THE STORY OF THE RINGS

By Karl Lennartz*

Preliminary remarks

The Olympic ceremony has always been an interest of mine. When Dietrich R. QUANZ showed me a Dunlop advert from 1896 with five rings and four continents two years ago (see below) I started collecting data on the history of the Olympic rings. The handing over of the stolen "original flag" by "Harry" PRIESTE from Antwerp to Sydney made me suspicious. The rectification by Jacques ROGGE in a letter to the editor of the *Journal of Olympic History* gave me the final impulse to write this article. It is dedicated to the new IOC president Jacques ROGGE whom the *International Society of Olympic Historians* heartily congratulates on his election. We are sure of being able to cooperate with him just as well as with his predecessor Juan Antonio SAMARANCH and we express the hope that the research on the history of the Olympic movement can still be progressed further.

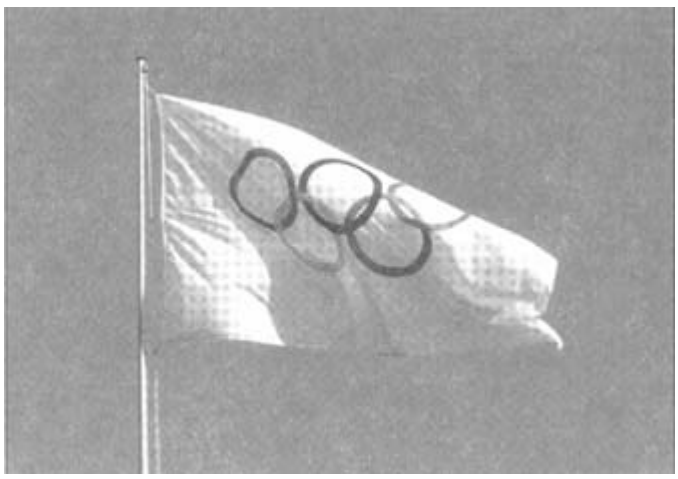

Figure 1: The Olympic flag (postcard taken from: *IOC archive)*

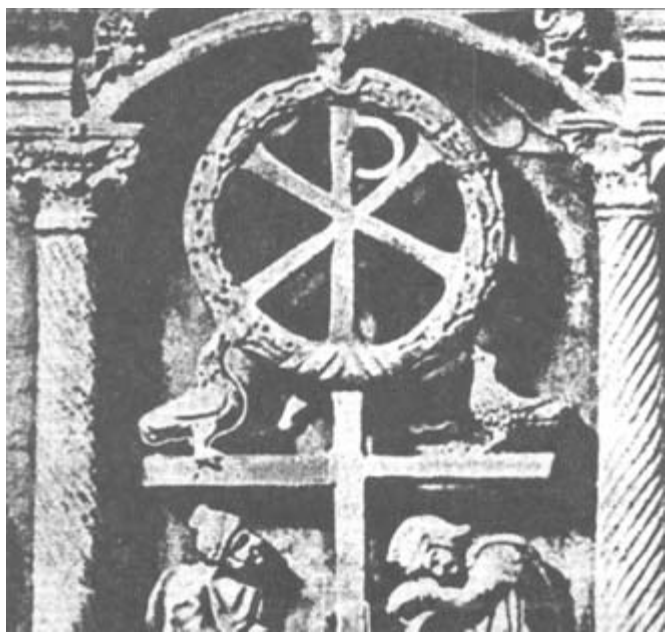

Figure 2: Early representation of the Vexillum (Labarum) at a sarcophagus (from: DÖRRIES, Hermann, *Konstantin der Grosse,* Stuttgart 1958, illustrations p. 12)

Everyone has his own logo

Nowadays every organisation attaches great importance to having a logo, a symbol of recognition. Whoever sees the logo is supposed to know, immediately who or what is meant by it and which message it expresses. As a rule, a positive impression is to he conveyed. Logos are not an invention of our times. Some have been used for thousands of years. The field symbol (vexillum) with the sign of the cross which supposedly helped the Emperor CONSTANTINE 325 a.d. to win the battle of the Milvian bridge, is often named as an example.

There are logos in the whole world which are recognised by nearly everyone. These include e.g. in the religious area the Christian cross or the Islamic crescent, in economic concerns the writing of Coca Cola or the Mercedes star, and in aid organisations the red cross (respectively the red crescent), or, in more general terms the dove as a symbol of peace.

It should not he concealed that there are also logos which provoke only negative feelings or are even prohibited e.g. the swastika, used by the German national socialists [Nazis], or the yellow Jewish star employed by the Nazis for means of discrimination.

Sport has always used logos. From the colour of the Byzantine jockeys to the flags of the Ferraristi there existed a large scope in this respect. The Olympic rings enjoy the highest degree

* For the translation I owe a debt of gratitude to Gerard KING, to Tony BIJERK for proofing the draft and Anne DÖRR for making corrections.

of familiarity and hopefully an also still equally high positive image.
A short time ago, in a quiz of a German television station the question was asked what the colours of the rings were. But the quizmaster did not go as far as to ask for who "invented" it.

The IOC needs a logo

When the sport congress called together in 1894 in the Sorbonne in Paris by Baron Pierre de COUBERTIN decided on June 23 to reintroduce the Olympic Games, the Olympic movement did not vet have a symbol of recognition. That is if one does not regard the motto *"citius, altius, fortius"* with which the diplomas were furnished as a symbol of recognition.

Figure 3: Diploma of the Olympic Founding Congress 1894 in Paris (from: *Private archive Lennartz*)

Resourceful auctioneers often have a seal with an "IOC" imprint and the year *"1896"* as the logo of the I[st] Olympic Congress on offer. Since the IOC first named itself *"International Committee of the Olympic Games"* and the current name *"International Olympic Committee"* can, verifiably, only be followed back to at the earliest 1897[1], the seal must have been printed later. It was probably used for the VI Olympic Congress 1914 in Paris, which celebrated the 20-year jubilee of the Olympic movement.

Figure 4: Seal of the Olympic Congress in Paris 1914 (from: *Private archive Lennartz*)

Like so many sport associations and organisations the IOC also wanted to have a symbol of recognition. The introduction of an IOC flag was discussed for the first time during the 12[th] Session 1910 in Luxembourg. Theodore COOK who had already taken care of the Olympic Games 1908 in London as an organiser and their artistic implementation, and who had also written a paradigmic official report, presented a model of a flag and the design of medals[2]. Unfortunately we do not know what this flag looked like. The flag and the medals were handed over to be dealt with by a commission with the members COOK, Godefroy de BLONAY (SUI), Jules de MUSZA (HUN), Clarence von ROSEN (SWE) and Eugenio BRUNETTA d'USSEAUX (ITA). The commission held a meeting which brought a proposal, but the result was not accepted by the general assembly. COUBERTIN let the matter be adjourned.[3] The subject does not seem to have been raised again in the next Session in 1911 in Budapest, nor in the one after that in Stockholm in 1912. However the question of a "permanent" emblem for the IOC was discussed once more at the 115[th] Session in May 1913, in Lausanne.[4] The proposal from Cook was rejected and the old badge retained. This badge should give the IOC members access to all events of the Games. It has nothing to do with a logo but is rather more like a "badge" handed out by the various organising committee's since 1896. Since 1908 these were made out of metal and identify the various participant groups.

1 *"Comité International Olympique"* in the newspaper *Le Petit Havre* on August 1, 1897 (No 6155).
2 The aim was the design of a permanent winner's medal. It took until 1927 until a permanent model could be found.
3 Protocol of the 13[th] IOC Session 1910, p. 9-10. *(IOC archive).*
4 Protocol of the 15[th] Session 1912, p. 26 *(IOC archive),* of the 16[th] Session 1913 in: *Revue Olympique* 13(1913)6, p. 98.

Coubertin's scheme

A few months later COUBERTIN then presented his scheme which he explained in detail in the August issue of the *Revue Olympique*[5] edited by himself:

"The emblem and the flag of 1914

The emblem selected to illustrate and represent the 1914 world congress which was to place the final seal on the restoration of the Olympics began to appear on various preliminary documents: five rings linked at regular intervals, their various colours - blue, yellow, black, green and red - standing out against the white of the paper. These five rings represent the five parts of the world now won over to Olympism, ready to accept its fruitful rivalries. In addition, the six colours combined in this way reproduce the colours of every country without exception. The blue and yellow of Sweden, the blue and white of Greece, the tricolor flags of France, England, the United States, Germany, Belgium, Italy and Hungary, and the yellow and red of Spain are included, as are the innovative flags of Brazil and Australia, and those of ancient Japan and modern China. This, truly, is an international emblem. It was made to be turned into a flag, and the look of the flag would be perfect. It is a light, appealing flag, a delight to see fluttering in the wind. Its meaning is largely symbolic. Its success is assured, to the point that after the Congress it can continue to be raised on solemn Olympic occasions. However this may turn out, the celebrations of 1914 now have the eurythmic messengers they needed to announce them. The great poster; the first copies of which have been given to the national Olympic Committees and which continues to be available to them, met with immediate general admiration. The reduction to post card format is equally successful for that medium. The five rings and their various applications will also be deeply appreciated.

Are these five rings solidly riveted together? Will war some day shutter the Olympic framework? This is an issue we have been asked about before, and since the occasion presents itself; we are pleased to respond. Olympism did not reappear within the context of modern civilisation in order to play a local or temporary role. The mission entrusted to it is universal and timeless. It is ambitious. It requires all space and all time. One must acknowledge that its initial steps immediately marked it out for that future. That being the case, war can merely delay, not stop, its advancement. As the preamble of the Regulations for the next Congress state, 'an Olympiad may fail to be celebrated, but neither the order nor the interval may be changed'. If God forbid, the Seventh or Eighth Olympiads were unable to be celebrated, the Ninth Olympiad would be held. If bloody memories, still too fresh, made it impossible to hold the necessary celebrations in one part of the world, there will be people on the other side of the world ready to honour the eternal youth of humanity.

In addition, a more sporting conception of war - the word is not inappropriate - is becoming predominant. This will not make the heated exchange any less harsh, but it will make the aftermath somewhat more easily tolerated. People will learn a great lesson from the athlete: hatred without battle is not worthy of man, and insult without blows is utterly unbecoming.

Perhaps we have strayed from our topic. Let us return to it, repeating that war cannot influence the future of the Olympics. Once peace is restored, the International Committee will be at its post ready to continue its worldwide work. That is why the new emblem eloquently evokes both conquered terrain and guaranteed endurance."[6]

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5 *"«L'emblème et le drapeau de 1914.*

L'emblème choisi pour illustrer et représenter ce Congrès mondial de 1914 qui mettra le sceau définitif à la rénovation olympique a commencé d'apparaître sur divers documents préliminaires: cinq anneaux régulierement enlaces dont les coloris differents - bleu jaune, noir, vert, rouge -se detachent sur le fond blanc du papier. Ces cinq anneaux représentent les cinq parties du monde désomais acquises à l'Olympisme et prêtes à accepter les fécondes rivalités. De plus les six coulers ainsi combinées reproduisent celles de toutes les nations sans exception. Le bleu et jaune de Suède, le bleu et blanc de Grèce, les tricolores français, anglais, américain, allemand, belge, italien, hongrois, le jaune et rouge d'Espagne voisinent avec les innovations brésilienne ou australienne, avec le vieux japon et la jeune Chine. Voilà vraiment un emblème international. Il était tout indiqué d'en faire un drapeau, et l'esthétique en sera parfaite. Un pareil drapeau est léger, chatoyant, spirituel à voir flotter; il a un sens largement symbolique. Son succès est assuré: si assuré même qu'après le Congrès, on pourrait bien le maintenir en usage et l'arborer aux solennités olympiques. Quoiqu'il en soit, les fêtes de 1914 ont dès à présent, pour les annoncer, les messagers eurythmiques qui convenaient. La grande affiche dont les premiers exemplaires ont été offerts aux Comités Olympiques nationaux et qui reste à leur disposition a soulevé, dès son apparition, l'admiration générale. La réduction en cartes postules n'est pas moins réussie dans son genre. On appréciera de même les cinq anneaux et leurs applications variées.

Sont-ils solidement rivés l'un à l'autre, ces cinq anneaux? La guerre ne risque-t-elle pas quelque jour de briser l'armature olympique? Voilà une question qui déjà nous fut posée et à laquelle, puisque l'occasion s'en présente, nous ne sommes pas fâchés de répondre. L'Olympisme n'a pas reparu au sein de la civilisation moderne pour y jouer un rôle local ou passager. La mission qui lui est confiée est universelle et séculaire. Il est ambitieux; il lui faut tout l'espace et tout le temps. On reconnaîtra que ses premiers pus l'ont de suite marqué pour une telle carrière. Cela étant, une guerre ne saurait que contrarier et non pas arrêter sa marche. Comme l'indique le préambule des Règlements du Congrès prochain 'on peut ne pas célébrer une Olympiade mais ni l'ordre ni les intervalles ne peuvent en être changés'. Si, ce qu'à Dieu ne plaise, la VII^me^ ou la VIII^me^ Olympiades venaient à ne pouvoir être célébrées la IX^me^ le serait. Si des souvenirs sanglants et trop récents encore interdisaient d'organiser en quelque partie du monde les fêtes nécessaires, il y aurait de l'autre côté de la terre des peuples prêts à honorer l'éternelle jeunesse humaine.

Aussi bien une conception de la guerre plus sportive - le mot n'est pas déplacé - tend à prédominer qui ne rendra point la passe d'armes moins dure mais

COUBERTIN himself interpreted the five rings as the five parts of the world, *"les cinq parties du monde",* which meanwhile participated in the Olympic Games. He could only have meant the five continents Africa, America, Asia, Australia and Europe. Only American, Australian and European athletes were represented at the first Olympic Games in 1896 in Athens, whereas a year previously – 1912 Stockholm – all five continents had been present. From Africa, South Africans[7] and Egyptians and from Asia[8] Japanese athletes had competed in the Games. The American sports historian David YOUNG, and after him his fellow countryman Robert BARNEY teaching in Canada, doubted the correlation concerning the five continents. Especially YOUNG thinks it possible that instead the rings would stand for the countries that had held Olympic Games until the jubilee congress in 1914. To support his argument he refers to the list of the countries in COUBERTIN'S article in the *Revue Olympique:* Sweden (in 1912), Greece (in 1896), France (in 1900), England (in 1908) and America (in 1904). Then follow Germany (in 1916), Belgium (in 1920), and eventually Italy, Hungary, Spain, Brasil, Australia, Japan and China.[9] Some questions must be asked concerning YOUNG'S theory. Why does COUBERTIN not list the correct sequence – Athens, Paris, etc.? How does COUBERTIN know which country the Games are to be held in, in 1920? Up til 1914 Budapest had been the "strongest" candidate. What was supposed to have been meant with *"les cinq parties du monde"* other than the five continents? Would he not have written *"état"* instead? Other than the Americans (YOUNG), the Europeans regard America as just one continent. YOUNG remarks that COUBERTIN did not write *"cercles",* but *"anneaux",* translated with *"chain"* by YOUNG.[10] He even states that after each Olympiad a ring was supposed to have been added to the flag. It also has to be asked why the flag then did not consist of a chain after 1914? Which colour was the sixth, seventh etc. ring to have? The Canadian sport historian Fernand LANDRY also argues against YOUNG'S theory. He refers to an article of COUBERTIN that was published on April 5, 1927 in the *Messager d'Athènes*:

> *"The great Olympic flag is hoisted up the same pole that it is to remain on for the duration of the Games. It was criticised when I designed it.*[11] *Today everyone likes it. It is white, as you know with five interlinked rings, blue, yellow, black, green, red, representing the five parts of the world united in Olympism."*[12]

It is surprising how much importance COUBERTIN already adheres to the rings in his article. He recognised their huge symbolic value and was sure of their success. The statements on a possible war and the cancellation of the Games even seem to indicate clairvoyant abilities too.

