

Hermann Historica's 74th Sale Buttresses An Upward Trend

Auction Action In Munich, Germany



A bidding war sent this presentation snuffbox, wrought in gold, belonging to Maximilian I, Emperor of Mexico (1832-1867), presented to him by Emperor Napoleon III (1808-1873) and his wife Empress Eugénie (1826-1920), far beyond its opening \$17,000 bid, to end at \$124,722.



The pair of large Chinese cloisonné vases in Mei Ping form, circa 1850, brought \$24,827.



The pièce de résistance of this category was this pair of deluxe cased percussion pistols for two shots, forged circa 1850 in the workshop of Anton Vinzent Lebeda (1797-1857), Prague, that was won by a connoisseur at \$86,223.

MUNICH — All specialist areas — antiquities, arms and armor, works of art, hunting antiques, orders and collectibles — reported excellent results at Hermann Historica's April 24-May 6 Spring auction. With some lots fetching many multiples of their estimated price, a total of approximately 6,000 items combined to make the 74th auction of this specialized auction house one of the most successful in its history and a continuation of its trajectory.

One of the highlights of the antiquities category was an expressive marble portrait of Emperor Hadrian. Crafted during the early years of his reign (117-138 CE), the craftsmanship and pristine condition of the bust, together with its documented provenance, attracted a great deal of attention, and it achieved \$103,935.

In terms of variety, the range of premium medieval and modern edged weapons on offer, some of which may be regarded as museum quality, left nothing to be desired. One such object was, a French deluxe sword dating from 1600 whose elegant appearance was accentuated by the superlative chiseling craftsmanship. While horsemen on a finely punched gold background adorned the finials of the quillons, the swept hilt was intricately chiseled with elaborate gilding and the heavy ball pommel boasted chiseled décor in relief and cartouches with figures in front of an antique backdrop of ruins; it changed hands for \$34,642.

The selection of lots from Africa, the Ottoman Empire, India, Japan and China also captivated the international audience. First up, forged in the late Eighteenth Century, an acclaimed Greek silver-mounted and gilt kilij in a solid silver scabbard unleashed an avalanche of bids, culminating at \$66,512

— almost tripling its opening price.

Another particular highlight was also an absolute rarity: an Ottoman bunchuk or tug, dating from the Seventeenth/Eighteenth Century, the period of the Turkish Wars. Although moderately estimated at \$17,000, the rarity of the piece fired bidders' enthusiasm to take it to \$36,039.

Hopes had been high for the auction of collectors' items from the private collection of Prince Joseph Clemens of Bavaria (1902-1990); these expectations were not only realized, they were exceeded. With lively participation over the telephone and in the internet, the tension in the room was palpable as the gems from the courts of European and international ruling houses were auctioned off with excellent results.

The uncontested highlight was a presentation snuffbox, wrought in gold, belonging to Maximilian I, Emperor of Mexico (1832-1867). Presented by another ruler, Emperor Napoleon III (1808-1873) and his wife Empress Eugénie (1826-1920), the gift displayed the monogram "N" above the intertwined monogram "E", above which the imperial crown with flowing ribbons was set in diamonds and mounted in high relief on the lid. Opening at \$17,000, the lot sparked a bidding war that ended with the victorious bidder claiming the prize for \$124,722.

Equally well received were the more recent objects in the military history and historical objects section. A beguiling lot from the United States was the deluxe cavalry sword presented to General George S. Patton Jr (1885-1945), on the occasion of his promotion to four-star general on April 14, 1945. Opening at \$14,000, the keen participation of the international bidders took the sig-



Achieving \$103,935 was a marble portrait of Emperor Hadrian, who reigned from 117 to 138 CE.

nificant edged weapon to \$74,833.

The auction also comprised a number of singular artifacts from Russian military history, like a rare and beautifully preserved heavy cavalry sword M 1826 for officers of the Russian cuirassiers, known as the "Golden Weapon," which realized \$20,280.

The pièce de résistance in the antique firearms category was a pair of deluxe cased percussion pistols for two shots, forged circa 1850 in the renowned workshop of Anton Vinzent Lebeda (1797-1857) in Prague. The barrels of fine rose Damascus steel, the breeches each featuring a chiseled Ottoman horseman on gilt ground, two-tone gold floral inlays on the locks and furniture, and the walnut stocks carved with flowers and inlaid with black horn all accentuated the significance of these examples of the gunmaker's craft. With bidding getting under way at \$31,550, this lot



A French deluxe sword dating from 1600 with exquisite craftsmanship changed hands for \$34,642.

was won by a connoisseur who parted with \$86,223.

All prices include the buyer's premium and were converted from euros to dollars at the time of editing.

For additional information, www.hermann-historica.com.

Dating from the Seventeenth/Eighteenth Century, an Ottoman bunchuk or tug opened at \$17,000, but the rarity of the piece fired bidders' enthusiasm and it finished at \$36,039.



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