

# FROM THE TEMPLE OF INDUSTRY TO OLYMPIC ARENA THE EXHIBITION TRADITION OF THE OLYMPIC GAMES



by Walter Borgers

## 1. Introduction

World's fairs or Universal Exhibitions have influenced the evolution of international sports from their start in 1851. Within the half-century to 1900 the contests of the products of the industry of all nations were transformed into a new form of event that was disputed in the Olympic arenas. As Dietrich R. QUANZ has pointed out in collaboration with the author,<sup>1</sup> the early history of and the development leading to the modern Olympic Games have been closely connected with the rise of 19th century world's fairs and expositions. [By the same token the early predecessors of the Olympic Games on a national level also reveal connections between national exhibitions and athletic contests developing simultaneously.] With the Olympic Games the world's fairs of the 19th century share the notion of a renaissance of an ancient Greek festival and are seen as re-enactments of the Panhellenic festivals of ancient Greece. ANDREE has pointed out in 1867 "thus also in Greece during the Games in Olympia many merchants appeared to gather for a trade fair that was said to be founded by Iphitos; and also with the Isthmian Games near Corinth an annual fair was connected where merchants and clients from Ionia, Sicily, Libya, all of Greece and from the Black Sea gathered."<sup>2</sup>

In this interpretation the Olympic truce of antiquity is brought almost up to date. In 1900 "a truce of the exhibition" was declared.

[Resorting to the close connection of athletic festivals and trade fairs in Classical Antiquity and to the concept of the "Olympic truce"<sup>3</sup> alongside safe conduct to and from such markets, the epithet "Olympic Games" in metaphoric use in the 19th century described

the universal exhibitions as modern revivals of the athletic festivals of Greek antiquity.] International world's fairs for all nations such as in London in 1851, in Paris in 1867 and in 1889 felt obligated to a universality that wanted to demonstrate the unity of mankind as ALBERT, Prince CONSORT (1819-1861) of Queen VICTORIA (1819-1901) had formulated in the year 1851. Besides the display of the products and the machines that made them, the universal approach included social change and progress in "engineering and the sciences, in education and the fine arts, in social politics and in international co-operation."<sup>4</sup> International congresses, conferences, and associations joined in those optimistic mass festivals. The host cities transformed their own appearances in their architectural endeavours to meet the needs of the world's fairs which were arranged as all-encompassing works of art (Gesamtkunstwerk) to reflect the modern cultural attainments of those days.

Sport and games including gymnastics had been systematically represented in world's fairs since 1867 when Frédéric Le PĀY (1806-1882) emphasized the display of the achievements of social reform in "objects spécialement exposés en vue d'améliorer la condition physique et à morale de la population." Competitions in sports have been part of the programmes and by-programmes since 1851.

Pierre de COUBERTIN (1863-1937) was been acquainted with Frédéric Le PĀY the eminent social reformer.<sup>5</sup> He was a member of the "Unions de la Paix Sociale" since 1883. Jules SIMON (1814-1896) was also a member. He had supported COUBERTIN in the Comité pour la Propagation des Exercices Physiques, also

<sup>1</sup> QUANZ, Dietrich R.: *From Industrial Sanctuary to Olympic Arena – and what after? Statement for the International Symposium of the IOC, Lausanne 18 – 20 March 1986.*

<sup>2</sup> ANDREE, Karl: *Geographie des Welthandels*, Bd. 1, Stuttgart 1867, p. 47.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. For the topic of Olympic truce in general: HÖER, Andreas: *Der Olympische Friede*. St. Augustin 1984.

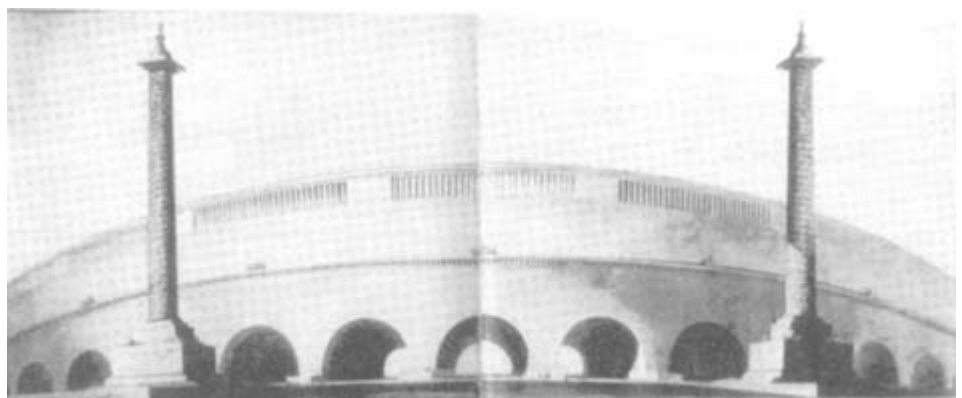
<sup>4</sup> PLUM, Werner: *Weltausstellungen im 19. Jahrhundert. Schauspiele des sozio-kulturellen Wandels*. Bonn-Bad Godesberg 1975, p. 68.

<sup>5</sup> MACALOON, John J.: *This Great Symbol. Pierre de Coubertin*. Chicago, London 1981, p. 83-93.

called "Comité Jules Simon" and presided over the Congrès International pour la Propagation des Exercices Physiques in 1889. In the footsteps of Le PLAY and SIMON Pierre de COUBERTIN began to move from national reform of physical education to international surveys that were discussed during the Congress, and were the reason for his frequent journeys to England and America. The congress was a starting point for a reformulation of his educational aims cumulating in his attempt to restore the Olympic Games in modern society. The combination of an international gymnastic festival and athletic competitions with the Paris Fair of 1889 may be seen as prototype for the linking of Olympic Games with the worlds fairs of the years 1900, 1904, and 1908.

Seen in this tradition the Olympic Games of the 20th century gradually gain independence by separating from the all-encompassing panorama of modern industry, economy and cultural achievements on display. Whereas the universal exhibitions had to give up their pretensions of an overview of world culture and industry, transformed into an agglomeration of national pavilions and gradually lost part of their importance to trade fairs and special expositions, the emerging Olympic Games made their way into the 20th century. The Olympic Games of today continue exerting the former influence of the world's fairs on the environmental and architectural transformation of their host cities, and at the same time reach the whole world via intercontinental and satellite television programmes. As in the universal exhibitions the representation of the unity of mankind, the internationalism, is achieved on the basis of national

**fig. 2:**  
**Plan for a Colosseum**  
**(National Stadium),**  
**1780-1790, in: WYSS,**  
**B. (ed.): Etienne Louis**  
**Boullé. Architektur,**  
**Abhandlungen über**  
**die Kunst, Züch,**  
**München 1987, p. 230.**



representation, though individuals and teams are the actual competitors.

