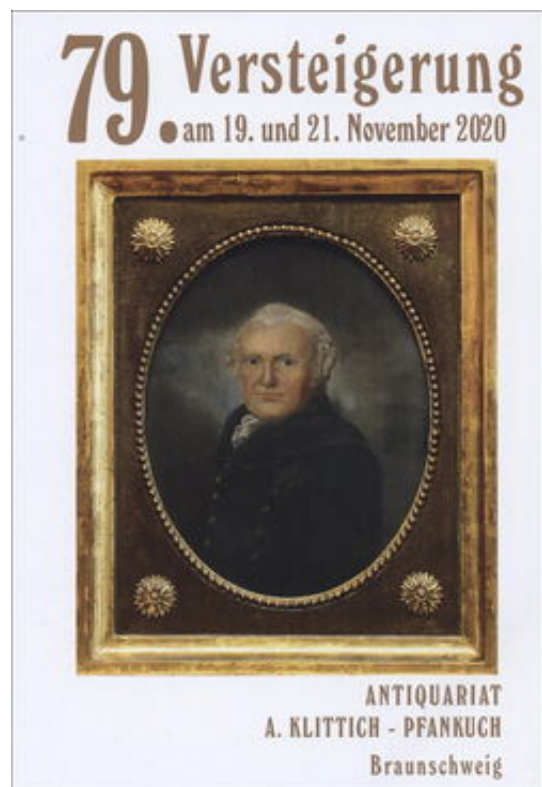


2020-12-12

Chess Auction - Antiquariat A. Klittich-Pfankuch 21st November 2020

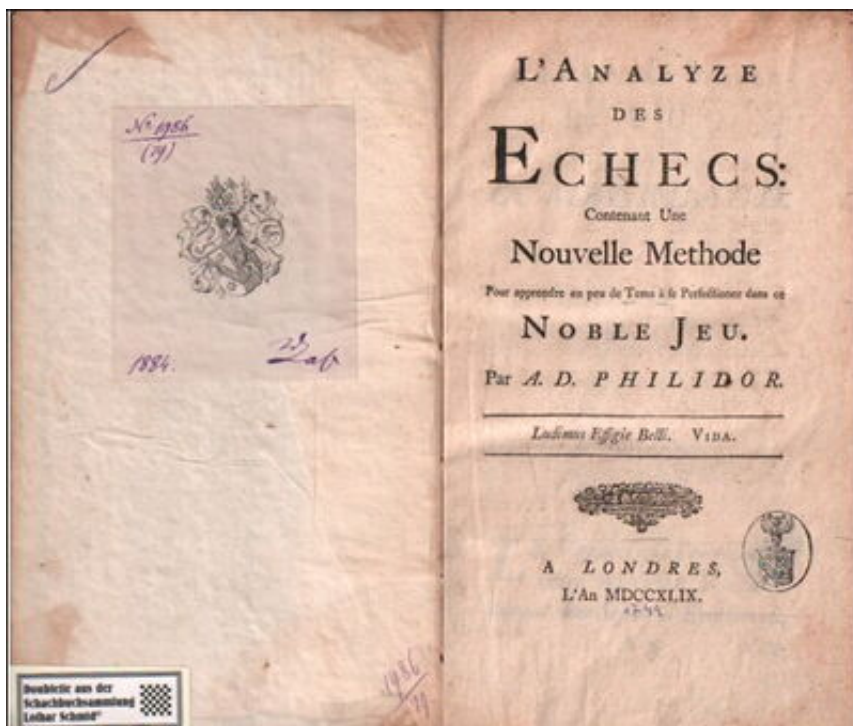


by Michael Clapham

The auction house [Antiquariat A. Klittich-Pfankuch](#) held its bi-annual chess auction last week with many rare and important books, manuscripts and other collectable items going under the hammer. Recent auctions in Braunschweig have included many rare items from the library of the late Lothar Schmid and again, some of the choicest items came from this source.

