

Martial Arts as Heritage of Mankind

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Abstract

Studi Purpose- Traditional martial arts, mostly originating from East Asia, are now practiced in many countries around the world, and therefore on a global scale.

Method. Research methodology in martial arts and according to the General Theory of Fighting Arts, in matters of cultural analysis it is most appropriate to adopt a qualitative methodology.

Result and Discussion. If a young, 30-year-old instructor boasts of having the rank of 10th dan, it is extremely strange and against tradition. These highest, non-technical degrees are awarded for merits, i.e. teaching, work for popularization, publications, ethical attitude, etc. They can rarely be achieved before the age of 60. The cases of juvenile holders of the highest degrees result from the extreme commercialization of the martial arts market.

Conclusion. The novelty of research here is the idea of assessing the presence of various martial arts in the general cultural heritage of humanity according to the level of institutionalization and dissemination on a global scale. The matter probably requires further research.

Keywords Heritage, Martial Arts, East Asia, Originality Martial Arts

1. Introduction

Traditional martial arts, mostly originating from East Asia, are now practiced in many countries around the world, and therefore on a global scale. Can we say that they have become part of the heritage of humanity? Does it need to be confirmed by UNESCO/UNICEF?

What is the **origin** of the martial arts practiced in many countries today? In Europe, these were the military traditions and cultures of ancient Egypt, Assyria, the Hittites, Troy and Greece on the one hand, and the Scythians and Slavs (Lusatian culture) on the other [Bukowski 1977; Cynarski, Maciejewska 2016; Daragan *et al.* 2022; Cynarski 2023b]. Later, the Roman Empire significantly influenced the entire European, Western culture. In turn, in

Asia, the origins are found in India and China, and from there martial arts came to Korea, Japan and other countries. What, in turn, has in common the martial art of ancient Scythia and India, as well as the kingdoms of the Medes and Parthians (today's Iran)? Well, we owe it to the Ario-Slavic people with the dominant haplogroup R1a1 (Y-DNA) and their warrior ethos combined with the perfection of horse riding [Cynarski, Maciejewska 2016; Cynarski 2022a: 90-94]. It is possible that knightly and related ethos come from this very source. However, it is difficult to overestimate the importance of the Chinese Shaolin monastery and other temples, where fighting techniques were linked to the practice of broader perfectionism, becoming martial arts.

In what areas of culture do martial arts and their derivatives function today? Does cultural globalization make them popular only in mass culture? Who is a martial art master? Is there a relationship between the dissemination of a given martial art (geographical indicator of its reach) and the influence of this martial art in a given area of culture?

The author puts forward **three bold theses**:

Thesis 1. Various national martial arts enter the world heritage of humanity, becoming, in a sense, a common cultural heritage.

Thesis 2. The master of a given martial art, as a work of art, is a concept understood in various ways and it is culturally variable.

Thesis 3. Global dissemination indicates a high level of institutionalization in the area of fighting arts, but the cultural influence of a given figure from this area is not dependent on this dissemination.

2. Materials and Methods

In accordance with the assumptions of research methodology in martial arts and according to the General Theory of Fighting Arts, in matters of cultural analysis it is most appropriate to adopt a qualitative methodology. Direct, practical knowledge of the described issues is also very important, i.e. knowledge resulting from the researcher's own participation in a long-term training and educational

process. Especially when it is an experience related to achieving higher mastery levels. The Japanese term *shugyō* refers to psychophysical practice and experience [Cynarski 2013]. An appropriate research method here is, among others, Autoethnography [Bielecka-Prus 2014].

Long-term, 45-year-long participant observation, also known as observer participation, was used [Green *et al.* 2019]. Interviews and knowledge obtained directly from the master teacher were also included [Sieber 1992-2022]. The state of knowledge was analyzed using the content analysis method of literature on the subject. Numerous film recordings and photographic materials were reviewed, in particular from the World Congresses and Conferences of IMACSSS - International Martial Arts and Combat Sports Scientific Society [cf. Ruth 2014; Gallery 2022]. This can be called Visual Ethnography [Pink 2021].

