Original research article

TRACING THE TERM PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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SUMMARY

Translating the work by Hufeland titled “Makrobiotik oder Kunst das menschliche Leben zu verlängern”, Georgije of Beckerek, the Hieromonk of the Fruska Gora monastery of Grgeteg, was the first among the South Slav people who used the term “physical education” in 1807. Applying the historical model in this research that relies on primary sources, the translation of Joan Stejic from 1826, which included this work in even more comprehensive way (with comments), is put to the forefront along with the above-mentioned publication. Pointing to the fact that the Russian translation of Hufeland’s work by Piotr Ozerov was published only a few years earlier, namely in 1803, the “birth” of the term physical education, although it did not have the current methodological-didactical determination at that time, represents a significant foundation from the value aspect for the development of national history of physical culture among the Serbs.

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INTRODUCTION

Being until recently only the assumption, it has become an entirely definite fact among the historians of physical culture that Georgije of Beckerek, the Hieromonk of the Fruska Gora monastery of Grgeteg, was the first among the South Slav people who used the term “physical education” in 1807 while he was translating the work by Hufeland titled "Makrobiotik oder Kunst das menschliche Leben zu verlängern".

However, the term did not have its current methodological-didactical definition at that time, but from the historical aspect, it was certainly significant for our history of physical culture.

![Makrobiotik](image)

Figure 1

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1 Wilhelm Christoph Hufeland, (Langensalza, Thüringen, 1762. - Berlin, 1836.), was the royal medical doctor, just like his father and grandfather before him, and by the end of the 18th and beginning of the 19th century he was one of the highest European authorities in the field of medicine. Relying firmly on clinical experiences, he improved medicine significantly, and, among other things, a special diet and hydrotherapy. He was the professor of special pathology and therapy at the University in Berlin. He wrote more than 400 papers, while some of the publications such as “Macrobiotics” encountered a huge success and popularity, according to: Encyclopaedia of Medicine (1968), Z Glj-Kom, Jugoslavenski leksikografski zavod, Zagreb, pg. 359)

2 Wilhelm Christoph Hufeland, Makrobiotik, the front and first page of the German issue
FROM GEORGIJE . . .

Hufeland’s “Macrobiotics” was a very popular work in the field of sciences and it was translated in many European countries, including Slav countries, at the turn of the 19th and 19th centuries.

It was translated first in Russia in 1803, and in Serbia in 1807 already. The translation of the Hieromonk of Beckerek from German was quite abbreviated, the second translation into Serbian done by Jovan Steic in 1826 encompassed the whole work, and it even contained some additional comments. Almost 40 years later, more precisely in 1864, the translation of the above-mentioned work in Slovenian was published.

Figure 2

Georgije Bečkerečki published his translation of “Macrobiotics” in Buda in 1807 under the title “Художество к продуженију живота человечаскаго” (“The art of prolonging human life”) where one Chapter of his abbreviated translation published at pages from 59 to 62 was titled “Разумно физическој воспитаније” (“Reasonable physical education”).

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3 Georgije Bečkerečki, “The art of prolonging human life” (Buda): [n.pub.], 1807), front and first page of the issue

4 Encyclopaedia of physical culture, (Zagreb): Yugoslav lexicographic Institute, 1975), 1 A-D:343.
Although the above-mentioned Chapter talks mainly about diet and care for infants and small children, this Hieromonk also recommends: "Allow a child and young men to run, jump, etc." This sentence is practically the only connection, if we can say so, with physical education.

Despite the fact that Hufeland’s original work translated as “Umjeće produženja ljudskog života” by J. Ulage speaks much more about physical strengthening, spending time at fresh air, walking, riding, and other psycho-physical activities, Beckerecki addressed this issue merely superficially.

That is why the research prone curiosity required also the knowledge on some of the elements of biography of Hieromonk Georgije Beckerecki, which would lead indirectly rather than directly to learning about things that motivated him to use the term “physical education”.

We have managed to do that only partially. Namely, the only piece of information is that the civic, or peaceful, as the Orthodox clergy would say, name of the Hieromonk Georgije Beckerecki is Grigorije Kircanski and that he was born in Veliki Beckerek (contemporary Zrenjanin) on November 18th, 1775. His father Jovan was a teacher in Szentendre. Grigorije Kircanski became a monk in the monastery Grgetić, in 1799 where he was given the name Georgije and surname Beckerecki, after his birthplace.

Figure 47


6 “The plea of the bishop Stefan Avakumovic addressed to Metropolitan Stratimirovic to produce Georgije Beckerecki into a deacon”, ASANUK, Metropolitans-Patriarchal Fund, 1799), B, 13.

7 “Birth Register of Veliki Beckerek for the period from 1772 to 1779”, Historical Archives of Zrenjanin.
In addition to Hufeland’s Macrobiotics, the Hieromonk Beckerecki translated from German another well-known philosophical work titled “Science of Philosophy” in 1809, and in 1824, he published his publication titled “Роданник”.

However, the Hieromonk Beckerecki, one of our first translators from foreign languages, did not have a necessary support of his superiors, in particular of the most influential one - Stefan Stratimirović, the Metropolitan of Karlovci, who was remembered in history after his strict autocratic rule and emphasised nationalistic attitudes. It was difficult to him to accept the reforms (e.g. language reform changes introduced by Dositej and Vuk), which was also confirmed by his resistance to pro-European, in particular German influence in culture. Condemning Beckerecki, most probably because of germanisation, the Metropolitan Stratimirović recommended the Hieromonk: “to stick strictly by his monastery, not to wonder around and not to lead an improper life.”

