

# Olympic medals

We are continuing here our study on the Olympic Medals through the Games. Today we are talking about the Games of the VIIIth and IXth Olympiad. Our readers will find information about the period 1896-1910 in the "Olympic Review", nos. 29, 34 and 52.

1924: PARIS



Delays and difficulties at the time - we are only in the year 1923 - meant that the international competition, envisaged by the IOC to chose a medal which would have become the award for the future Olympic winners, could not be organised. It had been decided that only the commemorative medal would be left to the choice of the Organising National Committees and this would be changed every four years.

The French Olympic Committee organised a small competition in which some young French artists took part. When reading the Official Report of these Games, we realise the disillusion felt by the members of the jury, when they knew the projects: *"One can easily understand how difficult it is for an artist to set aside the influence of a school to reproduce directly the impressions of life."* The exhibits were done conscientiously but were clearly inspired by reminiscences of Antiquity. The most original medal, by Mr. RIVAUD was accepted. One side shows different sports equipment, such as balls, skis, oars, above the words *"VIII Olympiad, Paris 1924"* and the reverse side has an engraving of two athletes. It was struck by the Paris Mint and awarded to 912 winners.



Raoul BERNARD, who had already engraved the medal for the competitions of Chamonix, which were to become officially the first Winter Games one year later, was the artist of the commemorative medal, representing on one side the God of Victory awarding the winning athlete and a panoramic view of Paris and the Seine on the reverse side. 9,500 copies were distributed to the officials and certain athletes.



Bernard NAUDIN was the author of the diploma, especially created for these Games. The artist hesitated a few months before accepting this honour. In fact, he was openly told that his diploma would be published by the printer quoting the lowest price and he was afraid that this concern for economy would hamper the perfect reproduction of his model. 10,700 examples of this diploma, signed by Count de CLARY, President of the French Olympic Committee and by Baron Pierre de COUBERTIN, were issued, each bearing the name of the winner in question.



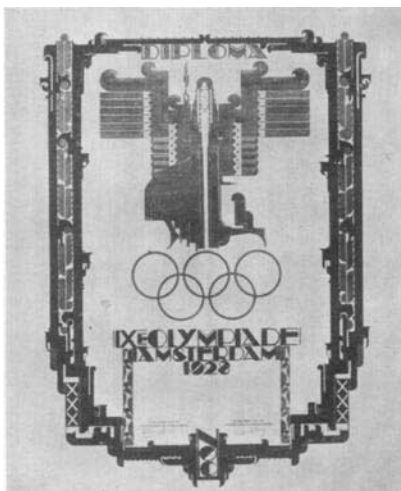
The competition, discussed by the IOC, during its meeting of 6th June, 1921 in Lausanne, which could not be organised during the VIIIth Olympiad, made possible the choice of an Italian artist's work, Professor Guiseppe CASSIOLI, as a new and, it was believed, definite medal for the winner of the Olympic events and it was thought that it would no longer be necessary to have a competition for each Olympiad. Victory, Fraternity and Universality seem to be the symbols on the front as well as on the reverse side.

This winner's medal was struck by the Mint of the Netherlands State in Utrecht. It was designed for the winners of both the sports and art competitions; 254 silver gilt first prizes, 258 silver second prizes and 259 bronze third prizes were awarded. The difference in numbers is due to the fact that some first and second prizes were not awarded for the Art Competition.



The commemorative medal, given to all participants and officials, was conceived and realised by a well-known engraver of this time, a Dutchman, J.C. WIENECKE. His design was adopted after some amendments by the Organising Committee. The front side represents two athletes, a man and a woman, carrying a torch, while, on the reverse side, the stadium of Amsterdam is engraved.

Minted in bronze by Gerritsen and Van Kempen and co., 5,139 medals were distributed to those participants and officials, who had the right to receive it, according to the instructions of the IOC, and 762 others were given to some individuals as a token of gratitude for services rendered.



The diploma, printed after a sketch by the Dutch artist, C.J. van der HOEF, and realised in black and gold, was sent to 1,842 winners and officials of the Games of the IXth Olympiad.

