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## Fact of the day

At the 2004 Olympic Games in Athens, Iranian judoka Arash Miresaeili was disqualified for weighing in at nearly four pounds above the limit for his weight class of his under-66 kilograms match against an Israeli opponent Ehud Vaks in the first round. It was claimed Miresaeili had gone on an eating binge to protest the International Olympic Committee's recognition of the state of Israel. Iran does not recognise the state of Israel, and Miresaeili's actions won praise from high-ranking Iranian officials. Mohammad Khatami, the country's President at the time, was quoted as saying Miresaeili's actions would be "recorded in the history of Iranian glories". He was later awarded \$125,000 by the Government - the same amount given to Olympic gold medalists.

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# Original Pierre de Coubertin drawing of Olympic rings to be auctioned

By Duncan Mackay

Tuesday, 21 July 2020

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An original drawing of the Olympic rings sketched by Baron Pierre de Coubertin is set to go up for auction in Cannes next Sunday (July 26) and is estimated to sell for as much as €100,000 (£91,000/\$114,000).

The founder of the modern Olympics created the five interlocking rings in 1913 in blue, yellow, black, green and red on a white field.

It is believed he intended the rings to represent the five continents of Africa, Americas, Asia, Europe and Oceania.

He claimed the colours of the rings together with the white of the background included the colours composing every competing nation's flag at the time.

Coubertin introduced the rings in the August 1913 edition of *Olympic Review*.

His original drawing is in graphite and gouache on a 21x27.5 centimetre piece of white card, which he has autographed.



The Olympic flag was flown for the first time publicly at the 1920 Olympic Games in Antwerp ©IOC

The new Olympic symbol and flag were due to be unveiled for the first time publicly at the International Olympic Committee (IOC) Congress at the Sorbonne University on June 17 in 1914 to mark the 20th anniversary of the decision to revive the Games and the formation of the Olympic Movement.

But the shadow of World War One hanging over the world meant the rings and flag did not make their official debut until the Opening Ceremony of the 1920 Olympic Games in Antwerp.

Cannes Auction House have put a reserve of €50,000 (£45,000/\$57,000) on the item - which is from a private Swiss collection - but are estimating bidding will reach between €80,000 (£73,000/\$91,000) and €100,000.

Last December, the manifesto drawn up by Coubertin which led to the revival of the Olympic Games sold for a record \$8,806,500 (£6,764,543/€7,916,191) at an auction in New York City.



The manifesto written by Baron Pierre de Coubertin which led to the revival of the Olympic Games sold at auction last December for a record \$8,806,500 ©IOC

The 5,000-word, handwritten document highlighted why Coubertin wanted to bring the Ancient Greek tradition of Olympic competition back during an address he gave at the Sorbonne University in Paris two years before the formation of the IOC in 1894.

He outlined how he believed the Games could be a way to provide peaceful competition between countries.

In February, it emerged that Russian billionaire Alisher Usmanov, the President of the International Fencing Federation, had bought the document and donated it to the Olympic Museum in Lausanne.

Cannes Auction House have promised to donate 15 per cent of the amount raised at the sale of this latest piece to the Pierre de Coubertin Family Association, an organisation dedicated to preserving the memory of the Olympic founder and spreading the philosophy of Olympism.

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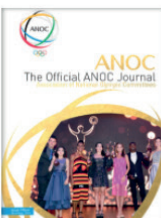


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