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## In search of new understanding of martial arts. Reflections after the 1st IMACSSS Conference in Genoa

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### Abstract

Contributing to the theoretical perspective are disciplines and theoretical concepts which include travel sociology, the sociology of martial arts, the anthropological-system theory of tourism and the humanistic theory of martial arts. So this is another small contribution - a case study of one journey, the description and review of a specialist conference, and an analysis of events from the perspective of the participants. It was, as in the title of this study, the 1<sup>st</sup> International IMACSSS Conference undertaken in Genoa, Italy.

### Introduction

Journeys to practise or to discover more about or to advance awareness of martial arts are a form of cultural, educational and sports tourism. Known as **martial arts tourism** it is the undertaking of journeys (and long distance stays) directly related to the study of martial arts. A specific and distinctive feature of martial arts tourism is the link between the travellers, the places visited, the travel context or main destination (the target-value) and the martial arts or their specific variety. The “martial arts tourism” path of self-knowledge and self-realization is combined with travel education. It is a :journey phenomenon motivated by learning of martial arts – their study, training or teaching) [Cynarski 2009; cf. Sieber *et al.* 2007; Cynarski 2010, pp. 97-195].

Similarly, that is for the improvement of scientific workshop, for new knowledge in the field and for the scientific advancement there are journeys carried out to scientific conferences – a variety of congress tourism [Krawczyk 2007; Cynarski 2010, pp. 94-96]. In the case of travelling to an academic conference devoted to martial arts, the above-mentioned types of tourist travel intertwine, and a trip of this kind is mainly motivated by cognitive and self-realisation needs. In addition to the need for entertainment and excitement, aesthetic or culinary experiences, there is, in both congress tourism and in tourism broadly-linked to sports

interests an interest in cultural and educational themes [cf. Funk, Bruun 2007].

Contributing to the theoretical perspective are disciplines and theoretical concepts which include travel sociology, the sociology of martial arts, the anthropological-system theory of tourism [Cynarski, Obodyński 2010] and the humanistic theory of martial arts. So this is another small contribution - a case study of one journey, the description and review of a specialist conference, and an analysis of events from the perspective of the participants.

Research has been carried out, and papers published from the same perspective on travelling to study martial arts (to learn, to practise or to teach) both in Europe and at their Asian sources. [Raimondo 2011; Słopecki 2012]. This is not yet tourist traffic of any great economic importance or with any advanced degree of organisational structure. The most regular attenders are those who are most committed to the sport, either as students and as experts. Furthermore as this is only the third year of international activities of the IMACSSS (International Martial Arts and Combat Sports Scientific Society) the cohort of experts and scholars who are its members are still in the process of creating the Society’s own structures- these are at present still linked to the organisational activities of the Society.



Photo 1. Closing Plenary Session

## Journey

The authors intended to participate in the 1<sup>st</sup> International IMACSSS Conference because of their activity in the organizational structures of the International Martial Arts and Combat Sports Scientific Society and their desire to present their own research results there. They left in a private car from Rzeszow on the afternoon of June 6, 2012, to reach the city of Cieszyn, a town on the Polish-Czech border in the evening. There, they stopped off at the "Three Brothers" Inn, to restart the journey in the morning. The route led through the Czech Republic, Austria and northern Italy to Liguria [Quaini 2006]. They slept in Piacenza, and on the morning of June 8, they arrived at the Columbus Sea Hotel in Genoa. The Alpine landscape highway tunnels, and the journey itself, which was a bit of a challenge, ensured an unforgettable experience.

**Idea of conference**, of which the overall theme was "Game, Drama, Ritual in Martial Arts and Combat Sports", was described as follows by the organizers:

"The organizers firmly believe that this initiative will provide a valuable opportunity to promote, enlarge, and strengthen the scientific community developed around the investigation of martial arts and combat sports (MA&CS). The central focus of the Conference will be the scientific interpretation of the fundamental connections among socio-cultural

categories of game, drama and ritual in the context of MA&CS. These modes of interaction can be found in all kinds of sports, but, in the specific context of MA&CS, they are even richer in socio-cultural meanings than in the context of other physical activities. In fact, the analysis of these behavioral genres also applies to research in very different fields ranging from religious studies to medicine, from expressive culture to applied studies" [Raimondo, Gutierrez-Garcia, Perez-Gutierrez 2012, p. 5].

