

## PRESS RELEASE

MUNICH, MAY 2023

### The Spring Auction of Hermann Historica – an unforgettable week

*Hermann Historica – where history is brought to life. And the auction house itself is now making history after its sell-out Spring Auction!*

Hermann Historica can now look back on an amazing auction week. The wide-ranging, major live auction took place from 6 to 12 May. With scores of highlights, an unparalleled collection of extremely rare Bulgarian orders and key objects of historical significance, the 3,500 lots were particularly well received by the numerous buyers. With bids being placed in the saleroom, on the telephone and online, the historical auction house delighted its customers with a diverse selection of objects, including some stellar rarities. A phenomenal sales quota and a number of gratifying price increases made this auction a resounding success.

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#### Works of Art and Antiques, Ancient and Asian Art

The heavens opened on Saturday, 6 May. To escape the rain, collectors were happy to gather in front of their screens at home and in the saleroom, following the auction with baited breath. 740 lots from the fields of "Works of Art and Antiques, Ancient and Asian Art" came under the hammer on this eventful day, eliciting torrents of bids to match the rain.



From the word go, there was a flurry of excitement.

Lot number 1, an Ancient Egyptian receptacle dating from just before the first dynasty, and in immaculate condition to boot, was listed at 1,000 euros. However, within a few minutes, it had increased its catalogue price almost ten times over. The rare piece, which would take pride of place in any museum, finally sold for 9,750 euros.



The next tour-de-force in the antiquities section was a helmet of the third development stage, over 2,000 years old (lot number 16). The severe lines and clearly structured form of the Corinthian headgear – the epitome of Greek

helmets – lent it a particularly formidable appearance that drew all eyes. Although estimated at 38,000 euros, this splendid example from the last third of the 6th or the early 5th century B.C. ultimately fetched 47,500 euros.

A bronze statue from China stood out in the chapter of Asian art. Bids from 1,900 euros had been invited for lot number 129, a 19th century figurine of the Taoist deity Shou Xing. Standing 52 cm tall, this decorative piece now ennobles a new collection for 9,750 euros.



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The companion piece to the deity was a coral statue of the Virgin Mary from Trapani in Italy (lot number 278). Her naturalistic expression and the folds of her robes were wrought in detail. The elaborate carving had a reserve of 9,500 euros, yet changed hands for 11,875 euros.

### Antique Arms and Armour from all over the world

Bidders in the section of "Antique arms and armour from all over the world" were somewhat restrained at first. However they soon threw caution to the wind, leading to some pleasing results over the course of the 356 lots.

One such was lot number 1153, a superb parade burgonet in the style of

Negroli, whose magnificent parade armour components all'antica are now almost exclusively found in museum collections. Bids from 27,500 euros were welcome for the museum-grade piece from Milan, which had attracted a great deal of attention during the run-up to the sale. The unique, 19th century piece proved to be a triumph, duly fetching 34,375 euros.



Lot 1154, a 17th century suit of Lower German armour for the field in attractive, well-restored quality, turned out to be another highlight. With its open burgonet, cuisses and ridged gauntlets, the fine armour was sure to be snapped up for its asking price of 12,500 euros. Nonetheless, it coaxed an enthusiast into investing 16,875 euros.



Among the edged weapons, a particularly rare Viking sword from Scandinavia was worthy of special mention (lot number 1288, guide price 18,000 euros). The inlaid blade inscription "+ULFBERTH+" and silver-inlaid swastika ornaments were able to command their price and the sale was completed at 22,500 euros.



### Fine Antique and Modern Firearms

1,000 lots and an auction lasting almost 13 hours – nobody expected such an onslaught of bids. Eager to place their bids, crowds of collectors filed into the saleroom in the early hours of Wednesday, 11 May. However, the telephone bidders, and particularly buyers online, were also in absolute top form.



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The most expensive prize of the day was one of the civil firearms. Aficionados had a chance to acquire a gold-inlaid percussion double rifle by Prague gunmaker Anton V. Lebeda for 39,000 euros. The magnificent weapon was made especially for Austria's Kaiser Franz Josef I in 1850. As lot number 2075, it found a new home for 48,750 euros.

Moreover, the modern firearms section also sparked plenty of fierce bidding wars. The Heckler & Koch models were particularly sought after. This led to a more than eight-fold price increase in the case of lot 2318, a Heckler & Koch PSP. Despite



its limit of 2,800 euros, the unusual collectible firearm from the pre-production series only closed at 23,750 euros. Even more astounding, a Heckler & Koch P7 PT8 in virtually mint condition eventually sold to a devotee for more than twenty-one times its limit. The rare firearm chalked up the sensational sum of 21,250 euros, its asking price of 1,000 euros notwithstanding.



