

On an auctioneer's claim about a book allegedly originating from Hitler's private library, thereby raising the value from almost nil to more than 1500 euro.

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Lot 4080

Adolf Hitler - "Der Mythos des 20. Jahrhunderts" aus seiner Privat-Bibliothek

Starting Price: € 1,500

Lot 4080: Adolf Hitler - "Der Mythos des 20. Jahrhunderts" aus seiner Privat-Bibliothek

Description Photos Sale Information

Erstausgabe 1935 mit goldgeprägtem Lederrücken und Leinwandeinband, oberseitiger Goldschnitt. Die innere Einbanddecke mit dem seltenen, erhaben geprägten ExLibris "Bücherei Adolf Hitler" mit Hoheitsadler in Gold, das Vorsatzblatt mit zusätzlichem Stempel "Adolf Hitler Privat-Bücherei, Obersalzberg".

Zustand: II +

Related Items



Lot 4080, 79r. Auktion, Hermann Historica, Linprunstraße 16, 80335 München, May 24, 2019

Index (text in blue can be clicked upon)

[Introduction](#)

[The facts](#)

[Hitler's Private Library](#)

[The Hermann Historica copy](#)

[The ex libris - authentic and fake](#)

[Conclusion](#)

[Appendix - Hitler ex libris prints](#)

Introduction

On May 24, 2019 the Munich auction house Hermann Historica is planning to sell a book that allegedly originates from Hitler's private library. The book contains, according to the auction house, a 'very rare, beautifully made *ex libris*' and a stamp print, which states 'Adolf Hitler / Private Library / Obersalzberg'.

That stamp print is very rare too, as it was never seen before. The same applies for this *ex libris*. Which is quite strange, as Hitler once possessed sixteen thousand books, many of which are still in existence.

Hermann Historica states as start price an amount of € 1500. Quite some money, as the real value of this object is as good as nil.

The book in question is an authentic yet nearly valueless book from 1935, 'upgraded' by a forger with a fantasy Hitler *ex libris* and a fake stamp print.

It is inconceivable that the auction house doesn't know the true nature of this book. In this investigation we will explain why.

Original description by Hermann Historica

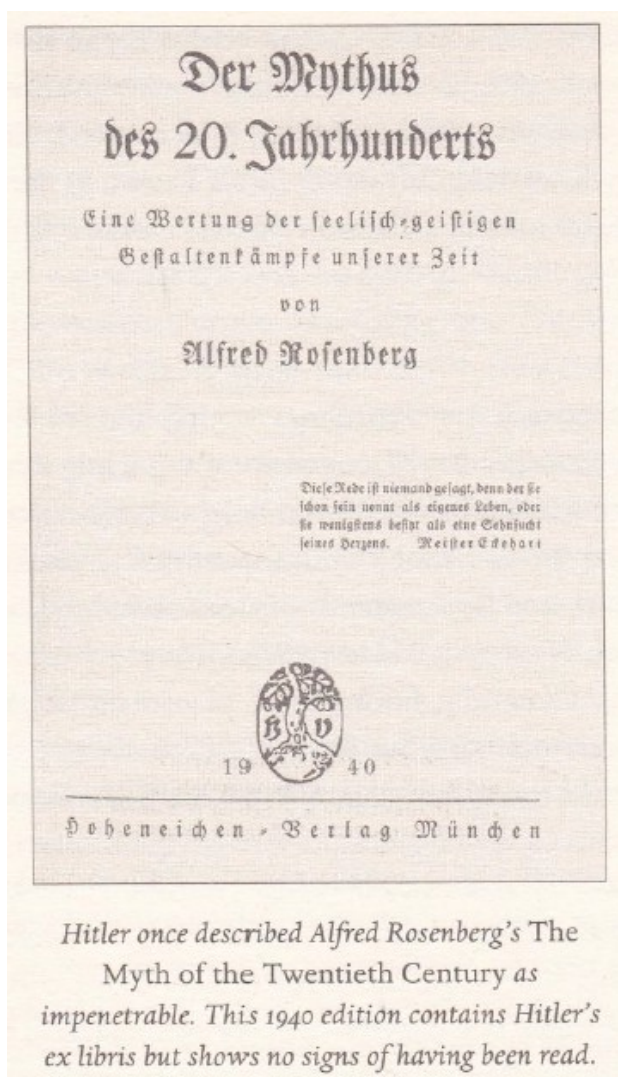
Lot 4080: Adolf Hitler - Der Mythus des 20. Jahrhunderts" aus seiner Privat-Bibliothek.