The meaning of the colours

The five colours of the rings – blue, yellow, black, green and red[13] – and the background white can in fact be found on all flags of the world – in regard to the year 1913. COUBERTIN did not hint at an allocation of the colours respectively the rings to a continent.[14]

Here one should also shortly focus on the symbolism of the colours. The allegorical meaning given to a colour is very different in the various civilisations and religions. Some colours are even associated with negative qualities. Some examples:

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en fera sans doute les lendemains plus supportables. Les peuples apprendront la grande leçon du sportif: à savoir que la haine sans bataille est peu digne de l'homme et que l'injure sans coups en est tout à fait indigne.
Nous voici peut être un peu loin de notre sujet. Revenons y en répétant que le cas de guerre ne saurait influer sur l'avenir olympique et que la paix rétablie trouverait le Comité International à son poste prêt a continuer l'œuvre mondiale. Voilà pourquoi le nouvel emblème dans son éloquent langage n'évoque pas seulement l'espace conquis mais aussi la durée assurée» (COUBERTIN, Pierre de, "L'emblème et le drapeau de 1914", in: *Revue Olympique* 13[1913]8, p. 119-120). The article is not signed but was doubtlessly written by COUBERTIN.

6 COUBERTIN, Pierre de, *Olympism. Selected Writings,* ed. MÜLLER, Norbert (ed.), Lausanne 2000, p. 594-595.

7 Already since the Olympic Games in St. Louis in 1904.

8 Possibly 1900 already an Indian and from Africa an Algerian athlete in the French rugby team and in 1908 a Turk.

9 YOUNG, David C., "Coubertin and the Olympic Logo", in: MANGAN, J. A. (cd.), *Proceedings of the XIth HISPA International Congress,* Glasgow 1985, p. 126-327. More detailed in: "The Riddle of the Rings", in: BANDY, Susan, *Coroebus Triumphs,* San Diego 1998, p. 257-289, especially p. 268-272. BARNEY, Bob. "This Great Symbol", in: *Revue Olympique* 23(1992)301, p. 629.

10 In dictionaries *"anneau"* is translated with *"ring", "cerele"* with "circle" and chaîne" with "chain".

11 But nothing can be read on this anywhere.

12 *«Le grand drapeau olympique monté alors au mât où il doit flotter pendant la durée des Jeux. On l'a critique quand je l'ai dessiné. Aujourd'hui sa popularité s'affirme partout. Il est blanc, comme vous savez, avec cinq anneaux enlacés bleu, jaune, noir; vert, rouge représentant les cinq parties du monde unies par l'Olympisme»* (COUBERTIN, Pierre de, "L'œuvre de l'Union Pédagogique Universelle. La renaissance du gymnase hellénique. La conférence de M. de Coubertin au Parnassos [jeudi, 31 mars 1928]", in: *Le Messager d'Athènes* [05.04.1927], p. 3:
Compare COUBERTIN, Pierre de, "La valeur pédagogique du cérémonial olympique", in: *Bulletin du bureau International de Pédagogie Sportive* (1931)7, p. 5.

13 Top: blue, black, red, bottom: yellow, green.

14 *"The colours of the rings are Blue for Europe, Yellow for Asia, Black for Africa, Green or America and Red for Australia"* (United States Olympic Association [ed.], *Report of the United States Olympic Committee. Games of the XIV Olympiad,* New York 1948, p. 14. But there are also other numerous colour allocations.

Israeli: White for purity and holiness, blue for the colour of god, the sky,
Islam: Green the colour of the prophet,
Ancient times: White and black for good and evil, green for hope, red for life and danger (Egypt), yellow for dignity,
Christianity: White for purity, red for earthly existence, black for sin, yellow for infamy, red for godfather, blue for the Son of God and Maria, green for the holy spirit,
Middle ages: Red for love, blue for loyalty, white for innocence, black for mourning and green for hope, yellow for jealousy, brown for bondage.
Finally it should also be referred to colours of political movements that still have an identification character today.

The origin of the idea

Where does the original idea come from to regard the rings as the five continents? The rings can be interpreted as a stylised wreath. Laurel or olive wreaths singly or interwoven were a popular decoration element in the 19th century. They were often handed over by goddesses of victory. These depictions are also to be found on the medals and diplomas of the early Olympic Games. Furthermore successful athletes received wreaths - the gymnasts received wreaths mainly made of oak leaves - at the Olympic Games 1912 in Stockholm and 1936 in Berlin.
COUBERTIN commenced his sport career as secretary-general of the *Comité Jules Simon* called into life by him in 1888. In 1890 he became secretary-general of the *Union des Sociétés Françaises des Sports Athlétiques* (USFSA) founded in 1887 respectively 1889. The logo of this association consisted of two interlaced rings. Above these was a band with the inscription *"Ludus pro Patria"*. During competitions athletes of this association bore both rings on their jerseys and also later at the Olympic Games. Countless photographies still exist. One of the earliest "Olympic" pictures shows the rugby team of the USFSA in their match against a German team on October 14, 1900 in Paris.[15] Since the 2nd International Olympic Games 1906 in Athens the t-shirt with both the rings seems to be the official shirt of the French team.[16]

Figure 5: Oaks-leave wreaths for the winners of the 1912 Stockholm Olympic: the Swedish tug-of-war team (from: HERMELIN, Sven/PETERSON, Erik, *Den Femte Olympiaden,* Göteborg 1912, p. 383)
Figure 6: Victory wreaths on medals:
Back of a victory medal of the National Olympian Games 1868 in Shrewsbury (from: *Private archive Lennartz*)
Figure 7: Victory wreaths on diplomas: Victory diploma of the Olympic Games 1908 in London (from: *Private archive Lennartz*)

[15] The French middle distance runner Albin LERMUSIAUX is supposed to have worn both the rings on his shirt at the Olympic Games 1896 in Athens (YOUNG, "Riddle", p. 266). But so far no photography of him has turned up.
[16] Until the Games 1912 in Stockholm (including).

Figure 8: Logo of the USFSA (from: *Private archive Lennartz*)

Figure 9: The rugby team of the USFSA before their match against Germany at the Olympic Games in Paris 1900 (from: *Sport im Bild* 6(1900), p. 645)

Figure 10: Just before the marathon race at the 2nd Olympic Games 1906 in Athens, at the front in the middle, one of the two Frenchmen is Émile BONHEURE or André ROFFI (from: SAVVIDIS, Pan. S., *Leukoma ton en Athenais B' Diethnon Olympiakon Agonon,* Athens 1907, p. 62)

So the two USFSA rings could have been a model for the five rings of the Olympic logo. But where did the rings of the USFSA come from? COUBERTIN is supposed to have designed this logo in 1890 as well, according to information given by his grandnephew Geoffrey de NAVACELLE.[17] The USFSA was a union of several smaller older sport organisations, respectively sport associations, practising all kinds of sport disciplines. The *Racing Club de France,* founded on April 20, 1882 and the *Club Stade Français,* founded on December 13, 1882 formed a union on November 29, 1897 with the *Francs-coureurs,* founded in 1887 or a little earlier and at first named themselves *Union des Sociétés Françaises de Courses à Pied.* By suggestion of their president Georges de SAINT-CLAIR the members changed their name into *Union des Sociétés Françaises des Sports Athlétiques* (USFSA)[18] on November 29, 1889. When preparing this paper Dietrich R. QUANZ pointed out a series of advertisements by the firm Dunlop, in the journal *Radfahr-Chronik* to the author. The firm advertised for the *Dunlop Pneumatic Tyre C.,* Hanau with a changing text for their bycicle tires in more than a dozen editions of the 1896 volume.[19] In the centre of the advertisements covering a whole page there is a drawing. Four angels – recognisable by their costume and complexion, respectively physiognomy and connected by a band with the inscription *"Africa", "America, "Asia"* and *"Europe"* – representing four continents hold five interlaced bycicle tires while flying. The fifth continent – Australia – is missing.[20]

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17 COUBERTIN, *Olympism,* p. 595.

18 SCHANTZ, Otto, „Organisation et institutionnalisation du sport en France au XIX^{e} siècle (1815-1914)", in: Centre National d'Enseignement à Distance (cd.), *Cours et documents d'accompagnement. Agrégation EPS,* écrit I, Grenoble 1999, p. 12-13.

19 For the first time in: *Radfahr-Chronik* 9(07.03.1896)46, p. 646, then (04.04.1896)54, 3. cover page, (11.04.1896)56, 3. cover page, (18.04.1896)58, p. 862, (25.04.1896)60, p. 906, (02.05.1896)62, p. 946, (13.06.1896)76, p. 1192, (20.06.1896)76, p. 1236, (26.06.1896)78, p. 1276.

20 *Radfahr-Chronik* 9(1896)2, no. 53-104.

Figure 11: A Dunlop advertisement with five rings (from: *Radfahr-Chronik* 9[1896]62, p. 646)

Figure 12: An advertisement of the firm Acatène refering to Baron de COUBERTIN (from: *Radfahr-Chronik* 9[1896]61, p. 933)

Did COUBERTIN maybe once see this advertisement and remembered it when he designed the Olympic symbol? Probably, yes! The paper contains another advertisement for a bike made by the firm Acatène. In this advertisement, 33 aristocratical personages are named as references, including *"Baron de Coubertin"*. Since all recorded names, also those of German aristocrats, are written in French and the firm Acatène was also seated in France, it may be assumed with high probability that the advertisement was taken from a French bicycle journal. The firm Dunlop also advertised in French professional journals.

A Japanese standing shade (size 210 x 320 cm), depicting a festive society of women and children in large palace grounds shows the five rings closely resembling the Olympic symbol as a decoration element in the right bottom corner. The shade was made in 1710 and today it belongs to the museum for the art of Japanese varnish in Münster.[21]

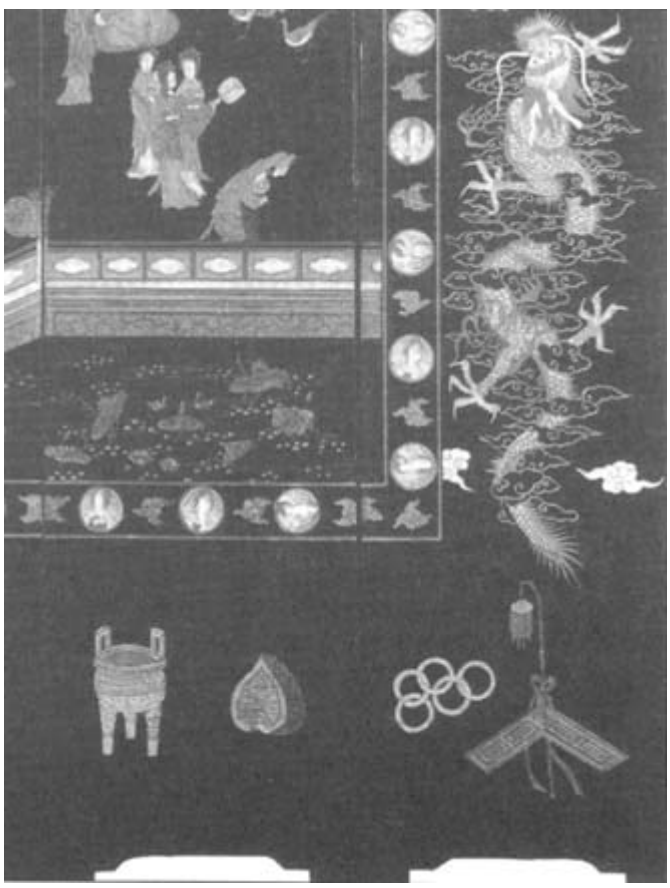
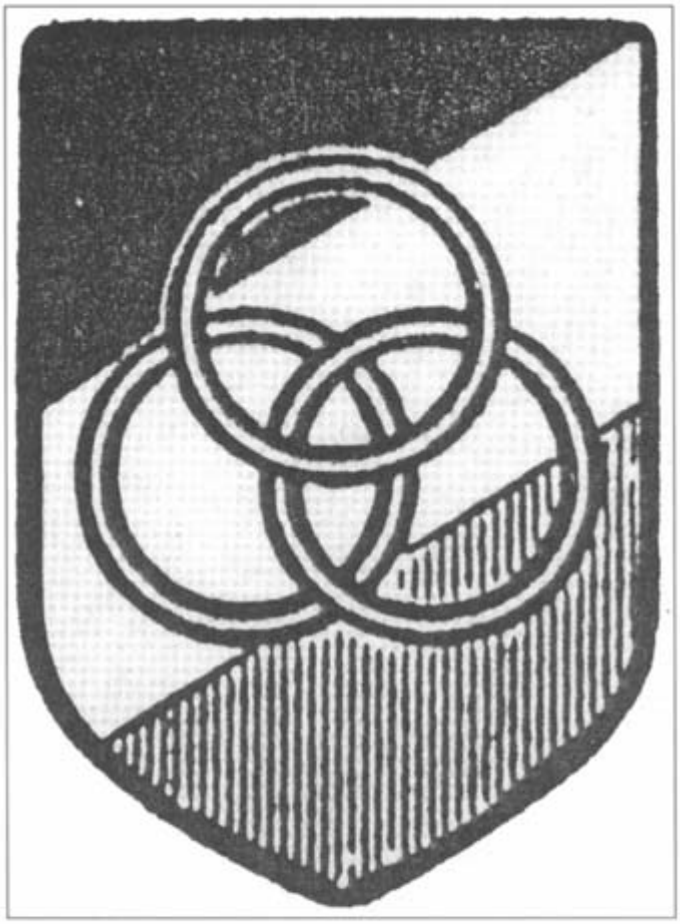


Figure 13: Detail of a Japanese standing shade with the five rings (from: KOPPLIN, *Lackkunst,* 105-106)

[21] KOPPLIN, Monika, *Ostasiatische Lackkunst. Ausgewählte Arbeiten,* Münster no year, cat. no. 13, figure p. 105-106. Walter BORGERS pointed out this shade to the author.

Several large firms use rings as their logo. First is to be mentioned the firm Krupp, which used three interlaced rings (two at the bottom, one at the top) – stylised train wheels – since 1875. Krupp exhibited at the world exhibitions of 1889 and 1900 in Paris and received numerous awards. COUBERTIN could have known the logo. The four rings of the firm Audi only exist since 1932: Union of Audi, Horch, DKW and Wanderer to the Auto Union AG. The six rings of Olympic Airways emerged even later. An imitation of the Olympic rings is hardly deniable.



