

plays, games and sports meant for the general public, who knew little of their local culture. Strutt was simply aware of the people, who would read his book. The unique language style in *Sports and Pastimes of the People of England* was used deliberately by Strutt to make a vivid portrayal of 18<sup>th</sup>-century England and its culture. He made use of prose, poetry and drama but also legal documents and dictionaries to make his book as useful and versatile as possible.

In Chapter Four “Joseph Strutt and his account of the sports of nobility” the readers can learn that Strutt “was forced to rely on his own intelligence” as he had no access to ethnographic theory. But his passion and love of his nation did not allow him to leave the theory aside. For that reason he collected antiquities in order to preserve them for the posterity. Chapter Four discusses different varieties of popular sports of the nobility, e.g. hunting, hawking, horse racing, tournaments, archery, games of strength, games of ball, water sports, sedentary games and their development through time.

Chapter Five reveals how Strutt tried to examine different social roles to define some general characteristics of his contemporaries. For the purpose of his work he had to establish who the common people and the elite were, which was not an easy task those days. The chapter includes information about the conversion of some popular games of the nobility into games of the common people. In presenting the wide, historical context of English sports tradition Maćków makes references to the *Declaration of Sport* of James I published on 24<sup>th</sup> May 1618 and to the 17<sup>th</sup>-century annual

Cotswold Olimpick Games. These early events had undoubtedly some influence on the development of English attitude towards practicing sports. Then she provides examples of ‘elite’ and ‘popular’ games and contrasts them with the pastimes of the aristocracy mentioned in Chapter Four.

The final chapter is wholly dedicated to entertainment and rituals. Maćków observes here that music and drama have much in common with ‘sport’ and its etymology as provided by the *Oxford English Dictionary*. She describes some of Strutt’s examples of theatrical performances, dancing, poetry, music, animal performances and popular rituals.

Agata Maćków’s study is indeed an outstanding work on a forgotten and neglected pioneer of European ethnography. The readers are offered a great opportunity to find out about the historical background of English sports, which constitute an indispensable part of English and world culture.

One aspect missing in Agata Maćków’s book is a comparison of Joseph Strutt’s study and ideas with other works of English-language and European authors on English sport heritage, tradition and history. However, without a doubt, *Joseph Strutt as a writer on the history and folklore of sports* is a remarkable work that can be recommended to all those interested in the rich culture of English-speaking nations.

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**Zbigniew Borysiuk**, *Modern Saber Fencing* with an accompanying DVD *Saber Technique and Tactics*, SKA SwordPlay Books, Staten Island, New York 10314, USA, 2009, pp. 235.

Zbigniew Borysiuk’s monograph *Modern Saber Fencing* with an accompanying DVD *Saber Technique and Tactics* is primarily directed to collegiate fencing communities in the United States and other countries. The book consists of twelve chapters preceded by the author’s extensive acknowledgements and a preface by Edward Korfanty, U.S. Olympic Women’s Saber Coach.

Chapter One contains the author’s reflections on the Beijing Olympic fencing tournament in 2008. In Chapter Two Borysiuk outlines the evolution of all fencing weapons from combat swordplay to sport fencing. He also describes the progressive character of the Polish saber school and the contributions of the great fencing master Michał Ostoja Starzewski during the apex of saber fencing

development in 19<sup>th</sup>-century Poland. The introduction of a lighter saber (up to 800 grams) and allowing natural movements and much faster fencing bouts in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century by the Italian fencing master Giuseppe Radaelli are also discussed. The development of fencing as a sport was also greatly affected by Luigi Barbasetti (Radaelli's student and the Headmaster of the Weiner-Neustadt Fencing Academy) and a number of Hungarian masters propagating the "stealthy" fencing footwork. The most important theoretical and practical models of the fencing schools from the 19<sup>th</sup> and the early 20<sup>th</sup> century became the foundations for the international successes of Polish fencers in the late 1950s, when the Polish national saber team defeated the Hungarian team (incumbent world champions) at the Fencing World Championships in Budapest in 1959. Zbigniew Borysiuk concludes his discussion of Polish fencing successes with Jerzy Pawłowski's Olympic victory in 1968 in Mexico City, but it should be remembered that Polish sabreurs also achieved important successes later, e.g. Janusz Olech's silver medal at the Seoul Olympics in 1988.

Chapter Three is a synthesis of the main transformations in saber technique and tactics in the late 1980s and 1990s. Borysiuk analyzes the combat styles of the top world fencers of the last twenty years and presents their fencing actions (in percentages). He duly notices that the introduction of electronic scoring into saber fencing had an important impact on the reduction of bout time and it limited the number of fencing actions. Due to these changes saber bouts became less spectacular; however, fencers' actions on the piste became more understandable to an average spectator. Overall, they contributed to a decrease in the attractiveness of saber fencing and its marginalization in comparison with foil or epee bouts.

