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ORIGINAL

COUBERTIN AND THE ARTISTIC COMPETITIONS IN THE MODERN OLYMPIC GAMES

COUBERTIN Y LOS CONCURSOS ARTÍSTICOS EN LOS JUEGOS OLÍMPICOS MODERNOS

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this essay is to analyse the importance that Coubertin gave to including the artistic competitions in the official programme of the modern Olympic Games. It will be studied how, when and why Coubertin's idea of harmoniously joining arts and letters to the Olympic Games appeared, as it had already happened in ancient Olympia. In the Olympic Games of Stockholm 1912, sport and artistic competitions were celebrated for the first time, fulfilling thus Coubertin's longing. However, after seven Olympic events where artistic competitions had been held, the IOC decided to eliminate them in 1949 and to replace them for "Cultural Olympics", "exhibitions" or "expositions". The methodology of this study is historical and based on primary and secondary sources. In conclusion, to Coubertin the artistic competitions in the modern Olympic Games were so important as to have the same status as the sport competitions.

KEYWORDS: Coubertin, artistic competitions, Olympic Games, Greek Olympic World.

RESUMEN

El objetivo de este trabajo es analizar la importancia que tenía para Coubertin la inclusión de concursos artísticos en el programa oficial de los Juegos Olímpicos modernos. Se estudiará cómo, cuándo y por qué surgió la idea en Coubertin de unir de manera armoniosa las artes y las letras a los Juegos Olímpicos, como ya ocurriera en la antigua Olimpia. En los Juegos Olímpicos de Estocolmo de 1912, se celebraron por primera vez competiciones deportivas y concursos artísticos, cumpliéndose el anhelo de Coubertin. Sin embargo, después de siete citas olímpicas en las que se habían celebrado concursos artísticos, el COI decidió suprimirlos en 1949, sustituyéndolos por “Olimpiadas Culturales”, “exhibiciones” o “exposiciones”. La metodología de este estudio es histórica y se fundamenta en fuentes primarias y secundarias. Como conclusión, para Coubertin fueron tan importantes los concursos artísticos en los Juegos Olímpicos modernos que tuvieron el mismo rango que las competiciones deportivas.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Coubertin, concursos artísticos, Juegos Olímpicos, mundo olímpico griego.

1. INTRODUCTION

Thinkers and artists gathered in Ancient Olympia and grouped around the Olympics, the most important meeting place of intellectual and social life of Greece (García Romero, 1992b) and the enormous prestige that the institution had for so long was born from that union (Coubertin, 1989). As in ancient Olympia, Coubertin (2012a) wanted the arts and letters to join the sport to ensure the greatness of the modern Olympic Games.

Coubertin launched the idea of integrating art competitions at the Olympic Games in 1904 and, two years later, in 1906, in order to achieve that purpose, a "consultative conference" in which five contests were created took place: architecture, painting, sculpture, literature and music, which would have the same status as any sports competition. But the initiative to include them in the 1908 London Games was frustrated by lack of time to organize it and it was not until the Stockholm Games of 1912 that, for the first time, the Olympic Games included sports competitions and artistic contests and the long awaited dream of Coubertin became true.

The last Olympic Games in which art competitions were held took place in London in 1948, since the International Olympic Committee (IOC) decided to abolish them in 1949, so Coubertin did not see how one of his most desirable projects disappeared.

This article intends to capture how important was the integration of artistic competitions in the modern Olympic Games for Coubertin.

The methodology of this study is historical and is based on primary and secondary sources. The primary sources used are the French texts written by Coubertin himself. The secondary sources are the writings of Coubertin translated into Spanish and also the studies conducted by experts who have investigated his work such as Durántez, Cagigal, Eyquem, Callebat, Rioux, Mayer, Meylan, Solar or Müller.

Moreover, to illustrate the chapter on "The arts around the ancient Olympic Games" we have used the works of García Gual, García Romero and Durántez; these sources are also secondary.

We have selected Coubertin texts in which he writes about art competitions in the modern Olympic Games or refers to them. We have checked prestigious authors and scholars who have researched the work of Coubertin. The majority of them have studied the art competitions in the modern Olympic Games.

