

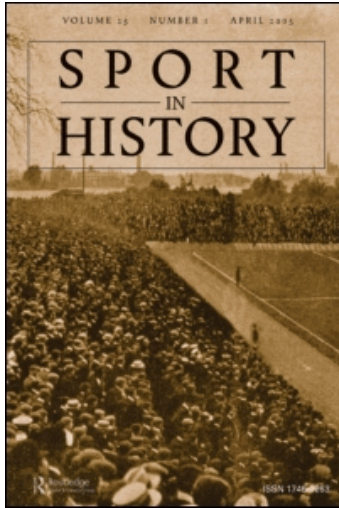
This article was downloaded by: [Syddansk Universitetsbibliotek]

On: 7 July 2010

Access details: Access Details: [subscription number 912902609]

Publisher Routledge

Informa Ltd Registered in England and Wales Registered Number: 1072954 Registered office: Mortimer House, 37-41 Mortimer Street, London W1T 3JH, UK



Sport in History

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:

<http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/title~content=t714579673>

Knud Enemark Jensen's Death During the 1960 Rome Olympics: A Search for Truth?

Verner Møller^a

^a Institute of Sports and Biomechanics, University of Southern Denmark,

To cite this Article Møller, Verner(2005) 'Knud Enemark Jensen's Death During the 1960 Rome Olympics: A Search for Truth?', Sport in History, 25: 3, 452 — 471

To link to this Article: DOI: 10.1080/17460260500396319

URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/17460260500396319>

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR ARTICLE

Full terms and conditions of use: <http://www.informaworld.com/terms-and-conditions-of-access.pdf>

This article may be used for research, teaching and private study purposes. Any substantial or systematic reproduction, re-distribution, re-selling, loan or sub-licensing, systematic supply or distribution in any form to anyone is expressly forbidden.

The publisher does not give any warranty express or implied or make any representation that the contents will be complete or accurate or up to date. The accuracy of any instructions, formulae and drug doses should be independently verified with primary sources. The publisher shall not be liable for any loss, actions, claims, proceedings, demand or costs or damages whatsoever or howsoever caused arising directly or indirectly in connection with or arising out of the use of this material.

Knud Enemark Jensen's Death During the 1960 Rome Olympics: A Search for Truth?

Verner Møller

Institute of Sports and Biomechanics, University of Southern Denmark

The linguistic turn in philosophy has brought the problem of truth to the fore of historiography. This has led to number of writers suggesting that there is no truth in history. This article aims to challenge this view through a study of the death of the Danish cyclist Knud Enemark Jensen at the Olympic Games in Rome 1960. Through the literature on the history of doping it is often mentioned that Jensen died from his use of amphetamines and that this fatality prompted a more serious response from politicians and sporting bodies. While evidence suggests that the incident did prove something of a catalyst for firming up anti-doping policy, it will be shown here that the oft-repeated claim that Jensen's death was doping-related is in fact unfounded. The implications for an understanding of truth in contemporary historiography will be discussed.

On the opening day of the 1960 Olympic Games in Rome, the twenty-three-year-old Danish racing cyclist Knud Enemark Jensen died. During the team time trials he became sick and fell off his bicycle: an ambulance was called, but he was beyond rescue. That much we know. We also know that it was an extremely hot day with temperatures above 40 degrees Celsius. What is not known for certain is why he died. We do know, however, that every death has a cause. That is, a truth about Jensen's death

Verner Møller, Institute of Sports and Biomechanics, University of Southern Denmark.
Correspondence to: vmoller@health.sdu.dk

does exist, and that truth forms the basis of this article. Given some of the conceptual developments within the humanistic study of sport since the 1980s, it is necessary to begin with a discussion of the problem of truth.

The fascination with the impossible thought that the truth was false

It is probable that laymen with an interest in the history of sport or the history of drugs in society will find the attempt to uncover the truth about Knud Enemark Jensen's death both legitimate and relevant. Within the humanistic and social sciences, however, it is a controversial project. Fashionable ideas such as postmodernism, social constructivism, deconstruction and neo-pragmatism have – with their emphasis on concepts such as construction, perspective, relativity, discourse and narrativity – put truth under pressure and nearly driven the humanistic sciences insane. Prestigious publishers have published books containing interesting but, at their core, meaningless statements such as ‘we make stars by drawing certain boundaries rather than others. Nothing dictates whether the sky shall be marked off into constellations or other objects. We have to make what we find, be it the Great Dipper, Sirius, food, fuel or a stereo system’. [1]

The field of history has not escaped this trend. Thus, in *The Saturated Self*, the social-constructivist psychologist Kenneth J. Gergen enthusiastically shares with us his discovery of the work of Hayden White:

Consider the writing of history. We generally think of proper history as furnishing us with an accurate account of the past. It is through the teaching of history that we come to understand our heritage, our accomplishments and our failings, and enrich our wisdom for the future. Yet, proposes the historian Hayden White, if historians are to be intelligible they must inevitably rely on the existing conventions of writing within their culture. These conventions are themselves subject to historical growth and decay, and our understandings of the past are thus rooted in the literary traditions of the day, particularly our tradition of storytelling, or narrative tradition. [2]

The insight that Gergen finds particularly fascinating is that historians are unable to present all the documents, bodily movements and statements that might be relevant. In other words, they are unable to present history as it really was. ‘Rather they select and interpret the evidence in a way that will fit the cultural demands for proper narratives.’ And this is not all: ‘In White's terms, “historical narratives . . . are verbal fictions, the contents of which are as much ‘invented’ as ‘found.’” (Reader beware, the same may be said of this book, and as well of the saying so).’ [3] In the way Gergen

reads White, what we assume to be historical reality is therefore – to put it radically – a fiction. Gergen’s fascination with the fact that everything could be different is all too conspicuous – and odd. If he really meant what he wrote, it ought to have made him hesitate and consider whether it was worth writing the book at all. Of course, he might simply enjoy writing in the same way that some people enjoy doodling when they are talking on the phone. But why then publish the book? If he claims that – like novelists – he wants to tell a story to an audience, why then choose the genre of non-fiction? Why not just write freely from his imagination – as if it were a novel – instead of going to the trouble of referring to a huge range of books (e.g. Hayden White’s) to provide support for his arguments? What is the use of footnotes and quotations? There seems to be a remarkable discrepancy here between form and content. This discrepancy gives rise to the suspicion that Gergen does not quite dare to trust his own point of view: that truth does not exist but is invented. If he did, his arguments would be completely in vain, as there is no reason to argue for a point of view that does not value truth.