The author also interviewed master teachers of various martial arts, such as: Prof. Lothar Sieber (10 dan *karate*, 10 dan *jūjutsu*, 8 dan *iaidō hanshi*; Monachium and Weichs, Germany, Feb. 2023), *shihan* Stanisław Cynarski (10 dan *aiki-jūjutsu hanshi*, 9 dan *goshin-jutsu*, 2 dan *kenjutsu*; Chłapowo and Jastarnia, Poland, Aug. 2023), Dr hab. Juliusz Piwowarski (10 dan *karate*, 9 dan kick-boxing; Osaka, Japan, Sep. 2023), Prof. Dr Fuminori Nakiri (8 dan *kendō kyōshi*; Osaka, Japan, Sep. 2023), Prof. Dr Teruo Oboki (7 dan *kendō kyōshi*; Osaka, Japan, Sep. 2023), *sōke* Yasuko Kimura (GM / leader *Tendō-ryū sōgō budō*; Osaka, Japan, Sep. 2023). They can be treated as a direct, free/unstructured interview.

However, this is not a review work, but presents relatively original views, interpretations and theses of the author. The main theoretical perspective/scientific framework here is the anthropology of martial arts, the General Theory of Fighting Arts, and the philosophy of martial arts as their superior theory - in the author's approach of W.J. Cynarski [Zeng, Cynarski, Xie 2013; Cynarski 2019a, 2022a].

3. Conclusion

Ad. 1.

Asian martial arts are taught in many countries around the world. New schools, styles and organizations are emerging, gaining independence from the masters and organizations from the countries of origin of these martial arts. Thus, American *kung-fu* or European *ju-jitsu* has only a name or, to some extent, terminology in common with China or Japan. But this terminology has more of a decorative function, like a bit of ritual/ceremonial, costumes, etc.

Jūjutsu practiced today is divided into Japanese - 'Nihon jūjutsu' or 'Nippon jūjutsu', as well as Brazilian - 'Brazilian jiu-jitsu' (Bjj), European - 'modern ju-jitsu', 'sports ju-jitsu', German - 'Ju-Jutsu', American varieties etc.

In sports *ju-jitsu* there are various competition formulas and competitions, and in self-defense oriented *ju-jitsu* there are various forms. So this old martial art has already gone quite far beyond its country of origin and has moved away from its original pattern. Since about 120 years have passed since the transplantation of *jūjutsu* (as a martial art and an idea) from Japan to Europe and other Western countries, subsequent generations of masters have changed the image of this martial art [cf. Kłośnik 1909; Mol 2001; Kraska 2020; Kisiel *et al.* 2022]. Independent organizations have been established, which most often do not use Japanese terminology. For example, in Germany, German is used in the *dōjō* (exercise hall).

Martial arts and combat sports from European countries also enter the global circulation of physical, sports and mass culture. This is, for example, Polish historical sabre fencing, popular not only in Poland [cf. Cynarski 2008; Sawicki 2011; Marsden 2015; Pokojski 2019]. This martial art is gradually gaining recognition in an institutionalized form, as described in the UNICEF publication [Sawicki 2020]. Both the Polish martial art *Signum Polonicum* and the Ukrainian *Boyovyi hopak* [Pylat 2018; Pilat, Sidoruk, Kurak 2022; Cynarski 2023c] are researched, then described and demonstrated during the subsequent World Scientific Congress of Combat Sports and Martial Arts and the IMACSSS conference [Rut 2014; Pawelec *et al.* 2015; Pawelec, Yu, Cynarski 2020]. In this way, they enter the global culture (and in scientific publications - the international scientific circulation) alongside the better-known martial arts of Asian countries [Green, Svinth 2003; Obodyński, Cynarski 2003a].