Approximately 750 lots of books included the following *Schachraritäten*:

- An Inquiry into the Antient Greek Game, supposed to have been invented by Palamedes..., by James Christie, London 1801 which sold for €1,200;
- the first printing of the first edition of Philidor's L'Analyse des Echecs, London 1749 - €1,600; and a later printing in the same year - €950



- A rare work by Alessandro Salvio: *Il Giuoco degli Scacchi*, published in 1723, around 80 years after his death, made €1,100;
- The first comprehensive chess treatise published in Germany - *Das Schach - oder König-Spiel* by Gustavus Selenus, Leipzig 1616, bound with another non-chess work dated 1624, realised €2,700.
- A very rare book by von der Lasa: *Entwurf eines Vollständigen Reglements für das Schachspiel*, Berlin 1854 made €950,
- and Lolli's *Osservazioni Teorica-Pratiche Sopra il Giuocco degli Scacchi*, Bologna 173 sold for €700.



- Several modern books fetched high prices including one of the 20 vellum bound copies of David DeLucia's *Chess Library*, 2nd edition 2007 which sold for €900 and a two volume work by Rolf Roth: *Schach in meinem Leben*, Wetzikon circa 2010, described as an "Interesting contribution to Swiss chess history" sold for €1,000.
- Harrie Grondijs's extremely limited edition books continue to be in great demand with several selling for between €200 and €460, but the highest price paid was €1,600 for his five volume series *Chess Craze Bad*, Maastricht 2015 - 2020.

- Several books on draughts were on offer in this auction and an 1811 work by Johann Koch: Das Damenspiel, auf feste Regeln gebracht... realised the top price of €400.
- A 1650 work by Canalejas Garcia: Libro del Juego de las Damas... sold for €301.

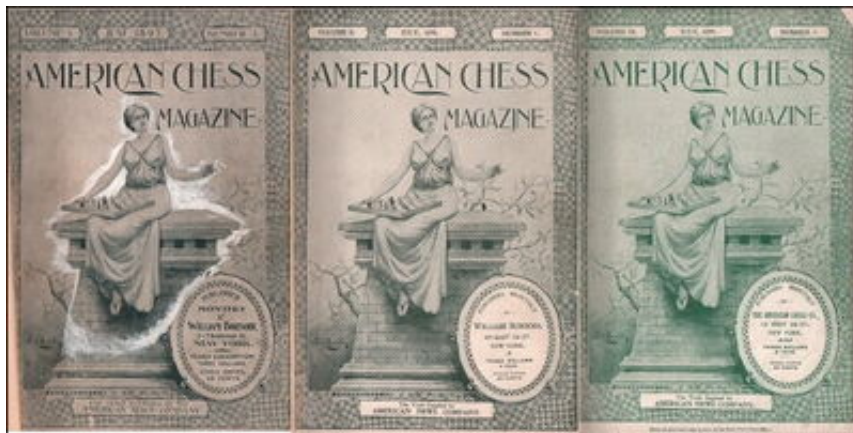


- The tournament books included Cleveland 1871 by Brownson which sold for €400;
- Kiev 1903 by Chigorin - €420;
- and New York 1889 by Steinitz - €480.