Figures 14-16: Logos of the firms Krupp, Audi and Olympic Airways (from: *Private archive Lennartz*)

Designs

COUBERTIN had probably "only" designed the logo for the Olympic Congress 1914 in Paris. When? Possibly shortly after the Session in Lausanne in April 1913 because the topic was not discussed there. Did he really send posters to the NOCs for viewing? Had postcards of the rings already been printed? Copies of these then should be found in archives or with collectors. These would have been mentioned in one of the many articles that have been written on the Olympic Games. Why then, does he present the logo – strangely enough without a picture, but only via a description in words – in August 1913 in the *Revue Olympique?* Though, elsewhere pictures already exist. COUBERTIN had printed the logo on the letterhead of the Olympic jubilee congress and they were coloured. The oldest letter bearing this logo in possession of the IOC archive in Lausanne is addressed to Godefroy de BLONAY and dated: *"Paris, July 15, 1913".* The rings are printed in the top left and the colours are not of a particularly high quality. COUBERTIN wrote a second letter to BLONAY on August 6, 1913 from the Hotel Quellenhof in Ragaz (Switzerland). The contents of the letters have nothing to do with the logo. Perhaps there still exists an early document in which COUBERTIN presents his friend with the logo and explains it to him. Under the logo of the letter from the 6th August, someone (BLONAY?) tried to give an arrangement of the five rings using a pencil.

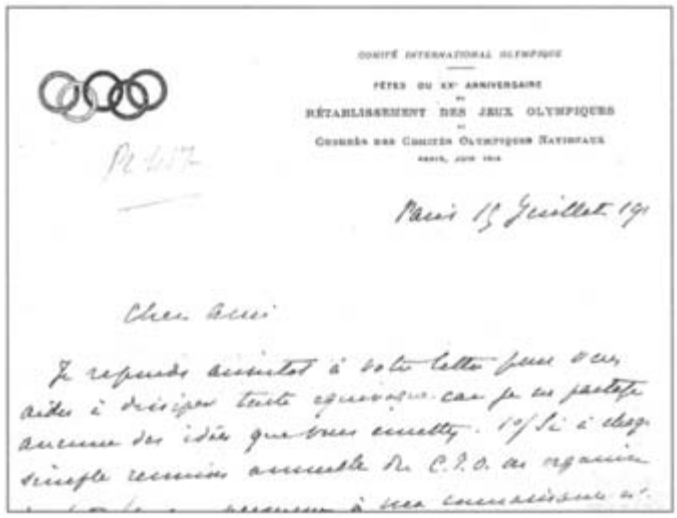


Figure 17: Letterhead of a document from July 15, 1913 addressed to de BLONAY (from: *IOC archive*)

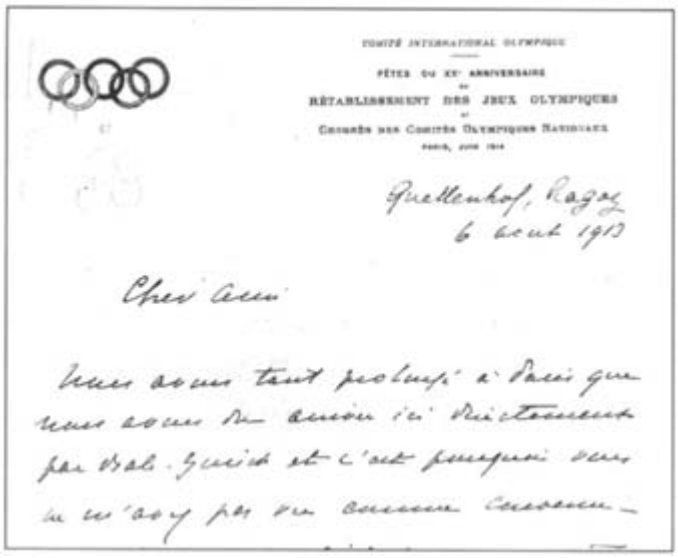


Figure 18: Letterhead of a document from August 6, 1913 addressed to de BLONAY with pencil corrections (from: *IOC archive*)

"Final test" in Alexandria

COUBERTIN mentions a flag with the five rings in his essay in the *Revue Olympique*. This reference and the drawing on the letterhead roused interest. Angelo BOLANAKI, IOC member in Egypt since 1910, received COUBERTIN'S permission to already, and thus for the first time, show the Olympic flag on April 5, 1914, at the opening of the Chatsby stadium in Alexandria within the framework of the first Panegyptian games[22]. COUBERTIN probably had a flag made in Paris and sent it to Egypt. Unfortunately no photography of the opening of the stadium in Alexandria has turned up so far. BOLANAKI writes in his *Histoire du Sport en Egypte,* that the flag was blowing in the wind *„à l'occasion de la célébration en Egypte du 20e anniversaire du Rétablissement des Jeux Olympiques".* [23] In 1959 he handed over large parts of his Olympic memorabilia to the Olympic museum, including the correspondence with COUBERTIN.[24] In 1960 he then also gave the flag of 1914 event in Alexandria to the museum.[25]
Originally, a photograph of this flag should have been printed with this article. However, on 18 October 2001, the Olympic Museum in Lausanne informed the author: *"we are sorry to inform you that, unfortunately, we no longer have the first Olympic flag. We this regret that we are unable to provide you with a photograph of it."*

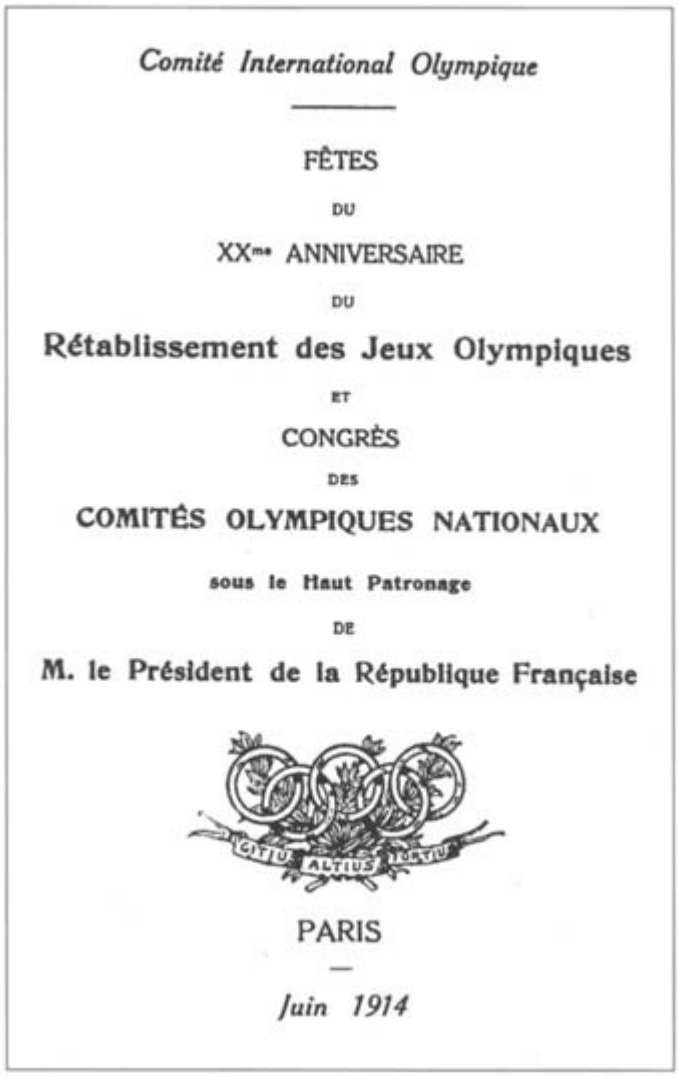
Paris in the sign of the rings

The congress, session and festivities for the 20th anniversary of the renewal of the Olympic Games took place "completely" in the sign of the five rings 1914 in Paris. At the opening ceremony of the Olympic congress on June 15, 1914 in the Sorbonne, it "flew" officially for the first time.[26] But it had already been shown on the 13th at the first meeting of the session and on the 14th at a ceremony. Unfortunately we do not have photographs of these occasions. A coloured image on the invitation to the *„Fête Nautique du 20 Juin 1914"* depicts what it might have looked like though. The Olympic flag is flown at the top of a flagpole, underneath are further flags and streamers.[27]

Figure 19: Invitation to the *"Fête Nautique du 20 Juin 1914"* (from: *IOC archive*)

22 The Games lasted three days.
23 BOLANAKI, Angelo, *Histoire du Sport en Egypte,* no place 1954, p. 6. The Olympic flag shown there is a triangular pennant and is not a photography of the flag which hung in the stadium in Alexandria but a picture taken in the Fifties.
24 The *IOC archive* does not hold a letter in which BOLANAKI asks COUBERTIN whether he can use the flag at the sport event in Alexandria. Information from 13.09.2001.
25 "+ M. Angelo Bolanaki", in: *Bulletin du CIO* 18(1963)84, p. 9-10.
26 Beforehand.
27 *IOC archive.*

It is possible that COUBERTIN was not pleased with his design without any attachments at all since he considerably changed the logo on the invitation to the jubilee congress. Behind the rings are three laurel twigs and underneath a band with the Olympic motto. The olive twigs are similar to the bunch that he had engraved on the memorial medal for the founding congress 1894. A further sketch contains just one olive twig and the Olympic motto on the decoration band. This in turn is very similar to the band on the logo of the USFSA.



Comité International Olympique

FÊTES

DU

XX^me ANNIVERSAIRE

DU

Rétablissement des Jeux Olympiques

ET

CONGRÈS

DES

COMITÉS OLYMPIQUES NATIONAUX

sous le Haut Patronage

DE

M. le Président de la République Française

CITIUS ALTIUS FORTIUS

PARIS

—

Juin 1914

Figure 20: Invitation to the Olympic jubilee congress 1914 in Paris (*IOC archive*)

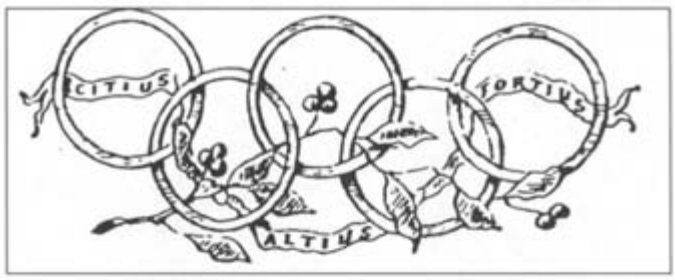


Figure 21: Rings with olive twig and motto (from: COUBERTIN, *Olympism,* p. 595)

Figure 22: Front of the memorial medal of the Olympic founding congress (*Private archive Lennartz*)

The logo had not found its way yet to all the "participants" of the congress. The printer in charge of the program of a music and dance performance on June 14, 1914 made a serious mistake in printing the rings the wrong way around – two at the top and three at the bottom.[28]

In his essay COUBERTIN mentions the possibility of also presenting the flag with the rings after the congress of Paris at Olympic events. This happened and happens abundantly perhaps too much so, as we know today. But we do not know whether any decisions were reached on this at the session, or the congress in 1914. COUBERTIN did not have a protocol of the congress printed until after the First World War, because of his defeat in the vote intending to prevent the future participation of the Bohemian and Finnish team (Olympic

28 *IOC archive.*

Figure 23: Invitation to a music and dance performance on June 14, 1914 (from: *IOC archive*)

geography).[29] The reports in the German sport journals, which were still published before the outbreak of the First World War actually only deal with discussions on the program. But they do however refer to an interesting detail. The author opens his report with the sentence:

> *"On Monday*[30] *the first session of the International Olympic Congress under representation of all nations was opened in the ceremoniously decorated hall of the Sorbonne. The International Olympic Committee was also almost completely represented. The aristocrat Windischgrätz*[31]*, the representative of Austria chaired the meeting instead of Baron de Coubertin who had unfortunately fallen ill quite suddenly."*[32]

Thus COUBERTIN did not take part in the celebrities at which "his" flag was presented officially for the first time.[33]

The Berdez letter

20 years later, COUBERTIN described in a letter dated October 9, 1935, and addressed to Albert BERDEZ[34] how the IOC colleagues reacted to the new symbol and other things that happened at the jubilee celebrations in Paris. This letter is to be found in the IOC archive and has strangely enough not been used for any interpretation yet. Thus it is fully quoted here and interpreted in the annotations:

> *"Dear Colonel Berdez,*
> *the significance of the importance of the five coloured rings representing on a white background all colours of the world* [...] *only became clear when the flag was created. Before 1913 my colleagues who had rejected the ideas of a ceremonial entry, oath, opening and closing phrase and who had only started changing their views after Stockholm, would have gone against a unification of gymnastic* [?]. *They were opposed to any opinion of this kind. I let Brunetta who was an exception concerning these views present a flag that was completely overloaded and complicated. One restricted himself to observing it without discussing it.*[35] *Towards the beginning of 1914 I then presented my deeply symbolic flag (the five continents*[36] *united by the Olympism and the colours of all nations) after having carefully reconsidered the proportions in regard to the background. I had the flag*

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29 LENNARTZ, Karl, „The Exclusion of the Central Empires from the Olympic Games in l920", in: BARNEY; Robert e.a. (ed.), *Global and Culturul Critique: Problematizing the Olympic Games. Fourth International Symposium for Olympic Research.* London, Ontario 1998, p. 69-74. LENNARTZ, Karl, "Der Ausschluß der Mittelmächte von den Olympischen Spielen 1920", in: GRUPE, Ommo (ed.), *Einblicke. Aspekte olympischer Sportentwicklung* (Festschrift für Walther Tröger zum 70. Geburtstag), Schorndorf 1999, p. 90-94.

30 June 15, 1914. The first meeting of the IOC-Session on June 13, had still been chaired by Coubertin.

31 Prince Otto WINDISCH-GRÄTZ (1873-1952), in the IOC from 1911 until 1919, was not listed as member since the Session 1919 being a representative of the IOC in a country having lost the war.

32 "Jubiläumskongreß des Internationalen Olympischen Komitees", in: *Rheinisch-Westfäl. Sportzeitung* 3(1914)26, p. 3. Thus in: *Deutsche Turn-Zeitung* 59(1914)26, p. 485.

33 Compare *Revue Olympique* 14(1914)7, p. 101.

34 BERDEZ, Albert (1885-1940), secretary-general of the IOC since the Midtwenties, professional soldier, lieutenant-colonel.

35 COUBERTIN mixed up the Count BRUNETTA d'USSEAUX with COOK who presented a flag at the session 1910. But BRUNETTA d'USSEAUX did belong to the committee treating this matter.

36 Again the reference to continents and not to single countries (see above). Compare a similar statement made by COUBERTIN shortly before the Paris congress in the *Revue Olympique* (14[1914]4, p. 63).

made in the Bon Marché (a machine had to be constructed solely for its fabrication). I think nearly 500 flags were made. I covered most of the costs via the festivities of Paris. Thus I was given a free hand as to what I spent money on. Only at the festivities in the Trocadéro did the IOC have to make a contribution. The flag appeared for the first time a two days before the commencing of the festivities at a celebration organised by the Count de Bertier[37] *and his wife in the Bois de Boulogne on Saturday June 13, 1914*[38]*. On Monday 15 the flag could be seen by a large number of people in the Amphitheatre Richelieu.*[39] *On the 17th it accompanied the president Poincaré at the 20th anniversary being borne by six boy scouts. It decorated the engine and the train station of* [...][40] *at the outing of June 19, in short, it was everywhere and many members of the congress took a flag back home with them.*

In 1915 it was in the town hall of Lausanne on the occasion of determining the seat[41]*, and 1916 at the IOC-day it had the central location at a place of honour during the exhibition in San Francisco. Thus it was not introduced in Antwerp as de Blonay writes in 1928 making a rare mistake which I have already had to correct several times.*[42] *I think that you will see these details in the Olympic Memories*[43] *but I think that it has been good anyway to again send you a detailed summary that you can hand on to Diem*[44] *the way it is."*

During and after the war

At Olympic Games the flag was supposed to be hoisted for the first time in 1916 in Berlin. The event became a casualty of the First World War.