COUBERTIN'S achievement is to have guided this transformation to an all-encompassing work of art in the field of sport and to a mass festival by simultaneously linking it to and separating it from many constitutive elements of the world's fairs. On the basis of his ideas the connotations of the Olympic metaphor, "athleticism", seen as individual and national effort, internationalism, seen as civilized and peaceful concurrence, and of truce were transformed into the framework of the only true international festival that has survived the 20th century: The Olympic Games.

## 2. Forerunners - National Festivals and National Exhibitions

Jean Jacques ROUSSEAU (1712-1788) recommended the implementation of national festivals to the Polish government in 1772 in his *Considérations sur le gouvernement de Pologne*.<sup>6</sup> He mentions games that unified the citizens in ancient Greece and emphasizes the public character and their value for national education. In revolutionary France this suggestion was followed for the first time. In a utopian architectural project Etienne Louis BOULÉ (1728-1799), who belonged to the first generation of modernism in architecture, designed a national stadium that encompassed both aspects of the development discussed in this article: physical activities in public contests and the exhibition of works of art and industry. In addition his plan can be interpreted as a step to a kind of Gesamtkunstwerk. The Colosseum designed as a national stadium for festivals and

<sup>6</sup> ROUSSEAU, Jean Jacques: 'Betrachtungen über die Verfassung Polens,' in: *Die Krisis der Kultur. Ausgewählte Werke*. Stuttgart 1956, p.292-299.

contests was planned to be situated at the end of the Champs Elysées (Etoile). National education for his compatriots and admiration abroad were the aims of BOULÉ'S plan.

*"The plan for a stadium that I am presenting here, was designed with respect to political and moral aims [...]. What could be more charming as the aspect of this magnificent arena, filled with a brilliant youth that is struggling to excel in all kinds of athletic activity, for example showing all its agility in running matches and prove its ability to protect their nation in military exercises. In this arena [...] the prizes of the different academies could be distributed. Authors who have excelled with good works could be crowned. The hard working farmer would receive his due reward for his work and virtue there under public applause. This would be the place to present painting and the designs of monuments to be built to the public."*<sup>7</sup>

BOULÉ'S utopian architectural fantasies, though inspired by antique models include a vision of modern mass society, for example, when he plans a stadium for 300000 spectators.

However his plans have been interpreted as predecessors of the monumental (megalomaniac) architecture of the Third Reich and the Soviet Union under STALIN. On the other hand it seems that within the Paris exhibitions from 1867 to 1889 his ideas, though possibly unknown,<sup>8</sup> were secret models of the huge Galleries and the Tour Eiffel though these buildings relied on iron and steel and not on bricks and stone. *"An optimism that takes the utopian for the attainable"*<sup>9</sup> can be stated in both, and the republican revival of 1889 is

connected with humanitarian and social approaches that have their models in the revolutionary years. Like BOULÉ the architect Claude Nicolas LEDOUX (1736–1806) with his plans for an ideal city is a precursor of the world's fairs in respect to his utopian project to harmonize work and leisure, an approach that shows the same moral and humanitarian tendencies that led the dominant figures behind the international exhibitions.

It would be useful to discover if Pierre de COUBERTIN was aware of BOULÉ'S project, when he laid down his ideas for the revival of the Olympic Games that were also to include art contests in the fields of literature, painting, sculpture, architecture and music one hundred years later. The Advisory Conference COUBERTIN gathered in Paris 1906 with the aim to re-unite mind and muscle and to find out, *"to what extent and in what form the arts and literature can participate in the celebration of the modern Olympiads."*<sup>10</sup>

The Champs de Mars was the site of the early French national festivals and national exhibitions and horse races, tournaments, running and wrestling contests were held in conjunction with these events. In 1792 Gilbert ROMME, who had urged the implementation of the republican calendar had suggested French Olympiads to the Convention *"similar to those of the Greeks"*. Corresponding demands are reported from DANTON (1759-1794) and others.<sup>11</sup> As a revolutionary item the national exhibition of 1798 displayed the new metric measures that were to be introduced with the beginning of the new century and at the end the jury distributed 12 gold medals.<sup>12</sup> Within the exhibition ground, sports contests as

<sup>7</sup> BOULÉ, Etienne-Louis, *Plan for a stadium, Colosseum, prior to 1793*; cf. WYSS, Beat (Ed.). *Etienne Louis Boullée. Architektur, Abhandlungen über die Kunst*. Zürich, München 1987, p. 230.

<sup>8</sup> The re-discovery of Boullée's drawings and text is dated to 1933, cf. VOGT, Max Adolf: "Einführung"; in: WYSS, Beat (Ed.), loc. cit., p. 12.

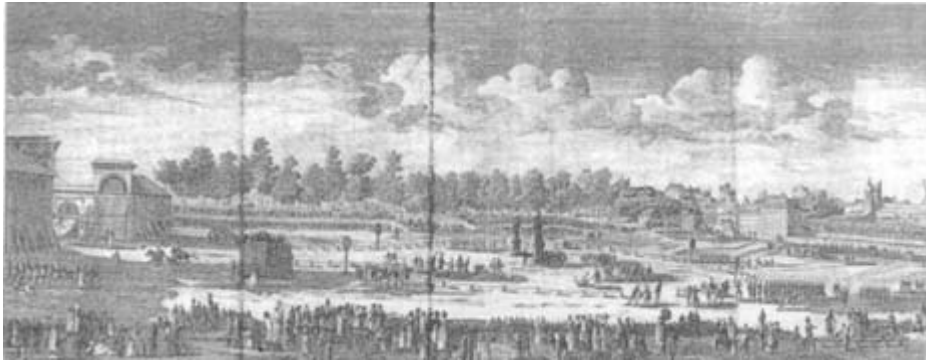
<sup>9</sup> ROSENAU, Helen: "Boullée und Ledoux in ihrer Bedeutung für die Gegenwart." In: *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* Nr. 189, 11.7.1964, Literatur- und Kunstbeilage, p. 20.

<sup>10</sup> Invitation to the Advisory Conference, Avril 1906, MÜLLER, Norbert (Ed.): *Pierre de Coubertin. Selected Writings*, Lausanne 2000, p. 609.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. SCHANTZ, Otto: "Nationale Olympische Spiele außerhalb Griechenlands. Frankreich". In: DECKER, Wolfgang/DOLIANITIS, Georgios/LENNARTZ, Karl (Ed.): *100 Jahre Olympische Spiele, der neugriechische Ursprung*. Würzburg: Ergon 1996, p. 69

<sup>12</sup> KRAEMER, Hans: *Das XIX. Jahrhundert in Wort und Bild*, Bd. 2, Berlin, Leipzig, Stuttgart, Wien 1899/1900, p. 134.

running, wrestling and horse! racing took place. A German etching published by the Industrie-Comptoir at Leipzig shows *the wrestling matches on Vendemiaire 1*, in the year VII (1798).<sup>13</sup>



**fig. 3: "Olympic Games" on the Champ de Mars in 1798, copper plate, published by the Industrie-Comptoir, Leipzig (collection of the author).**

The national festivals were combinations of processions, exhibitions of agricultural and industrial products and sports contests. One can presume that with the centenary of 1889 and its often retrospective exhibitions the knowledge of the early traditions of the revolutionary years was regained. For Pierre de COUBERTIN these early reminiscences of ancient Olympia on a national level were part of the surviving idea of the Olympic Games and he mentioned them in his writings.<sup>14</sup> Public contests, sometimes named "Olympic" were a constitutional element of the many new national festivals spreading over Europe in the footsteps of the French example.

