

Dear Friend,

The world is constantly changing. Lately it seems nearly impossible to keep up with all that is going on. That is one of the reasons I enjoy stamp collecting. As a hobby it allows me to possess a small piece of a nation, forever frozen in time. The Hungarian stamps you are receiving this month are a good example. These issues have preserved some of the interesting topics that make up the essence of the Hungarian culture.

Modern Hungary is an industrialized society, but prior to World War II and communist control, its economy was primarily agricultural. The Hungarian people still have a love of nature and the land, and that is reflected in many of their stamps. In this group we stamp which depict wine grapes and the ways in which they are grown. Hungarians are noted for their love of excellent wines, as well as very spicy foods. Other issues beautifully display colorful birds and flowers.

Many of the issues in this selection feature the great works of historically important artists. The Christmas issue features a painting by Sandro Botticelli. Botticelli was an artist active during the Italian Renaissance, known for painting religious themes such as the Madonna with Child in this selection. Hungarians think of the population are Roman Catholic, and one quarter practice Protestant faiths. Other religious groups include Jews, Eastern Orthodox Catholics, and Unitarians.

Hungary is an ancient nation dating back to the late 800's. Even today the country

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has been overrun and controlled by Mongols, Ottoman Turks, Austrians, Germans, and Soviets, but the people have maintained their identity. Hungarians have a strong sense of history which is evidenced on their stamps. Two issues celebrate legendary Kings Janos Hunyadi and Matthias Hunyadi. Janos was a fierce military general, and governed the Kingdom of Hungary from 1446 to 1452. He is best remembered for his efforts to rid Europe of Turks, a mission he was not able to accomplish. However, he fought so fiercely the Turks themselves called him, "war's lightning and thunderbolt." Matthias was his youngest son. He became king in 1459, and is remembered for his military abilities and attempts to rebuild Hungary. Matthias was a very learned man. His love of books, and knowledge of many languages earned him the nickname, "a friend of the Muses."

One of the most binding forces of any group of people is language. A stamp commemorating the 400th anniversary of the Karoli Bible was issued in 1990. Caspar Karoli's translation of the Bible in 1590 was a major influence on the development of the modern Hungarian language. Another issue honors Ferenc Kazinczy, a man who attempted to further reform the Hungarian language by improving grammar and spelling. His goal was to make the language more flexible, and a better tool for literary purposes.

As you can see, a study of a nation's stamps can shed such light on its people, history, and culture. Stamps bring about a more complete picture than the rushed headlines of a newspaper. Even more importantly stamps are beautiful treasures in their own right.

THE HUNGARY COLLECTION

1981-1990

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1981 HUNGARY



LURABA '81 - First Aviation and Space Philatelic Exhibition



Young Communist League



Bridal Chests

1983 HUNGARY



Protected Birds of Prey - World Wildlife Foundation



Resorts and Spas



Christmas

1984 HUNGARY



Budapest Riverside Hotels



Owls