ΕΡΩΤΗΜΑΤΑ
Official Report of the XXVIII Olympiad

Homecoming of the Games - Organisation and Operations
Unique Games on a Human Scale
ATHENS 2004 Organising Committee
for the Olympic Games S.A.

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Special thanks to:
Archive and Research Company Ltd
D’Mikros Romios
Eleftherios Skidas
Christos Karientidis
Charalampos Raptis
for original material and editing of Chapters 1-3
of Volume I.

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ORGANISING COMMITTEE
FOR THE OLYMPIC GAMES

November 2005

SET: 960-88101-6-7
ISBN: 960-88101-7-5
Official Report of the XXVIII Olympiad

Homecoming of the Games - Organisation and Operations
Dear Friends of Greece,

The Athens 2004 Olympic Games have marked a new peak in the unfolding history of this institution.

The people of Greece welcomed the world in a spirit of genuine hospitality. Faithful to our common ideals, Greece embraced wholeheartedly the preparation and organization of the Games, thus fulfilling its responsibility to the world.

The success of the Games was the result of the combined efforts of the Greek government and the Organizing Committee as well as of the total commitment and mobilization of all state authorities and entities of public and private sector. Most importantly, it was the result of the support of all the Greek people as well as of the decisive participation of thousands of volunteers who considered the Games as a common effort, a national matter, from the election for hosting the Games until the Closing Ceremony.

We worked together with our friends from more than 37 nations to provide a safe environment for the athletes, the mass media, the members of the Olympic Family and our guests, while maintaining the festive spirit of the Games.

We delivered ultramodern facilities of excellent quality, which hosted the best athletes of the world from a record 202 nations, as well as public works infrastructure that will be utilized by many generations to come. We are striving to mold the legacy of the Games and the new perception of Greece worldwide into a lasting benefit for the Greek people.

With the return of the Games to their birthplace, we highlighted the accomplishments of modern Greece. The 2004 Olympic Games associated sport to culture and education, the universal ideals that transpire the Olympic Movement. Sport is a symbol of noble competition: the Olympic Games highlight this ideal to its wider, global scale. In previous years, nations that were fighting each other marched into the Olympic Stadium together. This forum of reconciliation is one of Greece’s greatest gifts to humanity, ever since the Olympic Truce was first invoked in our land, more than two and a half millennia ago. This celebration of peace, through sport, was a resounding message of the Athens Games to the world.

Every time that, after the Athens Games, the Olympic Flame is lit in the Stadium of Ancient Olympia, Greece will remind the world that the ideals which illuminate the Games are as contemporary as they were 3,000 years ago.
Dear Friend of the Olympic Movement,

The preparation and organisation of the 2004 Olympic Games were an immense undertaking. Greece was the smallest country ever to host the largest event of the world. The Greek Government, Public Agencies and the Organising Committee united their efforts to prepare the necessary infrastructure and to provide the necessary resources to host the Games.

On behalf of all the people that worked to make the ATHENS 2004 Olympic Games a great success - the Greek public, the athletes, the volunteers, the members of the IOC, Organising Committee employees, spectators, viewers and sports fans all over the world - allow me to express my joy and pride that you are holding and reading the Official Report of the XXVIII Olympiad.

The 2004 Olympic Games were a Unique Homecoming of the Games to the country where they were born and the city where they were revived in 1896. The people of Greece worked tirelessly to provide to the athletes of the world the best possible conditions to prepare and compete, to the spectators from all over the world a secure and celebratory environment, to the 4 billion viewers worldwide an amazing voyage that combined the ancient history of the Games with their future. The first ever global Olympic Torch Relay sent a message of unity and peace through sport, to all five continents.

The IOC President during the Closing Ceremony stated that we organised and presented an “Unforgettable, Dream Games”. When we were bidding for the honour to host the 2004 Games back in 1997, we asked the IOC and the international community for the right to make our dream come true. We delivered on our pledge: athletes competed in state-of-the-art facilities such as the Olympic Stadium, ancient venues such as Ancient Olympia, the Panathinaiko Stadium and the original Marathon route, bridging the history of the Games with their future. The first ever global Olympic Torch Relay sent a message of unity and peace through sport, to all five continents.

In the Official Report you will discover in detail our endeavours and efforts to prepare and organise the Games through words and pictures. But when you close your eyes and think about the Athens Games, imagine that, from the magical Opening Ceremony until the festive Closing Ceremony, the world had a unique opportunity to celebrate sport and truly the best that humanity has to offer.

All of us in Greece who were part of this great celebration, and our friends abroad who shared in this homecoming, will treasure those 17 days for the rest of our lives.

Hoping that you visit Greece and our Olympic heritage,

Gianna Angelopoulos-Daskalaki
President, ATHENS 2004 Organising Committee for the Olympic Games
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Part A

Homecoming of the Games
Greece and the Olympic Games
Greece and the City of Athens

Greece, Cradle of Olympism

The first Olympic Games in antiquity, in 776 BC, mark a particular point in the history of world sports and civilisation. The values and ideals conceived by the Ancient Greek intellect found fertile ground in the Roman era, as the Romans succumbed to the appeal of Greece, the land they had conquered, and its cultural offspring. The following centuries, however, would set aside the ideals of Olympism, and gradually lead to their obscurity. This oblivion would prove to be only temporary.

In 1894 Pierre de Coubertin and the Congress in Paris took a giant step towards reviving the Olympic Games in modern times. The choice of Athens as the first Olympic City, as well as the enthusiasm with which the Greeks greeted the Games in 1896, contributed decisively to the effort of establishing a Modern Olympic Movement. From the end of the nineteenth century to the dawn of the twenty-first, Greece and the Games have both changed completely. However, in 2004 the Games of the XXVIII Olympiad in Athens would underline once more, after 108 years, the very real connection between Olympism and Humanity.

Athens: Voyage into Myth

Through the mists of time and deep into myth, the establishment of Athens is credited to its founder and first king, Kekrops. Two Olympian gods, Poseidon and Athena, sought patronage over the city, offering respectively, a spring of salt water and an olive tree. The inhabitants, or, in certain versions, the other gods of Olympus, voted; thus Athena was made guardian and namesake of the city. Thus begins the glorious history of the city of Pallas Athena, mixed with Ancient Greek traditions. Erechthonius, half-man and half-serpent, the King of Athens, who rose from the Athenian land, is a myth used to structure the claim that the Athenians were an indigenous people, who had always lived in the area. In fact, another appealing myth connects Erechthonius to Kekrops and his daughters. At the sight of this hybrid infant, whom Athena had placed in a basket and entrusted to Aglauros, daughter of Kekrops, her sisters, Hense and Pandrosos, and their mother Agraulos fled, leaping in fear off the Acropolis. Aglauros herself, in an act of self-sacrifice, also fell from the Athenian Acropolis, in order to save the city from foreign invaders. In the later periods of this early age, several mythical heroes, Cranaos, Pandion, Erechtheus, Aegaeus would be linked to Athenian history; he slew the Minotaur on Crete, putting an end to the homage tax his fellow citizens paid to King Minos, in the form of human lives. Furthermore, Theseus is credited with the synoecism or unification of Athens, the policy of uniting the settlements of Attica around the Acropolis of Athens, an early appearance of the city-state. The many deeds of Theseus (battling the Amazons and the Centaurs, kidnapping Helen from Sparta, descending into Hades), as told by myths, form a prelude to the many activities and dominant position Athens would hold during the classical period. The reign of Theseus is usually placed in the later Mycenaean period (14th - 13th century BC), when Athens was one of the most important centres of the Mycenaean "Empire", the seat of a monarch with a palace and cyclopean fortifications.

Early Historical Civilisations

The prehistoric era ended with Codrus, the last
The Olympic Games

Alongside the political and social changes taking place in Athens and throughout the Greek world, new connective links were being forged amongst the Greeks: the Olympic Games were the apex of these, dating from 776 BC. Of course the Games were initially established in the later prehistoric period and there are numerous mythological figures credited with this event. Most noteworthy is the myth of Pelops, who won a chariot race against Oenomaus, king of the region, winning as his prize the king’s daughter Hippodamia, and the throne. The tradition of killing the loser after the race was later abandoned. Athletic competition would henceforward be bloodless and the Games were purified by conferring symbolic prizes and making sacrifices to the gods. This version is connected to the funerary games that were organised at Olympia, the introduction of chariot racing and the establishment of Games for women by Hippodamia. Another legend links the establishment of the Olympic Games with Heracles, a demigod respected throughout the Greek world and a renowned exponent of athletic prowess. Heracles is associated with the reforming trend towards fair play and sporting competition, blessed by the gods themselves who participated in sporting events. During historic times, Oxylos, King of Elis is attributed with the establishment of the Games and they were revitalised by his descendant Iphitus, following a Delphic prophecy, and by a treaty between the King of Elis, Lycurgus of Sparta and Cleisthenes of Pisa. The many varied traditions that have survived to this day regarding the establishment of the Olympic Games are connected to various stages in the history of the general region.

The hosting of the Games was placed under the aegis of the sanctuary of Zeus in Olympia, revered throughout Greece; and the Games were connected to religious ceremonies. The religious nature of the Games was expressed in...
several ways. Before the Games, athletes took an oath and made sacrifices to the god or the protector hero of the Games; and any infringement of the rules was considered sacrilege. The link between religion and sport, forged in the worship of heroes and further strengthened by its ties to the gods, made the winners and all those who participated in sports certain that the divinities would favour those who sought their good will with offerings and statues. The establishment of each contest was attributed to divine will or suggestion; while some hero was mythically credited with having been the winner of each athletic competition. When they were held every four years at Altis in Olympia, the Games were occasion for a sacred truce throughout the Greek world. Two different cultures of sporting/educational ideals, those of Athens and Sparta, "competed" during the historic years in Ancient Greece. Fair play and sportsmanship were always emphasized in the Olympic Games. Nevertheless, a citizen's participation in the Games formed part of his long-term preparation for war, training him to fight for his city.

Winners at the Games received great prestige and unprecedented honours from their home towns, some cities even tearing down portions of their walls in their honour. Certain instances of Athenian Olympic Winners clearly illustrate the importance of winning at the Olympic Games. Cylon, an Athenian Olympic victor from the 7th century, took advantage of the glory of his success at the Games, and attempted to establish a tyranny in Athens in 632 BC. His attempt luckily failed. During the same century another Athenian, Alcmaeon, the founder of the renowned Alcmaeonid family, was "the first of the Athenian citizens to win victory with a pair of horses at Olympia", an event indicative of the great significance of the Games for the aristocratic families of Athens. Later, in the 5th century BC, Alcibiades, another Alcmaeonid, continuing the glorious family tradition of victory in the Olympic chariot races, became popular with the Athenian populace, effectively founding his political career. These examples indicate that participation and victory in the Olympic Games, besides the burnish of glory it gave victors, formed a wonderful starting point in the political life of Athens and involvement in public affairs. Olympic victory offered future political leaders, often the offspring of the aristocratic families of Athens, a way of proving their worth and ability to the irascible and unpredictable people of Athens. Moreover, the gathering at Olympia allowed Greek tribes from all over the widespread Greek world to create a consciousness of unity, with the same blood, language and religion, sacrificing at common altars and drawing their joint ancestry from mythical heroes or demigods. All free citizens could enter the Olympic Stadium, irrespective of their social class, as long as they had not been convicted for dishonourable actions, and were of Greek descent, as "this is not a contest for barbarian competitors but for Greeks" according to Herodotus. The Greeks also used the gathering at Olympia, to confer between themselves and form alliances between the representatives of Greek cities. The Olympic Games' importance was many-tiered, and this is indicative of the central position they held in the essence of the Ancient Greek world, intertwined with the concept of the "beautiful and virtuous" (KOAOU KayaQou) citizen of the city state.

Athens in the Archaic Years

By the end of the 8th century BC new economic and social conditions existed. The Greek world began to come out of isolation. Relationships with the Eastern Mediterranean and Italy become warmer, due to land and maritime trade, and a developing manufacturing industry. Throughout the 7th century BC, Athens, having previously led in trade and artistic output, was drowning in the turmoil of internal conflict between the aristocratic and the popular classes. Ancient Athens thus...
A new class appeared in early 7th century BC, the aristocracy of wealth, which rose through flourishing trade, small industry and the concentration of money, gathered increasing social influence. The conflict between the new aristocracy and the old hereditary clan-based aristocracy would create a new criterion for gaining political rights: the evaluation of wealth, which could be acquired and could evolve, in contrast to nobility, determined solely by birth. Oligarchic government caused inequalities, with great poverty amongst the lower orders, while those newly rich from trade, but not nobly born, sought political power. There was an attempt to resolve this social unrest, in 621 BC; Dracon was appointed lawgiver, and given expanded powers, in order to record what had been custom law and also to expand the body of active citizens, thus satisfying popular demand. Despite the harshness of the laws put into effect and the civil rights that were enacted, no solution was offered for the acute problems plaguing Athenian society.

In 594 BC Solon was elected archon of the city with broad lawgiver powers. He proceeded to wipe out all debts and to abolish the bondage system, liberating all those who had become slaves, though without meeting demands for land reform and redistribution. He also enforced monetary reform, strengthening Athenian coinage and promoting trade and manufacture. Solon carried out a series of social measures, and restructured the system of government, making it dependent on wealth rather than birth, and dividing citizens into four classes based on income. He also ceded political rights to the lower classes and proceeded with democratic reforms to the Athenian constitution.

Solon’s reforms, seeking a compromise in the conflict, failed to satisfy the major geographical political factions: the Plain, the Coast and the Hillmen, led by Peisistratus. He took advantage of burgeoning popular dislike and used his large base of supporters to establish a long tyranny. Popular and populist, he redistributed property to poor citizens from prominent nobles, whom he exiled. He preserved Solon’s reforms, but placed his own men in the state mechanism. He also completed public works and city improvements (the Sanctuary of Olympian Zeus, Hecatompedon, Henneakrounos and Major Hall of Mysteries at Eleusis). His rule saw burgeoning Athenian trade, with the black-figured Attic pottery dominating Greek and foreign markets. Furthermore, he reorganised the celebration of the Panathenaia Festival, which became a major part of Athenian life. He also promoted the arts and letters, patronising artists, and ordering the Homeric Epics to be written down for the first time. The Peisistratid tyranny was finally dissolved in 510 BC, 17 years after his death, when his heirs were overturned with Spartan assistance.

Following the end of tyranny in Athens, and despite opposition by the nobles, Cleisthenes put in place a series of reforms. The dominant position in the government was held by the the Popular Assembly. The Athenians were divided into 10 tribes and each led the city’s government for one tenth of the year. The reforms of Cleisthenes broke with the political history of Athens and the wider Greek world, providing the first true democratisation of the form of government, by granting power to the majority of the citizens.
The Persian Wars

At the end of the 6th century BC, after the second phase of Greek colonisation and the subjugation of Greek colonies in Asia Minor by the Persian king, the Persian Empire began to make its presence felt within the Aegean. In early 5th century BC the Greek city-states waged a battle for survival in the face of Persian expansionism. Persian intentions were presaged when they violently suppressed a revolt of the Ionian city-states (499 BC), which were militarily assisted by two Greek city-states, Eretria and Athens. At the battle of Marathon, in 490 BC, the Athenians defeated the Persian army, “battling at the forefront of the Hellenes”, according to the epigram written by Simonides of Ceos. Pheidippides was the messenger who ran to the city to report this victory and died of exhaustion. In memory of his self-sacrifice the Marathon race was established as a race in the Olympic Games of Athens in 1896.

As the city-states grew aware of the Persian threat, they created a Pan-Hellenic defensive alliance. Athens, the victor at Marathon, and Sparta, the major military power in the Greek world, lead the effort and the alliance included most of the major city-states. The Persian army, having invaded by land, met organised resistance at Thermopylae. There, in August 480 BC, a handful of Spartans and Thebans sacrificed their lives fighting a great number of Persian troops. The battle epitomised their absolute obedience to the laws of their country. Following the glorious defeat at Thermopylae, the naval battle of Salamis, a month later, was the final conflict between the Greeks and the Persians. The naval victory of the Greek city-states removed the Persian threat from the Aegean for at least half a century. Simultaneously, it brought Athens to the forefront, as a major sea power, and liberator of the Greek city-states of the Eastern Aegean Sea and Asia Minor.

**Athenian Hegemony - Peloponnesian War**

In the 50 years after the Persian Wars (479-431 BC) Athens used its powerful fleet to organise a defensive alliance, containing most of the island and Asia Minor city-states, to preserve the Greeks from Persian expansionism. With the passage of time, the Delian or First Athenian League mutated into a despotic hegemony of Athens. Tangible examples of the city’s wealth during this period include building programmes undertaken on the Acropolis, in the Ceramicus, Piraeus and Sounion, and the completion of the LongWalls. The city was rebuilt during the third quarter of the 5th century BC under its most enlightened leader Pericles, a member of the Alcmeonid family, who led the Athenian people wisely for a long time. While he was in power, the constitution was reformed and became more democratic, removing powers from the Areopagus, a bastion of aristocratic power. Additionally Athens became “the school of Greece”, with an influx of philosophers, artists and scientists from all the Greek city-states, an international cultural centre for the civilised world of the time.

This glorious period, the “golden age” of Pericles, is reflected in its extraordinary artistic achievements. Classical art in the 5th century BC can be described by the architectural and sculptural wonders of the Athenian Acropolis, revealing the artistic genius of Pheidias. The unprecedented and timeless style of the classical techniques is connected to the idealistic views held by artists of the time, who sought to portray the human figure as it should be. Furthermore, the Parthenon, housing the statue of Athena the Virgin, is the epitome of Pheidias’ superb technique, serving as a reminder and exaltation of Athenian history, with its thematic sculpture on the frieze, the metopes and the pediment.

The city was at the pinnacle of its glory. This, and the city’s high-handedness with its allies and the other city-states, infuriated its opponents (Corinth and Sparta), further exacerbating relations. The civil conflict that followed, known as the “Peloponnesian War” lasted for almost 30 years (431-404 BC) and proved to be a complete disaster for Athens, costing the city its position as a leader and its capacity to dictate developments. The end of the Peloponnesian War found the Greek world deeply divided, with large-scale loss of life, widespread destruction and a new leading power, Sparta, with the Persian king overseeing the agreements as a consequence of the assistance in gold the Persians had provided.

**The Beginning of the Decline**

During the first half of the 4th century BC, the Greek world was rocked by conflict between the city-states, with constant clashes and shifting alliances. The Spartan hegemony (404-371 BC), onerous to both its allies and its opponents, depended on Persian assistance, violence and terrorism, so that their rule could be established after the Peloponnesian War. The general dislike and turn of events allowed the Thebans to take over as the leading Greek power for about a decade (371-362 BC). Athens became impoverished in its effort to regain its lost power by convening the Second Athenian League, taking advantage of the small city-states’ fear of Sparta and the Persian threat. Yet again, the arrogant policies of Athens would anger its allies and bring about the intervention of Philip II, the dynamic and visionary king of the Macedonians.

The rise of a new major power, the Macedonian kingdom, would overshadow the activities of the Greek city-states, as it would rally the Greek world together in the fight against the Persians. This effort was completely contrary to the concept of autonomy, so fundamental to the city-states; and Philip’s grand plan was also considered an attempt to subjugate the Greek world. Finally, Philip’s victory in the Battle of Chaeronea (338 BC) overcame all resistance from the Greek city-states, Macedonian supremacy ending the great era of the city-state.