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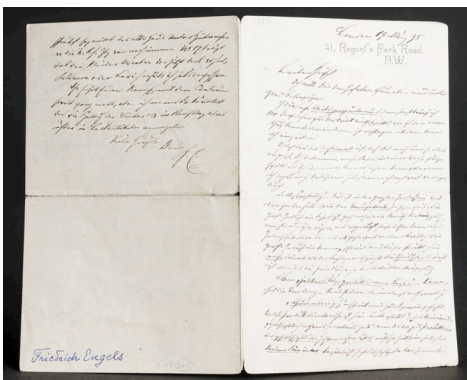
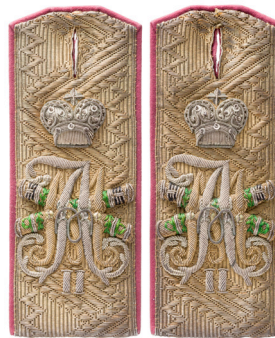
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Meanwhile, collectors were impatiently awaiting the announcement of lot number 2540. Even before the auction, written offers had been submitted for the Colt Mod. 1900 automatic pistol from the pre-production series. All the same, the new owner had to dig deep into his pocket for the serial number 2 model in beautiful condition with a highly polished finish. The "great-grandfather of the 1911 pistols" hammered at 60,000 euros, despite opening at 18,000 euros.

## Orders and Military Collectibles until 1918

Well over 600 lots in the chapter of Orders and Military Collectibles until 1918 were on the agenda on Thursday, 11 May. In many cases, spirited bidding kept the audience on tenterhooks, while the Bulgarian collection sent audible gasps through the room. Apart from a few lots, all orders instituted under Bulgaria's most important rulers were sold, achieving enormous price increases.

One highlight, lot number 3246, came from the Russian tsarist empire. Although a pair of exceptionally rare shoulder boards belonging to Grand Duke Mikhail Nikolaevich Romanov (1832 - 1909) had been valued at 14,500 euros, his personal badges in the rank of field marshal were ultimately acquired for 23,750 euros.



Next up, lot 3401 was a key document from German history. The important handwritten letter from Friedrich Engels to the social-democratic journalist Carl Hirsch had been estimated at 25,000 euros. He was replying to Hirsch's letter dated 16 March 1895, in which the communist was asked to edit four articles written by Hirsch. Penned on two small double sheets of notepaper, Engel's comments did not disappoint, selling for 36,250 euros.

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Nonetheless, the undisputed climax of the day was the auction of a private collection of Bulgaria's highest orders. Spanning the reigns of three sovereigns – Prince Alexander I, Tsar Ferdinand I and



Tsar Boris III – the insignia met with unprecedented favour in the saleroom and on the telephones and bidding platforms. Except for five lots, all 180 awards changed hands for gratifying margins.

Lot number 3456, the Military Order "For Bravery", a Cross 3rd Class, 1st Model (1880-86), is one such example. The reserve of 3,500 euros soon fell by the wayside as the avalanche of bids drove the price up to 25,000 euros.

By contrast, the new owner of the Order of St Alexander, 3rd Class, 1st Model, 2nd Type, had to part with 18,750 euros, dwarfing the catalogue price of 4,000 euros for this coveted order.



The auction house realised the highest price of the collection with lot number 3598. Bids from 9,900 euros had been invited for the small collar of the Order of Saints Cyril and Methodius. Together with the remarkably rare, original presentation case, the collar only closed at 26,875 euros.

### Orders and Military Collectibles from 1918 onwards

The auction house concluded the week with a phenomenal final auction day on 12 May. Bids were still being placed on the total of 800 lots until late in the evening. It was 10 p.m. before the hammer finally fell on the last lot. Given the outstanding sales quota, all the buyers and Hermann Historica's staff were destined to start the weekend on a high.



The gold pocket watch made by Lange & Söhne (lot number 4051) was regarded as a pièce de résistance. The 18-carat hunter pocket watch was a Christmas present from Hitler to his Marineadjutant von Puttkamer. Although set to rake in 50,000 euros, the fully functional precision pocket watch in "1a" quality, set with 20 rubies and consigned directly by the von Puttkamer family, commanded the handsome sum of 82,500 euros.

Lot number 4170 definitely caught the eye among the technical devices. The untouched "Enigma K" cipher machine with four rotors was guaranteed to be a huge draw. Along with its original wooden case, the remarkable model with the serial number "K 305" changed hands for 115,000 euros, more than doubling its catalogue price of 50,000 euros.

Lot 4764 was a notable object from recent Croatian history, namely a "Sjekirica" battle axe, dated 1942. Listed at 15,000 euros, it had been given to Slavko Kvaternik (1878 – 1947) as a gift of honour from the Hlinka Guard. Of the utmost historical significance, the rare axe eclipsed its reserve, selling for 60,000 euros.



The post-auction sale of this online auction runs until 26 June. During this time, all unsold lots may be purchased for their catalogue price, plus a buyer's premium. As usual, please see [www.hermann-historica.com](http://www.hermann-historica.com) for further details and the respective catalogues.

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