2. THE INFLUENCE OF THE GREEK OLYMPIC WOLRD IN COUBERTIN

The attraction of Baron de Coubertin for Olympia and the ancient Olympic Games is reflected in the passage of his book *Une campagne de vingt et un ans* (1909):

Of all ancient history, nothing had fascinated me as much as Olimpia. That dream city, devoted to a strictly human and material task in form, but refined and enlarged by the idea of the homeland, which had somehow there a factory of vital forces, constantly rising, before my teenager thinking, his columns and arcades. Long before dreaming to extract from its ruins a renovating principle, I used to reconstruct it in the imagination and revive its linear silhouette. Germany had exhumed the remains of Olympia. Why is France not going to get the revival of its splendor? From there to the project, less brilliant but more rapid and fruitful, of restoring the Olympic Games, there was only one step (1973d, p. 11).

To Meylan (1963), leading scholar of the work of the Baron, one of the two institutions of the origins of our civilization that attracted and amazed Coubertin were the Olympic Games.

In "New Panathenaic" from 1927, Coubertin himself states that he had tried to keep in modern Olympic Games its nature as an ancient institution, preserve in it the seal of the age of the institution, "renewed and adapted to modern times" (1973b, p. 170). In the article "Why did I reestablish the Olympics?", Written in 1908, Coubertin writes that it was "possible to find inspiration in the past without copying it" (2012g, p. 537).

In a lecture entitled "Olympia" from 1929, the Baron (1973c) explains that, in the late 80s of the nineteenth century, to shore up the fragile edifice that had just risen, to ensure that the sports renaissance lasted, at that time still in its infancy (creation of school sports associations, etc.) the only solution and the only way was the revival of the Olympic Games, fully internationalized for this occasion. In order to do this, you had to "add the immense prestige of the ancient times to one day's anglomania" (Coubertin, 1973c, p. 189).

To avoid seeing athletics degenerate and die for a second time, Coubertin believed that it had to be unified and purified, and only found a practical way to achieve this:

to create regular competitions to which representatives of all countries and all sports were invited, and put these competitions under the sole sponsorship that could confer an aura of grandeur and glory: the sponsorship of classical antiquity. Doing this was equivalent to restore the Olympic Games. The name speaks for itself; it was not even possible to find another (2012d, p. 301).

But that love and fascination of Coubertin for the ancient Greece and the Olympic Games were inculcated by Father Caron, professor at the *École libre Saint-Ignace*, Jesuit college in Paris where the Baron studied.

Father Caron, who taught Humanities and Rhetoric, made Coubertin love ancient Greece, where the body was united with the soul in one effort of harmonious exaltation (Rioux, 1986).

Müller (2012a) stresses that the idea of the Olympic Games conquered Coubertin, according to the Baron's own statements, thanks to Father Caron. In addition, Eyquem, author of the first important biography on the Baron (Durry, 1997), writes about Coubertin's admiration to Father Caron:

Of all his teachers, the one who exercised the most profound influence over him was his professor of humanities and rhetoric, Father Caron. He gave him a taste for moderation and love for the country where philosophers were poets, where writers and artists, those useless people, were fed in the shadow of the State [...] (1966, p. 20).

Above all, Coubertin was deeply marked by the harmonious Hellenic vision of Philosophy, Literature, Science and the Arts which he discovered thanks to father Caron (Rioux, 1986).

3. THE ARTS AROUND THE ANCIENT OLYMPIC GAMES

To Durántez, president of the Spanish Olympic Academy, the cultural dimension of Olympism was evidenced from the Games in Olympia, where outside the official competition of muscular struggle a cultural and artistic confrontation was developed in parallel:

The quadrennial appointment of Olimpia had a critical interest among all other religious or sporting festive calls and hence, due to the social notoriety that with the success of Olimpia was acquired, the dates of the Games were times of appointment for the leading thinkers, sculptors, poets, painters and artists in general (2009, p. 83).

According to García Gual, Olympia was not a city, but a great sanctuary of great sports area located between Elis and Pisa, two *poleis eleas* that organized competitions, provided the places and took care of the administration of honors, awards and inscriptions as well as ensured the peace and religious cults (1992, p. 10).

Olimpia was the most important center of Greek advertising, the best place to spread an idea, a slogan, a provocative message to all Greeks (García Gual, 1992). So, Herodotus went to Olympia "to read his *story* (as old news) and Gorgias preached pacifism in his *Olympic* speech (a title inherited by Lysias years later). Hippias went there as well to flaunt his multiple knowledge" (García Gual, 1992, p. 7).

