

REFLECTIONS OF ILLUSTRATED POSTCARDS IN THE PROMOTION OF ROMANIAN MINING ACTIVITIES

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Abstract: *The natural heritage is defined and accepted as the set of physico-geographic and biocenotic (floristic, faunistic) components and structures of the natural environment, whose ecological, economic, scientific, biogenic, sanogenic, landscape, recreational and cultural-historic significance and value has a relevant significance for present and future generations. Constantly promoting philatelic themes that address the natural beauties and richness of our country, the post office issuing entity performs a series of postage stamps in whose pictures Romanian sceneries of rarity. In this paper we propose an insight into the history of philately and bring into discussion the significant concerns in promoting Romanian mining activities, by presenting stamps and illustrated postcards, from the beginning of Romanian philatelic time.*

Keywords: *natural heritage, Romanian mining activities, philatelic appearances, postcards.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Philately can be defined as the activity of collecting and studying philatelic products, especially stamps. However, philately signifies more than a concern for beauty; challenge, information, education, friendship and fun are some of the characteristics of one of the most popular hobbies in the world [4].

Today, after over 160 years of philately in Romania [4], our preoccupations for this extremely vast field is to study not only of the postage stamps of various kinds and types, but also other categories of philatelic - postage envelopes (first day covers/envelopes, homage envelopes, postcards, postcards and maximum postcards etc), summarize and focus on everything intimate to mining activities.

By constantly promoting philatelic themes that deal with the natural beauties and richness of our country [3], the administrative entity responsible for issuing philatelic-postal items produces a series of issues in which images of the mining activity are found, especially miners.

Starting from the idea that Romania is, especially from the point of view of the natural heritage, a place blessed with extremely well-rounded biodiversity and geodiversity, of a rare beauty [3], we chose to present a series of philatelic-postal issues that come to refine the individual's need for aesthetics and cultural-educational development. At the same time, during the study we tried to emphasize the cultural importance of philately in society and we try to give the public a part of the forgotten history of mining in Romania, which has been the basis of the national economy for a good time.

2. MATERIAL AND METHODS

The working methodology for this study comes as an accessible concern from all points of view of the current generation. As with the practice of philately, no special, long-term training is required, as in the present study, no innovative methodology, expensive equipment and / or instruments is required, but creativity is needed for the conduct of research, stamp. Objectively speaking, beyond the passion of the authors for philately - as satisfaction for the aesthetic need and as a cultural-educational development [3], the working methodology consisted in identifying, indexing and describing the main philatelic pieces issued in Romania (postal stamps, FDCs, occasional envelopes, maxicards), which in the meantime remain to promote Romanian mining activities.

In our research period both author collections and international open-source philatelic databases have been thoroughly consulted, including Delcampe (www.delcampe.net), Colnect (colnect.com), StampWorld (www.stampworld.com), PicClick (picclick.com) and RomaniaStamps (www.romaniastamps.com) as well as specialized international philatelic catalogs: Yvert (Yv), Michael (Mi), Gibson (G) and Scott (S) [9].

The above mentioned bibliographic resources added, for the fullness of the study, a series of specialized catalogs on philatelic errors, curiosities and varieties [1, 2] as well as an important series of Romanian specialty papers with general character on Romanian postal stamps, which offer valuable information and authenticity to clarify the following parameters: *date of issue* [1, 2, 5-8], *layout and indexing of the pieces* [1, 2, 5-7], respectively *their description* (name, format, lace etc) [5-10].

At the same time, the open-source philatelic content platforms, especially the discussion forums, have been of great use, where, as a result of the online meetings of philately enthusiasts, valuable information has been found that guarantees the correctness of the data presented in this study.

3. ROMANIAN MINING EXPLOITATIONS REFLECTED IN PHILATELY

Although it may seem slightly exaggerated, the involvement and reflection of philately in promoting the intrinsic values of mining activity in Romania is felt, for the first time, in the period preceding the 1950s, when a series of postage stamps appear to celebrate the "Labor Day" later, "Miner's Day".

In the 1950-1954 period, when the first carto-philatelic and maxifilatelice parts appeared, as a laudation for the exploration and exploitation of minerals [6, 7], we identified a series of issues that were not neglected.



FIG. 1. Variations and editions of the "Mining Day", 21.08.1951 (LP #285)
(a) first day envelope, 12.08.1951, București;
(b) ocazional envelope - „Filatelic Exhibition”, 07-17.11.1951, Baia Mare

Thus, the oldest identified piece, which opens the way for philately to promote mining is the "Day of the Miner", which appeared in the form of "first day cover" (FDC) on 12.08.1951, under the Ministry of Postal and Telecommunications - the Philatelic Office in Bucharest (see Fig. 1a) [11, 12]. Some sources, however, mention the date of issue is on August the 21st, 1951 [2, 6-8, 10].