This is not to say that I believe historical accounts to be perfect reflections of the past as it really was. It is obviously impossible to give a complete rendition of the events of the past. Reading some of the many accounts of the Second World War will provide anyone with ample evidence of this: none of them are identical. The reader would even find significant differences between Danish, Norwegian and English history books. However, one would also discover another essential fact at the same time, namely that Hitler, Himmler, Göring and Goebbels, as well as a range of events such as *Kristallnacht*, the extermination of the Jews and D-Day appear in all of the accounts. They do so because a range of sources and personal testimonies about the events exist: this is a strong indication that we are not dealing with pure fiction.

There is a qualitative difference between novels and history books. Whereas novels can be fiction from one end to the other, historical accounts are based on a real past. The historian tries to give an account of real events and stay as close to the truth as possible, which is not to say that he tries to give an account of everything that took place: the object of his laborious work with sources is to find the essence of past events. The point of departure is that, although history is influenced by coincidences (for example natural disasters), it does not evolve coincidentally but is shaped by people who act according to certain motives. The writing of history thus requires the writer to assume a perspective and carry out an interpretation. It is necessary to carry out a selection based on debatable criteria of relevance. Hence, historians will often focus on events that

influenced developments in their own countries and have a tendency to disregard what might be important for areas further away. This, however, *neither* means that the events did not in reality have effects outside the historian's horizon – that the reality is not greater than as presented by the historian – *nor* that the result reached by the historian is pure fiction without any truth value. It does mean that history is presented by the historian as a subject and is hence a subjective account and interpretation of historical facts: and, moreover, that the truth which the historian believes his interpretation to uncover is *a truth about something*. He could also have sought the truth about a second, third or fourth matter within the same – or a completely different – field. These other truths were left out of consideration due to the historian's choice of focus. Despite this, his or her account may very well accord with the truth. Perhaps the agents of history really did act on the basis of the motives ascribed to them in the account. Due to the nature of the subject, this cannot be known for sure, but by investigating various sources, presenting documentation and arguing in a consistent way the historian strives to validate his or her interpretation. It is then left up to the reader to judge.

These are not the same criteria one would use to judge a novel. The essential thing is not whether it is a good story, whether it has a good plot and is well told and well composed. The main criterion is whether the account is *credible* and in accordance with the historical evidence. A badly written story about Auschwitz that accords with the comprehensive documentation of the camp is therefore better history writing than an excellently written denial of the existence of Auschwitz and what happened there. The first story is, in spite of its stylistic imperfections, closer to the truth than the well-written denial. The denial is very aptly called a falsification of history, thereby implying that there is a (true) history to falsify. The fact that this consists of an almost endless number of truths does not support the statement that there is no truth, or that we cannot get close to this truth by finding factual information about past events. Claiming that there is no objective truth – that truth is always a construction – is in reality claiming that there is no qualitative difference between the statement that mass exterminations took place during the Second World War in Auschwitz and the statement that mass exterminations never took place.

This is clearly untenable. Even if Auschwitz, contrary to all evidence, never did happen, this is a truth that falsifies the story we have been told about Auschwitz. Based on the scholarly criteria and methods according to which historians work, however, it is entirely unlikely that the people who deny the reality of Auschwitz will ever be given scholarly recognition:

the existing evidence is too overwhelming for that to happen. It therefore appears to be more appropriate to compare historical scholarship with legal scholarship rather than literature.

I tried to make this point at a conference arranged by Professor John Bale in the Danish city of Aarhus in response to Professor Jeff Hill's lecture, [4] which was strongly inspired by Hayden White. Hill emphasized the fictitious character of historical writing and maintained that, strictly speaking, there is no difference between the writing of history and the writing of novels. There is undoubtedly good reason to point out the potential value of literature as historical material. However, I was very surprised to hear Hill deny that there is a genre difference and deny that the historian – albeit in a literary form and with the use of certain artifices and additions – tries to the best of his ability to give an account of the past that is as close to the truth as possible. 'I don't believe in Truth with a capital T' was the answer, which clearly struck a chord in the audience but which, rightly considered, evades the problem. In order to clarify whether the concept of truth was valid at all, I asked whether it was not a truth that Kant was born in 1724, which made one of the historians present, Murray Philips from the University of Queensland, exclaim spontaneously 'No! That's a fact!' And thus ended the discussion.

From the linguistic turn to pure nonsense

The reason it has become necessary to argue that there *is* a truth (consisting of a number of truths) is that a great part of the humanistic disciplines have been seduced by the 'linguistic turn' in philosophy. For unknown reasons the (re)discovery of the language dependency and discursive creation of science possesses such centrifugal force that it has apparently slung cognition within certain humanistic fields beyond the gravitational pull of reason. Hayden White goes exactly as far as he can – and no further – when he states that:

recent philosophers of history have typically treated narrative less as a verbal structure than as a kind of explanation by storytelling and have regarded the story told in a given history as a structure of argumentative concepts, the relations among whose parts were logical (specifically syllogistic) rather than linguistic in nature. All this implied that the content of a historical discourse could be extracted from its linguistic form, served up in a condensed paraphrase purged of all figurative and tropological elements, and subjected to tests of logical consistency as an argument and of predicative adequacy as a body of fact. This, however, was to ignore the one 'content' without which a historical discourse could never come into existence at all: language.

