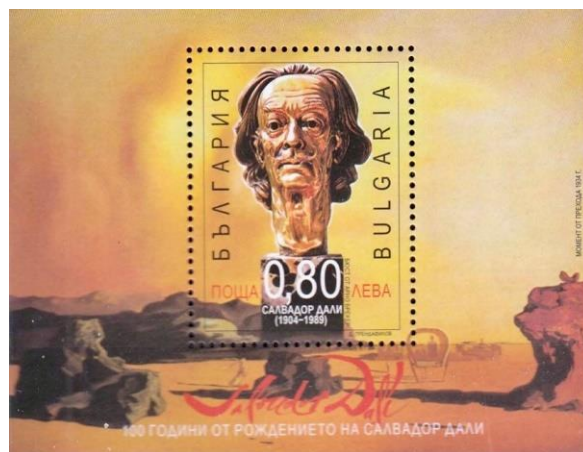
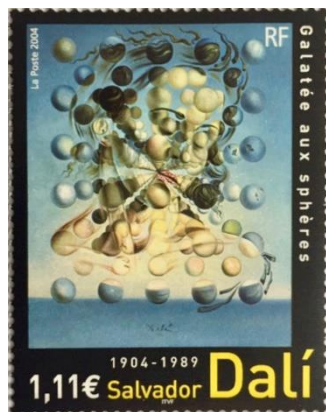


At the main entrance of the “Palace of Culture” from left : E. Petrakis – President of the Maritime Museum of Crete, Ioannis Refanidis – President of the O.C of Balkanfila XX in Thessaloniki, E. Douka – Secretary General of the Maritime Museum of Crete, Christos Gikas – President of the Hellenic Philatelic Federation and George Economou – Collector and Exhibitor of Olympic Collectibles

The exhibition brings together a wide-ranging selection of Dali's creative output, including painting, graphic art, illustration, sculpture, design, fashion-related works, advertising concepts, and cinematic projects. Among the featured pieces are well-known works such as "The Persistence of Memory," "The Face of War," "The Cosmic Elephant," as well as illustrations connected to Dante's "The Divine Comedy."



Salvador Dalí's artwork has been issues in the form of postage stamps, M/S as well as other philatelic material. Some of these items are shown below :



BALKANFILA 2026 vs NORDIA 2026

Francisc AMBRUŞ

Between April 27 - May 2 and then May 7 - 11, 2026, I had the honor of participating in two major European regional exhibitions. BALKANFILA XXI in Pernik, Bulgaria where I participated as a jury member and NORDIA 2026 in Helsinki where I participated as an exhibitor. Honestly, both exhibitions were of a high level and this demonstrates that despite the difficult financial conditions in recent years and the lack of government sponsorships as it was 15-20 years ago, large and high-level exhibitions can still be held. This was possible thanks to the organizers and participants who financially supported, with exhibits, with presence, with friends, with sponsors, the effort to realize these grandiose cultural manifestations. I will begin by presenting both exhibitions in the order of their development, by strictly reporting the events and presenting images from there.



...logo



...poster



...exhibition venue Palace of Culture - Pernik

The exhibition had FEPA Recognition and FIP Sponsorship, was hosted in the Palace of Culture - Pernik, Bulgaria, located or 5 minutes walk in the open air away from the official hotel. Pernik is a city in Western Bulgaria, located only about 30 kilometers from Sofia. It is well known for its industrial past, but at the same time offers a rich history and cultural landmarks that make it an interesting tourist destination. On the 540 frames and 127 exhibits on the frames along with 19 literature entries, divided into 12 competition classes distributed on two floors, with a museum hall specially arranged for the honorary class and two halls arranged for philatelic exchanges, the exhibition exceeded the level of a large Balkan exhibition. Exhibitors from Albania, Bulgaria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Greece, North Macedonia, Moldova, Romania, Slovenia, Serbia, Turkiye, invited Israel and China participated.



...assembly team



...images from the exhibition



...images from the exhibition

The Grand Prizes were awarded as follows:

Grand Prix Balkanfila: *Ion Chirescu (Romania): Foreign Posts in the Romanian Territories*

Grand Prix International: *Alan Mellaart (Türkiye): The Registered Mail of the Ottoman Empire 1840–1923*

Grand Prix National: *Guido Craveri (Bulgaria): Bulgaria: The 1879–1881 Lion Issues*



...validation of a commemorative issue



...the young webmaster



... special award given to FIP director Yigal Nathaniel



...images from the opening ceremony

The opening was attended by personalities from the philatelic world and city officials. Children from several schools visited the exhibition and then the museum. A Collectors' Fair was held during the same period.



There were daily cultural events that enriched the image and atmosphere of the entire event. Children's philatelic competition "Draw a postage stamp for Palm Sunday and Easter", Scientific session of the Bulgarian Philatelic Academy on the topic "100 years of Bulgarian airmail", Seminar on thematic philately, Meeting of the representatives of the philatelic federations from the Balkan countries and the BALKANFILA working group. In addition to the release of commemorative stamps and stamps, the organizers also offered a trip to Zemen Monastery and a tour of the Mining Museum.



...jury work



...jury work



...jury room



...national commissioners participating in Palmares



...Guido Craveri receiving the GPN prize



...Yigal Nathaniel receiving the diploma for jury work



...Thomareis George receiving the special prize for A. Papadopoulos

From the point of view of the quality of the collections on display, I am glad that I was able to see quality exhibits and that some of them that I already knew were restored and improved. However, exhibitors need to start visiting more exhibitions and participating more actively in seminars to raise the quality of their exhibits. In the following pages I will talk about another exhibition I attended a few days after this event. Honestly, the quality of the works exhibited there is much superior and to be truly competitive we need to work harder.

14th meeting of the Balkanfila Working Group



Less than a week after BALKANFILA, we traveled to Helsinki to participate as an exhibitor at the regional exhibition NORDIA 2026. The airline Air Baltic impressed us with its punctuality and the services offered. It far exceeds the standard of other low cost companies operating in Romania. From the very beginning we were impressed by the capital of Finland. Through everything we saw, visited, we found that they are totally different from us, the Balkans. Much more punctual, orderly and organized, with a special respect for everything that surrounds them. The difference between us is also given by the fact that they did not live 50 years under a totalitarian regime, and this was reflected in education and development. And visiting the entire exhibition, I found that the educational factor also positively influenced the exhibits. The exhibition had FEPA Recognition, was hosted in the Dipoli in Espoo - Helsinki, Finland. Dipoli is a building located in the Aalto University's Otaniemi campus in Espoo in Otakaari 24, Finland. It was designed by architects Reima and Raili Pietilä and opened in 1966. Dipoli was initially owned by the Student Union of the Helsinki University of Technology who sold it to Aalto University in 2014. The name of the building is a pun: it can mean dipole in Finnish, but also "the second Poly", the second building of the polytechnic students. On the 700 frames and 130 exhibits on the frames along literature entries. Exhibitors from Finland, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Estonia, Iceland, Germany, UK, USA - Scandinavian Collectors Club and one Romanian participated. In order not to misinterpret my presence, for the simple reason that in my country there are no qualified jurors for my participation class, I being the only juror at Revenues in the country, I preferred to become a member of other organizations where I can be judged as an exhibitor by accredited jurors.



...logo



...a company you travel with for pleasure



...Dipoli in Espoo, venue place



...Bill Barrell Ltd



...Nordic Partner, Postiljonen AB



...first contact with the organizers



...International Partners, Corinphila Auktionen & Heinrich Kohler Auktionhaus

The exhibition was very well organized, by participation classes and to my surprise, with exhibits of a high level for a regional exhibition. I questioned some exhibitors why I didn't see them at the FIP exhibitions and they replied that it was because of the participation fees. I'm not really convinced that's the reason, I think they feel better in the atmosphere and typology of Nordic exhibits, and most importantly, judged by jurors who are comfortable with the subjects. At a world exhibition there is a risk that their work will not be fully understood. It was risky for me too to participate with truly Balkan topics in the Nordic area, but I'm glad they were positively appreciated and the two LVs were close to the expected score. The discussion with the jury on the last day was very constructive and we still had something to learn. In fact, we were always learning from each other. The final conclusion is that the Nordics have a strong school of philately that we must take into account at future meetings.



