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A fest for the aficionado of medals: auction sale 123 of Gorny & Mosch

The undoubted highlight of the three great auctions, to be conducted by Gorny & Mosch from March 4 to 7, 2013, is an important collection of historical medals. But there is more to come. Gorny & Mosch offer ancient coins of the finest quality, rarities from Germany and Europe as well as a unique bar from Colombia – roughly 4,500 lots all together and a total estimate of 4.5 million euros.

A magnificent ensemble of historical medals manufactured by the best die cutters in their day will be offered in auction 213 of Munich auction house Gorny & Mosch, ranging from Hans Reinhart the Elder to Sebastian Dadler, from Johann Höhn and P. H. Müller, to state just a few illustrious names here. And this is only one highlight of the upcoming auction week from March 4 to 7, 2013. It all starts on Monday, March 4, with high-quality ancient coins. Two days are scheduled for the sale of the second auction’s lots consisting of ancient coins. Thursday, March 7, is focused on the medals, although several numismatic and phaleristic rarities from Germany, Europe, Russia and overseas will compete for the collectors’ attention.

Auction 211 – High-quality ancient coins

18 lots Celtic coins, 454 lots Greek coins, 247 lots Roman coins and 99 lots Byzantine coins – this is a very brief summary of this auction, albeit a not very illuminating one. … After all, every item on offer stands out due to its beauty, its rarity, its state of preservation, its provenance – sometimes due to all these at once. Let’s first have a look at THE Greek coin: the early Classical tetradrachm from Naxos showing the splendid head of Dionysos on its obverse and the squatting Silenus with a kantharos on the reverse. Auction 211 offers a very fine, magnificently toned example that was part of the Hunt Collection when it was auctioned off in 1991 at Sotheby’s in New York. This rarity is estimated at 50,000 euros.

Generally speaking, the descendants of the famous “Kunstfreund” will discover much that would have fit in with his collection perfectly, particularly in regard to Syracuse. The connoisseur’s eye will be appealed by a gorgeous severe style tetradrachm (EF; estimate: 15,000 euros) or by pieces signed by Eumenos, Eukleidas and Euainetos (EF and VF-EF, respectively; estimate: 20,000 euros and 15,000 euros, respectively). The unchallenged highlight of this section is a marvelous tetradrachm struck between 415 and 409 B. C. (EF; estimate: 75,000 euros) with its obverse being designed by Euth… and the reverse by Phrygillos. This piece breaks new ground iconographically: the hair of Arethusa is held together by a fillet decorated with grain ears. The charioteer has turned into Nike, and Phrygillos
uses the exergue for a depiction of Skylla. This gives rise to the hypothesis that this coin alludes to the naval victory of the Syracusans over the Athenians in 413 B.C.

There are many more highlights yet to come. It goes on with a monumental stater of the Orrescii which exhibits a kind of primitive archaic charm (VF-EF; estimate: 8,000 euros), a very early and very rare drachm from Argos showing a crouching wolf on the obverse (VF; estimate: 15,000 euros) and some unflawed pieces from Cyzicus like a stater with the head of young Perseus (EF; estimate: 30,000 euros) or the stater depicting Eleutheria sitting on a pedestal above a thuna fish (VF-EF; estimate: 20,000 euros). Special reference should be made to an example – the best one known so far – of an extremely rare emission of electrum coins, a hekte following the Milesian standard with a horse’s head to the left (EF; estimate: 25,000 euros). We mustn’t omit a series of Armenian coins here including a very rare chalkos of Tigranes IV from Artaxata which is hard to come by in such a nice condition (EF; estimate: 4,000 euros).

Roughly 50 coins date to the Roman Republic. The numerous rare gold coins deserve particular mention here, like an aureus of Marc Antony with the portrait of Octavian on the reverse (EF; estimate: 20,000 euros).

