

THE SPREAD OF GYMNASTICS IN EUROPE AND AMERICA BY PEDAGOGUE-GYMNASTS DURING THE FIRST HALF OF THE 19TH CENTURY

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Abstract

At the beginning of the 19th century, a general gymnastics movement was created by the Philanthropists' movement of the 18th century. Its main representatives were the great gymnastic systems (German, Swedish, English, and Slavic). In addition to the founders of the above gymnastic systems, there were also some other pioneer pedagogue – gymnasts. These people promoted physical education and more specifically gymnastics (Artistic Gymnastics: AG), and developed various gymnastic methods in several countries. The main components of these gymnastic methods were the various forms of AG, which spread and developed mainly through the gymnastic associations of the German gymnastic system. The aim of this study was to research and describe the gymnastic systems and the instructive and written works of the first pedagogue – gymnasts in the first half of the 19th century, who spread physical education and AG across Europe and America.

Keywords: *history, gymnastic movement, gymnastic systems, gymnastic apparatuses.*

INTRODUCTION

The Philanthropists' gymnastic movement began in Europe and America during the first decade of the 19th century. Specifically, Guts Muts's and Vieht's books constituted the base of this gymnastic movement and so many other books were written by other pedagogue- gymnasts. Then, the three main gymnastic systems were developed in this favorable environment (German, Swedish, and English) (Krüger, 1993; Pahnche, 1983). After Jahn, many pedagogue-gymnasts appeared in Germany. Their instruction and written work contributed to the rise of physical education and AG. Eiselen was one of these pedagogue-gymnasts (Jahn's student, collaborator, and best friend). Massmann was Jahn's student and the

founder of Bavarian physical education, and another man named Spiess was Guts Muts's and Jahn's admirer and the founder of the German and Swiss school of physical education. Spiess organized, separated, and grouped the German gymnastic system. (Borrmann, 1978; Chrisafis, 1965; Pahnche, 1983). This study was about pedagogue – gymnasts, who spread physical education and AG across Europe and America, with their books, their instruction and their gymnastic methods. This study was also about countries and pedagogue – gymnasts who cultivated and spread this system, either in its original form or a modified version. All these gymnasts had studied the Philanthropists, who devoted part of their books in forms of AG (Guts Muts, 1793; Vieht, 1794). They had studied and

translated Jahn's book that constituted the base of the German gymnastic system and specifically of AG (Jahn & Eiselen; 1816). Some of these gymnasts showed their own philosophy in a different way and with a different content in physical education and AG, something that history has not recognized until now. Some other gymnasts tried to convince people in their country, who were fond of gymnastics, that they were introducers of a new and original gymnastic system, but, in fact, it was a misleading modification, mainly of the German and Swedish system or some other gymnastic method. However, it did not constitute a completely new gymnastic system.

Doctors, who used gymnastics and AG for medical reasons, also contributed a lot to the gymnastic movement during that period. From 1820 onwards, various private institutes were founded by doctors and gymnasts mainly in Germany and England. Their aim was the healing and recovery of disabled girls, with myoskeletal problems. At the same time these doctors and some gymnasts published special books concerned with women's gymnastics and the healing of girls with myoskeletal problems with the help of gymnastics. (Hagelin 1985; Kaimakamis 2003; Pahncke, 1983).

Throughout the 1850's, there was a hostile attitude towards certain gymnastic apparatuses of the German gymnastic system, particularly the parallel bars. The reasons seemed to be political and ideological and appeared in Prussia, the country of the above system (Krüger; 1993). The world famous doctors (professors of physiology) Raymond & Virkov reinstated these apparatuses, and specifically the parallel bars, with their scientifically presumed intervention; Raymond's proposal finishes with the following phrases: "AG is useful and effective for muscles and nerves". "... and if the parallel bars had not been invented, the human beings should anyhow have to invent them in the name of physical education". (Gasch; 1920). Also, during that time period there was rivalry

between the two sovereign gymnastic systems (Swedish and German), not because of the real difference and the supremacy of one or the other, but due to political, national, and racist motives (Kaimakamis; 2001). The main characteristics of the German gymnastic system were the acrobatics, the steady gymnastic apparatuses (horizontal bar and parallel bars), and the foundation of gymnastic associations. The main characteristics of the Swedish gymnastic system were the gymnastic exercises, the absence of the horizontal bar, the parallel bars, and of course the distinction of gymnastics in school, military, medical, and aesthetical gymnastics. This system was recognized, and spread throughout Europe and to America from the beginning of the 20th century onwards. Its first great success was the impressive appearance of the Scandinavian countries in the Mesolympic Games in 1906 in Athens. (Kaimakamis et al., 2001). Finally, three basic points must be clarified and explained in this introductory section:

Firstly, during the 19th century, AG did not mean a separate and specialized sport, with specialized regulations, common dimensions and functional specifications in the apparatuses, but constituted various gymnastic apparatus included in a general, mixed gymnastic system.