During the very period in which this argument model predominated among analysts of historical discourse, philosophers such as Quine, Searle, Goodman, and Rorty were showing the difficulty of distinguishing what was said from how it was said even in the discourse of the physical sciences, let alone in such a nonformalized discourse as history . . . this implied that the very distinctions between imaginative and realistic writing and between fictional and factual discourse, on the basis of which historiographical writing had been analyzed since the disengagement from rhetoric in the early nineteenth century had to be reassessed and reconceptualized. [5]

In this connection it is essential to point out that White's invoking of the role of language in historiography is not aimed at abandoning truth, but to get even closer to it. It is fair to demand that we reflect on the consequence of the language dependency of scholarship, just as it is fair to doubt whether history allows us to know the past as it really was. However, it does not follow from this that one has to walk the plank of relativism. White's objective is to contribute to the development of the science of history, since he believes the traditional writing of history to be inadequate. Instead he opts for a modernist writing of history, which takes into consideration the linguistic staging, because 'modernist modes of representation may offer possibilities of representing the reality of both the Holocaust and the experience of it that no other version of realism could do'. [6] He argues for this re-conceptualizing, not for the sake of renewal, but because he believes that historical research would gain from this and become even better at what it aims to do: to provide us with insight into and understanding of, for example, the past political, financial and national developments that have contributed to shaping the conditions in which we currently live.

In fact, White is working for a laudable purpose that is similar to the cognitive development of the natural sciences, in which one attempts to develop new theories when too many questions have accumulated which the previous paradigm is unable to answer. Einstein's relativity theory and Bohr's quantum mechanics are examples of revolutionizing breakthroughs within physics. The difference, however, is that when these theories saw the light of day, the advocates had to prove that the power of explanation of the new theories was greater than that of previous ones. And the reason why these theories hold to this day is that Bohr and Einstein succeeded in convincing the scientific community that their theories possessed a greater power of explanation than the physics of Newton.

Within the natural sciences, new theories have to prove their worth. This is not the case within the humanistic disciplines. These do not have the same tradition of making strict demands on new theories that must be proved to be better than the existing ones in order not to be rejected. Within the humanities it is, for example, possible to put forward revolutionary claims such as that the idea of truth is an illusion or that the difference between men and women is a social construction, and then leave it to opponents to repudiate the claims. This is often cumbersome, and in certain circumstances even impossible, because the advocates of the new theories reject rationality as the basis for conversation. Thus there are still professional academics who read the French sociologist Bruno Latour in earnest and believe in his argument that it is problematic for new studies of the mummy of Ramses II to show that he died from tuberculosis, as this bacillus was first discovered and hence constructed socially by Robert Koch in 1882, which prompts him to write that ‘Before Koch the bacillus has no real existence’. [7]

Hence, it was not particularly surprising, but still a shock to many people, when the physicist Alan D. Sokal demonstrated the receptiveness of the humanities to nonsense with the publication of his mock article ‘Transgressing the boundaries: towards a transformative hermeneutics of quantum gravity’, which, in fact, provided ample hints to the editors that the article was pure humbug. Already in his introduction he wrote what ought to have made even the most naïve and vain humanist suspicious:

There are many natural scientists, and especially physicists, who continue to reject the notion that the disciplines concerned with social and cultural criticism can have anything to contribute, except perhaps peripherally, to their research. Still less are they receptive to the idea that the very foundations of their worldview must be revised or rebuilt in the light of such criticism. Rather, they cling to the dogma imposed by the long post-Enlightenment hegemony over the Western intellectual outlook, which can be summarized briefly as follows: that there exists an external world, whose properties are independent of any individual human being and indeed of humanity as a whole; that these properties are encoded in ‘eternal’ physical laws; and that human beings can obtain reliable, albeit imperfect and tentative, knowledge of these laws by hewing to the ‘objective’ procedures and epistemological strictures prescribed by the (so-called) scientific method. [8]

The quotation should speak for itself.

However, the newly developed theories in the humanities are often well thought out in their original form, and are – if they are read in the same vein that they were written – worth studying. Most often one will then

discover that they are not nearly as revolutionary as they are made out to be. The problem lies with inadequate reflection, objectivity and insight. It may be those who elaborate and radicalize the new theories, because small distortions can make them appear to be in accordance with a certain belief, policy or ideology. Or it may be that opponents of the new theories are tempted to present them in a way that makes it easier to repudiate them, but for which the original texts, strictly speaking, do not provide grounds.

The linguistic turn has sent much of the humanities into a cognitive muddle. Increased awareness that reality is thought and expressed in concepts has tempted people to draw the faulty conclusion that concepts such as truth and reality are no more than socio-linguistic constructions without foundation outside language. This has caused some to believe that a change of concepts would cause a change of (what we experience as) reality. Thus feminists used to believe that it would contribute to sexual equality if gender-specific terms such as 'chairman' and 'sportsman' were replaced with gender-neutral terms such as 'chair' and 'sportsperson'. These linguistic innovations seemed slightly comical at first. Now that we have become used to them, we are able to see that this was the only effect they had on anyone. In reality these innovations have changed absolutely nothing, because language complies with and takes shape from reality, not the other way around.