The processes of cultural diffusion, especially globalization and glocalization, are responsible for this [Cynarski 2003; Korobeynikov, Czarny, Cynarski 2022]. The most important cultural clashes and dialogues include the idea of sport and Olympism in confrontation with the tradition of Japanese *budō*. The first sports to be introduced were *kendō* and *judo* (*jūdō*) [Abe, Mangan 2003]. Especially sports and Olympic judo has become a global sport, also gaining its specific shape in individual countries. But *judo* is most often treated as a combat sport, not a martial art or an educational system. And it is primarily to Master Jigorō Kanō, the creator of *Kōdōkan judo*, that we owe the idea of the "way" as an educational process [Sato 1998; Cynarski 2000a]. This path was followed by *kendō*, *karate-dō* (G. Funakoshi), and later *taekwon-do* and other martial arts. The disciplines of Japanese *budō* were popularized to a large extent thanks to the adoption of the rules of sports competition [cf. Uozumi 2013; Uozumi, Bennett 2013]. Other types of fighting arts also follow this path.

Various martial arts cultures exist and intertwine. Japanese *kenjutsu* / *kendō* culture or *samurai* / *bushi* culture [Sikorski, Piasecki 2007; Bennett 2009, 2015; Mor-Stabilini 2016] is the fertile soil from which all modern *budō* grows.

A part of this martial arts group is hand-to-hand combat - *yawara*, *jūjutsu* or *taijutsu*. *Jūjutsu* culture and legacy has existed the longest outside Japan and is also developed in Western countries [cf. Kłóscinik 1909; Osano 1991; Czerwenka-Wenkstetten 1993; Osano 2003; Barlow 2005; Kraska 2020; Kruyning 2022]. Individual masters, schools and other organizations develop particular cultural phenomena, as in this case of *jūjutsu* and related fighting arts.

Okinawan / Japanese *karate* culture [cf. Piepiora *et al.* 2016; Bishop 2017] ranges from traditional Okinawan schools associated with the practice of *kobudō* to modern sports *karate*. In turn, Chinese *taiji quan* / *Tai Chi* culture or *wushu* / *kung-fu* culture is rich in diversity [Lin 2016; Guo 2019; Raimondo, Rea, Wang 2022] - covers areas from sports fighting, self-defence and health exercises, to Chinese opera and martial arts film (*kung-fu* cinema).

But there are also other cultures in other countries in East and Southeast Asia. Korea gave the world a new version of *karate* under the names *tangsoodo*, *taekwondo*, *yunjungdo*, and then also *hapkido* and *hwarangdo*, the antiquity of which is very doubtful [Moenig 2015; Gillis 2023: 52-55], but their symbolism refers to the national Korean heritage. The same applies to the martial arts of the Philippines and Thailand [Gomaratut 2011; Pookaiyaudom 2020], Vietnam and other countries (nations, ethnic groups). Their cultures are intertwined with martial arts traditions and are part of humanity's global heritage. Also it could be culture of Malaysian *silat* [Shapie, Elias 2016; Shapie 2021], or Indonesian *silat* [Cordes 1994; Sunardi 2019], where we find a strong connection with music and dance.

A set of cultures of various types of martial arts participates in the process of cultural globalization/cultural exchanges [Green, Svinth 2003; Obodyński, Cynarski 2003a; Uozumi 2013; Cynarski 2023a], in other words, in dialogues and cultural diffusion, and this applies to the entire *budō* or even all fighting arts of Asian origin [cf. Uozumi 2013; Uozumi, Bennett 2013; Korobeynikov, Czarny, Cynarski 2022].

Ad. 2.

Indicators of mastery in a martial art are high master ranks (*dan*, *duan* / *toan*) and traditional titles (Grand Master, *shihan*, *hanshi*, *meijin* and *sōke*, etc.). However, outstanding masters do not always obtain the highest grades. For example, in the history of *aikidō*, the outstanding *shihan* Kenji Tomiki (1900-1979) and Hirokazu Kobayashi (1929-1998) achieved "only" 8th *dan*. On the other hand, the successors of martial arts schools (the title of *sōke*) and the holders of the highest degrees are not necessarily the best master teachers. This is more often determined by family affinities or other considerations. Some Asian martial arts organizations today have their headquarters outside Asia.