Prof. Dr **Sergio Raimondo** and Mr **Filippo Fossati** (President of the Unione Italiana Sportpertutti), the main organizers made sure to tie the conference to the inauguration of the interactive show of Yves Klein's artistic achievements. This famous French painter and judoka died 50 years ago [Yves Klein ... 2012]. There was also a special venue – the Ducal Palace in Genoa. The Scientific Committee, led by Prof. Dr Wojciech J. Cynarski, presented on the following topics: bio physical, bio technical / bio tactical, pedagogical, philosophical, anthropological, taxonomy, psychological, sociological and historical. Thus, there was a broad spectrum of scientific reflection in the area of MA&CS.

## The scientific programme

During the opening ceremony S. Raimondo and W. J. Cynarski welcomed the participants, then

Cynarski led the Plenary Session. In this session, two keynote speakers spoke: Prof. Dr **Nicola Porro** (Italy) and Dr **Kenji Tokitsu** (Japan). Porro, President of the European Association for the Sociology of Sport, presented a paper entitled "Sport and globalization after the Western hegemony." He referred here to the achievements of sports sociology and the problem of cultural globalization. There was however a lack of references to the sociology of martial arts, developed by other people in the Rzeszow School, associated with the quarterly "Ido Movement for Culture". A further speaker Tokitsu, a famous master of karate and Budo, took up the problem of defining "Games, sports, martial arts or budo". In this lecture, the author focused on the description of the meaning of the Warrior's Way, dodging an in-depth reflection on the game, fun and sport in comparison to martial arts. Both teachers provided a suitable introduction for further consideration - on the one hand, Western - humanitarian and discursive, on the other Asian (Japanese)- from the perspective of the long-standing practice of Budo.

After the discussion and coffee break, Sensei **Giuseppe Tesini** (7 dan judo) presented a „handicap judo demonstration” – judo classes with people with learning difficulties. Thereafter proceedings were run in parallel sessions. A psychological session was led by Prof. Dr **Fuminori Nakiri** (Japan), and a socio-historical session by Doc. Dr **Zdenko Reguli** (Czech Republic).

On Saturday, June 9<sup>th</sup> **Abel A. Figueiredo** (Portugal) was chairman of the second plenary session, and Prof. **Xiong Xiaozheng** from China - a keynote speaker. He spoke on "From fighting skill to martial arts culture: The evolution of ancient Chinese martial arts". Added here was a necessary reflection on the historical evolution of martial arts. Then Dr **Jong-Hoon Yu** (USA) led the poster session while the Board of the Association (the Board of the IMACSSS) began deliberations mainly on the future activities of the IMACSSS.

From 11<sup>15</sup> a one hour session 2a (bio technical and bio tactical) was led by Prof. Dr **Raquel Escobar** (Spain), and session 2b (sociological and historical topics) by Prof. Dr **Zhang Guodong** (China). Additional sessions were led by Prof. Dr **Thomas A. Green** from the USA (about pedagogy) and Prof. Dr **Marc Theeboom** from Belgium (sociological and historical). In the session led by the Belgian sociologist the authors of this article were honoured to speak. First, Dr Krzysztof Kubala presented the results of the Polish-Czech-American studies carried out within the framework of the socio-anthropological section of the IMACSSS (Division of Sociology and Anthropology), led by W.J. Cynarski. The paper entitled *Chosen aspects of the*

*life style of students practicing martial arts* included the results of the first part of a study on health behaviours of martial arts practitioners. Secondly an original paper by W.J. Cynarski – *Jujutsu yesterday and today. From the research on institutionalization of martial arts* – was devoted to the institutional changes taking place in the curriculum and ways of promoting martial arts masters in jujutsu. In this session, the *randori* method of training jujutsu was described by Tetsuya Nakajima (Japan), and an interesting paper on dance, rhythm and martial arts was presented by Sergio Raimondo. On Sunday from 9<sup>30</sup> there was a parallel session scheduled: 4a – *Philosophical, anthropological and taxonomy*, with Prof. Dr Fuminori Shishida (Japan) as chairman, and 4b – *Bio physical*, with Prof. Dr Emerson Franchini (Brazil).