Chapters Four and Five describe modern saber technique and forms of training. Borysiuk discusses the basic elements of saber footwork, saber fencing rules, fencing actions and training methodology. Samples of individual saber fencing lessons at the introductory, intermediate, specialized and championship training levels are presented as well as the basic training forms, e.g. pair exercises, queue exercises and fencing dummy training. The two chapters include a great deal of information on the tactical significance of offensive, defensive and offensive-defensive

actions, classification of fencing actions and the concept of motor habits.

In Chapter Six the author discusses the principles of fencers' proper nutrition during both fencing training and competition. The proper nutrients and water and electrolyte balance are shown to be crucial for successful fencers. This kind of information has been extremely rare in professional fencing literature, and the contents of this chapter are absolutely novel in Polish fencing literature. The author points to fencers' old dietary habits and cautions against reaching for stimulants, e.g. alcohol, and doping.

Chapters Seven and Eight focus on fencing research, e.g. on talent identification and selection in fencing. Borysiuk observes that fencing talent identification should account for psychomotor abilities rather than general fitness predispositions as well as opinions of experts and developmental parameters of fencers.

Chapter Nine presents methods and tools of fencing training assessment, many of which have not been discussed in Polish fencing literature but can be extremely useful in the process of selection and examination of fencers' sports level in terms of their somatic build, physiological and psychomotor predispositions, personality traits, temperament and special preparation. The author demonstrates his own practical assessment tool for measurement of fencers' predispositions, consisting of several tests.

The concepts of reaction time and movement time in fencing are discussed in Chapter Ten. Borysiuk demonstrates here a practical implementation of the assessment system discussed in the previous chapter. He also analyzes results of measurement of sensori-motor responses using surface electromyography (sEMG) for recording reaction time and movement time during the performance of various motor tasks. The chapter includes an analysis of results of a novice-expert paradigm of training of simple and complex reactions to three types of stimulation: visual, tactile and acoustic. Borysiuk also examines fencers' responses to two types of anticipatory signals: spatial and temporal as well as the speed of their sensorimotor responses.

Zbigniew Borysiuk's research results can be effectively implemented in perceptual training and training of motor habits with the use of intrinsic and extrinsic feedback.

In Chapter Eleven entitled "Information processes, stimulation and perceptual training" the

author analyzes responses to different stimulation types (visual, tactile, acoustic) and their use in fencing training with regard to different psychological types of fencers. The variability of the studied parameters was shown to be statistically significant and dependent on fencers' training experience.

The last chapter is a methodological presentation of training and perfecting all technical and tactical fencing actions with regard to fencers' sports level.

In my opinion Zbigniew Borysiuk's book meets the expectations of both the author and the publisher. It constitutes a great example of application of high quality research in training of saber fencers at different sports technical and tactical levels. The first five chapters and Chapter Twelve are typically methodological, whereas Chapters Six – Eleven are rather research oriented. The language of the monograph is easy to understand for any fencing coach, athlete or layperson. The illustrative material in the book is truly impressive and it was prepared with valuable contributions from the European women's saber champion Aleksandra Socha and Monika Kościucha from the AZS Warszawa Athletic Club. The accompanying DVD contains useful fencing tutorials with Polish Olympic women's fencers carried out by the Polish National Fencing Coach Arkadiusz Roszak and the author himself. The DVD footage also contains group and individual footwork training techniques, individual fencing lessons and technical-tactical pair exercises carried out the author with two saber fencers from the

Polish National Team – Wojciech Marczak and Jan Karkosz.

Finding a more competent and interesting author on saber fencing than Zbigniew Borysiuk would be a very difficult task. *Modern Saber Fencing* is based on a plethora of valuable bibliographic sources in Polish and other languages, and it is a result of the author's long-term extensive research. The readers of the book are able to easily grasp the meaning of sports training and sports results and get to know the precise mechanisms of fencing training and competition. The monograph follows the current tendencies in sport training historiography stressing training methodology.

In his book Zbigniew Borysiuk focuses on issues of training known to him from his fencing research and coaching experience. *Modern Saber Fencing* is a practical manual and a report on contemporary diagnostic tools in fencing, which will be definitely well-received by the coaching community.

In conclusion I would like to emphasize the high educational, methodological and scientific value of Zbigniew Borysiuk's publication. It is an immense contribution to the theory of sports training, fencing practice as well as to the general field of physical culture sciences. It should be disseminated as a great source of state-of-the-art knowledge.

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