Secondly, AG (specifically for women) and Rhythmic Gymnastics (RG), in their current form, were created later, by the combination of these two gymnastic systems.

Thirdly, up to the end of the 19th century, the German gymnastic system was supreme and was the base of the European and world AG (especially for men).

The introduction of the German gymnastic system in England and role of Clias.

The German gymnastic system had spread to England (home of the English gymnastic system) from around 1825, due to Jahn's various students, such as Karl Föller, and the Swiss pedagogue-gymnast Fokion Heinrich. Clias (1782-1854)

introduced military gymnastics in this country (Mouratidis, 2000; Prestidge, 1988). In England AG was at its peak from the middle of the 19th century until the beginning of the 20th century. Many associations and gyms, with thousands of members, were founded. Clias contributed to the spread of AG and specifically of military gymnastics. Clias was born in America and lived in America, Switzerland, France, and England. "He used to train, to be trained, to teach, to write" (Chrisafis, 1930). His most important book, published in Bern in 1816, was titled "The basic principles of gymnastics and AG" (Hagelin, 1985). Among the various sports and games that Clias taught and included in this book, there were also exercises for the gymnastic horse, climbing, swinging, and exercises on the swinging "triangle", which Clias claims he invented. A commentator on Clias' work describes this apparatus and the way of his practice on this: "This apparatus consists of a strong bar four feet in length, supported in its edges by two ropes, fifteen feet in length, which are linked on a transversal beam. On this triangle, Clias demonstrates his maximum strength, hung either by the legs from the bar or the ropes, or with his head downwards. I have seen him staying in this position for a long time with his hands kept behind his back..." (Chrisafis, 1965). Clias' gymnastic method was oriented to apparatuses and exercises, which were really useful and not just impressive and spectacular.

Amoros's presence in French and Spanish gymnastics and his contribution to the general gymnastic movement in Europe

Francisco Odeano Amoros (1770-1848) was the founder of French and Spanish gymnastics. He lived during the first half of the 19th century. After he excelled in the Spanish army and Spanish gymnastics, he fled to France for political reasons, because he participated in the Battle of Waterloo in 1815 with Napoleon's troops, which were defeated by the allied forces. In his gymnastic methods and books (1819, 1821, 1830) he included a number of steady gymnastic apparatuses, like balance

beams (parallel bars and inclined), balance bars, swinging and climbing apparatuses, gymnastic horses, swinging horizontal bar etc. (Amoros, 1830). The last of these was invented by Amoros himself. He narrated that a Prussian traveler described it to him in Madrid, in 1806 (Chrisafis, 1956). So, Amoros is thought to be the inventor of this apparatus.

Nachtegal, the founder of Danish gymnastics, was one of the most important pedagogic-gymnasts of the first half of the 19th century.

Denmark has a great gymnastics tradition. A daily training programme for girls and boys was introduced in its schools in 1814 (Chrisafis, 1965). Denmark preceded even Prussia and many other European countries by 26 years in this regard. The great Greek gymnast J. Chrisafis praises this avant-garde Dane, as well as Guts Muts in his important book "Gymnastik für die Jugend" (gymnastics for young persons) (Guts Muts, 1804). Franz Nachtegal is considered to be the founder of Danish gymnastics (1777-1845). He was an educated person, who knew all Guts Muts's books on gymnastics (Chrisafis, 1930). Nachtegal left a great gymnastic work to Denmark and the entire world. His work had two focuses: pedagogic or school gymnastics, and military gymnastics. He used the following steady apparatus that had a direct relation to the later discipline of unmixed AG: balance beams, swinging and climbing apparatus, gymnastic horses, and various rolling exercises on the floor, which later became a special tradition in Denmark (Chrisafis, 1965). Nachtegal used these apparatus for the development of physical abilities and not for impressive acrobatics. One student, who attended his lectures for the education of gymnasts in Copenhagen, was Pier Ling, who was the founder of the Swedish gymnastic system.