After that there was the last plenary session whose chairman was S. Raimondo. Chairmen of parallel and poster sessions presented their conclusions (photo 1). For the first time, the IMACSSS Young Researchers Award Giving Ceremony was held. Prof. Dr **Carlos Gutierrez-Garcia** (Spain), the originator of the award, was chairman of the specially appointed commission. The prize was awarded in two categories – for the best empirical work and the best humanistic work. Laureates – Dr Jikkemien Vertonghen (Belgium) and Isaac Estevan (Spain) respectively, received certificates that were handed by Chairman of the IMACSSS, Young Researchers Award commission and by the President of the IMACSSS.

Prof. Nakiri, President of the Japanese Academy of Budo and Vice-president of the IMACSSS, presented his invitation for participation in the 2<sup>nd</sup> International IMACSSS Conference in Tsukuba University in September, 2013. Prof. Cynarski gave a first note about the 3<sup>rd</sup> IMACSSS Conference which will be held in Rzeszów, in a new Congress Center of the University of Rzeszów. He spoke about the idea of publishing the *Martial Arts Encyclopedia* (he is looking for a publisher, and for co-authors, of course), too.

During the Closing Ceremony, he said that participants can publish their papers in the "Ido Movement for Culture. Journal of Martial Arts Anthropology". As the President of the scientific society, then, along with Prof. Sergio Raimondo he handed the conference participants the certificates. President Cynarski received from Prof. K.R. Kernspecht awarded by the EWTO honorary second instructor degree in Wing Tsun kung-fu. In turn, Cynarski gave to S. Raimondo, on behalf of the Idokan Poland Association level 1 dan in *ido* (higher category of assessing mastery of martial arts, awarded to individuals who have obtained a





**Photo 2.** Dr Krzysztof Kubala, the general secretary of IMACSSS

black belt in at least two different styles of martial arts), and on behalf of the Board of the IMACSSS – a commemorative plaque for organizing the first, historic conference of the Society.

Then, it was time for warm thanks and farewell.

### The cultural programme

Even before the opening of the conference, Sergio Raimondo guided several participants through Genoa old town. It was also an opportunity to eat lunch with tasting of cuisine specific to this part of Italy. In the evening, during the Welcome Dinner, participants ate well cooked seafood while enjoying the Mediterranean Sea through a window at the restaurant.

June 9 after 2 pm, Sergio Maifredi presented to participants of the Conference the Yves Klein Exposition Tour. There were videos and judo photos of Jigoro Kano and Y. Klein, among others, movement studies – the forms and techniques of judo fight. There were also other artistic experiments of this capable author.

At about 5 pm the tourist walk and Old Harbour tour by boat started. On the ship, W. J. Cynarski held meritorical consultation with

sensei Fuminori Shishida (8 dan) on the history of aiki-jujutsu. After dinner at Ducal Palace there were further workshops, which were also a great attraction, especially for lovers of martial arts. A group of black belts of Tesini *sensei* demonstrated to the gathered people all *judo kata* showing in a masterly way “judo kata demonstration”.

On Sunday, June 10<sup>th</sup>, the programme contained “Genoese stick fencing demonstration”. Here, however, fencing skill level was not too high in the demonstrators. Maybe because this is a rather strictly recreational-only activity here and cultivating of native form of martial arts is probably worthy of support.

### The international assessment

**The summary of conference** is best started with some figures, proving the impact of this event. Twenty scholars from different countries formed a Scientific Committee. The Conference was under the auspices of nine scientific journals. There were about 60 active participants from many countries in Europe, Asia, North and South America.

After a series of conferences and congresses held in Rzeszów and Viseu (Portugal), it was the

first conference organized through the IMACSSS and for the IMACSSS, in collaboration with Italian martial arts and "sport for all" organizations. The great work of Professor Sergio Raimondo is difficult to overstate. Especially since we can talk about a big success – both scientific and organizational. The scientific level of the presented work was at least good, and organizational efficiency – without any cause for complaints.

The IMACSSS Board Meeting resulted in the decision to resolve the setting of the place and date of the next conference (the fourth, in 2015) by way of offer competition. Those interested should send a bid of organization about two years in advance. It has been established, that the second the IMACSSS International Conference will be held in Tsukuba, and the third – in September 2014 – in Rzeszów, in conjunction with the III World Scientific Congress of Combat Sports and Martial Arts.