...jury work



...vizitors



...my revenues exhibit



...after mounting my exhibit



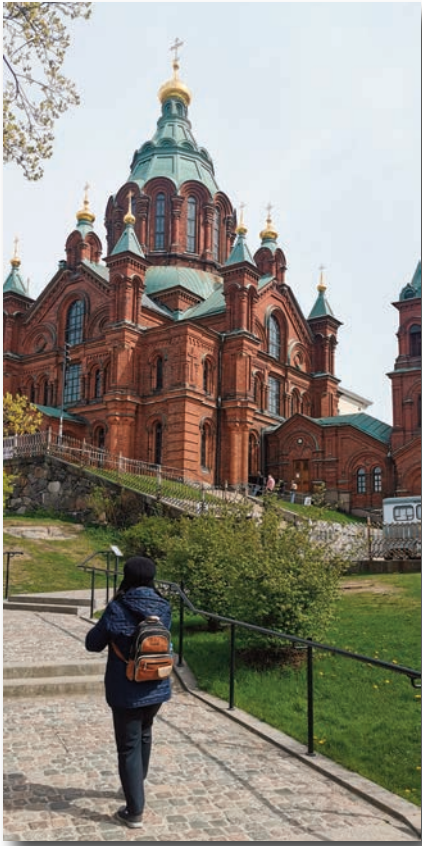
...jury team

...jury team



...Reception of the City of Espoo





...Some images from beautiful Helsinki



“KING PETER AT THE BATTLEFIELD” — THE WORLD’S FIRST POSTAGE STAMP DEPICTING A WAR SCENE

Prof. Dr Milan Radovanović

1. What is Known

It is well established that in 1915, during the second year of the Great War, the Kingdom of Serbia issued a series of postage stamps popularly known as “King Peter at the Front.” In November 1914, the ageing King Peter I appeared on the battlefield near Garevica, close to Darosava, at a time when the Serbian Army was winning a decisive victory over enemy forces in the celebrated Battle of Kolubara. That moment was immortalized in a photograph (Fig. 1) taken by Samson Černov, which subsequently served as the design for the Serbian stamp issue (Fig. 2).



Fig. 1 Samson Černov’s photograph, used as the design for the “King Peter at the Front” stamp issue.



Fig. 2 The 5-para and 10-para stamps were placed in circulation on 15 (28) October 1915 (Old Style/New Style). The remaining denominations — 15, 25, 30 and 50 para — never reached post office counters due to wartime conditions.



Fig. 3 The 5-para stamp exists in two color variants: light green and olive green

The same design was also used for a postal card issued for domestic use within Serbia, placed in circulation exactly one year after the Battle of Kolubara (printed at the State Printing Office in Niš).



Fig. 4 A Serbian postal card bearing the same design, sent from Niš to the front, with the Niš censorship cancel reading “EXAMINED / MAIN MILITARY CENSORSHIP / NIŠ.”

The same photograph by Samson Černov was used on Corfu (10 February 1916) for the printing of the “Serbian Soldiers’ Correspondence Card,” with a face value of 10 para for international postal use (printed by the Greek printer Aspiotis).

Balkanfila



Newsletter



Fig. 5 Unused “Serbian Soldiers’ Correspondence Card” in grey-blue.

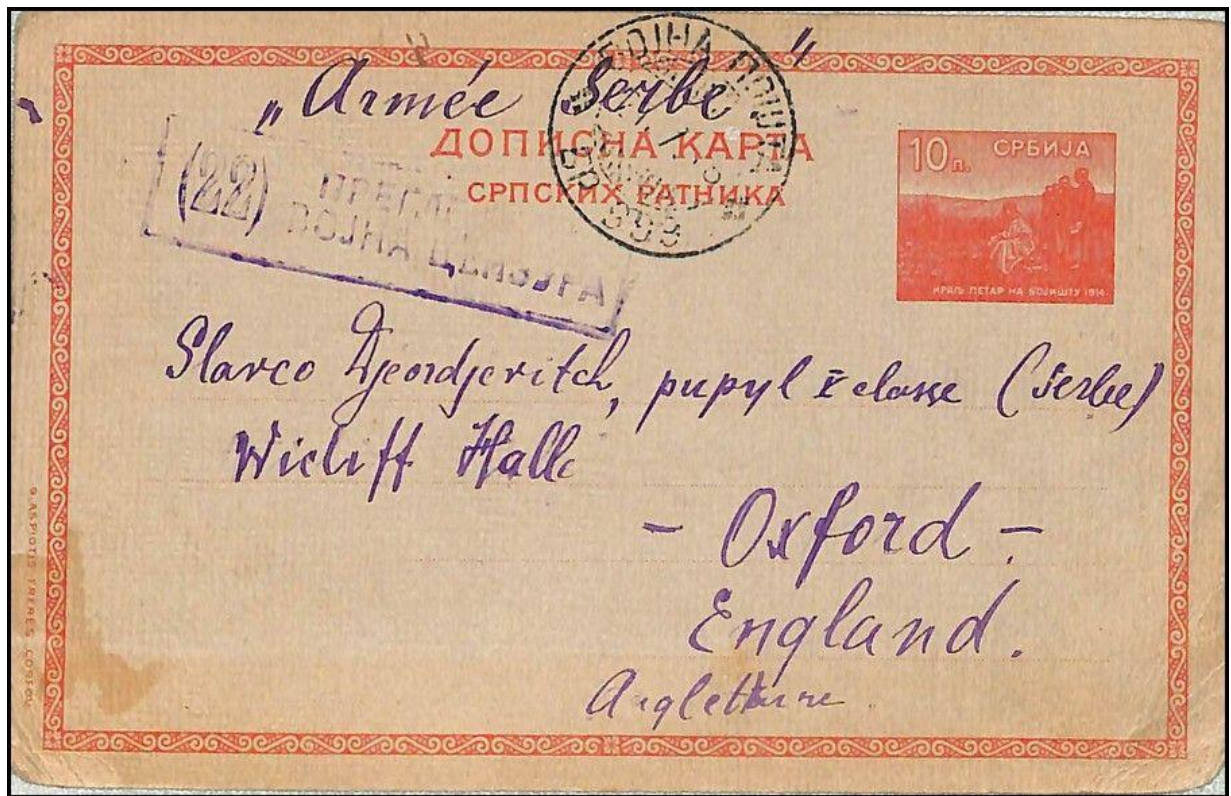


Fig. 6 A Serbian Soldiers’ Correspondence Card (Aspiotis printing, rose-colored), sent on 2 January 1917 by the father of Captain Stevan Đorđević from the Salonika Front (cancelled with the Supreme Command Field Post Office stamp VP 999 and military censor mark “(22) EXAMINED BY MILITARY CENSORSHIP”), addressed to Slavko Đorđević (“pupil, V classe”) in Oxford, England.

The same Samson Černov image has also been found online on a card of unknown origin bearing a bilingual caption in French and English: “King Peter watching defeat of German Army” / “Pierre de Roi Serbes contre Bataille les Allemands.” (Fig. 7)