Prunkausgabe 1935 mit goldgeprägtem Lederrücken und Leineneinband, oberseitiger Goldschnitt. Die innere Einbanddecke mit dem seltenen, erhaben geprägten ExLibris "Bücherei Adolf Hitler" mit Hoheitsadler in Gold, das Vorsatzblatt mit zusätzlichem Stempel "Adolf Hitler Privat-Bücherei, Obersalzberg".

Go to [Index](#)

The facts

Hitler owned indeed a copy of this work, which had a Hitler ex libris in it. This version:



Ryback, page 126

Alfred Rosenberg. *Der Mythos des 20. Jahrhunderts. Eine Wertung der seelisch-geistlichen Gestaltenkämpfe unserer Zeit*. Hoheneichen Verlag München, 1940 (1st edition 1930).

In English: *The Myth of the Twentieth Century*.

Rosenberg was seen as the Nazi party ideologist.¹ His book casts the history of the world as an eternal struggle between 'Aryans' and Jews, Africans and other 'inferior' peoples. Although criticized by some for being overly theoretical and abstract, it was a best-seller.²

It was amongst the thousands of books from Hitler's personal libraries and other locations shipped to the United States.^{3, 4} This particular copy is now to be found at the John Hay Library, Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island. The Rosenberg book *an sich* is not very special and *absolutely not* rare: at least 878 000 copies were printed.⁵

1 NN. Alfred Rosenberg: Biography. United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington D.C. [Seen 07-05-2019]. <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/alfred-rosenberg-biography>

2 NN. Alfred Rosenberg. Music and the Holocaust. ORT. [Seen 07-05-2019]. <http://holocaustmusic.ort.org/politics-and-propaganda/third-reich/rosenberg-alfred0/>

3 Timothy W. Ryback. *Hitler's Private Library. The books that shaped his life*. The Bodley Head, London, 2009.

4 Hannes Stein. Die Bücher, in denen Adolf Hitler gerne schmökerte. *Welt*, Berlin, 08-01-2009.

<https://www.welt.de/kultur/article2990583/Die-Buecher-in-denen-Adolf-Hitler-gerne-schmoekerte.html>

5 Bibliographical remarks at CB425.R73 1940, John Hay Library, Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island. <https://search.library.brown.edu/catalog/b4111832>

Hitler's Private Library

At the time of his death Hitler owned an estimated sixteen thousand volumes. These were kept in three libraries at his private residencies in Munich, Berlin and at the Obersalzberg (Berchtesgaden), as well as other locations.⁶

In the spring of 1945 some "three thousands of these book were transferred to a salt mine near Berchtesgaden, where they were discovered by a unit of the American 101st Airborne division, taken to a 'collecting point' in Munich, and eventually shipped, via Frankfurt, to a warehouse in Alexandria, Virginia."⁷

After selecting the special works out of this book pile (the twelve hundred with an *ex libris*⁸) these became part of the rare book collection of the Library of Congress, where it was assigned the call number N6885.07.⁹

Eighty books from Hitler's collection are stored at Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island.¹⁰ These originate from Berlin, where they were looted from Hitler's bunker by the American Albert Aronson¹¹. These works were donated to the university by Aronson's nephew in 1986.¹²

Additional works that were once in Hitler's libraries are scattered in public and private archives across the United States and Europe.¹³

Go to [Index](#)

6 Timothy W. Ryback. *Hitler's Private Library. The books that shaped his life*. The Bodley Head, London, 2009. Preface page I.

7 Ryback, pages 26-27.

8 Pieter van Os en Sander Pleij. De bibliotheek van Hitler. Wat Hitler las. *De Groene Amsterdammer*, Amsterdam, 07-02-2004.