Despite this, the position of Athens was not insignificant during the end of the 4th century BC. Thanks to good management by its leaders, the Athenian economy had righted itself, with a new influx of income. Consequently Athens...
created a battle-worthy army and fleet and strengthened its political situation. Intense construction was carried out in the city, building or renovating public buildings (the Panathenaic Stadium, the Temple of Apollo Patroos, the Theatre of Dionysus), and completing buildings commenced in previous periods. The city had last seen construction on this scale during the era of Pericles. Athens had also become an established learning and artistic centre, retaining its cultural supremacy in Greece the known world. It continued to attract numerous philosophers (Aristotle, Zenon, Epicurus) - who founded their own schools (Athenians - Lykias, Isocrates, Aeschesines, Demothenes); and artists (Scopas, Leocares, Praxiteles). Athens would retain its reputation as the intellectual centre of the ancient world to the end of antiquity.

Hellenistic and Roman Years

The conquest of the Persian Empire by Alexander the Great in the name of all Greeks significantly broadened Greece’s sphere of influence. However, Alexander’s death in 323 BC put pressure on relations between Macedonia and the Greek city-states. The announcement of his death caused great upheaval and anarchy throughout the mainland, as the Greek city-states sought to regain their lost autonomy and shake off Macedonian sovereignty. Simultaneously, Alexander’s generals, the “heirs” of his Asian Empire, were each set on Imperial power.

Athens led anti-Macedonian activities in Greece, creating an alliance with other city-states. All its efforts would prove futile, as the military superiority of the Macedonians would again defeat the alliance of city-states. Athens would surrender to particularly harsh terms (Lamian War 322 BC), leading to the dissolution of Athenian democracy and the establishment of a Macedonian garrison in the city. Once a leading power, Athens had now become a political satellite. Henceforward it would play only a peripheral role in the international political scene, as an ally of one of the Hellenistic Nations, depending on the balance of power in the Greek mainland.

Nevertheless, Athens would receive active support and patronage from the Hellenistic monarchs, irrespective of associations and alliances. The city’s glorious past continued to attract financial support of the Hellenistic kings, as their generosity meant their eternal association with a particular sport, with the associated monetary benefits, redefining the meaning of sport.

Hellenistic and Roman Years Continued...

The long-term alliance between Athens and Rome was interrupted at the start of the first century BC (88 BC), when the Athenians rebelled against the Romans, in support of Mithridates VI Eupator King of Pontus. Two years later, however Sulla retook the rebellious city after a siege of many months, looting its treasures and slaughtering its inhabitants. Many monuments were destroyed by his legions and the population was decimated. Additionally, Athens lost economic control of Delos and was threatened with extinction. However, the city’s glorious past had not lost its charm and Athens was soon ascendant, placed

The Nature of the Olympic Games

Alexander’s conquests, the establishment of the Hellenistic states and later the Roman conquest created a dialectic relationship between Greece and the East, which led to the appearance of cultural relativism. Moreover, there was an observable adulteration of the content of the Pan-Hellenic cultural and sporting institutions. The case of the Olympic Games is indicative of the prevailing conditions of that era, as they were led to inevitable adulteration. The changes in the political composition of the Greek world, with the creation of the Hellenistic monarchies that superseded the Greek city-states, brought about changes to the entire fibre that bound the Greeks together. Association with the conquered and neighbouring peoples and the disassociation from religion contributed to the diminution of the Olympic ideals, particularly that of noble competition. The trend for pageantry and luxury dates from this time, as athletes became professionals and specialised in a particular sport, with the associated monetary benefits, redefining the meaning of sport. Professionalism was considered to be the greatest wound to Olympic ideology. It went hand in hand with the Games serving political purposes, the secularisation of sporting events. Finally, it meant the loss of the meaning of measure in the sporting side of man’s life, a result of the new set of magnitudes in the structure and the dimensions of the Greek world.

Roman Years Continued...

During the 2nd century BC, Athens went into partnership with the rising power of Rome, in its attempt to block expansionism by Macedon and later the Seleucid state. The motive for Athenian policy was to retain its liberty and autonomy, fundamental values for a city-state. The Romans, taking advantage of the increased sensitivity of city-states towards their autonomy, consolidated their presence as mediators of the Greek squabbles. Consequently, while claiming to protect the liberty of Greece, they proceeded to invade the Greek world. Initially the Athenians sided with the Romans. After the Roman conquest (146 BC) of the Greek mainland, Athens remained a free state, as long as it supported Rome as an ally.

During the Roman era Athens enjoyed its precious autonomy to the hilt, particularly as concerns internal issues. Of course there was a clear and active involvement of Romans in the local administration, whenever there were difficulties and strife. Moreover Rome had made allies among the wealthy social circles in order to stabilise its power, reinforcing the oligarchic nature of the local form of government. Thus in Athens democracy ceded its place to oligarchy with a pro-Roman orientation.
under the protection of the emperors and the officers of Rome. For example, during the time of Julius Caesar, a new market, the Roman Agora was established; and Agrippa, son-in-law of Augustus, built an Odeon, or concert hall, that took his name. Even the ambitious Nero declared Athens and the remaining Greek cities to be free, which brought the city of Pallas the benefit of considerable tax exemptions. During the same period Christianity made its first appearance in Athens, with the arrival of Paul the Apostle (50 AD) and the creation of the first Christian community, events that would define the course of the city in later centuries.

Another landmark for the city’s history is the age of the Antonines, as their policies contributed greatly to the renaissance of the city. Hadrian (117-137) in particular was a fervent admirer of Athens and a scholar of the Greek language. He became an important benefactor of the city, connecting his name to the construction of a large number of public buildings (the Temple of Olympian Zeus, the Pantheon - a sanctuary for all the gods, the Hadrian aqueduct, Hadrian’s Library, the Temple of Hera, the Pompeium). Moreover he expanded the city of Athens, building a new suburb beyond the river Ilissos. Hadrian’s new city was separated from the city of Theseus by a gate, Hadrian’s Gate, still standing to this day. Hadrian made a distinct effort to render Athens the centre of the Greek world by establishing the Panhellenion, a federation of all the Greek cities with its seat in the Athens. As part of this effort he built a temple to Zeus Panhellenios and established the running of the Pan-Hellenic Games every five years. Imperial benefaction continued under Hadrian’s successors, Antoninus Pius (138-161) and Marcus Aurelius (161-180), the emperor/philosopher, who had studied in Athens. Private enterprise also played a role in Athens, as in the case of Herod Atticus, a nobleman. This renowned patron of the arts, sophist and city archon, used his colossal fortune to build or renovate many buildings (the Odeon of Herod Atticus and the renovation of the Panathinaiko Stadium in Athens).

During the third century AD the Roman Empire was struck by a deeply rooted internal crisis and by political upheaval. Central power had been weakened enough to create a climate of anarchy and insecurity, at a time when many barbaric tribes were overrunning the Greek mainland. Athens suffered from the situation, as in 267 AD a raid by the Heruli transformed the city into a heap of ruins, ruining the brilliant image of the previous century. The Athenians finally managed to expel the barbarian invaders, but the destruction and looting was unprecedented. The city’s urban web would be significantly reduced to the circuit around the Acropolis, centred on the Roman Agora. The new wall - the Late Roman Wall - built in 280 AD would touch off a violent change in the Athenian corpus. Diocletian, the reforming emperor showed personal interest for the city of Athens, charging the “Corrector” of the province of Achaia with rebuilding the public buildings of the city, starting with Hadrian’s Library.

**Cultural and Sporting Activity**

This period was accompanied by lively intellectual activity from the Greek element in Athens who transmitted Greek civilisation to the new conquerors. The Romans were very receptive to Greek cultural influences. A renaissance of Greek letters was characterised by the creation of new forms, the development of “atticism” and the systematic study of tradition.

In contrast to the cultural development of the Greek world, with its flourishing arts and letters, sporting activities throughout Greece - including the Olympic Games - were altered in character through the influence of Rome. For the Romans, sport was first and foremost a spectacle, free of any religious overtones.
Moreover, dominant trends linked sporting activity with the Roman amphitheatre and the arena. The Olympic Games would change drastically in Roman times, as they ceased to be a purely Greek endeavour and formed a point of reference and self-determination for the Greek world. New sports were now included, foreign to the original Greek tradition (gladiatorial contests, for example), while the participation of emperors demeaned the measure of competition and fair play. Despite this, the Olympic Games received unstinting material support from Rome, particularly under Augustus, an event reflected in the construction activities around Olympia. During the later Roman years, the institution of the Olympic Games, bloodied by constant barbarian incursions, survived; its influence however was limited, a pale reflection of a glorious past.

**Athens in the Byzantine Era**

A defining step in the evolution of the Empire and particularly of the Greek world was the establishment of Constantinople, the “New Rome” in 330 AD. The transfer of the seat of the empire marked the shift in the balance of political power to the Greek world. At the end of the fourth century, the division of the Empire into two portions, the East and the West, became official, and each was to have a different historical course and evolution. In the East, the Roman state would be slowly-transformed into the Byzantine Empire, with which the Greek world would identify throughout the Middle Ages. This new political format, whose leading characteristics were its Greek nature and Christianity as the official state religion, was heir to the imperial heritage of Rome and would survive for almost a thousand years; becoming, in essence, the cradle of European civilisation.

Within the Byzantine Empire, Constantinople, the “Vassileuousa” or ruling city, would overshadow all the old urban centres of the Aegean with its glory. Students came from all over the world, including two Fathers of the Church, Basil the Great and Gregory the Theologian of Antioch, and the future Emperor Julian the Apostate, to study with important teachers of philosophy and rhetoric. In 395 yet another incursion hit the city. This time it was Alaric’s Goths. But the invaders failed to take the city and did not affect its intellectual progress, which continued to flourish. Additionally, at the end of the fourth century, the city was extended beyond the later Roman Wall, with private residences and schools of philosophy built around the Areopagus and on the southern slopes of the Acropolis. Public edifices were also repaired, including the Theatre of Dionysus (which served as a hall of congress), the Tholos, the Metroon and others.

Despite the prevalence of Christianity, the city continued to flourish during the fifth century, due to the operation of national schools of philosophy. Athens became a sort of “university town” with distinguished teachers (Proclus, Plutarchus et al), a cradle of learning and the arts. In fact, during the fifth century the city retained its pagan way of life, following Greek traditions, while institutions of the classical period, such as the eponymous archon and the Festival of the Panathenaea were retained. In the effort to beautify the new capital, the emperors removed from Athens many important artistic treasures, denuding the city. The renowned gold and ivory statue of Athena from the Parthenon is a case in point, which disappeared forever after being transferred to Constantinople. Even though an Athenian woman would take the imperial throne in the middle of the century, as Eudocia Athenais married Theodosius II, she could not put an end the pillaging of art works to decorate the new capital.

Alongside the flourishing intellectual activity, there are also traces of athletic movements in mainland Greek. Of course, the Olympic Games were abolished in 393 AD by Theodosius the Great, as a pagan/nationalistic tradition. However, sporting endeavour, despite the loss of its religious nature, continued to entertain. Moreover, the Byzantines were influenced in their view of sport by the Ancients, retaining the classic events, but the Romans in their manner of mass organisation of popular sporting spectacles and by Christianity, in abolishing the bloody gladiatorial contests.

This period of high educational activity and fertile intellectual production in Athens would end suddenly in 529 AD, when Justinian’s edict shut down the Academy and the other schools. Athens was thus transformed into a typical provincial town in the Empire, as the closing down of the schools meant the permanent cessation of this intellectual blossoming and led the philosophers / teachers to seek refuge in Sassand Persia. The city of course continued to exist, as seen by archaeological and epigraphic evidence. There were also recorded visits by emperors (Constans II in 662 and Basil II Bulgaroctonus in 1018). The Parthenon was transformed into a Christian church, Panayia Athonitissa (Our Lady of Athens), which became a major pilgrimage site for the times, as indicated by its important visitors. Furthermore, it can be clearly discerned that the nature of the city was altered during the period following the closure of the schools up to the time Athens fell to the Crusaders in 1205. In fact, Empress Irene the Athenian was one who promoted the city’s development during this period. In the mid-Byzantine era, new economic developments, including the increase in trade, made the city a regional centre for the Empire. The relative prosperity of the inhabitants is eloquently displayed by the many churches built within the Byzantine city and its surrounding areas.

**The Frankish Period**

As the Byzantine Empire slowly declined, at the end of the 12th century, the effects would also influence Athens, much bloodied by pirate raids when its last Orthodox bishop - Michael Acominatos-Choniates (1186-1205) - entered the city. The detour of the Fourth Crusade to Constantinople, led the Franks to dominate the Greek proper. Athens fell to the new invaders in 1205 AD. Following the looting and sacking of
the first period, the Burgundian dukes under whose jurisdiction Athens fell, organised the city politically and ecclesiastically in accordance with the medieval standards of the West. Specifically on the rock of the Acropolis, the Parthenon was converted to a Roman Catholic cathedral; the Erechtheum became the Latin bishop’s residence; while the Propylaea formed the ducal palace. The relative peace in the city during this period is evidenced by the rise in trade, thanks to the ever-present Venetians and Genoese and the ceramic production of the local workshops, which incorporated western motifs in their products.

In 1311 the Catalan mercenaries of the Byzantine State took Athens, bringing an end to the dominion of the dukes of Burgundy. After the short Catalan presence, which was regarded as a dark page of the city’s history, the Florentine Nerio Acciaiolo seized the Acropolis of Athens. With a small break, 1395-1403, when the city belonged to the Venetians, the Acciaioli dynasty would establish its hold over the once-glorious city of antiquity up to its seizure by the Ottomans. The Florentine dominion in Athens and the general area of Attica and Eastern Boeotia, was a very significant period for the city, but differed completely from the previous Frankish Occupation. Athens once more became the ducal seat; there was increased production of goods and trade; and many infrastructure works took place, foremost amongst which were road repair; church renovation and the improvements on Piraeus harbour. In general, the city experienced a period of prosperity, offering the old Greek noble families - mainly the Chalcocondylis family - to rise in position, and for Arvanites (Albanians) to settle in the general region of Attica and Boeotia. The prosperity brought about in Athens by the Florentine humanistic movement was interrupted when the Ottomans took the Acropolis in 1458.

The Ottoman Occupation in Athens

Mehmed II the Conqueror visited Athens in person that same year, on his return from military operations in the Peloponnese, and was impressed by the city’s beauty and its ancient glory, granting the city special privileges. The most important of these was that all the ancient monuments of Greece, and consequently those of Athens, were declared to be the property of the sultan, in order to safeguard them from any danger. The city also became the seat of the administrative region (a cada) of Attica. Mehmed II was followed by his son Bayezid II, who was succeeded by Selim II, whose capital was Istanbul. With the establishment of new schools and libraries and the printing of important publications, the city experienced an intellectual revival throughout the three final decades of the eighteenth century and the first two decades of the nineteenth century resulted in the cultivation of a Greek identity. In the vanguard of transforming this intellectual evolution into revolutionary action against Ottoman rule was Rigas Feraios, who was put to death in Belgrade in 1798. His death as a martyr inspired the creation of the Philike Etaria or Friendly Society (1814) in Odessa, now a part of Ukraine, an organisation whose aim was to liberate the motherland.

All the aforementioned activities led to an uprising in the Peloponnese in March 1821, which signalled the start of the Greek War of Independence. Shortly before the revolt, Athens numbered approximately 11,000 inhabitants, the majority Christian. During this period the city covered an area of approximately 1,100,000 square metres, all contained within the wall built by the Ottoman Voevoda Hiday Ali Haskey at the end of the eighteenth century. Military campaigns throughout the War of Independence caused significant damage to the city, which the rebels entered in April 1821, while the Turks retreated to the Acropolis. When the Greeks realised that the Turks were making shot using lead from the core of the Parthenon columns, they volunteered to supply the besieged with the required quantity of lead, in order to stop the destruction of the ancient monument. Thus the Greeks “purchased the monument with blood, providing their enemy bullets with which to kill them.” The Greeks finally took the city in June 1822 ending 366 years of enslavement.
However, in May 1826 strong Turkish forces appeared in Attica and the non-combatants of Athens fled to the nearby islands, which had offered shelter in ancient times. The summer of that year, the former victors holed up on the Acropolis, with the Turks laying close siege to the city until May 1827, when the Greeks surrendered and abandoned the city. 47

However, European developments would soon set seal to the establishment of the New Greek State.

February 1830 saw the signing of the Treaty of London, with which Greece gained its independence. These glad tidings found Athens deserted, destroyed and ruined by the long drawn-out wars. The first governor of Greece Ioannis Kapodistrias arrived in Nafplio in January 1828, with the dream of transforming this deserted land into an organised country, self-sufficient and agricultural, with the end goal of inclusion in the group of European countries. Despite his ambitions, his efforts at restoration met much resistance, leading to his assassination in September 1831. 48

The loss of Ioannis Kapodistrias plunged Greece into deep political, military and economic chaos. However, by the end of February 1832 the news arrived that Otto, second son of Ludwig I of Bavaria had been selected as its monarch. Otto would remain in Greece for almost thirty years.

**Otto King of the Hellenes**

Fifteen-year old Otto arrived at Nafplio, the first capital of the Greek State on 6 February 1833, accompanied by a three-person Regency, comprised of Joseph Ludwig Graf von Armansberg; legal expert Professor Ludwig von Maurer, of the University of Munich; and Major General Karl von Heideck, the philhellene. The young king was greeted with enthusiasm by the Greek populace, as his arrival was considered to mark the start of a new period of stability in the country’s political life, which in turn would ensure the presence of those conditions that were necessary for the country’s progress and prosperity.

The problems faced by the Regency were immense, and neither the Regents’ optimism nor their experience was sufficient to the task. Agricultural production had ground almost to a halt, as had trade in general, and even the merchant marine. Moreover, both the army and the administration demanded that measures be taken in order to meet the requirements for modernising the newly formed state. 49

The current issues and problems, the lack of infrastructure for development, the complete destruction of the country’s production mechanism, as well as the general anarchy that prevailed, were some of the main concerns of the Regency. The basic goal was this: to create a well-ordered state, along the guidelines of the advanced Western European states.

Amongst the first measures that needed to be taken was the implementation of a new administrative system, on the basis of which the country was divided along ten nomoi or prefectures and 47 eparchies or provinces. In education, the plan laid out by Kapodistrias was followed, as it had remained unfinished, and the establishment of the first Greek university was brought forward (1837). Major work was also completed in the Justice sector, with the enactment of a new Criminal Law, and Criminal and Civil Jurisprudence, well as the formation of courts at all levels. Finally, as regards Church issues, the idea of forming an Autocephalous Greek Church was advanced, which would be administratively independent from the Patriarchate, whose seat was Phanar in Constantinople.

Despite the many important measures taken, and the significant efforts to lay down the foundations for progress in the new state, reactions and unrest continued. The arrogant attitude of the Bavarians towards the Greeks, as...
as the manner in which the political and military leaders of the Greek War of Independence were set aside, were some of the more grave factors that cultivated a climate of resentment against the Regency. This climate was only worsened because the Bavarians, instead of following a policy that would lead to a resolution of the crisis, insisted on taking a hard line, with the direct result of making the atmosphere even more intense. During the same period, serious unrest was breaking out in various regions of the country (Syros, Tinos), which the central authority appeared unable to control. Simultaneously, antagonism came to the surface even within the close circle of the Regency, leading Armansberg to strengthen his position.  

The Capital of Modern Olympism

Following the intervention of Ludwig I - Otto’s father, who was a great admirer of Ancient Greece - and after many discussions, the decision was taken in September of 1834 to transfer the country’s capital from Nafplio and make Athens the seat of the newly-formed state. Athens was then a small village, destroyed by the military events of the War of Independence, buried in dust, on the fringes of historical and political developments, without any building infrastructure that could house the public services. However, the city was irrevocably linked with the glory that was the Parthenon, clear testimony to the glorious past, whose course had marked the cultural life of all Europe.