For García Gual, it was exciting to see the races at the stadium in Olympia, but the cultural part was impressive:

There was much to see and enjoy, even apart from the gymnastic agones. It was exciting, no doubt, to see the races at the stadium, but the party atmosphere always had many other attractions. Also the cultural part was often impressive. Not only Pindar produced his most splendid

odes and epinikions for the victories at Olympia but also Empedocles himself sent a rhapsode, a certain Cleómenes, to recite his ceremonial verses there in the pomp of the occasion (D. Laertius VIII, 2, 8). And it was a good place to listen to some famous sophists (1992, p. 8).

The competitors came to Olympia from all over the Greek world and its surroundings. It was the best place in the Greek world to see and be seen, both for athletes and politicians, speakers, sculptors, painters and artists:

The most famous and those waiting to be, those who had already triumphed and hoped to increase the number of their crowns, and those who came forward to the resonant victory and glory of the Stadium. [...]. Also some prestigious speakers, politicians, and a number of pipers and various singers, hired for the celebration. And sculptors and painters and artists. [...].

Those who thought of ordering Pindar an ode had to rely on the usual delay in shipping. The great Theban poet had many commissions and sometimes quite delayed. As the author of the epinikions never get tired of repeating, a victory not celebrated with songs, a triumph without proper advertising, was something sad and gray (García Gual, 1992, p. 14).

García Romero states that the most diverse activities took place in the sanctuary of Olympia during the time that the festival lasted and the Olympic Games became the most important meeting point for the intellectual and social life of Greece, where thinkers, writers and poets went to submit their poems and compositions, besides commenting that also literary genres linked to the Olympic festival were created:

Vendors of food and drink and items of all kinds, pimps with their pupils, magicians, acrobats, clairvoyants and charlatans in general came to the Olympics with the hope of getting huge profits. But Olympia, during the celebration of the Games, was also the ideal place to observe and study human life in its various aspects, as is appropriate in philosophers to quote Pythagoras, and also offered an excellent opportunity for scholars and men of letters to expose their ideas and extravagance in public, and to make known his literary works, since public reading was the most effective way of diffusion in an essentially oral culture like the Greek was, at least until the classical period. [...].

Wise men came to the Olympics from the archaic period to the centuries of Roman domination, and it was in the games where Anaxagoras, Empedocles, the Hippias and Gorgias, Herodotus and many other Sophists presented to the public their poems and prose compositions, and even they came to develop genres closely related to the festival, not only epinikions or songs composed by order of the winners in the Games, but also a kind of political speech in which [...] the most prominent speakers at the time exhorted the Panhellenic unit and the conservation of the most distinctive features of Greek civilization (we have

received, complete or fragmentary sentences of Gorgias, Lysias and Isocrates) (1992b, p. 58).

However, despite the vital influence that the Olympic festival held on the literary and artistic life of Greece, competitions other than purely sporting ones were never included in it unlike in other big games, except for the contests for heralds and trumpeters, which began to be held in 396 BC; Only for the Olympiad 211 (67 p.C.) Nero's desire to show off his alleged musical and dramatic talent made the organizers of the games introduce this type of contest (García Romero, 1992b, pp. 58-59).

The top finishers in the competitions for heralds and trumpeters were "entrusted the task of making the output signal of the races and announce the decisions of judges and proclaim the name of the winners" (García Romero, 1992a, p. 199). In line with the comments made by García Romero, Coubertin (1972) in his *Pédagogie sportive*, says that in 396 BC Art competitions were added to the Olympic Games. We assume that Coubertin refers to the introduction, from that year, of contests of heralds and trumpeters.

Professor Cagigal (1961) says that the idea that the Olympic Games became, not only in words but in facts, physical and spiritual events, belongs to Coubertin, who lectured and promoted the movement of active artistic contests. Coubertin(1989) stresses that the Olympics were not just global or international championships, but a party that took place in a quadrennial way for the youth from all around the world, for the human spring. For Cagigal, "the initiative to organize artistic and literary competitions as part of the Olympic Games came from this idea" (1961, p. 211). Coubertin sees the conception of Olympism as the complete human manifestation (Cagigal, 1961).