In the German Countries public gymnastic games had been recommended by the hygienic pioneer Johann Peter FRANK (1745-1821) as early as 1783: "*In the light of the public and under the open sky*"<sup>15</sup> those festivals should take place. In Munich, Dessau, Canstatt, Doberan (Mecklenburg) and other places the regional sovereigns

adopted and adapted the republican custom, often under English or French influence. In Munich the *Oktober-fest* developed from a horse race on the occasion of the wedding of Crown Prince LUDWIG, later King LUDWIG I.

(1786-1868) with THERESE of SACHSEN-HILDBURGHAUSEN. The decision to repeat the festival the following year was the beginning of a large-scale event including agricultural presentations and prize contests, athletic contests and horse races as well as

public amusements that today are the main attraction.<sup>16</sup>

Inspired by ancient Greek models the local sovereign Fürst Leopold Friedrich FRANZ von ANHALT-DESSAU (1740-1817) who is known for his reformatory concepts of (garden) architecture and philanthropist education founded the Drehberg-Festivals in 1776 commemorating the birthday of his wife on September 24th. The programme consisted of horse races, running matches for boys and girls, shooting and dances connected with an agricultural show. Johann Christoph Friedrich GUTSMUTHS (1759-1839) mentions these festivals as "revived Olympic Games" in his book *Gymnastik für die Jugend* (Gymnastics for youth),<sup>17</sup> the most influential European title on physical education in the decades after the French Revolution published in 1793.<sup>18</sup> The system of philanthropist gymnastics, based partly on ancient Greek models like the Pentathlon, included the socially levelling methods of measuring and

<sup>13</sup> Collection of the author.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. de COUBERTIN, Pierre: "The Modern Olympic Games", in: *The Olympic Games in 1896. Official Report, part 2*, Athens, London 1897, p.4.

<sup>15</sup> FRANK, Johann Peter: *Medizinische Polizey*, Mannheim 1779-1788, p. ?

<sup>16</sup> DERING, Florian u.a.: *Das Oktoberfest. Einhundertundfünfzig Jahre Bayerischer National-Rausch. Katalog Münchener Stadtmuseum* 1985.

<sup>17</sup> GUTSMUTHS, Johann Christoph Friedrich: *Gymnastik für die Jugend*. Schnepfenthal 1793, p. 160

<sup>18</sup> BORGERS, Walter: *Johann Heinrich Lips und die Illustrationen zu GutsMuths Gymnastik für die Jugend*. In: GERMANN, Rolf/LÄMMER, Manfred (Ed.): *Beiträge und Bibliographie zur GutsMuths-Forschung*. Sankt Augustin 1998, p. 101-116, 247-256.

competition and a system of written records. inspired by the belief in the perfectability of man and in progress, typical for the age of enlightenment, the utilitarian approach of GUTSMUTHS Gymnastik wanted to create a citizen who was capable of using his mind and body. Behind this concept was the utopian motif of a new civil society.

The long and widespread tradition of national "Olympic Games" from 17th to 20th century, such as Robert DOVER'S (1582-1652) Cotswolds Olympick Games or the Olympian Games of William Penny BROOKES (1809-1895) in Much Wenlock, Shropshire, can only be mentioned here.<sup>19</sup> The same applies for the Greek Olympic revivals promoted by Evangelis ZAPPAS (1800-1865) that were planned as national exhibitions combined with athletic events and took place in 1859, 1870, 1875 and 1888/89.<sup>20</sup>

### 3. The Metaphoric Revival of the Olympic Games

After their prohibition by THEODOSIUS I. (393 A.D.) knowledge about ancient Olympia and the Olympic Games was handed down in written documents and this knowledge was broadened after the first English, French and German visitors had started to search the land of the Greeks not only by means of their mind and heart but by first hand viewing in the 18th century.<sup>21</sup> In the 19th century the excavations of Olympia brought to light not only the ruins of temples and buildings but also a more detailed knowledge of the Olympic Games in

antiquity. For example visions of the Greek polis and also of Olympia inspired the leading German architect of the first half of the 19th century, Karl Friedrich SCHINKEL (1781-1841), to his famous painting titled *Vision of Greece in its Prime (Blick in Griechenlands Blüte)*. The large picture was created by SCHINKEL in 1825 for the Magistrate of Berlin and was intended as a gift to Princess LUISE of PRUSSIA on occasion of her betrothal.<sup>22</sup> It is SCHINKEL'S major work [in the field of easel-painting]. The panoramic vision of a Greek polis gives an instructive lesson and an idealistic view at the same time. In SCHINKEL'S own words the essence of the painting is condensed: "*Here one can live in the picture with this people and can study it in all its pure human and political circumstances.*"<sup>23</sup> The painter borrowed motives from antique sources as PAUSANIAS and the engravings of STUART and REVETTS *Antiquities of Athens* (1787) and others and composed a utopian vision of Hellas. The aesthetic key to the painting, however, is, that its foreground is dominated by a huge building site of a temple showing in detail the work in progress. SCHINKEL'S message is: Build up a society that follows the principles of democracy, freedom and peace, which successfully integrates nature and culture. In his time, the as yet non-existent German nation and the rebirth of the Greek nation were the themes he had in mind. In SCHINKEL'S words, "[...] *acting historically is that which introduces the new and by means of which history is continued.*"<sup>24</sup> Though this *Universal Man*<sup>25</sup> never set a foot on Greek soil,

<sup>19</sup> Cf. RÜL, Jochen K.: Nationale Olympische Spiele außerhalb Griechenlands. England." In: DECKER, Wolfgang/DOLIANITIS, Georgios/LENNARTZ, Karl (Ed.): *100 Jahre Olympische Spiele, der neugriechische Ursprung*. Würzburg 1996, p.61-68.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. DECKER, Wolfgang: "Die Olympien des Evangelis Zappas". in: DECKER, Wolfgang/DOLIANITIS, Georgios/LENNARTZ, Karl (Ed.): *100 Jahre Olympische Spiele, der neugriechische Ursprung*. Würzburg 1996, p. 41-59.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. LENNARTZ, Karl: *Kenntnisse und Vorstellungen von Olympia und den Olympischen Spielen in der Zeit von 393-1896. Theorie der Leibeserziehung* Bd. 9, Schorndorf 1974.

<sup>22</sup> The original painting was destroyed in 1945, a copy by Wilhelm AHLBORN (1836) has survived. Cf. VOGT, Max Adolf: *Karl Friedrich Schinkel –Blick in Griechenlands Blüte. Ein Hoffnungsbild für Spree-Athen'* Frankfurt/M. 1985.