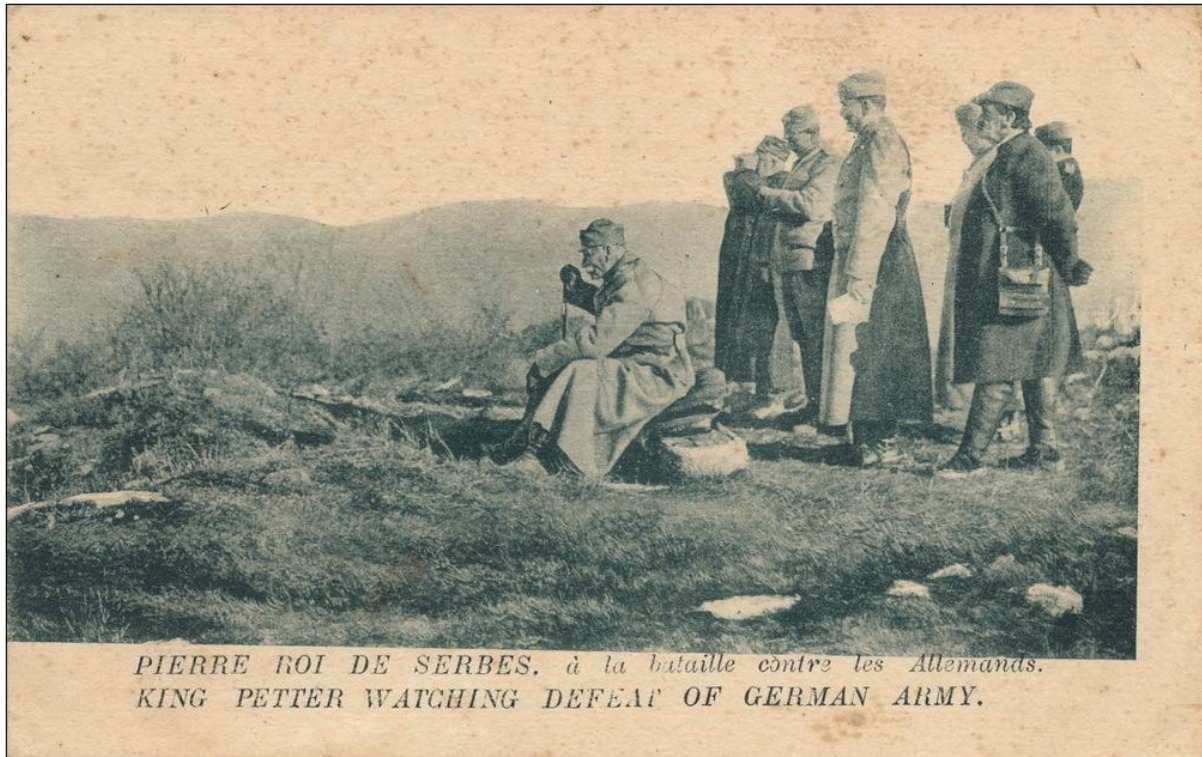


Fig. 7

2. Less Well Known

Less well known is the fact that Samson Černov — photographer, painter and war correspondent — was present in Serbia throughout the Balkan Wars and the Great War, serving as an eyewitness to events he meticulously documented. His photograph “King Peter at the Front” left an enduring mark on Serbian philately, and indeed well beyond it.

Samson Černov (Fig. 8), a Russian Jew, had been working in Serbia as a war correspondent for the Russian newspapers *Novoye Vremya* (*New times*) and *Russkoye Slovo* (*Russian word*) since 1912. During the Great War, his photographs were also published in the French illustrated weekly *L'Illustration*. Through his appearances across Europe, he brought the struggle and suffering of both Serbian soldiers and the civilian population to international attention.



Fig. 8 Samson Černov

In July 1916, on Corfu, he converted to Christianity, with General Terzić serving as his godfather and giving him the additional name Aleksandar. Following the Russian Revolution of 1917, his sympathies with the White movement made it impossible for him to return to Russia, and he took French citizenship. Towards the end of the Great War, the Serbian Government sent him to the United States, where in March 1918 he held an exhibition of photographs and watercolors at the Grand Central Palace in New York. Throughout his time in America, Samson Černov wore the uniform of a Serbian officer.

3. Not Generally Known

It is not generally known that on 25 June 1916 the *New York Times* published an article under the headline “Serbian War Stamps Rare at Present” (Fig. 9). The piece expressed concern that, owing to the embargo on postage stamps from belligerent nations — Serbian stamps in particular — they would fail to reach the American market.

STAMP collectors who have been making a specialty of the recent war issues have been anxiously awaiting the receipt in this country of the new issue of Serbian postage stamps issued a few days before the concentrated drive last year by the Austrian and Teutonic forces which virtually drove the Serbians from their native land. A photograph of one of these stamps is reproduced herewith. The chief interest in this issue lies in the fact that it is the first postal issue of any of the belligerent countries depicting a war scene. The design shows King Peter seated on a hill, with a group of officers standing behind him, watching a battle. The inscription, in Slavonic letters, below the group reads: “King Peter on the Battlefield, 1914.”

Because of the strict embargo recently placed on the exportation of foreign stamps from the fighting countries, no copy of this Serbian issue has yet reached the United States. The series included five values—5, 10, 20, 30, and 50 paras.

Owing to the fact that these stamps were in use only a short time, the used

copies will naturally be much scarcer than the unused ones.

“I have endeavored for several weeks to get a supply,” said Hugh M. Clark of the Scott Stamp and Coin Company recently, “but it is more difficult all the time to get any of the new issues from Europe. I presume that a good supply



A Serbian War Stamp.

was printed, and after the war the unused sets will probably be fairly plentiful, but they will undoubtedly be rarer than some of the war issues.” Serbia is now using the series of Aus-

Fig. 9 Extract from the article.

The article drew particular attention to the historic significance of this issue as the first instance of any postal administration selecting a war scene as the subject of a stamp issue:

“The chief interest in this issue lies in the fact that it is the first postal issue of any of the belligerent countries depicting the war scene.”

References

Radovanović M., “Prve ratne marke u svetu — srpske marke” [The world’s first war stamps — the Serbian stamps], *Filatelisticki glasnik*, No. 3, June 2013.

Radovanovic M., “Die erste serbische Kriegsbriefmarke 1915” [The first Serbian war stamp, 1915], *ARGE Suedost-Philatelie*, No. 137, December 2018.

Begović V., “Judaika” [Judaica], *Filatelisticki glasnik*, No. 3, June 2013.

Serbian Wikipedia: <https://sr.wikipedia.org/sr>

Anon., *Katalog poštanskih maraka jugoslovenskih zemalja* [Stamp Catalogue of the Yugoslav Lands], Jugopošta, 1991.

Apel W., “Kriegsschauplatz Serbien 1915” [The Serbian theatre of war, 1915], *Südost-Philatelie*, No. 132.

Michel-Kataloge: *Südeuropa; Ganzsachen Europa*, Schwaneberger Verlag, 2013.

New catalogue of Serbian postal stationeries

The book "Serbian postal stationery, forms and postmark 1873 - 1921, Volume one: Serbian postal stationery 1873 -1915" by Miodrag R. Vuković, will be published on June 3, 2026.

Introduction	3
Chapter One: Letter cards	9
Chapter Two: Post cards	39
Chapter Three: Postal orders	109
Postal rates	138
Errata	141
Sources	142
Literature	142
Addendum	143

Miodrag R. Vuković

Serbian Postal Stationery, Forms, and Postmarks 1873 - 1921

Volume One Postal Stationery 1873 - 1915

M.R. Vuković: Serbian Postal stationery 1873 - 1915

Serbia: 4500 RSD
+ shipping costs 300 RSD (R-AR) or 500 RSD (CoD)
Other countries: 45 € / 50 \$
+ shipping costs (registered, air mail): 15 € / 20 \$

9 786891 983116

Serbian postal stationery 1873 - 1915

Excerpt with imperforated stamp in uncancelled design prepared by C. Dumont (Paris) for 1880 issue of postage stamps (BRB)

By courtesy of Nikola Tadić

All these stamps are known to me with imperforated stamp in this design to imperforated stamp without indication of value. Known to me in only 20 imperforated stamps with 5 para indication of value. Known to me in only one. Other specimens are identical. Some Cancelled stamps in red ink with the Oberpost-Direktor, French 'à usage administratif' is added to back, before this is moved to the paper, describe these specimens of 5 francs in with 1880 - 1881 issues.

By courtesy of Marie Perović

Miodrag R. Vuković

Printed on one side of sheet printing to right of 10" x 11" and on left of "A" color

Two back for (probably) printing sheet of post cards # 4 (B) x 4 (B) (full)

Two back for (probably) printing sheet of post cards # 4 (B) x 4 (B) (half)

Serbian postal stationery 1873 - 1915

Telegraph postal orders

The first telegraph postal order for internal traffic only were issued on Jan 11 (24 February) 1901. In addition to usual postage provided for postal order service, 100% extra postage for telegrams had to be paid, as well as for order. Low on service.

However, that did not mean either that a telegraph postal order in a half month. By order of SP No. 127 (27 May 1903) their further issuance was abolished. Printed material remained in use until consumption.

Right: Issued as telegraphic postal order

Left: Issued as telegraphic postal order

For example:

Before telegraph postal orders were introduced on 11 (24) February 1901, regular postal orders No. 1 to 4 were issued for telegraphic transfer of money. The telegrams is printed on the back of the form, and value "Nisam isporučeno" (By the means of telegrams) was written diagonally on the front in red pencil in ink (V) - 100 francs

Following 20th April (1st May) 1906 only ordinary postal forms without face value, but with indication of price, were issued. The postal form was similar to 1905 No. 2.

However, that did not mean either that a telegraph postal order in a half month. By order of SP No. 127 (27 May 1903) their further issuance was abolished. Printed material remained in use until consumption.

Right: Issued as telegraphic postal order

Left: Issued as telegraphic postal order

Miodrag R. Vuković

1904 11 (24) February 1901, in addition to usual postage provided for postal order service, 100% extra postage for telegrams had to be paid, as well as for order. Low on service.