4. ARTISTIC COMPETITION IN THE MODERN OLYMPIC GAMES

4.1 The idea of including ART COMPETITION IN MODERN OLYMPICS BY COUBERTIN

In an article published in *Le Figaro* on August 4, 1904, entitled "L'Olympiade romaine" Coubertin writes:

'It has come the time to start a new stage in the Olympics and restore its original beauty. In the heyday of Olimpia and even later, when Nero, winner of Greece, aspired to collect on the banks of the Alpheus a few always envied laurels- letters and the arts, harmoniously combined with sport, ensured the greatness of the Olympic Games. The same must happen in the future' (2012a, p. 605).

For Müller, Coubertin took the idea of involving the arts and intellectual life in the Olympic festival from Ancient Olympia, "science and the arts ensured through their harmony with sport the grandeur of the Olympics" (2012b, p. 597).

In the article mentioned above, "L'Olympiade romaine", Coubertin states that in the IOC meeting held in London between the 20th to 22nd of June, 1904, "after discussing with discretion, Rome was chosen to celebrate the 1908 Games" (1986a, p. 220), while at the same time they decided to celebrate in Belgium the following year, in 1905, a congress concerning sports and physical education (Coubertin, 1986a), which would be the third Olympic Congress.

According Eyquem, Coubertin supported Roma's candidacy for the 1908 Olympics, "thus [the Baron] writes, 'a Roman Olympiad would clearly be, without great effort, an artistic Olympiad, and it was time, from now on, to think about re-establish contact [the relation] of yesteryear between sports and the arts" (1966, p. 183).

Solar maintains that Mayer, chancellor of the IOC, without contradicting the President Coubertin detailed the circumstances of that decision at the IOC meeting in June 1904, although unfortunately the designation of Rome as an Olympic city did not come to fruition and the wishes of Coubertin of organizing a paradigmatic Games in 1908, in which sporting competitions and artistic competitions coexisted, also collapsed (2013, p. 155).

But the arts had not yet been included in the modern Olympics. The IOC had not made that big decision.

Coubertin's work was unfolding like a fan. The pipings (plates, sheets) of that range seemed scattered like pieces of a puzzle, although they in your compounded a continuous drawing in his thinking. That border will be, in 1906, the piping of Art and Sport. To emphasize that union whose purpose was to make sport and arts enrich each other mutually, Coubertin devised, as always, an impressive demonstration (Eyquem, 1966).

4.2 THE "CONSULTATIVE CONFERENCE" ON THE ARTS, LETTERS AND SPORT OF 1906

After the Olympic Congress in Brussels in 1905, and with little interruption, Coubertin gave actual substance to one of his greatest aspirations: to hold a congress that integrated the arts into the Olympic Movement (Solar, 2003).

Coubertin writes that "it was not chance that brought and grouped writers and artists around ancient sports centuries ago in Olympia, and the prestige of the institution that emerged from that incomparable junction" (1989, p. 49).

Coubertin (1989, 2012f) wanted to proceed in stages in this major and long undertaking. After the Olympic congress of Le Havre in 1897, and Brussels in 1905 had established the relationship, the link with science in a sense, art had not been incorporated yet (Müller, 2012b). In *Cent ans de Congrès Olympiques (1894-1994)*, Müller (1994) insists that, for Coubertin, the Olympic Games should include elements that, on the one hand, put them above the international championships and on the other hand, express their special significance closely related to its old model.

In 1906, Coubertin led the Olympic Movement along a road that, according to him, was part of the very essence of Olympism from its birth: the link between the Olympics, the arts and literature (Müller, 1994).

In May of 1906 in Paris, this congress would take place and it would be the fourth in the official classification of the IOC and, although it was called by the least pretentious name of "consultative conference", "always had the status of a congress and so was designated by President Coubertin" (Solar, 2003, p. 182).

In the invitation to artists in April of 1906, Coubertin explains the purpose of the "consultative conference". The Baron (2012c) says in the invitation to artists: On behalf of the IOC I have the honor to request your participation in the "consultative conference" which will take place at the *Comédie Française* on Wednesday 23rd, Thursday 24th and Friday 25th of May 1906, under the chairmanship in honor of Mr. Dujardin-Beaumetz, deputy secretary of State of Fine Arts, and Mr. Jules Claretie, administrator of the *Comédie Française*, in order to study the extent and in what ways, the Arts and Letters could participate in the celebration of the modern Olympics and, in general, join the practice of sports in order to benefit them and ennoble them (2012c, p. 600).

