

Selbstzucht gelernt sein will. Diese Selbstzucht liegt im Wesen der Fellachen, die sehr strenge Sitten haben. Ich beobachtete die Ehrfurcht, mit der Männer des mittleren Alters den erscheinenden Sechzigjährigen begrüßen. Allerdings erwies sich dieser mit seinen Altersgenossen noch als ein vorzüglicher Fechter; ich konnte in bezug auf Gelenkigkeit, Spannkraft, leichten Fluß der Bewegungen, Schnelligkeit des Erfassens keinen Unterschied zu den Jungen und Jüngsten feststellen. Das Geheimnis dieser Jugend dürfte in der Gewohnheit körperlicher Arbeit und in der bescheidenen Ernährung und Lebensführung genügend entschleiert sein.

Ohne Zweifel genügten ein so kurzer Aufenthalt und eine so geringe Vertrautheit mit dem Lande nicht zu einem endgültigen Bericht über diese sportliche Übung. Ich gebe meine Mitteilungen mit diesem Vorbehalt wieder, um das Studium Erfahrenerer auf dieses Gebiet zu lenken und unter Hinweis auf das Stockfechten der Afghanen, Inder, Chinesen und Japaner das Bild der Körperkultur nach der nichtagonalen, nach der rein spielerischen Seite zu ergänzen.

## Nabbût (Stave Fencing)

by CARL DIEM

Few forms of exercise enjoy a past extending back four millennia, as is the case with the Egyptian sport of stave fencing. We possess a series of illustrations from the Old, Middle and New Empire depicting this sport and covering a period from 2400 to 1100 B. C., but one may safely assume that its origin extends back even farther into the prehistoric period when it was a method of self-defence, developing into a sport only in later years after projectile-throwing weapons and spears had come into use. Kings, soldiers, boatmen and peasants engaged in this form of competition, and it was carried on with and without protective helmets and guards. Small guards for the lower arm and helmets with face protectors were sometimes used but not always. The weapons were either simple sticks or basket-hilted staves. There were duels in which an attempt was made to strike the opponent and others in which the object was to present a skilful dancing exhibition.

Our illustrations, which by no means include all of those known, and in the selection of which Herr von Bothmer of the Egyptian Department of the Museum of Antiquities in Berlin was most helpful, will serve to indicate these different types. First, we have a wall painting from the temple city of Karnak which reveals the god Horus giving instruction to King Amenhotep II. (1448—1420 B. C.) in archery and stave fencing. The King has grasped the stave with both hands and the falcon-headed god instructs him from behind while in front of him can be seen the symbol of aid in the form of crossed arrows (illustration 1). Amenhotep II. was an excellent archer and much admired for his physical prowess. A second painting, which is unfortunately in a very imperfect condition, dates from the period of Amenhotep I. (ca 1550 B. C.) and was found in the grave of his High Priest near Dirâ Abûn Nâga. It depicts two pairs of wrestlers above which are two fencers just beginning a bout, their postures being correct in every detail. Their forearms are protected and the stave is grasped with one hand only, although at some distance from the end (illustration 2). The most recent painting dates from the twelfth century and was found in the Temple of Rameses III. (1198—1167 B. C.) near Medînet Habu in the territory of ancient Thebes. Here we see two pairs of fencers with helmets, the hieroglyphs appended to one of the illustrations containing the following warning: "Take care! I shall let you feel the hand of a true warrior." The fencers are two Egyptian soldiers while the figures of wrestlers in the marginal sketches are of Egyptian and Nubian soldiers, so that it may be assumed that the warning is intended for the negroes (illustration 3).

An example of stave fencing as a form of dancing may be seen in the two pairs of fencers on the boat, the staves being in this case manipulated by both hands. This painting dates from the Fifth or Sixth Dynasty, originating in grave No. 8 of Aba, one of the burial places hewn in the rocks of Deir el Gebeâwi near Assiut (illustration 4). Mention may finally be made of our coloured illustration, which depicts a group of five stave fencers who, to judge from their type, are probably from Asia Minor. In any case, they are not Egyptians, this being evident in the shape of their heads and their protruding stomachs, a distinguishing

feature commonly employed by the Egyptians to designate foreign races. The outside man bears the symbol of a guild, the wrestlers' crest upon a staff, as an indication that they are members of a sport club or professional competitive guild. The painting was found in the grave of Tjanung in Thebes, dating from the period of Thutmos IV. (1490—1411 B. C.).