<https://www.groene.nl/artikel/wat-hitler-las>

9 Ryback, preface page XV; pages 26-27.

10 Ryback, preface page XVI.

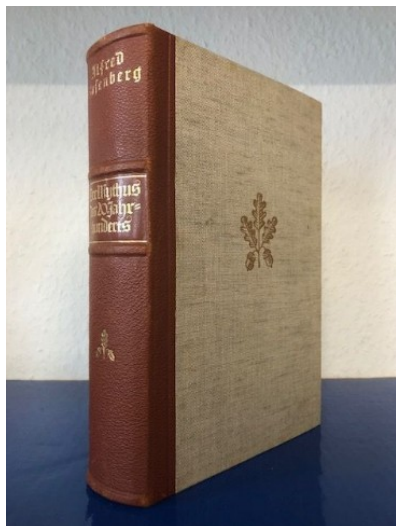
11 Thought to be Albert Aronson, 1913-1998. <https://prabook.com/web/albert.aranson/787352>

12 Ryback, preface page XVI. Ryback mentioned "in the 1970s"- this was a mistake.

13 Ryback, preface page XVII.

The Hermann Historica copy

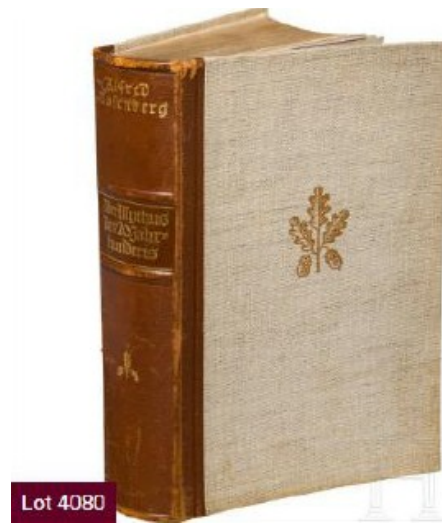
The edition to be auctioned by Hermann Historica is the 'Prunkausgabe' ('splendour edition') 1935. If such a copy is in a good condition, it's actual worth is about € 75 to € 135.¹⁴



Copy offered by Zeitgenoss for € 135,-



Copy offered by Zeitgenoss for € 75,-



Copy offered by Hermann Historica for at least € 1500,-

The copy offered by Hermann Historica is clearly *not* in a good condition. In the book trade such a copy has hardly any value, unless there's a special story to it.

If one has to believe Hermann Historica, its copy has a special story: Adolf Hitler once owned it.

But what's the evidence to corroborate this?

The evidence presented by Hermann Historica consists of one fantasy Hitler *ex libris* and a fake stamp print.

And that's all.

Go to [Index](#)

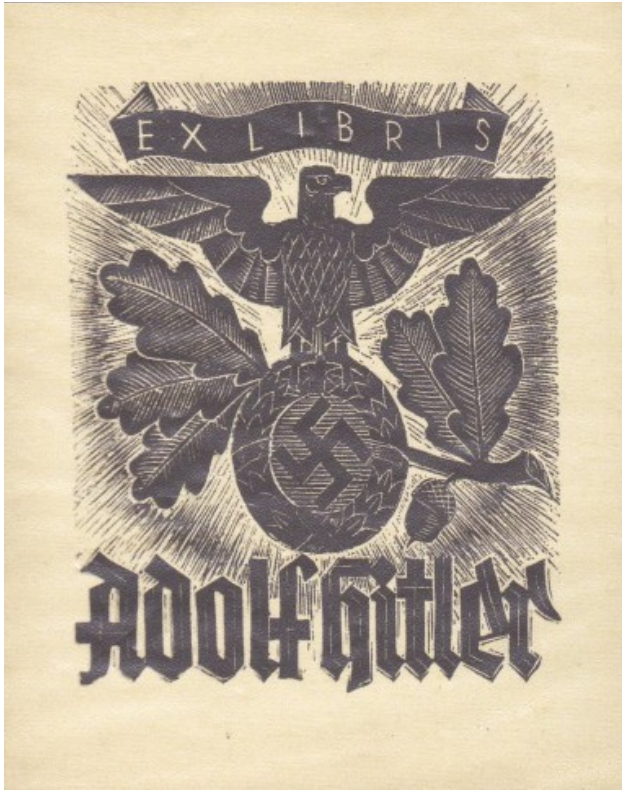
¹⁴ Zeitgenoss. Versandantiquariat für zeitgenössische Literatur, Eisenach. www.zeitgenoss.de [seen 07-05-2019].

