

A Philatelic Review Regarding the Romanian Architectural Tendencies

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Abstract

The Romanian Philately, since its inception (1858), has made known to the world the elements of local architecture (traditional and modern) - elements that we place at the basis of the ecological house concept, as a result of the concept of a healthy home. Through this paper, we want to present to the general public - as new and unique interdisciplinary methods of learning in architecture - a series of philatelic issues consecrated with the passage of time, from 1906 until currently, that are in the forefront of the architecture, the interior and exterior design, including, among others, peasant houses, pavilions and palaces, palaces and other architectural monuments. There are fractions of images, with people and places, with traditional and modern architecture, with what we want to remain alive in the memory of our descendants.

Rezumat

Filatelicia românească, încă de la începuturile sale (1858), a făcut cunoscute lumii elementele de arhitectură locală (tradițională și modernă) - elemente pe care le plasăm la baza conceptului de casă ecologică, ca rezultat a conceptului de cămin sănătos. Prin lucrarea de față dorim să prezentăm publicului larg - ca noi și inedite metode interdisciplinare de învățare în arhitectură - o serie de emisiuni filatelice consacrate odată cu trecerea timpului, de la 1906 și până în prezent, care au în prim plan arhitectura, designul interior și exterior, incluzând case țărănești, pavilioane, palate și alte monumente de arhitectură. Sunt fracțiuni de imagini, cu oameni și locuri, cu arhitectură tradițională și modernă, cu ceea ce dorim să rămână viu în memoria urmașilor.

Keywords: traditional architecture, philately, the Village Museum, architectural tendencies

1. Introduction

About houses, in one way or another, it's been discussed for a long time. Lately, even in Romania, the interest in architectural tendencies has begun to take on proportions [1]. In this context, the man viewed through ecology is directly involved and even responsible for his integration and harmony

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in a healthy environment, from which, in particular, the notion of ecological house [2], alongside the notion of smart homes, can not be missed.

For more than 150 years collecting stamps is one of the preoccupations of royal families, film stars, celebrities in the sport world and other people in public life. Throughout the world, postage stamps perform three main roles: a certain value receipt for a postage payment in advance, a means of celebrating and promoting national heritage and a collection piece [3, 4].

But above all, the postage stamp is a true ambassador of human history, culture and civilization, because its form and function give it freedom of movement and the ability to transmit information all over the world.

The popularity of philately is determined by the fact that it is flexible to the collector's needs, for which the most important piece of paper is proven to be stamp. The stamp was invented as a simple indicator, a sort of receipt meant to mark the payment of the mail transport tax. In the beginning, however, it has been seen that the stamp was an admirable vehicle that could transmit through inscriptions, but especially through pictures, different messages [4].

The Romanian philately, since its inception, has made known to the world the elements of local architecture, which we place as the foundation of the ecological house concept [3]. Through this paper, we want to present to the public a series of philatelic issues that have traditionally established the Romanian architecture in more than a century. In this context, we mention the first philatelic issue, appeared in October 1906 at the "General Exhibition held in Bucharest" (Fig. 1), in which are explicitly mentioned elements of architecture.



Figure 1. General Exhibition - Bucharest (1906) [2, 5, 7]

The issue includes 11 stamps, just 6 presented in Fig. 1 - pavilions and piles, true architectural monuments (LP #63). The issue also features a non-dotted version, with the "S.E." overprint, some of which have the overturned center or a double impression [2]. A series of stamps have been printed since then, illustrating architectural elements, but the first series dedicated entirely to traditional architecture was due to appear only in 1963, with the development of mass philately.

2. Elements of architecture in Romanian philately

2.1 Traditional architecture philatelic issues

The philatelic issue "Village Museum" appeared on 25 December 1963, consisting of 7 stamps made by Aida Tasgian after engravings by Ion Dumitrana (LP #575). The stamps illustrate houses from the Village Museum of Bucharest (Fig. 2). It can be seen how climate, materials, culture and people's habits have left their mark on the traditional architecture of the houses presented. Stamps have a 40x28 mm format and were printed in a 1,000,000 series run in 100-piece finished sheets. The philatelic issue is accompanied by 2 First Day Cover (FDC) pieces [5].



Figure 2. Village Museum - Bucharest (1963) [2, 5, 8]

As can be seen from the philatelic pieces presented in Fig. 2, the architecture specific to a certain place is influenced by a cumulus of factors, without any of them being determinant. By carefully analyzing the exposed stamps we will notice that the climate, building materials, economic motivations, culture and customs are the key elements around which the traditional Romanian architecture was built [2]. The house is, above all, a shelter against weathering: where the climate is warm and dry, high heat inertial materials that keep cool, the walls are painted white or in bright colors to reflect the radiation solar; where the climate is warm and humid, houses raised from the ground to avoid flooding are sometimes open or have thin walls that allow rapid ventilation; in the cold climate, the materials used are heavy and good thermal insulators, and the exterior is painted in dark colors that retain the heat.



