

In our earlier research books¹ on this unreasonably neglected component of the modern Olympic Games we tried to locate, document and describe as many of the medal-winning Olympic works of art as possible. Not all of the architectural designs, paintings, and sculptures, or literary and musical artworks are presently locatable for documentation. However, at least our work thus far filled in a few of those empty frames.²

Now we are proud to inform you of new discoveries, reducing the number of still “unidentified works” from the modern Olympic Art Competitions. These newly unearthed treasures will be presented here and over the next few editions of the *Journal*.

We begin by introducing you to Dorothy Margaret Stuart’s *Sword Songs*. *Sword Songs* appeared in a little booklet published in 1925 by Methuen & Co of London. It contains four illustrations by G Spencer Pryse, one of which is included here.³ The author’s dedication in the book reads, “*To the Memory of Captain Alfred Hutton, FSA, King’s Dragoon Guards, who taught me, while I was yet a child, to love the lore of the sword.*” The front inside fold of the book’s dustjacket informs the reader, “*In the international literary contest of the Eighth Olympiad, held in Paris in July, 1924, these Sword Songs were awarded the Silver Medal for Poetry.*”

Sword Songs consists of four poems and a long epilogue of 29 quatrains. Each song mirrors the sword in different periods of human history and illuminates a weapon with which the poetess was undoubtedly fascinated. The four swords presented are

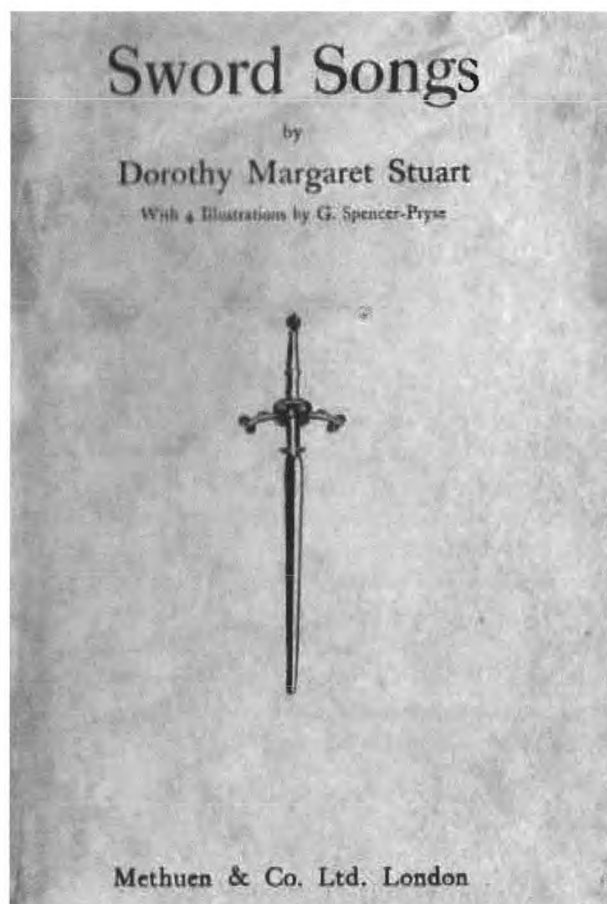
1. The Gladius (Rome. AD 103)
 2. The Two-Hand Sword (Edinburgh. Circa 1495)
 3. The One-Hand Sword (St Germain-en-Laye. 1547)
- and
4. The Small Sword (Dunkerque. Circa 1785).

In her first poem, *The Gladius (Rome. AD 103)*, Stuart describes a dramatic sword-fight in a blood-stained arena of ancient Rome. Under the eyes of Emperor Caesar, who watches from his “*ivory chair*”, the duellists “*Swayed like two tempest-tortured oaks / Whose boughs are locked in mesh / The gladiators strive.*”

This song comprises 14 cross-rhymed stanzas of six lines each. It opens thus:

*More sand! The stains dry fast, but do not fade.
Still before Caesar’s chair
The Tyrian awning hangs unswayed,
Though Caesar’s self be there.
Neither contending lions and leopards nor
The strutting ostriches with painted plume
Have stirred that silken gloom.*

After the death of one of the duellists, a Captain of the Guard – as if nothing had happened – calls for another round in this cruel spectacle, “*Bid men bring, with urgent*



beckoning hand / More sand – and yet more sand.”