Indeed, the IOC convened in Paris in May of 1906 a "consultative conference", with the purpose of what has just been exposed:

It was, in short, to prepare [...] 'the sound collaboration of arts and letters in the restored Olympics' [...]. [...] The conference unanimously approved the idea of establishing five contests, architecture, sculpture, painting, literature and music, which will join hereinafter the Olympics and will be part of them with the same status of the athletic tests. The works presented should be inspired by the sports idea or refer directly to sport things. They would be examined by an international jury. The winning works would be, as far as possible, exhibited, published or executed (as they were pictorial, architectural, sculpture or literature, or finally, musical or dramatic) along the Games (Coubertin, 2012a, p. 606).

The results of this "consultative conference" of 1906 focused mainly on the decision to include five artistic competitions in future Olympic celebrations: architecture, sculpture, painting, literature and music, "they would have the same status as any sport" (Solar, 2003, p. 182), and Coubertin himself (1986c) called them the pentathlon of the Muses.

Coubertin also wanted the Olympics, which brought together excellent athletes and consecrated them, to be the chance to crown the writers and artists who were inspired by the sport. He wanted, above all, that the sport could give rise to new Pindars and other Polykleitos (Eyquem, 1966).

During the keynote address at the "consultative conference" on the Arts, Letters and Sport (May 23, 1906), in the "Comedie Francaise" (*Comédie Française*), Coubertin (2012b) recalled that with the introduction of art in the Olympics they

would bring Muscle and Spirit together again like in ancient Olympia, and that, therefore, this way, Olympia was renewed.

Solar (2003) ensures that with this initiative, Coubertin tried to unite artistic and sporting events in a similar way as occurred in the classic Olympics.

4.3 THE FRUSTRATED ATTEMPT TO INCLUDE ARTISTIC COMPETITION IN THE OLYMPIC GAMES OF LONDON 1908

The art competitions, scheduled for the London Olympics of 1908, could not be held due to lack of time, the short period for preparation and also the great thematic limitation (Müller, 2012b). In the official report of the British Olympic Committee for the Olympic Games of 1908 is stated that "in the upcoming Olympic Games the call should be made public at least three years in advance and the results should be shown in an exhibition during the Games" (Müller, 2012b, p. 615).

Coubertin expressed his disappointment at not being able to place the art competitions at the Games in London in 1908 and talked about the reasons, he said, made it difficult to come out ahead:

From an artistic point of view, London brought other disappointments. The art competitions, managed by the Royal Academy, could not be finally held. Instead of letting the prospective contestants choose the motifs freely, it was intended to impose them. In addition to this there were the genuine difficulties of transportation and exhibition of the models of sculptures. It was really unfortunate because the sculptors seemed to be, in this first opportunity, the more willing to answer the call (1989, p. 56).

In another paper, "A Modern Olympia", 1910, Coubertin argues that The British organizers of the IV Olympiad published for 1908, a program written with help of the English Royal Academy of Arts, and chose the themes of the contest: ancient athletes parade, football game, discus throwers, buildings with swimming-pool, sports clubs and rooms... These were the themes for the competitions of painting, sculpture and architecture. This program, developed only in October 1907, could not be performed due to lack of time, but would be restored in the next Olympics (1973e, p. 55).

4.4 COUBERTIN DREAM CAME TRUE: FOR THE FIRST TIME, THE CELEBRATION OF ARTISTIC CONTESTS IN THE OLYMPIC GAMES

In 1912, for the first time, art contests within the framework of modern Olympic Games were held. It was at the Olympic Games in Stockholm.

The organizers of the 1912 Games in Stockholm (V Olympiad) had learned from the mistakes made in the art competitions of the London Olympics 1908, four years before. (Müller, 1986, 2012b).

