

# EUROPEAN PHILATELIC EXHIBITION BULGARIA '99

## BRIEF HISTORY OF BULGARIAN MAXIMAPHILY

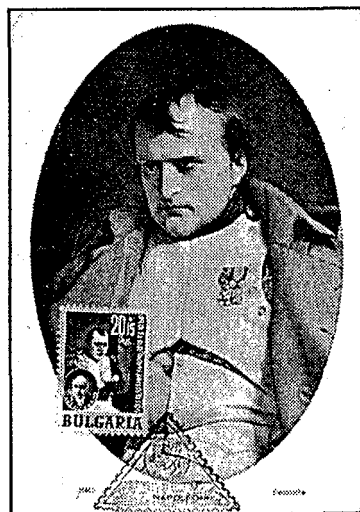
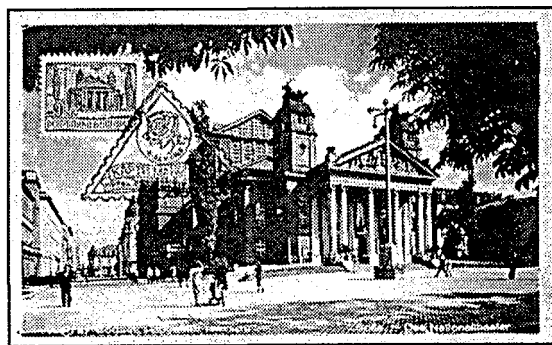
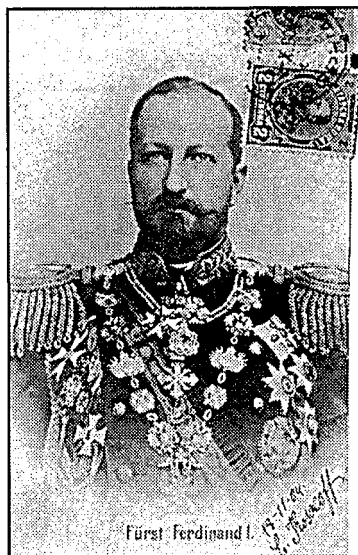
By George Constantourakis

The European Philatelic Exhibition of BULGARIA '99 was held in Sofia from October 5th to 10th, 1999. It celebrated the 120 years of the Bulgarian communications system and in particular the 120 years of their first stamp the "*Lion of Bulgaria*". In addition, it marked the 10th anniversary of FEPA - the Federation of the European Philatelic Associations - whose constitutional meeting was also held in Sofia in 1989.

The Class of Maximaphily was represented with 16 exhibits. There were 5 exhibits from Belgium, 4 from Greece, 2 from Bulgaria, 2 from Cyprus, and 1 each from Italy, Romania, and Israel. One exhibit from Cyprus was taken out of competition, as its owner was a member of the International Jury. Also a second exhibit from Greece does not appear in the Palmares catalogue. The 14 judged Maximaphily Exhibits (of 5 Frames or 80 Pages each) are listed here in the order of their achievement.

1. "*A Selection of Cards of USA*". Points: 82. Award: Vermeil medal. Exhibitor: Andre Sanders of Belgium (the president of the Belgian Maximaphily Association).
2. "*Greco-Roman Sculpture and its Influence*". Points: 80. Award: Vermeil medal. Exhibitor: George Constantourakis of Greece. (This of course is your editor, who retains a dual citizenship of Greece and Canada).
3. "*La Scultura nei Secoli*" (*Sculpture through the Centuries*). Points: 78. Award: Large Silver medal. Exhibitor: Vincenzo Scicutella of Italy. (A member of MACSU and also one of the founding members of the Italian Maximaphily Association).
4. "*Women in the Arts*". Points: 78. Award: Large Silver medal. Exhibitor: Leda Theocharides of Cyprus.
5. "*Trees - Their Leaves, their Flowers, their Fruits*". Points: 76. Award: Large Silver medal. Exhibitor: Jacques Jakowski of Belgium.
6. "*La France Touristique*" (*Touring in France*). Points: 76. Award: Large Silver medal. Exhibitor: Andre Piquer of Belgium.
7. "*Albercht Durer the Great Painter and Engraver*". Points: 75. Award: Large Silver medal. Exhibitor: Constantinos Samanides of Greece.
8. "*The Play of Light*". Points: 73. Award: Silver. Exhibitor: Mayer Gozes of Israel.
9. "*Gone with the Wind*". Points: 72. Award: Silver. Exhibitor: Alkis Valtinos of Greece.
10. "*Les Oiseaux dans le Monde*" (*Birds of the World*). Points: 72. Award: Silver medal. Exhibitor: Pierre Vanderhaute of Belgium.
11. "*Architecture throughout the Centuries on Romanian Territory*". Points: 71. Award: Silver medal. Exhibitor: Andrei Potcoava of Romania.
12. "*The Earth*". Points: 65. Award: Silver Bronze. Exhibitor: Lubmil Filipov of Bulgaria.

