

WHAT IS AN OLD TELEPHONE WORTH?

Fons Vanden Berghen

The answer to this question is well known: "Whatever the fool who wants it is willing to pay for it..."; and this is confirmed by the following.

It concerns the results of the sale of telephones (amongst others) by the auction house 'Breker' on 24 September 2021 in Köln (Germany).

Most of the telephones for sale came from a private Scandinavian collector I'm pretty sure that I have met him some decades ago at a swapmeet of the German telephone collectors club S.I.G. (both of us being at that time a member of it).

I have attached photos from the catalogue of some of the telephones that fetched the (crazy?) highest prices. It is striking that most of them are telephones (from the 19th century) from L.M. Ericsson and Siemens & Halske.

# Photo	# CATAL.	Price €	Manufacturer
1	267	6.159	Siemens & Halske
2a & 2b	271	28.492	L.M. Ericsson
3	278	6.672	Siemens & Halske
4	299	2.309	L.M. Ericsson
5	300	449	Ericsson Beeston (GPO)
6	306	7.699	L.M. Ericsson
7	314	10.265	L.M. Ericsson
8	315	18.131	L.M. Ericsson
9	322	2.590	A.B. Telefonfabriken
10	338	2.849	L.M. Ericsson
11	356	7.770	Elektrisch Bureau Kristiana
12a & 12b	375	19.248	Siemens & Halske
13a & 13b	380	28.230	L.M. Ericsson
14	382	2.823	Fr. Reiner (München)
15	270	3.977	Siemens & Halske

The above prices are the hammer prices increased by Breker's 'commission' (VAT incl.), i.e. the effective prices to be paid by the buyers.

The 'commission' for the buyer amounts, rounded, to 25%. So for an object hammered at 100 € the buyer pays 125 € at this auction house.

The costs for the seller are not mentioned on the website. But I know by experience that they are in the same order of magnitude as what the buyer has to contribute. I therefore take also 25% here in order to make the calculation simple. So the seller does not get 100 but only 75 €.

A conclusion, (al)l auction houses are doing the best business; in this example with a hammer price of 100 they get a total of $25 + 25 = 50$ € ...!

Then there are the possible additional costs for the buyer: the shipping costs (packinginsuranceshipment) and possible customs fees and import taxes.

P.S.1: I myself stopped collecting telephones some 30 years ago to devote myself entirely to 'telegraphy in the 19th century'. I did leave a trace in my article 'A passion from long ago' in the THG Journal, number 92 - Autumn 2015 pages 18-20. That can also be found in my website at <https://www.telegraphy.eu/pagina/miscelanneous.html> .

P.S.2. I took the photographs from the auction catalogue, with the exception of 2b, 12a and 13a which I got directly from Breker.



Figure 1



Figure 2a*Figure 2b**Figure 3*



Figure 4



Figure 5



Figure 6

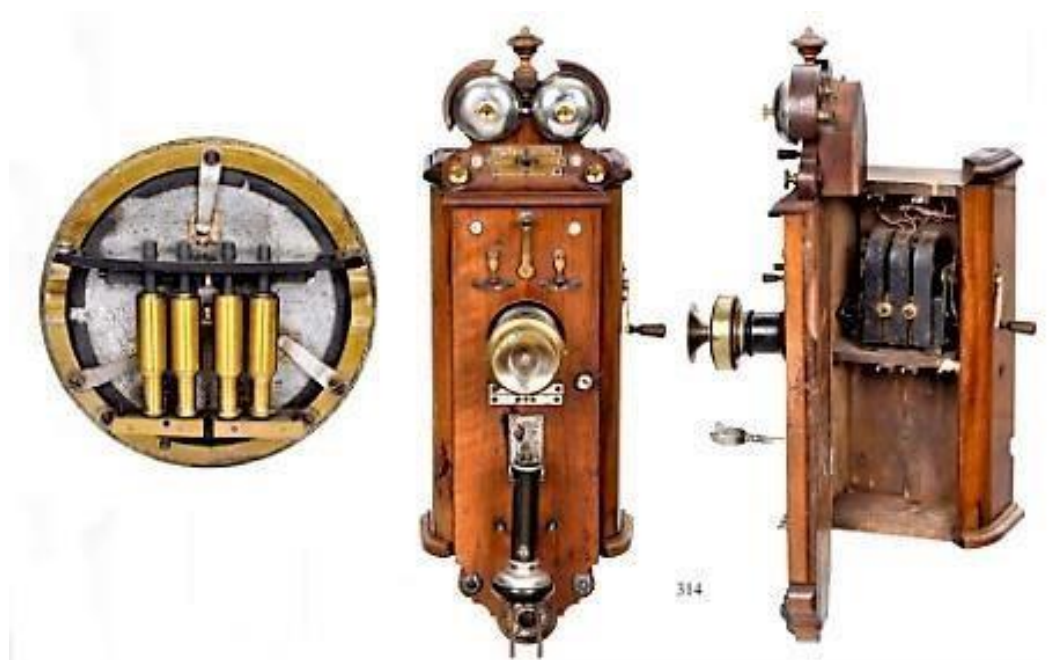


Figure 7



Figure 8



Figure 9

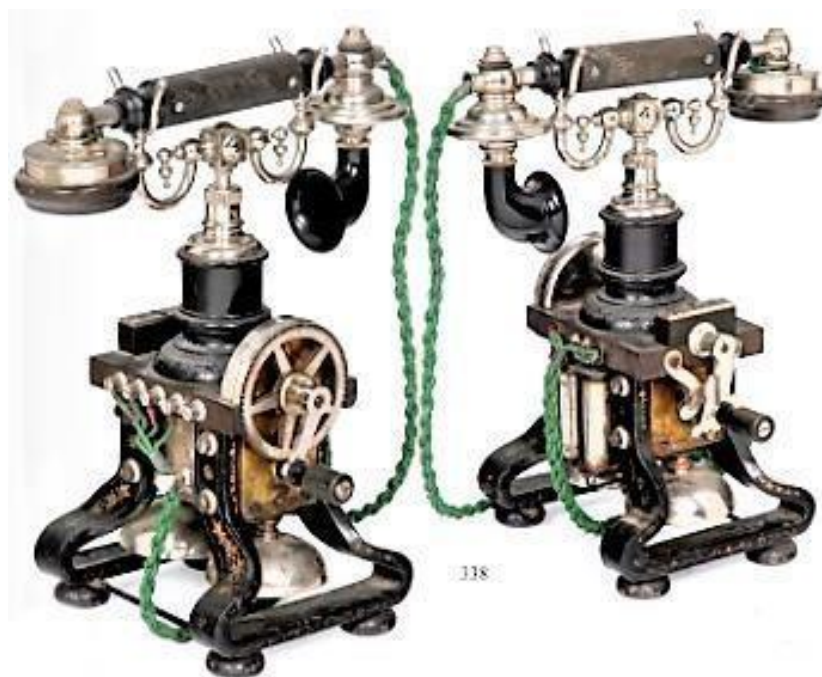


Figure 10



Figure 11



Figure 12a



Figure 12b



Figure 13b



Figure 13a



Figure 14



Figure 15