The graphic theme of this envelope was used in the making of a homage envelope on the occasion of the philatelic exhibition from 07-17.11.1951 which took place in Baia Mare. In this sense, the color of the printing ink, as well as the legend accompanying the image (see Fig. 1b), was changed [13].

The second piece on which we stopped is also entitled "Miner's Day", Fig. 2b, appeared on August 11th, 1952, but stamped on August 10th, 1952 and franked by the stamps of the "Mining Day" show of 15.08.1952 (LP #328) [14-17]. The FDC presents itself as a 9×16.5 cm white envelope and a black drawing that reproduces the 20-pound stamp (RO #1570) of the show, which, along with the 55 bani, comes stamped with the "miner badge" and circulated in more than 1,400 pieces [7].



FIG. 2. Variations and editions of the "Mining Day", 11.08.1952 (LP #328)
 (a) maximal postal card - „Filatelic Exhibition”, 06-20.11.1952, Baia Mare;
 (b) first day cover (FDC), 10.08.1952, București;
 (c) occasional envelope - „Mining Day”, 24.10.1952, Tg. Mureș

The stamps, laced, indexed by Yv #1274...5, Mi #1402...3, G #2258...9 and S #902...3, are 28×33 mm in size. They were painted by N. Popescu, in a very generous circulation (1,000,000 series), in finished sheets of 100 pieces.

The graphic representation of the FDC reproduces the stamp model with a face value of 20 bani [14, 15]. Along with the aforementioned FDC, in our searches we identified a series of movements that were not neglected. Thus, in Fig. 2a we have a maximum postcard made on the occasion of the philatelic exhibition in Baia Mare that took place between 06-20.11.1952. In the illustration of the postal support we can find the miner statue and the building of the Baia Mare Technical School. The circulation of this edition,

comprising both the stamps of the show, was 500 copies [18]. In Fig. 2c we present a circulated occasional envelope.

The 1955-1959 period is poor in graphical representations to propagate various mining activities or riches of the Earth. However, in the relatively extended research framework we have identified a circulation that we consider to be interesting (Fig. 3a) [19] and, of course, a series of errors and varieties thereof (Fig. 3b-d) [1, 2, 21-23] for the postage stamp "a miner" (RO #1673) [20] of the usual "Activities" (LP #381) issue dated 29.03.1955.



FIG. 3. Variations editions of postage stamps for "miner" (RO #1673)
 (a) postal service postmark bearing the "miner" (RO #1673), 30.12.1960, Bucharest;
 (b) UFO in front of the stamp; (c) white vertical stripe over the nose;
 (d) UFO (interruption) at the neck level

In addition to the pieces already presented, for the years 1960-1975 a number of postcards were also identified - see Fig. 4 [24, 25], Fig. 5 [26-30] and Fig. 6 [31-35], about which are little known, although they have facilitated the promotion of Romanian mining.



FIG. 4. Illustrated postcards circulated during the 1960-1975 (I)
 (a) "Entry into the mine" Salina Tg. Ocna; (b) "Entry into the mine", Salina Ocele Mari (Vâlcea).



FIG. 5. Illustrated postcards circulated during the 1960-1975 (II)
 (a) "Entry into the mine" Salina Dej; (b) "Entry into the mine", Baia Mare;
 (c)-(e) "Entry into the mine" and "Salt exploitation", Dej



FIG. 6. Illustrated postcards circulated during the 1960-1975 (III)
 (a)-(b) "Salt exploitation", Slănic-Prahova; (c) "View for exploitation", Baia Sprie;
 (d) "View for exploitation", Aninoasa; (e) "View for exploitation", Slănic-Prahova

On the opposite side, while retaining the emphasis on promoting Romanian mining by presenting the main exploits of the time, there are the uncirculated postcards that we present synthetically, without verso, in Fig. 7 [36-42].