Copy for € 135,-: https://zeitgenoss.de/epages/1bc84882-c8e1-493f-971c-23b8b9ef8444.sf/de_DE/?ObjectPath=/Shops/1bc84882-c8e1-493f-971c-23b8b9ef8444/Products/4789

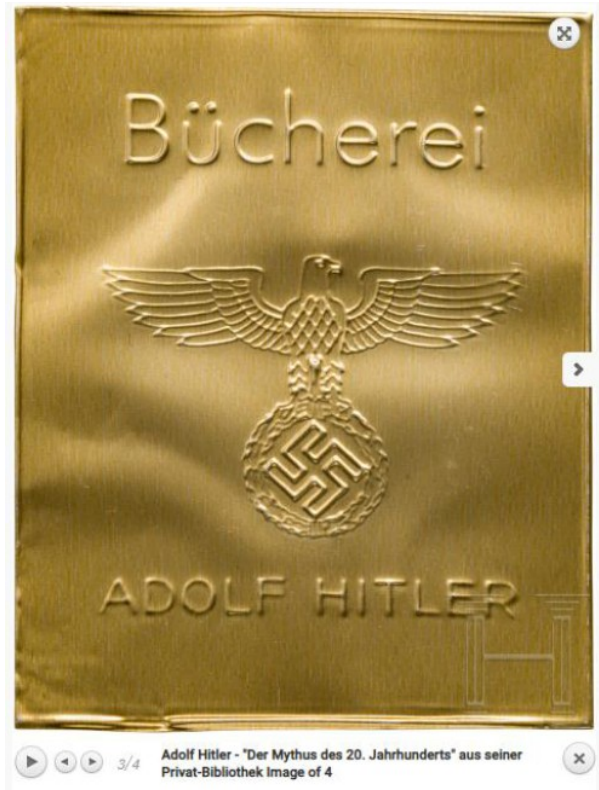
Copy for € 75,-: https://zeitgenoss.de/epages/1bc84882-c8e1-493f-971c-23b8b9ef8444.sf/de_DE/?ObjectPath=/Shops/1bc84882-c8e1-493f-971c-23b8b9ef8444/Products/4789

The ex libris - authentic and fake

Books once to be found in Hitler's private libraries were provided with Hitler's *ex libris* prints. On the left an authentic Hitler *ex libris*, on the right the Hermann Historica version:

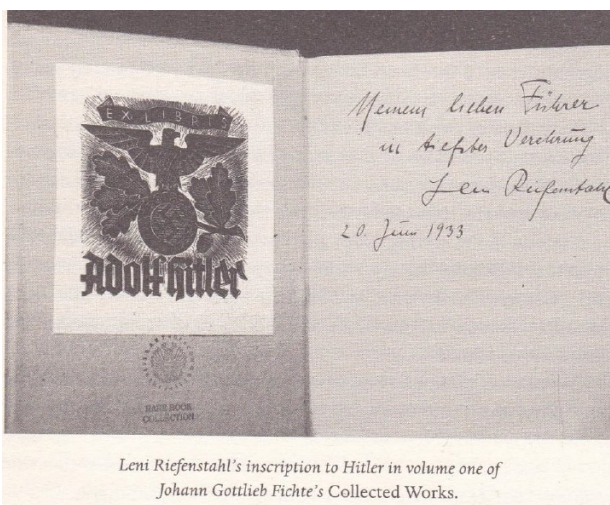


Source: Library of Congress



Source: Hermann Historica

In the books they look like this:



Source: Ryback. *Hitler's Private Library*.



Source: Hermann Historica

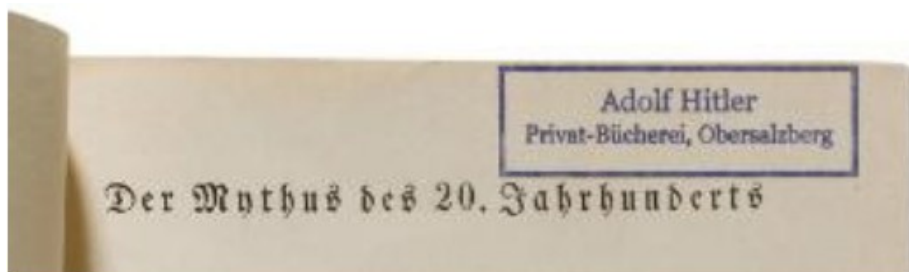
Go to [Index](#)

As we've already told: the *ex libris* in the Hermann Historica copy has never been seen before. Which is very odd, given the many known volumes originating from Hitler's libraries.

Now Hermann Historica and its predecessor Graf Klenau have, just as other auction houses specializing in Nazi rubbish, sold in the last fifty years numerous books with the familiar Hitler *ex libris* prints - authentic as well as forged ones.