Anyone dealing with Roman Imperial Times will appreciate the rare denarii in perfect condition, the splendid aurei and the untooled bronze coins with the finest patina possible. And here we are again, being at a loss which item to single out: perhaps an aureus of Augustus with Victoria on its reverse (EF-MS; estimate: 20,000 euros), an aureus of Otho (EF+; estimate: 50,000 euros) or an aureus of Septimius Severus featuring a double portrait, his own and the one of Caracalla, on the obverse (EF+; estimate: 25,000 euros). Numerous gold coins come from the period of the Tetrarchy, like an aureus of Diocletian with Iuppiter Conservator on the reverse (FDC; estimate: 15,000 euros), an aureus of Maximianus Herculis with Hercules killing the Lernaean serpent (EF-FDC; estimate: 15,000 euros) and a solidus of Crispus with a rare portrait to the left (EF+; estimate: 15,000 euros). A great number of solidi from the time of the joint reign of Valentinian I and Valens leads over to Byzantium where the connoisseur will discover rarities like a hekagram of the first reign of Justinian I (EF; estimate: 10,000 euros) or a histamenon of Michael VI (EF; estimate: 15,000 euros).

**Auction 212 – Ancient coins and multiple lots**

All these four- and five-figure estimates mustn’t be taken as evidence that only the rich can afford to collect ancient coins. Quite the contrary, as auction catalog Gorny & Mosch 212 testifies. Prices for ancient coins start with 50 euros here, and many a rarity comes with a low three-figure estimate. This auction is interesting notably for the collector of fractions. Historical rarities in silver and bronze are on offer, like, for example, the extremely rare tetrads from Himera whose obverse displays a bearded man with a long he-goat’s horn (EF; estimate: 250 euros), an extremely rare small bronze...
coin of the Scythian king Sariakos (VF; estimate: 120 euros), a likewise extremely rare small bronze coin of the Arcarnanian city of Medion (VF; estimate: 150 euros) or hemiobol from Assos which is impossible to find in the great collections (EF; estimate: 250 euros).

Large series of coins of Alexander the Great, of Athenian tetrachdrachs from Hellenistic times and of electrum coins from the cities of Mytilene and Lesbos complete the varied offer of Greek coins.

The roughly 200 multiple lots containing Roman Provincial coins, the 150 lots with coins from the Roman Republic and the more than 350 lots with Roman Imperial coins come up with a wealth of rare coins and minting authorities and thus offer some rarity for every collector. The Byzantine section not only includes solidi and bronze coins but an assortment of lead seals as well.

As usual, the second auction week of Gorny & Mosch will be concluded by the popular, interestingly assembled multiple lots – more than 100 this time – we recommend every dealer and collector for a closer inspection.

**Auction 213 – Medieval and modern times**

Hardly any other numismatic genre has more to offer and is (yet) as underestimated as the medal. This is a good reason to examine auction catalog 213 of Gorny & Mosch in closer detail. Its first part is devoted to historical medals. Several important die cutters are present there, from Hans Reinhart the Elder to Sebastian Dadler and Johann Höhn as well as P. H. Müller whose great works the collector had bought. The estimates range from 50 euros to 30,000 euros. Hence, there is something here for everyone.

Let’s begin with the medals of the 16th century, the Renaissance works of art that depict the leading figures of the Reformation. The medals and a commemorative coin, respectively, display three variants of Frederick the Wise at once (VF-EF; VF; and VF-EF; estimates: 5,000, 7,500 and 4,000 euros, respectively). The catalog puts a special emphasis on the fantastic medals of the Leipzig artist Hans Reinhart the Elder. The aficionados encounter, amongst other pieces, his medal on the Fall of Man and the Salvation (EF, original cast; estimate: 5,000 euros), his elaborate portrait of Charles V (old cast, EF; estimate: 1,000 euros), his extremely rare work about the apocalypse (EF, original cast; estimate: 4,000 euros) and the famous Trinity medal as his most groundbreaking and at the same time most mature work (EF; original cast; estimate: 30,000 euros).

Sebastian Dadler most certainly was the most prominent die cutter of the 17th century. The collector was able to acquire highlights of his work in finest conditions, like a splendid specimen of the medal 1634 on the burial of Gustavus II Adolphus in Stockholm (FDC; estimate: 5,000 euros) or a medal from 1649 on Emperor Ferdinand III and the Nuremberg day of execution (EF-FDC; estimate: 15,000 euros).
The medals spanning the period of time from the 18th to the 20th century likewise contain some rarity, like an extremely rare gold medal of 15 ducats from 1814 on the triumphal march of the allied forces against Napoleon and the Treaty of Paris (EF; estimate: 22,000 euros).