Dr Kubala, as Secretary General of the IMACSSS, held during the conference secretaryship (photo 2). There are old members (not all are "goodstanding", with all membership fees paid) and new members. Among new members are people from Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Italy, Portugal, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain and Turkey. It is important that there are still people actively participating in the activities of our organization from the very beginning, and that new people join - scientists of all ages, representing various fields of knowledge.

Poles marked their presence not just as activists, but as very active participants in scientific discussions. They delivered two lectures mentioned above (oral presentations), and Dr Yu presented in a poster session the results of Polish-American research of pedagogical issue *Action research in martial arts* [Yu, Cynarski, Konukman 2012].

Probably part of the papers will be published in subsequent issues of the quarterly "Ido Movement for Culture. Journal of Martial Arts Anthropology", which is published by the Idokan Poland Association under the auspices of the IMACSSS and with the support of the University of Rzeszów. More than a dozen works are to be published in Italian.

It is worth mentioning that, in addition to the exchange of knowledge (the latest empirical and theoretical considerations), the participants had the opportunity to see the judo forms, judo use in therapy, artistic interpretation of judo and Ligurian fencing exercises with sticks.

### Travel summary

The journey home along this now familiar route went by fast and efficiently. Authors made only one several-hour stop before Brno in the Czech

Republic. As they swapped places as drivers, they also exchanged their impressions and observations, resulting in this text.

Photographical documentation further enhances the above description.

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## Po nową wiedzę o sztukach walki. Refleksje na kanwie I Konferencji IMACSSS w Genui

**Słowa kluczowe:** sztuki walki, sporty walki, turystyka sztuk walki

### Streszczenie

Tekst stanowi relację z wyjazdu na konferencję specjalistyczną związaną ze sztukami walki oraz sportami walki, która odbyła się na początku czerwca 2012 w Genui, we Włoszech. Konferencja, podobnie jak cały cel wyjazdu powiązane były ściśle ze sferą zainteresowań i badań naukowych autorów tzn. turystyką sztuk walki oraz turystyką kongresową. Podróże tego typu przyczyniają się do poszerzenia wiedzy, nabycia nowych doświadczeń i umiejętności w miejscach ściśle związanych z konkretną dziedziną sztuki walki. Do teoretycznej perspektywy przyczyniają się dyscypliny i teoretyczne koncepcje takie jak socjologia podróży, socjologia sztuk walki, antropologiczno-systemowa teoria turystyki oraz humanistyczna teoria sztuk walki.

Głównym celem Konferencji pod tytułem: „Gra, sztuka, rytuał w sztukach walki i sportach walki” było promowanie, poszerzanie

i wzmacnianie społeczności naukowej zajmującej się sztukami walki. Tematyka prezentowanych na konferencji prac dotyczyła zagadnień biofizycznych/bio-technicznych, pedagogicznych, filozoficznych, antropologicznych, taksonomicznych, psychologicznych, socjologicznych i historycznych w obszarze szerokiego spektrum sztuk i sportów walki. Komitetowi Naukowemu przewodniczył prof. UR dr hab. Wojciech J. Cynarski, prezydent IMACSSS.

W konferencji brali udział uznani naukowcy z całego świata między innymi z Japonii, Chin, Czech, Portugalii, Niemiec oraz USA. M.in. dr Krzysztof Kubala przedstawił rezultaty polsko-czesko-amerykańskich badań przeprowadzonych w ramach socjologiczno-antropologicznej sekcji IMACSSS a koordynowanych przez W.J. Cynarskiego. Referat pt. „Wybrane aspekty stylu życia studentów ćwiczących sztuki walki” obejmował rezultaty pierwszej części badań dot. zachowań zdrowotnych wśród ćwiczących sztuki walki. Natomiast W.J. Cynarski zaprezentował pracę pt. „Jujutsu - wczoraj i dziś” mówiącą o zmianach w *curriculum* i sposobach promowania *jūjutsu*. Prof. Cynarski poinformował także uczestników o możliwości publikacji prac w kwartalniku „Ido - Ruch dla Kultury”.