Clockwise fr Left. Figure 1: Prince Ferdinand I, first ruler of modern Bulgaria, which was a principality of Turkey from 1878. From 1908 it became independent and Ferdinand assumed the title of Tsar. Issue: Oct. 14, 1901. Cancel: 5.XI.1904, Sofia. Figure 2: Tsar Boris III and Queen Giovana. Issue: Nov. 12, 1930. Cancel: Dec...1930, Duse. Figure 3: On stamp: Actor Sava Ognianov in the role of Emperor Napoleon. On card: Emperor Napoleon. Issue: Dec. 8, 1947 for the 50th anniver. of National Theater. Cancel: May 2, 1948, Sofia, triangular, special illustr. & mention: "Cartes Maximum, 2-24 V 1948, Sofia, Bulgarie", to mark the 1st Exhibition of M.C. in Bulgaria. Figure 4: National Theater. Issue: Jan. 9, 1948. Cancel: May 2, 1948, Sofia, same as on Figure 3.



13. "Love of Horses" Points: 63. Award: Bronze. Exhibit.: Sergej Magdichev of Bulgaria  
 14. "Galerie Tratiakov - U.S.S.R.". Points: 63. Award: Bronze medal. Exhibitor: Andre Sanders of Belgium

From the official catalogue of the exhibition we learn that on Oct. 8 there was a scheduled meeting of Maximum Card collectors from the Balkan countries. The same catalogue devotes two full pages on the " *First Events of Maximaphily in Bulgaria*". Based on that information and using certain rare Bulgarian M.C. from my own collection, I am able to present a brief history of Bulgarian Maximaphily.

The period from the 1900's to 1947 is characterised by spontaneous M.C. realisations by unknown collectors, who by chance created some unique M.C. Not all these M.C. are perfect from a contemporary Maximaphily point of view. However they are considered as an original expression of national honor of the Bulgarian Maximaphily (see: *Figures 1 & 2*). Organised Maximaphily in Bulgaria starts only after 1947, when at the 1st International Congress of Maximaphily, held in Dijon France from Sept. 11 to 14, 1947, the first basic rules of Maximaphily were laid. A year later, on May 2nd, 1948 the 1st Bulgarian Exhibition of Maximum Cards took place in Sofia, with the aim of acquainting the Bulgarian philatelists with the rules of this new branch of philately. A number of beautiful M.C. were then created, in order to mark this occasion (see: *Figures 3 & 4*).

Bulgaria is proud with its five 1946 Maximum Cards for the " *1000 years of the Monastery of Rila* " (see: *Figures 5 & 6* ). All these Maximum Cards, these "first swallows", are considered as the classics of the Bulgarian Maximaphily.

*Figures 5 & 6* , Different Views of *Rila Monastery* located 50 miles south of Sofia. It was founded by Ivan Rilski (876-946), and became a great spiritual center. Later on in the 14th century, when it was at the height of its wealth and power, a vast monastery was erected, most of which was destroyed by fire in 1833. The present complex ,built between 1834 to 1860, is a World Heritage Site. Issue: Aug. 26, 1946. Cancel: Aug. 31, 1946 at "Rilski Monastir" special mention and illustration of its founder Ivan Rilski.