It is important to be aware that there are differences between concepts, and that it is neither reasonable to maintain a purely concept-relativist nor a purely concept-realistic point of view. If we take a word such as 'doping', for example, it is easy to see that this is a highly arbitrary concept, which might as well have been called 'performance-enhancing drugs' and might as well have been legal as well as illegal. At the time of Knud Enemark Jensen's death, doping was not illegal; today a veritable crusade has been launched against it. There are reasons for this. Nevertheless, it is impossible to ignore the fact that the problem of doping is a social construction. If, on the other hand, we look at a concept like 'death', it refers to a real condition, namely the lifelessness of a previously living organism; a condition which, irrespective of whether we choose to use a different term for it, remains a reality independent of human decisions. The fact that Jensen died during the Olympics in Rome in 1960 is beyond any doubt: it is a truth that can be changed by neither language nor historical account. Death is no construction, and neither is the cause of death. Even though the problem of doping is a social construction, and the means of doping are as well (in the sense that they have been produced – possibly in a laboratory), doping drugs are also

substances with an effect on the organism, and this cannot be changed. This effect is no social construction. For example, a well-trained marathon runner will acquire enhanced endurance by consuming small doses of strychnine, whether he knows this or not. Whether or not he chooses to call the drug something different, the lethal dose is about 5mg/kg; if he consumes 15mg/kg death will be certain. Thus truth does exist, and this is what historians are chasing when they search through archives for material which may throw light on this or that. That the truth is not very easy to find, on the other hand, will be demonstrated by the following.

The Jensen mystery

In many publications about doping, Jensen's death during the 1960 Olympics is mentioned as a significant reason why politicians and sports organizations became aware of doping as a problem which needed to be fought actively. Barrie Houlihan is the author of one of these publications, and he writes the following about the episode in his excellent book *Dying to win*: 'In 1960 the Danish cyclist, Knut Jensen, collapsed and died at the Rome Olympic Games during the 175-kilometre team time trials following his use of amphetamines and nicotine acid. Jensen's two team-mates, who had taken the same mixture, also collapsed but later recovered in hospital.' [9]

This piece is written without references. It is therefore impossible to know where Houlihan got his information. On the other hand, it is possible to spot three factual errors and one unsubstantiated claim: (1) The cyclist who died was not called Knut, but Knud; (2) The discipline was not 175 kilometres but the 100-kilometre team time trials; (3) Jensen did not have two team-mates, but three, namely Niels Baunsøe, Vagn Bangsborg and Jørgen B. Jørgensen, and there is no evidence to support Houlihan's claim that they, too, had taken amphetamine. Even before finishing the first half of the race, Jørgensen could no longer keep up with the others. He felt unwell in the heat and let himself fall behind the team. As the performance of the team was measured by the finishing time of the third cyclist, it was thus vital for Jensen to keep up with the team to the finish, even though he also complained about feeling unwell during the race. A photo in the Danish tabloid *Ekstra Bladet* on 27 August, the day after the tragedy, shows how the two remaining team-mates are holding Jensen's shirt on both sides and are unsuccessfully trying to support him and prevent him from falling down. The text accompanying the photo is: 'The team-mates Baunsøe and Bangsborg try to keep Knud Enemark on

his bike as he suffers heatstroke.' Underneath is the famous photo where Jensen falls, hits his head on the ground and sustains a concussion. The text reads: 'They did not succeed in holding him up. Knud Enemark falls onto the road while Niels Baunsøe watches in horror.'

Even though these are part of the circumstances surrounding Jensen's death, Houlihan does not mention them. He also does not mention that thirty-one other cyclists suffered heatstroke during the infamous race, which points to the extreme heat as a crucial factor. Similarly, he remains silent about the presumably fatal factor: that, unlike the other collapsed cyclists, Jensen was not cooled down but was placed by the first-aid team in a tent, where he lay for about two hours in a temperature of approximately 50 degrees Celsius. [10] Houlihan's loose description of the situation is probably due to the fact that he only needs to use the tragedy to document that the use of doping has had fatal consequences, a fact that contributed to the initiation of an anti-doping policy in the 1960s. Considering the context in which Houlihan writes, it is understandable that he relies on knowledge that has generally been accepted by doping researchers, even though one wonders why he does not carefully pass the buck by referring to the work he paraphrases.

Ivan Waddington has apparently taken this precaution. He writes:

Writing about the more recent period, Mottram (1996: 92) noted that 'there are numerous examples of fatalities arising from the use of amphetamines by cyclists', two of the most famous amphetamine-related deaths being those of the Dane Knud Jensen in the 1960 Olympic Games and of the British rider Tommy Simpson in the 1967 Tour de France. [11]

Apart from the fact that Waddington has given the poor Dane an un-Danish name, there seem to be no real problems here. We can see that he is talking about Knud Enemark Jensen, and it would appear that we can get the full story by consulting David R. Mottram. However, consulting Mottram's text [12] proves rather disappointing because although Mottram does write what Waddington quotes him as saying, he does not mention a word about Jensen and Simpson. Thus, Waddington does not provide any support for his knowledge about Jensen's death, but similarly draws on the well-known 'fact' that it was a consequence of amphetamine use.

It is remarkable that experienced researchers such as Houlihan and Waddington do not make the effort to cover their backs with references in the Jensen case. This is, after all, a serious allegation to circulate without evidence. But since Jensen died, and the rumours that his death was

caused by amphetamine use began, it seems that these rumours have acquired the status of public knowledge. However, this does not mean that they are true, if the truth, which we do not know yet, was in reality different. Waddington might as well have quoted from or referred to Chapter 2 of Mottram's book and thereby passed the blame on to 'former director of ethics and anti-doping at UK Sport', Michele Verroken, who gives the impression of possessing evidence that Jensen's death was doping-related. She states with great confidence: 'At the 1960 Rome Olympics, the cyclist Knud Jensen died on the opening day of the Games as he competed in the 100 km team time trial. Two team mates were also taken to hospital. The post-mortem revealed traces of amphetamine and nicotinylnitrate in Jensen's blood.' [13] The only thing missing here is documentation. Verroken writes as if she has personally seen the post-mortem report, which she probably has not. She, too, seems to be writing on the basis of rumours, because it is not easy to gain access to this report. So in the quest for the truth about Jensen's death, a reference to Verroken would have been a *dead end* after all.

