

of Haute Epoque

"It seems that all the known statuettes of this type are reckoned to have come from the same altarpiece"

another unpublished piece, a large 8in (20cm) high carved ivory diptych from the first half of the 14th century. It featured three registers of carved scenes of The Passion and retains traces of gilding and polychrome. Kept in the same noble Breton family since the 18th century, it too outstripped its €20,000-30,000 guide to take €72,000 (£65,455).

Not everything in the auction approached these heights. In a sale that produced a respectable 76 per cent volume take-up, there was plenty available in the four- or even three-figure bracket, like the little 5½in (14cm) high iron plaquette cast with a figure of Bacchus pictured here which could be had for just €250 (£230).



A 17th century German fruitwood group €165,000 (£150,000) at Piasa.

Right: a Martin Carlin table – €910,000 (£827,270).



EUROP Auction (25% buyer's premium) have had a number of individual successes in the field of top-end classic 18th century French furniture. Earlier this year they added to their tally at a January 27 mixed-discipline sale that ranged across paintings, furniture and works of art.

Topping the bill at €910,000 (£827,270) was this small occasional table by Martin Carlin (1730-1785), decorated with Japanese lacquerwork panels and applied with ormolu mounts. The piece had an earlier provenance to Lady Baillie at Leeds Castle and was sold via Sotheby's back in 1974.

The sale also included a pair of 6ft 5in (1.97m) wide Louis XIV ormolu-mounted low bookcases, attributed to Charles André Boulle with première and contre partie marquetry. Last on the market in 1993 in a sale in Sotheby's New York rooms, this time around they realised €600,000 (£545,455).



A Helsinki torch for the 1952 Olympic Games – €290,000 (£263,635) at Clermont Ferrand on February 3.

Olympic torch hits gold at €290,000

IVOIRE Group Bernard Vassy et Philippe Jalenques' (20% buyer's premium) Olympic themed sale in Clermont Ferrand on February 3 offered a clutch of Olympic torches from past games and yielded a huge €290,000 (£263,635) for this rare example from the 1952 Helsinki Games.

Three bidders contested the piece, two in the room and one on the internet, before the hammer fell to one of them, an American who secured it for a client who needed this example to complete their collection.

Only 22 torches were created for the Helsinki Games and Ivoire's consultant, Serge Laget, said the price represents a substantial increase on the previous examples of this rare edition that have cropped up at auction in 1999 (\$46,000) and 2006 (\$185,000).

A total of six Olympic torches were offered in the Clermont Ferrand sale. A torch for the 1936 Berlin Games was unsold; a Sapporo Games torch (1972) sold at €7500 (£6820); a 1980 Moscow Games torch at €2200 (£2000); a Sarajevo 1984 torch at €2600 (£2365); a Seoul 1988 torch at €2800 (£2545) and an Athens 2004 torch at €1600 (£1455).

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