Thus, there is no doubt that Beckerecki came from and educated family, that he was an excellent connoisseur of German language and that he showed a special interest in sciences and philosophy, which could not explain the motives driving him to use the term “physical education” in his translation of “Macrobiotics”. Most probably, the term was used in the context of physical and health care for children.

THROUGH STEIĆ….

Contrary to Beckerecki, some twenty years later, namely in 1826, Jovan Steić translated the entire Hufeland’s Macrobiotics into Serbian and published it under the title “Макробиотика или наука о продужениу живота човеческог” (“Macrobiotics or science of prolonging human life”). At almost 400 pages, he entered some of his remarks in that translation, pointing out more specifically and more precisely the impact of physical movement. This can be illustrated with the following piece:

“Every day one should walk in fresh air for an hour in the morning and another hour in the afternoon, taking care to ascend gently and moderately along
the way to some elevated place and come down from it; one should also often read aloud.”

In the end, if we wish to encircle in a certain way the historiographical review of translations of Hufeland’s “Macrobiotics” into Slav languages we should also mention the oldest translation into Russian, in a free translation titled “Nauka, koja govori o putevima dugovečnosti” (“Science indicating the ways to achieve longevity”), the author Piotr Ivanovitch Ozerov started his translation from 1803 with Goethe’s saying: “Sweet is the feeling of life! It is beautiful to live and create! – But, do we have to depart from you, oh life?”

11 Jovan Steić, Macrobiotics or science of prolonging human life, Vienna: [n.pub.], 1826, 321.
12 Ibidem, front page and page 321
13 Pjotr Ozerov, “Science indicating the ways to achieve longevity”, Moscow: [n.pub.], 1803, front page.
This Russian translation singles out in particular the evaluation of human life not only from the aspect of medical care but also from the moral side. Physical nature of a man has been created for the purpose of a higher, moral goal, which makes it essentially different than animals, and without moral education a man would wage a constant struggle with his own nature.

Finally, the statement that is not possible to achieve one without the other is based of the links between physical and moral health, just as the soul and body are linked - they have a shared source, they merge into one and being merged in such a way they make a perfect nature of man.

The “emphasis” in this part of a book is placed on young people who are considered to lay down the foundations of health at that age, and it would be thus an unforgivable mistake to exert negligence in education of young people when it comes to physical education, which used to be a common phenomenon even at that time.

**INSTEAD OF THE CONCLUSION**

More than two centuries have passed since the first written trace of the term “physical education” appeared in Serbian language and it is nowadays much more than a mere historical heritage of a profession, more than the fact based on which parts of Serbian ethnic space are “valued” as less or more “cultural”.

Physical education in its terminological “source” reflects “care” for an infant and small child, their need to “run” and “jump” (Beckerecki, G.), daily walking in fresh air (Steić, J.), moral and physical health (Ozerov, P.) as values that will soon be given a full meaning in scientific and professional-pedagogical practice through the works of Dr Dimitrije Radulović, Dr Djordje Natošević and others.

The power of these guidelines dating back to the 19th century is still and inspiration in processes by which we measure our potentials in “approximation” to new value perspectives. Regretfully, a selective memory, frequent oblivion that we used to have responsible lawyers, monks, medical doctors, and later on pedagogues of physical culture in our country emphasises the critical “loudness”
of professional public on the issue of the reach of contemporary physical education as centuries old property of both linguistic and pedagogical heritage.

REFERENCES AND SOURCES

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ТРАГОМ ТЕРМИНА ФИЗИЧКО ВАСПИТАЊЕ

САЖЕТАК

Јеремићама је руских манастира Гретег, Георгије Бечкеречки, препоручио познато дело Хуфеланд „Макробиотик или Kunst das menschliche Leben zu verlängern“. 1807. године, први је код јужнославенских народи употребио термин физичко васпитање. Применом историјског метода у овом истраживању, ослоненима на примарне изворе, поред наведене публикације, у први план се истиче и превод из 1826. године којим је Јован Стећ, на још целовитији начин (уз коментаре), обухватао ово дело. Указујући на чињеницу да је руски превод Хуфеландовог дела од стране Пјотра Озерова објављен тек неколико година пре – 1803. године, „двање“ термина физичко васпитање, а када тај није имао динашњу методичко-едукативну одредницу, са вредносног аспекта представља значајан упориште за развој националне историје физичке културе код Срба.

Кључне речи: термини, физичко васпитање, историја
В РОЗЫСКЕ ТЕРМИНА ФИЗИЧЕСКОЕ ВОСПИТАНИЕ

РЕЗЮМЕ

Переводя работу Гуфеланда под названием "Makrobiotik oder Kunst das menschliche Leben zu verlängern", Георгие Бечкеречки, нероманх монастыря Гргетег в Фрушкої Горе, был первым среди южных славян, которые использовали термин "физическое воспитание" в 1807 году. Применяя исторический метод в этом исследовании, которое опирается на первоисточники, наряду с вышеупомянутой публикацией ставится в первый план перевод с 1826 года которым Иван Стеич всеобъемлющим образом (с комментариями) рассмотрел эту публикацию. Указывая на то, что русский перевод работы Гуфеланда Петра Озерова был опубликован лишь несколько лет назад, а именно в 1803 году, «рождение» термина физическое воспитание, хотя у него не было нынешнего методологического-дидактического определения в то время, представляет собой значительный фундамент для развития отечественной истории физической культуры среди сербов.