



# Winning gold in Greece

## Israeli philatelists get a stamp of approval in Athens

**THE HOBBY** of collecting stamps also known as philately comes from the Greek words philo, meaning friend, and atelia, meaning something that has been prepaid. So when our Greek friends in the Hellenic Philatelic Society extended an invitation to the Israeli Philatelic Federation to participate in 'NOTOS 2021,' the European International Philatelic Exhibition held from November 19 to 22, I was indeed honored to be appointed the Israeli Commissioner.

Notos 2021 also commemorated the 200th anniversary of the re-birth of the Greek nation, as the success of the 1821 revolution marked the beginning of the liberation of Greece.

Organizing an international exhibition is a mammoth task in itself. No one could have foreseen or would have expected that we would have to deal with the global corona pandemic, which resulted in the cancellation of all international and national philatelic exhibitions worldwide. However, the organizing committee of Notos made a Herculean effort to prevail despite many obstacles that at times seemed insurmountable.

Amid very strict safety restrictions including vaccination certificates and PCR tests, my wife and I flew into Athens with 12 Israeli exhibits. After passing through customs, we were welcomed by Costas Chazapis, head of the organizing committee, who personally drove us to the exhibition hall where the collections were mounted on frames.

The venue for the exhibition was the spectacular Zappeion Conference and Exhibition Center, which has borne witness to many cultural and political events in Greece, including the venue for the fencing competitions at the first modern Olympic Games in 1896.

Our Israeli delegation included Dr. Eddie Leib, who was appointed to the international jury, and Izhak Barak, an exhibitor. It was wonderful to meet my close friends and colleagues from Europe, but especially the commissioners from Egypt, Slovenia, Turkey and Albania with whom I have maintained close relations. The array of commissioners, judges and representatives from all



(LES GLASSMAN)

The Commissioners at Notos 2021. The writer is at the center of the front row.

over Europe became like a family of nations, built on the common interest of the love of philately, and united in their acceptance of diverse cultures, nationalities, races and religions. By interacting not only on a philatelic but personal level, friendships were renewed and new acquaintances were made.

The exhibition, which for nearly two years under corona was unimaginable, became a reality and a great success. The jury judged a total of 285 exhibits from over 30 countries and found the quality to be of a very high standard.

I was extremely pleased with the medals and the recognition our contingent was given at the lavish Palmares ceremony. A gold medal was awarded for the Shana Tova Postcard Exhibit depicting Jewish tradition and history. The second gold was for a Pre-Philatelic Postal History of Jerusalem exhibit, which illustrated the development of postal communications from 1683 to 1872, and included original Sir Moses Montefiore letters.

The remaining collections received ver-

meil and silver medals. The Tour of Jerusalem exhibit was admired by many visitors who expressed their desire to visit the Holy Land.

The exhibition was under the patronage of the president of the Hellenic Republic, Katerina Sakellariopoulou, the Federation Internationale de Philatelie, the Federation of European Philatelic Associations, the Internationale des Journalistes Philateliques, and the Academie Europeenne de Philatelie.

Today, when electronic mail and social media are the primary means of communication, the old-fashioned postage stamp seems like a relic from the past. Despite this trend, the dedicated organizers of Notos 2021 together with the commissioners, judges and collectors are making sure that the cherished hobby of philately will not be 'stamped out.'

To the Organizing Committee of Notos 2021, words cannot express my sincere appreciation for a wonderful and very successful exhibition, which I will always remember. Thank you very much - 'Efharisto.' ■