

Foot Of Buddha Steps To \$199,875 At Hermann Historica's Anniversary Auction

Auction Action In Munich, Germany

MUNICH — Approximately 6,800 collector's items from all specialist areas represented by the Hermann Historica

oHG auction — antiquities, arms and armor, works of art, hunting antiques, orders and collectibles from all fields of

history and military history — came under the hammer during the 75th auction by the specialized German auction

house November 6–17.

Several veritable rarities among the early bronze helmets and archaic swords were enthusiastically received. Among the outstanding examples, forged with consummate blacksmith's workmanship, was a Chalcidian helmet, probably customized by nomadic horsemen, dating from the Fifth Century BCE. Testimony to an early adaptation of a Greek cultural asset, the extremely interesting helmet opened at \$16,400, unleashing a volley of bids that culminated in the sum of \$25,880.

Among the elaborately worked, fully documented rarities in the arms and armor catalog, an early officer's suit of armor was particularly sought after. Forged in 1540 in Nuremberg, the suit of armor comprised a burgonet of the Hungarian type, and caught the eye of the international experts, selling for \$35,265.

In the range of edged weapons, some known to have formed part of prestigious collections for many years, was a knightly hand-and-a-half sword, wrought circa 1420 in Passau, Germany. Stamped with the Passau wolf mark inlaid in brass at the root of the blade, below which a six-pointed star on each side, the extremely rare Gothic battle sword was acquired for \$17,635.

As in previous years, the artefacts from Asia and the Ottoman Empire proved to be in great demand. Achieving the sensational final result of \$199,875, which dwarfed its minimum bid of \$14,000, the foot of a significant Tibetan monumental Buddha statue from the Seventeenth/Eighteenth Century emerged as the absolute highlight of the auction. The three-dimensional left foot, made of hammered copper with fire gilding, still bore a decorative band on the bridge of the foot with settings for the stones that had since been lost.

Among the Oriental weapons, high-grade miquelet-lock pistols captivated bidders. One such specimen was a Caucasian, gold-inlaid pistol, dated 1835, struck with the manufacturer's marks, the miquelet-lock completely covered with floral gold inlays and boasting engraved, nielloed silver furniture, and the price soared to \$29,400.

The history section held significant collectors' items, including objects from the personal possessions of Empress Elisabeth of Austria (1837–1898). Fashioned in sumptuous materials with consummate workmanship, fierce bidding wars were sparked by rare garments like the skirt of a ball gown ensemble in cream silk, the brocade train intricately embroidered with sprays of roses in silver and white, some with mother-of-pearl, circa 1880, that sold at \$99,925, ten times its high estimate.

No less outstanding and equally sought-after was a meticulously documented artefact from the estate of the last German Emperor, Kaiser Wilhelm II (1859–1918). Presented by the Prussian Officers' Corps to mark the 20th anniversary of his accession to the throne in 1908, his marshal's baton found its way into a private collection. Opening at \$41,100, the splendid baton, wrought in gold, silver, enamel and velvet, adorned with the Kaiser's appliquéd monogram "WR II," the Prussian crown and inscriptions of the occasion and the benefactors, finally found a buyer for \$70,500.

Opening at \$5,290, a larger-than-life portrait bust of World War I's most successful fighter pilot, Manfred Freiherr von Richthofen (better known as the "Red Baron") (1892–1918) now delights a new owner for the final price of \$29,390. With a total height of just over 14 inches, the striking bronze head was mounted on a flat pedestal and had acquired a dark reddish-brown patina all over.

With a focus on Austrian and German helmets, two exceptional collections that had been amassed with enormous dedication over many years had been merged in the special catalog. They included remarkable treasures, such as a helmet made for the k.u.k. First Arcieren Life Guards of 1905. Its silver skull adorned with fire-gilt fittings and topped with a white horsehair plume, the helmet attained \$39,970.

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.de or 49 89 54726490.



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A flurry of excitement saw the price rocket from \$14,100 to \$31,740 for a heavy German combined matchlock and wheellock rifle from 1580.



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A rare silver screw medal with interchangeable pictures in traditional costume in the style of a dress-up doll, Augsburg circa 1730–40. Its charm proved so beguiling that it ultimately fetched \$3,175.