Herodotus has also provided us with an account of these competitions (II, 63). In the course of a religious ceremony in connection with a cult celebration in Papremis about 1000 men engaged in stave fencing at sunset, this symbolizing the defence of the entrance to the temple against the god of war. Herodotus asserts that the warriors beat one another to the point of death, although Egyptian chroniclers deny that anyone was seriously injured.

Thus we have multiple examples of ancient participation in a sport which is carried on still today in a very similar manner. During a short sojourn in Egypt, I was able on several occasions to observe stave fencing. A former student of mine in the German School of Physical Culture who is now gymnastic inspector in Cairo, Ahmad Marzouk, entertained me one fine afternoon in his tent at the edge of the Libyan Desert, and upon my expressing a wish to see stave fencing, he summoned several youths from the nearest rural village who gladly gave a performance in this sport. The Director of the German Archaeological Institute in Cairo, Professor Junker, invited us several days later to an afternoon tea at the foot of the Pyramids of Giza, where he had excavated several extremely interesting and instructive Mastabas. From the German, American and Egyptian excavating groups he had assembled the best stave fencers, and in their exhibition of this sport we saw unusual performances by different age groups from 16 to 60 years. Youths of ten even tried their ski but the result in this case was scarcely successful. The boatmen on our Nile steamer also arranged a programme of native sports and games, among them the barber pranks so popular in the Orient. The displays of physical strength and ability naturally included stave fencing.

This sport occupies a prominent place in the recreational pursuits of the "Fellach", or Egyptian peasant, who has retained his traditions and customs throughout the millennia. Races and nations have swept over Egypt — the still mysterious Hyksos, the Ethiopians, Persians, Greeks, Romans and then the Arabs and Turks, not to speak of the French invasion under Napoleon —, but the Egyptian peasant, who often enough has lived under foreign dominion, has remained sturdy and unchanged. His features today do not differ in the slightest from those we encounter on the walls of the Pyramids. In his diligent and unpretentious work of cultivating the banks of the Nile, the Egyptian reveals time and again his ancient racial heritage, and his customs, clothing, farming implements, food and habits have not altered. Tall, slender figures with unusual strength of limb despite apparently slight muscular development, small heads and complete lack of obesity characterize the Egyptian of today, who is sturdy and agile, with the same grace of movement one encounters in the highly life-like representations in ancient paintings. Professor Junker described to us the unusual physical ski and agility of the "Fellachs", declaring that they descend vertical grave shafts to a depth of as much as 40 metres with only the small grooves for their toes and fingers which their ancient predecessors notched for the same reason. They are tireless and dependable in their work. Particular praise was devoted to the "Fellachs" of Upper Egypt, who have remained least contaminated from an ethnical point of view.

In wandering through the country-side, the "Fellach" carries a sturdy straight stick about 1.25 metres long, sometimes even longer. It is carved out of heavy, seasoned oak imported from Southern Asia Minor, which was also the source of ship masts and similar sticks in ancient times. This stick is the weapon used in fencing. When a pair of fencers decide to test their prowess, the spectators, who are usually on hand, squat in a circle around the performers. Clothing remains unchanged, the contestants retaining their wide cotton trousers and the white shirt which often reaches to the ankles. A cape is frequently worn in addition thereto, while the head is encased in a white turban wound about the red fez. The stave is grasped with both hands, which are spread wide apart for defence purposes or drawn to one end when hammer-like blows are delivered. In the course of fencing, the stave is often manipulated with one hand if greater rapidity of motion can thus be acquired, and in such cases the resemblance to the ancient illustrations is complete.

The fencing bout involves unusual rapidity of movement, and in this respect quite exceeds sabre fencing. The two opponents manoeuvre about one another in a wide circle, advancing and retreating, dodging and leaping, stooping and stretching, so that every muscle of the body is brought into play. There is a great amount of parrying and manoeuvring; at times hard blows are rained upon the earth or a series of thrusts follow one another in quick succession as in prime, changing then with lightning-like rapidity to tierce or quarte. The unusual feature about this sport is the fact that blows are rained with extreme violence only when the opponent is in a position to parry. Should his defence fail, the blow is checked at the final moment and the opponent is only lightly touched as an indication that the manoeuvre has succeeded. In this manner

the duel takes on the character of a dance, and the graceful leaps and movements of the fencers are actually somewhat terpsichorean in character.