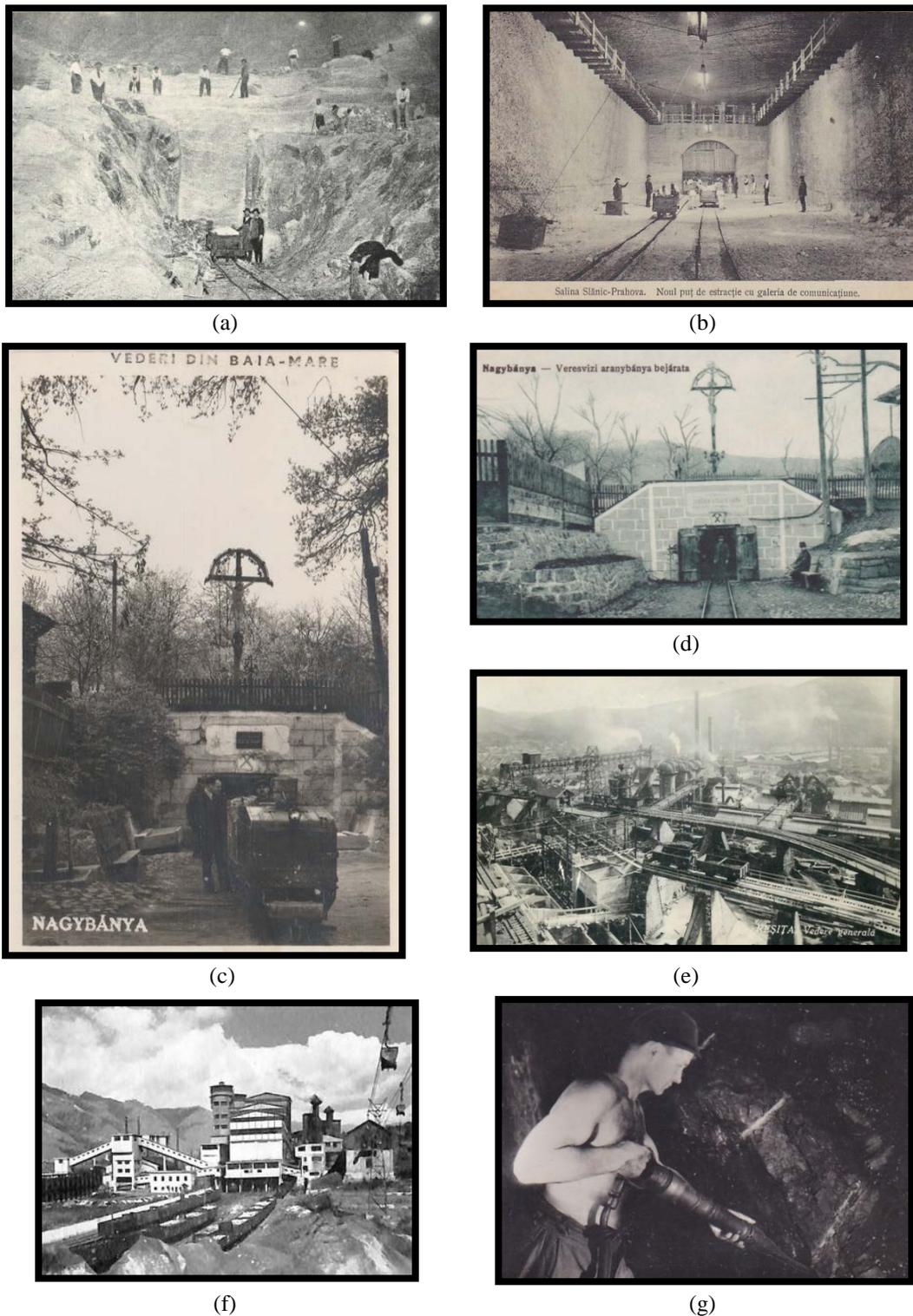


FIG. 7. Illustrated postcards non-circulated from the 1960-1975
 (a) "Transport of exploited salt", Ocna Dej; (b) "Transport of exploited salt", Slănic-Prahova;
 (c)-(d) "Entry into the mine", Baia Mare; (e) "View to the exploitation facilities", Reșița;
 (f) "View towards exploitation", Petroșani; (g) "Miner working", Petroșani

4. CONCLUSIONS

By publishing this study we hope that we will make available to all those interested a useful tool of information, education and philatelic orientation in what was the mining activity in Romania over time. We would like the work to be the first light to guide through the intricate philatelic galleries of Romanian mining.

Also, to somewhat revive the sober style, proper corrections and catalogs, and of course to remove the monotony specific to a purely philatelic study, we sought to present the material in the form of not so analytical, but descriptive notes.

This study is mainly addressed to passionate philatelists, but can also be of interest to other professional categories that can develop similar studies. It can be highlighted once again that philately by its stamps and postcards has a special beauty - is capable of being a true embassy of culture and a post of human mining history passage.

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