



## **Reflections and Implications of Philately in the Promotion of Mining and Mineral Samples, Fossils and Gems in Romania (I): 1945-1960**

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### **Authors' contributions**

*This work was carried out in collaboration among all authors. Author BC designed the study, performed the chronological and descriptive analysis and wrote the first draft of the manuscript. Authors ALP and MC managed the analyses of the study and complete it with valuable philatelic details. Authors BC and ALP managed the philatelic literature searches. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.*

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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 heritage, different philatelic associations and post office entities performs a series of postage elements in whose pictures we also find the Romanian

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industrial preoccupations over time. In this paper we propose an insight into the history of mining-philately and bring into discussion the first significant concerns in promoting mining activity and mineral samples, fossils and gems in Romania. In this context, the main objective of this paper is to identify, index and describe the main philatelic pieces issued in Romania (postal stamps, FDCs, occasional envelopes, postcards and maxicards etc), from the beginning of issuing in this field, namely the period 1945-1960.

**Keywords:** *Natural heritage; mining activities; philatelic appearances; mineral samples.*

## 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 [1].

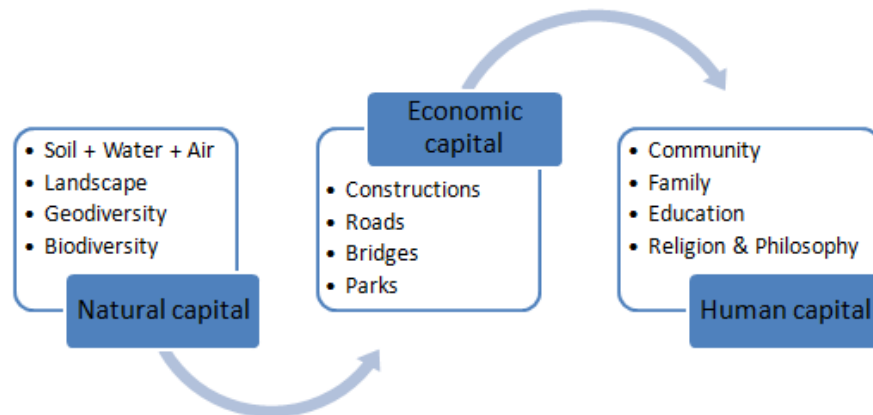
By closely scrutinizing the etymology of philately, beyond the franchise business, in the broad sense of the word, we realize that this is more than a preoccupation, a pleasant and instructive means of recreation, which consists in collecting and studying postage stamps and other philatelic-postal items [1]; practically, the two parts of philately - collecting and studying philatelic parts - are very closely linked, constituting an organic entity.

In fact, we think that the mistaken idea that philately represents only gathering, brand collection, without careful, thorough and multilateral study of them, makes one lose from the beginning the opportunity to to enrich themselves in a pleasant and surprising way, the knowledge of general culture, which is equivalent to emptying philately from its instructive-educational content.

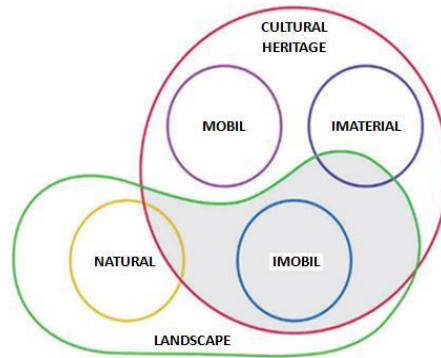
Today, after over 160 years of philately in Romania [1], our preoccupations for this extremely vast field is to study not only of the postage stamps of various kinds and types, but also other categories of philatelic- postage envelopes (first day envelopes, homage envelopes, postcards, postcards and maximum postcards, etc.), summarize and focus on everything intimate to mining and mineral, fossil and gemstones.