However, that did not mean either that a telegraph postal order in a half month. By order of SP No. 127 (27 May 1903) their further issuance was abolished. Printed material remained in use until consumption.

Right: Issued as telegraphic postal order

Left: Issued as telegraphic postal order

Serbian postal stationery 1873 - 1915

Letter Cards

Letter cards for domestic mail (local and countrywide) were introduced on 1. (12) July 1893. Special letter cards for foreign mail were issued, in 1907 a uniform of 10 para postage was set for all domestic traffic.

Printing plates

The first issue of letter cards was printed on cardboard in Post Form (12x10) mm from two printing plates, each consisting of two halves.

From 1894, printing plates consisted of four halves, and number of plates varied from one to four plates. Cardboard used for printing was an Oberpost-Direktor, measuring 10x17 mm. The only exception was 1901 issue, printed on three from plates consisting of sixteen subjects.

According to research done by Dr. Richard M. Stevens, from 1893 to 1908 all specimens of printing plates, each individual issue were cancelled normally. This resulted in number of varieties. Machine error was introduced in 1899.

Miodrag R. Vuković

1893 July 1st (12th) July 1893, first issue of letter cards, imperforated stamp with the back of the stamp. Under Oberpost-Direktor on the stamp issue of 1894, Oberpost-Direktor printed in black. With 100% extra postage provided for telegrams had to be paid, as well as for order. Low on service.

However, that did not mean either that a telegraph postal order in a half month. By order of SP No. 127 (27 May 1903) their further issuance was abolished. Printed material remained in use until consumption.

Right: Issued as telegraphic postal order

Left: Issued as telegraphic postal order

Serbian postal stationery 1873 - 1915

Printing plates used for postal order cards

Existing material through shows the following types of printing plates:

Fig. 1: Printing plate consisting of two halves for both front and back side. Used for printing of postal order card No. 1 on black "double paper" for corresponding format of cardboard (full format 46 x 71 mm). Printed from two plates for both front and back side of the stationery.

Left and right: Plate for front and back side.

Fig. 2: Printing plate consisting of four halves for both front and back side. Used for printing of other postal order and telegraphic postal order cards. On "Pisarnica" for corresponding format (full format 46 x 71 mm). Printed from two plates for both front and back side of the stationery.

Left and right: Plate for front and back side.

Miodrag R. Vuković

Official postal orders

Basis for postal order on one side: 25 para for amount up to 25 dinars, 30 para for amount up to 50 dinars, 40 para for amount up to 100 dinars and 40 para for each further hundred dinars. Imperforated stamp covered both sides.

1900 11 (24) February 1901, first issue of official postal order: imperforated stamp with the back of King Alexander of Obrenović in 1894 design; distance between stamp and vertical lines on the right 8 mm. Questions on the back covered relative to front side: flag on the back on the left side (black) 100% extra postage with stamp on the front; scanned on right side and top. Printed in 10 paragraphs. No. 100 printed on thicker brownish paper in form of an on-line document (17x10) mm.

100 25 para, face

The book is in a modified B5 format, hardcover, with about 700 full-color illustrations on 144 pages. Contact e-mail for information and orders: Miodrag R. Vuković, mrvorama@gmail.com

ITALIAN POST IN SCUTARI OF ALBANIA



by Jovan BASHO

The Italian Post Office in Shkodra was opened on November 1, 1901. The opening of this post office was based on the Royal Decree of Victor Emmanuel III no. 471, dated October 21, 1901. This decree it is said: "Recognized the convenience of establishing an Italian post office in Shkoder of Albania, in order to ensure Italian residents with a speedy and more expedited postal service and thus benefit the interests of commerce and the prestige and influence of Italy in that locality". The decree also determines the date of opening of the Post Office in Shkodra (1, 2).

The opening of Italian post offices in the territories of the Ottoman Empire was realized thanks to the benefits from the capitulation regime, signed between the two countries in 1861 (3). The capitulations of the Ottoman Empire were contracts between the Ottoman Empire and other powers in Europe, particularly France. Turkish capitulations, or Ahidnâmes were generally bilateral acts whereby definite arrangements were entered into by each contracting party towards the other, not mere concessions. (4). The Turkish Capitulations were grants made by successive Sultans to Christian nations, conferring rights and privileges in favour of their subjects resident or trading in the Ottoman dominions, following the policy towards European states of the Byzantine Empire. According to these capitulations traders entering the Ottoman Empire were exempt from local prosecution, local taxation, local conscription, and the searching of their domicile (4).

When the Italian Post was opened, Shkodra was considered the main center of Albania, the capital of the Vilayet of the same name and with a population of 32,000 inhabitants. Postal connections were provided by the ships of "Navigazione Puglia" with two trips per week from Bari to Shkodra and vice versa. This post office was closed on October 1, 1911 (2, 3) due to the Italo-Turkish War (or as it is otherwise known the "Libyan War", from September 29, 1911 to October 18, 1912). The Shkodra Post Office was reopened again in early 1913.



Fig. 1 Ottoman period November 1, 1901 until October 1, 1911

The Italian Post of Shkodra was closed on January 20, 1916 (2). Later in this city was opened the Italian Military Post No. 116 (P.M. 116).

In the beginning, in the Italian post office of Shkodra, no special stamps were used, but the Italian stamps of the time were used (Fig. 2) (5, 6).



Fig. 2 Postcard and cover circulated from the Italian Post Office of Shkodra to Venice with Italian postage stamps of the time, in January and February 1902.

On September 1, 1902, three Italian stamps of 1901 were printed with the word ALBANIA and changed values in Ottoman money, namely "10 Para 10" over 5 c, "35 Para 35" over 20 c and "40 Para 40" over 25 c (Fig. 3). The royal decree of July 2, 1902, authorizing the issuance of these stamps, stated that they would be given to post offices at the Italian price and they would be resold at the overprinted price, thus leaving in charge of the Ministry of Post funds the difference that would be won or lost (2).



Fig. 3 Italian stamps printed on September 1, 1902, with the word ALBANIA and changed values in Ottoman money.

Below are presented two postcards travelled from Shkodra to Rome and Forli with the stamp "10 Para 10" over 5 c.



Fig. 4 Two postcards travelled from Shkodra to Rome and Forli with the stamp "10 Para 10" over 5 c.

More rare are the circulated covers with stamps of this emission. One of them (Fig. 5), has travelled from Shkodra to Florence, starting in June 1909.



Fig. 5 This rare cover with one Italian stamps of 25 cent of the year 1901, overprinted "ALBANIA" and "40 para 40" in Ottoman money in 1902, has travelled from Shkodra (Scutari d'Albania), to Florence (Italy), June 28, 1909.

Along with this emission, on September 1, 1902, a postcard with the overprint "ALBANIA" and changed value "20 Para 20" was issued (7). One of these travelled postcards was presented below (Fig. 6).



Fig. 6 This postal stationary card issued in September 01, 1902 with the value "20 Para 20", in Ottoman money has travelled from Shkodra (Scutari d'Albania) to Costantinople through Italian Post Office, delivery June 30, 1904.

In November 1904 another postcard was issued, overprinted "ALBANIA", with a value of 20 Para 20", in Ottoman money on the Italian postcard 10 c (Fig. 7) (7).



Fig. 7 Postcard issued in November 1904 with a value of "20 Para 20", over 10 c, has circulated from Shkodra (Scutari d'Albania) to Turin (Italy), launched on March 2, 1906.

In May and November 1907, three more Italian stamps of 1906 and 1901 were overprinted again with the word ALBANIA and changed values in Ottoman money, namely "10 Para 10" over 5 c, "20 Para 20" over 10 c and "80 Para 80" over 50 c (Fig. 8). The first two stamps

were from 1906, the third from 1901. Along with this issue, the same postcards as those of 1904 were issued (7).



*Fig. 8 Italian stamps overprinted with the word ALBANIA and new values in Ottoman money:
May 30, 1907 and November 01, 1907.*

On March 1, 1909 and in 1911, a new emission of 8 stamps was issued (Fig. 9) with the overprint "Scutari di Albania" on Italian stamps of 1901, 1906 and 1908, with changed values in Ottoman money, namely "5 Para 5", "10 Para 10", "30 Para 30" (on stamps of 1906), "1 Piastra 1", "2 Piastre 2" (on stamps of 1908), "4 PIASTRE 4", "20 PIASTRE 20" and "40 PIASTRE 40" (on stamps of 1901). The last value was overprinted in 1911.