<sup>23</sup> RAVE, Paul Ortwin: *Karl Friedrich Schinkel: Blick in Griechenlands Blüte*. Berlin 1946, p. 18.

<sup>24</sup> K. F. SCHINKEL, in: BÖSCH-SUPAN, Helmut/GRISEBACH, Lucius: *Karl Friedrich Schinkel - Architektur, Malerei, Kunstgewerbe. Ausstellung der Staatlichen Schlösser und Gärten und Nationalgalerie Berlin, Staatliche Museen Preußischer Kulturbesitz*, Berlin 1981, p. 102.

<sup>25</sup> SNODIN, Michael: *Karl Friedrich Schinkel. A Universal Man, published to coincide with the exhibition Karl Friedrich Schinkel: A Universal Man, held at the Victoria and Albert Museum*. New Haven, London 1991, p. 207.

SCHINKELS aesthetic vision was an attempt to use the ancient Greek model for a reform of his own time and nation. This connects it with the great number of metaphoric representations of the Greek Olympic model that can be found within the solemn words spoken during international exhibitions or in their descriptions. Some examples may illustrate this fact:

**1851:** *"This Olympic game of industry, this tournament of commerce."<sup>26</sup>*

*"The tribes of the Greeks gathered at Delphi, Olympia and on the Isthmos to gain the victor's crown, not only in every exercise of their body but also in arts and science.*

*All nations are struggling (today) for the honour of victory and choose from their midst an Areopagus distributing the prizes, prizes that do not promise treasures to the winner, but a futile copper medal."*<sup>27</sup>

**1867:** *"The poets of antiquity praised the solemn games where the different nations of Greece concurred for the prize of the running match. What would they say today, when they participated in these Olympic Games of the whole world, where all nations in the struggle of intelligence hasten towards an ideal on the track of progress side by side, an ideal that they approach perpetually without being able to reach it."*<sup>28</sup>

**1878:** *"What the Olympic Games were to all the tribes of the Greeks, that are in the spirit of modern times the universal exhibitions to all tribes, all nations of the civilized world."*<sup>29</sup>

Just as the Ancient Greeks had a hellenocentric interpretation of the world in ancient Greece the Europeans and Americans of the 19th century also tended to see themselves in the centre of the world. Their

modern exhibition-Olympias were full of ritual and pseudo-religious elements and they worshipped their modern gods: progress and liberty. The exhibitions also included a revival of the antique agonistic principle in modern capitalist societies, competition within the boundaries of defined classes of contests observed by an independent jury. In its formative years the Olympic Games of the modern era borrowed from both, the antique Olympic festival and its modern industrial heirs.

#### 4. The Exhibition Tradition of International Sports Events

The international character of sport is manifested in rules and norms respected around the world is documented in international contests and in the all-sports-event of the Olympic Games. At its genesis parallels may be drawn with the developments of international congresses in science, technology, trade as well as international conventions in the field of communication, patents and copy rights and last but not least the international peace movement. Many of these efforts have their origin or their first appearance on an international level within the programmes of the international exhibitions.

From 1851 onwards the national boundaries were transgressed by some sports during international exhibitions and from 1889 to the Franco-British Exhibition of 1908 world's fairs are an important financial and organizational background of the developing Olympic Games.

Some examples may illustrate this growing importance of sport on the exhibition ground in the second half of the 19th century:

##### 1851

The most prominent event in the sporting season of the exhibition year 1851 was an

<sup>26</sup> *The Spectator*, 24, May 3, 1851, p. 419.

<sup>27</sup> SARTORIUS, G.: *Die Industrie-Ausstellung in London*. Darmstadt: C. Schäfer 1851, p. 1,2.

<sup>28</sup> These words were spoken by Emperor NAPOLÉON III on the occasion of the distribution of prizes of the Paris exhibition on July 1st, 1867. *Illustrierter Katalog der Pariser Industrie-Ausstellung von 1867*, Leipzig (F. A. Brockhaus) 1868, p. 346.

<sup>29</sup> C.A.R.: "Der Orient auf der Weltausstellung". In: *Die Pariser Welt-Ausstellung. Illustrierte, von der Commission autorisierte deutsche Ausgabe*, Nr. 2, 1878, p. 9.

international sailing regatta at Cowes. The challenge for the race was the so-called 100 Guinea Cup which was bought from the stock of the London silversmith Robert GARRARD (1793-1881) in 1848 by the Marquess of ANGLESEY and presented to the Royal Yacht Squadron as a racing trophy. In a race open to all nations this prize was disputed on August 22nd under the eyes of Queen VICTORIA and Prince ALBERT. To



fig. 4: Poster for the Regatta at Cowes 1851, in: <http://www.americascup.yahoo.com/story226.html>



fig. 5: Southern entrance of the Crystal Palace 1851, in: *The Art Journal. Illustrated Catalogue. The Industry of All Nations, London 1851*, p. XVI.

the great consternation of the British, the New York schooner America won the race. The New York Yacht Club offered the Cup as a permanent challenge and today the most important yachting event is still the America's Cup. This defeat was a severe blow to *Britannia ruling the waves*.<sup>30</sup> As "the beginning of significant international sporting competitions"<sup>31</sup> the yachting regatta within the Exhibition of the Industry of all Nations marks the beginning of a new era in sport.

### 1867

The universal exposition of 1867 that was remembered in later years for its peaceful and warm atmosphere, its "relative freedom from political overtones,"<sup>32</sup> was a diplomatic success for NAPOLÉON III, who could welcome sovereigns from many countries, among them WILHELM I of Prussia (1797-1888) and ALEXANDER II of Russia (1818-1881). The exhibition was mainly the work of the social reformer Frédéric LE PLAY, who designed the classification system according to an encyclopedic concept. The architecture was arranged to house the grid system that

allowed national exhibitions in radial direction and systematic exhibitions following the rings. As a whole it resembled a stadium and also recalled the *ideal city* of LEDOUX. A park of more than 200 national pavillions, restaurants, churches, mosques, colonial exhibits surrounded the central exhibition building that consisted of seven rings with native inhabitants and a variety of amusements. The systematic centre of the exhibition had in its nucleus a display of the national measuring systems of the world. Its designer LE PLAY has described his exhibition as "a real city of its own" with an infrastructure of nutrition, communication, leisure and even hygienic and medical services.<sup>33</sup> As in the *ideal city* of LEDOUX, the centre was dedicated to work, the outer parts to leisure. Human work was a central theme of the exhibition, a special department Histoire du Travail was installed, delegations of workers had free lodging. Out of the visiting French delegates a first parliament of workers was established. As Yves Pierre BOULOGNE has pointed out, LE PLAY, who had already been commissioner

<sup>30</sup> Cf. OLIVER, John W.: *Geschichte der amerikanischen Technik*. Düsseldorf 1959, p. 268.; [www.Americascupjubilee.com/history](http://www.Americascupjubilee.com/history).