The second song *The Two-Hand Sword (Edinburgh. Circa 1495)*, begins with five introductory stanzas to set the scene of a boastful Dutchman, Sir John Cockbewis, who “*came from the Lowlands that lie across the sea*” and who is greedily looking for a fight:

*O, who will do battle, for honour and for fame,
O, who will do battle, for love of his Ladye?
Let him come forth to me!*

His opponent, the “*stalwart Scot*” Sir Patrick Hamilton, accepts the challenge and speaks to his good King James (James IV]):

*Now Scots knights are valiant, and comely are their dames,
Now Scots knights are valiant – and that shall Cockbewis say!
I will go forth, perday!”
“..... Sir Patrick, all unheeding,
Unhooked his Two-Hand Sword.
Heigh, come forth, Cockbewis – I take thee at thy word.
Heigh, come forth, either to win or fall
Beneath the castle-wall!*

In the following 20 quatrains the fight – first on horseback with lances, then on foot with swords – is described in fast-running, ballad-like, four-line stanzas, beautifully rhymed:

*Men breathed not when they ran the course,
Lance against lance and horse to horse.
Strong wrists and hardy horsemanship
Shivered both lances to the grip.*

The endlessness of the dramatic fight is excellently presented, for example in the stanza:

*They fought, while lengthening o'er them fell
The shadow of the Citadel.
They fought till from St. Margaret's tower
The clear bell called the vesper hour;
And never once they glanced towards
The king, nor eased their weary swords.*

In the final stanza Sir John Cockbewis has to surrender to his opponent's superiority:

*Where went Sir John Cockbewis
And what last word spake he?
He went to the Lowlands that lie across the sea,
He went to the Lowlands, saying, "Swordman there is none
Like the valiant Hamilton!"*

In Stuart's third song *The One-Hand Sword (St Germain-en-Laye. 1547)* the scene changes from Scotland to medieval France with the rivalries and jealousies of a bored society at court. Again, a dramatic duel is presented, this time between Chastaigneraie and the Sieur de Jarnac.

After a mysterious introductory line "*Thus the Sieur de Jarnac:-*" follow these beautiful opening lines:

*Whether his tale had any tinct of truth
It matters little now; for she of whom
He spake, that golden Rose of Love and Youth,
Has fallen to dust in alabaster gloom,
And dust long since has filled his babbling lips.
Now few who know the way of his eclipse
Have heard the cause. Death is no chatterer.*

In the intricate plot of the song, obviously the "Sieur de Jarnac" is the challenger who fights Chastaigneraie, his "best friend of other days". The now "puissant wrestler", had had a lot of leisure at the court.

*Four long weeks – that seemed not overlong –
Chastaigneraie still strutted in the light
Of summer suns. I knew that he was strong,
A puissant wrestler, tough and quick in fight;*

But with the help of a good trainer – an Italian swordsman named Caizo – the narrator "practised diligently" every day for the duel. This Caizo is described as "a subtle rogue, to whom were known all tricks o' the steel." So "the King his son" [Henri II] together with "Three hundred men in white and scarlet weed" observe the fight in which Chastaigneraie is beaten.

*....Then, wide-eyed, ashen-lipped,
I saw his face tilt forward as he stood,
Whils down his thigh ran glittering spurts of blood
That made the fair sand into deadly mire.*

Before the last song, the poetess inserts a kind of apology to the reader, called "note on the omission or the Rapier", in which she shows that she was a real expert in swords: "Though the period of the Rapier falls between that of the One-Hand Sword and that of the Small Sword, this weapon is here left unsung, for the following reasons." She explains that the rapier was "seldom employed in any formal test of skill before witnesses. As it is in just such a test that the essence of the Olympic 'Agon' lies, the Small Sword, together with its direct descendant, the modern fencing-foil, stands in a far closer relation to the weapons used in the Roman arena and the Mediaeval champ clos." We can be sure that the remark about the Olympic Agon (in Greek letters) deeply impressed the Paris literary jury under the chairmanship of Jean Richepin.⁴

The last of the four songs, *The Small Sword (Dunkerque. Circa 1785)*, is a partly humorous ballad.⁵ It comprises more than 160 rhymed couplets presented in a plot of breathtaking poetical speed. In the course of the story a "pert Captain of Hussars, / Born beneath inauspicious star" gets into difficulties with an "affronted Cavalier". The end of the fight is foreseeable.