*Fig. 9 The full emission of March 1, 1909 and 1911
with the overprint "Scutari di Albania" and new values in Ottoman money.*

Below are presented some philatelic materials travelled with stamps of this emission (Fig. 10–13).



Fig. 10 Circulated postcard with two Italian stamps of 5 c (year 1906), overprinted with "Scutari di Albania" and the new value "10 Para 10" in Ottoman money in 1909, from Shkodra (Scutari d'Albania), to Paris (France), launched on April 04, 1909.



Fig. 11 Travelled envelope from Shkodra (Scutari d'Albania), December 24, 1910 to Bari (Italy), December 26, 1910, with an Italian stamp with the value 25 c of the year 1908, overprinted "Scutari di Albania" and new value "1 Piastra 1" in Ottoman money (issued date, March 1, 1909).



Fig. 12, Rare registered envelope, departed on October 09, 1913 from Shkodra (Scutari d'Albania) towards Brindisi (Italy), where it arrived on October 10, 1913, with two Italian stamps with the value 5 c (year 1906) and another 50 c (year 1908) overprinted "Scutari di Albania" and new values "10 Para 10" and "2 Piastre 2" in Ottoman money (year 1909).



Fig. 13, Rare envelope travelled on May 01, 1915 from Shkodra (Scutari d'Albania), towards Durrës, with an Italian stamp with the value 10 c (year 1906) and another 25 c (year 1908), overprinted "Scutari di Albania" and new values "10 Para 10" and "1 Piastra 1" in Ottoman coins (March 1, 1909).

Along with this emission, also on March 1, 1909, a postcard was issued (Fig. 14) with the overprint "Scutari di Albania" and a new value "20 Para 20" in Ottoman money over 10 c (7).



Fig. 14, This postcard issued on March 1, 1909, overprinted "Scutari di Albania" and the value "20 Para 20", has circulated from Shkodra (Scutari d'Albania) to London, starting on October 01, 1910.

In the year 1915 another stamp was issued, with the overprint "Scutari di Albania" and a new value "4 Para 4" in Ottoman money on a stamp with a value of 2 c of 1901 (Fig. 15).



Fig. 15, Italian stamp of 1901, with value 2 c, overprinted "Scutari di Albania" and new value "4 Para 4" in Ottoman money.

It is thought that this stamp was not put into circulation, therefore no circulated philatelic materials with this stamp are found (2, 8).

In the year 1916, on the stamp with the overprint "Scutari di Albania" and the new value "30 Para 30" in Ottoman money, was made another overprint 20 c. This relates to the increase of the Italian postal tariff from 15 c to 20 c, from January 01, 1916 (2). Apparently this stamp did not circulate in Shkodra, because it is thought that this stamp did not reach this city before closing of the post office (2). As mentioned above, the Italian Post of Shkodra was closed on January 20, 1916, a few days before the entry of the Austro-Hungarian Army. Even with this stamp were not found circulated philatelic materials (Fig. 16).



Fig. 16 The stamp with value 15c. of 1906 overprinted "Scutari di Albania" and the new value "30 Para 30" in Ottoman money, overprinted again 20 c, on the value 15 c.

Conclusion

The Italian Post Office in Shkodra represents one of the most important post offices during the period of Ottoman occupation of Albania and the first years of the independent Albanian state. Circulated philatelic materials are rare and extremely rare

Bibliography

1. Fogli sciolti - Anno 1901. N. 471. Composto di pag. 2, 471-472
2. John S. Phipps. Pullat dhe postat e Shqipërisë dhe Epirit 1878 - 1945, Korçë 2002, f 89 - 92.
3. Giuseppe Razza. Storia Filatelica. Në: L'amicizia tra Italia e Albania: passato, presente, futuro. Roma 21-29 novembre 2006.
4. Wikipedia. Capitulations of Ottoman Empire
5. Thimi Nika Historia e filatelisë shqiptare, Tiranë 2013, f 47-49.
6. Bajram Peçi Shërbimi dhe pullat postare në qytetet shqiptare prej fundshekullit të XIX, deri në Luftën e Parë Ballkanike. Koleksionisti Nr. 35, viti 2020, f. 26-31.
7. Unificato filagrano 1999, I. P. XX edizione. Interi postali, ALBANIA f. 106-107
8. Kolë Gjinaj Historia e filatelisë shqiptare. Shkodër 1996, f. 31-34.

Cape Treport & Cape St. Janji

by Kozma Dashi

If we look carefully at the 1916 map (Fig. 1), we notice that the imaginary line that connects Cape St. Janji on the Karaburun peninsula, with Cape Treporti opposite it, to the north/west of the Bay of Vlora, closes off the Bay of Vlora. During the Great War, battery units of the Italian Royal Navy were deployed at both of these strategic points. First, a battery of the Royal Navy was installed at Cape Treporti before January 1, 1916, and on March 20, 1916, 1/2 company 11/15 (Fig. 1/1) was deployed, and parallel to that, before January 16, 1916, a detachment unit of the Royal Navy was deployed at Cape St. Janji = Cape Kongjiorufes. The following materials shed light and clarify the postal history of these two strategic points during the Great War.



Cape Treporti. (Fig. 2) – Postcard 10c. cancelled with the postmark “BASE PASSEGERA * 2* SEZIONE*” dated January 1, 1916, accompanied by the blue quadratic censorship seal in two lines “VERIFICATO PER CENSURA “DISTACCAMENTO R.M. TRE POSTI”.



The absolute rarity of this stamp is due to the toponymic error “TRE POSTI” instead of the correct toponym “TRE PORTI”, so the specimen in question is the second known so far. This postcard was sent by a soldier of “40 Battag. M. Territoriale, 4 Compag” – “(soldier of the fourth Company of the 40th Battalion of the Territorial Militia)” stationed at Cape Treporti. Furthermore, the specimen in question is rare also for the fact that it records the date of the opening of the post office “BASE PASSEGERA *2* SEZIONE *” from the spring of 1916, recorded in prestigious contemporary literature in January 1, 1916 (Kozma Dashi collection).

Piero Macrelli in his prestigious collection “Le poste italiane in ALBANIA” – AICPM, presents (Fig. 3) – a postcard franked with a 5c stamp cancelled with the same postmark in black accompanied by the note “con evidente errore, unico esemplare conosciuto” (evident error, only known specimen).



In my collection I have (Fig. 4) – a postcard travelled on December 27, 1915, cancelled with the postmark “BASE PASSEGIERA *2* SEZIONE *”, it is the earliest known date so far of this post of the Vlora naval base. The error – the toponymic slip TRE POSTI – TRE PORTI would be corrected later as noted in the material presented on (Fig. 5).



Postcard of the Italian Royal Navy – second type, distributed free of charge to military personnel during the Great War conflict, cancelled with the postmark “BASE PASSEGERA * 2* SEZIONE *” on August 5, 1918, sent to Genoa – Italy, accompanied by the interesting blue censorship seal “VERIFICATO PER CENSURA / Dal Comandante Distaccamento / TREPORTI-VALONA” (Kozma Dashi collection).

(Fig. 6). Royal Navy postcard – second type, cancelled with the postcard “BASE PASSEGERA *2* SEZIONE *” on February 7, 1919, sent to Florence by a member of “ Fotoelectrica Treporti B. N. Valona “ (Kozma Dashi collection).

Cape St. Janji. Without a doubt, Piero Macrelli would be the first to identify and present the first – rare – materials, launched by members of the Royal Navy battery installed at Cape St. Janji on the Karaburun peninsula.



cartolina da Punta S. Giovanni 16.1.16 a Roma affrancata 5c. annullata in transito a Brindisi; bello di censura in cartella del COMANDO DISTACCAMENTO S. GIOVANNI

(Fig. 7) – Cancelled postcard with the stamp “BASE PASSEGERA *2* SEZIONE *” on January 16, 1916, sent to Rome, accompanied by the blue square censor seal “VERIFICATO PER CENSURA/ dal Comando R.M./ “DISTACCAMENT. S. GIOVANNI” (P. Macrelli collection).



raccomandato dal DISTACCAMENTO S. GIOVANNI, affrancato 85c. per tre parti; trasmesso dalla P.R. ALBANIA n.1 il 17.4.16 e giunto a Firenze il 21.4; bello in cartella del Distaccamento e faccetta di censura al verso

(Fig. 8) – Registered envelope, third weight, franking 85 c, cancelled with the postmark “POSTA MILITARE ALBANIA* n.1*” on April 17, 1916, travelled to Florence, accompanied by the square censorship seal, purple color” VERIFICATO PER CENSURA /dal Comandante R.M./ “DISTACCAMENTO S. GIOVANNI” (Piero Macrelli collection).