<sup>31</sup> LUCAS, John: "The Influence of Anglo-American Sport on Pierre de Coubertin – Modern Olympic Games Founder". In: GRAHAM, Peter J./UEBERHORST, Horst: *The Modern Olympics*. Cornwall (N.Y.), n.d., p.23.

<sup>32</sup> MANDELL, Richard: *Paris 1900. The Great World's Fair*. Toronto 1967, p. 12.

<sup>33</sup> LE PLAY, Frédéric: *Commission Impériale. Rapport sur l'Exposition Universelle de 1867 à Paris. Précis des opérations et listes des collaborateurs*. Paris 1869, p. 164.



fig. 6: General view of the Paris exhibition of 1867, the exhibition building designed by Frédéric LE PLAY, in: *Le Livre des Expositions Universelle 1857-1989*, Paris (Union Centrale des Arts Décoratifs) 1983, p. 220.

fig. 7: German rowers from the *Hamburg and Germania Rowing Club* at the first international competition in Paris 1867, in: DIEMKE, E./SCHREYER, D. (ed): *150 Jahre Rudern in Deutschland. Der Hamburger und Germania Ruderclub 1836-1986*, Hamburg 1986, p. 63.

general of the universal exhibition in 1855, was “in social matters the master of Coubertin’s thinking” who had a “capital, determining and constant influence”<sup>34</sup> on him. Through LE PLAY the Olympic founder is connected to the roots of Saint-Simonism and its belief “that moral progress constitutes the natural result of economic progress.”<sup>35</sup> Many of the great financial and industrial projects and especially the exhibitions of the Second Empire were inspired by followers of Claude Henri de Rouvroy Comte de SAINT-SIMON (1760-1825) and the first French Exposition Universelle in Paris 1855 has been interpreted as “apotheosis of Saint-Simonism”<sup>36</sup>. In 1856 LE PLAY had founded the *Société d’économie sociale* that was joined by COUBERTIN in 1886; also the *Unions de la paix sociale*, founded in 1872, “a kind of propaganda arm of the société”<sup>37</sup> had him on its member’s list. Later the IOC was based on similar principles as those of the *Unions de la paix sociale*.

For the first time in the history of the exhibitions physical exercise and education had systematic place in an exhibition in 1867. The above mentioned Group X, for example



contained the Saxonian model of an academy of physical education (Turnlehrerbildungsanstalt).<sup>38</sup> A gymnastic apparatus and works section was included in the reports.<sup>39</sup> A German rowing team from the *Hamburger and Germania Rowing Club* had its first

<sup>34</sup> BOULOGNE, Yves Pierre: *La vie et l’œuvre pédagogique de Pierre de Coubertin*. Ottawa 1975, p. 96.

<sup>35</sup> *Grande Larousse encyclopédique*, Vol. 9, p. 538.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. this expression by DOLLÉNS in: *Grande Larousse encyclopédique*, Vol. 9, p. 538.

<sup>37</sup> MAC ALOON, John J.: *This Great Symbol. Pierre de Coubertin 1863-1937*. Chicago, London 1981, p. 86.

<sup>38</sup> Paris, Ausstellung 1867. *Amtlicher Spezialkatalog der Ausstellung Preußens und der Norddeutschen Staaten. Berlin 1867*, 2nd ed., p. 287

<sup>39</sup> DEMARQUAY, Jean-Nicolas: *Appareils et ouvrages de gymnastique. Exposition Universelle de 1867 à Paris. Rapports du jury international publiés sous la direction M. Michel Demarquay*. Paris 1867.

international race in Paris in 1867. American, Dutch, English, Belgian, French and German teams started in the regattas from July 8th to 12th.<sup>40</sup> Ernest and Pierre MICHAUX, whose vélocipède was patented in 1862, showed their bicycles on the exhibition and from there “the triumph of the bicycle throughout the world”<sup>41</sup> began.

In an interesting approach Richard MANDELL has compared the role of LE PLAY the “impresario of the Paris Universal Exhibition of 1867” with the leading figures behind the design concept of the Munich Olympic Games of 1972, Otl AICHER (1922-1991) and Willi DAUME (1913-1996) and their “belief that good design inspires good living.”<sup>42</sup>

### 1889

In 1889 Pierre de COUBERTIN, became acquainted with civilized nationalism and true internationalism on the grounds of the Paris exhibitions. These notions were to become the ingredients of his idea after 1889.

*“Though I grew up in the shadow of Sedan, I never felt as a subdued. The awakening of 1878 enlightened me and the magnificent turn of 1889 made me free, so that I got an idea of national capabilities and that I believed in a future different from the past but in no way of less dignity.”<sup>43</sup>*

The international exhibition of 1889 was in many respects a republican festival of the centenary of the French Revolution. It seems to be the turning point in COUBERTIN’S efforts to “rebronze France.” Siegfried GIEDION has described it as a “culminating and final point of a long development.”<sup>44</sup> The Eiffel-Tower and the *Palais des Machines* with its rolling bridge (pont roulant) that enabled the visitors to watch the many of the machines in action from an elevated position were striking

experiences. For the last time industry itself caused admiration by its sheer presence. With the Eiffel-Tower the peak seemed to have been reached and the creative potential of the exhibitions exhausted. The decline of these dominating events began. It is an interesting fact that the idea of international Olympic Games starts its most successful way through the following century just in the moment when the idea of international exhibitions, the visualisation of the industry of all nations was no longer suitable as a basic concept because of the simple reason that industry had become omnipresent and self-evident.<sup>45</sup> The crisis of the international exhibitions was discussed in the decade of the Paris exhibition in many respects. In 1886 F. C. HUBER compared the value of races for horse-breeding with that of exhibitions for the branches of industry.<sup>46</sup> He describes the transformation of the exhibitions from a “promoter of industry” to “a show event for the masses” of the rapidly growing cities.” “For the big cities it has straight ways become a kind of sports or visitor industry [...]”<sup>47</sup> Beginning with the display of the industry of all nations (1851) and a statistics of universal culture on the basis of products the exhibitions after 1867 (Paris) and 1873 (Vienna) include the display of ideas by the means of congresses and new groups that allow the presentation of results of national and international statistics and surveys. Whereas “industry” meant progress in the start, now social reform and education, the establishment of international peace and collaboration became the timely topics. The high costs of the exhibitions however tended to produce entertainment rather than instruction. The Janus-headed character of the exhibitions between “circenses” and

<sup>40</sup> WETZEL, Hermann: “Regatta in Paris 1867”. In: DIEMKE, Erik/SCHREYER, Dirk (Ed.): *150 Jahre Rudern in Deutschland. Der Hamburger und Germania Ruderklub 1836-1986*. Hamburg 1986, p. 61-63.

<sup>41</sup> LÖDERS, Otto: *Der Radfahrersport*. Berlin, n.d., p. 15.

<sup>42</sup> MANDELL, Richard: *The Olympic of 1972, a Munich Diary*. Chapel Hill and London 1991, p. 152.

<sup>43</sup> COUBERTIN, Pierre de: *Olympische Erinnerungen*.