By constantly promoting philatelic themes that deal with the natural beauties and richness of our country [2], the administrative entity responsible for issuing philatelic-postal items, currently Romfilatelia, produces a series of programs in which images of the elements of the mining activity are found, especially minerals, fossils and gemstones that we consider to be part of natural capital (see Fig. 1).

Starting from the idea that Romania is, especially from the point of view of the natural heritage (see Fig. 2), a place blessed with extremely well-rounded biodiversity and geodiversity, of a rare beauty [2], we chose to present a series of philatelic-postal issues that come to refine the individual's need for aesthetics and cultural-educational development.



**Fig. 1. The environment has the structure of the natural - economic - human capital**



**Fig. 2. Natural heritage as part of cultural heritage**

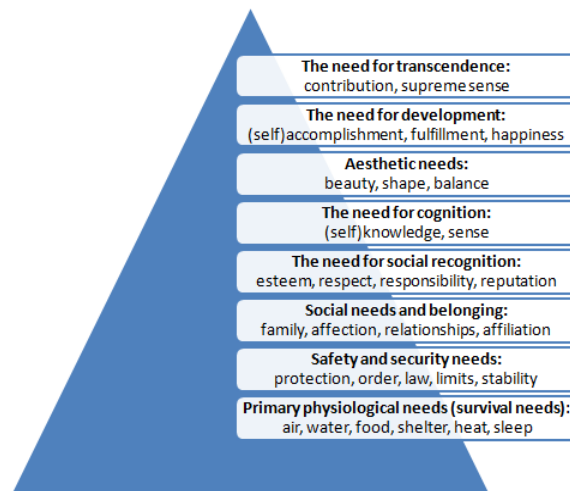
The study is conducting in order to present the real history of thematic philately, especially the one dedicated to industrial activities in general, and the exploration and exploitation of resources in particular. At the same time, during the study we tried to emphasize the cultural importance of philately in society and 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. MATERIALS 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. As we mention before no innovative methodology is

required, but we used a huge numbers of pictorial data (postal stamps, FDCs, occasional envelopes, postcards and maxicards etc) from different international open-source philatelic databases, as well as from specialized philatelic catalogs. We analyzed and interpreted this kind of pictorial data based on the descriptions made by other philatelists and collectors, respectively by consulting and comparing with other sources and specialized catalogs.

Objectively speaking, beyond the passion of the authors for philately - as satisfaction for the aesthetic need and as a cultural-educational development [2], the working methodology consisted in identifying, indexing and describing the main philatelic pieces issued in Romania (postal stamps, FDCs, occasional envelopes, postcards and maxicards), which in the meantime remain to promote mining and mineral, fossil and gem samples from 1945-1960 closely (see Fig. 3).



**Fig. 3. The pyramid of Maslow's needs - adapted and redefined in the current context**

In our research period both author collections and international open-source philatelic databases have been thoroughly consulted, including Delcampe ([www.delcampe.net](http://www.delcampe.net)), Colnect ([colnect.com](http://colnect.com)), StampWorld ([www.stampworld.com](http://www.stampworld.com)), PicClick ([picclick.com](http://picclick.com)) and RomaniaStamps ([www.romaniastamps.com](http://www.romaniastamps.com)) as well as specialized international philatelic catalogs: Yvert (Yv), Michael (Mi), Gibson (G) and Scott (S) [3].

The above mentioned bibliographic resources added, for the fullness of the study, a series of specialized catalogs on philatelic errors, curiosities and varieties [4,5] 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* [4,5,6-9], *layout and indexing of the pieces* [4,5,6-8,10], respectively *their description* (name, format, lace, etc) [4,5,6-9]. 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. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION: MINERAL EXPLOITATIONS IN ROMANIA REFLECTED IN FILATELY**

Mining is an old occupation that has not escaped the attention and sphere of philatelic interest [11], besides the collecting of stamps and other postal material [12]. This theme also includes the present work, besides the numerous specialized exhibitions and anniversaries (dedicated to the Day of Labor and the Day of the Miner) which we mention, which come as a crowning of the prestigious activity carried out persistently by the philatelic associations.