According to statistical data from the Secretariat of the Interior, Athens was comprised of 1,886 families and only 7,028 inhabitants. Along with Piraeus, which was almost entirely uninhabited at the time, they formed a population that barely amounted to 7,223 inhabitants and 1,924 families. However, the choice of Athens was a practical way to implement the goal of promoting the classical past of Greece. The new capital constituted a first, substantial step in the turn to classical antiquity, with the goal of establishing a political and national identity for the New Greeks. The first urban plan laid out for the new city was prepared by two exceptional architects, Starnatios Kleanthis, a Greek, and Eduard Schaubert, a German. The plan set out wide avenues, spacious squares with gardens, as well as areas set aside for public buildings. What is today Omonoia Square was laid out in accordance with this plan, and in close proximity to this the plan foresaw the construction of a royal palace. At the time the square was named “Othonos Square,” after the king, but, in the end, the plans for a palace were not implemented. The study for a new town plan was assigned to yet another German architect, Klenze, who amended the previous urban plan, narrowing the roads and the squares.

On 1 December 1834, Otto landed in Piraeus, on an almost deserted beach, and was welcomed enthusiastically in Athens, where a church service in honour of his arrival took place in the Temple of Hephaestus (the Theseion), located in the Ancient Agora. His presence in the new capital also marked the start of a course of economic and social development for the city over the following 170 years. In fact, Athens started to develop at a very rapid pace, and at the end of Otto’s reign, its population numbered 43,000 inhabitants.

The Revolution of 3 September 1843

On 1 June 1835, Otto achieved his majority and began officially to exercise his royal duties; but even with the official end of the Regency, the Bavarian influence remained powerful and was a source of discontent. One important point that increased the friction between the Bavarian government and the Greek political world was the king’s consistent refusal to grant a constitution. Despite the fact that after 1837 the Prime Minister was always a Greek and the last of the Bavarian troops left Greece a year later, Otto refused to abandon the arrogant manner of government had had been implemented mainly by Armansberg. The fact that the royal couple failed to beget an heir and the king refused to convert from Roman Catholicism to the Orthodox creed simply increased the dissatisfaction. A series of unpopular measures, such as the implementation of an onerous system of taxation, cultivated the climate of disgruntlement. In general, Otto proved incapable of understanding the political situation, or to take measures to calm it down.

The result was that on the night of 2 to 3 September, the Revolution of 3 September broke out; a product of the general dislike for Otto himself, as he was considered personally responsible for the country’s misfortunes. This was the first military intervention in the country’s political process. This bloodless coup manifestly reflected the popular will and received the support of the populace, convincing Otto, who did not put up any resistance, to accept the demand of the military and the politicians - from all the existing political blocs (Andreas Metaxas, Andreas Lontos, Constantinos Zographos) - and to grant constitutional liberties. The much-desired constitution was finally promulgated in 1844, and Greece acquired the institutions of a liberal parliamentary democracy, far earlier than several of the more advanced, at the time, European States. To commemorate these events the square located in front of the palace - what is today the Parliament Building - which up to that point had been known as “Perivolaki” (or little garden), was renamed “Plateia Syntagmatos” or Constitution Square.

A Forerunner of the Revival of the Games: the Olympia

The latest and most official attempt to revive the Olympic Games in Greece, and particularly in Athens, commenced in 1856 and was due to Evangelis Zappas. Zappas emigrated to Romania, where he settled and acquired a large
The Olympia. In its first steps, the institution was take place every four years; that they would concern all Greek craft, agricultural and animal husbandry products; and their organisation would be supervised by the committee for encouraging national industry - which had been convened in 1837 - with the addition of four supplementary members from the Ministry of the Interior. Specific provisions in the decree set out that these events would take place every four years; that they would commence on the first Sunday in October; and, besides the organisation of agricultural exhibitions, they provided for religious celebrations, academic events as well as athletic competitions. The needs of the populace, the particular nature of Athenian society - which represented a way of life that combined the Anatolian with the European - as well as a realistic appraisal of the economic and political situation, guided the steps of the organisers of the Olympia. In its first steps, the institution was influenced, particularly on an organisational level, by the international exhibitions that had been held in London (1851) and Paris (1855).

The Olympia were transformed into a unique "Greek panorma", a mirror of the economic, social and intellectual growth of the country. It was where the heart of Greece beat; and in the four times they were held, they provided a clear appraisal of the country's progress, with impressive thoroughness and statistical clarity. However, the most important contribution of the institution was the feeling it cultivated in the public opinion, a significant source of experience and an element that would contribute decisively to the ideological preparation of Greece to accept the idea of reviving the Olympic Games, a decisive factor in their first successful organisation in Athens almost thirty years later; in 1896.11

First Olympia (1859)

The Royal Decree of 1859 planned the running of athletic contests to be included in the institution of the Olympia. The schedule of contests included four events: jumping, running, discus and wrestling. Even though the overall preparation was inadequate, the constitutive purpose set by the Committee responsible for organising the games, was that they should not only be run in a faultless manner but to all extent possible "in keeping with the forms utilised by the ancients", in other words, in the ancient manner.

Initially, the games were set to take place on the grounds of the ancient Stadium (what is today the Panathenaiko Stadium), which would have to be suitably adapted. However, as that had absolutely no infrastructure, and as the deadlines were very tight for completing the required work, it was considered expedient to select a different venue. The one chosen as being the most suitable was Loudovikou Square. This specific square did not have clear cut boundaries; centred around what would later become Kotzia Square, where the Athens Town Hall is located, it extended as far as what is today Eleutherias Square, perhaps better known as "Koumoundourou Square", because the residence of Al. Koumoundourou, politician and Prime Minister of Greece was located on the square. In the end, the stadium that took shape was somewhat makeshift, oval in shape, and the area set aside for the events was marked with stakes and roped off. Furthermore, a grandstand was built with royal boxes and seats for the officials, which could seat approximately 500 and which was suitably decorated.

The athletic games took place on 15 November 1859 and they received mostly negative criticism, as a complex web of events contributed to their failure. The lack of any previous organisational experience was of primary importance. For the first time in the history of the Greek State, there existed the challenge of organising such an important sporting event. The cold and inclement weather was another factor that weighed against their success. However, the most important cause of the games' lack of success should be sought mainly in the fact that, at the time, very limited importance was placed on sport. This is also confirmed by the fact that sporting life in Greece in the mid-nineteenth century was very limited indeed, bordering on non-existent; and that sport had not yet acquired its own ideological value, supporting the balanced
development of the body and the spirit. However, the event’s failure offered the opportunity for mature deliberations seeking those organising models that would permit a creative transformation of the Ancient Games into the spirit, the values and the needs of the new age.

Despite all the organisational difficulties and the problems that arose, the sporting events of the First Olympia had an international dimension, as well. William Penny Brookes (1809-1895), who had organised local sporting celebrations in his own town Much Wenlock (Shropshire) in England, made intensive efforts to revive the Olympic Games. Hugely enthusiastic when he received the news from Greece, he decided to send a prize often pounds for the victor of the boxing competition. In the end, as no boxing competition took place, the monetary prize went to the victor of the dolichos long-distance race. The sporting events of the First Olympia did not only encourage W.P. Brookes in his efforts to revive the Olympic Games, they also provided him with the idea that they should be international, an idea that would be decisive for the later growth of the Olympic Movement.

The Exile of Otto

At the end of the 1850s, the political situation in Greece was unstable, with a constant changeover of governments. The country was in a frenzy of organisation, while simultaneously facing tremendous difficulties both in establishing new institutions, and in the population adapting to lawful order. Furthermore, the two main characteristics of Greece’s foreign policy for that period were its weak diplomatic position, and the interventions by the Great Powers in its domestic affairs. Following the “Pacifico” episode, the British blockade of Greek ports in retaliation for the looting of the house of a Portuguese Jew who was a British citizen, and the almost three-year-long blockade of Piraeus (1854-1857) by French forces for the duration of the Crimean War; dissatisfaction and feelings of national humiliation were widespread, along with economic distress. Otto, devoted to the idea of an absolute monarchy, gradually began losing popular support.

A series of domestic issues heightened the disaffection. All the disenchantment that had led to the Revolution of 1843 came once more to the forefront. An assassination attempt was made on the life of Amalia (1861). The garrison at Nauplia mutinied on 1 February 1862, after which a revolt by all the military units of Athens led to the exile of Otto. With tears in their eyes, the royal couple abandoned the country and the deposed monarch retired to Bavaria, his birthplace. His affection for Greece, however, continued even from a distance. He continued to display his affection for his former subjects from Germany and up to his death in 1867. A year before he died, he donated money in support of the Cretan rebellion, in the revolution of 1866-1869. In accordance with his wishes, he was buried wearing his favourite fustanella (a gathered multi-layered Greek kilt).

A New Royal Dynasty for Greece

There was now a Greek dynastic problem, resolved when the three Great Powers proposed that the Greek throne be offered to the second son of Christian, heir to the Danish throne: the eighteen-year old Christian William Ferdinand Adolph George, of the Glucksburg dynasty. This branch of the dynasty would reign in Greece - with a few brief intervals - for eleven decades, from 1864 to 1974. The arrival of the new king in Greece was accompanied by a gesture of goodwill from Great Britain: ceding the Ionian Islands - a British protectorate - to Greece, a gesture which was also made to temporarily placate Greek irredentist appetites.

In general, the first years in the reign of George
l. political life continued to be as unstable as it had been during the reign of Otto. Political parties were fluid formations, whose main cohesive force were notable political figures rather than common, stable, ideological principles and directions. At any rate, the demands that voters made of politicians were as varied as they were multi-faceted, and as a consequence a select few prospered to the detriment of public interest. In the absence of production and developmental planning in the Greek economy, entering the civil service became a very good career choice and every change in government affected the fate of public servants. Another major characteristic of the period from 1864 to 1881, were the hard-waged election campaigns, as well as the lack of a stable government. However, in 1875 there was an intrinsic change in the political life of Greece, when George I conceded to the proposal of Charilaos Trikoupis - a new politician, who up to that point had been a harsh critic of the king - that he would henceforth implement the Principle of the Deedlomen (the stated choice), i.e. that the king would entrust the government to the political leader enjoying the confidence of a majority of the deputies in parliament.11

Second Olympia (1870)

The Second Olympia should normally have taken place in 1863. However the downfall of Otto and the death of Evangelis Zappas two years later paralysed the Olympia and Bequest Committee. In this instance, however, preparation was better and commenced on schedule, and the members of the Committee were able and responsible individuals capable of responding to the general climate in Greece, which sought the success of the Olympia institution. The trade and industry exhibition and the cultural games were a success, as were the athletic contests. For the first time integrated and worthy athletic achievement was on display. The games set an obligatory period of 45 days for candidates to train under an expert, and athletes were all uniformly dressed. The organisation of the games was, in fact, very innovative for its times. At the inauguration of the games, which took place at the Panathinaiko Stadium on 15 November 1870, the first Olympic Anthem was heard, with lyrics written by Th. Orphanides, Professor of Botany at the University and music by Rafael Parazinis, a music teacher. Another innovation at the Second Zappeion Olympia was the athletes' oath, which was given before a Games Committee.

The timing of the games was wrong (the weather in November was bitterly cold), but despite this fact, their success was greater than expected, and the Press unanimously praised the result. The Games Committee issued a report on achieving that gymnasia should be established in the major towns of every prefecture and region, and in every primary school. They also proposed the creation of sporting institution that would be national in stature. Finally they pressed the case for erecting a Stadium in order to fulfill the national needs for exercise.12

The Look of Athens

Almost four decades had gone by since the capital of the New Greek State had begun to be rebuilt. However; it still lagged behind other European capitals, both as regards its buildings as well as in the technical progress the others had achieved. During the first ten years of the reign of George I, transport in Athens improved, the city’s population increased and there was increased building activity in the city of the goddess Athena. Moreover, during the 1870s there would be significant economic growth. Under Prime Minister Alexandras Kountoundouros, trade developed and the economy improved. The Stock Exchange opened its doors in 1876 and there was an influx of wealth from Greeks abroad. Both foreign and Greek entrepreneurs decided to fund modernisation projects in the capital (putting in gas lighting and electricity). Various fine buildings were constructed during this period, including the Municipal Nursery on Piraeus Street (1875) and the Town Hall on what is today Kotsia Square, which was designed by P. Kalkos (1874). At the same time the new prosperity led to a blossoming of building activity, and from 1879 there was a sudden demand for plots of land and for houses.13 The capital’s population at this point numbered 100,000 and the buildings erected during this period are indicative of the material and aesthetic progress that had been achieved. During the 1880s Athens acquired a series of buildings that would radically change how the capital looked: the Archaeological Museum of Athens (1880), the “Evangelismos” Hospital (1881), the Zappeion (1888), the Municipal Theatre of Athens (1888) and others. The University had started attracting large numbers of students, becoming a crossroads of ideological and cultural developments.14

Third Olympia (1875)

The third Olympia were organised by Ioannes Phocionos, who used as his model the previous, successful games of 1870. The fact that the institution was repeated so quickly - eleven years had elapsed between the first and the second Games - clearly proved the magnitude of their success. The basis of Phocionos’ philosophy was the idea that the working class had only one basic incentive to participate in the games, monetary prizes. However, this would be overturned if he could attract to the games youths from the middle classes. Even though there were only minor changes to the programme, climbing a net set at an angle and certain gymnastics exercises modelled after the German system were added to the Games, as were shooting contests. The athlete candidates trained at the Municipal Gymnasium, which was located on Kifissias Street, near the Poorhouse, under the supervision of Phocionos. The athletic events of the Third Olympia took place on 18 May 1875, without the presence of the royal couple, who did not attend because of the tense political climate of the time (the “Stelitic” episodes). This lessened the prestige of
the event, as would be expected. And although the athletic preparation for the games had been highly successful, from a technical standpoint, their organisation was an utter failure, as preparations at the Panathinaiko Stadium were sketchy at best and the authorities failed to keep order and maintain good behaviour amongst the spectators.

Despite the efforts of Ioannes Phocianos, there was a clear breakdown of the technical portion of the event, which concerned the details of the preparations, and he was the target of strong criticism in the Press. Although his efforts to promote the spread of physical education and to cultivate the value of gymnastics education appeared wrecked, he had managed this: Several young men of that generation entered the realm of sport and later went on to play important roles in the country’s developments, both sporting and socio-political. These men included Mark Mindler, C. Miliotis-Comnenos, Spyros Merkouris, G. Orphanides and others.66

**Greece in the lifetime of Charilaos Trikoupis: Restoration and Impediments**

During the last quarter of the nineteenth century, one figure dominated Greek politics, and that was Charilaos Trikoupis. His presence at the country’s helm is identified with the implementation of a long-term programme of modernisation and development. His first stint as prime minister followed the second expansion of the Greek State, taking over territories that had belonged to the Ottoman Empire. On the basis of decisions taken at the Congress of Berlin (1878), in 1881 the territories of Thessaly, except for Elassona, and Epirus, except for Arta, were ceded to Greece.

Charilaos Trikoupis represented the modernising trend in politics, attempting to reform the state and the political process. The period of his presence on the Greek political scene became synonymous with the bipartisan system, as he clashed with his major opponent, Theodoras Deliyiannis, and the two took turns in holding power Trikoupis believed that Greece needed to stand on its own two feet, economically and politically, before seeking to implement its irredentist dreams. To those ends, he attempted to strengthen the country’s diplomatic position, as much as possible, to promote industrialisation, to modernise the army and to create a wide network of communications, which would encourage and facilitate domestic trade. Starting in 1882 and up to the end of the first period of the reign of George I there was a new age of prosperity for the economy of Athens.67

The ambitious infrastructure plans laid down by Trikoupis required the corresponding funds, but the international economic recession affected the export of Greek agricultural products, particularly currants. The general economic downturn and the increase in taxation brought popular disenchantment and the country appeared unable to meet its foreign debt obligations. In the end, on 1 December 1893 Trikoupis declared the public finances to be bankrupt. In April 1895 he retired from political life, not even managing to be elected to parliament. In his disappointment he left for France and died in Cannes in March 1896.68

**Fourth Olympia (1888-1889)**

Almost fifteen years would have to pass for the Olympia Games to be organised once more, and this time the event was combined with the silver jubilee of George I and with the end of construction on the Zappeion. From an institutional standpoint this was the most complete hosting of the Olympia, but they were also very unlucky. The inauguration ceremony of the trade and industry exposition and the cultural games took place on 20 October 1888 and the exhibition itself was rich, impressive and well designed, a veritable “Olympian celebration”. It could have been regarded as a “test event” for the 1896 Games if eight years had not elapsed between the two events. The city and the Acropolis were decorated and floodlit; joint philharmonic bands from all parts of Greece took part; there was an Olympic Anthem; the City of Athens hosted a dinner on the Acropolis; there were a great many fireworks displays, a torch-light procession and a host of similar events, which transformed Athens with a celebration of joy and enthusiasm.

However, the athletic contests of the Fourth Olympia had a most unfortunate development. After a series of successive delays, it was finally decided to postpone all the contests that had been previously announced, due to bad weather and to the fact that preparation time was limited and the financial resources even more so. The day was saved by Ioannes Phocianos, who, on his own initiative and with the participation of his students, organised games on the following year (in May 1889). Fearing a repeat of the failure of the 1875 games, he avoided using the Panathinaiko Stadium, moving the event to the Central Gymnasium. Moreover, in response to the limited space available, he limited the number of events to twelve.

The result was positive overall. However, the most important fact was that in a matter of a few years, this tireless advocate of physical education in Greece managed to alter the prevailing mentality, at least to a certain extent, changing the way youth and society in general viewed physical exercise. The success of the 1896 Games in Athens is not unconnected to these developments.69
The Revival of the Olympic Games in 1896

The Sorbonne Congress

The significant moment in the process of reviving the Olympic spirit came in 1896, after centuries of silence and temporary - as it finally proved to be - forgetfulness of those high-minded values that would later form the core for the creation of the Olympic Movement. In June 1894 the Sorbonne Congress took place in Paris, chaired by Baron De Courcel. Before an audience of two thousand, representing 13 countries - the chairman of the Congress supported the plans of Baron Pierre de Coubertin. The latter had taken steps to create an atmosphere of admiration for the Ancient Greek ideals. Thus distinguished artist J. Renel sang the "Hymn to Apollo" newly discovered at Delphi. The Congress had invited the Pan-Hellenic Gymnastic Club to participate, in the person of its president, Ioannis Phocianos. He, however, authorised Demetrius Vikelas to attend as the general representative of the Association in Paris. Even though in the beginning Vikelas considered his presence at the proceedings of the Congress to be purely a formality, his contribution was nevertheless inspired and full of initiatives.

Two crucial decisions were taken at the Congress in Paris. The first concerned the unanimous decision to revive the Olympic Games in Athens, the capital of the Kingdom of Greece, under the concentrated glow of the products of the Ancient Greek civilisation, and the second concerned the formation of the first International Olympic Committee. As the organisation of the first Olympic Games would be a Greek affair, Demetrius Vikelas was appointed Chairman of the International Olympic Committee, as his arguments had contributed to the selection of the Greek capital.10

Athens, the Cradle of Olympism in the Modern World

Athens in 1896 was a city of some 128,735 residents, which gathered all the political, administrative and economic forces of the land. George I was king, Theodoros Deligiannis was prime minister and Lambros Kaliphranos was mayor of the city. Lying in the open basin, surrounded by the Attic hills, the city was a rare sight, combining monuments with a history of thousands of years with more modern elements. The city had developed at a rapid pace and had soon expanded beyond the limits of its original plan. Overlooking everything was the sacred rock of the Acropolis. All the main roads started in Omonoia Square.