<sup>44</sup> GIEDION, Siegfried: *Raum, Zeit, Architektur. Die Entstehung einer neuen Tradition*. Ravensburg 1965, p. 191. (1st ed. Cambridge 1941).

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., p. 192-194.

<sup>46</sup> HUBER, C.F.: *Die Ausstellungen und unsere Exportindustrie*. Stuttgart 1886, p. 6.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., p. 16.

“monstra”<sup>48</sup>, between entertainment and festival on the one hand and instruction, education and moral progress on the other hand led to huge amusement parks and curiosity shows and surrounding programmes to a kind of pop-culture and entertainment-industry.

Thorsten LORENZ has described this phenomenon in the field of music<sup>49</sup> Jacques OFFENBACHS (1819-1880) *Bouffes Parisiens* was one of the big attractions of the exhibition of 1867. The couplet of his opera buffo (comic opera) “Die Großherzogin von Gerolstein” was the hit of the season, Hortense SCHNEIDER, who sang the *Grande-Duchesse*, was the absolute star of the exhibition.<sup>50</sup> The composer himself with his “Can-Cans” and Johann STRAUß (1825-1899) and his waltzes were the dominating figures in the field of music. As it seems *infotainment and edutainment*, the novelties of the marketing experts in recent years, have had their early models.

In some respect sports events also belonged to these popular attractions of the world’s fairs and the upcoming Olympic Games had to struggle against a circensian image that tended to overshadow the educational aims and the nobility of the peaceful competition of the youth of the world, seen as a *ver sacrum* that would lead to a better international understanding.

### 1889: From LExposition athlétique to Olympic Athletes

“LExposition Athlétique” is the title of an article published by Pierre de COUBERTIN,



fig. 8: Reconstruction of the Altis of Olympia by Victor LALOUX, Ecole Nationale de Beaux Arts, Paris LEVEQUE, P.: *La Naissance de la Grèce*, Paris 1990, p. 118-119.

dated May 6th 1890, exactly one year after the opening of the exhibition. The article recalls the triumphal moment of the opening in an unusual emotional style and he describes how he assisted his friend Charles HAVILAND<sup>51</sup> (\*1893) in unpacking the porcelains of this famous company and disposing them on the four sides of the kiosque *Maison Haviland et Compagnie de Limoges* in the last moment before the arrival of the President of the Republic in the gallery. The Eiffel Tower in the evening, when for the first time it was illuminated by its crown of light, seems to him “*an appearance of supernatural construction*” and he remembers that the “Marseillaise” “*had lost all its bellicose character, it was an anthem of joy, an ode of peace.*” The atmosphere of Paris in those days reminds him of “*that grand vicinity; the unanimous admiration created a type of union, of brotherhood that nations only know on the day after a great victory or when an irresistible stream of enthusiasm seizes them.*”<sup>52</sup> The moment of athleticism COUBERTIN discovers in the exhibition is identified. in the enterprise of the exhibition

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., p. 296.

<sup>49</sup> LORENZ, Thorsten: *Klang-Welten, eine musikalische Reise durch die Weltausstellungen im 19. Jahrhundert. Söwestfunk Baden-Baden*. Sendedatum 13. bis 17.8.1990. Sendemanuskript.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., p. 6.

<sup>51</sup> COUBERTIN, Pierre de: “LExposition Athlétique” In: *Revue Athlétique*, May 25, 1890, p. 259-264. The company Haviland & Cie was founded in 1842 by the American David HAVILAND. His son Charles is a prominent figure in the history of French art pottery, who founded a famous atelier in Auteuil in 1873.

itself and in the immeasurable individual efforts that led to its success:

*“Never an enterprise has represented a similar sum of work, a similar ensemble of efforts.”*

*“The athlete only gets strong and agile by regular and persevering training in which each of his members takes part; in the same way only daily uninterrupted work of each citizen can make a nation athletic.”*<sup>53</sup>

This description of the great exhibition of 1889, not only marks a turning point in the history of exhibitions but also in COUBERTIN'S educational strategies, but seems to be the unveiling of a key experience of the founder of the modern Olympic Games. It contains the nucleus of the Olympic idea: persisting individual efforts, integrated in a civilized nationalism, displayed in an international festival that is controlled by an independent organization.

In June 1889 COUBERTIN was responsible for the organization of the first Congress on Physical Exercises and their Propagation at an international exhibition where results of studies carried out in the Anglo-Saxon countries were presented. The month after the congress he was sent to the United States by the Minister Armand FALLIÈRES to study the *“organization and operation of the Athletic Associations founded there by the youth of those countries.”*<sup>54</sup> Marie Thérèse EYQUEM has stated that on this journey COUBERTIN mentioned his plan to revive the Olympic Games for the first time.<sup>55</sup> The sports program of the congress included equestrian sports, fencing, athletic sports, tennis (longue paume), Swedish gymnastics

and swimming. At the end of the congress after a speech by Jules SIMON, it was Pierre de COUBERTIN who handed out the prizes, in most of the cases medals of vermeil, silver or bronze.<sup>56</sup> Besides that an international gymnastic festival was held in Vincennes on June 9th and 10th. This *Federal Festival* included foreign participants from European countries, the German Turners however had stayed at home.

Dietrich R. QUANZ has opened a new chapter of Olympic historiography in detecting the close connections between Pierre de COUBERTIN and the peace movement of the last two decades of the 19th century. The efforts of the founder of the Olympic Games to include members of this new movement into the list of patrons of the congress to revive the Olympic Games in 1894 are revealed. QUANZ points out that more than one third of the list of patrons consists of members of the peace movement, including the whole leading body of the *International Peace Bureau* and the leading *Interparliamentarians*.<sup>57</sup> The relation to the peace movement dates back to the international exhibition of 1889, when within the month of June not only the Congress of Physical Exercises but also the first International Peace Congress and the first Interparliamentarian Conference took place in Paris (June 23rd to 27th and June 29th to 30th). The exhibition of 1889 marks the formative period in the beginning of the modern peace movement.<sup>58</sup> Within the following twenty years leading to the anniversary of the IOC in 1914 six Peace Nobel-Prize were presented to people and institutions that had patronised the congress

---

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., p. 262.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., p. 263, 264.

<sup>54</sup> RIOUX, George: *Pierre de Coubertins Revelation?* In: MÜLER, Norbert (Ed.): *Pierre de Coubertin. Selected Writings*. Lausanne 2000, p.30.

<sup>55</sup> EYQUEM, Marie Thérèse: *Pierre de Coubertin. Ein Leben für die Jugend der Welt*. Dortmund 1972, p. 135. Unfortunately she does not give the reference.

<sup>56</sup> Cf. *Exposition Universelle de 1889. Congrès des Exercices Physiques Juin 1889. Compte rendu des Séances et Concours Paris 1889*, p. 98-108.

<sup>57</sup> QUANZ, Dietrich R.: *“Civic Pacifism and Sports-Based Internationalism. Framework for the Founding of the International Olympic Committee”*. In: *Olympiaka. The International Journal of Olympic Studies*. Vol. II, 1993, p. 1-23.