You may therefore expect that 'experts' of Hermann Historica know how a real Hitler *ex libris* print looks. They, as well as other experts, might be fooled by high quality forgeries of the authentic print. But in this case the *ex libris* doesn't even *look* like the real one.

On top of that, the forger has made this stamp print in the book:



A stamp print never seen before, and certainly not to be found in the books once owned by Hitler. This and the fantasy *ex libris* are the evidence that lot # 4080 (Adolf Hitler - 'Der Mythos des 20. Jahrhunderts' aus seiner Privat-Bibliothek) on the Hermann Historia auction is a contraption produced by a forger.

This forger inserted a fantasy Hitler *ex libris* and a fake stamp print in an authentic, but rather valueless copy of Rosenberg's book. By doing this, the forger made an object which might fool Hitleriana collectors, who - for whatever reason - are willing to pay thousands of euros for this kind of material, if authentic.

One would think that an auction house tries not to offer clearly forged material as authentic. Of course, skilled forgers can deceive collectors as well as experts from auction houses. But in this case the auction house cannot claim that it was deceived - as alleged Hitler book is a very bad forgery. It's inconceivable that they didn't notice so.

Which means that Hermann Historica can in this case be accused of at least harsh negligence for accepting and promoting this lot as authentic. Or even of intentionally deceiving its customers.

Go to [Index](#)

Conclusion

Given all factors we suspect Hermann Historica of intentionally misleading its clients about the nature of lot 4080, on the auction 79r, May 24, 2019.

A company with such a long history of selling alleged Hitleriana must be able to recognize clearly fake or fantasy items.

In this case especially: what happened with Hitler's copy of the Rosenberg book is well documented. It's even known where the book is stored. It is also very well known how the authentic Hitler *ex libris* prints looked like.

But when a consignor, known only to Hermann Historica, offered the Rosenberg book to Hermann Historica, the auction house didn't do the only logical thing to do: refuse it.

No, they accepted it and claimed it was authentic, by describing it as:

"Adolf Hitler - "Der Mythus des 20. Jahrhunderts" aus seiner Privat-Bibliothek" (Adolf Hitler. "The Myth of the Twentieth Century" from his private library."

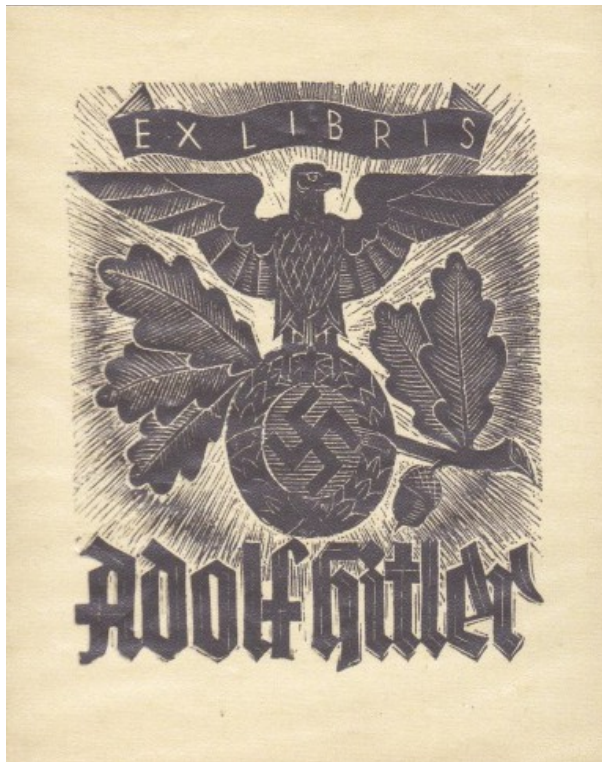
Hermann Historica especially stated that the *ex libris* is 'very rare' ('mit dem seltenen, erhaben geprägten ExLibris'). If this were true, they must know of the existence of more of these golden bookplates and can show them and prove they are authentic. If not, they are clearly deceiving their clients.

When a person or organization knows that an alleged Hitler object must be a contraption made by a forger, and then still tries to sell it as an authentic Hitler object, then this person or organization is committing a criminal offense, for this is called fraud.