The city's architectural features had also radically changed. The National Metsovio Polytechnic and the National Archaeological Museum were the first major buildings along the country road that lead to the country suburb of Patissia. Stadiou Street was full of trees and decorated with the first public edifices, while Panepistimiou Street was one of the more brilliant boulevards of the city. This was the site of the so-called "Athenian Trilogy": the Vallianean Library, the Sinaean Academy and the University. Other jewels in the capital's crown were the Zappeion and the Palace - now the Hellenic Parliament - while to the south and to the north of the latter building, an initiative of Queen Amalia had led to the creation of the National Garden, modelled on the Imperial Garden of Munich and laid out under the supervision of the horticulturist Schmidt. Finally, Georgios Averoff, one of the national benefactors, had sponsored the renovation of the Panathinaiko Stadium and the replacement of a large section of its marbles, in a very short time managing to transform the site from an
ancient monument into a functional venue at the edge of the city. Additionally, to meet the needs of the 1896 Olympic Games a Velodrome, designed by K. Vellinis, was built at Neo Faliro, marks of the Olympic architecture of 1896.

By the end of the nineteenth century Athens had changed drastically, both in its organisation and its way of life. Camels and coaches had been replaced by horse-drawn street cars that ran on tracks; in 1869 the steam-engine railway covered the journey from Athens to Piraeus; and from 1885 onwards there was the "Therio", or Monster, the railway line that went as far as Lavrio. The old oil lamps were replaced by electricity or gas lighting. There were outdoor theatres; and suburban garden cafes made their appearance in several points. Neo Faliro was the main resort destination for the capital, while Athenians were also attracted to the leafy suburb of Kifissia.

Moreover, the last quarter of the nineteenth century and the start of the twentieth, was the period best known for its literary salons, where all the major intellectual personalities of the age would gather. The most constant sources of intellectual activity were the salons of St. Skouloudis, G. Souris, Callirhoe Parren, Kostis Palamas - which was purely literary in nature, while the literary coffeehouses "philologika kafeneia" were constantly full of political, social and other activities. Most representative examples of these were those of Giannopoulos (on what is now Karageorgi Servias Street) and Zacharatos (on the corner of Stadium and George I Street on Syntagma Square).

The problems that existed were, nevertheless, commensurate with the development. The city's roads were in dreadful condition and the lack of water was a constant problem for its inhabitants. However, in the run-in to the Olympics, the climate in intellectual circles was optimistic, with a decidedly romantic view of things, which saw Athens clad in a series of symbols. Undoubtedly the city in 1896 was materially and psychologically prepared to welcome the revival of the foremost sporting and cultural event."

**The Games**

In 1894 the news that Greece would host the revival of the Olympic Games was cause for much domestic deliberation and debate, as the country’s economy was in a highly critical condition. Only the previous year Charilaos Trikoupis had declared the Greek State bankrupt. After much debate and argument, and the steadfast refusal by Trikoupis to undertake any financial obligation for running the Games whatsoever, the IOC even entertained the possibility that Budapest should host the Games. Instead, the unwavering stance of Prince Constantine, heir to the throne, that Athens was the right choice for the Games, and the rise to power of Theodoros Deligiannis confirmed that Greek opinion had already been expressed. Thus the first Hellenic Olympic Committee formed, allocated the work that had to take place into specific Commissions, while for the financial problems that inevitably arose, they decided to call upon sponsors. The work of the Committee was indeed extremely difficult, as it had a relatively short period of time to coordinate all the individual details of running the Games, and this comprised a very wide range of activities, concerning everything from athlete participation to their accommodation and food. The final result was clearly indicative of the seriousness and care taken in their preparation.

The opening ceremony of the first modern Olympic Games took place on 25 March 1896, a National Holiday, which also happened to fall on Easter Sunday. The Panathinaiko Stadium sounded for the very first time with the Olympic Anthem, to lyrics by poet Kostis Palamas and music by Spyridon Samaras. In 1958 this Hymn was established as the official anthem.
of the Olympic Games. The success of the Athens Games, which lasted for nine days, 25 March - 3 April 1896 (of the Julian calendar), was an event of major importance - as was proved later - for the establishment and the further development of the International Olympic Movement. That first organisation had a total of 13 participating nations with 241 athletes taking part in 43 events. Greek athletes won a total of 29 medals, not counting the three winners in instances where the decision had been made that medals were not to be awarded. The victory of Spyridon Louis along the classic course of the Marathon road race, which was established for the first time after being proposed by French professor M. Breal, was perhaps the most talked-about and most described in the history of the Olympic Games. It was also the one that caused the greatest enthusiasm in Athens of 1896.

At the end of the nineteenth century, the Greeks revived the institution and set the foundations for its future success with only their enthusiasm and their faith. The euphoria and the spirit of optimism caused by the Olympic Games was directly responsible for the suggestion, before the Games had even officially ended, by King George I, that the Olympic Games be held permanently in Greece. This appeal by the Greek monarch was not a solitary thought; it arose from a wider request, formulated on the streets of Athens during the Games and was spelt out in the columns of Athenian newspapers. However, despite the interventions to make Greece the permanent and constant site of the Games, there was no State provision made. The wider feeling of sporting euphoria expressed would not last for long, as both the lack of financial resources and the unpleasant turn of national events in 1897 were not conducive to such an outcome. 

Developments in Greece

While propaganda in Bulgaria reached its apex with the insertion of armed bands in the region to prepare the ground for its territorial hold, there was serious unrest taking place in Crete. Massacres of Greeks in Chania (23 January / 4 February 1897) exacerbated the mood in Greece. Under pressure form a nationalistic society named "Ethniki Etaria" (the National Society) Th. Deligiannis took the decision to involve the country in the Cretan rebellion, even though the army was completely unprepared. This heedless action led to an unfortunate war in 1897, which ended within a month (May 1897). The final peace accord brought about certain changes in the national boundaries, with Greece yielding land to Turkey; the payment of war indemnity; and the imposition of international economic controls on the country’s public economy.

Greece was nationally humiliated and economically burdened by debt from the 1897 national adventure. Between then and 1909 political instability was rife. In contrast the State’s fiscal situation appeared to be distinctly improved following the imposition of the International Financial Commission. That improvement proved to be a stabilising factor, to a great extent facilitating foreign capital investment in Greece, particularly in the public sector and in the public utility corporations. Furthermore, the two governments under G. Theotokis (1899-1901 and 1905-1909) advanced an ambitious programme to reorganise the Greek Army as well as a series of political and administrative reforms.

In August 1909 the Goudi coup took place, organised by the Military League (Stratiotikos Syndesmos), formed by higher- and lower-ranking officers and led by the Artillery Colonel N. Zorbas. The coup had popular support and did not seek to dissolve parliamentary democracy, but to steer it. Amongst its major demands was the removal of the royal family from the Armed Forces, the reorganisation of the army and the navy, as well as a series of internal measures. In the end, Eleutherios
Eleutherios Venizelos launched a programme to modernise the state, reorganise the army, improve public administration and the justice system, as well as to inculeate the populace with the meaning of law and order. He also advanced a series of moderate social reforms.

Prudent economic management, the presence of a dynamic leader and the optimistic outlook that took hold, brought an air of renewal to Greek internal affairs, hammering out a new sense of national unity. Each of these considerations, and all together, permitted Greece to deal successfully with the military adventure that would follow.

The Revolutionary of the Young Turks (1908) had created irredentist expectations in the subjugated nations of the Ottoman Empire, which proved to be false. This, along with the ongoing uncertainty regarding the fate of Macedonia and the resolution of the Cretan issue, as well as the Italian-Turkish war of 1911, strongly pressed the looming crisis. During the first five months of 1912, Serbia, Bulgaria and Greece contrived to organise a joint military front. In September of the same year Montenegro joined the coalition, and the coordinated military action of the Balkan states against the Ottoman Empire commenced at the start of October 1912.

By the first days of November, the Greek Army had liberated Thessaloniki and the Greek Navy held the Aegean liberating, one by one the islands that had been under the Ottoman yoke (Chios, Limnos, Samos, Mytilini). In February 1913 the Greek Army took Ioannina. With the Treaty of London (May 1913), the Turks conceded the loss of almost all the European holdings of the Ottoman Empire. In March 1913 King George I was assassinated in Thessaloniki, where he and a group of civilians had set a symbolic seal to the Greek presence in the city.

However, the various claims on the region of Macedonia, and mainly the excessive Bulgarian demands, soon led the Balkan Alliance to an impasse. In June 1913 the Second Balkan War broke out, this time between Bulgaria on the one hand and Greece and Serbia on the other. The new conflict was very short, with a predictable outcome: Bulgaria was defeated. The Treaty of Bucharest (August 1913) conceded Southern Macedonia to Greece and recognised its dominion over Crete. The victorious Balkan Wars expanded Greek territory by 70% and the population of the Kingdom of Greece rose from approximately 2,800,000 to 4,800,000 inhabitants. The acquisition of new territories gave a new boost to the growth of the economy. Another consequence, and one of the most important, was that Greece became an important player in the Southern Balkans and in the Mediterranean.

The Treaty of Bucharest (August 1913) broke out on the pretext of choosing the country's military alignment and led to the national schism of 1915-1917. The king's insistence on remaining neutral finally led to Venizelos' resignation in March 1915. Over the next eighteen months the breach between the two men became even deeper and the Schism came to a head with the breakdown of strong fighting between the two sides in December 1916. From mid-September 1916, Venizelos already had formed a provisional government in Thessaloniki, with the support of the Entente Powers; this government had its own army and the borders of this "state" went as far as Katerini.

In Athens, despite the savagery of the Schism and the War, a unique intellectual euphoria ruled the day. The various literary salons enjoyed their glory days, literature flourished and revues ruled the theatrical stage. In June 1917, Constantine, under pressure from the Allies, was forced to abandon the country and Eleutherios Venizelos became the prime minister of a formally united, but in fact, bitterly divided country. Greece would enter the war on the side of the Entente, providing substantial contributions in breaking down the Western Front and gaining the right to take part in the Peace Conference in Paris with expectation of reward.

The territorial gains made by the Greek prime minister were very substantial. With the Treaty of Neuilly (1919), Greece gained Western Thrace, while the Treaty of Sevres (1920) gave Greece control of Eastern Thrace, except for Constantinople, and the administration of Izmir; with the possibility for that region to be annexed in the future, after a plebiscite. The Treaty of Sevres was greeted enthusiastically, making Greece "a land of two continents and five seas". However, both the Allies and the political world of Greece, knew well that the treaty's implementation would depend directly on the outcome of the military confrontation that would take place on the Asia Minor front, where Greece had a presence from May 1919.

On the domestic political scene, the exhaustion felt by the many years of involvement in a series of wars became particularly obvious with the defeat of Eleutherios Venizelos in the elections of November 1920. His removal brought about the restoration of Constantine, an event that gave the Allies a pretext on which to set aside their political promises. Thus the Greeks were left on their own to meet the wave of resistance organised in Asia Minor by Mustafa Kemal, the Turkish officer.

The international climate, however, was, once more very tense. This time Austria declared war on Serbia in July 1914, setting the fuse that would detonate into World War I for four years.
Athens in the Interbellum

After almost ten years the military battles were over for Greece. In future the country would seek a new course through the developing international and Greek political scene. The presence of such a large number of refugees created a large cheap labour market, with the immediate consequence that economic growth received a large boost. Additionally, once the refugee settlements in Athens remained stricken by poverty, leading their inhabitants to become social outcasts. However, the refugee settlements in Athens were rapid. King Constantine departed for Palermo, in Italy, where he would die in December of that year; while in November the six main members of the anti-Venizelos political and military circles were sentenced to death, considered responsible for the national debacle. The arrival in the capital of the refugees raised its population in 1928 to 460,000 inhabitants, while together with Piraeus the number approximated 800,000. Its greatest problem being how to deal with the miserable condition of the refugees, the country implemented a wide-ranging housing programme; as a consequence shantytowns sprang up all over the Attica region, but this also created new neighbourhoods, settled in their majority by refugees: Nea Ionia, Kalithea, Neos Kosmos, Nea Smyrni, Nikiaa, Kaisariani, etc.

Athens in the Interbellum

The official appearance of the modern Torch Relay and the lighting of the Olympic Flame would take place for the first time in the modern era in the year 1936 for the Games of the XI Olympiad in Berlin. From ancient times the flame had symbolised man’s power to resist the wishes of the gods, as well as man’s ability to define his own future through knowledge. Even in 1896 and the Revival of the Games in Athens, the Greeks had undertaken a series of symbolic revivals, including the ancient torch relay. Thus as part of the fringe events of the Games, within the framework of the celebrations scheduled for the seventh day, there was a torch relay, that left wonderful impressions on all those who witnessed it.

A series of distinguished individuals all contributed, each in his way, to the implementation and the establishment of this Olympic symbol. However, it should be clarified that the Olympic Flame and its lighting in Olympia are recorded separately from the Torch Relay. Thus the idea of the torch relay from Greece to Germany is attributed to Carl Diem, a German member of the Olympic Movement. Connecting this with Ancient Olympia and enriching the idea with a plethora of symbols derived from “Apollonian light” was the inspiration of Kostas Kallipapas, a Greek archaeologist and author. The values and population. The water supply problem was resolved finally by constructing the reservoir lake of Marathon. The electrification of the mass transit system and the city provided a particular note of modernisation in the Greek capital. Athens began to transform into a major city. Finally, the so-called “Generation of 1930” (Genia tou trianta) made its appearance amongst the intellectuals. Its main preoccupation was the turn to hellenicity, the Greek character, its traits and values. The new ways of aesthetic expression proposed a new ideological alignment, giving new energy to the cultivation of literature and the arts. The country’s intellectual life would be whetted once more with the establishment of the Academy in 1926.

The fall of the Venizelos government in 1932 was followed by the rise to power of the leader of the Popular Party, Panagis Tsaldaris. Greece entered yet another period of political instability, with the military interfering repeatedly in the political process and with violent clashes between the pro- and anti-Venizelos parties. After a failed coup attempt in March 1935, and with the consent of Venizelos himself, the road opened once more for a restoration of the monarchy. The latter became a fact with the return of King George II, after a twelve-year exile in Great Britain. The following year, on 4 August 1936, and with the king’s consent, Ioannis Metaxas established a dictatorship, the “Regime of the Fourth of August 1936”. In the meantime, with the completion of various works and interventions, Athens was finally starting to acquire an image fitting to a capital.
symbolism expressed by the Flame have the power of universal human experience, and the sacred fire became a world symbol of peace, a symbol of civilisation and a point of connection for the youth of the world. The ritual of lighting the flame and the torch relay highlights the timelessness of the Olympic Games, a unique blend of sport and culture, which aims to promote the noblest ideals of human existence.

**Occupation and Civil War**

In 1940 a new series of national adventures began for Greece, as the country entered World War II. The successful stand against the Italian attack and the staunch defence of the country in 1940 were glorious new pages in Greek history. The capital was the target of aerial attacks, but its monuments remained untouched, as the city was considered unfortified. However, in spring of 1941, the German invasion took place and the Nazi occupation took a hard toll on the entire country. On 27 April 1941 the first German troops entered a deserted city of Athens, as the inhabitants had shuttered their houses as a symbolic act of resistance. The conquerors paraded in an empty city that appeared abandoned by its inhabitants. King George II and the Prime Minister E. Tsouderos had already abandoned the country, in order to continue the Greek fight from abroad.

The winter of 1941-1942 was one of the worst in the history of the city, as fuel reserves ran out, along with other necessities, the black market thrived and there was galloping inflation. Famine led to the death of thousands of Athenians. Skeletal children and the dead piling up on the streets became everyday sights, marking the four-year German occupation. Despite these hardships, the Athenians did not lose their appetite for resistance against the Nazi regime. They started to form resistance cells, as well as networks to collect and send military information to the British authorities in the Middle East that remained unknown to this day.

On 12 October 1944, Athens could finally breathe free at last. The celebrations on the streets were phenomenal and reached their apex with the arrival from abroad of Georgios Papandreou, prime minister of the exiled Greek Government and the speech he gave in Syntagma Square on the 18 October 1944. Unfortunately, joy at the national liberation and its concomitant euphoria would only last for a very short time. Two months later in December the first bloody and tragic events of the Civil War broke out, the so-called "Dekemvriana". During these, hand-to-hand fighting took place in the neighbourhoods of Athens, clashes that were often violent, harsh and with multiple dead. Despite the Varkiza agreement that saw the end of the Dekemvriana (in February 1945), civil war would break out with even greater intensity in March 1946 and engulf all of Greece until 1949. The bitter dregs of the civil war would trouble the country for several more decades.

**Greece and Athens in the Post-War Era**

After the end of the Civil War, the hard task of reconstruction began in Greece. The material progress made since then has truly been remarkable; and gradually the country began to follow the developments and progress made by the other major European countries.

Undoubtedly the fifties would have to be characterised as the decade of the Greek “economic marvel”. During this decade, and particularly under the eight years of the premiership of Constantine Karamanlis (1955-1963), significant steps were taken to industrialise the country; the national coin was stabilised; and many major infrastructure works were completed. In 1961 the Treaty of Accession was signed with what was then the European Economic Community. However, new upheavals on the Greek political scene in the sixties would lead to a military coup on 21 April 1967.

In July 1974, almost a year after the revolt of the students of the Polytechnic, the country would return to a democratic legitimacy, opening a new historical cycle, that of the restoration of democracy. Political life returned to normal and the democratic operation of the Greek state is the main characteristic of the last thirty years.

Athens played a major role in the post-war development of the Greek state, becoming a centre of economic, political and cultural activity. During the nineteen fifties and sixties, the capital received a massive wave of internal migration, simultaneous to the wave of emigration to Germany, Australia and the USA. A large portion of the population of the Greek countryside headed to Athens in an attempt to find a better standard of living and a more secure future. Thus the city’s population rose from 1,124,000 in 1940 to 2,540,000; it would total 3,016,000 in the 1981 census, with new inhabitants arriving constantly from the provinces and settling mainly in the suburbs. Thus in 1971 the population of Athens numbered 30% of the overall population of Greece, a percentage that had virtually doubled over a period of thirty years.

However, besides development, the capital had major problems to face. During the 1960s and the 1970s, the city’s expansion took place without specific planning, in an arbitrary and uncontrolled manner; covering all the free acreage and every piece of park, and lacking those infrastructures that could offer a human standard of living.

One of the most important events of the twentieth century for Greece was its entrance into the European Economic Community. This new European course for the city once more had Athens as its starting point. On 28 May 1979 in a climate of celebration the official accession agreement was signed in the Zappeion, laying out new prospects for the future growth of the Greek economy. Twenty years later; in 2001, Greece joined the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU), and taking yet another important step in the direction of making Greece a country completely integrated with Europe.
The International Olympic Academy

Greece was one of the countries that emerged from World War II devastated and financially vulnerable. The civil war that followed simply deepened the gaping wounds in the fabric of Greek post-war society. Despite this, the noble idea of establishing an International Olympic Academy found fertile ground in Greece. From 1950 to 1961 there were several failed attempts to convene the first founding Session. A decade would have to pass before the proposal came into fruition. The failure of those efforts was mainly due to the difficulty in disseminating the content and the goals of this new institution, as well as the difficulty in approaching the National Olympic Committees. Thus the first session of the International Olympic Academy took place in 1961, with a major role being played by the German Olympic Committee. Indubitably, Ioannis Ketseas, who was a distinguished member of the Greek Olympic Movement, was one of the principal proponents of establishing the International Olympic Academy, working towards its inauguration. Amongst the first to support this effort were Otto Simitsek, Dean from the time of its foundation up to his death in 1992; Cleanthis Palaiologos; Carl Diem et al.

The International Olympic Academy has its seat in Ancient Olympia and operates an international centre for Olympism. Its mission is to preserve and spread the principles of the Olympic Spirit, to study and implement the educational and social principles of Olympism and to consolidate the scientific basis of the Olympic Ideal. The Academy also acts as a coordinating body, guiding the National Olympic Academies, which act as its branches and transmit its ideals, with national programmes of Olympic education.