Figure 3. 50 years of Bucharest Village Museum (1986) [2, 5, 9]

All these aspects can easily be seen on the stamps of "The Semicentenary of the Village Museum of Bucharest" (Fig. 3). The philatelic issue (LP #1162), which appeared on 21 July 1986, consists of 6 stamps illustrating houses from Sălcuia de Jos (Alba), Stănești (Argeș), Ostrov (Constanța), Sârbova (Timiș), Audia Neamt) and Cutișoara (Gorj). Stamps have a 33x48 mm format and were printed in a 200,000 series run in 25-piece finished sheets. The philatelic issue is also accompanied by 2 FDCs [5].

There are many aspects of the local architectural specificity of a habitation area, by socio-cultural factors. Sometimes, cultural factors become more important than environmental determinants. The Romanian post office has successfully illustrated this idea in the philatelic issue entitled "Traditional Architecture" (Fig. 4), composed of 6 stamps made by Mihai Vamăescu, put into circulation on 18 February 1989 (LP #1215). It can be seen on each stamp the house plan specific to the architectural area. Stamps have a size of 27x42 mm and were printed in a 200,000 series run in 50-piece finished sheets. The philatelic issue is also accompanied by 2 FDCs [5].



Figure 4. Traditional architecture (1989) [2, 5, 10]



Figure 5. Windmills (1994) [2, 6, 11]

The traditional house and household always agree with the occupations and way of life of the inhabitants, but also with their economic possibilities. The economic motivations influencing architecture refer to the basic occupations of the inhabitants and the way they determine the configuration of the household. This aspect can also be seen from the "Windmills" (Fig. 5), which appeared on 31 March 1994 and consists of 6 stamps (LP #1338) made by Gh. Leahu. The stamps illustrate mills from Tulcea, Vâlcea and Vrancea. They have a 48x33 mm format and were printed in a 200,000 series run in 25-piece finished sheets. The issue is also accompanied by 3 FDCs [6].

In addition to the 1994 philatelic issue, the series of overtipar stamps, in 34x49 mm format, with the following nominal values: 1,300 lei / 245 lei - overprint with brown wheat spice 258,178 pieces, 2200 lei / 115 lei - overprint with brown corn stiletos - 519,919 pieces, 5000 lei / 115 lei - overprint with green corn stiletos - 395,187 pieces and 16500 lei / 70 lei - overprint with brown rye spice 121,166 units (LP #1543) [6].

The next philatelic piece (Fig. 6), distinguished by its very representation, is the miniature of the commemorative "ASTRA 50th Anniversary Establishment Museum of Traditional Folk Civilization" (LP # 2001b). Appearing on 4 April 2013 and based on the offset lithography, the philatelic piece, in the same narrow frame, is drawing the vertical mill from Dăbâca (Hunedoara - 1848) - both the building itself (the illustrated cuff) as well as its interior, respectively the plan and the section of the gear (the vignette). The nominal value of the stamp is 14.5 lei [6].



Figure 6. 50th Anniversary of ASTRA Traditional Folk Civilization Museum (2013) [2, 6, 12]

Other notable mentions, worth to be reviewed, regarding the traditional Romanian architecture, are the philatelic pieces from the commemorative series: "Romania - a European treasure" (LP #1844) with the stamp having the nominal value of 3 ron "Folk Art - Maramures" - appeared on 16 September 2009, "Discover Romania - Transylvania" (LP #1971) with the stamp having the nominal value of 3.6 ron "Guest House from Zălanului Valey (Covasna County)" - appeared on 15 March 2013 (RO #6874) and "Seasons at the Village Museum" (Fig. 7) - appeared on 20 May 2016 (LP #2105) . The piece from the image (LP # 2105a) representing the block of 4 stamps [6].

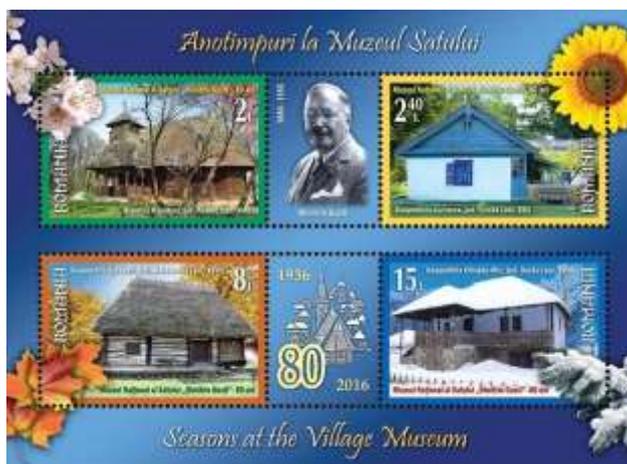


Figure 7. The block of 4 stamps - Seasons at the Village Museum (2016) [6, 13]

Also concerning the architecture, in Maramureş, for example, wood has always been a resource used in multiple ways: from the plate from which people eat to the shelter which protects the villagers, and the wooden churches in which they worship. When the people of Maramureş smell wood, they feel at home. The wooden gates are symbols of the Maramureş village, also considered the Land of Wooden Churches. The themes carved in the poles of the gates shows a symbolic territory located between the outer world and the homestead, between the neutral space and the sacred realm, their role being to protect the house and the family (Fig. 8).

