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Olympic Myth and sports heroes

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OLYMPIC MYTH AND HERO SPORTSMEN: ELEMENTS OF SYNTHESIS (INTERNATIONAL CESH CONGRESS OF MONASTIR, SEPTEMBER 23-25, 2010)

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Three communications in plenary sessions, about forty others presented during nine specific sessions: the organizers had concocted a dense, copious program, structured in an adequate way and which, in most people's opinion, performed all its promises. A double perspective was privileged: comparative clause (with many monographs and illustrations) and multidisciplinary (history, but also sociology, political science, social psychology, and STAPS).

We can here leave classically, following John Hoberman, following a questioning concerning the impact of the Olympic movement (and of the philosophy of its founding fathers, of whom Pierre de Coubertin) in terms of pacification, links between the peoples, valuable distribution of respect, division or user-friendliness, mediation, stabilization or normalization during crises or during conflicts between belligerent parties. These "virtuous" supposed repercussions require an attentive examination, placed under the sign of demolition: however, even if such effects must not be overestimated and often correspond to the other motivations, in particular economic ones, they can also bring their stone to the building by avoiding, as auxiliary of democracy, the "rise in extremes".

In an Marcel Mauss optic, we have to deal with a "total social phenomenon", the constructivist approach adopted by many contributors distancing themselves from the common sense or the prenotions, that it is about a "new citizenship" (love story, evoked by John Hellström, of the Russian short-distance runner Ludmila Narozjilenko-Engqvist with the public Swedish through mechanisms of identification, assimilation or integration), of "communities" or "national identities" (example, developed by Floris Van der Merwe, of the South African rugby and the role played by Paul Roos on the background of colonization and of unification of the country) either still of "cultural representations" (case of the water sport, studied by Denis Jallat on the basis of reports of the "performances" of the sailor Eric Tabarly and the windsurfer Arnaud de Rosnay, the processes of name or categorization of these "exploits" giving rise to numerous questionings).

Besides, the sociology of the genre was not untold. Let us think of the evocation, by Gertrud Pfister, of some figureheads of the JO of 1900 as Hélène de Pourtalès or Charlotte Cooper, in the highlighted problem of the disparities or the discrimination, with a sub-representation in

the functions of supervision (Sonia El Amdouni), careers full of pitfalls (Immaculada Blanco Pastor and Francisco Martinez Cabrera), stereotypes or accumulation of handicaps (Zohra Abassi). The collective memory, fortunately, always keeps very alive athletes' images African paralympics (Charles Little), of pioneers in cross-country running (Evangelina Vouzanidou), charismatic personalities of the Finnish nationalism (Aino Sarje) or first marathon runners (Miguel Angel Morales Cevidanes and al.).

The education, via the process of socialization, puts the accent:

- on the deciphering of the relationship in the body and the relations men in the Arab-Moslem tradition (Zhora Abassi) ;
- on the examination of the transmission of standards or ideals concerning the competition (Alex de la Viuda Serrano), the "Olympic Greek awakening" or the emergence of a new man in an optics "regénérationniste" (Teresa Gonzalez Aja);
- on the consideration of attitudes of type quijote as in Spain (Juan Carlos Castillo, Cristobal Serrano Gomez and Javier Real Herrera), or of modes of sociability (Adel Belhadj) where are outlined the spectre of the individual of mass and the rises of tribalism.

The sociohistorical dimension is also very present with Alberto Martin Barrero (transformation of the sports equipments), Patricia Hadj Taieb, Morad Rouissi and Julio Herrador Sanchez (evolution of protocols or iconographic symbols), Fernando Garcia Romero, Dwailey Mansourihya or Matti Goksoyr (process of conversion, projection or of héroisation), Faten Hamdi and Samira Ouelhazi (reconstruction of exemplary courses, such that of the Tunisian champion Mohamed Gamoudi, from Sidi Aich to Mexico City), Nenad Zivanovic (variations of the conceptions or the perceptions touching the equity), Joachim Rühl or Abel Ferreira Martin (obstinacy of certain myths), Nabil Kerfes and al. (eight of the glory and the immortality).

The bibliographic analysis fed the discussion: portraits, very informed and full of teachings, Marcel Cerdan (Jean-François Loudcher), of Adolf Metzner and Elfriede Rahn-Kaun (Claus Tiedemann), of Janusz Kusocinski (Iwona Gryś and Tomasz Jagodzinski), of Riga Velestinlis (Christodoulos Faniopoulos and Pelagia Liandi) or of Juan Antonio Samaranch (Maria Madrid Riquez) show it.

Finally, the mediatization of the hero, that this one is Spanish (Solead Moreno Bermudez) or of the Arabic world (Ali Elloumi and Imen Bel Amar), Danish (Else Trangbaek) or Swedish (Leif Carl Yttergren), be the object of diverse communications both under the angle of the techniques of report (Kazuhiko Kusudo) and of geopolitical point of view (Swantje Scharenberg, Carlos Jesus Lopez Diaz or Paula Rey Jimenez).

As Bertrand During underlined it very well, most of the interventions, between knowledge and value, knowledge and action, so supply us with a very stimulating lighting of the Olympic movement and its foundations, between "reason" (educational project) and "mythology" (imagination and symbolism of the emotion), the works of Roland Barthes or Claude Lévi-Strauss, Paul Ricoeur or Enrico Castelli, Gilbert Durand or Mircea Eliade allowing to deepen all these problems.

As a matter of fact, a good International Congress of CESH, which took place under excellent conditions (many thanks to the steering committee, and quite particularly to Ali Elloumi, Jean-François Loudcher and Alejandro Serrano de la Viuda), for very friendly exchanges and a rich harvest. The only thing, which remains, is the publication of the Congress Proceedings of Monastir which are coming soon....