(Fig. 9) – Royal Navy postcard – second type cancelled with the postmark “BASE PASSEGERA *2* SEZIONE *” on September 28, 1917, travelling to Milan, accompanied by the interesting, square black censorship seal “VERIFICATO PER CENSURA / dal Comando R.M./ D I S T A C C A M E N T O S. GIOVANNI” sent by a member of the “Distaccamento S. Giovanni Vallona–Albania” (Kozma Dashi collection). We think it is appropriate to clarify that in the literature of Italian postal history (3), Daniele Focosi: *La Regia Marina italiana in Albania, 1916 – 1921* (1*parte), we encounter a “toponymic LAPSUS” confusing Cape of Saint Janji – Punta San Giovanni, on the Karaburun peninsula, which we are examining with Saint Gjin – San Giovanni di Medua in Lezha, in northern Albania, wrongly concluding that “In Saint Gjin from June 1, 1917 the office “Posta Militare Truppe Occupazione 6” operated”. This post office at this time operated in Ioannina & Kalibaki – Greece, was renamed “POSTA MILITARE *116 * on August 1, 1917 and from December 10, 1918 it operated in Saint Gjin. The toponymic slip, which generates a slip in postal history, has been reused, without filter, even by Albanian philatelists.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. B. Cadioli, B. Selvaggi, P. Macrelli “LA GRANDE GUERRA NEL CENTENARIO, I Volume. AICPM Rimini 2018
2. Ministero della difesa Stato Maggiore dell’ L’Esercito Italiano nella Grande Guerra. Roma,1981. Volume VII, Tomo 1,2,3.
3. Daniele Focosi. *La Regia Marina italiana in Albania, 1915–1921*.

Carol Göbl, Institute of Graphic Arts, 150 years since its founding

Francisc AMBRUȘ

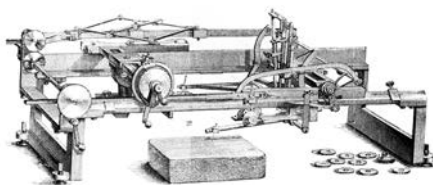
Why an article about a typographer, a printing house and his work?

The answer is simple. Our postage stamps, which we are so proud of, were printed in such graphic establishments. In the numerous specialized books and philatelic articles, far too rarely has the editorial space been dedicated to them. That's why I decided to present you with some images and information from the life and work of a great typographer of the time, Carol Göbl.

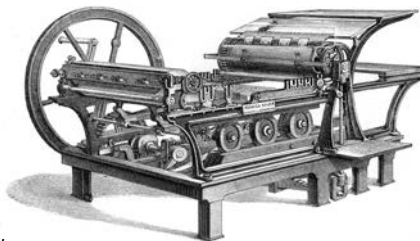


Carol Göbl

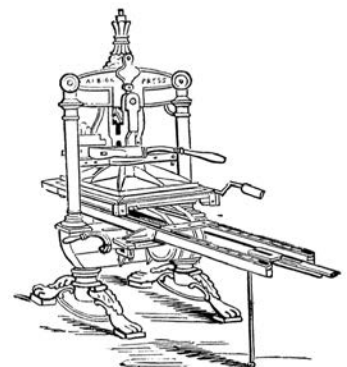
Born in Vienna on October 14, 1845, into a family of printers, he began his apprenticeship as a typographer in 1859 at the Romanoff & Rasidescu printing house, where after only two years he became chief machinist. In 1864, he went abroad to complete and perfect his typographic studies. For eighteen months he worked in Vienna at the "Imperial Printing House", then in Stuttgart and finally in Paris in the postage stamp printing workshops (Hotel Monnaie) where he stayed until 1866. Returning to the country, he worked at Rasidescu's printing house, which he bought on April 16, 1876 from C.A. Rosetti. The main activity of the printing house until that moment was the printing of the newspaper "Romanul", the leading newspaper of the country, which, due to the poor condition of the machines and their wear, had become difficult to read.



...Pantograph

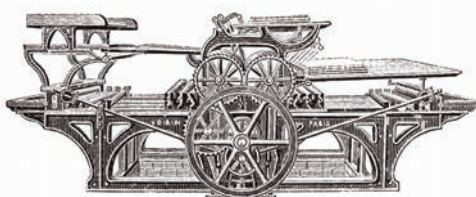


...Country Newspaper press

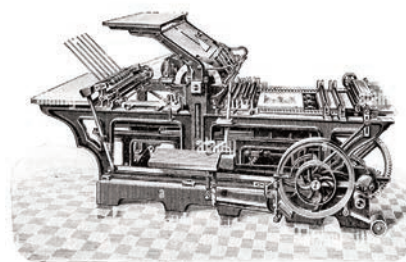


...Lithographic printing press

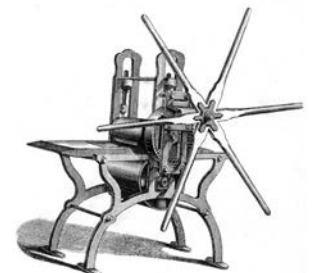
The first thing the new owner and patron did was to repair the machinery and recondition it, but also to invest in new modern machinery compatible with new high-quality printing. The purchase of machines for the Ausburg flatbed printing, a Sigl machine for taille-douce printing, a pantograph, machines for rubbing lithographic stones, large quantities of type bodies and many other machines and accessories necessary for typographic works, led to the raising of the standard and quality of the works executed, followed by many gold medals at national and international exhibitions. Through the great diversity of works executed, books, various printed matter, secured printed matter (shares and securities), illustrated postcards, stamps and labels, the printing house became the most important graphic establishment of the time in Bucharest, becoming in 1895 the supplier of the royal house.



...Double Side printing press



...Ausburg printing press



...Copperplate printing press

In 1894, Carol Göbl won the gold medal at the Liege exhibition and in the same year, the first attempts at three-color printing were made at his printing house. Before the 1900 Paris Universal Exhibition, the first relief-printed works were produced by the graphic stable. At the 1900 Paris Universal Exhibition, the products exhibited by the Carol Göbl house obtained the highest award, the Gold Medal for this type of work.



...Lithographed trade card Romanian Pavilion



...vignettes for the Paris Exhibition 1900



...transfer rollers



1900 - The first and most beautiful vignette issue printed in three colors and with gold folio intended for order notes for printing works.





In 1901, a book dedicated to 25 years of typographic activity of the Carol Göbl Graphic Establishment was printed, with illustrations and cover executed by the painter Costin Petrescu.



...1902 - Invoice with personalized letterhead of the Carol Göbl Institute of Graphic Arts



...Proof of stamps intended for access to the Romanian General Exhibition of 1906, sent to the exhibition commissioner for approval



Illustrated postcard, circulated with the jubilee vignettes dedicated to the Romanian General Exhibition of 1906



...Booklet with jubilee vignettes dedicated to the Romanian General Exhibition of 1906





...lithographed illustrated postcards, executed in the workshops of the Carol Göbl Institute of Graphic Arts



...Bonds and shares lithographed, executed in the workshops of the Carol Göbl Institute of Graphic Arts



A Football Club that has scored against illiteracy

receives a commemorative stamp on its centenary anniversary

On April 24, 2026, in a highly symbolic and historic event, commemorating 100 years since the founding of Panetolikos F.C, the club's anniversary stamp was presented. The event was the first to take place in the packed new event hall of Panetolikos' Stadium, and the organization was jointly undertaken by the Agrinion Philatelic Society and Panetolikos.



However, what distinguishes it from the rest of the sports associations in Greece is its educational activity. Since its foundation in 1926, seeing the poverty and illiteracy that existed, the extremely difficult living conditions of the locals and the Minor Asian refugees who had flocked to the area of Agrinion, it created Night Schools for needy students. From the 1926–1927 school year to the 1982–1983 school year, for 57 whole years, children who worked in the morning for a day's wages, learned reading in the Night Schools created and maintained by the Panetolikos. According to records, about 5,500 students attended the night schools.

The commemorative stamp displays the football club's badge which features Titormos, a mythological hero who was a shepherd from Aetolia known for its immense strength. They also launched other philatelic products, such as a sheet of Personal Stamps, a commemorative envelope, and a special commemorative postmark, constituted a distinct tribute to the club's century-long history, which has left a strong imprint on Greek football and the local community through its extensive Philanthropic Educational work.



