

## THE HISTORY OF RESEARCHES OF THE MOON BY SPACE VEHICLES DEPICTED ON THE POSTAGE STAMPS OF THE WORLD

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Astrophilately – the collection and study of postage stamps and other postal and philatelic documents and media related to astronautics and space research. Although the spatial philately was born after the launch of the first artificial satellite, Sputnik 1, the first its stamps is included in a set dedicated to Soviet Union scientists, issued in August 15, 1951, that depicts Konstantin Tsiolkovsky, the father of astronautics and the first image of a cosmic rocket. A few days after the launch of Sputnik, on October 7, 1957, two stamps were issued: the first belonging to the set dedicated to the International Geophysical Year, contains the text 'research with rockets' and an image in which a rocket is drawn on the background of a starry sky. The second stamp, dedicated to the birth's centenary of Tsiolkovsky, shows the portrait of the scientist and, in the background, a rocket and the planet Saturn. On this stamp November 28, 1957, a black overprint was imprinted with the words "4 October 1957 the first Earth's artificial satellite". This was the first real astrophilatelic issue [1].

The first original space stamps were issued on November 5, 1957 by the Soviet Union. They represent the *Sputnik 1* satellite in orbit around the globe, with words "October 4, 1957. The Soviet artificial Earth's satellite, first in the world". Before the end of 1957 as many as 15 stamps dedicated to Sputnik were issued by four countries (USSR, Romania, Czechoslovakia, and the German Democratic Republic). In the following years, space stamps dedicated to the most important satellites multiplied and in 1969, the year of the conquest of the Moon, at least 88 countries from all continents have already issued space stamps. Of about two thousand stamps. Approximately half of this material was devoted to astronauts and satellites of the USA and the first satellites launched from France, Italy, Canada, and UK. Since the 70s many other countries, such as Japan, China, India and Indonesia, Israel, Sweden, Brazil, Argentina, Mexico and many others, will issue commemorative stamps of their national satellites. In 1969, the Apollo 8 issue received 900,000 First-Day cancels while others received less than half this amount.

Many of the stamps and poster documents, particularly those issued by major space countries, contain scientific information which help to build, even in details, the history of space exploration. One of the most interesting stamps that celebrates the early space missions was issued on October 12, 1959, by the Soviet Union for the mission of Luna 3 space probe that had just photographed the far side of the Moon. On a surface of about only 10 cm<sup>2</sup> there is not only the outline of the trajectory followed by the spacecraft, with relative positions of the Moon and the station during the spaceflight, but also an explanatory text of 48 words and 5 numeric values [2] (Fig. 1). On another postage stamp dedicated to the same mission a map of the Moon's far side, with the main features and craters discovered by Luna 3, is depicted.

There are examples of postal stamps devoted to space research on Fig. 1.



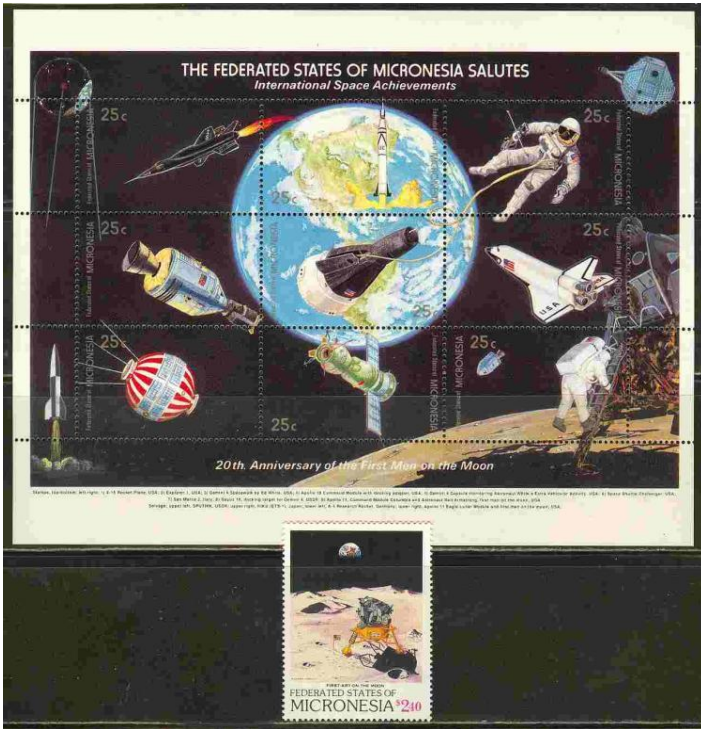


Fig.1 Examples of postal stamps.

References:

- [1]Dicati Renato. Stamping Through Astronomy. Springer. Switherland. 2013. 373 p.
- [2]Dicati Renato. Stamping the Earth from Space. Springer. Switherland. 2017 . 429 p.