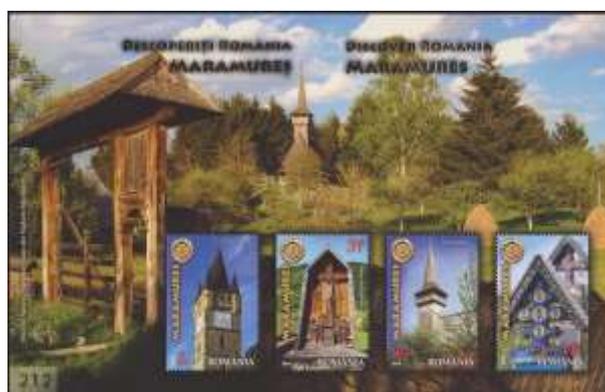


Figure 8. Discover Romania - Maramureş (2014) [6, 14]



Figure 9. Maramureş wooden churches from UNESCO World Heritage List (1997) [6, 15]

When you travel through small villages, you can easily notice how they preserve their old wooden church, a testament to local experienced builders. Eight of these monuments, located in Bârsana,

Budești, Desești, Ieud, Plopiș, Poienile Izei, Rogoz and Șurdești, have been included on UNESCO World Heritage List (Fig. 9). The wooden churches are not only touristic attractions, they are also places of worship for the villagers, who, dressed in their traditional clothes, show up every Sunday morning to pray and pay respect (Fig. 10).



Figure 10. Wooden church, Rogoz (2013) and Wooden church, Sugatag (2014) [6, 16]

2.2 Modern architecture philatelic issues

In addition to the philatelic issues, presenting the traditional architecture from Romania, there are a few series of philatelic pieces representing Romanian modern architecture. One of the first issue, in this context, "*Romanian modern architecture*" appeared in 20 November 1961 and contain stamps with reference to Bucharest - new construction, new homes and state circus, Constanta - railway station, the new Hall Palace, Hunedoara - new steel-mill, and Mangalia - workers club (Fig. 11).



Figure 11. Romanian modern architecture (1961) [5, 17]

As a continuation of Fig. 11, the philatelic series "*Modern architecture*" appears on 25 July 1979, containing 6 pieces in 48x33 mm format including the State Theatre (Târgu-Mureș), University (Brașov), Political Administration Building (Baia Mare), Stefan Gheorghiu Academy (Bucharest), Political Administration Building (Botoșani) and House of Culture (Târgoviște) (Fig. 12).



Figure 12. Modern architecture (1979) [5, 18]

Other representative buildings for Bucharest, Eforie Nord, Satu Mare, Târgoviște and Căciulata, we found in "InterEuropa" series starting with 18 May 1987 as presented in Fig. 13.



Figure 13. InterEuropa - representative buildings (1987) [5, 19]

Other notable mentions, worth to be reviewed, regarding the modern Romanian architecture, are the philatelic pieces from the commemorative series "550 years of Bucharest" (Fig. 14) with the 72x36 mm format stamps - Buna Vestire Church, Colțea Hospital, First Romanian Architecture School and Șuțu Palace - appeared on 18 September 2009 [6]



Figure 14. 550 years of Bucharest (2009) [6, 20]

and the "Iași - city of the Great Union" (Fig. 15) with the 48x33 mm format stamps - Ghica House (Residence of King Ferdinand I), National Theatre, University of Iași and Rosetti-Roznovanu Palace - appeared on 26 April 2017 [6].



Figure 15. Iași - city of the Great Union (2017) [6, 21]

3. Conclusions

The need for communication, especially among stamp collectors, led to their organization in various philatelic societies and clubs, which had an intense activity, especially at the beginning of the 19th century. Today, the stamp, as the main vector of philatelic communication, represents, together with the flag, the anthem, and coins one of our national symbols. In this context, the Romanian philately, since its inception, has made known to the world the elements of local architecture.

Through this paper, the authors want to open a series of presentations of what has given valuable, over time, the philately to civilization and human culture and which is reflected in philatelic

collections. There are fractions of images - as far as a stamp is concerned - with people and places, with traditional and modern architecture, with what we want to remain alive in the memory of our descendants - as an essential component of sustainable development after which we tend to believe that the current society is functioning.

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