In all of the exhibitions which I was privileged to witness I did not see one blow administered with violence. Painful injuries are sustained only when the parrying is unskilful and blows land on the fingers of the defending fencer. In spite of the vehemence with which these duels are carried out they always remain chivalrous and sporting, and are usually concluded at a sign from one or both fencers or from the next waiting pair. The case of the ten year old youths, who obviously lost their tempers and began to flay one another, indicates that this sportsmanlike control must be learned. It lies in the character of the "Fellach", who adheres strictly to tradition. I observed the reverence with which middle-aged men greeted those of sixty. Even those who had passed the three-score mark proved to be excellent fencers when competing with others of like age, and as regards agility, elasticity, lightness of movement and rapidity of action, I could discern no difference between them and their more youthful colleagues. The secret of this permanent youthfulness is probably concealed in the daily physical labour and in the modest nourishment and manner of living. It is true that so short a sojourn and such a slight acquaintanceship with the country are scarcely adequate to qualify one for compiling a detailed report upon this form of physical exercise. I therefore present my comments with this reservation, hoping in so doing to attract those of wider experience to this field of study, and, by referring to stave fencing among the Aghans, Indians, Chinese and Japanese, to extend the field of physical culture in its non-combative but purely recreational aspect.

## Kunst und Amateurismus

Von CARL DIEM

Die olympischen Kämpfe stehen unter dem Gesetz des Amateurparagraphen, und nur, wer den Sport als Liebhaberei betreibt, kann olympische Ehren gewinnen. Doch gibt es eine Ausnahme : den olympischen Kunstwettbewerb. Hier sind alle Künstler aufgerufen; diese widmen sich ihrer Kunst allermeistens so, daß sie ihr ganzes Dasein ausfüllt. Demgemäß müssen die Künstler in der Regel aus der Ausübung ihrer Kunst auch ihren Lebensunterhalt verdienen. Sportlich gesprochen, würden es also „Professionals“ sein.

Kann man ihre Teilnahme im olympischen Wettstreit rechtfertigen ?

Ich habe solche Fragen oft in der Aussprache über die olympischen Gesetze auftauchen hören, selbst im Kreise der olympischen Führerschaft, und sie wurde oft genug verneinend beantwortet; hier klaffe eben ein logischer Fehler in den Bestimmungen!

Ich wage dies zu bestreiten. Der Unterschied liegt im Wesen beider Inhalte: dem der Kunst und dem des Sports, und ist daher berechtigt!

Bevor ich dies begründe, sei an die Entstehung der Kunstwettbewerbe erinnert. Dies geschah auf der von Coubertin am 23. Mai 1906 nach Paris einberufenen „beratenden Versammlung“. Coubertin entwickelte damals in der Eröffnungsansprache sein Programm. Sein Ziel war, die Werte, die der Sport aus der Kunst ziehen könnte, für diesen zu gewinnen, den Sport durch die Kunst zu veredeln (pour en bénéficier et les Sports ennoblir). Er wollte erreichen, daß die Künstler selbst Sport treiben und daraus die Erlebnisse für ihre Kunst ziehen sollten. Alle drei, die Athleten, die Zuschauer und die Künstler, sollten wieder „Eurythmie“, schöne Bewegung lernen. Kurz, Coubertin dachte an echte, volle Kunst, er dachte an die großen, reifen Künstler, und er versprach sich von ihrem Einfluß einen neuen Glanz für die Olympischen Spiele, für den Sport überhaupt und für das menschliche Geschlecht in der Erweckung eines neuen Sinns für die schöne Bewegung im Leben, nicht nur für das Festgehaltene der Bewegung, das schöne Stehende, das Bild, die Skulptur,



1



2



3

*Stockfechten an den Pyramiden von Giza.  
Kampfbeginn ein- und zweihändig.  
Bild 3: Täuschung durch Schlag auf den Boden.*

Aufnahmen : Carl Diem



4



5



6



7



8



9

*Stockfechten an den Pyramiden von Giza.*

*Bild 7—9 beidhändige Abwehr.*

*Bild 9: Zehnjährige Knaben.*

Aufnahmen: Carl Diem