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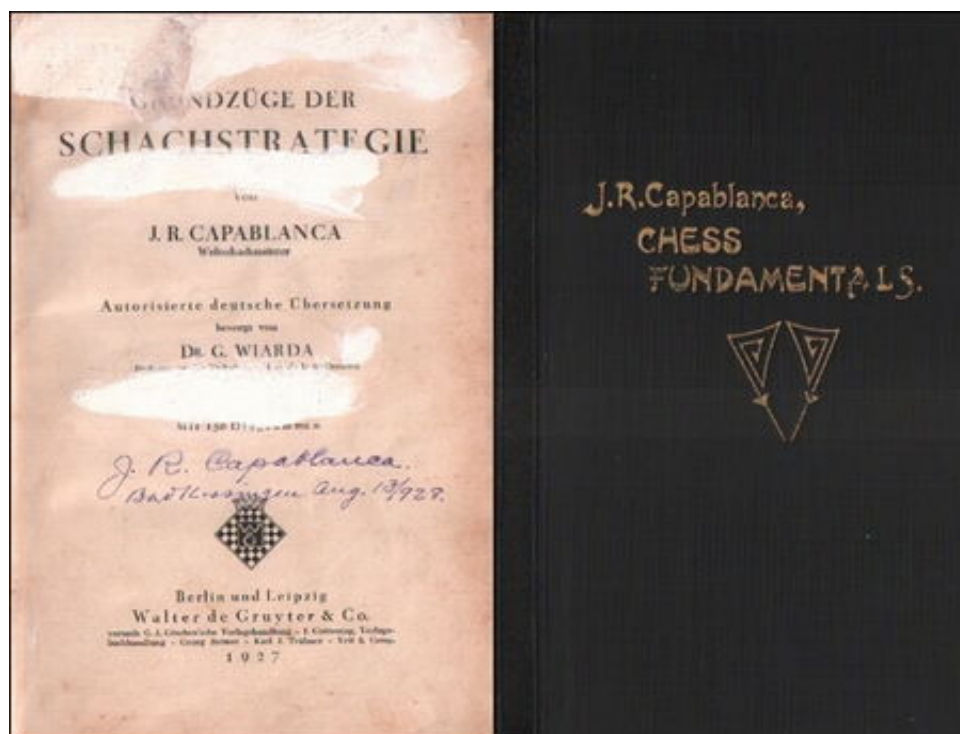
- The Zeitschriften included a complete three volume run of American Chess Magazine, 1897 - 1899 which made €500;
- the first volume of The British Chess Magazine, 1881 - €300 (good value);
- Le Palamède two volumes 1838 and 1839 - €380;
- and a scarce year of Wiener Schachzeitung for 1915 - €400.



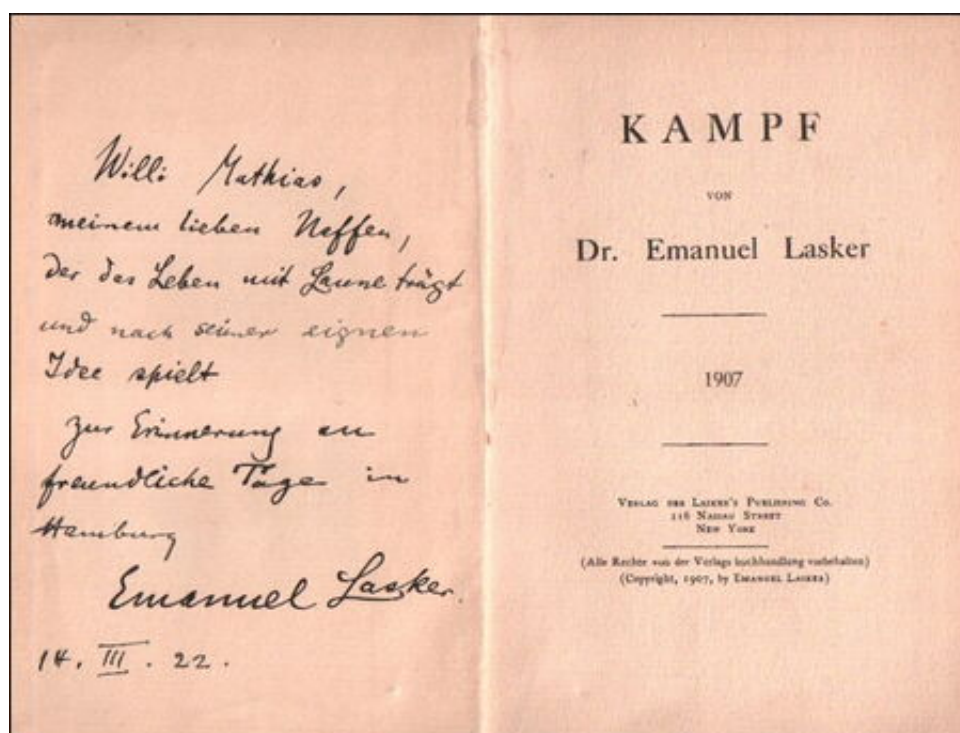
However, the items most in demand were the autographed books, manuscript items and other pieces of memorabilia. Books signed or inscribed by famous players are very desirable and the following examples went under the hammer:

- Das Grossmeister-Turnier New York 1924, inscribed by Alekhine - €450
- Die Moderne Schachpartie, with a dedication from Tarrasch - €500
- Die Praxis Meines Systems, with a 9 line inscription by Nimzowitsch - €600

- Grundzüge der Schachstrategie (the German edition of Chess Fundamentals), signed by Capablanca at Bad Kissingen 1928 - €1,200



- The Community of the Future, signed by Emanuel Lasker - €1,300
- Kampf von Emanuel Lasker, with a dedication from the author - €1,800



- The rare book on The Third American Chess Congress, Cleveland 1874, signed by the winner George Mackenzie, sold for €2,300

But the most highly prized items are original letters and manuscripts by the leading masters of the past, and many were put up for sale here:

- A manuscript notebook with 23 pages written by Tal sold for €800.
- A handwritten 5 page tournament report and two letters by Alekhine fetched €800, €950 and €1,900.

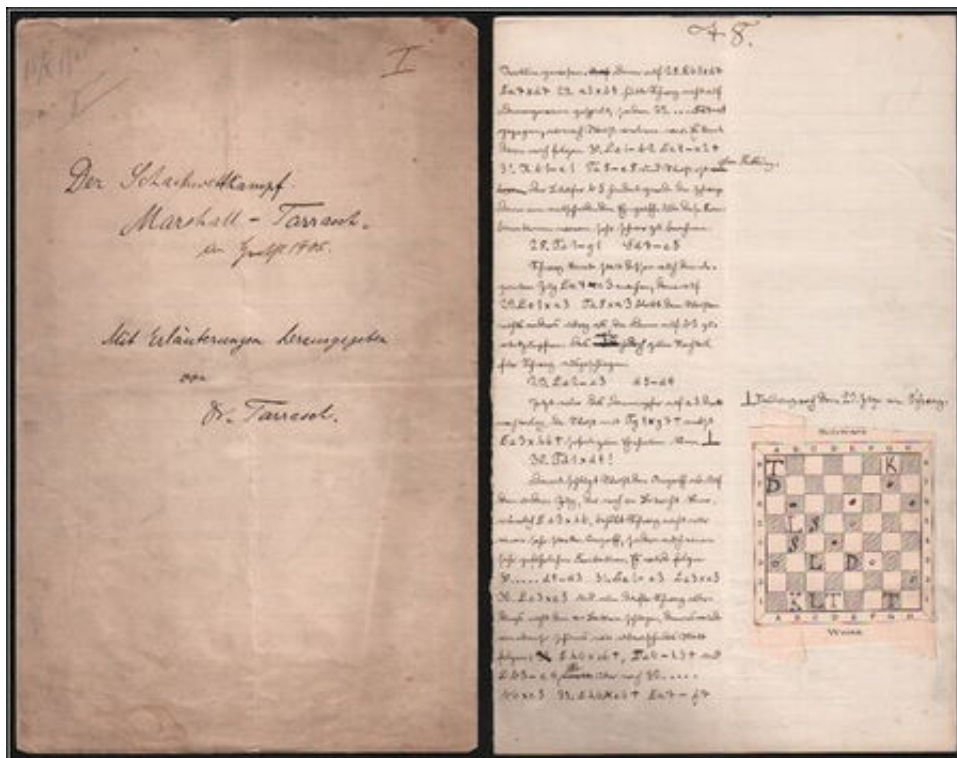
- A letter from Richard Reti pasted into Modern Ideas in Chess sold for €1,100.

Moving up a gear;

- 3 letters written by Adolf Anderssen in the 1850s sold for €2,900, €3,000 and €3,700, Morphy is mentioned in the last of these.

- A bound volume of Löwenthal's chess columns from the Era for the years 1854 to 1866 with an 18 page list of contents written in Lowenthal's hand made €4,000.

- Siegbert Tarrasch's handwritten manuscript for his book Der Schachwettkampf Marshall - Tarrasch 1905, also sold for €4,000.



- The auction (and the auctioneer) reached a crescendo with the sale of a notebook written by Rudolf Spielmann in which he had annotated 80 of his games played between 1900 and 1905, the hammer finally falling at €6,600;
- and a single page letter written by Paul Morphy to Miron Hazeltine regarding an invitation to the St. Louis Chess Club, dated May 1859, which also sold for €6,600.