Many countries, not only Asian ones, borrowed the system of master degrees and the institution of the "Dan degree commission" / council of masters from the Japanese.

Many organizations have become independent, which is justified in the case of a long-standing tradition. Within the framework of the adopted statutes and regulations, they award degrees, titles and licenses according to patterns of East Asian provenance [more: Kim, Bäck 2023b: 78-85]. But the possibilities for obtaining individual degrees vary.

In Japanese *kendō*, a candidate for 8th *dan* must pass a very difficult technical exam. In some cases, the honorific title of *hanshi* requires the age of 80. Higher grades in *kendō* have not been awarded at all for a long time. Meanwhile, in most martial arts, especially those taught in Europe, ranks above 5 *dan* (usually the highest technical rank for which a technical exam is required) are awarded as honorary. Of course, constant activity, teaching and popularization, activity in a given organization and for a given martial art is required.

There is no point in fetishizing grades 10-12 *dan*. Not 10, but 12 *dan* is the highest possible after the introduction of the *kyū* & *dan* grading system. Already in 1940, master Dr Jigorō Kanō was awarded the 12th *dan* (*Kōdōkan judo*). However, it was postmortem. No one else has awarded this degree in Japan. But 11th *dan* was awarded to *sensei* Makoto Nakamura, in the *Kyokushin karate*. Grades 11-12 *dan* are also awarded outside Japan. The highest degrees were awarded in Japanese martial arts: Dr Krzysztof Kondratowicz, Poland - 12th *dan jūjutsu*; GM (Grand Master) Joseph M. Victory Jr., USA - 12th *dan jūjutsu*; GM Lothar Sieber, Germany - 12 *dan jūjutsu* [Korobeynikov, Czarny, Cynarski 2022]. Because *jūjutsu* has been practiced in Western countries and especially in Central Europe since the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries [Pérez-Gutiérrez *et al.* 2021] and - according to some experts - today's level of teaching in Europe and the USA is the highest [Cynarski 2016], the possession of higher degrees by outstanding teachers outside Japan than in Japan itself seems to be justified in individual cases.

In addition, high grades were awarded - equivalents of "dan" for:

Great Grand Master (GGM) Yip Man (Ip Man) from Hong Kong - 12 *toan* in VingTsun kung-fu (postmortem); GGM Leung Ting from China - 11 *toan* in Wing Chun kung-fu;

GM Cacoy Canete from Philippines - 12 *dan* in Modern *escrima*; Grand Guro Jose G. Mena - 12th *dan* in Philippine *arnis*;

GM Tjero Khan (aka Gerald Karel Meijers) from the Netherlands - creator/founder of the Mongolian-Chinese style of Chan Shaolin Si & Dju Su kung-fu - 12 *toan* / *dan*; GM Gilberto Pauciullo from USA - 11 *duan* in his own system Mon Seer Kung Pai kung-fu (also the holder of 10 *dan jūjutsu*, 9 *dan karate*, 8 *dan judo* etc.) [cf. Korobeynikov, Czarny, Cynarski 2022].

Although originally in the Chinese, Filipino or Polish martial arts traditions, master degrees of related "dans" were not awarded, today it is imitated by some

organizations, such as EWTO (European WingTsun Organization) or IPA (Idokan Poland Association). However, the culturally accepted role of *si-gung* in *kung-fu* or *guro* in Filipino-origin schools is different from the position of *sōke*, *hanshi* (high-ranking master), or *shihan* (high-ranking teacher) in the Japanese tradition. Also, Master or Grand Master is a title understood differently in different countries and organizations. Either there is one master and others are instructors of different ranks, or everyone who reaches a certain rank (meets the criteria) becomes a "master" or "grand master".