We are talking about philatelic associations and clubs, which appeared in the full communist period, with the propagation of mass philately [12]. Through them, philately has gained momentum and new valences, including mining and metallurgy, through the appearance of philatelic (industrial) thematic issues.

By consulting open-source philatelic platforms and browsing an important series of specialized works, as presented in reference area, of general character, on Romanian postage stamps, I had the pleasant surprise of having a

handy readable material, even in its gross form, captivating us with interesting and well-thought-out things in the history of the industrial preoccupations of the time.

The history of mining and metallurgy in Romania can indeed be easily pursued by studying postage stamps and other philatelic products, using a scientific method of exposure and research similar to that presented in [13].

Presenting a history of philatelic implications in promoting mining in Romania, starting with writing about an industrial objective (some mining) or about a major event (an exhibition or an anniversary) is not too easy for information is broad, heterogeneous, sometimes even contradictory [14], and as such it must be selected, ordered as chronologically as possible or after other subjective aspects, and rendered in the most convincing way possible.

So I found out a number of interesting things about mining and miners trying to take out the natural riches of the homeland and especially about the involvement of philatelic circles in exploiting and capitalizing on the Romanian activities of the time.

Today, we find that the members of these philatelic associations have, over time, made the phenomenon of mass culturalization through philatelic education, through correspondence (thematic movements), exhibitions and anniversaries, a true act of culture, as the information they bear on postal items - philatelic self-help and will help the specialist, the researcher, the cultured man and the general public to better understand the Romanians' industrial history as well as the evolution of one of the most important mining operations in Europe.

Through the philatelic pieces, the creative and innovative spirit of the mining specialists is emphasized, reflecting the evolution over time with original elements of the methods of exploiting the resources. The philatelists address in their daily concerns both the technical and economic problems related to the mining production and the correlation between them and the social and historical events which marked the evolution of the exploitation and, implicitly, of the mining localities as a whole.

Throughout the paper, we have attempted to show the involvement of science and technology in solving the problems faced by the

communities in their industrial work, also emphasizing the outstanding achievements. In order to give the Romanian mining the best possible picture of the development of Romanian mining in time, we have proposed that the work should contain a rich illustrative material, addressed both to the general public and to the philately and/or mining enthusiasts, the researchers and the specialists deals with issues of technical development in general and mining in particular. Each of them will be able to find in this first work devoted to mining philately rich information chronologically structured.

### 3.1 Period 1950-1954

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". Of those marks, we mention the stamps representing "a miner" from the "Labor Day - 1 May 1946" (RO #1122, LP #195) appeared on May 1, 1946 (see Fig. 4a) [7,15], respectively that of 1947 (RO #1193, LP #217) appeared only on June 15, 1947 (see Fig. 4b) [7,16].

The postage stamp shown in Fig. 4a, appearing on white paper with M1 filigree, lace-shaped 28×33 mm, and in a series of 86,000 pieces, is indexed by Yv #906, Mi #987, G #1803 and S #605 [7,15], while the postmark of Fig. 4b, appeared in 225,000 series on white MM filigree paper in 42×26 mm lace format, is indexed by Yv #971 and Mi #1057 [7,16].

In the 1950-1954 period, when the first carto-philatelic and maxifilatellic parts appeared, as a

laudation for the exploration and exploitation of minerals [7,8], we identified a series of issues that were not neglected. 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 (Fig. 5a) [17,18]. Some sources, however, mention the date of issue is on August the 21<sup>st</sup>, 1951 [5,7-9,10]. 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. 5b), was changed [19].

The two stamps shown met in a special composition, as part of a franchise "par airplane". As can be seen in Fig. 5c, this piece has never circulated, and we tend to believe, according to the arrangement of the stamps, that it was strictly philatelic [20].