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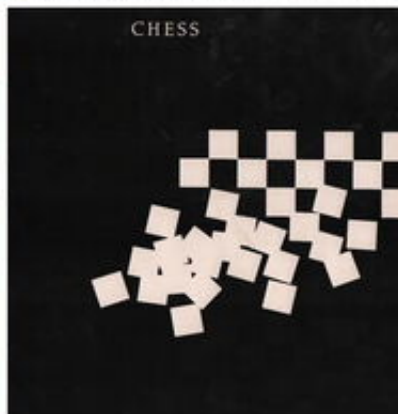
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St Nicholas Hotel
May 19th 1859
Miss J. Hazelton
Dear Sir:
I shall write
to Mr Brown in a day or
two and inform him whether
or not I shall be enabled
to accept of the very kind
invitation of the St Louis
Chess Club
Truly yours
Paul Morphy

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Chess related photographs and postcards are always popular and the *Schachmemorabilia* section included a large number of these with many lots selling for between €300 and €700. A remarkable collection of cuttings and adverts on the theme of chess in films, with many photos of chess scenes in the movies sold for €1,100, and the next lot, which was also from the Couwenbergh Collection, on the theme of chess and music, sold for €1,200. This included many record sleeves featuring a chess motif.



Charles Aznavour seems to be playing Fischerrandom chess.

- Other lots selling for high prices included a postcard featuring caricatures of participants in the Candidates Tournament at Bled-Zagreb-Belgrade, 1959, with their signatures - €900;

- two manuscripts on problems by William Bone - €850 and €2,100;
- a beautifully executed manuscript from the J W Rimington Wilson library with games and positions from the works of Captain Bertin, Stamma, The Calabrois and others - €1,300;
- a typescript containing 50 self-mates by Miroslav Soukup with a handwritten dedication to A C White - €1,600;
- and a collection of 16 autographed photo postcards featuring the participants at Podebrad 1936 - €2,400.

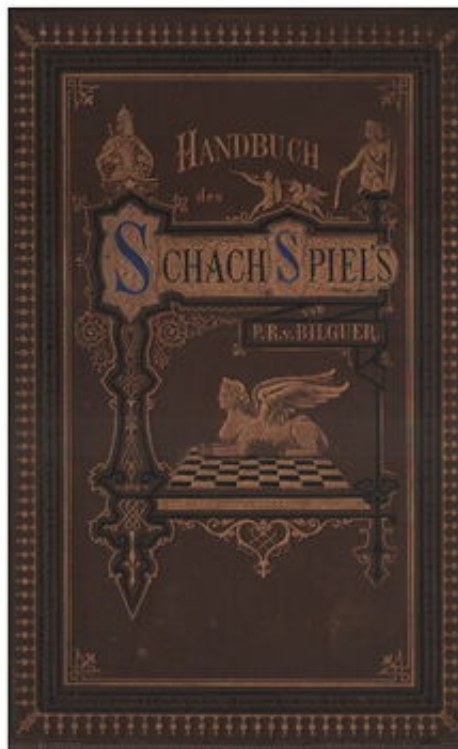
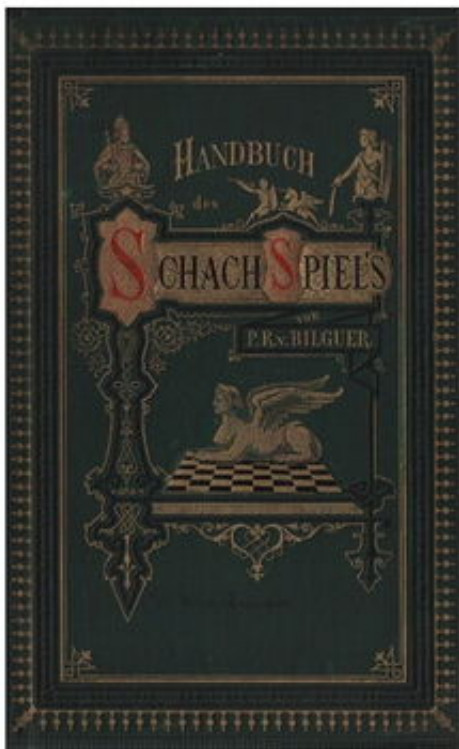
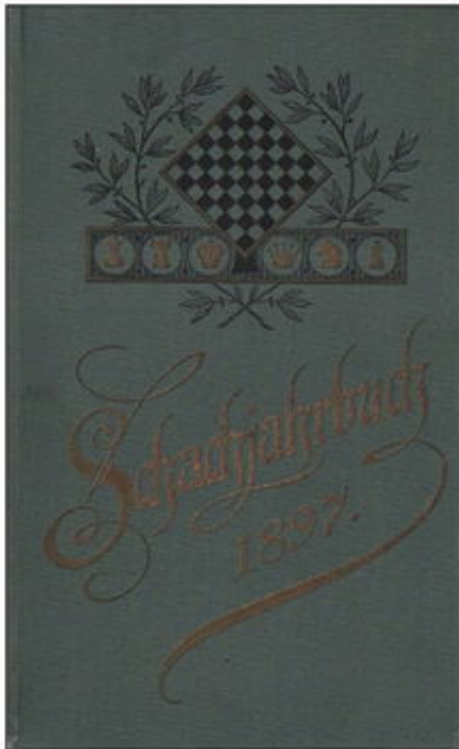
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The 1,100 plus lots were auctioned off in around seven hours with prices from €10 upwards, so there were plenty of items for all pockets. The following less expensive but still desirable books all sold for €50 or