COUBERTIN received a second request for the use of the flag: In the spring of 1915 an exhibition took place in San Francisco at which the flag was hoisted at a sport event of the exhibition – *"International Olympic Committee Day"* – on March 18.[45]

Thus it came to Lausanne for the first time in 1915 (see above) and hung in the assembly hall of the university during the 18th Session and the combined 25-year celebration from April 5-8, 1919. There exist no photograph's of these events.

Antwerp 1920

The flag made its Olympic debut a year later at the VII Olympic Games in Antwerp. For a long time, and possibly still today, the Olympic Games 1920 in Antwerp are regarded as a white patch on the map of historic research on the Olympic movement. Probably, the reason is that only a provisional and a very short official report was produced. This "skeleton edition" was typed on a typewriter, seven years later, and then copied. The author was Alfred VERDYCK, the secretary-general of the organising committee.[46] The Games in Antwerp were no autonomous enterprise but rather a part of the *»Fêtes d'Anvers» ("Feedten van Antwerpen"),* which were held in the town from April 15 to October 15 and which apart from the Olympic Games, included many festivities and exhibitions (art, flowers, agriculture, motors, sport, industry, trade, colonies), The overall management soon had great financial problems and could not pay for a printed official report anymore, like for example those of the Games of 1908, or 1912. But we can now fall back onto photograph's as a reference for the first time. A picture taken at the opening ceremony on August 14, 1920 has often been published.[47] In the interior of the stadium the teams stand behind their flags and look towards the audience stand with the Belgian King and the honorary guests in their box. In the background we see a high flagpole with the Olympic flag between the cinder-track and the grandstand at the height of the centre line. The flag could be the size of three by six metres. On the roof of the stand and within the stadium flags of the participating nations can be recognised. The flagpole and Olympic flag correspond to what we are used to seeing in an Olympic stadium today.

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37 BERTIER de SAUVIGNY, Count Albert (1861-1948), IOC member from 1904 to 1920.

38 Correct: Sunday, 14. July (Revue Olympique 14[1914]7, p. 101).

39 Ceremonious opening of the congress.

40 Gare de Maintenon. The engine bore a transparent with *"1894-1914"* (*Revue Olympique* 14[1914]7, p. 107).

41 On April 10, 1915 the town council of Lausanne decided to fulfil COUBERTIN'S wish to grant the IOC its seat in Lausanne.

42 The relationship between COUBERTIN and BLONAY was not that good anymore in the Twenties.

43 The book had been published in 1932, so that was three years before. The details passed on to BERDEZ arc not to be found there.

44 Carl DIEM, the secretary-general of the organising committee in charge of the Games 1936 in Berlin had informed himself on the history of the Olympic flag with BERDEZ while preparing the ceremonial of the opening and closing ceremony. In the *Diem archive* however, no data can be found on this.

45 *Bulletin du CIO* 19(1964)87, p. 45-46.

46 Comité Exécutif des Jeux d'Anvers (Hg.), *Rapport Officiel,* Typescript, Antwerp no year [1927]. A reprint was „published" in 1964.

47 Probably printed first in: BERGVALL, Erik, *VII Olympiaden,* Stockholm 1920, Vol. 2, p. 74. The photography was also sold as postcard. Two further photographies that were taken from a slightly different angle are to be found in: American Olympic Committee (ed.), *Report. Seventh Olympic Games Antwerp, Belgium 1920,* Greenwich 1920, p. 34, 41.

Figure 24: View of the stadium of Antwerp during the opening ceremony of the VII Olympic Games (from: *IOC archive*)

The photograph again opens up a new question. The Olympic Games in Antwerp already commenced at the end of April with ice hockey and figure skating, and in July and the beginning of August were followed by other sport disciplines, this being before the opening ceremony, Had the Olympic flag already also been hoisted then in the various sport arenas? In the summer of 2000, a few months before commencement of the Olympic Games in Sydney, "sensational" news was going through the world press: The American Hal Haig "Harry" PRIESTE, the then oldest living medal winner being 103 years old, claimed towards journalists that he was in possession of the Antwerp Olympic flag. After winning the bronze medal in high diving he and Duke KAHANAMOKU[48] had crept into the stadium, climbed the pole and taken the flag. The police had disturbed them though but they had been quicker. Strangely PRIESTE[49] had already stated this for the first time in 1997. Three years later journalists organised a return of the flag. PRIESTE, meanwhile nearly blind, very deaf and mainly sitting in a wheelchair but mentally still on top was flown to Sydney and handed over the flag to Juan Antonio SAMARANCH during the session shortly before the Games. PRIESTE was then one of the honorary guests at the opening ceremony. He died a few months later on April 19, 2001. The return of the stolen flag was an important topic for the press throughout the whole world to interest their readers in the coming Games. Again and again articles were written on the „official" Olympic flag.[50] The impartial reader must gain the impression that this must have been the flag that the IOC president and the Mayors of the „old" and „new" Olympic city had waved so „enthusiastically" at the closing ceremony.[51] What really happened and was actually stolen in Antwerp was then examined by the Belgian member and current president of the IOC, Jacques ROGGE, and reported on in a letter to the editor in the *Journal of Olympic History"*. From the official Olympic report on the Antwerp Games it can be deducted that the flag hanging in the stadium on August 14 was stolen but that the thieves had been caught. On August 20, Olympic flags were stolen from three places in the vicinity of the stadium. PRIESTE was supposed to have stolen his flag on August 29 – the day he won his bronze medal. The flag that PRIESTE handed over to the IOC has the measurements 135,5 by 94 centimetres. This alone proves that this cannot be the original much larger flag (about three by six metres) which was hanging in the stadium.[53]
What is it about that so-called official Antwerp flag though? Clues on this, but also on the "large" flag in the stadium, can be found in the official report:

> *"After the equestrian competitions the Belgium NOC donated an Olympic flag embroidered on silk to the IOC in memory of the Games in Antwerp. Coubertin asked the municipal authorities of Antwerp to keep this flag and to hand it over to the authorities in Paris in 1924.*
> *Eventually after an impressive silence the president spoke the closing phrase:*[...]
> *As on August 14*[54]*, the Theban trumpets were sounded and cannons were audible while the Olympic flag was lowered down the large pole.*"[55]

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48 KAHANAMOKU (1890-1968) was then the best swimmer in the world, he won a gold and a silver medal in 1912, two gold and one silver medal(s) in 1920, and was substitute in the USA water polo team in 1924 and 1928, later he was an actor, and he is also considered to be the „inventor" of the sport surfing.

49 After the Games in Antwerp PRIESTE was active as an artist in circuses and variety theatres, as actor and figure skater. In 1996 he bore the torch for a short stretch on the way to Atlanta.

50 E.g. SMITH, Mike, "Hero of 1920 Returns the Flag", in: *The Daily Telegraph* (11.09.2000). Also compare the press collection in the *IOC archive*.

51 At the same time before the Games in Sydney it was often reminded that the Australian star swimmer Dawn FRASER had been caught stealing an Olympic flag 1964 in Tokyo that was hanging in the emperor's palace, and that she had been suspended for ten years thus terminating her career.

52 In: *Journal of Olympic History* 11(2001)1, p. 40.

53 The correction that PRIESTE could not have stolen the large flag that was hanging in the stadium is not included in his detailed obituary in the *Revue Olympique* ("Haig 'Harry' Prieste", in *Revue Olympique* 30[2001]39, p.90).

54 The day of the opening ceremony.

55 *»Les jeux équestres terminés, le C.O.B. offrit au C.I.O., en souvenir des Jeux d'Anvers, un drapeau olympique brodé sur soie, dont le Baron de Coubertin confia la garde à la Municipalité d'Anvers, qui avait pour mission de la faire remettre en 1924, à la Municipalité de Paris.*
Enfin, au milieu d'un silence impressionnant, le Président prononça la formule de clôture: [...]
Comme le 14 août, les trompettes thébaines retentirent, le canon tonna, et, tandis qu'était amené du grand mât le Drapeau Olympique, [...] (Comité Exécutif des Jeux d'Anvers [ed.], Rapport Officiel des Jeux de la VII[eme] Olympiade, Anvers 1920, Typescript, Antwerp 1927, p. 50-51»).

Figure 25: The first known photograph of the traditional Olympic Flag. It can be seen on the far left side at the medal ceremony on August 30, 1920 for both Aileer Riggin and Helen Wainwright (USA), fist and second in highdiving. The medals were awarded by King Albert I and Crown Prince Leopold. (from: BERGVALL, Erik, *VII Olympiaden,* Stockholm 1920, p. 199)

As stated the *Belgian NOC* had a flag fabricated with satin and brocade embroidery. The equestrian competitions took place, as the last event of these Games, from 6 to 12 September, but the closing ceremony, with most of the victory-ceremonies had already been held on August 30. On this day the flag must have already been available in the stadium for this special purpose. For as you can see the flag is clearly distinguishable on one of the photographies of a victory ceremony, respectively in the film of the Games, on the left hand corner of the pictures.[56] Perhaps COUBERTIN received the flag from the Mayor (?) after the last presentation ceremony of the equestrain competitions on September 12.

Possibly, Count Henri de BAILLET-LATOUR, the president of the organising committee of the Antwerp Games, came up with the idea to order the production of such a precious flag.[57] The handing over of this flag to the city of Paris mentioned above was certainly arranged beforehand with COUBERTIN. In the first edition of the Olympic charter[58], which COUBERTIN probably had printed in 1921, the following is said on the regulations of the closing ceremony:

> *"Under the salut of five cannon shots and accompanied by a closing song the Olympic flag is lowered from the main pole. At the same time the president of the IOC on the honorary stand hands over the silk embroidered flag, supplied by the B.O.C., that he has just received from the Mayor of the town of the prior Games, to the Mayor of the town.*[59] *The flag is to be kept in the town hall until the next Games."*[60]

COUBERTIN also anchored the rules for the "large" flag in the stadium and the "smaller" ones at other sport sites:

> *"The flags*
> *In the area of the Olympic stadium as well as all other Olympic sites an Olympic flag is to fly together with the flags of the participating nations. A large Olympic flag hangs on a central pole in the stadium where it shall be hoisted at the opening ceremony and lowered at the closing ceremony."*[61]

COUBERTIN added these new parts to the ritual of the opening and closing ceremony. Like many other things he probably did this single-handed. However the ceremonial aspect does not seem to have been discussed at the sessions 1920 and 1921 or at the Olympic congress in 1921.
The regulations in the text of the "charter" and the reference of ROGGE to the flags at the Antwerp sites makes it appear probable that the flags already bearing the five rings were hanging at all sport sites in 1920.

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56 BERGVALL, *Olympiaden,* p. 199. MÜHLEN, Bengt von zur, *100 Jahre Olympische Spiele der Neuzeit. 1896-1996,* Video. Band 2, *Olympische Sportbibliothek* München 1996.

57 Carl DIEM utters this in a letter dated 21.07.1947 to Sigfrid EDSTRÖM who informed himself on the flag's history with DIEM (correspondence in the *Diem archive*).

58 The Olympic congress 1894 and the 2nd Session 1896 had decided on several basic principles but there was no statute. But COUBERTIN now and again published – for the first time 1908 – brochures *(„Annuaires"),* in which he on a few pages provides some information on the IOC's work, rules and statistics. The continuously more important Games, the majority of the participating countries and especially the claims of world sport associations of influencing program questions respectively to be represented in the IOC, made it necessary to have a statute. The protocol of the 21st session 1922 in Paris contains in its appendix a *"Charte des Jeux Olympiques".* A year previously – to be deduced by the names of the IOC members – a brochure with the same content and the title *"Statuts"* had been published (*IOC archive*). On the top left of the title page coloured rings are printed and below them is the Olympic motto.

59 Where the Games are just about to end.

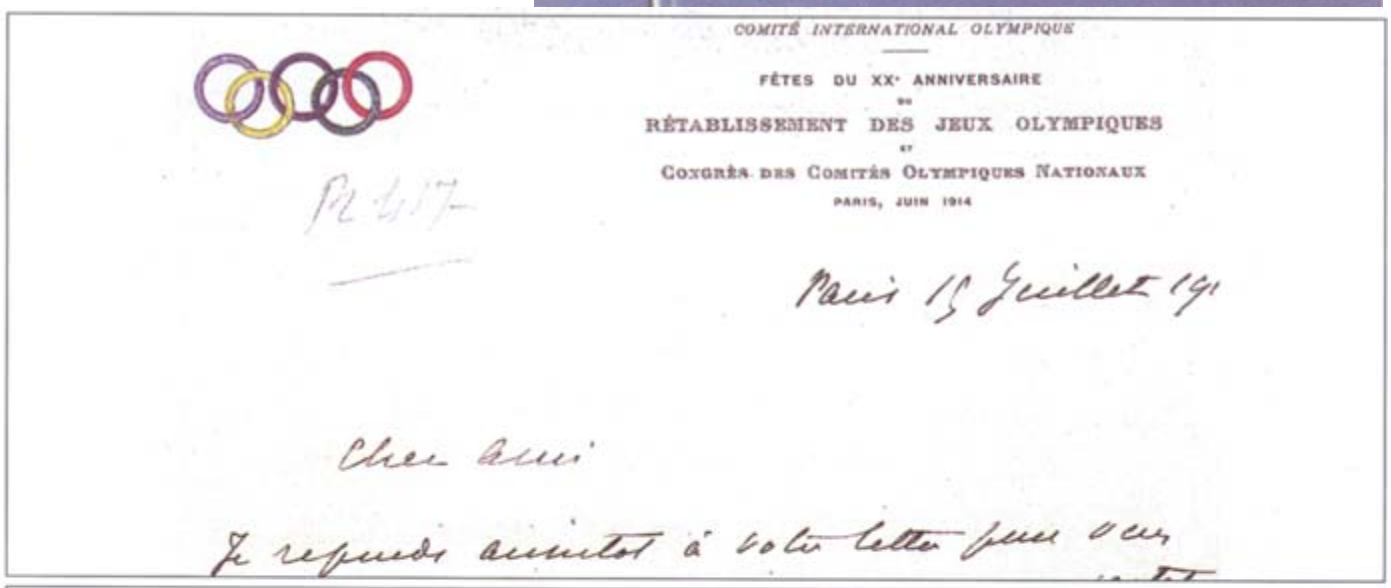
60 *»Le drapeau Olympique descend du mât central salué par cinq coups de canon et les chœurs chantent la cantate finale. En même temps le Président du Comité International, dans la tribune d'honneur, remet au maire de la ville le drapeau Olympique en satin brodé donné en 1920 par le Comité belge et qu'il a reçu des mains du représentant de la ville où ont eu lieu les précédents Jeux. Ce drapeau doit être conservé au palais municipal jusqu'à l'Olympiade suivante»* (IOC [ed.], *Statuts. Règlements et protocole de la célébration des Olympiades Modernes et des Jeux Olympiques quadriennaux,* no place, no year [Lausanne 1921], p. 10).

61 *«DRAPEAUX*
Dans l'enceinte du Stade ainsi que dans toutes les enceintes Olympiques, le drapeau olympique doit être abondamment mêlé aux drapeaux des nations concurrentes. Un drapeau Olympique de grandes dimensions doit flotter pendant les Jeux au Stade à un mât central où il est hissé au moment de la proclamation de l'ouverture des Jeux et d'où il est descendu quand la clôture en est prononcée» (IOC [ed.], *Statuts,* p. 12).