<sup>58</sup> Cf. FRIED, Alfred H.: *Handbuch der Friedensbewegung*. 2nd ed. 1911, p. 95.

of 1894. The close relations are also indicated by the fact that Jules SIMON, president of the congress on physical exercises and gave the closing lecture there before COUBERTIN handed out the prizes, also made the solemn opening speech at the Peace congress.

The steps of COUBERTIN on his way from “national athleticism” to “international Olympism” .

Were thoroughly investigated at the time of the IOC Centenary when the Congrès International de Paris pour le Rétablissement des Jeux Olympiques was commemorated. This included the lectures and invitation letters on the way to revive the Olympic Games from 1889 to 1894, especially his Olympic *Manifesto*<sup>59</sup> of 1892 that is traditionally seen as the first use of the term “Olympic” by COUBERTIN, The famous sentences of this lecture on the occasion of the Jubilee of the French national sport association in 1892 illustrate the shift in COUBERTIN’S ideas.

*“Let us export rowers, runners and fencers; there is the free trade of the future, and on the day when it is introduced within the walls of old Europe the cause of peace will have received a new and mighty stay.”*<sup>60</sup>

## 1900

The first modern Olympic Games had been initially planned for the Exhibition of the Century in Paris 1900, but the first games were of course staged in Athens in 1896. The Olympic Games of 1900 and the subsequent Games Of 1904 in St. Louis have been dismissed as “*farical Games*”<sup>61</sup> because the programme was dispersed over the whole period of the exhibition and because of the absence of an organizing Committee of its own. On September 2nd, 1894 the French Minister of Commerce started a program-commission for the Exposition Universelle de

1900 and in Article 14 of the respective document Pierre de COUBERTIN was named as Vice-President of the *Comité Consultatif Special Jeux Athlétiques*. 77 events were planned and 50 of them were scheduled for Vincennes, the annex of the exhibition. In the course of time COUBERTIN lost most of his influence on the event. About 1500 athletes took part however, most of them considered it an Olympic Games. Coming home many of them criticized the marginal role of the events. Though the founder of the Games was by far not content with its organization he later counted them in his Olympic calendar and Olympic historians followed him.

The greatest world’s fair ever the *Exposition du Siècle*, as it was called, with its 50,860,801 visitors, had a tremendous effect on international tourism. Its architecture was dominated by eclecticism” and most of the national pavilions were built along the *Rue des Nations*. The number 67,638 official participants at the more than 130 congresses gives an impression of the incentive effect of this meeting of world culture.<sup>63</sup> As in ancient Greece during the Olympic Games a truce (trêve de l’exposition) was announced. The New York Sabbath Committee caused the opening ceremony to be brought forward to April 14 instead of 15,<sup>64</sup> later the “Sunday issue.” Raised by the Americans caused other problems for the time-table of the athletic events.

The improvement of traffic and communication was one of the main topics of the exhibition, Métro, *trottoir roulant*, the automobile and bicycle industry, wireless telegraphy, photography and cinematography and also sports were elements indicating the developments of the coming century. The marginal role of the so-called Olympic Games during the Paris exhibition has been

<sup>59</sup> COUBERTIN’S lecture given at the Sorbonne in November 1892 was published in 1994 by Francois D’AMAT under this title. Cf. MÜLLER, Norbert (Ed.): *Pierre de Coubertin. Selected Writings*. Lausanne 2000, p.287-297.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid. p. 297.

<sup>61</sup> HOWELL, Reet/HOWELL, Maxwell L.: *The 1900 an 1904 Olympic Games: The Farical Games. Paper presented to the VI. International HISPA- Seminar, History of Sport and Comparative Physical Education*. Trois Rivières, Quebec, Canada 1976.

<sup>62</sup> Cf. MANDELL, Richard: *Paris 1900. The Great World’s Fair*. Toronto 1967, p. 70-88.

<sup>63</sup> PARSONS, Léon: “Les Congrès de l’Exposition.” In: *Revue Bleue*, Vol 37, Quatrième Série, T. XIII, Paris 1900, p.661

interpreted as dangerous to the Olympic ideal being mingled with commerce and entertainment. COUBERTIN himself has lamented the fact that the Games were “taken over by a big fair where their philosophical value vanished into the thin air” but he had to admit in respect to the relation to international exhibitions:

“Unfortunately the alliance we had concluded was more indissoluble than we thought. On two other occasions, in 1904 and 1908, for budgetary reasons, we were unable to sever our relation with exhibitions.”<sup>65</sup>

In fact the central part of Games was announced as Championnats Internationaux, Courses à pied, Concours Athlétiques for July 14th and 15th. In general the number of sports events of the exhibition 1900 and their integration into the exploitation of the world’s fair gave a realistic view on the sports movement at the turn of the century. Only in Olympic hagiography it is a deviation from the way to the summit of Olympic success. The integration of the Olympic Games into the Universal Exhibitions was a necessary step to true internationalism for a movement that was used for national demonstrations from the start. The report on the sporting events of the Paris exhibition by Daniel MÉILLON forms a small part of the general report but gives a detailed account and it was to become a model for later *Official Reports of Olympic Games*.<sup>66</sup>

## 5. Congrès International de l’ Education Physique

As one of the congresses of the *Exposition Universelle* with relations to sport and physical education the *Congress of Physical Education* took place in the *Palais des Congrès* from August 30th to September 6th

**Olympic Games 1900, long jump of the American SWEENEY, chronophotograph by Etienne Jules MAREY, in: *Exposition Universelle de 1900 à Paris: Concours Internationaux d’exercices Physiques, Rapports*, publiés sous la direction de M- D. Mé rillon, vol. 2, Paris 1901, p. 19.**

1900.<sup>67</sup> As President of the *International Olympic Committee* Pierre de COUBERTIN was one of the vice-presidents of the congress and of its organizing committee, the German IOC-member Willibald GEBHARDT (1861-1921) was one of the foreign vice-presidents. General secretary was Georges DÉMENY (1850-1917) who had for many years been the assistant of the leading French physiologist and pioneer of chronophotography, Etienne Jules MAREY (1830-1904), the President of the congress. A strong American delegation of seven representatives including three women took part in the congress. The title of the congress indicated a change from 1889 when *Propagation des Exercices Physiques* was the theme. Now as physical education had spread to different countries an inventory of its world status was tried and experts from all around the world gathered in Paris. The summary of the minutes of the congress given by Georges DÉMENY shows the extensive discussions on the fifteen questions in five sections: philosophy, applied biology, techniques, pedagogics, propaganda. At the end of the congress an international journal, an



<sup>64</sup> MANDELL, 1967, p. 69.

<sup>65</sup> COUBERTIN, Pierre de: *Olympic Memoirs*. Lausanne 1997, p. 69.

<sup>66</sup> MÉILLON, Daniel: *Concours Internationaux d’exercices physiques et de sports*. Rapports, Paris 1901.