Due to this long-standing tradition of teaching *jūjutsu* in Central Europe, it has its own original institutional solutions. This is, for example, the awarding of an academic title - Professor of *jūjutsu*. It was first received by Franz Rautek (Austria; a diploma presented by the President of this country), then Dr Krzysztof Kondratowicz (Poland; from the Academy of Physical Education in Kraków, signed by Prof. S. Sterkowicz, also highly advanced in *jūjutsu*) as a result of consultations with Prof. W.J. Cynarski. The European Jūjutsu & Kobudō Committee (EJKC) awarded the title of professor to such *jūjutsu* experts as Doc. Lothar Sieber (10th dan, Germany), Prof. Ph.D. Wojciech J. Cynarski (9th dan, Poland), Dr Jan Słopecki (10th dan, Poland), Dr Roland Maroteaux (9th dan, France), Franz Strauss (10th dan, Austria), and Hannelore Sieber (9th dan, Germany) [Czerwenka-Wenkstetten 1993; Korobeynikov, Czarny, Cynarski 2022]. Here, outstanding masters also achieve two 10th dan, as Erich Rahn (in *jūjutsu* and *judo*), or even three, as Dr Wally Strauss and Hans Schöllauf (in *jūjutsu*, *judo*, and *judo-dō idō*) [Sieber 1977; Gdanietz 1984; Preiss 2012; Sieber, Cynarski 2013].

Some people may think that achieving a black belt (1st dan) entitles them to claim to be a master. Traditionally, however, only *hanshi* (8-10 dan) is an independent master-teacher, like a Full Professor in an academic environment. In turn, the highest ranks and titles, such as 9-12 dan, *sōke* or *meijin*, should be awarded by other masters of the highest rank. A self-proclaimed champion, who has awarded himself the highest honors in the school and style he invented, very rarely finds recognition in the martial arts community.

Some, like *meijin* M. Mochizuki, achieved a high level of mastery in several different martial arts and taught *sōgō budō* / *sōbudō* / *sōbujutsu* themselves, i.e. a group of martial arts - a kind of complete martial arts system [Kruyning 2022]. Today, H. Mochizuki, T. Sugawara, A. Floquet and R.J. Maroteaux teach similarly. Sugawara first achieved *kyōshi* level in *aikidō* and *kenjutsu*, which is above the highest technical level for which an examination is required. The rest – similarly. In turn, the leader (*sōke*) is above the dan gradation and can award grades up to 10 dan. In the 15th century *Tenshinshōden Katorishintō-ryū* school, which is the complete *heiho* / *sōbujutsu* of that time, the *sōke* is the successor of the Iizasa family (the founder of the

school) and it is he who appoints the main *shihan* - master teacher.

To acquire competences confirmed by authorities, ambitious students and instructors go to master teachers, training centers, and sources. Teachers also go to promote their schools and organizations. This is how martial arts tourism is developing [Pawelec, Świder, Cynarski 2020].

Ad. 3.

The global level of institutionalization in the area of fighting arts is a function of a number of factors. Popularity results especially from its presence in the world of sports and global mass culture [Green, Svinth 2003]. Sometimes, when demand is high, there is a lack of instructors and opportunities to acquire the necessary competences.

The example of *judo* is significant - the first Olympic sport derived from the martial arts tradition of East Asia. Sports *judo* has become a sport practiced all over the world. It is true that coaching staff and national teams "pilgrimage" to the Kōdōkan Institute, a kind of "*judo* temple". However, the main goal of sport, which is the best result (winning the competition), outweighs other goals and values. The International Judo Federation [Błach, Cynarski, Litwiniuk 2004] mainly cares about the development of *judo* as a sport. Meanwhile, contrary to the ideas of Jigorō Kanō, knowledge about *judo* as an educational system is limited to a rather narrow group of enthusiasts. Outside Japan, where *judo* contributes to the school physical education system, *judo* is not widely used in the areas of physical culture and pedagogy.