The reason why the truth about Jensen's death seemingly does not interest doping researchers may actually be that, although doping was not illegal in Jensen's time, he has since become a symbol of unethical behaviour. Therefore there is no mercy regarding his posthumous reputation. Robert Voy writes:

Perhaps the landmark amphetamine-related tragedy in Olympic history occurred when Danish cyclist Knud Enemark Jensen collapsed and died during the 175.38-km road race at the Summer Olympiad in Rome. It was reported at the time that, leading up to his death, Jensen was taking, supposedly on doctor's orders, a combination of nicotynal alcohol and amphetamine, sarcastically nicknamed by his competitors the 'Knud Jensen diet'. Several of the other athletes competing in Jensen's race collapsed like Jensen had at the finish; however, Jensen was the only fatality. An autopsy revealed that Jensen probably died from dehydration caused by the amphetamine in his system, though his skull had also been fractured. [14]

Once again, no evidence is provided for the claim that Jensen had used amphetamine, (and once again we find factual errors in the account). However, the story has gained a new dimension, as it is implied that Jensen was known by his rivals for using a certain 'doping diet'. This is certainly a good story. Nevertheless it seems scientifically irresponsible to present this kind of claim without substantiating it. Only if Voy actually claimed to have been present and heard about the 'Knud Jensen diet', as well as having had this confirmed by several people independently, would

it have been defensible to tell the story in this way. The way it is presented by Voy, the story falls into the category of gossip, which has no place in scientific literature. The fact that the sensational story about the Knud Jensen diet has not appeared in the doping literature after Voy's reference to it indicates a generally high standard of scientific ethics. Still, one is tempted to ask whether the circulation of the story about Jensen's death from doping does not indicate the opposite, in so far as the researchers do not seem to support their claims properly. This may be too hasty a conclusion, as certain pieces of circumstantial evidence speak for this claim, even though one may object that this evidence has never been evaluated properly in the international sport and doping literature.

Circumstantial evidence

Under the headline 'Olympic Trainer Admits Giving Drug to Danish Cyclist Who Died', the *New York Times* on 29 August 1960 wrote the following:

The trainer of Denmark's Olympic cycling team revealed tonight that the Danish bicycle rider who died after a race in the Olympics last Friday had been given a drug. The rider was Knut Enemark Jensen, 22 years old [he was in fact 23]. He collapsed during the 100-kilometer (62.5-mile) team road race in Rome and died later in that day. The trainer Oluf Jorgensen, told the Danish Government organ *Aktuelt* that he had given the drug *roniacol* to Jensen and other members of the Danish cycling team. Preben Z. Jensen, the leader of the Danish Olympic cycling team, confirmed Jorgensen's statement in a report to the Danish Road Biking Union. Preben Jensen told the union that the trainer had given a stimulant to the team's four members prior to the race. He said Jorgensen admitted Friday night, only a few hours after Enemark Jensen's death, that pills had been given to the cyclists. No reason was given why the report had been withheld until now. Jorgensen said the purpose of the drug was to intensify blood circulation. He said he had obtained the prescription from his doctor.

It thus seems indisputable that Jensen consumed a medical preparation before the race, presumably expecting it to enhance his performance. However, *Roniacol* is a drug that causes vascular dilation but has no real performance-enhancing effect. While it does make the blood flow more easily to the muscles, it also causes the blood pressure to fall and the blood supply to other non-working muscles and organs not to be shut off as effectively as normal when the body is exposed to great performance demands. This means that the blood supply to the working muscles is not optimal, meaning that *Roniacol* actually has a performance-inhibiting

effect. This would have resulted in a drop in blood pressure, which was probably made worse due to dehydration. When blood pressure falls, it causes dizziness and general indisposition. Given these facts, the journalist Lars Bøgeskov's account of the circumstances sounds plausible:

There are very few hills, but not much shade either. It is a fast race. Just after the four Danes start the second round, Jørgen B. Jørgensen is suddenly gone – he just falls behind all of a sudden. A little while later, he is taken to the central hospital in Rome. On their way up the only small incline towards the turning point, both Knud Enemark and Vagn Bangsborg complain about stiffness in their legs. Only Niels Baunsøe still has any real strength left in his legs. 'Follow me' Baunsøe says, and then he pedals like mad towards the turning point. And Niels Baunsøe rides really fast. At the sharp corner of the turning point a spectator shouts that the three Danish riders are now only ten seconds from a bronze medal. Again, Baunsøe goes in front in the light headwind on the sun-baked plain. 'Homeward bound', says Knud Enemark, ready to endure the final pain in the hope of winning an Olympic medal. But eight kilometres from the finish, Knud Enemark shouts 'I am dizzy'. And when the riders have only five kilometres left, Enemark is only semi-conscious. He lags behind, and his bicycle falters. Niels Baunsøe keeps him up on his bicycle by holding his shirt; Vagn Bangsborg sprays water on his face. His bicycle reels, but then Enemark regains consciousness. 'Are you OK?' Baunsøe asks. 'Yes' replies Enemark; Baunsøe lets go of his shirt, but the next moment Enemark passes out and falls heavily onto the scorching asphalt. Team manager Preben Z. Jensen, who was driving the 100-kilometre team car, turned the car around immediately and fetched an ambulance, which the riders had passed 400 metres earlier. Meanwhile, other teams passed the prostrate Knud Enemark from behind. Knud Enemark was put on a stretcher and inside the ambulance, which took him to the finish area. Here, the unconscious Knud Enemark was placed in a military hospital tent. Niels Baunsøe and Vagn Bangsborg passed the finish, but Bangsborg also felt dizzy. He was sick and was taken to the Olympic village. Baunsøe rode his bicycle. In the military tent the heat was even more oppressive than on the route, and here the 23-year-old Knud Enemark died – the exact time was 1530. [15]

People had high expectations of the Danish team in this race for good reason. Two months earlier, Jensen had won a Nordic Championship and earlier in the year the team had drawn with the Germans, who were considered favourites together with the Russians and Italians. The conditions were the same for all teams, but if the Danish team had been given Roniacol by their coach ahead of the Olympic race, it is understandable that they all felt dizzy, unwell and performed below normal levels in the extreme conditions. The real enigma is Niels Baunsøe,

who was the only person to ride well, and who was even well enough after the hardships to cycle back to the Olympic village.

