

BOOK REVIEW

Applications of Traditional Equestrian Sports in the World

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First of all, I would like to congratulate the editors of *Applications of traditional equestrian sports in the world*, Professors Adem Kaya, PhD and Mehmet Turkmen, PhD. Both have coordinated 25 authors from 12 countries and authored this necessary contribution. Through this book, the reader can understand the world of equestrian sports played in different communities and cultures since the ancient history of the world.

Through 20 chapters and 416 pages, this book, published by Nova Science Publishers Inc., provides a detailed description of traditional equestrian sports from a historical point of view and also shows current applications. History, anthropology, sociology, education, cinematography, and archaeology are some disciplines that dialogue harmoniously in this work.

From a theoretical point of view, the chapters that make up this publication follow various scientific methods, such as qualitative methodology, consultation of written sources or phase-to-face interviews (live interviews). At the same time, *Applications of traditional equestrian sports in the world* incorporates many photos and colour illustrations that help to understand the message.

This book provides insight into the significance of horses' every day and ludic use. Far from being biological activities or phenomena that can be explained by physics or biomechanics, equestrian games and sports operate as a miniature society in which the values and meanings assigned by the local culture where they have been performed are reflected. This book is a work with an ethnomotor approach to equestrian sports games, in which the game and the culture, the rules and the socio-cultural context, that is, the internal and external logic of these activities, constitute an inseparable and multicoloured binomial.

Applications of traditional equestrian sports in the world shows clearly and directly that the equestrian body culture is unique, varied and widespread throughout the world. Game is the emblem of a culture, so deep knowledge of game-based practices is an excellent element to knowing a society.

According to the internal logic of this family of body activities, the reader will discover that the variety of ways of participating (rules) offers a multicoloured scenario that confirms that the originality of traditional games and sports is, in fact, their variety. For example, the book describes games: with horses carrying lances, wrestling on horseback; wrestling on dappled horses, horse races; equestrian archery, equestrian-javelin, acrobatics on horseback, horse capture, horse saddle racing, horse fighting, face-to-face competition with one player from each team, horse sledges races, race to tame wild horses; games where riders take away a goat

carcass from each other, a race to chase after a horse by its tail; tug-of-war or goatskin; javelin catching point in the air; horseball (*Pato*).

It is fitting that, in the face of such a diversity of practices, the book devotes a chapter to A simplified description of the most commonly-played traditional equestrian sports in the World.

From an external logic point of view, through equestrian games and sports, the reader gets to know better the idiosyncrasy of the Ottoman period, as well as the Turkish, Mongolian, Persian, Arabic, Greek, Indo-Germanic, African-Roman, African (Republic of Benin) World and also the Argentinian culture.

Emotion is a keyword to understand the meaning of this book. Etymologically, emotion comes from the Latin *emotio*, *emotionis*, derived from *emovere*, *movere*, to move. This book invites us on an exciting 360° journey around the world where the horse is the ambassador of values and social messages necessary for human beings and their life in society. This book shows the reader that equestrian peoples often eat, drink, shop, chat, organise congresses, worship, and sleep on horseback. Horses are loved, admired and adorned by the meaning of these practices.

Equestrian games and sports constitute a wide range of phenomena where it is necessary to interweave varied aspects such as work, religion, warrior skills, daily life, education, wedding, small festivals (feasts), funerals (memorials), holy days, calendar cycles, religious rites, mourning ceremonies. Roles of men and women, often, the women in equestrian Peoples did all the men's sports and are still doing most of them. In many games, men and women could participate together.

Through equestrian games and sports, people learn to be confident, strong, skilled, powerful, full reigns, courageous, brave, intelligent, intrepidity, and endurance. Teamwork, choice of a group leader as well as Spiritual values are also encouraged. These activities show the honour of the tribe, clan, village, ancestry and nation. In the competitions, the winners are considered heroes. It is a way of life deeply rooted in the local history and culture.

The reader of *applications of traditional equestrian sports* in the world learns that the role of the horse is at least as necessary as the rider. The horse is an indispensable element of social, economic, political, military and religious life. For many societies, the horse is a true friend, helper and even a carrier of good luck. The horse is the personification of beauty, purity and speed among nomadic people.

This book is also a tribute to equestrian games understood as an intangible cultural heritage. Following UNESCO guidelines, the content of this book contributes to safeguarding traditional games and sports where the horse is present. In some chapters, the authors describe games that have practically disappeared; in others, they explain top-rated equestrian sports games.

The reader will also note the importance of networking to advance the knowledge and application of these activities. In this way, the reading invites us to recognise and understand the meaning of initiatives of organisations such as the World Ethno-Sport Confederation (WEC) or the World Nomad Games (WNG).

Finally, let me conclude the review of this book by organising into four groups some of the words most frequently used by the 25 authors. This *game* shows the hidden curriculum on which the pillars of Applications of Traditional Equestrian Sports in the World are based: a) Terms related to tradition and cultural diversity. History, tradition, culture, society, national identity, national culture, social life, traditional sports, traditional game; b) Terms related to sustainable

development. Education, learning, values, peace, rules, spiritual, physical culture, school, physical education, physical exercises, family, women, young people; and d) finally, Words referring to the protagonist of this work, the horse, equestrian sport.

I hope you all enjoy reading this book as much as I have. Thanks again to Professors Adem Kaya, PhD and Mehmet Turkmen, PhD. and Nova Science Publishers Inc. for this gift to equestrian games and sports in particular and traditional games and sports in general.

Alea jacta est! The die is cast.

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