In turn, the today very popular and fashionable MMA (mixed martial arts), present in numerous sports programs on satellite television and in new action films for young people, brings little value, apart from vitality and the level of fitness/skills. It is quite a brutal spectacle, and for the competitors - risky/highly traumatizing. Compared to traditional martial arts, the only advantage of MMA is its relative technical and tactical versatility in preparation for a fight. However, compared to the idea and values of budō, MMA appears as a cult of violence (anti-way) and a modern formula of gladiatorship.

In the case of *karate*, those schools, styles and organizations that have entered the path of sports competition are more popular. Meanwhile, the creator of *karate-dō*, Gichin Funakoshi, rejected sports competition as contrary to the idea of self-improvement. Few supporters of practicing *karate* in a traditional way practice its combat version, with an emphasis on self-defense or with an emphasis on personal development (e.g. *Zendō karate Tai-te-tao* / *Idōkan karate*) [Cynarski 2014; Cynarski, Sieber 2016]. Thus, some karate organizations still strongly reject sports/sports competitions, due to the contradiction between the goals of sports and the path of martial arts. Similarly, this also applies to other martial arts.

Martial arts films introduced martial arts into

popular culture [Cynarski 2001b, 2003, 2018; Bowman 2010; Cynarski, Slopecki 2016]. Bruce Lee and subsequent screen heroes captured the collective imagination. Therefore, in parallel to the actually existing samurai tradition and sword culture [Bennett 2015; Cynarski 2017], patterns functioning in mass culture were created, which influenced the perception and understanding of martial arts in individual countries [cf. Donohue 1994; Obodyński, Cynarski 2003a; Ko, Yang 2012; Lachina 2018; Cynarski 2022b].

In fact, sports culture lies in the area between physical culture and mass culture. The connecting factor is the spectacular nature of sports, especially combat sports. Physical culture itself includes areas of physical recreation, and here the wealth of martial arts is used more and more widely [Grabiner 1982; Gim 1998; Brown, Leledaki 2010; Zeng, Cynarski, Xie 2013; Cynarski, Sieber, Szajna 2014; Bielec *et al.* 2021]. The same applies to school physical education [Warchol *et al.* 2021], activities to improve health [Lin 2016; Skrzeta *et al.* 2021] and the use of martial arts in today's security culture [Cynarski, Piwowarski 2016; Piwowarski, Czajkowski 2023].

Institutionalization and changes in teaching

The processes of sportization and globalization, democratization and dissemination of Asian martial arts on a global scale result in the adaptation of martial arts to new conditions - their modernization and adaptation [Tokarski 1989; Cynarski 2003]. The biggest changes are taking place in those martial arts that have become competitive sports. Then, changes occur in teaching and in the repertoire of techniques used by adapting them to sports regulations. Institutions operating in the world of sports are also implicated - sports associations and federations, committees within these organizations, competition systems, etc.

As indicated by masters who have been practicing martial arts for many years, the changes concern *judo* and *kendō*, *jūjutsu* and *karate*, and even *aiki-jūjutsu* and *iaidō*, where there is basically no sports competition. Only classical schools, such as *Tendō-ryū*, still teach the same forms. But the author's own experience indicates that in the case of the 15th-century *Tenshinshōden Katorishintō-ryū* school, the details of performing techniques and *kata* change in teaching subsequent *shihan* [more: Cynarski 2024 - in print].

Discussion

If a young, 30-year-old instructor boasts of having the rank of 10th dan, it is extremely strange and against tradition. These highest, non-technical degrees are awarded for merits, i.e. teaching, work for popularization, publications, ethical attitude, etc. They can rarely be achieved before the age of 60. The cases of juvenile holders of the highest degrees result from the extreme commercialization of the martial arts market [cf. Cynarski 2001a; Slopecki 2013].

