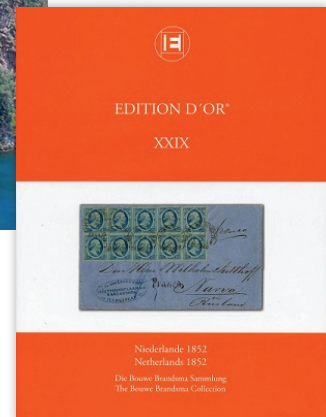


# The Phenomenal EDITION D'OR Series of Books

By Nathan Bouscher



In 2006 a new series of philatelic books was presented at MonacoPhil in Monte Carlo, its title: *EDITION D'OR*. What began in 2006 in Monaco with four books is a 'philatelic success story' today. This is shown by the now 42 volumes, many of which are already sold out. But what is the overall history of the *EDITION D'OR* book series from the initial idea to its realization and the years that followed to 2014?

It began back in the spring of 2006. The two sister companies of Heinrich Köhler in Germany and Corinphila Auctions in Zurich, the oldest stamp auction houses in their countries, were having talks on the strengthening of their management. Dieter Michelson, Managing Director of Köhler and a director of Corinphila, had to win over Karl Louis to his side for the new and exciting task.

Four weeks prior to his engagement, in April of 2006, Managing Director Dieter Michelson invited his future colleague to a working dinner at the Schlosshotel Kronberg. Also there was Jose Miguel Herrero, Chairman of the Board of the former parent company of the ESCALA group.

The conversation soon came round to how could philately be promoted, while at the same time strengthening the position of the Heinrich Köhler and Corinphila companies in the market?

Karl Louis told of one example: his experiences within his own family: for decades since 1973, his father, Dr. Albert Louis, had been awarded the highest honours at international exhibitions for his Netherlands collection. During his active career as a doctor, he had only found time to prepare the album and exhibit sheets. But his great 'secret dream' was the publication of an outstanding handbook of classic Netherlands philately on the basis of his stamp collection. And Karl Louis' father was quite sure: after retirement he would find the necessary time to do this.

But as things turned out there were other priorities and the Neth-

erlands handbook, moved further and further into the future.

At some point the 'dream' of the publication of a handbook faded. Questions as to its technical preparation seemed increasingly difficult with advancing age. There was also the unspoken question: is the time-consuming work of writing a comprehensive handbook really still the first priority in one's life, when the 70th birthday party is now many years in the past?

Was the story of Karl Louis' father typical for many collectors? Dieter Michelson could report similar experiences with long-time Köhler customers. And so the project was this: the Heinrich Köhler and Corinphila auction companies would on request realize a long-cherished dream for collectors—a true innovation in the long history of philatelic literature. Any collection which had received the highest international awards is attractive and informative.

The most important information regarding stamps, covers, postmarks, postage rates, etc. are available on its album pages. The album pages of the most important exhibited collections, digitally reworked, with essentially true colour rendition and elaborate in detail with the help of computer programs were to be central to the content of the new book. A book enriched with a detailed portrayal of the collector, with many photos of philatelic friends and family, a presentation of the collecting area concerned and a list of exhibition successes. The result: a series of high quality *EDITION D'OR* publications.

The three people around the table in the Schlosshotel Kronberg were soon of one mind. This project should be realized as soon as possible. The most important collections of stamps of our time should be preserved in book form for future generations of collectors. And the 'prominent collections' were certainly the collections which had been awarded major honors at international stamp exhibitions. A title for the new book series was also quickly found.





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At MonacoPhil 2006 the first four *EDITION D'OR* volumes were shown by the Heinrich Köhler and Corinphila firms to an audience at a presentation in the 'Hotel Hermitage' in Monte Carlo.



The last presentation in Monaco 2013 with Chris King (President of the Royal Philatelic Society of London) and his wife Birthe after the presentation of his *EDITION D'OR* book. Karl Louis (on left) and Dieter Michelson (on right).

If the collections in the newly published books had all received Large Gold awards, the title *EDITION D'OR* was suitable! Note: *EDITION D'OR*: derived from the French 'Golden Edition.'

Soon afterwards, the first collectors with international Large Gold medal awards were approached by Dieter Michelson and Karl Louis with regard to possible publication of their collections in the newly planned *EDITION D'OR* book series. The reactions were diverse: 'When the first books have appeared I will decide whether my own collection should also be in the new series, was an often heard comment.

The first collector who believed in the idea was, then, also Karl Louis' father Dr Albert Louis. He quickly agreed to the publication of his *Netherlands: the Issue of 1852* collection. And after he gave his approval three more collector-authors could soon be persuaded: Rolf-Dieter Jaretsky with *Mexico*, Silvain Wyler with *Austrian Empire* and Georg D. Mehrtens with *Trans-Atlantic Mail via Bremen*.

These were the books that were ready as of December 1, 2006. At MonacoPhil 2006 the first four *EDITION D'OR* volumes were shown by Heinrich Köhler and Corinphila to an audience at a presentation in the 'Hotel Hermitage' in Monte Carlo. The four collector-authors were also present and after the presentation wrote many autographs and dedications in their *EDITION D'OR* books for the audience.

The presentation of the new *EDITION D'OR* books at MonacoPhil 2006 marked the beginning of a very successful book project in philately. By December 2013, 42 *EDITION D'OR* volumes had appeared. The published collections include the best of present-day philately. The list of collector-authors reads like a 'Who's Who' of Philately—among whom are the German philatelists Georg D. Mehrtens, Rolf-Dieter Jaretsky, Arnim Knapp, Jochen Heddergott

and Fritz Heimbüchler, Jussi Tuori from Finland, Silvain Wyler and Kurt Kimmel from Switzerland, Dr Geoffrey Lewis from Australia, Joseph Hackmey from Israel, Luis Alemany and Jose Alberto Barreras from Spain, Stavros Andreadis from Greece, Dr. Hugo Goeggel from Colombia, Everaldo Santos from Brazil, Chris King from United Kingdom and Patrick Maselis from Belgium.

Editions from Large Gold Medal or exhibits from America's international-level exhibitors are now close to being launched.

The *EDITION D'OR* collector-authors are all leading philatelists of today's collecting generation. But stamp exhibitions are momentary snapshots. After some years the memories of the rarities they included and the philatelic research contained in a collection fade. With the documentation of these collections in the *EDITION D'OR* series of books, these collections are appreciated as the lifetime work of philatelists, and are handed down to future generations of collectors.

The *EDITION D'OR* books have additionally been able to motivate new collectors of the various collecting areas: collectors who may only be known by the publisher and distributor of the *EDITION D'OR* books.

The success of the books came as a pleasant surprise to Dieter Michelson and Karl Louis and the companies they run—when the former American shareholder of Heinrich Köhler, Corinphila Auctions Zurich and Amsterdam, H.R. Harmer (United States) and John Bull (Hong Kong) decided in 2012 to sell the 'Philately' business, Michelson and Louis, together with a private stamp collector, were able to acquire all the companies.

Today the combined firms are well positioned worldwide as the Global Philatelic Network. The *EDITION D'OR* book series is of central importance to the further development of the group in the future. ✉