There are two possible explanations. One is that he was the only person in the team who refused to take the Roniacol tablet. The other is that, in addition to Roniacol, he also took amphetamine. The latter seems more plausible. Firstly, amphetamine has a performance-enhancing effect (and Baunsøe did cycle so fast that the others had difficulty in keeping up). Secondly, it enhances the effect of noradrenalin which is, in popular terms, the 'flight-and-fight' hormone of the body that causes vascular contraction. In other words, amphetamine would neutralize the negative effect of Roniacol. In spite of this, no allegations have ever been made against Baunsøe and this is understandable. First of all, doping was not illegal at the time; secondly, the attention was focused on Jensen; and finally, this reasoning was not immediately obvious, as the emerging campaign against doping was based on a growing scepticism towards modernity and the medical progress made by modernity. [16] Nevertheless, it actually seems more likely that the use of amphetamine helped or even saved Baunsøe than it is that it killed Jensen.

Considering Jensen's poor performance, it does not seem likely that his death should later be ascribed to the use of amphetamine. Jørgensen's admission that he had given the riders a medical preparation probably contributed to the view that Jensen's death was doping-related. The public are probably ignorant as to what kind of preparation Roniacol really is, and may therefore have believed that it was probably the name of a potent performance-enhancing drug (like amphetamine). However, it takes much more than just the rumour that Jensen might have taken amphetamine for this to become historical fact. The Danish journalist and Olympic expert John Idorn gives us a clue as to what this *more* is. In his book about the history of the Olympics he writes:

In the Danish cycling camp it was admitted that the drug in question was Roniacol, said to be harmless, and an 'official' report from November 1961 maintained that the cause of death was sunstroke. The post-mortem showed something different, however. The IOC account, written by Prof. Dr Ludwig Prokop, claims that it was a case of doping with methamphetamine and pyridic carbinol. [17]

Idorn thus refers to Prokop's account, and Prokop seems confident about the matter. According to Bøgeskov, who investigated the case thoroughly in 1998, the IOC account from 1972 is impossible to get hold of, but it is supposed to be 'a historical account about doping cases up until the present' which 'quotes the post-mortem report from the Italian doctors

back in 1960, according to which the doctors found amphetamine and the drug pyridic carbinol in Knud Enemark's blood'. [18] I strongly suspect that the report Bøgeskov was unable to get hold of is identical to Prokop's article in Helmut Acker's anthology *Rekorde aus der Retorte* from 1972. Here Prokop briefly describes doping cases through the ages and states authoritatively that Jensen 'broke down and died during the Olympics in Rome as a result of an overdose of amphetamine and Roni[a]col provided by his coach'. [19] The article is, however, written without documentation. Those who claim that Jensen was cycling on amphetamine have only the words of Prokop for support. And his claim that, apart from handing out Roniacol to the riders, the coach supposedly handed out amphetamine as well seems to be just as much of a haphazard guess as the above claim that Baunsøe did better than his team-mates due to the use of amphetamine. It is worth remembering that, after the tragedy, the coach himself volunteered the information that he had distributed Roniacol within the team. And as doping had not been made illegal yet, it would not have incurred any legal sanctions to tell the whole truth. Although there is hardly any reason to doubt Prokop's credibility (he is, after all, one of the pioneers of the campaign against doping), it seems likely that he accidentally 'invents' the provision of amphetamine by the coach based on the Italian post-mortem report.

In the course of his thorough research, Bøgeskov interviewed John Idorn, who refers directly to Prokop's account of the case. In the interview Idorn says:

I was at the press centre [in 1972], when Ludwig Prokop delivered his account. He gave a speech on various doping cases and mentioned the Enemark case as being central. . . . I had the account in my hands; I do not have it anymore, but I have no doubt that Enemark was under the influence of amphetamine and pyridic carbinol – it isn't something I made up in my book. Everybody involved in the race knew that it was a case of doping. [20]

Idorn's statement indicates that he may have fallen victim to an illusion. In 1972 he hears Prokop state that Knud Enemark Jensen had taken performance-enhancing drugs and is even told the names of the drugs in question. He links this with rumours heard at the scene of the event in 1960, where everybody involved in the race believed that it was a case of doping without any other evidence than the admission by the coach that he had handed out the infamous drug Roniacol to the riders. In combination, the rumours and Prokop's account eliminate any shadow of a doubt in Idorn's mind, which is why he simply quotes

in his book from 1996 what he heard from Prokop twenty-four years earlier.