less:

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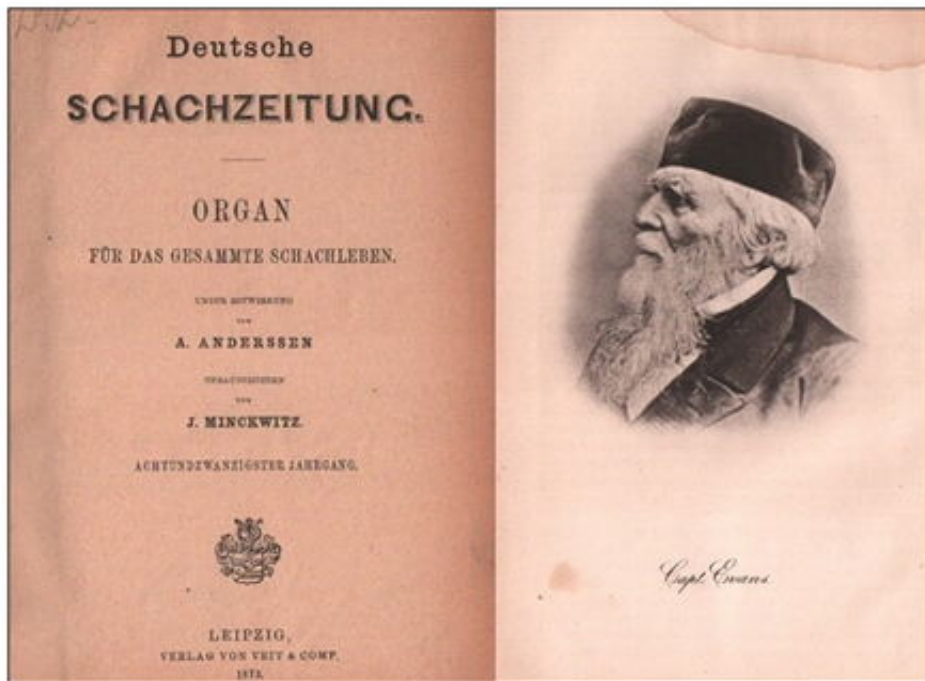
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The printed 266 page auction catalogue is a collector's item in itself and a very useful reference work, while every lot was meticulously described and illustrated in the online catalogue.

The auction was admirably organised and conducted by Karl Klittich and his team, and they are fortunate indeed to enjoy so many rare and historical chess artefacts passing through their hands.

Many thanks to Karl Klittich for permission to use extracts and illustrations from the catalogue.

The hammer prices quoted above exclude the buyer's premium and other costs.

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The article was first published on [Chess Book Chats](#)