Figure 1: The Olympic flag (postcard taken from: IOC *archive)*

Figure 17: Letterhead of a document from July 15, 1913 addressed to de BLONAY (from: *IOC archive*)

Figure 18: Letterhead of a document from August 6, 1913 addressed to de BLONAY with pencil corrections (from: *IOC archive*)



COMITÉ INTERNATIONAL OLYMPIQUE

FÊTES DU XX^e ANNIVERSAIRE
DU
RÉTABLISSEMENT DES JEUX OLYMPIQUES
ET
CONGRÈS DES COMITÉS OLYMPIQUES NATIONAUX
PARIS, JUIN 1914

Paris 15 Juillet 191

Cher ami

Je reponds aussitôt à votre lettre pour vous

COMITÉ INTERNATIONAL OLYMPIQUE

FÊTES DU XX^e ANNIVERSAIRE
DU
RÉTABLISSEMENT DES JEUX OLYMPIQUES
ET
CONGRÈS DES COMITÉS OLYMPIQUES NATIONAUX
PARIS, JUIN 1914

Quellenhof, Ragaz
6 août 1913

Cher ami

Merci de votre tout prochain à Paris que

Figure 19: Invitation to the *"Fête Nautique du 20 Juin 1914"* (from: *IOC archive*)

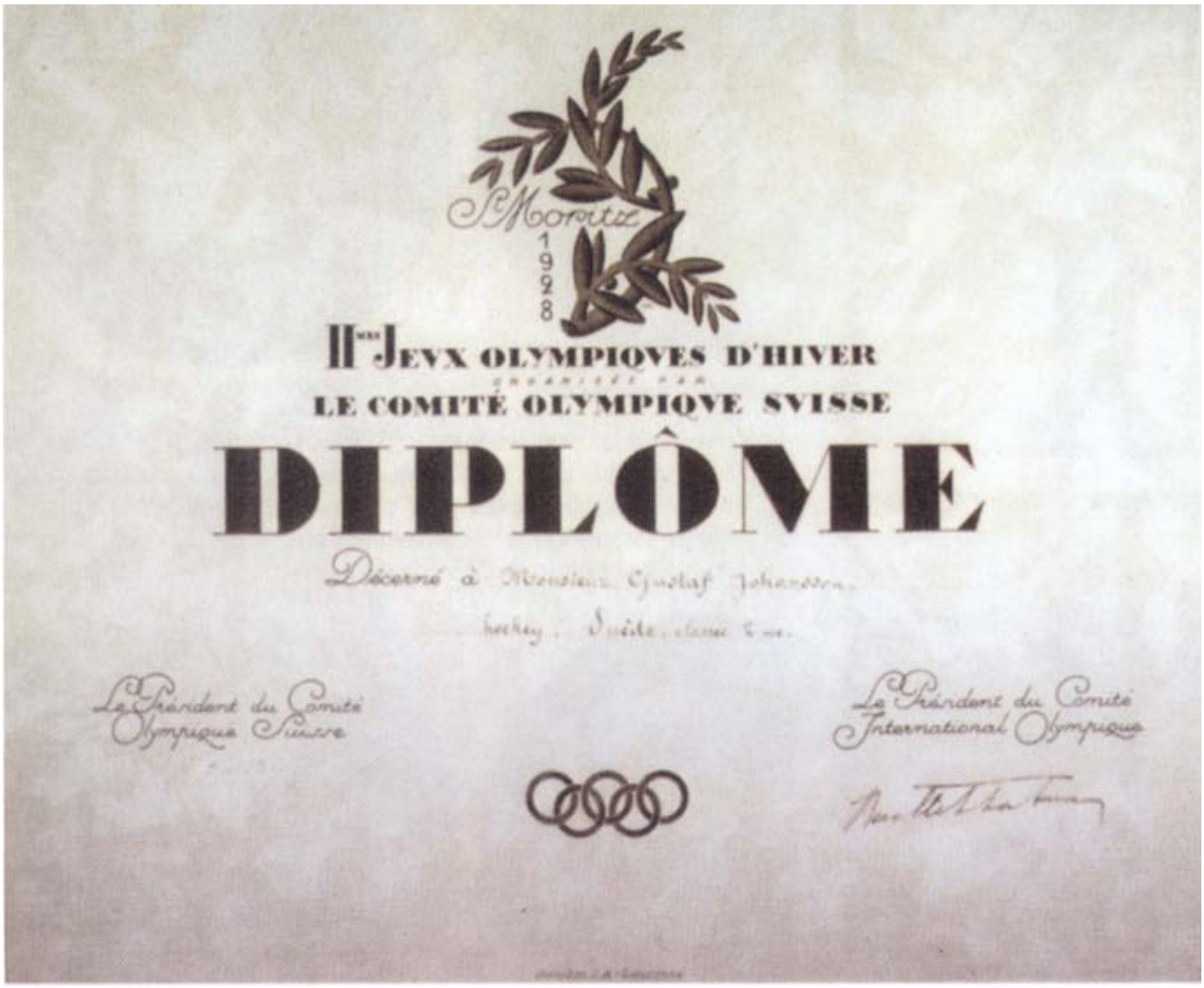
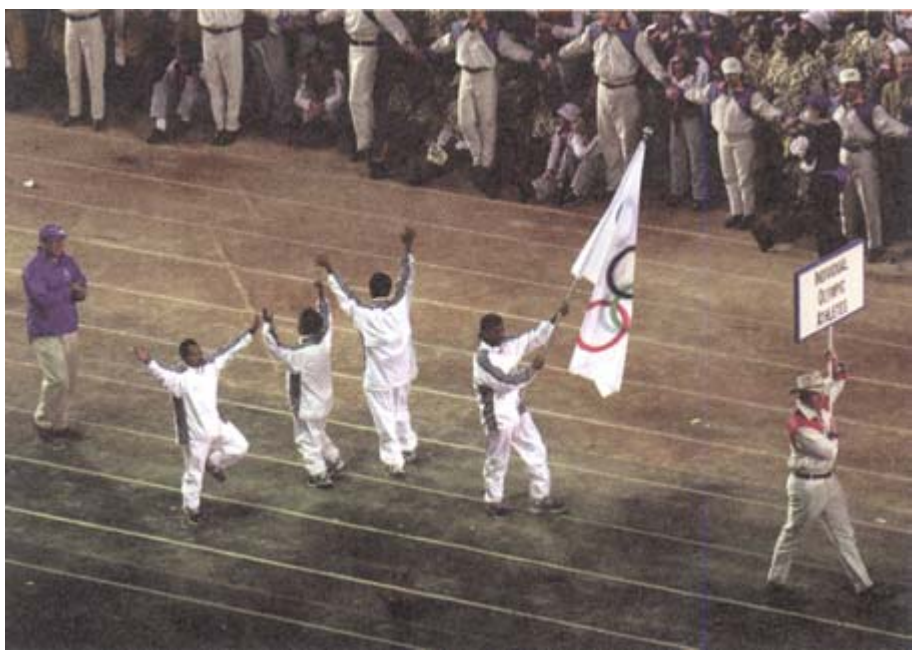


Figure 34: The winner's diploma of the II Olympic Winter Games 1928 in St. Moritz (from: *Private archive Lennartz*)
Figure 32 and 33: The backside of the winner's medal and front of the memorial medal of the II Olympic Winter Games 1928 in St. Moritz (from: *Private archive Lennartz*)

Figure 39 and 40: The two Portuguese extra charge stamps (from: *Private archive Rathjen, IOC archive*)

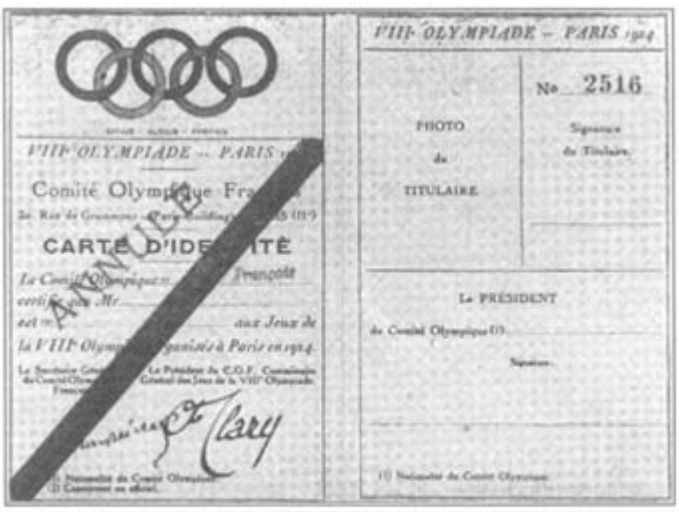
Figure 51: Out of protest against the invasion of Afghanistan by the USSR the Luxembourg team refuses participation in the opening ceremony. Merely the NOC-sign and the Olympic flag are carried into the stadium by a Russian volunteer (from: *Olympisches Feuer* 30[1980]4, title page).

Figure 52: Athletes with IOC t-shirts from the Eastern Timor delegation (from: © IOC/Olympic Museum Collections, photo Giulio Locatelli)



Paris 1924

The triumph of the Olympic logo really commenced at the VIII Olympic Games 1924 in Paris, as a look at the many pictures bearing the rings in the official report demonstrates. It is not just the countless flags in the stadiums, but also the advertisements for the Games on posters, on house walls, on curtains in bureaus of the organising committee, on accreditations, on admission tickets and even on the badges for officials, athletes and journalists, all bearing the five rings next to the logo of the French NOC. The Olympic flag is also recognisable on a picture taken at the winter sports week in Chamonix that was later declared the I[st] Olympic Winter Games[62]. But this does not prevent the designer respectively the printer of the official report from again „standing the rings on their head".[63]



Figures 26-29:
Accreditation card, badges, department stores' adverts, winter sports week, (from: Comité Olympique Français, *Jeux,* p. 791, 821, 832, 715)

When Comte Justinien de CLARY stepped into a sort of pulpit at the opening ceremony in order to after a short greeting ask the president of the French republic for the opening phrase, and when at the end of the event Geo ANDRÉ stood there to pronounce the Olympic oath, this pulpit was picturesquely draped with an oversize Olympic flag.

Figure 30: Rostrum draped with the Olympic flag (Comité Olympique Français, *Jeux,* p. 85).

But before ANDRÉ could pronounce his oath the large flag was hoisted:

> *"The Olympic flag with its five interlaced rings is hoisted to the highest point of the main pole."*[64]

After the IOC president COUBERTIN had spoken the closing phrase after the presentation ceremony on July 27, the flag

62 Comité Olympique Français (ed.), *Les Jeux de la VIII[E] Olympiade. Rapport Officiel,* Paris 1924, p. 715, 718, 813, 814, 816, 817, 820, 821.
63 Comité Olympique Français, *Jeux,* p. 839.
64 »*Le drapeau olympique, avec ses cinq anneaux enlacés, est hissé au sommet du mât central*« (Comité Olympique Français, *Jeux,* p. 84).

ceremonial is performed for the first time completely as we know it today:

> *"The Olympic flag was lowered accompanied by five cannon shots. Then the Greek, French and Dutch flags were lowered and the choir sang 'Chœur de la Muette' by Auber and the 'Hymne à la France' by Ambroise Thomas. At the same time the IOC president gave the embroidered silk flag, supplied in 1920 by the Belgium NOC and which he had just received from the Mayor of Antwerp, to the chairman of the city council of Paris. The flag is to be kept in the town hall of Paris until the IX. Olympiade."*[65]

The president of the *»Conseil municipal de Paris»,* Maurice QUENTIN, then held – probably unique in the history of the closing ceremonies – a speech singing the praise of the importance of the Olympic flag in many sentences. He said that it symbolised the high values that had revealed themselves with so much glamour at the sport competitions and that it was an honour for Paris to be allowed to keep it for four years.[66]

Figure 31: Handing over of the flag at the closing ceremony 1924 in Paris (Comité Olympique Français, *Jeux,* p. 615)

The rings everywhere

The "triumph" of the rings continued four years later. The organisers of the II Olympic Winter Games 1928 in St. Moritz "dared" to for the first time adorn the winner's medal (backside), the memorial medal (front) and also the winner's diploma with the rings.

Figure 32 and 33: The backside of the winner's medal and front of the memorial medal of the II Olympic Winter Games 1928 in St. Moritz (from: *Private archive Lennartz*)

[65] *»Le drapeau olympique est amené, salué par cinq coups de canon. Puis sont descendus, à leur tour, les trois drapeaux grec, français et hollandais et les chanteurs entonnent le 'Chœur de la Muette', d'Auber et l 'Hymne à la France', d'Ambroise Thomas. En même temps, le Président du Comité Internationale Olympique remettait au Président du Conseil Municipal de Paris, le drapeau Olympique en satin brodé, donné en 1920 par le Comité Olympique belge, et qu'il venait de recevoir de M. le Bourgmestre d'Anvers, drapeau qui doit être conservé à l'Hôtel de Ville de Paris jusqu' en 1928, date de la célébration de la IX^e^ Olympiade«* (Comité Olympique Français, *Jeux,* p. 615).

[66] Comité Olympique Français, *Jeux,* p. 615.

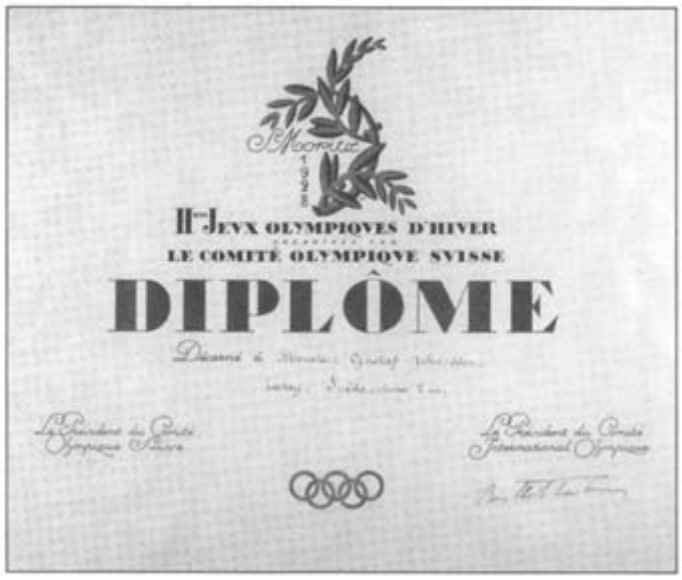


Figure 34: The winner's diploma of the II Olympic Winter Games 1928 in St. Moritz (from: *Private archive Lennartz*)

After this they "stayed" on the diplomas and the winners' medals of the Winter Games and the memorial medals of nearly all Games.

