

PRESS RELEASE

Results from Morton & Eden's auction of 18 April 2002

London auction sale of Coins, Medals and Plaquettes by the new firm of Morton & Eden realises £645,713.

New world record auction price for a Renaissance plaquette established at £143,750.

Portrait medal of the painter Artemisia Gentileschi sold for £6,900.

Great War Victoria Cross group sold for £89,700

Queen's Gallantry Medal awarded for bravery at the King's Cross Underground Fire in 1987 sold to London's Transport Museum for £3,090.

One of the earliest Islamic silver dirhams fetched £23,000.

Victorian five-pounds of 1839 sold for £12,650.

The first auction by the newly-formed company of Morton & Eden Ltd took place in London on 18th April at the Westbury Hotel. The company was set up in 2001 by James Morton and Tom Eden, both former directors of Sotheby's London, and acts as specialist coin and medal auctioneers.

The sale had wide appeal with sections devoted to Ancient coinage, English and foreign coins and banknotes, Islamic coins, war medals, a very important group of Renaissance plaquettes, and portrait and historical medals.

Highlights among the ancient Greek coins were a beautifully preserved 4th Century BC Carian tetradrachm of the satrap Hidrieus at £1,955 (estimate £1500-2000) and a gold hemidrachm of Ptolemy I of Egypt (323-285 BC) at £1,050 (estimate £500-700). A Roman aureus of Trajan (AD 98-117) sold for £1,150 (estimate £1000-1500). English coins included a "Una and the Lion" five-pounds of Queen Victoria, 1839, at £12,650 (estimate £10,000-12,000) and a five-guineas of William III, 1701, selling for £3,162 (estimate £2500-3000). Banknotes included a very rare Clydesdale Banking Company £1 note which sold to a collector bidding by telephone for £2,085 (estimate £600-800)

The War Medal section included a Great War VC group of medals, awarded posthumously to Private Frank Lester, killed by an enemy sniper in the closing months of the war while attempting to save his fellow soldiers. After strong competition it sold to a UK dealer acting for a collector at £89,700 (estimate £60-70,000). The Queen's Gallantry Medal awarded to Constable Stephen Hanson of the Transport Police for his bravery during the King's Cross underground fire in 1987 sold for £2,990 (estimate £2-3000) to London's Transport Museum.

Islamic coins included an apparently unique Umayyad dirham from Adharbayjan, struck in AH 78 (AD 698) – the earliest date for an Islamic dirham – selling to a private middle-eastern collector for £23,000 (estimate £20-30,000).

There was great interest in the group of Renaissance plaquettes in the auction, the best to come onto the market since the Adams sale in 1996. The highlight was Riccio's plaquette of the *Entombment* (late 15th - early 16th century) which realised a new record price for a plaquette of £143,750 (almost doubling the previous record set in 1996 for Riccio's *Death of Dido*), selling to a London dealer. A previously unrecorded plaquette of an Allegory of Hope, attributed to the workshop of Niccolo Spinelli, circa 1500, sold for £6,900 (estimate £4-6000). A superb plaquette of the Judgment of Paris by the master IO.FF sold to a private US collector bidding by telephone for £5,290 (estimate £1000-1500) and from early 16th century Germany a lead plaquette of the Shame of Noah by Peter Flötner realized £3,680 (estimate £2-3,000), selling to a different US collector on the telephone. Yet another US collector, bidding in the saleroom, acquired the extremely rare portrait medal of the artist Artemisia Gentileschi

for £6,900 (estimate £1000-1500), the price no doubt bolstered by the current exhibition of her and her father's paintings at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

The sale ended with an extensive collection of Dutch guild medals, mainly of the 17th century, selling for £7,475 to a Dutch dealer (estimate £4-6000).

Tom Eden commented after the auction: "the sale was interesting from so many different angles, with coins of varying periods and cultures, bank notes, the war medals, and the plaquettes and historical medals appealing to very different groups of buyers. All sections were well received, none better than the Renaissance plaquettes where collectors and dealers usually associated with pictures and works of art were drawn to the outstanding quality of the pieces on offer. The Riccio plaquette of *The Entombment* was greatly admired and attracted immense interest culminating in a bidding battle where the price rose to a hammer of £125,000 (plus premium [= £143,750]), establishing a new record high in the field. We were very pleased with the sale of the Great War Victoria Cross group of medals which achieved £89,700 and also very happy that London's Transport Museum was able to acquire the QGM awarded for bravery at the King's Cross Fire in 1987. The auction grossed close to our top estimate and we are looking forward to our next auction to be held in London in October."

All prices include the buyers' premium of 15%.

For further details or for images please contact James Morton or Tom Eden.

Morton & Eden Ltd, 45 Maddox Street, London W1S 2PE, UK

Tel: +44 (0)20 7493 5344 Fax: +44 (0)20 7495 6325 Email: tom@mortonandeden.com