If in the Polish school of sociology of physical culture of Prof. Zbigniew Krawczyk we treat physical culture holistically, the ways of martial arts in their full, systemic approach find their important, rightful place here [Cynarski 2005]. The ascetic model of somatic culture implemented here in its particular variant brings a strong emphasis on perfectionism in everyday training - working on one's own body for internal self-improvement. In this way it refers to areas beyond the physical. The world of symbolism and values, psychophysical practice and aspirations going beyond sports achievements mean that we can talk about a person operating in the field of psychophysical culture [Cynarski 2000b; Obodyński, Cynarski 2003b; Cynarski, Obodyński 2011; Cynarski *et al.* 2015].

Japan cultivates, protects and promotes its martial arts traditions - *kobudō* and *gendai budō* / modern *budō* [Bennett 2009; Uozumi, Bennett 2013; Lachina 2018]. Thailand does similar in the field of *krabi krabong* and Thai boxing [Phuykaekam, Deebhijarn 2020; Pookaiyaudom 2020]. In India, *kalaripayattu* is promoted, and in China - numerous schools and styles of native martial arts [Green 2020]. *Taekwondo* is promoted by both South and North Korea [cf. Johnson, Cynarski, Lee 2020; Kim, Bäck 2023b]. The competition for a place in the world heritage of martial arts includes Malaysian *silat* [Shapie 2021], Indonesian *silat* [Purwanto, Perdani 2023], and other traditional martial arts. Martial arts enrich sports culture, physical culture and philosophical reflection [Cynarski 2022a; Kim, Bäck 2023a]. They also convey, as heritage, the richness of movement and symbolism encapsulated in technical forms [Kim, Bäck 2023a: 83-101].

George Jennings [2023: 123-130] in the chapter The revival and Protection of martial arts as heritage of his book writes about the Modern Renaissance of Martial Arts that were lost and found. This applies - in his opinion - especially to HEMA, i.e. Historical European Martial Arts. It is a cultural phenomenon resulting from the popularity of literary works and mass culture (the films "Braveheart", "The Lord of the Rings" and others). Additionally, Brazil promotes capoeira and BJJ (Brazilian jiu-jitsu), and Israel promotes *krav maga*. A specific MMA show, which is something on the border between sport and gladiatorship, has gained great popularity on a global scale. So is this a return to the heritage of the Roman Empire (although in a changed form and content)?

An example of the achievements of European martial arts masters of Japanese origin is the *Idokan* organization (since 1947). There were certain borrowings and adaptations, modernization modifications, and institutional arrangements. The institutionalization of the adopted and applied solutions results from the advancement of organizational development and the need to adapt to the mentality and world of values of today's inhabitants of Central Europe [Sieber, Cynarski 2013; Cynarski 2019b].

Attempts were made to preserve what is most valuable both in the technical sphere (curriculum) and the knightly ethos, adding modern teaching methods and democratic principles of the organization.

The novelty of research here is the idea of assessing the presence of various martial arts in the general cultural heritage of humanity according to the level of institutionalization and dissemination on a global scale. The matter probably requires further research.

Any comments and suggestions are welcomed so that we can constantly improve this template to satisfy all authors' research needs.

4. Conclusions

All three theses are confirmed as a result of many years of observation and analysis.

1. Various national martial arts enter the world heritage of humanity, becoming, in a sense, a common cultural heritage.
2. The master of a given martial art, as a work of art, is a concept understood differently and is culturally variable.
3. Global dissemination indicates a high level of institutionalization in the area of fighting arts, but the cultural influence of a given figure from this area does not depend on this dissemination.

Additionally, it can be said that in addition to the more famous martial arts from East Asia and Southeast Asia (which are present in mass culture through cinema and in martial arts tourism), other martial arts are also becoming part of the cultural heritage of humanity, such as the Polish *Signum Poloncum* and Ukrainian *Boiovyi hopak*.

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The limitation for conclusions here is the qualitative approach and the relatively subjective perspective of the author from Europe. Further research on this issue should therefore take into account the assessments of researchers from different countries and continents, and use quantitative methodology (diagnostic survey, multivariate analyzes of appropriately determined indicators) as a complementary one.

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