Since the IOC had committed itself after accepting the design made by the Italian Giuseppe CASSIOLI in 1927 to a permanent winner's medal it took until 1976 – in that year the backside had been granted a free design – until the rings also appeared there for the first time in the form of the Montreal emblem.[67]

Figure 35: The backside of the winner's medal of the XXI Olympic Games 1976 in Montreal (from: *Private archive Lennartz*)

In order to advertise for the II Olympic Winter Games in St. Moritz the rings were for the first time placed on the official poster of the Games. The American NOC was probably the first to include the rings in their emblem and therefore also in the jersey of their athletes. While in Paris the official flag was still handed over in the stands, in Amsterdam in 1928 this took place in the middle of the stadium visible to everyone.[68]

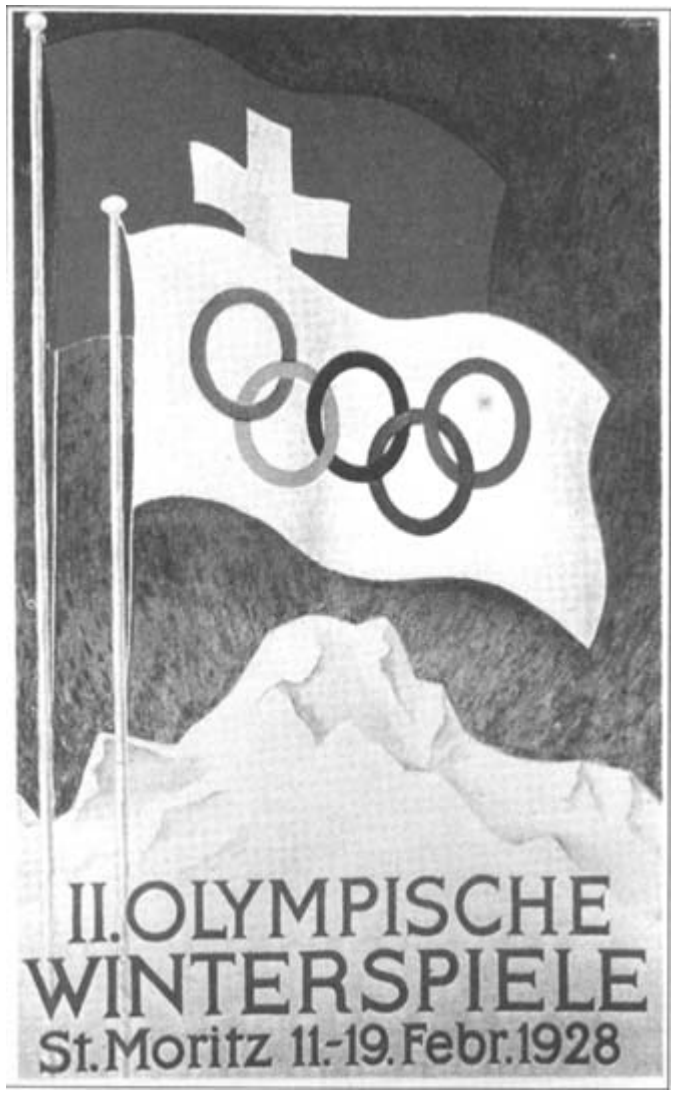


Figure 36: Poster of the II Olympic Winter Games 1928 in St. Moritz (from: *IOC archive*)

67 And then every time except Los Angeles 1984.

68 Netherlands Olympic Committee (Committee 1928) (ed.), *The Ninth Olympiad being the Official Report of the Olympic Games of 1928 Celebrated at Amsterdam,* Amsterdam 1929, p. 937.

Figure 37: Elizabeth ROBINSON (USA), winner of the 100 metres (from: Netherlands Olympic Committee, *Olympiad,* p. 455)

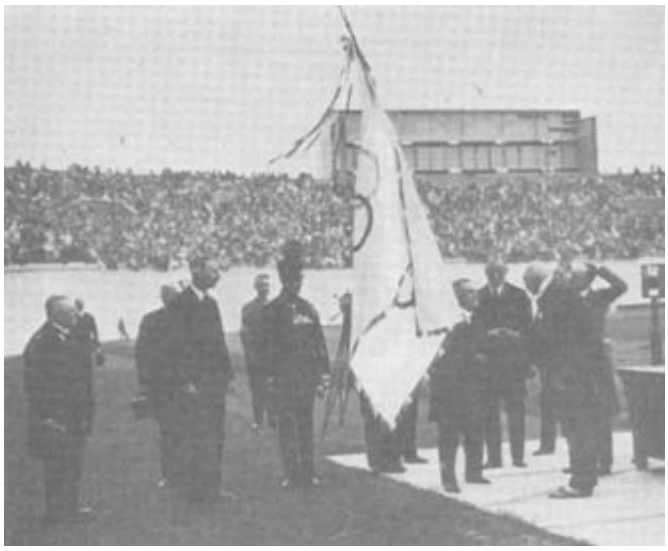


Figure 38: The official Antwerp flag in Amsterdam (from: Netherlands Olympic Committee, *Olympiad,* p. 937)

Rings for the philatelists

In the Olympic year 1928 the rings were used for the first time in the philatelic sector. The Portuguese NOC had been looking for financial help to send their team to Amsterdam and found support in their national postoffice. During the so-called *"Olympic days"* on May 22-24 a compulsory extra charge stamp of 15 centavos had to be added to all postal consignments. The red and black stamp had the rings at the top, underneath a hurdler and in the background a sailing ship. If anyone "forgot" the extra charge, a stamp worth 30 centavos was stuck on by the post office before delivery.[69] The circulation of both stamps amounted to 1.800.000 copies.[70]

Since then the rings are used on nearly all Olympic stamps, to such an extent that should they be missing, the description will use the term "without rings".

Figure 39 and 40: The two Portuguese extra charge stamps (from: *Private archive Rathjen, IOC archive*)

[69] Date of appearance 30.04.1928.

[70] SCHMIDT, G./SCHNEIDER, G., *Sport und Briefmarken,* Coburg 1958, p. 47. BURA, Fabian, *Die Olympischen Spiele auf den Briefmarken der Welt,* Köln 1960, p. 38-39.

The "Zuchelli-flag"

Some years ago the author received records with copies of photographies and letters of the collection of Olympiaca by Ed J. ZUCHELLI from the Mayence Coubertin researcher Norbert MÜLLER. ZUCHELLI had been the general manager of the Productions Department of the Los Angeles Olympic Committee in 1932. Patrick L. ZUCHELLI, his nephew, wrote on November 26, 1997 among other things to MÜLLER:

> *"The Ed J. Zuchelli collection contains numerous memorabilia from the 1932 Olympic games. One item in the collection is the 1920 Antwerp Olympic flag. This flag also was flown at Paris in 1924 and in Amsterdam in 1928. The flag was then passed on to the 1932 Olympic Committee.*
> *Because this flag was worn and dirty, a new silk flag was made for the 1932 Olympic games. The new silk flag flew at the Los Angeles Colosseum for the duration of the Olympics. After the Olympics this flag along with other flags used during the 1932 Olympics were given to the Los Angeles County Museum. Most or all of these flags, along with other memorabilia were lost due to damage, neglect, or theft.*
> *When the 1912 Olympic Commitee closed down, my Grandfather Ed Zuchelli asked for and received permission from the Committee President, William M. Garland and the General Manager; Zack Farmer; to take possession of the Antwerp flag and other items in the Ed. J. Zuchelli collection."*

The file contains two photographies of the flag and several certificates of textile experts who can at least certify that this flag had been produced around 1920 in Europe.[71]
After the Olympic Games 1936 in Berlin, Werner KLINGEBERG, the sport director of the organising committee said to his predecessor in Los Angeles, Bill HENRY, that ZUCHELLI should receive a *"first place American Victory Flag and possibly the official Olympic Flag itself; or one of the secondary Olympic Flags used in the Stadium".*[72] This did not come about. ZUCHELLI therefore after the war turned to Carl DIEM the secretary-general of the Berlin Games. DIEM told ZUCHELLI on July 21, 1947, that all flags with the exception of the official Antwerp flag[73] had been stored in the bell tower of the stadium. The tower had survived the battle of Berlin but had then been *"destroyed by an explosion of near by stored film material".*[74] Thus a new stadium flag had to be made for the 1948 Games in London.[75]

Figure 41: The flag of Ed ZUCHELLI'S collection (from: *private collection Patrick L. Zuchelli*)
Figure 42: The "Diem-stone" in Delphi (from: BARNEY, "Symbol", p. 631.)

The "ancient" rings

At the 1934 session in Athens the IOC decided to take up Carl DIEMS idea of performing a torch relay from Olympia to Berlin for the opening ceremony of the Games. On the 3.075 km long way to Berlin the Olympic fire had to "overnight" eleven times. Sport and music festivities as well as dance performances were held. The fire burned in a bowl on a three feet high stone pedestal in Delphi near the starting thresholds of the ancient

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71 Patrick ZUCHELLI, grandson of Ed ZUCHELLI, kindly provided a photograph of this flag.
72 Ed ZUCHELLI on April 18, 1947 to Carl DIEM.
73 On this see below.
74 DIEM on 21.07.1947 to ZUCHELLI *(Diem archive).* The tower had burnt out shortly after the war, due to this.
75 The official report describes the flag to be *„18ft. by 11 ft.",* having been hoisted by *"three corporals of* the *Guards"* and on the closing day having been lowered by *„seven guardsmen".* (Organising Committee for the XIV Olympiad [ed.], *The Official Report of the Organising Committee for the XIV Olympia,* London 1948, p. 203, 540).

stadium. A mason had chiselled the Olympic rings as a decoration in the stone block. This stone stood unnoticed for decades somewhere within excavation grounds near the spring of Castaglia-. That is where Robert BARNEY saw it and photographed in 1984.[76] He then ironically states in his essay *„This Great Symbol"* of the Olympic rings in the *Revue Olympique"* that "historians" actually claim in their books that this stone *„is considered by 3 experts to be 3,000 years old"*[78] and *"the circles form a link between ancient and modern Olympics"*[79].

From Berlin to London

DIEM may not have been responsible for the interpretations of so-called sport historians but indirectly he was responsible for the keeping of the official Antwerp flag after l936.[80] The flag was kept together with the Olympic chains of the IOC members in the cellar of the Berlin *Stadtsparkasse*[81]. Both were to be brought to Tokyo respectively Helsinki in 1940. But since the XII Games and the XIII Olympics were cancelled, all remained in Berlin.

After the war DIEM immediately tried to make contact with those responsible in the Olympic movement and offered his help in organisational and ceremonial questions concerning the Olympic Games 1948 in London. In a letter to the incumbent IOC president Sigfrid EDSTRÖM from June 15, 1946[82] he also mentions the flag and the necklaces. He fears that both were lost in bombing raids. He is not sure whether Edström received the letter since the latter asks for the chains in a letter dated July 31, 1946[83]: *„Do* you *know whether the chains were destroyed?"* DIEM writes in his response from August 15[84] that the British military administration had already inquired on the whereabouts of the chains with the Berlin municipal authorities This had probably been initiated by the London organising committee. DIEM promised EDSTRÖM to undertake investigations himself and to approach the Lord Mayor of Berlin. DIEM found the *„flag in an inconspicuous box and nine of the 60 chains"* in the cellar of the *Stadtsparkasse* and gave the insignia to the Lord Mayor of Berlin.[85] He reports to EDSTRÖM on September 25[86] *„that the Olympic flag is retrieved undamaged and that the honorary chains are also found. I am still checking whether completely. If not the missing ones will be reproduced."* EDSTRÖM thanked him for the information on October 11[87] and told DIEM on November 8[88] that the flag and the chains would be *„picked up by the English authorities."* On November 17 DIEM was ordered to appear before the British military authorities and asked for the whereabouts of the flag and chains due to a police message made by Lord David George BURGHLEY, the secretary-general of the London organising committee. At the interrogation DIEM referred to the Olympic ruling that the delivery is the responsibility of the last hosting city of the Games. But he also informed them that the flag and the remaining chains were now in the hands of the Berlin municipal authorities.[89] *"He phoned the Lord Mayor who provided information on the location within the Russian zone."*[90] DIEM also informed the German IOC member Duke Adolf Friedrich zu MECKLENBURG, who even wrote of a *„seizure"* in his response from December 11[91] and considered of officially complaining to his colleague EDSTRÖM. A few weeks later DIEM was told by the Lord Mayor of Berlin *„that the British military authorities had demanded and received the handing over of the flag and insignia from the central commander's office in Berlin."*[92] He informed EDSTRÖM of this on December 29 [93] and remarked:

> *"You will notice that the seizure of this Olympic property in this manner does not correspond with the Olympic customs. We expect that you suitably balance this interference. I personally now feel free of any further responsibility"*[94]

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76 Beforehand already YOUNG, "Riddle", p. 258-262, numerous photographs.

77 BARNEY, Bob, "This Great Symbol", in: *Revue Olympic* 23(1992)301, p. 627-633, 641.

78 GROMBACH, John V., *The 1980 Olympic Guide,* no place 1980, p. 280. COOTE, James, *History of the Olympics in Pictures,* London 1972, p. 9. And latest also HACHE, Françoise, *Jeux Olympiques,* Paris 1992, p. 11 (even with a coloured picture of the stone).

79 POOLE, Lynn and Gray, *History of Ancient Olympic Games,* London 1963, p. 119.

80 The Berlin Lord Mayor Julius LIPPERT was responsible but he had been handed over from the Americans to Belgium in 1946 as a war criminal.

81 „Das Schicksal der Olympischen Fahne und Ehrenketten", in: *Sport. Zürich* (30.04.1947). According to a note in the paper *Die Welt* from January 1, 1947 the insignia were kept in the Berlin municipal bank.

82 DIEM on 05.07.1946 to EDSTRÖM *(Diem archive).*

83 EDSTRÖM on 31.07.1946 to DIEM *(Diem archive).*

84 DIEM on 15.08.1946 to EDSTRÖM *(Diem archive).*

85 *Sport. Zürich* (30.04.1947).

86 DIEM on 25.09.1946 to EDSTRÖM *(Diem archive).*

87 EDSTRÖM on 11.10.1946 to DIEM *(Diem archive).*

88 EDSTRÖM on 08.11.1946 to DIEM *(Diem archive).*

89 DIEM on 18.11.1946 to EDSTRÖM who himself confirmed this information on December 7. *(Diem archive).*

90 *Sport. Zürich* (30.04.1947).

91 MECKLENBURG on 11.11.1946 to DIEM *(Diem archive).*

92 Thus the British had managed to receive the approval of the Russian occupation administration to send the flag and chains to Lausanne *(Sport. Zürich* [30.04.1947]).

93 DIEM on 29.12.1946 to EDSTRÖM *(Diem archive).*

94 EDSTRÖM followed this appeal for a „balance" two years later when he invited DIEM as honorary guest to Olympic Games in London.

According to an article in the paper *Die Welt* from January 1, 1947, the Lord Mayor Dr. OSTROWSKI handed over the flag to the British liaison officer of the municipal authorities lieutenant colonel MANDER. The insignia probably then came to London via Switzerland (IOC). At any rate the flag was present at the closing ceremony and was symbolically handed over to the London Lord Mayor for safekeeping.

The Oslo-flag

Until now a special Olympic flag like the official Antwerp flag had not been used at the closing ceremony of the Winter Games. Merely the "large" flag had been blowing at a central location but this one was also handed from one host city to the next.