Tyrs, the founder of the gymnastic movement in the Slavic countries

Miroslav Tyrs (1832-1884) is considered to be a great personality, particularly for the Slavic nations. He was an intellectual and he founded the gymnastic association "Sokol" (Falcon) in 1862. His aim was to promote gymnastics and improve the cultural and national level of the Slavic nations (Blecking, 1987). Later, similar associations were founded in all the Slavic nations, while at the same time a gymnastic, cultural, national, and liberation movement was created through them. The result of this movement was the organization of Slavic gymnastic and cultural meetings called Slets (as of 1953 these games were replaced by the "Spartakiades"), (Huguenin, 1911). Tyrs was a professor of history and art and an expert of ancient Greek gymnastics. He created a new gymnastic movement, in which he added elements from various other gymnastic systems (mainly from the German system) mixed with national, cultural, and folklore elements of the Czech nations. Tyrs work is great and except for his gymnastic method, he establishes the gymnastic terminology of the Czech (Blecking, 1987). The main characteristics of Tyrs's method were the gymnastic apparatus of the German gymnastic system, as well as the spectacular gymnastic performances by hundreds of athletes who were performing simultaneously (Huguenin, 1991). Countries like the Czech Republic, Slovenia, Slovakia and Poland had a developed level of AG in the beginning of the 20th century. During the first decades of the 20th century Czech (later Czechoslovakia and nowadays Czech Republic) was a world champion six times, from a total of nine championships (Kaimakamis, 2001).

The spread of various variations of the German gymnastic system in Italy, the Netherlands, and in other states of Europe

Italy did not present any gymnastics movement during the beginning of the 19th century. The Swiss Obermann and Baumann promoted the German gymnastic system in

this country, but in the distinctive style of Spiess', Jahn's, and Guts Muts' method (Gasch, 1920). In 1865, Obermann published a book with many pictures and references to Gymnastics (Obermann, 1865). At the end of the 19th century and at the beginning of the 20th century, Italy was one of the most important gymnastic forces with a high level of AG. Italy participated in all the Olympic Games in the first three decades of the 20th century and held a leading position in AG. The greatest athlete of that period Alberto Braglia was a member of the Italian team (Götze & Herholz, 1992; Götze & Zeume, 1989).

The German gymnastic system spread to the Netherlands (Holland, Belgium, Luxemburg), where a lot of gymnastic associations and gyms, with thousands of members, were founded. The International Federation of Gymnastics (FIG) was founded in Belgium in 1881, by the President of the Belgian Gymnastic Federation, Niclaus Cuperus (Huguenin, 1981).

Jahn's students, tradesmen, and political fugitives promote the German gymnastic system in the USA and in South America

AG and the German gymnastic system began to be spread in the USA from the beginning of the third decade of the 19th century when some of Jahn's students (like Follen, Beck, and Lieber) arrived and settled there (Gasch, 1920). Follen introduced Jahn's gymnastics to the University of Harvard in 1826, and Beck translated Jahn's book "Die Deutsche Turnkunst" (Mouratidis, 2000). Many political fugitives arrived in the USA at the end of 1840, after the revolution against the feudal lords failed in Germany. Therefore a lot of German communities were created (mainly in Philadelphia and Saint Louis), which consisted of several former gymnastic-revolutionists. In 1860 these Germans founded the first gymnastic association in America, called "Cincinnati Turngemeinde". In 1850 13 German-American gymnastic associations were organized in leagues, and later a federation

was formed called "Socialist Gymnastic Federation of North America". Turners also had their own organisation. Up to 1860, 70 associations with 7,000 athletes were founded and ten years before the end of the century, in the USA, there were 312 German associations, with 41,000 members, which produced a high level of AG (Binz, 1985).

The organization of gymnastic events of the Olympic Games in 1904, in Saint Louis, shows the American people's love for high level AG. At that time, 17 German associations with many members existed in Saint Louis. The Americans had a complete programme with four team all around events and an individual all around event, according to the German gymnastic system (Götze & Herholz, 1992).

In Latin America and mainly in Chile, Argentina, and Brazil the German gymnastic system and AG began to be spread from the middle of the 19th century onwards (Temme, 2000). European (mainly German) tradesmen, pedagogues, politicians, and economic refugees, who had settled in these countries, brought Jahn's gymnastic methods with them. In Chile, the German political fugitive Karl Anvander, who arrived in the country in 1850, introduced the German gymnastics. In 1853 he and other Germans founded a gymnastic association and a school in the city of Valdivia (Temme, 2000). Later, gymnastic associations that taught the German gymnastic system multiplied. So, the German community created a powerful gymnastic, social, and commercial movement in Chile and other parts of South America. The German emigrants, in keeping with the habits of their homeland, began to organize annual gymnastic and cultural events in their new home-countries. These events were called Turnfeste (Temme, 2000).