The Agrinion Philatelic Society, through its President Ioannis Skarmoutsos, was honored with the receipt of a commemorative item for its initiative and contribution to the issuance of the stamp.



From left : Evangelos Karras, Secretary General of the Hellenic Philatelic Federation, Hellenic Post Pantelis Skyllou "cancellation" expert and the President of the Agrinion Philatelic Society, Ioannis Skarmoutsos.

In the same venue, the opening of a Philatelic Exhibition with sports content was also held, highlighting the timeless relationship between Sports and Philately. The Exhibition lasted until April 30th with high attendance and was a world first as the only Philatelic Exhibition so far to take place in a fully operational first-class football stadium.



Ioakeim Chalvatzidopoulos, a former professional goalkeeper and ex-President of the Hellenic Philatelic Society has exhibited in Agrinion Philatelic Exhibition his 30-frame Football Philatelic Collection.

Commemorative postage stamps : EUROPA 2026 on April 5th

The first edition of EUROPA stamps was printed in 1956, and today it is the most popular issue collected by philatelists worldwide. EUROPA stamps depict rich European history, common roots, and diverse cultures. They have a registered PostEuropa trademark, which is the official EUROPA logo. Each year, a common theme is chosen for all PostEuropa member states.



The year 2026 marks the 70th anniversary of the EUROPA stamp, and all PostEuropa member post offices will print a stamp of the same design. After a competition involving postal operators, the best-rated proposal was from Finland Post by designer Klaus Welp. The abstract depiction of seven dots arranged in a diagonal line represents 70 years of unified work by European postal operators. The colourful patterns in the background are a joyful mix of the European flags colours of the PostEuropa member states, an association representing European postal operators and officially recognized by the Universal Postal Union (UPU).

Definitive postage stamps : Archaeological Treasure 2026

Croatian Post Ltd. Mostar has issued on May 12th a definitive postage stamp in a sheet of 8 stamps, a postmark and a First Day Cover (FDC).

The Roman military camp at Gračine (Ljubuški) – Domitian’s Hiberna, has been a national monument of Bosnia and Herzegovina since 2003. Archaeological research, conducted under the supervision of archaeologist Mirko Rašić led to a new discovery. A building inscription was found confirming a strong military presence in the province of Dalmatia during the reign of Emperor Domitian. The inscription was found as a “spolium” (part of an older building used as construction material for a new one), divided into two parts and embedded in the foundation of the western semicircular wall of the defensive tower.



The 119 x 70 x 17 cm tablet is made of local limestone and has the shape of a “tabula ansata” (an ancient form of inscription tablet). Relief depictions of an eagle and a winged lion with a floral motif between them are located on the left side, in the corners. On the opposite side, eagle claws are preserved, suggesting that the relief is mirrored. In the discovered inscription, Domitian is mentioned as the patron of the construction; the letter size in the first nine lines is 3.5 to 5 cm, and 2.5 cm in the last line.

Domitian – Titus Flavius Domitianus (October 24, 51, Rome – September 18, 96, Rome) was a Roman emperor who improved the economy, built roads, rebuilt Rome devastated by fires, and supported artists. He was assassinated when he began to deal ruthlessly with the aristocracy and persecute Christians. The Senate pronounced “damnatio memoriae” upon him – a condemnation to posthumous obliteration, destruction of his statues, and erasure of his name from all monuments.

BULGARIA

On 14.01.2026 the Ministry of Transport and Communication launched a postage stamp “Bulgaria in the Euro zone” into postal circulation. The stamp depicts a stylized lion, a symbol of Bulgaria since the Middle Ages. The stamp's design echoes that of the first postage stamps since 1879 – the centimes.



On 02.02.2026 the Ministry of Transport and Communications launched into postal circulation a souvenir sheet of one postage stamp “150th Birth Anniversary of Jack London”.

Jack London (1876–1916) was an American novelist and author of over 50 books and around 200 short stories. His works vividly depict the forces of nature and the struggle for survival under the most difficult conditions. Among his best-known novels are "The Sea-Wolf," "White Fang," "The Call of the Wild," "Martin Eden," "Moon Valley," and "Belle Smoke."



On 12.02.2026 the Ministry of Transport and Communications launched into postal circulation a souvenir sheet of one postage stamp “Chinese New Year of the Fiery Horse“. The stamp features a stylized horse with a fire burning underneath it. There is the inscription "Year of the Fire Horse" in Bulgarian and Chinese. The emblem of “Balkanfila” International Exhibition 2026 is depicted in the lower right corner of the souvenir sheet.



On 25.02.2026 the Ministry of Transport and Communications launched into postal circulation a postage stamp with a vignette of the issue “Bulgarian Masquerade Games”.



The stamp was issued in the city of Yambol during the Kukerlandia Festival, which took place from February 26 to March 1, 2026, and celebrated the 70th anniversary of Bulgaria's UNESCO membership. The Kukeri are traditional Bulgarian masked men (rarely women) who perform rituals to drive away evil spirits and promote health and fertility. Masked groups and delegations from Europe, Asia, and Africa travel to Yambol specifically for Kukerlandia Festival, which has been held annually since 2000. During the festival, Yambol's residents and visitors can enjoy a variety of exhibitions, competitions, open-air workshops, and colorful bazaars.

On 24.03.2026 the Ministry of Transport and Communications launched into postal circulation a set of four postage stamps “Thracian Gold“.

The stamps depict gold objects and jewelry from the Thracian period (c. 1200 BC – 1st century AD) discovered in Bulgaria. The Thracian period is a significant era of Bulgarian antiquity, characterized by a highly developed culture, masterful metallurgy, and a belief in an afterlife. The Thracians are renowned for their rich gold and silver treasures, which depict complex mythological scenes and showcase exceptional craftsmanship. The period ended with the incorporation of Thracian territories into the Roman Empire, but their cultural heritage remains of great importance to the region.



On 06.04.2026 the Ministry of Transport and Communications launches into postal circulation a postage stamps and a vignette of the issue “150th Birth Anniversary Krustyo Sarafov”, a Bulgarian actor with significant roles as Nikita in Leo Tolstoy's "The Power of Darkness," Fedya in Leo Tolstoy's "The Living Corpse," Famusov in Alexander Griboyedov's "Intellect Creates Suffering," Golemanov in Kostov's play, and Tartuffe in Molière's play.

He is considered one of the most important figures and pioneers of Bulgarian theater and was awarded the Dimitrov Prize. From 1952 to 1962, the National Theater was named after him. Today, the National Academy of Theater and Film Arts "Krustyo Sarafov" bears his name. The stamp features a portrait of Krustjo Sarafov. The decorative panel depicts the building of the National Academy of Theatre and Film Arts, built in 1942.



GREECE

The Hellenic Post the period March to April has put into circulation two new sets of commemorative stamps.

On March 17th was launched a set of four postage stamps of the series “100 years Academy of Athens” as follows :

“*Athena and Prometheus at the heavenly gate of light*”, detail of oil painting on canvas by Christian Griepenkerl (1884) decorating the west wall of the conference hall of the Academy of Athens, face value €0,50

“*Prometheus introduced to Olympus*”, detail of oil painting on canvas by Christian Griepenkerl (1885) decorating the south wall of the conference hall of the Academy of Athens, face value €1,20



“*Colossal marble statue of Athena*” (detail) by Leonidas Drossis, 1882, face value €1,20

“*Academy of Athens*”, the main entrance of the Academy building (from SE), face value €2,00

On April 22nd was launched a set of three postage stamps of the series “Anniversaries and Events” as follows :

200 years of Ermoupolis, Syros, face value €1,20

100 years Panetolikos, face value €1,70

100 years Fédération Internationale de Philatélie (F.I.P), face value €2,00

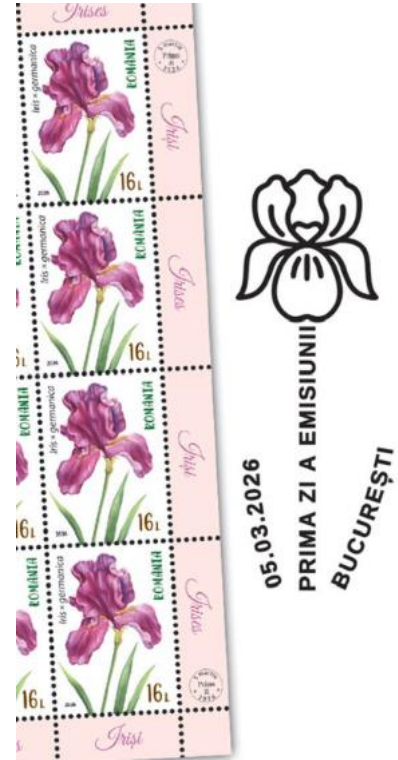


ROMANIA

Romfilatelia and the Romanian Post bring us closer to the wonderful world of flowers through a philatelic issue that will be introduced into circulation on March 5th under the name **IRISES**, consisting of 4 postage stamps (with face values of Lei 5.50, Lei 6.50, Lei 9 and Lei 16) and two First Day Covers in miniature format.