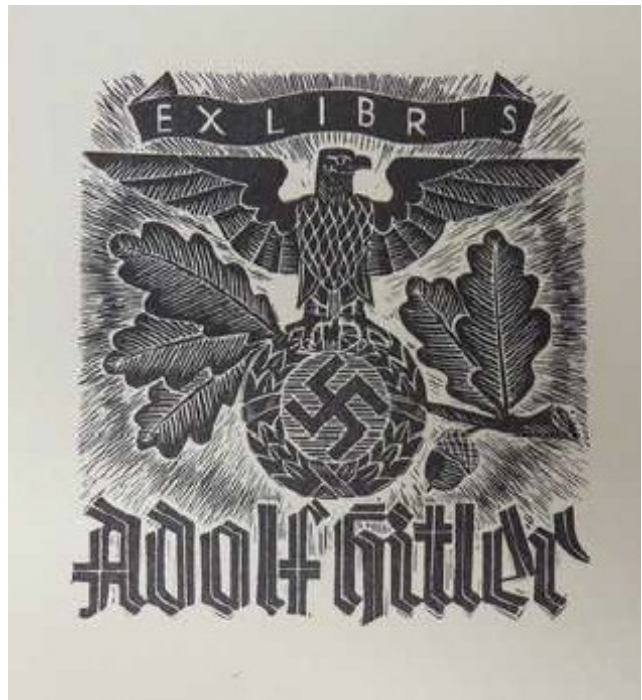
Go to [Index](#)

Appendix - Hitler *ex libris* prints - authentic and fake ones

Hermann Historica (since 1982) and its direct predecessor Graf Klenau, have sold since at least 1975¹⁵ books with Hitler *ex libris* prints or just spare *ex libris* prints - authentic or forged. Which in so far doesn't really matter, because until very recently all forged Hitler *ex libris* prints at least looked a bit like the authentic ones.



Authentic. Source: Library of Congress



Fake. Source: William J. Jenack Auctioneers¹⁶



As the following pages show, fake Hitler *ex libris* prints are abundant. Every bona fide expert on Hitleriana must be aware of this, and know too how an authentic one looks like.

Therefore it's unthinkable that the experts of Herman Historica, with all their expertise didn't recognize the fantasy Hitler *ex libris* in the Rosenberg book for what it was: a blatant forgery.

¹⁵ Catalogs Graf Klenau, auction 113 (1975); auction 117/118 (1976); auction 161/162 (1979); Hermann Historica autumn sale 2017, lot 7178; and so on.

¹⁶ Via: https://www.liveauctioneers.com/en-gb/item/61503594_volume-verdun-ex-libris-adolf-hitler



Authentic

Forgery

Forgery

Enlarging the images will help to identify the forgeries.

Why bother to forge the ex libris prints yourself, as you can order them online?

Categories » STAMPS » EUROPE » Germany » Cinderellas » Adolf Hitler EX-LIBRIS - set of 3 / forgery

Print

Adolf Hitler EX-LIBRIS - set of 3 / forgery

Product no.: 67477

● In stock

4.00 €
Price exclusive shipping costs

Recommend

Forged Hitler ex libris prints for sale on: <http://www.edestamp.com/Adolf-Hitler-EX-LIBRIS-set-of-3-/-forgery>

Go to [Index](#)

309 LOT OF 10 GERMAN NAZI ADOLF HITLER EXLIBRIS CARDS

Currency: USD Category: Everything Else / Other Start Price: 2.00 USD Estimated At: 60.00 - 8,000.00 USD



SOLD
20.00 USD to f***r
+ (3.60) buyer's premium. + applicable fees & taxes.

This item SOLD at 2013 Mar 03 @ 17:42 UTC-7 : PDT/MST

Did you win this item?
A full invoice should be emailed to the winner by the auctioneer within a day or two.

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Forged Hitler ex libris prints for sale on: https://www.icollector.com/LOT-OF-10-GERMAN-NAZI-ADOLF-HITLER-EXLIBRIS-CARDS_i15629867

Collectibles

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Lot 7553 ▾

Next ▶



LOT OF 15 EX LIBRIS ADOLF HITLER LIBRARY STAMPAGE

Estimate \$90 - \$180

Nov 9, 2017

Sold for \$120 11 bids

[SELL A SIMILAR ITEM](#)

[SAVE ITEM](#)

3 bidders watching this item

Affiliated Auctions TOP RATED

4,851 Followers

Tallahassee, FL, USA



Forged Hitler ex libris prints for sale on: https://www.liveauctioneers.com/item/56996721_lot-of-15-ex-libris-adolf-hitler-library-stampage

Go to [Index](#)