

**EGYPT STAMPS, by Maghdi M. Abdel-hadi. self-published; Cairo. 2010.
Vol. I 717 pp., Vol. II 636 pp. hardbound. £75* postage £15. ISBN 978-977-17-9162-1**

When a new catalogue appears, one wants to know why it is justified and whether it differs significantly from existing catalogues. There have been many catalogues of Egyptian stamps, beginning with Albani and Zeitun and wit Zeheri (to whom this new one is dedicated). The great advance of Mr. Abdel-hadi's work is that it is all in colour, that almost every plate flaw or other variet is illustrated with enlargements, and that it is, of course, up to date.

This is a wonderful publication, and I have spent much enjoyable time reading through it. I am impressed by the completeness of the illustrations, for they cannot be made without the original items (or suitable photocopies) to work from. One must have an extraordinarily complete collection, or close contacts with many other willing collectors. Mr. Abdel-hadi apparently has both, but he also has the necessary familiarity with Egyptian stamps at a sophisticated level.

Volume I begins with an extensive introduction in which basic philatelic features are clearly explained, along with the various special terms that apply to Egyptian philately (e.g., royal proofs). Watemarks are shown very nicely, as are the filigrees that occur on a few stamps and envelopes. Then come the essays and the non-commemorative stamps (all 650 pp. of them!), including the first issues of Sudan, the Gaza Strip, the Suez Canal Co., and the French post offices. Control numbers are listed, and then three appendices: the various printings of the King Fuad and King Farouk issues, the 1933 air mail printings, and the colour trials of the "King of Egypt and Sudan" overprints. Volume II covers unissued stamps, commemorative stamps, miniature sheets, and the postal stationery of Egypt and Sudan. The large production of commemorative issues in recent years makes this volume especially lengthy.

A useful feature is the inclusion of the size of the sheets and the layout of the panes. It is good to see a clear exposition of the origin of the 2004 Prestige Booklets, and illustrations of the covers and interleaves of the other booklets.

Pricing can be very difficult, especially by a collector rather than a dealer. The prices are given in US dollars. The very rare items are not priced (they so rarely come on the market). Prices for unused stamps are stated to be for stamps never hinged. Although these are available for issues from 1879 onwards, the great majority of stamps issued prior to, say, 1940, have been hinged. What about the classic issues? Nearly all singles have been hinged, but nevertheless, never-hinged examples exist for most classic issues in the form of blocks, in which only one or two stamps have been hinged. The First Issue is the scarcest. Unfortunately, no clear indication is given about the value of lightly hinged stamps. On the whole, the pricing seems fairly accurate. The values given for postal stationery are considerably higher than I expected, which probably reveals the growing popularity of this area as a specialty.

For a work of this magnitude, by a single author, there remarkably few errors and omissions, and I mention here only those that might lead a user to confusion. The heading of the issue of 1874-5 lists a perforation of 13 and a third instead of 12 and a third. The 5 para provisional (1879) with guide lines in all four corners is not listed. The "Canal Farouk I" is not shown or mentioned. In the Postage Due section, the Harrison die proofs, in blue, are also omitted. When one considers the enormous amount of information that the author had to contend with, a few omissions are understandable.

Lastly, it should be mentioned that the Posta Europea and interpostal seals are not listed. This is intentional, for they are not strictly stamps. Covers are not listed, except for first day covers (I would have much preferred seeing non-philatelic covers listed instead!). Should one buy this catalogue? I would not be without it!

Peter Smith

Editor's note: the price quoted is the standard retail price. For ESC members there is an offer of a reduced price, see *QC* 235 p291

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