But don’t think that’s it for now, there are many more spectacular items still ahead. The orders and decorations as well as the medieval coins are followed by Germany with quite a number of rarities. Bavaria, for example, is present with a small series of the rare Würzburgian neujaehrsgoldgulden for Louis I and Louis II (all FDC; estimates: 1850 – 2,500 euros; 1864 – 2,500 euros and 3,000 euros, respectively). The collectors of Brandenburg-Prussia will be delighted by an extremely rare vereinskrone from 1861 whose mintage was 2,488 specimens only (Proof; estimate: 7,500 euros). Even rarer is a unifaced ducat-klippe from Braunau from 1743 on the defense of the fortress against the Austrian siege (FDC; estimate: 12,000 euros) and a unique double ducat from Jülich – Cleves – Berg from 1682 (VF-EF; estimate: 20,000 euros). A 5 ducat piece from Würzburg from 1702 brings up the rear (EF-FDC; estimate: 15,000 euros).

Similar surprises can be found with Europe, like a pattern of the Belgian 40 francs piece from 1841 with a marginal inscription in cursive characters (FDC; estimate: 25,000 euros) as well a Danish ducat from 1699 with an impressive depiction of a ship (VF-EF; estimate: 7,500 euros). The category “Sweden and its territories” has a small series of extremely rare gold coins on offer: a mining ducat 1750 (EF-FDC; estimate: 6,000 euros), a double ducat 1843 (about EF; estimate: 6,500 euros) as well as a ducat 1700 from Riga (EF-FDC; estimate: 12,500 euros).

One of the most expensive items of the auction is a completely preserved gold bar, weighing 1061 g, made of the gold from the mines of the Colombian province of Antioquia; the ship with which that bar should have been transported from the New World to the Old sank in 1622 (estimate: 100,000 euros). The overseas coins are followed by the Oriental ones with a very special collection: a number of miniature orders from the Ottoman Empire.

The Russian coins conclude the auction. It is a grand finale, since a majority of the 150 lots carry pre-sale price tags with five- or even six-figure sums. For example: 9 lots date to the reign of Paul I, three of them are estimated between 15,000 and 25,000 euros, another one is the most expensive coin of the entire sale with its estimate of 200,000 euros. It is a hitherto unpublished rouble from 1798 with no comparandum known so far. A 10 rouble piece in gold from 1897, issued under Nicholas II, likewise is of greatest scarcity. Bitkin refers to it as ‘donative coin’, hence a coin given away as a present (about FDC; estimate: 100,000 euros).

However, don’t let yourself be fooled by this: many high estimates are faced on the catalog by any number of lots that are of interest to every collector. The reasonably assembled multiple lots in particular contain a number of good bargains.
Thus, browsing the latest Gorny & Mosch auction catalogs will surely pay off.

All catalogs can be viewed on the internet at https://www.gmcoinart.de/Online_Catalogue.AxCMS? and ordered at Gorny & Mosch, Giessener Münzhandlung, Maximiliansplatz 20, D-80333 Munich, phone +49 / (0)89 / 24 22 643-0, fax +49 / (0)89 / 22 85 513.

Consignments for the upcoming auction October 2013 can be made as of now until August 2, 2013.

Captions:


Marcus Galerius Aurelius Antoninus was the second eldest son of Antoninus Pius. He had already died before his father accessed the throne in A. D. 138. His burial inscription was found in the mausoleum of Hadrian.


Lot 4668. Colombia. Completely preserved gold bar, weight 1061 g. Cast and essay prior to 1622, Zaragoza mint (gold mines of the Antioquia province). Retrieved from the wreck of the Spanish galleon “Nuestra Senora de Atocha”, which had sunk in 1622, with Fischer certificate of authenticity #85A-G8045 from July 1, 1986. Measuring c. 275 x 27 x 11 mm. The bar carries markings stating the fineness as XXI (= 21 carat; in 5 places), on the tax class (10 partial stamps in total), the place of manufacture and the assayer. Extremely rare. Traces where the bar has been tested on one end, attractive specimen, straight and even. Estimate: 100,000 euros.


From a private collection in the Baltic States. – The design of the reverse die shows similarities to the one of the Jefimok reverse illustrated under Bitkin lot 213 (cf. Michail Coll. pl. II, 4; Chaudoir 2026). Since neither diameter nor weight perfectly matches this piece, it cannot simply be an unusual die combination.
