

An Olympic Mosaic

Multidisciplinary Research and Dissemination of Olympic Studies
CEO-UAB: 20 Years

Editors

Emilio Fernández Peña
Berta Cerezuela
Miquel Gómez Benosa
Chris Kennett
Miquel de Moragas Spà



Centre d'Estudis Olímpics
Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona



Ajuntament de Barcelona

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Foreword

Ana Ripoll Aracil

Rector of the Autonomous University of Barcelona

As Rector of the Autonomous University of Barcelona (UAB), it gives me great satisfaction to write the foreword of the book celebrating the 20th anniversary of the Olympic Studies Centre (CEO), which was founded on 28 June 1989 with the approval of the Governing Council of the UAB.

Since then, CEO-UAB has grown, and its scientific know-how and direction have become consolidated, thus making it a point of reference in the international network of Olympic studies. This is due its proven ability to collaborate with the Olympic Movement and with various Catalan, Spanish and international sports bodies on the academic, scientific and cultural dissemination of Olympism.

For those unaware of its background, it is worth recalling that CEO-UAB is the result of a dream: a dream come true for Catalan society when Barcelona was chosen as the host city for the 1992 Olympic Summer Games. The enthusiasm aroused by the fact that Barcelona would be staging the 1992 Games also permeated through to the academic world. Thus, CEO-UAB emerged as a space for analysis and reflection on Olympism, a unique phenomenon in contemporary history that, besides its implications for sport, has a significant impact on areas as diverse as the economy, urban planning, culture, politics and society. It was a truly local initiative driven by Dr Miquel de Moragas Spà at the UAB and, right from the start, its character was marked by three defining traits: pluralism, an international vocation and the desire to carry out multidisciplinary research.

Over the years, CEO-UAB has been the spearhead of our university in its desire to contribute to and promote the values and ideals of peace that both Olympism and sport represent. However, as a higher education and research institution, the UAB decided to do this by studying Olympism primarily as a social and cultural phenomenon of 20th and 21st-century society. No other sporting event arouses so much passion, brings together so many viewers in front of their television sets or serves to globally exalt the new Olympic gods of sport. Like the celebration of an Olympic Games, there are few events that decisively contribute to the transformation of a city. It is thanks to the Olympic truce, which manages to enhance international relations between nations, that differences are played out on fields and tracks or in pools and boats.

These and many more topics are studied by CEO-UAB researchers and conserved at the Documentation Centre, which contains a remarkable collection of documents, in all sorts of formats, on Olympism and especially on the Barcelona'92 Olympic Games. Consequently it is providing an invaluable service of keeping the memory and legacy of those Games alive. This documentation can be accessed via the CEO-UAB website. Back in 1996, CEO-UAB pioneered the use of the Internet by creating a website designed to act as big reading room open to the world, making all kinds of documents on Barcelona'92 available to everyone.

For all these reasons, it is only logical that, from the very beginning, all the UAB's Rectors have placed their trust in it. These include Ramón Pascual, who was Rector when CEO-UAB was founded, Josep Maria Vallès, Carles Solà, Lluís Ferrer and,

most recently, myself. Consequently, we have renewed and maintained our support for this project, which allows our university to have a research centre of international renown in the field of Olympic studies.

CEO-UAB is not a closed research centre set in the UAB campus. Quite the opposite in fact; since 1989, the CEO-UAB Board has been formed by the university, Barcelona City Council, Barcelona Provincial Council and the Spanish Olympic Committee. In addition, the Government of Catalonia joined the Board in 2002, represented by the Secretariat General for Sport. This is demonstrative of the consensus that this project generates; it has managed to involve the main Olympism and sports-related institutions from Catalonia and Spain. Along the same lines, it is worth noting CEO-UAB's agreements and collaborations, for the promotion of education and research projects, with a variety of institutions, such as the Barcelona Olympic Foundation, the National Institute of Physical Education of Catalonia (INEFC) and the Spanish National Sports Council, among others.

The magnificent relationship that CEO-UAB has managed to build with the International Olympic Committee (IOC) based in Lausanne deserves a special mention. It is a clear example of necessary and positive cooperation that needs to be cultivated between the Olympic Movement and universities, particularly in the field of social sciences and humanities, to which CEO-UAB has dedicated the majority of its research efforts. As an example of such collaboration, we could highlight the joint organisation of international symposiums with the Olympic Museum Lausanne, the co-edition of specialist publications on Olympism and its impact on society, and the various commissions to undertake research of strategic interest to the IOC that CEO-UAB has received. Another relevant chapter of such cooperation was the creation of the International Chair in Olympism in 1995, which is managed by CEO-UAB through an agreement, signed by the then Rector Carles Solà and the former President of the IOC, the late Juan Antonio Samaranch.

For the UAB, CEO-UAB's existence has represented a link with the Olympic Movement and with its internationally recognised symbol: the Olympic rings. It also inspired the creation of the first academic version of an Olympic mascot. With the IOC's permission, the Academic Cobi, designed by Javier Mariscal, has become a symbol of CEO-UAB, an emblem disseminated across all five continents thanks to academic collaborations with universities worldwide.

Last but not least, I would like to personally thank Dr Miquel de Moragas Spà for his work as director of CEO-UAB, from the time it was founded to 2009. He was the inspirational force and the *alma mater* of the centre, as I have mentioned. He could be described as true visionary who decided that the staging of 1992 Olympic Games was an opportunity for the city of Barcelona that had to be embraced by the scientific community. Judging by the results, that was indeed what happened. Therefore, I would also like to thank and congratulate the documentalists for having achieved extraordinary documentary holdings, as well as the researchers of the UAB and of many other universities around the world who have collaborated on numerous academic and research projects promoted by CEO-UAB. Without their involvement, we would not have achieved the international visibility and respect that we have gained over these 20 years of existence.

I only hope that CEO-UAB continues to celebrate many more anniversaries with the same drive, determination and commitment to research and to the transfer of knowledge to society. And, of course, on behalf of the UAB, I would like to thank all the institutions and people mentioned in this foreword for their support and collaboration. This anniversary would not have been possible without them.

Congratulations to everyone!