The official announcement was published in the *Revue Olympique* soon, in September 1911, and it was clear that the works presented could only be unpublished and be inspired by the sports idea (Müller, 1986, 2012b). This is stated on the basis of literary and artistic competitions of 1912, which also specifies that each of the winners of the five competitions (architecture, sculpture, painting, music and literature) would receive the medal of the V Olympiad and as far as possible, the winning works would be exhibited, published or executed during the Games (Coubertin, 2012f).

Coubertin points out that the results of the artistic and literary competitions were lackluster and weak for the claim of the Swedish artists to make separate chapter who organized a second little competition between them, claim that we had to accept [...]. But the important thing was to convene the first competitions, give the first awards, expose the winning works. This was the first step, the essential (1989, p. 79).

Coubertin won the literature competition of the Games in Stockholm in 1912, with its *Ode to sport*, presented in French and German with the pseudonym Hohrod/Eschbach (Müller, 1986, 2012b), which were the names of two towns in Alsace not far from the family home of Coubertin's wife, Marie Rothan (1861-1963), in Luttenbach, near Münster, where the Baron often spent his summer vacation with his family until 1914 (Coubertin, 2012f).

Coubertin always held his "literary Olympic triumph in the highest regard" (Durántez, 2009, p. 83).

Participation in the literary competition of the Stockholm Games of 1912 was particularly weak and may have been the same in the other competitions, in the other four, since only a silver medal was granted in the sculpture contest, (Müller, 1986, 2012b).

As shown in the official report of the Swedish Organizing Committee, the respective associations of artists from Sweden were very skeptical when it come to taking charge of the artistic competitions, so ultimately the responsibility fell on the IOC and the Organizing Committee for the Olympics Games of Stockholm 1912 (Müller, 1986, 2012b).

Besides commenting that in 1912, at the Games in Stockholm, the dichotomous formula of celebrating sports and artistic competition was achieved for the first time, Cagigal (1961) argues that only writers slightly participated in the art contests. The artists were not aware, despite the idealistic efforts of the undaunted Baron:

In 1928 he tries to stoke the cultural interest. The winning artists will receive gold, silver or bronze medals, like the sports champions. Already in 1936, in Berlin, the number of registered totaled 774.

Besides the Italian Pellegrini, the Polish Tursky and some others, we are not aware of other notable artists who attended these events (1961, p. 177)

In his radio address of 1935, considered the most important Olympic testimony of his later years, entitled "The philosophical foundations of modern Olympism", Coubertin says that one of the essential elements of modern Olympism was the beauty, by participating in the Games of Arts and Thought, and wondered if the festival of human springtime could be celebrated without inviting the Spirit. Then arose, according to Coubertin, the high point of the interaction of muscle and spirit, the character that should cover their alliance, their collaboration.

Certainly the Spirit dominates; muscle should remain his vassal, but on condition that it is about the highest forms of artistic and literary creation, not the lowest, to which a steadily increasing license has allowed to boost greatly nowadays (1973a, p. 217).

This paper demonstrates how important was for Coubertin, also at the end of his life, that the modern Olympics were physical and spiritual events, to ensure the greatness of them, an idea that he took from Ancient Olympia and that reflected the conception that the Baron had about Olympism as the complete human manifestation by uniting again, as in antiquity, muscle and spirit. Coubertin himself (1973c, 1986b, 2012e) insists that Olympism was a doctrine of brotherhood of body and spirit.

4.5 THE DISAPPEARANCE OF MODERN ART COMPETITION IN OLYMPIC GAMES

For Cagigal, it was apparently not known if what made the International Olympic Committee to suspend these artistic events in 1949 was the certain meanness of the organizers to grant awards -many awards were not granted because the works were considered low or poor- or the little vital attraction that the Olympic theme had on the artists, (1961, p 177).

Various pretexts were handled. It seemed clear that much of the leadership of the IOC were not very enthusiastic about this approach of the Olympics, which was so less spectacular (Cagigal, 1961).

Durántez emphasizes that art competitions on the occasion of the Olympic Games did not develop equally throughout the seven Olympics (1912-1948), "finally in 1949, [...], they were suppressed and it was agreed that they subsisted as mere 'exhibitions'" (2009, p. 83).

Both Cagigal (1961) and Durántez (2009) claim that the art competitions of the Olympic Games were abolished in 1949, while Müller (1986, 2012b) claims that they were eliminated by the IOC in 1951 and replaced by exhibitions in future Games. Bolanaki (2015) refers to a report accepted at the IOC session in Vienna in 1951 in order to assert that the motion was adopted to change the artistic competitions for art exhibitions due to a decision taken at the meeting in Rome in 1949.