The philatelic part of Fig. 5a [17], which appears as a 9×16.5 cm white envelope in a print of 1,460 pieces, has the semicircle stamp, filled with laurel leaves and miner's markings [8], over the francature made of stamps of the "Mining Day" show, dated August 21<sup>st</sup>, 1951 (LP #285). It also reproduces in the background, by drawing in black, the second applied stamp, representing "a miner and mining installations" [8].

In terms of the stamps used to frank the piece, symbolizing "a miner in uniform" (RO #1433) and "a miner in working clothes" (RO #1434) [21, 22], they are indexed by Yv #1162...3, Mi #1272...3, G #2121..2 and S #792..3, and



**Fig. 4. Various postage stamps representing miners that appeared before 1950**  
 a) „Labor Day - 1 Mai 1946”, 01.05.1946 - postage stamp RO #1122; b) „Labor Day - 1 Mai 1947”, 15.06.1947 - postage stamp RO #1193



**Fig. 5. 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; c) uncirculated envelope marked „par avion”; d) overprint on postage stamp "a miner in uniform" (RO #1433); e) variety of the postage stamp "a miner in work clothes" (RO #1434); f)-k) various editions marked with postage stamps of the emission

are presented in lace-shaped 26×42 mm, according to O. Adler's mosaics, in a print run of 800,000 series arranged in finite sheets of 100 pieces [5,6,7].

The philatelic part of Fig. 5b [19] holds the graphic element of Fig. 5a, the difference being the color of the pattern. On the occasion of the 1951 philatelic exhibition, the piece was made in a print of 1,200 pieces and was franked, besides the stamps of 1951 mining day, with the stamp "coal extraction" (ro #1444) from the "plan cincinal" (lp #292).

It is worth noting that even in 1951, with the monetary reform (1 new leu = 20 lei old), overprinting with new values appeared, including for "a miner in uniform" (indexed RO #1510), reindexed by Yv #1251, Mi #1433, G #2204 and S #854, and renominated with 55 bani, in a circulation of 187,800 pieces (see Fig.5d) [4,5,7,8,23].

Over time, philatelic researchers for this area have identified a philatelic error [4], two curiosities and a few varieties. Thus, in Fig. 5e the "scar on the miner's cheek" error [24] can be

noticed, and as a diversity. In Fig. 5f-k we present a series of circulation with the issue stamps [25-30].

The second piece on which we stopped is also entitled "Miner's Day", Fig. 6b, appeared on August 11<sup>th</sup>, 1952, but stamped on August 10<sup>th</sup>, 1952 and franked by the stamps of the "Mining Day" show of 15.08.1952 (LP #328) [31-34]. 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 a circulation of 1,400 pieces [8].

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 [31,32]. Along with the aforementioned FDC, in our searches we identified a series of movements that were not neglected. Thus, in Fig. 6 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 [35]. In Fig. 6c-e we present a series marked with the 55 bani issue mark [36-39].



**Fig. 6. Variations and editions of the "Mining Day", 11.08.1952 (LP #328)**  
 a) maximal postal card - „Expoziția Filatelică”, 06-20.11.1952, Baia Mare  
 b) first day cover (FDC), 10.08.1952, București; c) ocazional envelope - „Ziua Minerului”, 24.10.1952, Tg. Mureș; d)-e various editions marked with postage stamps of the emission



**Fig. 7. Variations and editions of the "Mining Day", 03.09.1953 (LP #350)**

- a) first day cover (FDC) - „Minierul 1953”, 03.09.1953, București  
 b) occasional envelope - „Expoziția filatelică”, 13-22.06.1954, Hunedoara  
 c-f) various editions marked with postage stamps of the emission

The list of identified philatelic pieces continues with "1953 Miner's Day" (Fig. 7a) [40,41]. The FDC with the stamp of the issue (LP #350) is stamped on the first day of the issue, dated September 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1953, Bucharest. The occasional envelope shown in Fig. 7b, is stamped with the stamp of the philatelic exhibition organized in Hunedoara, between 13-22.06.1954 [42].