The fact that Prokop's account (which is impossible to get hold of) has become the primary source of the doping shadow looming over Jensen's grave is even more regrettable due to the fact that Bøgeskov interviewed the author of the account in 2001 and gained an admission that Prokop never saw any documentation to prove that Jensen had been doping:

'I was there when Knud Enemark died, and from the beginning I suspected that doping might be the cause. I sought information straight away but I couldn't gain access to the post-mortem report. A couple of months later in Monte Carlo I met the Italian professor who carried out the post-mortem on Knud Enemark, and he told me that, among other things, he had found amphetamine in the Danish cyclist. However, I have to admit that I have never seen documentation to prove that his death was caused by doping. Perhaps it was wrong of me to draw it out in the report,' says Ludwig Prokop, who does not believe, however, that Enemark died in vain. 'Remember that Knud Enemark's death initiated the fight against doping,' says Ludwig Prokop. [21]

Bøgeskov's interview leaves no doubt that Prokop's commitment to the early work against doping led him to make unsubstantiated claims, because it happened in the service of a good cause. Confronted with the question several years later, he reveals a doubt as to whether the statement by the Italian professor was sufficient reason to maintain as a fact that Jensen had been doped by amphetamine. In those days, the methods used for tracing drugs were not as sophisticated as today. It therefore seems a very reasonable demand to see documentation, stating what kind of data the professor bases his statement on, before declaring with medical authority to the public that Jensen was doped by amphetamine. And the case becomes even more precarious for Prokop, as the Italians produced a medico-legal report in 1961 clearing Jensen of suspicion.

This report caused the then president of the Danish Olympic Committee, Leo Frederiksen, to write the following letter in 1962 to the editor of the *Bulletin du Comité International Olympique*, which had published an article providing new fuel for the suspicions against Jensen:

Dear Sir,

I refer to the article *Waging War Against Dope* on page 46 of the International Olympic Bulletin, No. 77, which includes, *inter alia*, the following lines: 'We do not wish to cite the case of the unfortunate Danish cyclist during the last Games in Rome, the medical and legal sport [report] on whose death was communicated only to the family, so that we shall never know the real cause of this death.' I would like to

comment on this paragraph as follows: The official report from the Italian authorities has not been made available to the Olympic Committee of Denmark, but the report was handed to the Danish police authorities, who submitted it to the Danish public health authorities. 'In due course, our Committee received from the Copenhagen Police a letter of the following wording: "The Italian authorities" report on the death of the cyclist Knud Enemark Jensen and the results of the subsequent post mortem and pharmacological and toxicological examinations have been submitted to the Danish Public Health Board.' On returning the report, the Board declares that no grounds have been found for comment of any importance on the case. In consequence, the Copenhagen Police want to establish as final the conclusion of said report, viz., that the death of Knud Enemark Jensen was caused solely by heatstroke. No charge whatsoever will be brought against anybody in connection with this case. I would much appreciate it if you would include this comment in your next issue of the International Olympic Committee Bulletin.

Yours faithfully

For the Olympic Committee of Denmark

Leo Frederiksen

President. [22]

The letter was published and followed by the editor's thanks for the comment 'which put an end to this regrettable accident which happened during the Rome Games'.

So what is the truth?

Today we know that the editor was wrong. Frederiksen's comment did not put an end to the story. The rumour lives on. Presumably due to the highly esteemed Austrian doctor Prokop's circumstantial account, it has been written into the scientific literature as fact. But the only accessible official document about the case acquits Jensen of doping. This raises doubts whether there is any way to substantiate the repeated claim by the doping researchers: that Jensen died as a result of doping with, among other drugs, amphetamine. As the case stands, it seems scientifically dishonest for Tom Donohoe and Neil Johnson to maintain that 'While the official verdict cited sunstroke as the cause of death, the autopsy revealed that Jensen had taken the stimulant amphetamine and also nicotinyl tartrate to increase the blood supply to his muscles'. [23] As nothing indicates that they have ever seen this post-mortem report, what they communicate as fact is only what they have read or heard through the grapevine. This is not to say that it is necessarily wrong. Lars Bøgeskov concluded his research into the case in 2001 by phoning one of the

doctors, Dr Alvaro Marchiori, who carried out the post-mortem. With reservations about his weak memory now forty years after carrying out the examination, he says: 'But of course I remember the examination of the cyclist who died during the 100-kilometre race. Because it was the first time we had a doping case at our institution. And I remember that we found traces of several things – amphetamine among others.' [24]

Bøgeskov thus receives the same message from Marchiori as Prokop received from the professor who carried out the post-mortem a few months later. So what are we to believe? It is odd that the doctors who carried out the post-mortem claim to have found traces of amphetamine, whereas the official report, which was published on the basis of the post-mortem and sent to the Danish authorities, does not mention this finding at all. It complicates the matter further that the only currently accessible document is an unfinished nine-page translation, which can be found at the National Archive in Copenhagen. The Italian authorities will not allow access to the full medico-legal analysis report. It is beyond understanding what motives the Italian authorities may have had for publishing a report which acquits Jensen, if they, in reality, did find amphetamine in his blood. On the other hand, it is also beyond understanding that the doctors who carried out the post-mortem would claim to have found traces of amphetamine if this was not the case. In my view, the best explanation for this is that there were doubts about the finding. The doctors could not prove that they had found amphetamine. We will only know whether this is the truth when the Italian authorities release the post-mortem report and the medico-legal analysis in its entirety.

This is not to say that we know nothing, and that there is no historical truth about the event. Even though our knowledge is communicated to us in a narrative form and using literary means, it is beyond any doubt – it is true – that during the Olympics in 1960 a 100-kilometre team time trial race was run with Danish participation in temperatures of over forty degrees Celsius. We also know for certain that Knud Enemark Jensen was a rider on the Danish team, that he had been given a drug, Roniacol, which causes vascular dilation, became unwell, collapsed and died a few hours after the race in a hot military tent. Furthermore, we know that there were rumours to the effect that he had been doped, that those who carried out the post-mortem claimed to have found traces of amphetamine, but also that the report which was forwarded to the Danish authorities did not mention this finding, for which reason the case was shelved. Against the background of these and other truths (call them facts if you wish) presented here, it is possible to offer a plausible explanation of the cause of death. It seems unlikely that Jensen cycled with

