

# What is MAXIMAPHILY?

By Nicos Rangos FIP Maximaphily Commission former chairman



Maximaphily is the most beautiful and exiting way in stamp collecting. It is one of the eleven recognized classifications of Philately. All types of visitors in the F.I.P. exhibitions find it very attractive, because of the beautiful illustrations on postcards and because the purpose of Maximaphily is to collect exclusively Maximum cards.

## *A little history*

The Maximum cards are born towards of the end of 19th century, with the appearance of the illustrated postcards and the postage stamps.

At the time, the back of the postcard being reserved only for the name and address of the recipient, the postage stamp on the postcards was on the view side, where the illustration was.

With the publication of the first commemorative stamps, symbols, characters, landscapes were formed the first T.C.V (Timbres Cote Vu) which are the precursors of the Maximum cards.

The first steps of Maximaphily were the result of spontaneous creations, made by chance, obeying only to the imagination and taste of their creators.

Later, after 1920 when the philatelic production was enriched with the issues of the first commemorative stamps, Maximaphily started getting more interest from a small number of collectors were the true Maximaphily pioneers.

Up to the Second World War Maximaphily exists almost on a purely semi-official basis and without any structure. This is why all the Maximum cards of this time are rare and expensive.

The first Maximaphily association was born in 1945 by the French collectors while new associations started appearing in many other countries in Europe and all over the world.



## ***What is a Maximum card?***

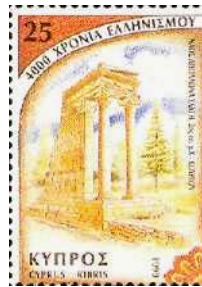
A Maximum card is made up of three elements:

1. The postage stamp.
2. The picture postcard.
3. The postmark.

*A postcard of the trade*



*A postage stamp*



*a postmark*



**The three elements are joined together in a fascinating way conforming to the following very precise regulations adopted by the International Philatelic Federation (F.I.P.).**

The meeting of the above three elements having a close visual relation constitutes the Maximum card (left).



## ***What about the postage stamp?***

It must be in perfect condition.

Only one postage stamp should be affixed on the view side of the picture postcard. Before 1978, when the "International statute of Maximaphily" was approved, maximum cards showing several postage stamps are tolerated, if one or more of those are concordant with the picture on the postcard.

In the case where a postage stamp has multiple, secondary or partial subjects, each subject must as far as possible, be dealt with separately.

The postage stamp (or the souvenir sheet it belongs to, if it is stuck on the postcard) must not exceed a quarter of the postcard area.

When the same subject is spread out on several se-tenant stamps making a panorama, the set can appear on a single postcard. However, when a subject is isolated on

one of the se-tenant stamps only the one on which the treated subject is illustrated should be affixed to the postcard.

- The use of an illustrated postal prepayment impression dispensed by automatic vending machines, affixed on the view side of the postcard, is allowed.
- In general, abstract or symbolic subjects do not suit Maximaphily and are excluded from its field.

## ***What about the picture postcard?***

- The picture postcard must be, if possible, on sale before the issue of the stamps or if it has been specially published, it must reproduce an existing document.
- Its size must conform to dimensions accepted by the “Universal Postal Convention”. However, postcards of square or rectangular shape available on the market are accepted, provided that their size allows them to be laid out on a sheet to the A4 format (210 x 297 mm) at a rate of two per sheet. Out of respect for its designer, it is strictly prohibited to reduce the size of a postcard by cutting it.
- The picture must offer the best possible concordance with the subject of the postage stamp or with one of them, if there are several.
- All postcards fully reproducing the postage stamp, that is to say with perforation, face value, country name, are forbidden.
- The picture must emphasize the subject of the postage stamp.
- The postcards on the market are accepted as they are. They can have margins and a text directly connected with the subject. Old postcards can have on the view side an area for correspondence. With the exception of these old postcards, the larger the picture is, the better the quality of the maximum card is considered to be.
- Postcards with multiple pictures as well as ones with holograms are forbidden.

## ***What about the postmark and the time of cancellation?***

The pictorial design of the cancellation and the place of cancellation (name of the post office) should have a close and direct connection with the subject of the stamp and of the picture postcard, and its date should be within the validity of the stamp and as close as possible to the date of its issue.

## ***What is "appropriate material"?***

The Maximaphily items should conform to the principle of maximum possible "visual" concordance between: The postage stamp, the picture postcard and the postmark. Special attention must be paid to the observance of the three concordances: of subject, of place and of time.

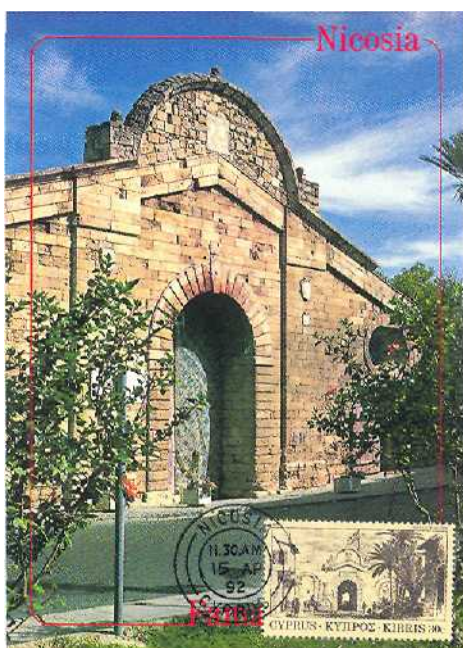
- The concordance of subject is the most important condition to characterise a Maximum card, e.g. the best concordance between the subject of the stamp and the illustration of the picture postcard.
- The concordance of place requires a connection between the name of the place or the locality written in the postmark and the subject of the stamp and the card.
- The "first day cancellation" can only be used when it is in accordance with the above mentioned condition
- For monuments, landscapes and sites the only place giving the required concordance is the one where the monument, the landscape or the site is located.



## ***What is not appropriate material?***

Any other material which does not conform to the above mentioned regulations is considered as not appropriate material for this classification of Philately.

Furthermore, the following items cannot be used for maximum cards: collages, cut-outs, private photographs on photo paper, color or black and white photocopies, photo-montages, drawings, documents specially devised for the stamp issue to be printed privately on photo paper thanks to a computer, illegible postmarks, bigger size or different shapes of postcards: only square and rectangular formats are allowed; all others are excluded.



## ***What is a "variant" Maximum card?***

When the stamp is the same on different postcards with the same subject and different postmark we call them "Variant" Maximum cards.



## ***What can I collect?***

Before you start collecting you must decide on the subject of the collection you would like to build. Then you collect Maximum cards strictly related to the subject you have chosen.

## ***Where can I find Maximum Cards?***

- Maximum card collectors would like to exchange maximum cards.
- The majority of philatelic dealers sell Maximum cards. However, you must be vigilant at the time of your purchases and pay attention to distinguish the difference between the "Philatelic memory" and a good and correct Maximum card.

**Do not forget that you can enjoy the creation, by yourself, of the original Maximum card.**

Further information can be obtained from:

- The official FIP Maximaphily Commission Regulations paper included in this website.
- The chairman of F. I. P. Commission for Maximaphily. E-mail: [dnl989@cytanet.com.cy](mailto:dnl989@cytanet.com.cy)
- The links related to other Maximaphily websites.