*O, luckless, ludicrous Hussar,
See in the mirrors what you are,
That image most disconsolate,
A braggart in the grip of fate!*

But the reader who has read the foregoing three songs knows better.

*...then with a wrench
He makes the Captains weapon spin
Out of his fist – 'Tis thus I win.'
Wrathful, with foolish empty hands,
The victim of his prowess stands;*

And he has breath enough to teach his opponent and the arrogant ladies a lesson:

*But, pray, let fall nor fan nor cup,
Lest son Hussar should pick it up.
And, Captain, on last word I pray.
Next time it pleases you to say
That De St. Georges has fought with you
Speak boldly – for it will be true!*

In the reflective epilogue of 29 quasi-terza rima order the poetess again dwells on the mythos, or what she called "the lore of the sword". The first three stanzas are a good example of the fervour and poetic power of the poetess:



Illustration to the epilogue by G. Spencer Pryse – the caption reads: "Honour endures, and holds like a golden cord; The knightly and noble past to the days that are"

*Now that the brief songs end and the phantoms fade
Called for a little while from the murk of time,
I sing of the spirit that dwells on the bright grey blade.*

*There an influence dwells, of three forces born –
Beauty and Valour and Honour – and there they are one
As the stars are one in the jewelled cup of the morn.*

*The spirit of beauty runs, like the sap in the tree,
Through the ancient clay and wood, the bronze and the stone,
That man wrought with his hands of old, by the land-girt sea.*

Very impressive also is the moment when man invented the sword:

*Altar and hearth he made, and the patient plough,
The spokeless wheel and the shallow boat rough-hewn,
And the Sword – like a leaf from a great bronze willow-bough.*

*The sword – when he made him a sword he had journeyed far
From the dusk of the knotted forest where tribes would crash
Like wolves contending in blind and weaponless war.*

*For beauty thrilled through the bronze – that spirit divine
Winged on the waves and pent in the polished urn
Willed the form and the hue, the curve and the line.*

It is not until the 14th stanza that she discloses by name the legendary swords Philippan (the sword Mark Antony used at the Battle of Philippi in Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*), Excalibur (the fabled sword of King Arthur), Balmung (Siegfried's sword) and Durandal (the sword of Roland, chief paladin of Charlemagne), not hitherto identified in her songs.

At the end of the epilogue (from stanza 25 on) she turns to modern times. Her poems appeared in 1925, seven years after World War I. In spite of the atrocities of that war she seemed to be convinced that former virtues like honour, beauty and valour still counted. Today, more than eighty years since the English poetess sang her songs of the sword and after our own experience of modern warfare, the belief in the fascination of a weapon has almost lost its magic. Nonetheless, Stuart's songs have lost only little of their attraction, preserved by their powerful language and her gift for telling dramatic stories in well-constructed verses.

Here are the last two stanzas of the epilogue unfolding again the seductive beauty of her singing:

*The ardour and faith of a world that has passed from sight
Shine out again in the love of the lore of the Sword
As the light of the sun is flashed from the stars of the night.*

*Beauty, – the form of the blade, and Valour, – its force,
And Honour, – its deathless soul, I have sung of them all:
Now that the brief songs end, I have finished my course.*

Neither a photograph nor any biographical information about this poetess has yet been located. All that has been found is this: Dorothy Margaret Stuart, née Browne, (1889-1963) was a prolific and widely published author-ess. Beyond her published books and poems she left a small glimpse of the soul who was this Dorothy Margaret Stuart in a tiny little poem about her dog in which the closing stanza reads,

*Joyous fleet creature, graceful and ardent and golden.
Look at him now as he skims the green like a swallow
Or lies relaxed with a loving head on my instep.
'As a friend,' did I say? Well, I know what riches of friendship
Were pledged by the three brief words on the Battersea docket –
One Brown Dog.*

The authors welcome any information about this forgotten Olympian. ■

Notes and References

- 1 KRAMER, Bernhard, *Die Olympischen Kunstwettbewerbwerke von 1912-1948. Ergebnisse einer Spurensuche*. Weimar 2004.
- 2 STANTON, Richard, *The Forgotten Olympic Art Competitions*. S. Victoria BC, Canada 2004.
- 2 The *Journal* (Vol. 14, May 2006, Special Edition) contains excellent colour reproductions of Pellegrini *Winter Sports* (GM Painting 1912), Jacoby *Rugby* and *Corner* (GM 1924), Yeats *Swimming*

(SM 1924), Konarska *Stadium* (SM 1932), Klukowski *Sport Sculpture II* (GM 1932).