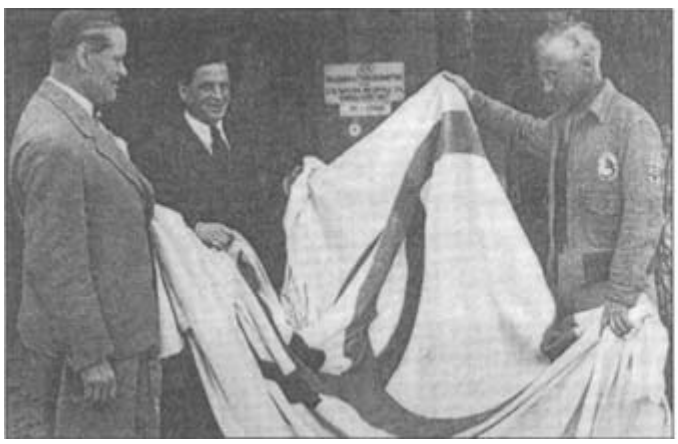

Figure 43: American bobbers bring the "large" flag to Garmisch-Partenkirchen (from: *Reichssportblatt* [1936], p. 100)

The flag provided by the Belgian NOC was probably not used also at the Olympic Winter Games because these were to begin with only to be held in those countries hosting summer Games as well. Both events were regarded as celebrations that terminated with the closing ceremony of the summer Games. Within the IOC especially the Norwegian member objected to this since Norway - the ideal winter sport country - could never organise both Games because of their infrastructure. When this "rule" on several occasions could not be kept due to political and climatical reasons (1928, second and third awarding for 1940, planned locations for 1944 and 1948) the winter and summer Games became two completely different Olympic highlights. The organisers of the VI Olympic Winter Games 1952 in Oslo also tried to make the new situation as clear as possible within the ceremonial. They introduced the torch relay and supplied the winter Games with an official flag that was handed over for the first time at the closing ceremony:

> *"The Mayor of Oslo hands the Vice President of the IOC the Olympic silk flag as a gift from the City of Oslo. The Vice President receives the flag on behalf of the IOC and announces that this flag will follow the winter Games to mark the continuity and the contact between the one organising city and the next. He then hands the flag back to the Mayor of Oslo declaring: 'Mr. Mayer I deliver to you the Official Olympic Flag to rest in your custody for four years until 1956, then to be delivered to the town of Cortina d'Ampezzo.'"*[95]

Apparently they did not even go to the trouble of unpacking the new flag and waving it. The photography in the official report depicts the moment when vice-president Avery BRUNDAGE hands back the folded flag to the Mayor.

Figure 44: Vice-president Avery BRUNDAGE hands back the new official winter flag to the Mayor of Oslo for safekeeping for the next four years (from: Organising Committee VI Olympic Winter Games Oslo 1952, *Vinterleker,* behind p. 216)

Sometimes at the opening, at the closing and at both

Between 1956 and 1958 the Olympic charter was thoroughly revised. The resulting edition of 1958 contained important reforms concerning the showing of the official flag:

> *"The official Olympic flag is to be handed over to the Mayor of the city which is staging the Games not in the Closing Ceremony of the Games but in the Opening Ceremony, which is much more sensible."*[96]

[95] Organising Committee VI Olympic winter Games Oslo 1952 (ed.), *VI Olympiske Vinterleker. Olympic Winter Games. Oslo 1952,* Oslo 1952, p. 184.

[96] "The New Olympic Rules," in: *Bulletin du CIO* 14(1959)65, p. 53.

This seems the more reasonable because now the Mayor of the former host city brought the flag that he had kept during "his" Olympiad, to the opening ceremony of the new host "whose" Olympiad had commenced on January 1. This happened for the first time at the opening of the VIII Olympic Winter Games 1960 in Squaw Valley:

> *"Renzo Menardy Deputy Mayor of Cortina, Italy delivered to Mr. Brundage the original Olympic Flag, presented in 1952 by the city of Oslo. This flag had reposed in the principal municipal building at Cortina since the VII Olympic Winter Games. It will now be displayed at the State Capitol in Sacramento until the 1964 Games at Innsbruck, Austria."*[97]

Accordingly this was also the procedure a few months later at the summer Games in Rome and at the celebrations of the ensuing Olympics.

Figure 45: Adolfo CONSOLINI pronounces the Olympic oath, left the Mayor of Rome with the official flag (from: Deutsche Olympische Gesellschaft [ed.], *Die Olympischen Spiele 1960. Rom, Squaw Valley,* Stuttgart 1960, p. 31)

The organising committee of the summer Games 1984 in Los Angeles received the IOC's permission to show the official flag both at the opening and closing ceremony:

> *"IOC President Juan Antonio Samaranch presented the flag to Los Angeles Mayor Tom Bradley who in turn presented the flag to LAOOC Chairman Paul Ziffren. Two members of the United States Olympic delegation to the 1920 Games in Antwerp. Alice Lord Landon*[98] *and Aileen Riggin Seoule*[99]*, were included in the exchange ceremony."*
> *"Finally, the flags of Greece, the United States and Korea were raised. [...] The Antwerp flag exchange followed, the first time the exchange had been made during the closing ceremonies.*[100] *IOC President Juan Antonio Samaranch, Los Angeles Mayor Tom Bradley. Seoul Mayor Bo Hyun Yum, LAOOC Chairman Paul Ziffren and LAOOC Executive Vice President/General Manager Harry Usher participated in the exchange."*[101]

Possibly the double presentation of the official flag at the opening respectively closing ceremony in Los Angeles did not agree with the IOC. In accordance with the rules of the Olympic charter of 1985 the ceremony was again combined with the closing ceremony:

> *"The Mayor of the city organizing the next Olympic Games shall then join the President of the IOC on the rostrum. A representative of the city where the Games of the Olympiad have just been held shall deliver the official Olympic flag (of embroidered satin presented in 1920 by the Belgian Olympic Committee) to the President of the IOC who shall hand it over to the Mayor. For the Winter Games there is another flag, presented in 1952 by the city of Oslo. The flags must be kept in the principle municipal building of the city organizing the next Olympic Games until the closing ceremony."*[102]

The Seoul-Flag

The Antwerp flag was used for the last time in 1984 in Los Angeles. It was 64 years old then and had become a little "decrepit". The *Seoul Olympic Organising Committee* ordered the production of a new flag together with a metal staff. The chairman of the committee Tae-Woo ROH symbolically handed over the new flag to the IOC president SAMARANCH on June 5, 1985 during the 90th Session in East-Berlin. On July 11 the Mayor of Seoul Bo-Yun YUM then received it and kept it until the Games 1988 in Seoul.[103] The Antwerp flag was given to the Olympic museum in Lausanne.

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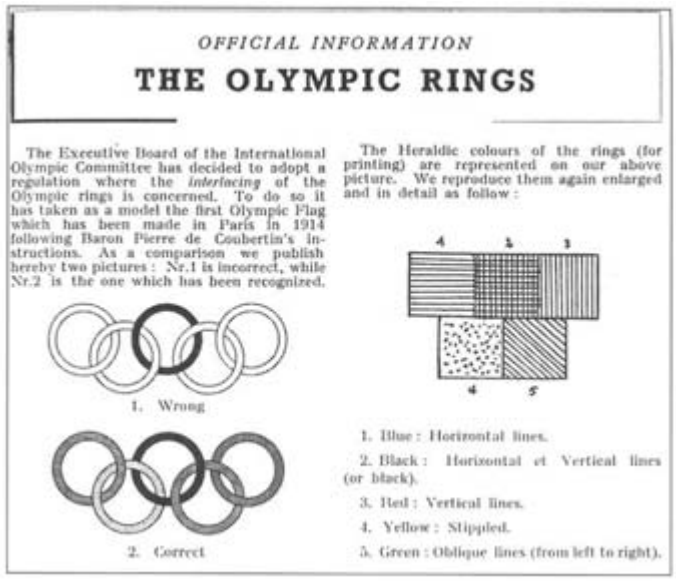
97 California Olympic Commission (Organizing Committee) (ed.), *VII Olympic Winter Games. Squaw Valley California 1960,* San Francisco 1960, p. 55.
98 She participated in the high diving competition as Alice Harlekinden LORD (came last in the pre-competition).
99 Aileen RIGGIN born on 02.05.1906 won a gold medal 1920 in springboard diving (1924 second) and came third in the 100 metres breast-stroke. She is the only remaining living medal winner of the Antwerp Games.
100 This statement is false. From 1920 to 1956 the Antwerp flag was handed over at the closing ceremony.
101 Los Angeles Olympic Organizing Committee (ed.), *Official Report of the Games of the XXIIIrd Olympiad Los Angeles, 1984,* 2 vol., Los Angeles 1985, vol. 1, p. 210, 218.
102 IOC (ed.), *Olympic Charter 1985,* Lausanne 1985, p. 59.
103 "The Seoul Flag Becomes the New Olympic Standard", in: *Olympic Review* 25(1985)215, p. 551-552, there a detailed description of the new flag and its production can be found.

Figure 46: Tae Woo ROH hands the new Olympic flag to Juan Antonio SAMARANCH (from: *Olympic Review* 25[1985]215, p. 551)

Copyright of the rings

During its meeting in 1957 in Evian, the executive board dealt with the copyright of the Olympic rings and determined precisely how they were supposed to "look". [104] Above all it was determined which rings were to be „overlapping" each other and which spacing was to be kept. This was necessary because in the 50-year history of the logo a lot of different, if not to say strange things had been produced. Even COUBERTIN had not given great importance to how the rings were to be interlaced as the IOC chancellor Otto MAYER told the American philatelist Travis L. LAND in May 1958: *"that once the interlacing was so and once different".*"[105] On this occasion MAYER also points out that *„the original flag, which hangs in our museum, was a copy of the original one".*[106]



OFFICIAL INFORMATION

THE OLYMPIC RINGS

The Executive Board of the International Olympic Committee has decided to adopt a regulation where the *interlacing* of the Olympic rings is concerned. To do so it has taken as a model the first Olympic Flag which has been made in Paris in 1914 following Baron Pierre de Coubertin's instructions. As a comparison we publish hereby two pictures : Nr.1 is incorrect, while Nr.2 is the one which has been recognized.

1. Wrong

2. Correct

The Heraldic colours of the rings (for printing) are represented on our above picture. We reproduce them again enlarged and in detail as follow :

1. Blue : Horizontal lines.
2. Black : Horizontal et Vertical lines (or black).
3. Red : Vertical lines.
4. Yellow : Stippled.
5. Green : Oblique lines (from left to right).

Figure 47: Regulation of the design of the Olympic rings and the flag (from: *Bulletin du CIO* 12[1957]60, p. 43)

Today the IOC gives very detailed recommendations to those permitted to use the Olympic rings:

CITIUS · ALTIUS · FORTIUS

INTERNATIONAL OLYMPIC COMMITTEE

GRAPHIC STANDARDS

COMITÉ INTERNATIONAL OLYMPIQUE

NORMES GRAPHIQUES

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Figure 48: Official graphic standards of the Olympic rings (from: IOC [ed.], *Graphic Standards,* Lausanne 1993)

[104] *Bulletin du CIO* 12(1957)60, p. 43.

[105] Typescript of two pages in the archive of the IOC, written according to LAND; Travis L., "Olympic Week Recalls History of the Five-Ring Symbol of the Olympics", in: *Western Stamp Collector* (now *Stamp Collector*) (20.10.1959), p. 8. LUNDALL, Edvin, "Olympic Rings in Sports Philately", in: American Topical Association (ed.), *Topical Time* (September - October 1958), p. 229.

[106] Probably the flag of the 1914 jubilee congress is meant.

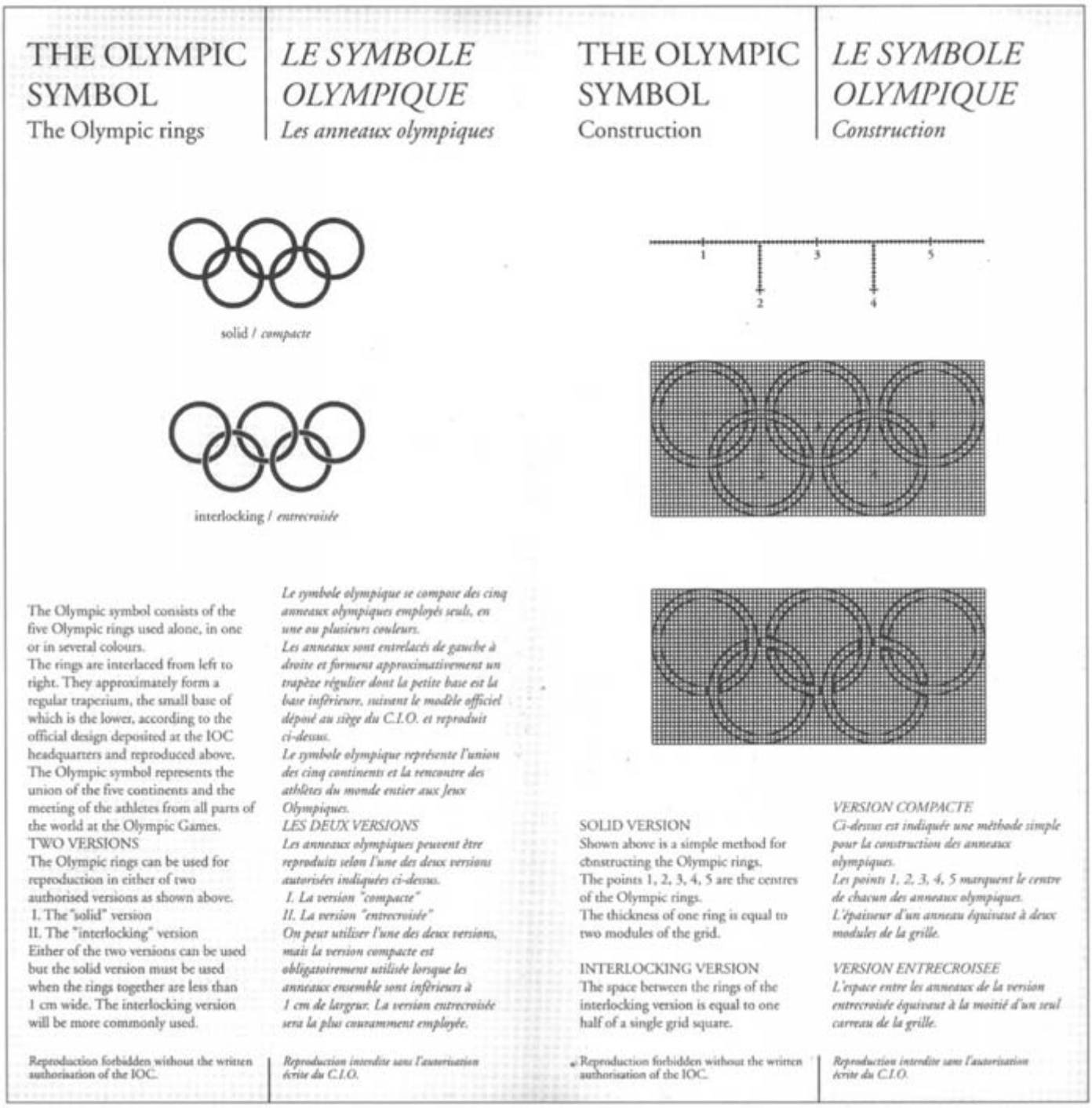


Figure 48: Official graphic standards of the Olympic symbol (from: IOC [ed.], *Graphic Standards,* Lausanne 1993)

Figure 49: A selection of NOC logos (from: IOC [ed.], *Le Mouvement Olympique – The Olympic Movement,* Lausanne 1987, p. 60)

The IOC already tried to protect its institutions in the years before the First World War. In the conflict of a monopoly of the Olympic Games against the workers, chess, women or student Olympics, first successes were gained when the "real" Olympic Games had reached such worldwide importance that the other organisers arranged themselves, became insignificant or changed their names through insight. The securing of the logo and motto also proved difficult when commercial institutions realised that money was to be made with the institutions and symbols of the Olympic movement. The IOC was an organisation that was registered nowhere. Even before the Olympic Games 1972 in Munich the organising committee asked the Munich lawyer Theodor KÖRNER to formulate a detailed *"testimonial on questions concerning the protection of the Olympic rings in Germany"*.[107] Today this problem appears to be solved and the rings are under copyright throughout the whole world, respectively nobody can use them without the permission of the IOC. The great popularity can be seen by the fact that nearly all NOCs and the institutions connected to the IOC use the emblem when permitted to. E.g. the letterheads of the *Carl and Liselott Diem-Archive of the German Sport University Cologne*[108] and the *International Society of Olympic Historians*[109] are to be named.