The IOA, with more than forty years of activity, is called upon to adapt its activities in accordance with the demands and the challenges of the new millennium. The Academy’s philosophy is that knowledge is one of the few things that have to be spread out in order to multiply. Its unswerving goal is to spread the principles of Olympism to every corner of the Earth. To this purpose the Academy makes creative use of the latest technological developments, organises academic discussions with the participation of young people from all over the world and supports cross-cultural education. As Olympism isn’t limited to sporting events, but instead forms a general philosophy and a way of life, the IOA is active in its efforts to cultivate a peaceful society, contributing in its own manner to the achievement of an Olympic Truce during the Games, which is one of the future goals of the Olympic Movement. In general the Academy, now in its fifth decade, appears rejuvenated, with important activities and exemplary commitment to the principles and ideals of the Olympic Movement.

Towards the end of the nineteen sixties, foundations were laid on the new Olympic Museum in Olympia, which was inaugurated in 1972. The Museum was placed under the auspices of the IOA and, besides its much-admired and complete international philatelic collections, there is also a display of souvenirs and objects from all the Olympic Games that have taken place, and a photographic archive that is being constantly enriched. Along with the Archaeological Museum of Olympia, it may be considered to be part of an integrated whole, attempting to connect ancient and contemporary Olympism. 

This page:
Aerial view of the International Olympic Academy.
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Hellenic Sporting Tradition
Hellenic Sporting Tradition

Human Scale

Man is the measure of all things. This is the great and defining value of Greek civilisation, a philosophy of life that inspired Greeks throughout their history. Simplicity and humanity feature in the classical era and in modern times. The international venue where human abilities are demonstrated and acknowledged, the stadium that assembles these efforts, each athlete's, each team's efforts, and the desire to excel in their endeavours through noble competition are present in every era. The Games are the inspiration that encourages and empowers all humans to pursue their dreams, high as they might be.

Traced back in history, the Greeks have always staged and participated in sporting competitions. Far back in time, the Greeks passionately loved sport. In the country where the Olympic spirit of fair play and the pursuit of balanced excellence were originally born, and in the city where the Games were revived, Greeks take pride in sport.

Already in the Mycenaean times, the athlete was named "athlete", a title that endured throughout history. Sport, as an organised physical endeavour, as competition, with those qualities embracing the core values of Olympism, is a Greek invention and institution and was a fundamental feature of Greek civilisation.

All the heroes of ancient Greek history were nurtured in sports and were true athletes. Men of sparkling spirit competed in Pan-Hellenic festivals: Euripides; Aristocles, the philosopher known as Plato, who established, praised and conveyed like no other the value of sport to form a healthy body, mind and ethos, the ideal of a "sound mind in a sound body".

The reason behind the impressive development of sport by Greeks was primarily the will to excel, but also through these Games to honour the gods and heroes. The religious element is clearly illustrated in the Taurokathapsia (bull-vaulting) of Crete, but also in Mycenae, in Tanagra, in Thessaly, in a mural of children wrestling in Thera, in events taking place in sacred precincts in Olympia, Delphi, the Isthmus, Nemea, and other Greek religious centres.

Ancient Olympic Games

The highlight of these sporting activities was the establishment of the Olympic Games. The Olympic Games were the highest religious and civil institution of public life in ancient Greece, the ultimate symbol, the most powerful moral bond of "national" unity of all races, city-states, whether on the continent or the islands, metropolis or colony. The Olympic Games were the most prominent "feast" and largest gathering of Greeks, the pan-Hellenic forum of sporting competition and virtue, a firm ground of national conscience and unity.

The pioneering quality of Olympia and its Games is not only qualitative, but also chronological. Historical and archaeological evidence indicates that the other great pan-Hellenic Games (the Pythia in Delphi, the Nemea in Nemea, the Isthmia in Corinth, the Panathenaia of Athens) were established at least two hundred years later than the first Olympic Games in 776 BC. Also, the ancient Olympic Games were those for the duration of which arms were laid down and hostilities ceased. The Olympic truce came into effect, a peaceful interim of civic and military neutrality throughout Hellenic territories, in honour of Zeus, the powerful god made peacemaker.
A lyrical description of the ancient Olympic Games derives from the Greek lyric poet Pindar: "Water is best, and gold, like a blazing fire in the night, stands out supreme of all lordly wealth. But if, my heart, you wish to sing of contests, look no further for any star warmer than the sun, shining by day through the lonely sky, and let us not proclaim any contest greater than Olympia."

Thousands of years later the well-known writer Nikos Kazantzakis, wrote of the Greeks and the Olympic Games: "When life struggles daily to overcome its enemies, natural forces and wild beasts; hunger; thirst and sickness, there is always some energy left to spend it on play. Civilisation starts the moment the game, the competition begins..."

At this point, it is worth mentioning the events of the ancient Olympic Games, in chronological order of their appearance:

- Stade (running one length of the Stadium)
- Diaulos (running twice the length)
- Dolichos (long-distance run from 7 to 24 stades)
- Pentathlon and Wrestling
- Boxing
- Four-horse Chariot
- Pankration (a combination of boxing and wrestling with limited rules)
- Boys' Stade and Wrestling
- Boys' Pentathlon
- Boys' Boxing
- Hoplitodromos (2 to 4 stade race run by athletes in armour)
- Race for Mule Carts
- Race for Mares
- Two-horse Chariot
- Heralds and Trumpeters
- Four-colt Chariot
- Two-colt Chariot
- Colt Race
- Boys' Pankration.

To the above, three more events should be added, Discus, Jumping and Javelin (part of Pentathlon), in which there were both men's and boys' categories.

The ultimate goal of the Olympic Games, as of all Pan-Hellenic Games, was participation, not victory. The only prize given was an olive wreath, the "kotinos". The athletes competed for honour, not for material gain. Thus an athlete's education concentrated on learning to live a vigorous life and withstand hardship, following the ethical path, learning the values of effort, idealism, the desire for distinction, and the recognition of the opponent's victory. As the Games developed, those values remained the same. The universality and uniqueness of the Games can be found in the Olympic ideals. People of various backgrounds, different cultural roots and different ideas come to the Olympic Games to participate in a gathering that highlights what makes us alike, not what makes us different.

The Olympic Games continued for nearly 12 centuries and became the meeting point for the celebration of noble competition and the educational value of sport, illuminating examples of extraordinary achievements. The ancient Olympics were contested every four years until the Romans introduced the...
gladiatorial games in 146 BC. The Romans replaced the Olympic Games with gladiatorial contests, when athleticism went out of vogue among the Roman elite. In those combats, the gladiators disabled, captured or killed their opponents. Later on, Nero sought to destroy the spirit of Olympism and the Olympic ideals. Finally, in 393 AD, the Games were banned by the Emperor Theodosius for being "pagan cults". The Emperor asserted that the Games placed an excessive public focus on athletic and spiritual affairs and abolished them.

**Hellenic Sport through the Ages**

Nevertheless, the sporting spirit of the Greeks was still alive. It passed to Byzantium, the bulwark of Hellenism, where games were held during Christian festivities after the end of Mass, in the courtyards of Churches throughout the Byzantine Empire.

These games continued until 1453, the date of the fall of Byzantium. But even then, during those hard times of Ottoman oppression, the Greek klephts and armatoloi (local brigands and militias) preserved the competitive tradition, celebrating games as a pleasant diversion during Easter, on the feast day of St. George, as well as in honour of the patron saints of the Orthodox Church.

In late 18th century in Cefalonia, the Jacobin Greeks proposed the revival of the Olympic Games. In 1807, the Ionians declared competitions called "Prix Olympiadiques", Olympic prizes for cultural achievements.

In 1829, in the army camp of Megara, shooting and high jump events were held. Six years later such games were held in Athens.

One of the visionaries of the Olympic Games was Panagiotis Soutsos, a prominent intellectual and journalist, who first wrote about the revival in his poetry in 1833. Panagiotis Soutsos, with continuous proposals to the Greek Government (1829-1835), strove to revive the ancient Olympic Games and to promote the celebration of Greek independence and nationhood. In 1834 the Greek Prime Minister Koletis embraced Soutsos’ vision for the revival of the Olympic spirit. A decision was made to "hold Greek competitions every four years, whether at Hydra or Nauplion, or Athens or Corinth".

In 1837, the University of Athens is founded in the area of Plaka and the first sports book is published in Greece by Georgios Pagontas under the title "A Summary of Sports". The same year, the municipality of Letrina at Olympia, in an effort to boost Greek national morale and to remind them the glory of the Olympic tradition, declared the 25th of March as the National Day of Greek independence and planned to hold a revival of the Olympic Games at a Greek level at Pyrgos, in 1838.

In the 19th century, intellectuals such as Evangelis Zappas and Demetrios Vikelas, who believed in the spirit of noble contests and Olympism, lent their voices and efforts to the revival of the Olympic Games. Specifically, Zappas decided to propagate the idea and finance the effort. After his agreement with the Greek Government, the Zappeian Olympic Games, the "Olympia", a mixed competition of both agricultural/industrial and athletic character, were founded. Zappas’ ultimate goal was to unite the peoples of Europe.

However, it was the Frenchman Baron Pierre de Coubertin, who orchestrated the re-establishment of the Games, in 1894 at the Sorbonne Congress, where 13 countries voted for the revival of the Olympic Games. In 1896, the first Modern Olympic Games were held in Athens, paving the way for the modern Olympic movement, and establishing Greece's place in modern sporting history.

Greek influence can be found, beyond the revival of the Olympic Games, in the foundation of the Mediterranean Games, an athletic celebration that was established throughout the Mediterranean nations. The Mediterranean Games owe its birth to Greece, specifically to Angelos Volanakis and Ioannis Ketseas, distinguished officials of the Olympic Movement. However, the roots of the institution of the Mediterranean Games should be traced back to Athens, in 1925, when the International East Mediterranean Championships first began to develop, Mediterranean Games for one sport, Tennis.

Greece also hosted the first Balkan Games (for Track and Field events), held in the Panathinaiko Stadium, crowded with spectators in October 1930. This institution flourished and united in sports the war-weary peoples of the Balkans, especially in the last decades.

**Greek Athletes in the Modern Era**

The course of sports in Greece changed in March 1896, with the Opening Ceremony of the Olympic Games in the newly renovated Panathinaiko Stadium. This would be marked by the conquest of dozens of Olympic medals, as well as major successes in International, European and Mediterranean Championships, and major events in most sports.

**Men**

**Olympic Medallists**

The first Greek to win first place in the modern history of the Games won his title on Monday 26 March 1896. Leon Pyrgos beat Frenchman Perronet with 3 hits to 1. Second places were gained by Miltiades Gouskos in the Shot Put and Panayiotis Paraskevopoulos in the Discus. History would be made however on the final day of those Games. On Thursday 29 March at 13:50:30 thirteen Greek athletes and 4 foreigners set off from the starting point at Marathon towards the Panathinaiko Stadium. Two hours, 58 minutes and 50 seconds later; 70,000 Athenians greeted Spyridon Louis with a storm of applause. He was followed by Harlaos Vassilakos and the Hungarian G. Kellner.

In the 1896 Games Greece also received podium positions with the following athletes: Nikolaos Andriakopoulos (first in rope climbing), Ioannis Georgiadis (first, sabre
fencing), Pantelis Karasevaday (first, shooting 200m), Aristidis Konstantinidis (first, cycling), Ioannis Malokinis (first, 100m swimming), Ioannis Mitropoulos (first, gymnastics - rings), Georgios Orfanidis (first, shooting 300m), Ioannis Fragioudis (first, shooting, rapid-fire revolver, 25m), Ioannis Andreou (second, swimming, 1,200m), Telemanov Karakalos (second, sabre fencing), Dionysis Kasdaglis (twice second in tennis singles and doubles), Georgios Kolettis (second, cycling 100km), Stamatis Nikolopoulos (twice second, cycling single round and 2 km), Thomas Xenakis (second, rope climbing), Georgios Orfanidis (second, shooting, rapid fire revolver 25m), Pavlos Pavlidis (second, shooting, gras gun 200m), Antonis Papanos (second, swimming 500m freestyle), Demetrios Petrokokkinos (second, tennis men's doubles), Georgios Titas (second, wrestling), Ioannis Fragioudis (second, shooting, rifle 300m), Spyros Hazapis (second, swimming 100m), Sotiris Verenis (twice third, in the discus and the weightlifting with two hands), Dimitrios Golemis (third, 800m), Evangelos Damaskos (third, pole vault), Dimitrios Drivas (third, swimming, 100m), Ioannis Theodoropoulos (third, pole vault), Nikolaos Marakis (third, shooting, military pistol, 25m), Alexandros Nikolopoulos (third, weightlifting with one hand), Georgios Papadis (third, shot put), Nikolaos Papadis (third, tennis, men's singles), Ioannis Persakis (third, triple jump), Pericles Pierrakos-Mavromihalis (third, fencing, foil), Nikolaos Trichopoulus (third, shooting, gras gun), Ioannis Fragioudis (third, shooting, pistol 50m), Stefanos Christopoulos (third, Greco-Roman wrestling), Efthimios Horafas (twice third, swimming 500m and 1,200m). One more second position was gained by the gymnastics team of the Pan-Hellenic Gymnastics Club and a bronze by the team from Ethnikos.

In the Saint Louis Olympics in 1904, Pericles Kakouss won gold in the two-handed weightlifting competition, and a bronze was won by Nikolaos Georgantas in the discus.

In London, in 1908, three more medals were added to the tally, silver by Michael Dorizas in the 85 kg category, gold in the standing long jump and bronze in the standing high jump. In Antwerp in 1920 the total was only one silver medal in the discus.

In Stockholm in 1912, Costis Tsiliristas wrote a beautiful chapter in history by gaining two more medals, gold in the standing long jump and bronze in the standing high jump. In Antwerp in 1920 the total was only one silver medal in the team event for shooting with a revolver over a distance of 30m, while in 1924 in Paris, Constantinos Dimitriadis won a gold medal in Sculpture at the Art Games.

In Melbourne in 1956 Giorgos Roubanis won the bronze medal in the pole vault and in 1960 another gold medal was added to the tally, this in Sailing in Dragon Class vessels.

In 1968 in Mexico City Petros Galaktopoulos won bronze in wrestling, and in Munich 1972, took silver in Greco-Roman wrestling, while Elias Hatzipavlis won silver in Sailing (Finn class).

In Moscow in 1980, Stelios Miyakis won gold in Greco-Roman, while in Sailing, in the Soling class, Boudouris, Gavrilis and Rapanakis won bronze. Georgios Hatzioannidis won a bronze medal in Wrestling, Freestyle.

In Los Angeles in 1984, Dimitris Thanopoulos silvered in the 82kg category of Greco-Roman wrestling, while Babis Holids took bronze in the 57 kg category. In Seoul in 1988, Hides added a bronze medal to his collection.

In Barcelona Pyrros Dimas became an Olympic gold medal winner in the 82.5 kg category of Weightlifting. The Greek Atlas would also shine in Atlanta gaining another gold medal. Kahi Kakivoli would also win gold there in the 99kg category, while Leonidas Kakkas at 91kg, Valenios Leonidis at 64kg and Leonidas Sabanis at 59 kg would each take silver. Two more gold medals were added to the tally by Nikos Kaklamakis for Sailing (Mistral), and Ioannis Melissanidis for Gymnastics (floor exercises).

In 2000 in Sydney, Pyrros Dimas once more stood on the highest place on the podium in the 85 kg category. The Greek Weightlifting Team shone once more, with a gold for Kahi Kakivoli in the 94 kg, and silver medals for Viktor Mitrou at 77kg and Leonidas Sabanis at 62kg. In the Australian Antipodes, Kostas Kenteris won gold in the 200m in Athletics and Michalis Mouroutos went gold in Taekwondo. Dimosthenis Tabakos won silver in Gymnastics (fringes) and Amiran Kardanov won bronze in the 54kg category of Freestyle-Wrestling.

Football
Beyond its Olympic Games successes, Greece also had major achievements in all sports, in other international competitions, both on a national as well as on a club level. One of shining lights of that achievement was winning the European Football Championship in Portugal, where Greece surprised fans around the globe, by beating Portugal 10 in the finals in Lisbon's Da Luz Stadium, with the winning goal scored by Angelos Charisteas. Earlier, Greece had also beaten Portugal in the opening match, before eliminating France and the Czech Republic. The whole nation, stunned with success, flooded the streets in a delirium of happiness and pride. The national junior side had also competed in the final of the European Football Championship in 1988, where they had lost in the double final to France (0-0 at Faliro, 3-0 in Besançon), and again in 1998, in the finals in Romania, where they once more lost in the final 1-0 to Spain.

In 1994 the National team fulfilled a dream nurtured for decades by taking part in the World Cup finals in the USA, but the results were anything but glorious.

Basketball
Basketball is a sport that has provided Greece with dozens of successes, both with the national team and with club sides.

In 1949 the National team won the bronze medal in the 6th European Championship in Egypt. In 1979 they took Yugoslavia 85-74 to win gold in the Mediterranean Games in Split. In 1987 the Greek National team, with star players such as Nikos Galis, Panagiotis Yiannakis, Fanis Christodoulou and Panayiotis Fasoulas, beat out the powerful Soviet Union team to win gold in
The winner of the first Marathon race in 1896, the legendary Spyridon Louis, wearing the traditional Greek costume on the day that prizes were awarded to the Olympic winners at the Panathinaiko Stadium. © Benaki Museum/A. Meyer
the European Championships that were held in Athens. Two years later, when the competition was held in Yugoslavia, Greece’s “official sweetheart” won the silver medal.

In 1995 the National Junior side came first in the world. In the 5th World Championships, held in Greece, they remained unbeaten to come first, winning 91-73 over Australia in the final, before an audience of 20,000.

The club sides also have a parade of successes to show.

In 1968, in front of an 80,000-member audience at the Panathinaiko Stadium, AEK beat out Slavia Prague 89-82 to win the Basketball Cup Winners Cup. In 1991 PAOK won the same trophy by winning 76-72 over Saragosa, as did Aris in a score of 50-48 over the Turkish side Efes Pilsen in 1993. In 1997, Aris would take out another Turkish side, Tofas Bursa to win the Korac Cup, and in 2003 gain the third of its European titles by prevailing over Polish Prokom 84-83 to win the Champions Cup. In 1996 Panathinaikos and in 1997 Olympiakos would each successively beat Barcelona 67-66 in Paris and 73-58 in Rome respectively, to win the Euroleague. Panathenaikos would also win the Euroleague in 2000 in Thessaloniki, beating out Maccabi Tel Aviv 73-67 and against Bologna in 2002, by a score of 89-83. In 2001 Maroussi BC would win the Saorta Cup in Warsaw, 74-72 against the French team Chalon.

Sailing
For a country with the long naval tradition of Greece, to excel at Sailing would be only natural. In 1965 and 1966 in the Lightning class, Andreadis, Anninos and Psarakis won the silver medal at the European Championships. In 1972 Alexandros Andreadis, Anninos and Psarakis won the silver medal at the European Championships. In 1972 Alexandros Andreadis won the gold in the same category at the European Championships that were held in Italy. Giorgos Andreadis won gold in the same category at the Europeans in 1974 and 1978. In 1993 at the Soling World Championships, Boudounis, Deligiannis, Pekanakis won the gold medal, and that same year Nikos Kaklamakis also took gold at the European Mistral Championships. In 1995 with the World Championships being held in Canada, Kosmatopoulou and Trigonis took a gold medal in the “470” class. In 1996 in the Mistral World Championships, Nikos Kaklamakis took the gold medal, a feat he would repeat in 2000 at the corresponding Championships, when they took place in Argentina.