Iris flowers owe their popularity to their unique shape and intense colours, which convey optimism and bring joy to those who care for them or receive them as gifts. These flowers express nobility, dreaming and melancholy, mystery and spiritual depth.

The iris flower is a symbol of royalty and a subject of Greek mythology, where Iris is presented as the goddess of the rainbow. It is called either 'Iris' (rainbow) or 'eiris' (messenger). After the advent of Christianity, the Iris began to be considered the flower of the Virgin Mary, a symbol of divine protection, faith, wisdom, and value. For the French, the iris flower was the precursor to the famous lily flower.



The items of the issue feature hybrids of the *Iris × germanica* species, commonly known as the bearded iris, is one of the most spectacular ornamental plants grown in gardens. An ancient hybrid of Mediterranean origin, this species impresses with the elegance and chromatic diversity of its flowers. It belongs to the Iridaceae family and is widely cultivated for its large, spectacular flowers with a varied colour palette of deep purple, blue, yellow, white, pink, or spectacular two-colour combinations and they have been cultivated in Europe for centuries and has become naturalized in many regions, blooming in spring, between April and June, *Iris × germanica* symbolizes elegance, hope, and nobility.

ROTARY, DISTRICT ROMANIA, 90 YEARS

To mark the anniversary of nine decades since the establishment of the first Romanian Rotary District, Romfilatelia and the Romanian Post introduce into circulation on *Friday, March 20th, the postage stamp issue entitled ROTARY, DISTRICT ROMANIA, 90 YEARS*, consisting of a postage stamp and a First Day Cover.

In 1905, American lawyer Paul Percy Harris, along with three friends, founded a Rotary club in Chicago, a non-profit organization that brought together professionals and leaders from various fields to perform community service, promote ethics, and contribute to the peace and well-being of the community in which it operated.

Shortly afterwards, other clubs were also established, and the network known as Rotary International expanded worldwide.



In 1929, the first Rotary club appeared in Romania, and on March 1st, 1936, District 84 Romania was established, comprising nine clubs – Bucharest, Timișoara, Brașov, Cernăuți, Arad, Câmpina, Iași, Cluj, and Ploiești – and having as its Governor the engineer Christian Penescu – Kertsch, the President of the first Club – Bucharest (the postage stamp with the face value of Lei 16). During the communist era, the Rotary movement was banned in Romania, but it was reactivated in 1992 with the establishment of the Bucharest Rotary Club.

Today, Rotary International District 2241 Romania and the Republic of Moldova is a humanitarian, non-governmental, non-profit, community service organization in which people unite and take action to create lasting change in their communities and in themselves, leading to a lasting impact wherever they act. On the First Day Cover is represented a diagram of Rotary International's areas of action, also adopted by Rotary International District 2241 Romania and Republic of Moldova, which are: Peacebuilding and conflict prevention, Disease prevention and treatment, Water, sanitation and hygiene, Maternal and child health, Basic education and literacy, Community economic development and Environment.

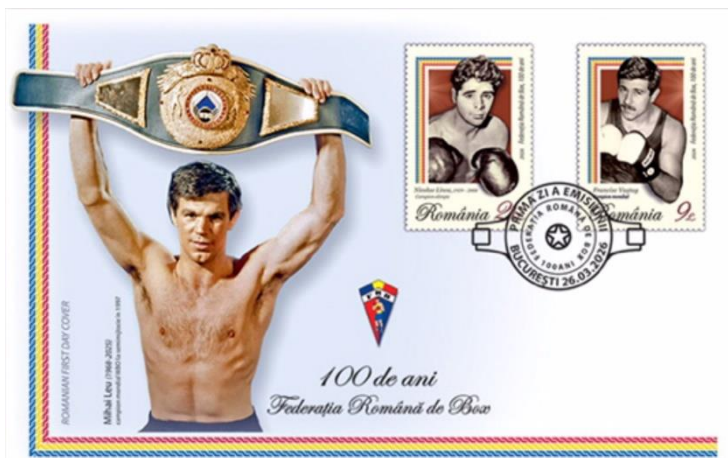
Romanian Boxing Federation, 100 Years

An anniversary postage stamp issue dedicated to a sport practiced for millennia by both amateurs and professionals was introduced into circulation on March 26th under the summarizing title **ROMANIAN BOXING FEDERATION, 100 YEARS**.

The issue consists of two postage stamps, a perforated souvenir sheet, a First Day Cover, a set of two maxicards for maximaphily enthusiasts and a philatelic folder with special products in limited run printing. The postage stamp with the face value of lei 21 depicts the image of the Olympic champion Nicolae Linca, who, at the 1956 Melbourne Olympics, won the first Olympic gold medal for Romania, and the postage stamp with the face value of lei 9 presents Francisc Vaștag, a three-time world champion. The perforated souvenir sheet of the issue, bearing the postage stamp with the face value of lei 32, depicts an image from a boxing match between King Michael I and a schoolmate in the presence of coach Gheorghe Axioti.

In Romania, boxing, which was initially practiced in the form of demonstrations in circuses or restaurants, began to take on a more organized structure starting in 1920, following the establishment in March 1920 of the 'Boxing Club' by founder Mihai Codruș. The sport of boxing appeared in Romania at the beginning of the 20th century and experienced a rapid rise from the outset, from the first boxing galas organized in the country by sailors who arrived aboard commercial ships.

Romanian boxing remains among the elite sports disciplines in Romania, gradually regaining its former prestige due to the 21 European medals won by Romanian boxers over the past year.



International Children's Book Day

On April 2nd a postage stamp issue was put in circulation, dedicated to a cultural event of global significance: *INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S BOOK DAY*, consisting of four postage stamps and a First Day Cover. This cultural event was initiated on April 2nd, 1967, as a mark of particular respect for the most renowned storyteller for children, Hans Christian Andersen (born on April 2nd, 1885), author of such timeless tales as: *The Little Mermaid*, *The Ugly Duckling*, *The Snow Queen*.

The postage stamps illustrate various stories as follow : Lei 3 the well-known tale 'Little Red Riding Hood', Lei 6 depicts a touching story entitled 'The Little Mermaid' by Danish writer Hans Christian Andersen, the postage stamp of Lei 7 depicts the fable 'The Raven and the Fox' by Aesop, adapted and made known to the general public by the French writer Jean de La Fontaine, that of Lei 27 illustrates the famous story 'The Goat and Her Three Kids', by the beloved Romanian writer Ion Creangă.

The image on the First Day Cover suggests the idea of staging a small theatrical performance, in which children, playing the roles of the story's characters, read a single book while sharing their own experiences with the actions of a cunning animal : the wolf.





For **Suggestions, Comments and Inquiries**, kindly contact the **National Delegates**

Albania : **Julian Demeti** julian.demeti@gmail.com

BiH Kanton : **Danijel Potocki** tockipo@gmail.com

BiH Repubika Srpska : **Radenko Radanović** radenkoradanovic@gmail.com

Bulgaria : **Boncho Bonev** bnb11@abv.bg

Croatia : **Capt. Slavoljub Katancevic** katem-sjeme@pu.t-com.hr

Croatia : **Julije Maras** julije@maras-filatelia.com.hr

Greece : **Christos Gikas** (editor) xgikas@gmail.com

Moldova : **Andrei Adam** ufrm@mail.com

Montenegro: **Tomo Katuric** tomokaturic@t-com.me

North Macedonia: **Sinisha Pavleski** unionofphilatelists.mk@gmail.com

Romania : **Francisc Ambrus** franambrus@yahoo.com

Serbia : **Svetislav D. Jelic** svetislav.jelic@gmail.com

Slovenia : **Igor Pirc** ipirc711@gmail.com

Türkiye : **Mehmet Akan** studiotasarim@gmail.com