- 3 G Spencer Pryse later received an Honourable Mention in the 1932 Olympic Art Competitions in Los Angeles for his *Greyhound Coursing*.
- 4 It should be noted that the jury – as in the Paris music competition – consisted of a great number of celebrities like Gabriele d’Annunzio, Paul Claudel, Jean Giraudoux, Selma Lagerlöf, Maurice Maeterlinck, Marcel Prévost and Paul Valéry. It is doubtful

whether each of these literary giants, among them two Nobel Prize winners (Lagerlöf and Maeterlinck) was really present or took part in the decision-making procedure. [Cf Stanton, *Forgotten*, p. 83]

- 5 There are definite thematic parallels with one of the most famous ballads of the German poet Friedrich Schiller *Der Handschuh* (The Glove), though with Dorothy Margaret Stuart not a glove but a fan started the ball rolling.

PAINTER JEAN JACOBY AND SCULPTOR FRANTZ HELDENSTEIN

A Pair of Unknown Luxemburg Medalists and the Story of the Olympic Art Competitions

Pierre Gricius

There are two artists in the Olympic history of Luxemburg who are relatively unknown even though they won medals in the 1920s. The first was the painter and draftsman Jean Jacoby, a gold medalist in Paris in 1924 and Amsterdam in 1928. The other was the sculptor Frantz Heldenstein, a 1924 silver medalist. They participated in Olympic art competitions that were an integral part of the official Olympic program from 1912 until 1948. Although they were not athletes, they were still champions, and should interest the Olympic historian.

These two Luxemburgers had very different artistic developments that were hardly comparable. For Jacoby, painting and drawing was more than a way to make a living. It was the sole purpose of his life. Heldenstein, on the other hand, actually created only a single sculpture with sport as its subject: the figure *Vers l’Olympiade* (*Towards the Olympiad*). It followed the example of ancient sculptures, depicting the classical javelin thrower. Heldenstein, born into a family of artists in 1892—his grandfather Franz [sic] Heldenstein was a painter and co-founder of the Salon du Cercle Artistique—had been a student of sculpture in Paris in the early 1920s, and so the obvious thing for him to do in 1924 was to create a work for the Olympic art competitions to be exhibited in the French capital. It would remain his only participation in the Olympic Games.

Jacoby, however, participated in the Olympics four times. The native Luxemburger (1891) who grew up in Alsace and later lived in Germany, mostly Berlin, won the 1924 gold for his *Étude de sport*. He won again four years later in Amsterdam for his painting *Rugby*. He received honourable mentions for his works *Before the goal* entered in Los Angeles in 1932 and *Abfahrtslauf* (*Downhill*) entered in Berlin in 1936. The 1936 honourable mention was a huge disappointment for him, and he complained about it in several letters to the Berlin organising committee.

Berlin, where he lived since 1926, had been his residence of choice and during the eight years that followed he was at the height of his career as an artist. He was responsible for sport illustrations published in several



Jacoby's gold medal (left) and Heldenstein's silver medal (right) from the 1924 Paris Olympic Games Source: GRICIUS, Pierre & KLEPPER, Georges: *Médaillés luxembourgeois aux concours artistiques des Jeux Olympiques. Jean Jacoby et Frantz Heldenstein*. Luxembourg 2008, pp. 90-91.

daily and weekly newspapers. Jacoby was one of the most famous draughtsmen of his time, focusing on sport, although it was not until 1923 that he had made sport the main theme of his work.

Under the depressing impression of World War I and after difficult years in Wiesbaden and Frankfurt am Main, Jacoby returned to Strasbourg in 1923, where, fourteen years earlier, he had studied at the École des Beaux-Arts. Here, he radically changed his style. From then on the motion of sport would be his source of inspiration and, in a time when sport photography was still in its infancy, he became a master of the subject and an internationally renowned artist. First he made a name for himself in France, where in 1923 he won a contest staged by the sports newspaper *L’Auto* (the predecessor of *L’Equipe*) with his painting “Passage des haies”, and as of 1926 he also became known in Germany.

Jacoby died far too early on 9 September 1936, at the age of 45. He remains the only artist in the world to have