It would also be important to note that in his book *Through the Olympic rings*, Mayer (1962) argues that in the 44th IOC session in Copenhagen in 1950, after seven art competitions had taken place in the Games from 1912 to 1948, they decided for the first time, and under the new Olympic rules, that Helsinki, the city that would host the 1952 Olympics, organized an "exhibition". According to Mayer (1962), previously, at the 42nd IOC Session in London in 1948, they decided that women were admitted to the art competitions of the Games after several previous refusals.

Callebat thinks that the interventionist focus established to approach the topic - for example, by the Royal Academy of Arts-, the difficulties inherent to any custom work, 'the indecision of sculptors and painters to cross a forgotten threshold' and, perhaps even more as Coubertin suggests, the orientations of contemporary art, contributed to the relative failure of the association -and it could have been fruitful, as it was in the Greek age- of the arts, literature and sport (1988, p. 202).

The void left in the competitive organization of the Games and the exclusion of artistic competitions made that subsequently they were replaced by the "Cultural Olympics", which was the way to name the wide range of activities related to music, art, science, etc. that were scheduled on the occasion of the Games which were to be held (Durántez, 2009).

According to Müller, the success of the artistic events in the Games reaffirms this agreement, even though, from the point of view of Coubertin, artistic competitions were of great value in its overall system. Fortunately, he did not live long enough to see these competitions abolished (2012b, p. 624).

Some National Olympic Committees assimilated the old illusion of Coubertin and ran, "especially in recent decades [fifties of the twentieth century], into the arms of particular organizations towards the spiritualization and culturalization of Olympism" (Cagigal, 1961, p. 177).

In 1952, the exhibition-contest "Olympia in the present German art" took place in Frankfurt with encouraging success. Also in 1952 the "Olympia Art Exhibition" was organized in Helsinki which coincided with the Olympics in that city. In 1956, the Polish Olympic Committee convened an interesting competition of sports art, whose results were probably closest to "homo faber" than "homo ludens". The German Olympic Committee, also in 1956 but this time in Munich, presented the artistic competition "German Olympia", which was also held in Munich in 1959 (Cagigal, 1961).

For García Romero, the relationship between poetry and sport, between culture and sport in general, has not reached today a direct link as the one it had at certain stages of the history of ancient Greece, particularly during the archaic and classical times, and it is currently limited to the cultural activities that the organizers of each Olympiad prepare on the occasion of the Games, not related to them or directly related to the sport phenomenon. Nothing comparable today with the decisive influence that sport exerted on the great Greek sculpture or

the very abundant metaphors and images taken from the field of sport that fill the works of Homer, Aristophanes, Plato, or the orators (1992b, pp. 59-60). Finally, Cagigal (1961) writes that one of the largest chasms separating the modern Olympism from the Greek one was the current lack of artistic and cultural impact.

5. CONCLUSIONS

One of the ideas that Coubertin pursued with more determination and tenacity was holding art contests within the framework of the modern Olympic Games, which was finally achieved in Stockholm in 1912. In Coubertin's thinking, the idea was one of the pieces of the puzzle that helped to complete his project. For Coubertin, artistic competitions were so important in the modern Olympic Games that they had the same status as any sports competition. Coubertin wanted the artists to be inspired by sport, and reveal their aesthetic emotions, like Pindar, to exaggerate and enhance the Olympics.

Even at the end of his life, Coubertin recalled that one of the essential values of Olympism was beauty, through the participation of the Arts and Thought in the Games, an idea that he took from Ancient Olympia and reflected the conception that he had on the Olympism as a complete human manifestation by joining, inspired by ancient Greece, the physical and the spiritual.

Coubertin would have experienced a profound disappointment if he had lived the disappearance of the art competitions from the official program of the Olympic Games since they must be physical and spiritual events for him. The harmonious combination between sport and art and literature in the Olympics was what made them great and distinguished them from the global or international championships.

Coubertin himself insisted that Olympism was a doctrine of brotherhood of body and spirit, a way of thinking that implied a complete view of life in which culture, art and sport coexisted.

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