amphetamine in his blood. And if he did, this still is not grounds for maintaining that he died as a result of amphetamine doping. On the contrary, there is good reason to believe that if, indeed, he had taken amphetamine, he did not die because of but rather *in spite* of this, inasmuch as amphetamine would have countered the fatal effect of the Roniacol tablet. It is therefore more likely that his death was caused by a combination of factors. The extreme heat combined with the consumption of Roniacol, which would have contributed to an already significant level of dehydration, is presumably an essential part of the explanation. From the Danish Sports Association's biography of Danish Olympic athletes, it appears that the Swedes had measured a loss of fluid in their cyclists of six litres. Furthermore, it says that in that era the Danish cyclists and coaches did not believe 'that it was worth carrying fluids on the bicycle (they were too heavy)'. [25] Insufficient intake of fluids thus seems to have been a critical factor. Jensen's team spirit and his ambition to win an Olympic medal are also factors to be included. If he had not raced in order to win, but simply for the joy of participating, he would probably have stopped when he started to feel ill. Finally, placing Jensen in a hot military tent with insufficient cooling or treatment with fluids seems to have contributed to the tragedy. We are not likely to get any closer to the truth unless new material about the case appears. Nevertheless, we have now substantiated that there is a truth about Jensen's death, and for this reason it does matter what is claimed about the cause of death; it would not matter unless it were the purpose of (historical) science to search for the truth. Thus, there is good reason to support the opinion rejected in mockery by Sokal that 'human beings can obtain reliable, albeit imperfect and tentative knowledge' also about history'.

Notes

- [1] Nelson Goodman, *On mind and other matters* (Cambridge, MA, 1984), p. 36.
- [2] Kenneth J. Gergen, *The saturated self. Dilemmas of identity in contemporary life* (New York, 1991), p. 108.
- [3] *Ibid.*, p. 109.
- [4] Jeff Hill: "Sport as Ideology: History, Literature and Culture". Lecture held at the conference "Educational and Sociological Issues in Sports and Physical Education" Aarhus University 8–10 December 2004.
- [5] Hayden White, 'Literary theory and historical writing', in *Figural realism: studies in the mimesis effect* (Baltimore, MD, 2001), p. 5.
- [6] Hayden White, 'Historical emplotment and the problem of truth in historical representation', in *ibid.*, p. 41.

- [7] Here quoted from David Favrhøldt, *Filosofisk Codex. Om begrundelsen af den menneskelige erkendelse* (Copenhagen, 1999), p. 230. Philosophical codex. On the basis for human understanding.
- [8] Alan D. Sokal, 'Transgressing the boundaries: towards a transformative hermeneutics of quantum gravity', in *Social Text*, 46/47 (1996), p. 217.
- [9] Barrie Houlihan, *Dying to win – Doping in sport and the development of anti-doping policy* (Strasbourg, 1999), p. 36.
- [10] Lars Bøgeskov, 'Doping-mysteriet uden løsning', *Politiken*, 9 April 2001, sportsmagasinet, p. 12. All excerpts from the original article translated by Mette Bollerup Doyle. The doping mystery without solution.
- [11] Ivan Waddington, *Sport, health and drugs* (London, 2002), p. 154.
- [12] David Mottram eds. *Drugs in Sport* (London 1996).
- [13] Michele Verroken, 'Drug use and abuse in sport', in David R. Mottram, *Drugs in sport* (London, 1996), p. 19.
- [14] Robert Voy, *Drugs, sport, and politics* (Champaign, IL, 1991), pp. 6ff.
- [15] Lars Bøgeskov, 'Dopingsagen der ændrede verden', *Politiken*, 20 Sept. 1998, section 1, p. 14. All excerpts from the original article translated by Mette Bollerup Doyle. The doping case that changed the world.
- [16] For a further discussion of this, see Verner Møller, 'The anti-doping campaign – farewell to the ideals of modernity', in John Hoberman and Verner Møller, eds., *Doping and public policy* (Odense, 2004).
- [17] John Idorn, *OL-Historie Strejftog gennem myter, legender og danske medaljer* (Copenhagen, 1996), p. 92. Excerpt translated from the original by Mette Bollerup Doyle. Incursion through myths, legends, and Danish medals.
- [18] Lars Bøgeskov, 'Dopingsagen der ændrede verden', *Politiken*, 20 Sept. 1998, 1. section, p. 14. The doping case that changed the world.
- [19] Ludwig Prokop, 'Zur Geschichte des Dopings', in Helmut Acker, ed., *Rekorde aus der Retorte* (Stuttgart, 1972), p. 25.
- [20] Lars Bøgeskov, 'Dopingsagen der ændrede verden', *Politiken*, 20 Sept. 1998, section 1, p. 14. The doping case that changed the world.
- [21] Lars Bøgeskov, 'Intet bevis i historisk dopingsag', *Politiken*, 9 April 2001, sportsmagasinet, p. 1. Excerpt translated from the original by Mette Bollerup Doyle. No evidence in historical doping case.
- [22] Leo Frederiksen, 'Correspondence', *Bulletin du Comité International Olympique*, 78 (May 1962), p. 47.
- [23] Tom Donohoe and Neil Johnson, *Foul play – drug abuse in sports* (Oxford, 1986), p. 6.
- [24] Lars Bøgeskov, 'Doping-mysteriet uden løsning', *Politiken*, 9 April 2001, sportsmagasinet, p. 12. The doping mystery without solution.
- [25] Danmarks Idrætsforbund, *De Olympiske biografi af danske OL-deltagere 1896–1996* (Copenhagen, 1996), p. 313. Excerpt translated from the original by Mette Bollerup Doyle. (author: The National Olympic Committee and Sports Confederation of Denmark) title: The Olympic – a biography of Danish participants in The Olympic Games 1896–1996.