Wrestling
At the European Wrestling Championships in 1972, Petros Galatopoulos took the gold medal. When the World Championships were held in Mexico in 1978 and Budapest in 1986, Babis Holidis took the bronze in the 52kg class of Greco-Roman wrestling. In Sweden’s European Championship, Yiorgos Pozidis took bronze in 90kg Greco-Roman. In 1990, Yiorgos Athanasiadis took the silver in 68kg for Freestyle wrestling. In 1991, when the same event took place in Varna, Bulgaria, Heraklis Deskoulidis took silver in the 90kg. In 1992, at the European Greco-Roman Championships in Copenhagen, Isaac Theocharides took the bronze in the 57kg category. In 1994, when the European Greco-Roman Championships were held in Athens, A.Rubanian (57kg) and A.Triantafyllidis (100kg) took silver medals and A.Agatzanian (48kg) took bronze.

Rowing
Rowing also had great pleasure to offer the Greek public. When the World Junior Championships were held in Belgium in 1980, the coxed pair reaped a bronze medal for the crew comprised of Christomanos, Lykomitros and Kragtchenko. In 1985, the coxless pair Teppis and Bouloukouvas took the bronze medal in the World Junior Championship in Germany. In 1987 Gatos, Fotiou, Georgiou took silver in the coxed pairs at the World Junior Championships in Cologne. In 1997 at the World Rowing Championships, Karyotis, Fotiou and Pizas took the bronze medal in the coxed pairs.
Taekwondo

Taekwondo entered the SEGAS (Hellenic Amateur Athletic Association) competition schedule in 1980. At the World Championships in London Greek athletes went on to win three medals. In 1987, at the World Championships in Athens, Greek athletes would take a total of nine medals.

Volleyball

In 1980 the National Volleyball team took the Spring Cup with successive victories over Spain, the United Kingdom, Italy, Sweden, Holland, West Germany and France. They repeated this feat in 1981 and 1982. The crowning moment for the sport came in 1987. That year the team that included Margaritis, Moustakidis, Triantafylidis and Gontikas took the bronze medal in the European Championships overtaking Sweden with three sets to two.

Aquatics

Greece has had its glory moments in the water as well. In 1997 the Vouliagmeni Water Polo team took the Cup Winners Cup against the Italian side Roma. That same year the Men's National team took the silver medal at the FINA Cup that was organised in Athens. Ten thousand were in the stands at the Olympic Swimming Pool at the Athens Olympic Sport Complex, to see the USA win by 8-5. At the World Junior Championships in Cuba, the national side would take the bronze medal beating Australia 9-6 in the bronze medal match. In Swimming, Yiannis Milidakis took the first Greek medal at a European Junior Championship when he came in third at the 200m breaststroke in Luxembourg in 1984. In 1985 Haralambos Papanikolaou took silver in the 100m backstroke at the games in Geneva.

Table Tennis

In 1991 the World Table Tennis Championships were held in Japan. In 1991 and Kreanka - Badescu took the bronze medal at the mixed doubles. In 1993 the Men's National side took gold for the first time in its history at the Balkan Games. In 1994, at the European Table Tennis Championships, Kalin Kreanka took the gold medal at the men's doubles and the silver in the mixed doubles.

Boxing

That same year Yiorgos Stefanopoulos took the silver medal in the 91 kg category at the European Boxing Championships in Sweden, a success he would repeat two years later, when he took the bronze.

Shooting

In 1993 at the European Shooting Grand Prix, Greece took first place in the team event.

Handball

In 1993 Filippos Veroias reached the semi-finals of the Cup winners Cup in Handball.

Cycling

In 1997 the Olympic Velodrome in Athens hosted the fifth Track Cycling World Cup. The threesome of Georgalis, Hemiototos and Vasilopoulos took the gold medal at the Olympic Sprint.

Baseball - Softball

In 1997 two Olympic sports, Baseball and Softball, began to be practiced in Greece. In December, the General Secretariat of Sports officially recognised both sports.

Weightlifting

Weightlifting rates a special mention. The "sport of the strong" has given Greece victories at the Olympic, World, European Championships and the Mediterranean Games, with a total of 582 medals won, including 155 gold, 205 silver and 222 bronze.

Women

Women's Sport in Antiquity

From ancient times there are records of Greek women heavily involved in exercise. Their models were goddesses and heroines who took part in games, often competing with men. One of these mythical heroines was Atalanta, daughter of Iassus, king of Arcadia, who followed the Argonauts on their quest. She wrestled Peleas during the funeral games for King Pelias, and won. She also took part in the Caledonian boar hunt. She offered to marry anyone who could outrun her in a footrace, which was finally achieved by Hippomenes by an ingenious trick. Another example of a woman with an athletic physique is offered by Homer, describing Nausicaa, the Phaeacian princess, with "a man's daring and virginal grace as she drove the chariot and went to the beach to compete in the shot put".

In Crete there are epigrams and murals showing women in the 16th and 15th centuries BC showing Minoan women dancing, running, vaulting bulls, driving chariots and wrestling.

In antiquity, women were prohibited from competing or even attending the Olympic Games. The penalty was particularly harsh, as it required that women caught violating that edict be thrown off the rocky Mount Typaeon. Ancient writers attest that Callipateira illegally entered the Stadium in 404 BC, disguised as a trainer in order to watch her son Pesios. Her joy at her son's victory betrayed her. She was only saved from a death sentence by her family ties to so many Olympians. As imagined by Lawrence Mavis, she proclaimed... "I am not like other women. In the centuries my family will shine with the unwaning privilege of courage...".

What is not so widely known is that at that very Stadium in Olympia, every four years there were games for women, corresponding to the men's games, and dedicated to the goddess Hera, the wife of Zeus. The women at the Heraea games competed in three groups, according to their age, as children, teenagers and young women. The only race at the Heraea was the short sprint race, over approximately 160 metres. Virgin runners competed in a short tunic, baring their right shoulder and breast, with their hair loose.

Therefore women of that time were not entirely barred from physical education. Plutarch, in fact, wrote of Spartan women: "The virgins exercised their bodies by running, wrestling and throwing the discus and the javelin, so that they could bear the pains of...".

Women's Olympic Achievements

Women started to take part in the Olympic Games in 1928. From that time onwards, Greece has had its glory moments in the water as well. In 1997 Yiorgos Stefanopoulos took the silver medal in the 91 kg category at the Olympic Games. Heimonetos, the son of Lorenzos Mavilis, she proclaimed, "I am the strong" has given Greece victories at the Olympic, World, European Championships and the Mediterranean Games, with a total of 582 medals won, including 155 gold, 205 silver and 222 bronze.

Athletics

In 1987, at the World Championships in Sweden, Greece achieved its first Greek medal at a European Junior Championships, overtaking Sweden with three sets to two. That same year Yiorgos Stefanopoulos took the silver medal in the 91 kg category at the Olympic Games. Heimonetos, the son of Lorenzos Mavilis, she proclaimed, "I am the strong" has given Greece victories at the Olympic, World, European Championships and the Mediterranean Games, with a total of 582 medals won, including 155 gold, 205 silver and 222 bronze.
childbirth and bring forth children who were healthy and vigorous*. An example of women exercising is their involvement in the pyrrichie. This was an armed dance learned by the men of Sparta, because a perfect soldier must first be a perfect ptyrnikhistes. This “god-driven warrior dance” was first danced, according to one myth, by the goddess Athena, in order to celebrate the victory of the Olympian gods over the giants; she taught mortals this dance.

Women’s Sport in the Modern Era

Very few changes took place in Greek women’s sport. Only in the nineteenth century was any emphasis placed on the physical education of girls and women. The private institutions that were mostly involved in women’s education, made an initial move to involve women in sport and gymnastics. The girls performed exercises, mainly with apparatus that included wooden clubs and iron horses.

At the revival of the Olympic Games in 1896, Spyridon Louis was the only one to gain mythic status with his victory in the Marathon. A woman called “Melpomene” also became a legend. “Melpomene” was a woman called Stamata Revithi. She appears to have been the sole exception regarding women’s participation in the first modern Olympic Games, though she never entered the official record. An Athenian newspaper from that time mentioned that on 30 March 1896, 35-year-old Stamata Revithi from the island of Syros ran the distance in 5 hours and 30 minutes under the supervision of the Mayor of Marathon.

The presence of Greek women athletes would be stronger in the so-called Intercalated Games of 1906, when seven took place in the Tennis women’s singles. This competition took place at the practice grounds of the Athens Tennis Club in Zappeion and the winner was Emé Simiotou. From that time on, tennis became the prime sporting activity for women and would retain that place until the third decade of the twentieth century, when women’s sport, mainly athletics, gained a place at the Greek Championships.

The first women from Greece to participate in the Olympic Games were tennis players: Lena Valaortou-Skaramanga and Eleni Kontostavlou-Nikolopoulou took part in the Paris Games in 1924. Even on this point there is lack of clarity, as many consider that Dornmisa Lantou-Kavoundou was the first Greek woman to join an Olympic delegation and participate in the 1936 Olympic Games, in Berlin.

Following 1925, Greek women started to participate ever more actively in sports. Twenty young women were amongst the participants in the games organised by the Pan-Hellenic Gymnastics Club in June 1926. They competed in the long jump, the high jump and the 50m foot race. The same year the first Women’s Sporting Union was established in Thessaloniki, named “ARTEMIS”. This was an innovative move, and was swiftly copied, as women’s sporting unions were swiftly established in Constantinople, Samos, Chios, Mytilene, Patras, Rethymno, Volos and in Cyprus. In March 1928, the International Union of Women’s Sport announced to SEGAS that women’s sport in Greece had been recognised internationally.

In fact, it was only after 1960 that Greek women took an active part in competition. In August 1962 a Greek women’s team represented its country internationally for the first time in its own country. The national basketball teams of Greece and Turkey met at the Panathinaiko Stadium. The Greek women won with excellent form by 31 points.

At the European Championships, Belgrade 1962, Sophia Leriou took part in the discus competition. In the Balkan Games of 1963, in Sofia, the first bronze medal was won by Greek women athletes in athletics, gaining third place in the 4x100 metre relay.

In the Olympic Games, in 1964 the first female team to participate was the volleyball team.

In 1973 at the 32nd Balkan games, sprinter Maroula Lambrou took the silver medal in the 100m and the bronze in the 200m. The following summer in Sofia, the same athlete scored an even greater success winning the gold in the long jump with a 6.62m jump.

The 1970s marked the final acceptance and progress of women’s sport. At the end of the decade a special cooperation programme was drawn up between SEGAS and the Federations, and the GSS offered incentives to school children and university students who participated in the national teams.

In October 1974, the first open Marathon race took place in Athens, with the participation of women.

At the Mediterranean games held in Split, Yugoslavia, in 1979, Greek women returned with two gold, three silver and four bronze medals.

1982 was a great year: AnnaVerouli and Sophia Sakorafa, javelin champions, both threw excellent distances. The former won the gold medal at the Athens European Championships, while the latter took bronze and twenty days later broke the world record with a 74.20 throw that took place at Hania.

The largest yet women’s sports delegation was sent to the Seoul Olympic Games in 1988, but Greek women athletes would start to shine from the next games, in Barcelona 1992. Sprinter Voula Patoulidou won Olympic gold at the 100m hurdles with a time of 12.64*.

At the same games Antonia Sweier placed seventh in the single sculls and Morpho Drosiou took gold in Taekwondo, which was an exhibition sport.

The year 1996 also offered major distinctions in the Atlanta Games. Niki Bakoyianni took a silver medal in the high jump, Niki Xanthou came fourth in the long jump and Olga Vasdeki came fifth in the triple jump.

In the European Indoor Championships held in Stockholm, sprinter Katerina Thanou took the gold medal in the 60m; Niki Bakoyianni took the
bronze in the high jump, as did Olga Vasdeki in the triple jump.

In 1997 Katerina Koffa took the gold medal in the 200m at the World Indoor Athletics Championships in Paris.

In 1999 sprinter Katerina Thanou took the bronze medal in the 100m at the World Championship and the gold in the 60m at the World Indoor Championships.

In 2000, at the Sydney Games, Ioanna Hatziizannou won a bronze in weightlifting, as did the girls’ ensemble team in rhythmic gymnastics.

Although the successes in Track and Field Athletics dominate women’s sport in Greece, women have a major presence in other sports.

In Basketball, the first game of the National squad took place on 15 April 1958. The Greek team won that of Lebanon 68-32, at the Pan-Hellenic Club court before an audience of 8,000.

The establishment of OPAP (Organisation of Football Game Forecasts, i.e. the Football Pools) in 1959 provided a boost to the growth of female sport.

That year Olga Tzavara took a gold medal at the European Shooting Games, a win she successfully repeated in 1960 in Madrid.

In 1985 the National Volleyball women’s team was qualified for the first time for the finals of the European Championship, which took place in Thessaloniki. In 1988, for the first time in history the squad took the silver medal at the Spring Cup.

In 1985 Skourli took a gold medal at the European Trap Shooting Championships in the JuniorWomen group.

In 1986 Angeliki Kanellopoulou was ranked amongst the top 50 tennis players in the world.

In 1988 Antonia Sweier took a silver medal at the single sculls at the World Junior Championships, a success repeated by Thekla Louka in 1989 at the Worlds held in Hungary.

In 1989 Maria Christoforidou took a bronze medal in the 60 kg category at the World Weightlifting Championships, held in Manchester.

In 1991 Maria Maion took the bronze at the European Table Tennis Championships in Turkey.

In 1991, Christina Thalassindou took the silver at the European Synchronised Swimming Championships. That same year at the European Diving Championships Stavrindou took a bronze medal in the 3m springboard.

In 1994 Yiota Antonopoulo broke the world record at the World Weightlifting Cup, lifting 130kg in the clean and jerk.

In 1994 at the European Shooting Championships, Kypriotou took the gold medal at skeet shooting and Papadimitriou at trap shooting, while Ponga took silver at skeet shooting.

In 1997 the National Water Polo junior side took the gold medal at the World Championships in Prague, remaining unbeaten in the final, where they took Australia 6-5.

In 1999 Angeliki Skarlalou took the gold medal at the World Sailing Championships in Belgium, in the Mistral class.

In 2000 Sofia Bekatorou and Emilia Tsouflla took the gold medal at the world Sailing Championship in Hungary, in the 470 class.

We should further note that these distinctions, both in men’s and women’s sport and in the junior teams for both sexes, are only a portion, albeit a large portion, of what Greek athletes have achieved. All the Olympic medals won up to the Sydney Games were mentioned above, but for example Greek athletes have won over 500 medals in the Mediterranean Games. Additionally in Sailing, Wrestling, Weightlifting and other sports there have been dozens of successes at World and European Championships, in various categories and age groups. They are a characteristic example of the love Greeks have for sport and the manner in which Sport has been cultivated in Greece from antiquity to the present day.

Greek Sporting Experience

The 2004 Olympic Games have a left an important inheritance in infrastructure and experience. The image and organisation of Greek Sport have much improved. Athens now has some of the most beautiful and functional stadiums and playing fields in the entire world for all sports.

The beauty of the stadiums where the ancient games were held remains unparalleled. From the ancient Stadium in Olympia, to the beautiful marble Panathinaiko Stadium, to the modern Olympic Stadium, the Greeks have held their sporting events in wonderful venues.

In the modern era of sport, starting with the revival of the Olympic Games in 1896, Greece has organised hundreds of sporting events in all sports. The Olympic Games, Balkan Games, Mediterranean Games, European and World Championships, men, women, junior men, junior women, boys and girls, creating new records for participation, show international recognition of the ability that Greeks have to organise events.

In 1991, the country created the best conditions for the organisational and sporting success of the 11th Mediterranean Games. They were described as the best games in the history of the event, with 2,762 athletes from 18 countries.

The 6th IAAF World Championship was held in August 1997 at the Olympic Stadium a few days before IOC Members voted the Host City for the 2004 Olympic Games; it went down in history as “Athens’97.”
The 1896 Greek shot-putter, Panagiotis Paraskevopoulos. Spectators of the time admired his perfect body and the press hailed him as a "modern Hermes".

© Benaki Museum

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**Olympic Medals, 1896 - 2000**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sport/Discipline</th>
<th>Athlete</th>
<th>Placed</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rope climbing</td>
<td>Nikolaos Andriakopoulos</td>
<td>1st</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sabre Fencing</td>
<td>Ioannis Georgiadis</td>
<td>1st</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shooting (gras gun 200m)</td>
<td>Pantelis Karasevdas</td>
<td>1st</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cycling (Marathon 87km)</td>
<td>Aristidis Konstantinidis</td>
<td>1st</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Athletics (Marathon 40km)</td>
<td>Spyridon Louis</td>
<td>1st</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swimming 100m (between Greek sailors)</td>
<td>Ioannis Malakofis</td>
<td>1st</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gymnastics (rings)</td>
<td>Ioannis Mitropoulos</td>
<td>1st</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shooting (gras gun) 300m</td>
<td>Georgios Orfanidis</td>
<td>1st</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fencing (foil, between fencing masters)</td>
<td>Leon Pyrgos</td>
<td>1st</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shooting (rapid fire revolver 25m)</td>
<td>Ioannis Frangoudis</td>
<td>1st</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swimming (1,200m freestyle)</td>
<td>Ioannis Andreou</td>
<td>2nd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Athletics (Marathon race)</td>
<td>Haralos Vassilakos</td>
<td>2nd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Athletics (shot put)</td>
<td>Miltiadis Gouskos</td>
<td>2nd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sabre fencing</td>
<td>Telemachos Karakolos</td>
<td>2nd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tennis (singles, lawn tennis)</td>
<td>Dionysis Kasdaglis</td>
<td>2nd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tennis (doubles)</td>
<td>Dionysis Kasdaglis</td>
<td>2nd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cycling (100km)</td>
<td>Georgios Kolettis</td>
<td>2nd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cycling (single round)</td>
<td>Stamatios Nikolopoulos</td>
<td>2nd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cycling (2km)</td>
<td>Stamatios Nikolopoulos</td>
<td>2nd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rope climbing</td>
<td>Thomas Xenakis</td>
<td>2nd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shooting (rapid fire revolver 25m)</td>
<td>Georgios Orfanidis</td>
<td>2nd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Athletics (discus)</td>
<td>Panayiotis Paraskevopoulos</td>
<td>2nd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shooting (gras gun 200m)</td>
<td>Pavlos Pavlidis</td>
<td>2nd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swimming (500m freestyle)</td>
<td>Antonios Papanos</td>
<td>2nd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tennis (men's doubles)</td>
<td>Dimitrios Petrokokkinos</td>
<td>2nd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wrestling (Greco-Roman)</td>
<td>Georgios Titas</td>
<td>2nd</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shooting (army rifle 300m)</td>
<td>Ioannis Frangoudis</td>
<td>2nd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swimming (100m between Greek sailors)</td>
<td>Spyridon Hazapis</td>
<td>2nd</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Gymnastics team of the Pan-Hellenic Gymnastics Club took second place, however the team's composition has not been fully ascertained (approximately 50 individuals).