<sup>67</sup> Congrès International de Lé ducation Physique tenu à Paris du 30 Août au 6 Septembre 1900. Procès verbaux sommaires par George Demeny. Paris 1900.

international commission and the next congress to be held at Geneva in 1903 were planned. Though not “Olympic” the Physical Education Congress of the World’s fair had a close connection to the young Olympic movement. Interesting visual aspects of the congress were the photos and sculptures of athletes presented by Tait MACKENZIE (1867-1938) showing the different aspects of effort, fatigue etc. During the Olympic track and field events the team of MAREY carried out various radiographic, anthropometric and chronophotographic investigations. MAREYS work constitutes the beginning of sport sciences within the Olympic Games.

From a German perspective it is interesting to mention that the Reichskommissar for the Paris and St. Louis exhibitions later became president of the National Olympic Committee (*Deutscher Reichsauschuß for Olympische Spiele*). Knowing both fields from his continuous work Theodor LEWALD stated:

*“As the idea of international exhibitions has proved to be not accomplishable, the Olympic Games are the only universal manifestation, where representatives of all civilized nations gather for a concurrence under the eyes of the united public of the whole world to compare their abilities.”<sup>6 8</sup>*

As already stated by COUBERTIN the integration of the Olympic Games into the international exhibitions could not be ended before the Games of the IV. Olympiad in Stockholm.

1904 they were part of the programme of the St. Louis World’s fair and COUBERTIN did not even visit them. In 1908 the Games were a success within the Franco-British Exhibition 1908, as had been expected from the homeland of modern sport. A model athlete representing the traditional British all-round

sportsman, Lord DESBOROUGH (1855-1945), headed the organizing committee. By 1912 the international sports movement had become a strong factor in public and also economic life. This is indicated by increasing numbers of national and international organisations and also sports exhibitions<sup>69</sup> as well as a dedicated press of its own.

## 6. Conclusion

At an early stage of the projects for the Exposition, du Siècle in 1900 a stadium was planned for the very site BOULÉ had intended to cover with his huge Colosseum for national festivals in the years of the French Revolution. A group of well-known sportsmen wanted to construct a covered building to house renovated gymnastic games (*“jeux gymniques”*).<sup>70</sup> Perhaps this is the *“cardbord stadium to replace that of Pericles”* that COUBERTIN mentions and that – in his opinion – fortunately was not erected.<sup>71</sup> Instead COUBERTIN’S idea of peripatetic Olympic Games found its way into stadiums around the world.

Looking back on more than two hundred years of national exhibitions developing into world’s fairs and on athletic festivals transforming into Olympic Games it seems necessary to identify the motivating background of these rituals of competition. They occur with the declaration of human rights and with the introduction of civil rights and their consequences in the fields of communication, association, manufacture and trade. Free competition was a prerequisite of competitive public display in local and national exhibitions as free trade was a precondition of the international *“mammoth rituals”*<sup>72</sup> of the world’s fairs. The first exhibitions at national and international level concentrated on the

---

<sup>68</sup> LEWALD, Theodor: “Olympia”. In: *Erste Beilage der Vossischen Zeitung*, press clipping ca. 1926, Diem-Archives, Cologne.

<sup>69</sup> In Germany the first exhibition dedicated to sport was held in Berlin in 1882 and it was combined with athletic “meetings”. Cf. GLASENAPP, G.: *Reglements für die Meetings der Sport-Ausstellung*, Berlin. Berlin 1882.

<sup>70</sup> DESROCHES, Pierre: “Les grands clous de l’exposition de 1900”, in: *La Grande Revue de L’Exposition*, p. 57.

<sup>71</sup> COUBERTIN, Pierre de: “The Meeting of the Olympian Games”. In: *The North American Review*, Vol. 170:802-II, June 1900, p. 808.

<sup>72</sup> BENEDICT, Burton: *The Anthropology of World’s Fairs. San Francisco’s Panama Pacific International Exhibition of 1915*. London, Berkeley 1983, p.6.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 60.

display of goods, then the display of goods and machinery, including machine contests, until in the end they displayed ideas, scientific progress and achievements of social reform. The media then took over the job of publicizing manufactured goods. Advanced technology could no longer be transported to the exhibitions but becomes the exhibit itself today, as shown by the public display of the production in the new VW plant in Dresden. On the other hand the displays at international trade fairs are often closed to the public. International Corporations and the spread of information have contributed to the decline of the universal exhibitions and besides that *“the national competition element in world’s fairs was siphoned away by the Olympic Games.”*<sup>7 3</sup>

In the course of the last two centuries the Olympic Games have replaced the universal exhibitions as the only world festival. Having the decline of the world’s fairs in mind, the question of the enduring success of the Olympic Games arises and also an awareness for corresponding signs of structural change. One clue to the success of the “Olympics” may be the simplicity of the display of men and (from 1912) women in competitive live action and the embedding of individual or group efforts in a ritual that is separated by solemn opening and closing ceremonies and ritual forms of gathering from

everyday life. Many of the ceremonial elements of the Olympic Games were copied from the international exhibitions. With its limitation to a period of about two weeks the Olympic Games today constitute a spectacle that in general sense follows the principles of drama: unity of place, time and action and as the media coverage reveals, this is a realistic span. The abolition of the four year cycle could be the first step to overkill and decline as well as over-commercialisation. The old question *temple or market* is still crucial, not as dichotomised opposition but as a dialectic issue.

The ambiguity that is a general token of rituals also applies to the Olympic Games. The future will prove whether they become the catwalk for the most advanced types of *l’homme machine*, who, powered by doping, genetic manipulation and advanced nutrition schemes, will compete in an event that could be a mixture of pop-festival and global marketing instrument. An alternative though possibly utopian view could hope that the Olympic Games can still retain in the triad of their constitutive structure of individual effort, national representation and international competition the vestiges of that “athleticism” that COUBERTIN began to transform into “Olympism” in 1889. For him it was a kind of social reform on the scale of mankind.

## OLYMPIC OR NOT?

### A DISCUSSION ABOUT THE STATUS OF EVENTS OF 1900 AND 1904

*by Herman de Wael*

When trying to write the definitive history of the Olympic Games, one of the very first discussions one faces is that of the status of the different events. Most cases are clear, but some cases are far more difficult.

By far the most difficult cases are those of the Olympic Games of 1900 and 1904. These two Olympics were conducted not by one organizing committee, but rather as a sideshow to the Universal Expositions held in Paris and Saint Louis respectively. An enormous amount of events were conducted, and it is clear to any historian that not all of

these events can or should be termed Olympic. For the other Olympic Games, there have been decisions made by the varying Organizing Committees, and by the IOC, as to which events were “official”, and which were “demonstration” events and sports. It seems logical to follow those decisions, even if this means including a swimming event for Greek sailors (1896). But for 1900 and 1904 such official decisions are lacking. There is mention of a report from 1912 that should have solved the problem for 1900, but the report is neither very official nor very reliable. No official IOC decision exists about 1904.