Both pieces are marked with the stamp of the issue, a "mining worker", indexed by odds Yv #1316, Mi #1443, G #2301 and S #945, stamped in 42×26 mm lace format, made by L. Kuşçenco, in a circulation of 2,000,000 copies, disposed in finite sheets of 100 pieces [43,44]. They are further exposed, according to our research method, and the circulation with the mark of the issue, in Fig. 7c-f [45-48].

The next piece analyzed is the FDC issued on 08.08.1954, "Miner's Day 1954" (Fig. 8a) [49, 50,

51]. The issues denomination of 1.75 lei (LP #365) was used to reproduce Fig. 8b [52]. In Figs. 8c-g we encounter more freed traffic with postage stamp of the issue [53,54-57].

The year 1954 brings additions to the philatelic pieces with interest manifested for the mining activity through the occasional envelope with the stamp "Philatelic Exhibition", dated 10-25.08.1954, Petroșani (Fig. 9) [58].

### 3.2 Period 1955-1959

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 very interesting (Fig. 10a) [59] and, of course, a series of errors and varieties thereof (Figs. 10b-d) [4,5,60-62] for the postage stamp "a



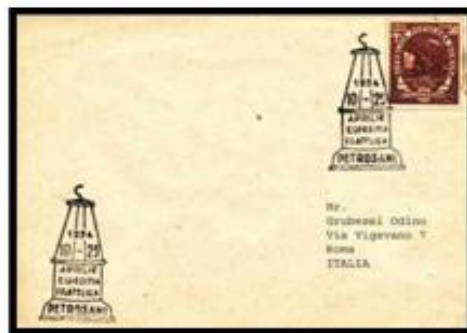
miner" (RO #1673) [63] of the usual "Activities" (LP #381) issue dated 29.03.1955. As it was natural, an impressive series of franchised traffic follows the postage stamp of the issue, during 5-

6 years, as shown in Figs. 10e-f [64, 65], Fig. 11 [66-75], Fig. 12 [76-85], Fig.13 [86-95], Fig. 14 [96-105], Fig. 15 [106-115] and Fig. 16, from annexes, [116-121].



**Fig. 8. Variations and editions of the "Mining Day", 08.08.1954 (LP #365)**

- a) envelope for the first day (FDC) - „Minierul 1953”, 03.09.1953, București
- b) maximum postcard, unmarked and uncirculated
- c)-g) various editions marked with postage stamps of the emission



**Fig. 9. Occasional envelope - "Philatelic Exhibition", 10-25.04.1954, Petroșani**



**Fig. 10. Various editions of postage stamps for "miner" (RO #1673)**

- a) postal service postmark bearing the "miner" (RO #1673), 30.12.1960, București;
- b) UFO in front of the stamp; c) white vertical stripe over the nose; d) UFO (interruption) at the neck level; e)- f) various editions marked with postage stamps of the emission







Fig. 13. Various editions of postage stamps for "miner" (III)





Fig. 15. Various editions of postage stamps for "miner" (V)

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS

Lately, in Romania at least, the philatelic research is almost completely missing. The novelty of this study is that we try to bring, to the

current and future generations, a hint of the mining history. Through the philatelic pieces, in a very large number of pictorial data (in the form of postal stamps, FDCs, occasional envelopes, postcards, maxicards etc), we expose, something

that has not been included in Romanian philatelic studies so far.

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. And that is to make it easier to fully understand the evolution of mining in philately, as well as the dynamics of the preoccupations for the promotion of mineral, fossil and gemstone samples that we often find as museum pieces or as collections of exhibitors.

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

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## COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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ANNEXES:



Fig. 16. Various editions of postage stamps for "miner" (VI)

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