Athletics (discus) | Sotiros Versis | 3rd |
Weightlifting with two hands | Sotiros Versis | 3rd |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sport / Discipline</th>
<th>Athlete</th>
<th>Placed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Athletics (800m)</td>
<td>Dimitrios Golemis</td>
<td>3rd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Athletics (pole vault)</td>
<td>Evangelos Damaskos</td>
<td>3rd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swimming (100m between Greek sailors)</td>
<td>Dimitrios Drivas</td>
<td>3rd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Athletics (pole vault)</td>
<td>Ioannis Theodoropoulos</td>
<td>3rd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shooting (military pistol 25m)</td>
<td>Nikolaos Morakis</td>
<td>3rd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weightlifting (with one hand)</td>
<td>Alexandros Nikolopoulos</td>
<td>3rd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Athletics (shot put)</td>
<td>Georgios Papasideris</td>
<td>3rd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cycling (12-hour course)</td>
<td>Georgios Paraskevopoulos</td>
<td>3rd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(disqualified by some accounts)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tennis (men’s singles)</td>
<td>Nikolaos Paspatis</td>
<td>3rd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Athletics (triple jump)</td>
<td>Ioannis Persakis</td>
<td>3rd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gymnastics (rings)</td>
<td>Petros Persakis</td>
<td>3rd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fencing - Foil</td>
<td>Pericles Pierrakos-Mavromihalis</td>
<td>3rd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shooting (gras gun 200m)</td>
<td>Nikolaos Trikoupis</td>
<td>3rd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shooting (pistol 50m)</td>
<td>Ioannis Fragoudis</td>
<td>3rd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wrestling (Greco-Roman)</td>
<td>Stephanos Christopoulos</td>
<td>3rd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swimming (500m freestyle)</td>
<td>Efstathios Horafi</td>
<td>3rd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swimming (1,200m freestyle)</td>
<td>Efstathios Horafi</td>
<td>3rd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gymnastics: the Ethnikos team came third</td>
<td>(the team had 15 members but its composition is not fully known)</td>
<td>3rd</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:**
From the above data we can conclude that Greek athletes who placed in the first three during the Olympic Games were many more in number than the 38-40 usually mentioned.

In the individual events and in the Tennis doubles, a total of 39 Greeks must have taken part, competing with foreign athletes, whereas including the teams in the team uneven bars would make the number rise to above 100.

Names of gymnasts (team uneven bars event) that are known include Phil. Karvelas, Dimitris Loundras, Ioannis Mitropoulos, Th. Xenakis, P. Persakis, A. Pezemus.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sport / Discipline</th>
<th>Athlete</th>
<th>Placed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weightlifting (with two hands)</td>
<td>Pericles Kakousis</td>
<td>1st</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Athletics (discus)</td>
<td>Nikolaos Georgantas</td>
<td>3rd</td>
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<tr>
<td>London 1908</td>
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<tr>
<td>Athletics (javelin)</td>
<td>Michael Dorizas</td>
<td>2nd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Athletics (standing long jump and standing high jump)</td>
<td>Costis Tsiklitiras</td>
<td>2nd</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shooting (trap shooting)</td>
<td>Anastasios Metaxas</td>
<td>3rd</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stockholm 1912</td>
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<tr>
<td>Athletics (standing long jump)</td>
<td>Costis Tsiklitiras</td>
<td>1st</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Athletics (standing high jump)</td>
<td>Costis Tsiklitiras</td>
<td>3rd</td>
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<tr>
<td>Antwerp 1920</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shooting (revolver team event over a distance of 30m)</td>
<td>Alexandros Vrasianopoulos,</td>
<td>2nd</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Alexandros Theofilakis,</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ioannis Theofilakis,</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Georgios Moraitinis,</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Iason Sappas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paris 1924</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Art Games (Sculpture)</td>
<td>Constantinos Dimitriadis</td>
<td>1st</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melbourne 1956</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Athletics (pole vault)</td>
<td>Georgios Roubanis</td>
<td>3rd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rome 1960</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sailing (Dragon Class)</td>
<td>Crown Prince Constantine,</td>
<td>1st</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Odysseas Eskitzoglou,</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Georgios Zaimis</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mexico City 1968</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wrestling (Greco-Roman)</td>
<td>Petros Galaktopoulos</td>
<td>3rd</td>
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<tr>
<td>Munich 1972</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wrestling (Greco-Roman)</td>
<td>Petros Galaktopoulos</td>
<td>2nd</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sailing (Finn Class)</td>
<td>Elias Hatzipavlis</td>
<td>2nd</td>
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<td>Sport /Discipline</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wrestling (Greco-Roman)</td>
<td>Stelios Myakis</td>
<td>1st</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sailing (Soling Class)</td>
<td>Tasos Boudouris, Tasos Gavrilis, Aristeidis Repanakis</td>
<td>3rd</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wrestling (freestyle)</td>
<td>Georgios Hatzioannidis</td>
<td>3rd</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Los Angeles 1984</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Wrestling (Greco-Roman, 82kg)</td>
<td>Dimitrios Thanopoulos</td>
<td>2nd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wrestling (Greco-Roman, 57kg)</td>
<td>Haralambos Holidis</td>
<td>3rd</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Seoul 1988</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Wrestling (Greco-Roman, 57kg)</td>
<td>Haralambos Holidis</td>
<td>3rd</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Barcelona 1992</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Weightlifting (82.5 kg)</td>
<td>Pyrros Dimas</td>
<td>1st</td>
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<tr>
<td>Athletics (100m hurdles)</td>
<td>Voula Pasoulidou</td>
<td>1st</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Atlanta 1996</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Weightlifting (83kg)</td>
<td>Pyrros Dimas</td>
<td>1st</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sailing (Mistral windsurfer)</td>
<td>Nikos Kaklamanakis</td>
<td>1st</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weightlifting (57kg)</td>
<td>Akakios Kakiasvilis</td>
<td>1st</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artistic Gymnastics (floor exercises)</td>
<td>Ioannis Melissanidis</td>
<td>1st</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weightlifting (91kg)</td>
<td>Leonidas Kokkas</td>
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<tr>
<td>Weightlifting (64kg)</td>
<td>Valerios Leonidis</td>
<td>2nd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Athletics (high jump)</td>
<td>Nikis Bakoyanni</td>
<td>2nd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weightlifting (57kg)</td>
<td>Leonidas Sabanis</td>
<td>2nd</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Sydney 2000</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Weightlifting (85kg)</td>
<td>Pyrros Dimas</td>
<td>1st</td>
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<tr>
<td>Weightlifting (94kg)</td>
<td>Akakios Kakiasvilis</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Athletics (200m)</td>
<td>Kostas Kenteris</td>
<td>1st</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taekwondo</td>
<td>Michalis Mouroutsos</td>
<td>1st</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Athletics (100m)</td>
<td>Katerina Thanou</td>
<td>2nd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Athletics (discus)</td>
<td>Anastasia Kelesidou</td>
<td>2nd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Athletics (javelin)</td>
<td>Mirella Manjani</td>
<td>2nd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weightlifting (77kg)</td>
<td>Victor Mtrou</td>
<td>2nd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weightlifting (63kg)</td>
<td>Leonidas Sabanis</td>
<td>2nd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gymnastics (rings)</td>
<td>Dimosthenis Tabakos</td>
<td>2nd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wrestling (freestyle, 54kg)</td>
<td>Amiran Kardanov</td>
<td>3rd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weightlifting (62kg)</td>
<td>Ioanna Hatzioannou</td>
<td>3rd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhythmic Gymnastics (ensemble)</td>
<td>Irini Aindili, Maria Georgatou, Hara Karyami, Klelia Pantazi, Anna Politou, Eva Christodoulou</td>
<td>3rd</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The conclusion drawn from the table above is that Greek athletes have climbed the Olympic podium 90 times (some athletes more than once). In the 1906 Intercalated Games, which the International Olympic Committee does not include in the official Olympic Record, the following Greek athletes won against foreign competition: Nikolaos Albrands (gymnastics pentathlon), Nikolaos Georgantas (stone throw), Ioannis Georgiadis (sabre), Georgios Orfanides (shooting, revolver over 50m), Esme Simiriotou (tennis, singles), Constantinos Skarlatos (shooting, precision pistol, 25 m), Dimitrios Tafalos (Weightlifting with two hands). Many Greek athletes took second and third positions.
The History of the Hellenic Olympic Committee

The history of the Hellenic Olympic Committee (HOC) is closely linked to the history of the revival of the Olympic Games. The HOC was established in Athens on 24 November 1894 (according to the Julian calendar) and its first president was then Crown Prince Constantine. On the same day, the Committee also conducted its inaugural meeting, with the agenda of organising the first Modern Olympic Games, which finally took place in Athens in 1896, from 25 March to 3 April, in the recently renovated Panathinaiko Stadium. This renovation was accomplished by the donation of 920,000 gold drachmae (an huge amount for those times) by Georgios Averoff. It should be noted that from the date of its establishment and up to the year 2000, the name of the HOC in Greek was "Olympic Games Committee" (EOA), given that the reason for which it was established was the organisation of the First International Olympic Games.

Following the success of the first modern Olympic Games in 1896, the HOC also organised the first Pan-Hellenic Games in 1901, which took place in the Panathinaiko Stadium; as well as the Second International Olympic Games of Athens in 1906, which are now called the "Intercalated Games". Athens had also received the consent of the IOC to host the Third International Olympic Games in 1914, which were called off due to the international upheaval which led to the outbreak of World War I.

The first Olympic Torch Relay was proposed by a German Professor Carl Diem, and was organised for the first time in the form it holds to this day by the HOC on the occasion of the 1936 Olympic Games, when the torch was carried from Ancient Olympia to Berlin. The idea of the lighting ritual, in the same form it retains to this day, belonged to the Greek archaeologist and writer Alexandras Philadelpheas.

In 1949, the IOC unanimously approved the establishment of the International Olympic Academy (IOA) in Ancient Olympia, under the supervision of the HOC, which was also entrusted with the organisation and the administration of the Academy. Sponsored by the HOC and under the aegis of the IOC, the IOA operates in its facilities in Ancient Olympia and its inaugural congress took place in 1961.

Besides the first Olympic Games in 1896, the HOC also organised the first Pan-Hellenic Games in 1901, which took place in the Panathinaiko Stadium; as well as the Second International Olympic Games of Athens in 1906, which are now called the "Intercalated Games". Athens had also received the consent of the IOC to host the Third International Olympic Games in 1914, which were called off due to the international upheaval which led to the outbreak of World War I.

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Overall control of the organisation and its operations belongs to the HOC. The Academy’s purpose is to promote Olympism and the Olympic Movement internationally by: (a) organising on an annual basis International Sessions for Young Participants, Joint International Sessions for Directors or Presidents of National Olympic Academies and Staff of National Olympic Committees and International Federations; and International Seminars for Postgraduate Studies, Joint International Sessions for Educators and Staff of Higher Institutes of Physical Education as well as International Sessions for Sports Editors; and (b) encouraging the creation of National Olympic Academies in countries around the world. The IOA is, in any case, responsible for the first Modern Olympic Games Museum that was founded in Ancient Olympia in 1961 by Georgios Papastefanou-Provatakis, sports enthusiast and art lover who donated the museum to the HOC in 1964.

Presidents of the Hellenic Olympic Committee

The following have served as Presidents of the HOC since its founding:

• Crown Prince Constantine (1894-1912)
• King Constantine (1913)
• Crown Prince George (1914-1917)
• Miltiades Negropontes (1918-1920)
• Crown Prince George (1921-1922)
• King George II (1922-1923)
• Georgios Averoff (1924-30/4/1930)
• Ioannis Drasopoulos (1/5/1930-1936)
• Crown Prince Paul (1936-1947)
• King Paul (1947-1955)
• Crown Prince Constantine (1955-1964)
• Crown Princess Irene (1965-1968)
• Theodosios Papanassiadis (1969-1973)
• Spyridon Vellianitis (3/1/1973-1974)
• Apostolos Nikolaou (30/8/1974-1976)
• Georgios Athanassiadis (1977-1983)
• Angelos Lembessis (1/4/1983-1984)
• Lambis Nikolaou (1985-1992)
• Antonios Tzikas (1993-1996)
• Lambis Nikolaou (1997-2004)
• Minos Kyriakou (2005-to date)

IOC Members for Greece

The following have been IOC Members for Greece:

• Demetrius Vikelas (1894-1897), who also served as the first President of the IOC, 1894-1896,
• Alexandras Merkatis (1897-1925),
• Georgios Averoff (1926-1930),
• Nikolaos Politis (1930-1933),
• Angelos Volanakis (1933-1954),
• Ioannis Ketseas (1946-1965),
• King Constantine of Greece (1963-1974),
• Pyrros Lappas (1965-1980),
• Epameinondas Petralias (1975-1977)
• Nikolaos Nisiotis (1978-1986).
The current IOC Members for Greece are:

- Nikos Filaretos, elected to the IOC in 1981. He served as Secretary General of the HOC for the period 1974-1985; President of the IOA for the period 1986-1993 and from 1997 to this day; and Secretary General of the International Committee for the Mediterranean Games (CIJM) from 1977 to this day.

- Lambis Nikolaou, elected to the IOC in 1986. In July 2001 he was elected a Member of the Executive Board and in July 2005, Vice-President of the IOC.

**Administration of the Hellenic Olympic Committee**

According to the founding charter of the HOC, which was approved by the IOC, the Committee is administered by:

The Plenary session of the Committee, which includes the IOC members for Greece (permanent ex-officio members of the HOC), and is comprised of the representatives of the National Federations of Olympic Sports, a designated representative of the Council of State, one active male athlete or one veteran male athlete, one active female athlete or one veteran female athlete, who have participated at least once in the Olympic Games (in the instance that a veteran athlete is selected, either male or female, said athlete should have participated at least once over the previous three Olympic Games before the date of selection) and two prestigious individuals (who have contributed to sport and the propagation of the Olympic Spirit).

The Executive Board, which is comprised of seven members. Ex-officio members of the HOC Executive Board include the President of the HOC, the IOC Members for Greece, the First Vice President of the HOC, the Secretary General of the HOC and the Treasurer of the HOC. These individuals may only sit on the Board of the HOC in one of their aforementioned capacities, and the Plenary Session will designate the remaining members of the Executive Board from its overall membership, to bring the number of board members up to seven.

The HOC also includes the following Commissions:

- National Olympic Academy
- Sportmanship Commission
- Olympic Preparation Commission
- Olympic Torch Relay Commission
- Athletes’ Commission
- Sport and Women Commission
- Marketing Commission

The offices of the HOC, as well as the offices of the IOA in Athens, are located in Halandri, on a street which, subsequent to a request lodged by the HOC with the Municipality of Halandri, was named “Demetrius Vikelas Avenue”, in honour of the Greek responsible for the revival of the Modern Olympic Games and first President of the IOC. The Secretariat of the International Committee for the Mediterranean Games is also located in the same building, as its administrative headquarters are in Athens.

**Competences of the Hellenic Olympic Committee**

The HOC works to develop, promote and safeguard the Olympic Movement, sport, fair-play and extracurricular physical education, in accordance with the principles of Olympism and the traditions of Greek sport. The HOC also supervises the Olympic Sports and cooperates with the State, as well as with public and private enterprises in order to promote healthy policies in the field of sport. It seeks to promote love of sport and respect for the spirit of fair play in young people. In cooperation with the competent National Federations, the HOC is also in charge of organising the preparation of athletes. The HOC is the sole authority responsible for the selection of athletes who will represent Greece in the Olympic, Mediterranean, as well as for such continental and transcontinental competitions as are held under the patronage of the IOC - and inspects and oversees the organisation of the aforementioned Games, whenever these are held in Greece.

The HOC is responsible for the administration, management and care of its facilities, their equipment and the surrounding public grounds, in all the competition and non-competition venues belonging to the HOC.

The HOC attends to the Lighting of the Olympic Flame for the Summer and Winter Olympic Games - for which the HOC has exclusive responsibility - as well as within the framework of every other such instance, in accordance with the decisions of its Plenary session. Moreover the HOC is in charge of correctly interpreting and implementing the rules of the IOC Olympic Charter. As regards this latter point, it is also within the competency of the HOC to formulate proposals addressed to the IOC that concern both the rules of the Olympic Charter and its interpretive provisions; the Olympic Movement in general; and the organisation and running of the Olympic Games in particular. It is also within the competency of the HOC to select any Greek city that should wish to place its candidacy for undertaking the organisation of Olympic or Mediterranean Games.

Furthermore the HOC is responsible for preparing, publishing and distributing special editions that concern the growth and advancement of the Olympic Idea, the history of Olympism, extracurricular physical education and sport in general, as well as every other form of written material whose aim is to achieve the mission of the IOA. Finally the HOC proposes to the Minister in charge of Sport, who supervises the HOC, any special measures that may assist the HOC in achieving its mission.
Bidding for the Games
The Idea of Hosting the Games

The dream that the Olympic Games would return to the country where they were born and the city of their revival intensely preoccupied people involved in sport, culture and politics during the nineteen eighties.

The trends of the Olympic Movement up to the Los Angeles Olympic Games (1984) gave the wider sporting family reasons for concern. The institution had become politicised, a fact borne out by terrorist attack at the Munich Games (1972), and the boycotts of the Games at Montreal (1976), Moscow (1980) and Los Angeles (1984); there was an orientation towards commercial development, an increase in Doping incidents, and it was clear that the Olympic Movement sought an opportunity to correct its course. All those studying sport confirmed at every opportunity and in every manner their concern about the future of Olympism.

In 1976, the Greek Prime Minister Constantinos Karamanlis proposed to the Olympic Family that the Games should take place permanently in Greece. The idea was well intended, but not feasible, as its potential acceptance would alter the international character of the Games and simultaneously the capacity the Games offer host nations to improve their infrastructure and the general living conditions of their citizens, through the opportunity of organising the Games.

In this international climate, people involved in sports in Greece looked positively on the possibility of organising the Games, considering that if such a thing were to occur, the sporting and cultural benefits for Greece would be manifold. Primarily, this would offer Greeks, on the one hand, an opportunity once more to seek “a new Revival”, revisiting the Olympic principles of antiquity and restore these to the Modern Olympic Games; and on the other hand, the means to seek a deep renewal and major growth of sport in Greece.

From a political standpoint, the Government considered that an endeavour of this scale would place in its hands a tool to approach the field of sport that would be widely accepted, and a serious argument in favour of creating new, contemporary sporting facilities and urban infrastructure projects that were lacking in Greece.

The opportunity appeared with the bid for the 1996 Olympic Games, the Golden Jubilee of the Games, a hundred years after their Revival in Athens in 1896.

The Failure of the First Bid

Although institutionally the decision to bid for the Games is made in each instance by the National Olympic Committee, in this instance it was made by a political body, the Hellenic Parliament. On 14 April 1986, the Hellenic Parliament, following a proposal by Andreas Papandreou and Melina Merkouri, at that time Prime Minister and Minister of Culture respectively, decided by overwhelming majority to support the candidature of Athens for the Games of the “Golden Olympiad” of 1996.

At that time, at the Athens Olympic Sports Centre (OAKA) only the Olympic Stadium that had hosted the European Athletics Championship in 1982 existed, the construction of which at the end of the nineteen seventies had been judged to be a project of first priority by the Government at the time. Immediately following the unanimous decision of Parliament, and as an indication of how serious the State’s intention was to host the Olympic Games, an
overall programme for the construction of the remaining facilities at OAKA commenced (Olympic Indoor Hall, Olympic Aquatic Centre, Olympic Velodrome, Olympic Tennis Centre, Training Grounds, Administration Centre and Guesthouses).

On 14 January 1987, the Executive Board for the Preparation of the Olympic Games was established, which included representatives of the Municipality of Athens under Mayor Mitilades Evert; the Hellenic Olympic Committee (HOC); and the Government. The Minister of Culture at the time was designated in charge of the Executive Board for the Preparation of the Olympic Games, jointly with George Papandreou, then Minister of Education, as Coordinator of the government’s involvement.

On 9 June 1988, the Ministerial Council published its decision that the Greek Government was to grant guarantees for the financial coverage of the Games, while on 13 June 1988, the Municipal Council of Athens, and simultaneously the HOC, decided unanimously in favour of submitting the candidature of Athens for the “Golden Olympiad” of 1996.