Aid in solving political problems

When the officials of the two German states could not agree on a common flag while forming an all-German team for the Olympic Games 1956 in Melbourne the proposal was made to print the Olympic rings on the black-red-gold flag. All-German teams participated six times under this neutral Olympic flag.""

Figure 50: Entry of the all-German team at the opening ceremony of the Olympic Games 1960 in Rom. Fritz THIEDEMANN bears the Olympic flag with the five rings (from: LÄMMER, Manfred [Hg.], *Deutschland in der Olympischen Bewegung,* Frankfurt 1999, p. 241).
Figure 51: Out of protest against the invasion of Afghanistan by the USSR the Luxembourg team refuses participation in the opening ceremony. Merely the NOC-sign and the Olympic flag are carried into the stadium by a Russian volunteer (from: *Olympisches Feuer* 30[1980]4, title page).

[107] KÖRNER, *Testimonial on questions concerning the protection of the Olympic rings in Germay, 5.* August 1970, 46 p., 38 enclosures (copy in the *Diem archive).*

[108] Spoken agreement between Monique BERLIAUX and Liselott DIEM at the end of the Eighties.

[109] The *International Society of Olympic Historians [ISOH]* received official permission from the IOC to use the Olympic rings in their logo on April 1, 1999. Letter from Howard M. STUPP, number 0645/99/HMS/mcs.

[110] As a hymn at presentation ceremonies it was agreed on *"Freude schöner Götterfunken"* from BEETHOVEN'S *IX. Symphony,* with the lyrics by Friedrich SCHILLER. This could be regarded as an "additional" Olympic hymn. It was COUBERTIN'S wish to have this music played at all opening ceremonies.

Altogether 42 NOCs boycotted the Olympic Games 1980 in Moscow out of protest against the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. Others expressed their protest at the opening ceremony. Seven NOCs (BEL, FRA, ITA, LUX, NED, SMR, SUI) did not take part in the entry of the nations. A NOC-sign and the Olympic flag were both born into the stadium for them. Three NOCs (GBR, IRL, POR) came with only one official, their NOC sign and the Olympic flag, four (AND, AUS, DEN, PUR) entered with the athletes, the nations' names and the Olympic flag, and New Zealand presented the NOCs flag and their nation's name before the athletes.[111]

When the USSR disintegrated towards the end of 1991, problems arose due to the qualification for team competitions concerning the participation of a nation that no longer existed. It was agreed to compete as an *"Equipe Unitée/Unified Team (EUN)"*. At the opening ceremony an Olympic flag was born ahead of this team. Behind followed the flags of the newly constituted nations.

The IOC has – especially after the two world wars but also later – excluded nations from participating in Olympic Games for political reasons. But this rarely punished those political responsible, but rather the athletes who were never guilty. Today athletes of countries excluded from the Olympic movement or not yet accepted can participate in the Games. They bear the rings on their shirt and their flag and the hymn used is the Olympic one. They virtually compete for the Olympic movement.

On May 30, 1992, the UN Security Council decided on sanctions against the Republic of Yugoslavia. The Spanish government informed the IOC that a team from Yugoslavia would not be allowed to enter the country for the Games in Barcelona. However, the individual athletes were allowed to compete under the name of *"International Olympic Participants"*. A similar procedure was followed eight years later, with regard to the representatives of East-Timor who competed as *"International Olympic Athletes"*

Figure 52: Athletes with IOC t-shirts from the Eastern Timor delegation (from: © IOC Olympic Museum Collections, photo Giulio Locatelli)

Satire and caricature

It is not to be neglected to point out at the end of this essay that the rings have been a popular object for caricaturists for decades, be it to discredit the Olympic movement or to produce a smile on our faces:

A state president was to open the Games and commenced with "Oh, oh, oh", until his adviser whispered to him *"those are the Olympic rings, the sentence you are supposed to speak is down below."*

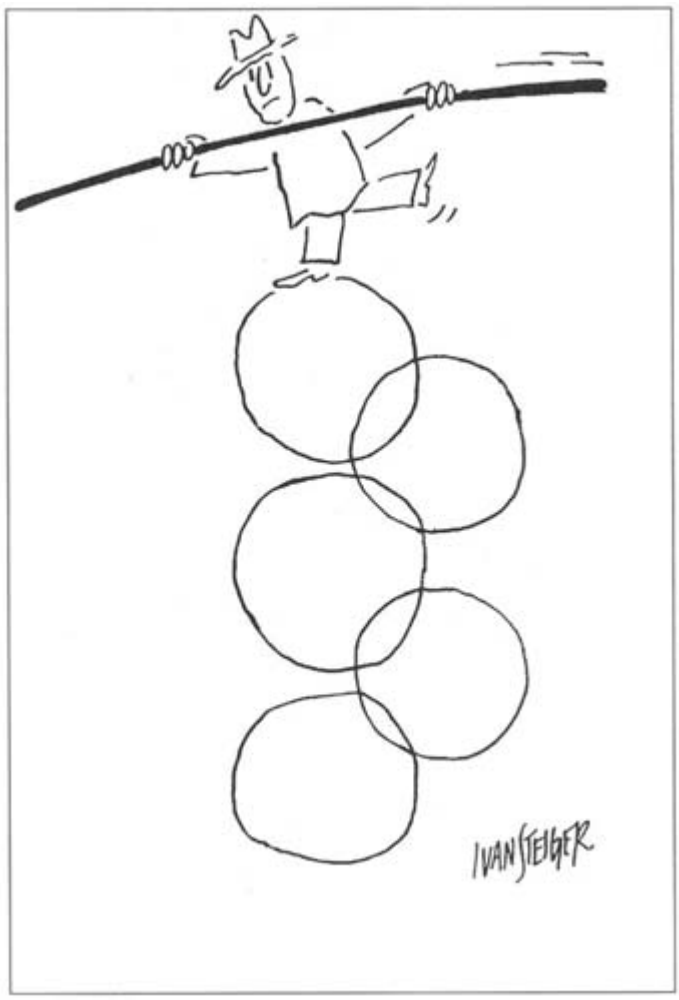
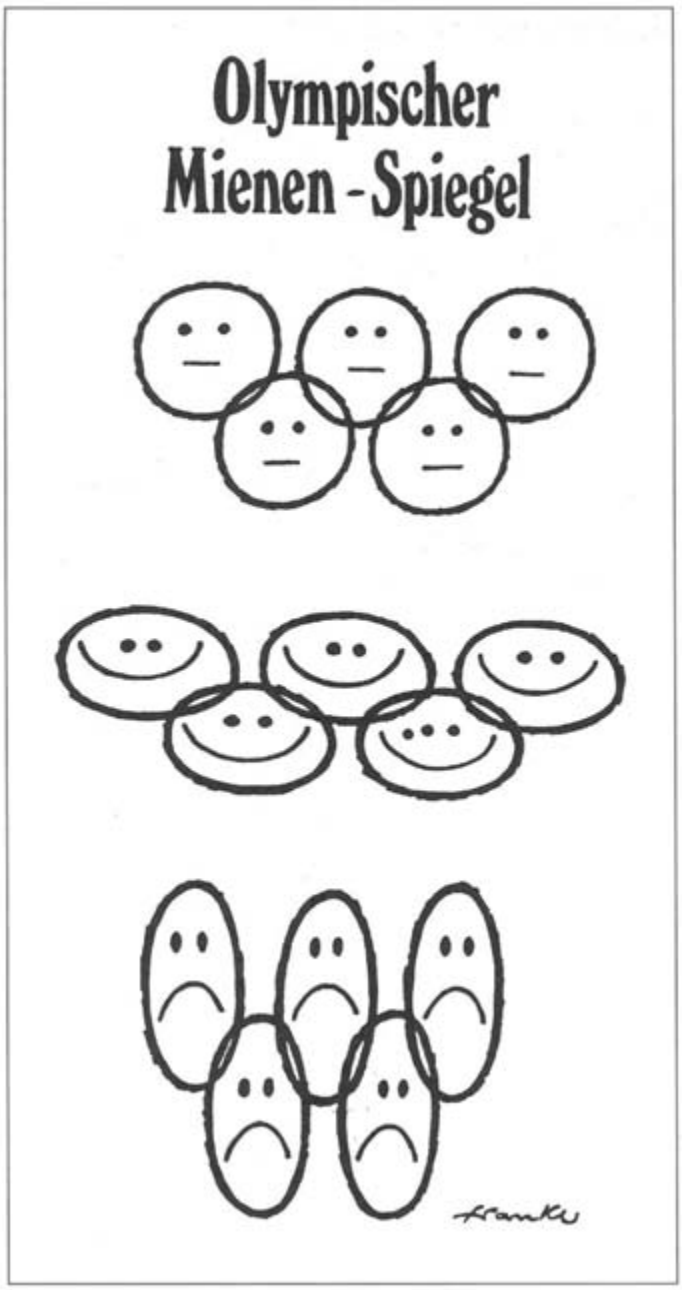


Figure 53 and 54: Rings in caricatures (from: *Olympische Jugend* 29[1984]8, p.28, 37[1992]7, p. 28)

[111] KLUGE, Volker, *Olympische Sommerspiele. Die Chronik,* Berlin 2000, Vol. 3, p. 676-677.



Rings and flag in the charter of 1999

It would exceed the limits of this paper if every change of the charter concerning the rings and the flag were to be treated. Thus only the French and English edition of the currently valid version of 1999 is to be quoted. Basically little has changed. At the opening the large flag is hoisted in the stadium while many small ones already hang in the sport sites and in the host city. At the closing ceremony the official flag is handed by the Mayor of the host city to the IOC president and then to the Mayor of the next Olympic city. Finally the large flag in the stadium is lowered.

«12 Symbole Olympique

1 Le symbole Olympique se compose des cinq anneaux olympiques employés seuls, en une ou plusieurs couleurs.

2 Les cinq couleurs des anneaux sont obligatoirement le bleu, le jaune, le noir, le vert et le rouge. Les anneaux sont entrelacés de gauche à droite. Les anneaux bleu, noir et rouge se trouvent en haut, les anneaux jaune et vert en bas. Le tout forme approximativement un trapèze régulier dont la petite base est la base inférieure, suivant le modèle officiel déposé au siège du CIO et reproduit ci-dessous.

3 Le symbole Olympique représente l'union des cinq continents et la rencontre des athlètes du monde entier aux Jeux Olympiques.

13 Drapeau Olympique

Le drapeau Olympique est à fond blanc, sans bordure. En son centre est situé le symbole Olympique dans ses cinq couleurs. Son dessin et ses proportions doivent être ceux du drapeau présenté par Pierre de Coubertin au Congrès de Paris en 1914.

15 Emblème Olympique

1 Un emblème Olympique est un dessin intégré associant les anneaux olympiques à un autre élément distinctif.

2 Le dessin de tout emblème Olympique doit être soumis à la Commission exécutive du CIO pour son approbation. Cette approbation est préalable à tout usage dudit emblème.

17 Droits sur le symbole, le drapeau, la devise et l'hymne Olympiques

Tous les droits sur le symbole, le drapeau, la devise et l'hymne olympiques appartiennent exclusivement au CIO.

Texte d'application pour les règles 12, 13, 14, 15, 16 et 17

[...]

67 Utilisation du drapeau Olympique

1 Un drapeau Olympique de grande dimension doit flotter, pendant toute la durée des Jeux Olympiques, à un mât dressé à un emplacement du stade principal, bien en vue, où il est hissé lors de la cérémonie d'ouverture et amené lors de la cérémonie de clôture des Jeux Olympiques.

2 Le village Olympique ainsi que les enceintes de compétition et d'entraînement et tous les autres lieux qui sont sous la responsabilité du COJO doivent être décorés de drapeaux Olympiques en grand nombre.

3 Les drapeaux Olympiques flotteront en grand nombre aux côtés des autres drapeaux dans la ville hôte.

69 Cérémonies d'ouverture et de clôture

1 Cérémonie d'ouverture [...]

1.10 Pendant que retentit l'hymne Olympique, le drapeau Olympique déplové horizontalement est introduit dans le stade bissé au mât élevé dans l'arène.

2 Cérémonie de clôture [...]

2.4 Le Maire de la ville hôte rejoint alors le Président du CIO sur l'estrade et lui rend le drapeau Olympique. Le Président du CIO le confie au Maire de la ville hôte des Jeux Olympiques suivants. Ce drapeau doit être exposé dans le principal édifice municipal de cette dernière ville.

2.6 Puis retentit une fanfare; la flamme Olympique est éteinte et, pendant qu'est joué l'hymne Olympique, le drapeau Olympique est descendu lentement du mât et, déployé horizontalement, emporté hors de l'arène suivi des porte-drapeaux. Un chant d'adieu est entonné.»[112]

"12 Olympic Symbol

1 The Olympic symbol consists of the five Olympic rings used alone, in one or in several colours.

2 The five colours of the rings are mandatorily blue, yellow, black, green and red. The rings are interlaced from left to right. The blue, black and red rings are situated at the top, the yellow and green rings at the bottom. The whole approximately forms a regular trapezium, the shorter of the parallel sides forming the base, according to the official design deposited at the IOC headquarters and reproduced below.

3 The Olympic symbol represents the union of the five continents and the meeting of athletes from throughout the world at the Olympic Games.

13 Olympic Flag

The Olympic flag has a white background, with no border. In its centre is located the Olympic symbol in its five colours. Its design and proportions shall be those of the flag presented by Pierre de Coubertin at the Paris Congress in 1914.

15 Olympic Emblem

1 An Olympic emblem is an integrated design associating the Olympic rings with another distinctive element.

2 The design of any Olympic emblem shall be submitted to the IOC Executive Board for its approval. Such approval is a prerequisite to any use of such emblem.

17 Rights to the Olympic Symbol, Flag, Motto and Anthem

All rights to the Olympic symbol, the Olympic flag, the Olympic motto and the Olympic anthem belong exclusively to the IOC.

Bye-Law to rules 12, 13, 14, 15, 16 and 17

[...]

67 Use of the Olympic Flag

1 An Olympic flag of large dimensions must fly for the entire duration of the Olympic Games from a flag pole placed in a prominent position in the main stadium, where it is hoisted at the opening ceremony and lowered at the closing ceremony of the Olympic Games.

2 The Olympic Village as well as the competition and training venues and all other places that are under the responsibility of the OCOG must be decked with a large number of Olympic flags.

3 A large number of Olympic flags shall be flown along with the other flags in the host city.

69 Opening and Closing Ceremonies

1 Opening Ceremony

[...]

Bye-Law to rule 69

1.10 While the Olympic anthem is being played, the Olympic flag, unfurled horizontally, is brought into the stadium and hoisted on the flagpole erected in the arena.

2 Closing Ceremony

[...]

2.4 The Mayor of the host city joins the President of the IOC on the rostrum and returns to him the Olympic flag. The president of the IOC then entrusts it to the Mayor of the host city of the following Olympic Games. This flag must be displayed in the latter city's main municipal building.

2.6 A fanfare then sounds; the Olympic flame is extinguished, and while the Olympic anthem is being played, the Olympic flag is slowly lowered from the flagpole and, unfurled horizontally, carried out of the arena, followed by the flag bearers. A farewell song resounds."[113]

[112] According to website of the IOC from 07.09.2001.
[113] According to the website of the IOC from 07.09.2001.