

THE 50 PIASTRES PORT FOUAD SHEET

The well-known Italian philatelic magazine "Il Collezionista" produced on the front page of its No. 2 of 16th January, 1964, a photo of the 50 piastres Port Fouad sheet, in the original purple colour, accompanied by a brief article in Italian, French and English on its pages 19 and 20 inside.

The English text is as follows

"Our front cover shows the only existing full sheet of the top value (50 Piastres) of the set issued by Egypt on the 21st Dec. 1926, to mark the inauguration of the town of Port Fouad, located on the mouth of the Suez Canal, opposite Port Said.

The set consisted of four values, the 5, 10 and 15 mill. stamps having a printing of 2,500 copies each, whereas only 1,500 copies were printed of the 50 Pt. stamp. They were available only at Port Fouad, and soon after they went on sale in the morning of the inauguration day they were sold out. An unprecedented crowd turned up at the Post Office, and in the rush a native was killed and several people were severely hurt.

Some of the sets were cancelled on the 21st December with the round dated postmark of Port-Fouad; a few sets were also postmarked on the invitation card to the inauguration ceremonies, and in this case they received a different cancel, i.e. a round dated postmark with the word "CASH" at bottom. The Port-Fouad set is the scarcest that Egypt has ever issued, and it is now one of the greatest world rarities in the field of commemorative stamps"

In fact this is not "the only existing full sheet", but one of three, the other two are still in the collection of an Egyptian collector who possesses all the Egyptian commemoratives in sheets of 50 examples.

All the Port Fouad sheets originated from the Palace Collections of Egypt, sold by auction at Koubbeh Palace, Cairo, on February 12-18. 1954.

The Palace Collections contained 100 complete Port Fouad sets. the 5m., the 10m. and the 15m each in 2 sheets of fifty, and the 50 piastres in 4 sheets of 25. In addition there was a mint bloc of five stamps from the lower left corner of the sheet with Control number of each of the 5m., 10m. and 15m apart from these sheets and blocks, stamps of this commemorative issue were practically non-existent in multiples.

The Port Fouad sheets and Blocks did not reach the reserve prices imposed at the auction sale and therefore were withdrawn. Few years after they, among the unsold lots, were bought by the above mentioned collector by private treaty, with a premium to the figures at which they were withdrawn from the auction sale.

Only one sheet of the 50 piastres was broken up and sold in blocks of four, pairs and singles. Another sheet was sold complete, and it is the one illustrated on the front cover of the Italian magazine and reproduced on the opposite page. The remaining two sheets repose still in the buyer's collection.

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