The German gymnastic system spreads to Russia and Ukraine, where a general gymnastic movement is created

Jahn's gymnastic movement began to spread early but slowly, in various regions of Russia and Ukraine. In 1825, Holander,

who had studied in Prussia and was Jahn's student, established the first gym using the German model, in Riga. In 1837 the German Lange founded the first gymnastic association in Odessa. In the early 1860's, a number of similar associations were founded in Moscow and in Saint Petersburg (Gasch, 1920). Later, these German associations had multiplied and began to organize annual athletic and cultural events in the model of the German "Turnfeste". In 1881, the first original Russian gymnastic association was founded in Moscow. The famous writer Giliarofski was the president of this association. In 1897, the first pan-Russian gymnastic events were held in Saint Petersburg (Arkayev, 1997). In 1900, in Saint Petersburg, another gymnastic movement appeared, which was based on Jahn's movement, but catered for the Slavic nations. The Czech gymnast and pedagogue Wichra founded the first Czech gymnastic and cultural association in the model of the Slavic "Sokol" (Gasch, 1920). Later, in 1913, after these associations had multiplied, the federation of "Sokol" was founded (Arkayev, 1997). The German gymnastic system and AG were in ascendance in Russia, however the October Revolution of 1917 suppressed this athletic movement, because it was considered to be the "sport of Bourgeoisie" (Gasch, 1920). Contrary to the view of gymnastics being the "sport of Bourgeoisie", it was found to be very useful for the soviet army. After a decade, unmixed AG began to be spread in all Soviet Union nations and across all social classes. Later, these countries became the greatest gymnastic forces in the world.

The German gymnastic system in Greece

In Greece the German gymnastic system began to spread after the establishment of the Modern Greek state. G. Pagontas was the founder of this system. He had studied in Munich beside Massmann (Jahn's student). Also, many Germans and thousands of Bavarians promoted this system when they came to Greece during that period. Othon was the first king of Greece. Othon's father was fond of ancient

Greece and gymnastics. When Othon came to Greece, many Bavarian consultants and 3500 soldiers followed him (Kaimakamis & Mouratidis, 2003; Seitzl, 1965).

In 1837 G. Pagontas wrote his first book about gymnastics, based on books by Guts Muts and Jahn (Pagontas, 1837). In his book he describes how to manufacture several gymnastics apparatuses, and also some of the exercises that could be performed on them. At the end of his book, there is a special table with pictures of these apparatuses. The writer states that some of these pictures were taken from Amoros' book, and some from Guts Muts' and Jahn's books (Pagontas, 1837).

Jahn's gymnastic movement, and later the mixed German gymnastic system, spread across the developed world. The gymnastic associations were founded one after the other, in the following countries and cities: Australia (Melbourne 1861, Adelaide 1864, Sidney 1862), Congo (1863), Istanbul (1874), Stockholm (1864), Copenhagen (1878), and in some large African cities (Gasch, 1920).

CONCLUSION

The Philanthropists' instructive and written work created a general gymnastic movement, from which all the main gymnastic systems emerged.

Jahn was the founder of the German gymnastic system. His students promoted this system and AG in Germany, and across almost the entire developed world. Additionally, many natives of these countries, who had known and adopted this system, contributed to its promotion.

Many of these great pedagogue-gymnasts modified the German gymnastic system to develop new gymnastic methods. Others did not do anything more than a simple translation or a slight modification of the work of other important gymnasts.

AG spread all over the world, through gymnastic associations (the main characteristic of the German gymnastic system). These associations were

institutions of an athletic, political, social, and national movement.

In the Slavic nations, Jahn's gymnastic movement was modified, promoted, and organized in a way that reflected the character of these nations and to accommodate their particular national and cultural needs.

In Greece, the main representatives of the German gymnastic system and AG were the Greek gymnast Pagontas (with his instructive and written work), some German gymnasts, thousands of Bavarian soldiers, and king Othon's consultants.

From the middle of the 19th century onwards the German gymnastic system, after its rapid development, was considered to be the sovereign gymnastic system.

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