On 29 June 1988, on the occasion of the inauguration of the OAKA building site by the President of the IOC, Juan Antonio Samaranch, the Prime Minister officially announced to the Preparation of the Olympic Games, jointly with George Papandreou, then Minister of Education, as Coordinator of the government’s involvement.

On the initiative of the Coordinating Minister, the renowned architect and urban planner George Kandylis was invited from Paris, in order to assume responsibility for the preparation of the Official Bid File for the “Golden Olympiad”.

Almost simultaneously the 1996 Olympic Games Bid Committee was convened, chaired by entrepreneur Spyros Metaxas. The Members of the Committee were Lambs Nikolaou and Dimitris Dithinopoulos, as President and Secretary General of the HOC; Loukas Kyrakopoulos as Vice-President; and Giorgos Andreadis, Kostas Liaskas and Yiannis Triantafyllidis as members. Besides George Kandylis, urban planners Petros Synadinos, Christos Kourtis, Takis Frangoulis and Eleni Hatzinikolaou were on the Bid File Preparation Team.

At the IOC Executive Board meeting during the Seoul Olympic Games (1988), the Bid Committee officially presented the candidature of Athens for the Golden Olympiad.

The Official Bid File for the 1996 Games

The Athens proposal was formed within the framework of the preparation of the Official Bid File by a multi-member team of scientists working under the direction of G. Kandylis.

At the end of the nineteen-eighties, Athens was a city known for the problems typical of every major metropolis that grew rapidly and without urban planning after the end of World War II. Throughout the period 1975-1990, consecutive Greek Governments, with valuable assistance from the European Economic Community, attempted to deal with the Greek capital’s urban planning and environmental problems. This was when the framework for the “major salvation works” for historical Athens was formed.

The Official Bid File for the Golden Olympiad contributed to the final formulation of the framework to implement the so-called “Major Works” which ensured not only that Athens improved significantly, but also that the city was transformed in order to be able to host the Olympic Games. The Bid File for the 1996 Games made considerable contributions in finalising decisions to:

- reclaim the city’s sea-front,
- create major road axes through the city’s urban web, formulate the plans for the ring road, etc.,
- transfer the airport from the site at Helliniko,
- expand the metro system and create tram lines,
- resolve the chronic problems in the infrastructure networks,
- renovate the city’s historic centre and unify the archaeological sites,
- highlight and protect the mountain masses that surround the capital’s basin location,
- finalise the position for the main Olympic Centres for the Olympic Games, connecting them in the so-called Olympic Ring.

The official Athens Bid File was submitted in March 1990 at the IOC headquarters and Juan Antonio Samaranch called it a “masterpiece”.

In the period 1989-1990, a large number of IOC Members visited Athens and were briefed on its proposal. The people of Greece were eager to experience the Golden Olympiad in Athens: this was a strong card in the hands of the Bid Committee and the IOC Members were well aware of it.

On the strategy front, the Bid Committee, besides the above positive element, also relied on the main message of the effort “return to the roots”, a catch phrase that alluded to the preoccupations and references of antiquity and promoted the principles and ideals of that time. This connection of the past with the present was considered completely logical, particularly in view of the hundred-year anniversary of the revival of the Games, but also due to the general climate that was influencing the world of sport and the course of the Olympic Movement. This attempt to regain the glory of the past under existing conditions led the Bid Committee to adopt a slogan: “the Games of 1996 should take place in the city where they were revived”.

64 Official Report of the XXVIII Olympiad
June 1989: IOC President Juan Antonio Samaranch is given a tour of the Megaro Stathatou, headquarters of the "Athens 96" Bid Committee, by Bid Chair Spyros Metaxas, Professor George Kandylis and his assistant Petros Synadinos.

Besides choosing this strategy and despite the conscientious efforts undertaken by all the members of the Bid Committee, without exception, as well as its staff, the period preceding the crucial selection day, was characterised by a climate of intense political change. Over a period of eight months, there were three general elections and three different governments were formed.

This climate of alternating governments created a sense of political in stability, which though unwarranted, was viewed as a handicap for the candidature of Athens, and was noted as such in the official candidate evaluation report prepared by the IOC Evaluation Commission of that time, which was chaired by Gunnar Ericsson, IOC Member for Sweden.

This turn of events forced Greece’s political world to seek a way of reversing this climate of “political instability”. The tactic selected was for the political parties to intervene in the proceedings. This resulted in the process, which traditionally had a purely sporting nature, to take on political overtones. The political powers of the country, in their attempt to alleviate the impression that the Ericsson report had created, regarding supposed political instability in Greece - an impression which had, however affected IOC voters - decided to project their presence as part of the bid procedure and mainly to underline that the Government and the Opposition were both wholeheartedly behind the effort to undertake the duty and the responsibility of covering the expenses entailed in organising the Olympic Games.

This atmosphere created two opposing trends between the main contenders, Athens and Atlanta. On the one hand was the importance placed by the Greek Bid Committee on the “historical element” of the bid and its attempt to persuade the members of the Olympic Family of the advantages guaranteed by selecting Athens and returning the institution to the principles of Olympism. On the other hand, the modern, methodical, persuasive and low-key approach of the American bid, offered the security of a large nation with the appropriate infrastructure. Despite this, up to the final days, the international media considered that Athens was a firm favourite to win, based mainly on public opinion (not only in Greece, where over 80% of the population supported the idea, but also internationally), which was particularly positive about the idea of returning the institution to Athens one hundred years after the Revival of the Games in 1896.

The basic jubilee argument of Athens proved to be insufficient to convince the Members of the IOC that the Golden Olympiad should be hosted at the birthplace of the Olympic Games. Despite best efforts by the Bid Committee, in September 1990, the IOC Session in Tokyo decided to award the Games of the Golden Olympiad to Atlanta.
In the period of time after the unsuccessful bid in 1990 and up to 1995, and despite the failure to win the Games of the Golden Olympiad, Greece steadily continued to implement the major works to improve Athens, as well as to complete its sports infrastructure. It is worth noting that despite the general disappointment in Greece, the Mediterranean Games that took place in the newly built OAKA venues in 1991 were particularly successful. Yet again a major international sporting event was organised well, proving that the Greeks were capable of undertaking major events.

The idea of undertaking the Olympic Games never left their mind, an event they proved at any given opportunity.

In the spring of 1995, then Deputy Minister of Culture Giorgos Lianis, with the consent of the Government, following a conversation with IOC President Juan Antonio Samaranch, decided to submit to the IOC a proposal for the 2008 Olympic Games to be awarded as an honour directly to Athens.

The IOC President received from the Greek Government on 29 November 1995 a report with detailed argumentation, citing the reasons for which Greece desired to seek an “honorary award” of the 2008 Games. The IOC President appeared sympathetic to the Greek proposal in conversations held with the Deputy Minister of Culture, in the presence of IOC Members for Greece Lambis Nikolaou and Nikos Filaretos, retaining, however, strong reservations as to the outcome of this move. Despite this, the Government kept the request active until December of the same year.

In November 1995, the cities bidding for the 2004 Games had submitted their candidature and Rome appeared to be the certain front-runner. At that time the HOC President was Antonis Tzas, Marton Simitsek and Manolis Katsiadakis were First and Second Vice Presidents respectively, Dionysis Gangas was Secretary General, Spyros Capralos was President of the Olympic Preparation Commission and Freddy Serpieri was President of the International Olympic Academy. The HOC, in a Plenary session on 5 December 1995, attempted to persuade the Deputy Minister that a decision on the part of the IOC to offer the Olympic Games directly to a single city, in contravention of the procedures set down by the Olympic Charter, would have to obtain the votes of a minimum of two thirds of its members, as this would require a partial amendment of the Charter itself. This was not considered achievable, when the “honorary award” would have to be supported by all those seeking to undertake the 2008 Games, as well as all those candidate cities for 2004 that would want to pursue another bid. Two meetings followed at the Municipality of Athens, in the presence of representatives of all the political parties, as well as functionaries from the world of sport, where it became clear that most of those present were in agreement with the reservations voiced by the HOC regarding the “honorary award”. In the meantime, members of the HOC had already formulated arguments in favour of bidding for the 2004 Games, an event that finally put paid to the idea of seeking an “honorary award”.

On 13 December 1995, the HOC held an extraordinary session and an overwhelming majority of its members voted in favour of bidding for the 2004 Games, a decision the Committee announced to the Deputy Minister of Sport that very evening. The consent of Dimitris Avramidopoulos, Mayor of Athens, was also secured and subsequent to this, the Deputy Minister announced on behalf of the
Government that he warmly supported the change of course, to bid for the Games.

In this manner, the announcement of Athens’ bid for the 2004 Games, formally took on the form required by the IOC: a signed Declaration/Application for Candidature to Organise the Olympic Games by the President of the HOC and the Mayor of Athens, with the guarantee of the Greek Government that it would undertake the responsibility of preparing the necessary infrastructure projects in order to host this major event.

On 5 January 1996, just five days before the deadline, at the seat of the IOC in Lausanne, the Secretary General of the HOC officially submitted the Candidature of Athens for the 2004 Olympic Games, to the IOC Director-General, Francois Carrard.

News of the Athens candidacy was a big surprise and made an impression in international sporting circles, not only because it had been submitted at the last minute, but because, up to that moment, Greece had not appeared prepared to undertake such a risk, to seek the right to organise the Olympic Games for a second time, and particularly against such strong candidates, including Italy, which was a major sporting power. In contrast to Athens, all the other candidate cities had made all the necessary preparations long before the end of 1995. They had already formulated their strategy and had begun initial exploratory contacts with the IOC and with other sports institutions. The other candidate cities were (in alphabetical order) Buenos Aires, Argentina; Cape Town, South Africa; Istanbul, Turkey; Lille, France; Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; Saint Petersburg, Russia; San Juan, Puerto Rico; Seville, Spain; and Stockholm, Sweden.

Domestically, the announcement of the Athens candidacy for the 2004 Olympic Games was greeted by the residents of the capital and all of Greece with uninhibited enthusiasm and great expectations.
This page,
from top to bottom:

5 January 1995: the Secretary-General of the HOC officially submits the Athens 2004 Candidature to the Director-General of the IOC.
© IOC archives

IOC President Juan Antonio Samaranch in conversation with the Mayor of Athens Dimitris Avramopoulos and the Head of Operations for the Bid Marton Simitsek. Visible in the background is the logo of the Athens 2004 bid.
© Marton Simitsek archive
The speed with which the decision to seek the Olympic Games had been taken and implemented by the HOC and the Mayor of Athens, found the Government, which had warmly supported and advocated the idea, with no ready proposal regarding the composition of the Bid Committee. The Prime Minister at the time faced serious health problems, succession to the leadership of the ruling party and the country preoccupied the Government; therefore, for a significant amount of time, the procedure of appointing a Committee that would undertake the difficult task of pursuing the cause had halted.

The time to prepare the Bid was acutely limited, as within the following eight months, the final Bid File had to be prepared and submitted, while simultaneously the framework for strategically approaching the voters had to be established, meticulously and innovatively.

The deadlines for the formal procedures appeared particularly pressing, given that Athens had submitted its Application for Candidature in the final days before the deadline for such applications. The selection of the city that would host the Games of the XXVIII Olympiad followed a procedure that differed greatly from that instituted following the amendment of the IOC Charter in early 2000.

According to the IOC timeline, the first meeting of experts and technical consultants from the Candidate Cities with IOC staff would be held on 23 January 1996 in Lausanne, in order to set the details of the course of the Bid by August of the following year. On 13 July 1996, there would follow a presentation by the Bid Committee to the IOC Executive Board, in Atlanta, U.S.A., within the framework of the 1996 Olympic Games. On 15 August 1996 the Official Bid File would have to be submitted along with answers to hundreds of IOC questions and all the guarantees on behalf of the Municipality and the Government.

By 30 August 1996, the Candidate Cities would submit the corresponding Dossiers with all the required information to the members of the IOC Evaluation Commission. What would follow was the first complete presentation of the Bid File to the IOC Executive Board on 9 September 1996, and from 30 September 1996, the members of the IOC Evaluation Commission would commence their visits to the candidate cities, in order to prepare their proposals for the procedure of selecting the five finalists. Short-listing was scheduled to take place on 30 March 1997 by the Selection College in Lausanne, comprised of three IOC Members, three representatives of the International Federations and three representatives of National Olympic Committees.

Despite the climate prevailing in Greece during the first days of 1996, certain decisions had to be reached by the competent agencies, in order to prove to the IOC Members that the Bid was taken seriously in Greece.

The initial composition of the Committee was proposed by the Hellenic Olympic Committee to the Mayor, after a meeting that took place in the HOC offices, during the second third of January. It included the names of several entrepreneurs that were well-known in Greek and international financial circles, without any particular involvement with sporting affairs in the country, but with the will to help take these first steps in what had become an issue of national importance.
Greece and abroad, that private enterprise supported the candidature, and in cooperation with the HOC, the City of Athens and the Government, would prepare the ground for the composition of a more substantial Committee that would undertake the overall work of the Bid. The names selected for inclusion in this first Committee were: A. Potamianos, ship-owner and Chairman of the Special Olympics; G. David, Chairman of the Board of 3E; P. Livanos, also a ship-owner; M. Latsi; D. Krontiras; entrepreneur A. Lavidas; and professors P. Fotidas and M. Sallas. This composition was never formally made known to the IOC, nor did it receive any particular publicity in Greece, it was however used as the "leaven" that would lead to the final form of the Bid Committee.

The concept was simple: the Bid had to be prepared by an agency that could manoeuvre easily, a société anonyme, acting under private law, and mainly supported by sponsorship from the private sector. The Mayor initially appointed the First Vice-President of the HOC to coordinate this informal Committee, thus introducing the HOC into its composition.

In the meantime, the procedure for electing a new Premier had progressed, and on 18 January 1996, Costas Simitis took over the position of Prime Minister, proceeding to replace many of the Ministers, including the Deputy Minister for Sport, whose competencies included the issues of the Olympic Games. This position went to Andreas Fouras, who retained it for a lengthy period of time, thus assisting the course of the Bid Committee.

In order to imprint its own ideas on the Bid Committee, the Government sought the assistance of other prominent personalities, including Theodore and Gianna Angelopoulos, who willingly accepted the proposition that the Prime Minister placed before them.

On 30 March 1996, the HOC organised the time-honoured ceremony of Lighting the Flame in Ancient Olympia. The Flame would subsequently travel around the American continent and light the Olympic Games in Atlanta. Hillary Clinton, First Lady of the United States, was present at the ceremony, to receive the Flame for Atlanta. Within the framework of the events surrounding the lighting of the Flame, the Prime Minister proposed to Gianna Angelopoulos-Daskalaki, already a member of the expanded Bid Committee, to undertake a leading role in the Bid effort, a proposal she accepted.

The second HOC event in that same period of time was the celebration of the centenary of the revival of the Olympic Games. The events to celebrate this anniversary commenced on 5 April 1996 in the Old Hellenic Parliament Building, in the presence of the President of the Hellenic Republic, where President Samaranch received an award for his contributions to the Olympic Movement. On the following day, 6 April 1996, at the Panathinaiko Stadium, once more in the presence of the IOC President, the full membership of the Executive Board and 23 further IOC Members, there was a parade of young people carrying the flags of the member-nations of the Olympic Movement, and a partial re-enactment of the 1896 Games by Greek and foreign athletes. The ceremony was concluded with a symbolic Torch Relay of representatives and Olympic medallists from all the cities that had hosted Olympic Games up to then, with the Flame being received in special lanterns by the city mayors, in a ceremony that was particularly moving for the members of the meeting of experts from the candidate cities. Heading the group were the two Vice-Presidents and the Secretary General of the HOC and urban planners Petros Synadinos and Christos Kourtis from the Kandylis group, which had undertaken to prepare the Bid File for the 1996 Games, and Nikos Filaretos, the IOC Member for Greece.
In the meantime, on 4 April 1996, the Mayor of Athens granted a Press conference at the City Hall, to announce the composition of the new expanded Bid Committee, in consultation with the President of the HOC and the Deputy Minister for Sport, Gianna Angelopoulou-Daskalaki acting as coordinator. The members of the Committee were: Andreas Potamianos, Jules Dassin, Giorgos Livanos, Dimitris Korintiras, Angelos Tsakopoulou, Michalis Sallas, Panayiotis Fotilas, Marianna Latsi, Giorgos David, Athanasios Lavdas.

Despite efforts on all sides for cohesion and joint action, the period from April to June 1996 saw friction between institutional agencies in order to delineate the course and action of the Bid. The personal professional obligations of most of the Committee members appeared to prevail over their sincere intentions, with the result that the above period saw several withdrawals from the Committee. Time was already flying and the preparations that had to be in place by 15 August were many and exacting.

In the face of this critical time crunch, and at risk of the Athens bid appearing without leadership before the IOC Executive Board, the Government decided to proceed with rapid changes in the composition of the Bid Committee. The cycle of the previous composition had drawn to a close. The objective of all the bodies involved, as originally defined, the emphasis placed on the presence and the support of the private sector, had already been achieved, and the message that all the forces of the nation - political, financial and sporting - were united in support of the Bid appeared without leadership before the IOC Executive Board, the Government decided to proceed with rapid changes in the composition of the Bid Committee. The cycle of the previous composition had drawn to a close. The objective of all the bodies involved, as originally defined, the emphasis placed on the presence and the support of the private sector, had already been achieved, and the message that all the forces of the nation - political, financial and sporting - were united in support of the Bid appeared without leadership before the IOC Executive Board, the Government decided to proceed with rapid changes in the composition of the Bid Committee. The cycle of the previous composition had drawn to a close. The objective of all the bodies involved, as originally defined, the emphasis placed on the presence and the support of the private sector, had already been achieved, and the message that all the forces of the nation - political, financial and sporting - were united in support of the Bid appeared. The entire structure and image of the Committee had to be such as would convince the selectors and the other members of the Olympic Family that this time, in which the Bid Committee would approach its targets had all the elements of a serious, contemporary, flexible and purely professional effort, which was a reflection of the corresponding content of the candidature.

As soon as she took over, the President of the Bid Committee undertook to form a point group of individuals involved in sports, with special expertise in various crucial sectors of actions. The purpose of this group was to flack the President, and in essence undertake at her side the full weight of the Bid effort - from laying out its strategy to implementing its goals. This group would have to be formed of a limited number of staff; with exemplary professionalism; flexible in reaching decisions; from a communications point of view, be familiar and acceptable to those members of the Olympic Family who would finally be the judges deciding the result of 5 September 1997.

The Board of Directors undertook the role of supporting the strategy and actions of the President and her staff. The Board met once a month or whenever the occasion demanded.

The members of staff of the Bid Committee were the following: Deputy Managing Director: G. Giannakakis Head of Operations: M. Simitsek Head of Sports: S. Capralos Head of International Relations: D. Gangas (with A. Laios) Head of Public Relations: R. Papadopoulos (with volunteers: A. Andreadi and K. Kehagoglou) Strategy Group: M. Zacharakotis, D. Tziotis, E. Sdralli Press and Media Group: M. Pavrommatis, P. Gerarakis and a group of journalists

Finally, the Bid File Group operated outside the purely administrative structure of the Committee, but was linked directly to the entire Bid; this was in the charge of Petros Synadinos, urban planner and his partner in this, Christos Kouras, also an urban planner. The fact that the File was technically excellent played a major role in the final selection of Athens, as it contained detailed reports and substantiated proposals, debunking the unflattering myths that accompanied the Greek capital, supposedly an inhospitable city with high levels of atmospheric pollution, stiffly built and burdened with heavy traffic.
The Bid File

The Athens Bid File for the 2004 Olympic Games was an operational plan for an organised intervention in the urban complex of the contemporary capital of the Greek State and its general environs. This intervention was based on the long-term plans and programmes that were already in place in line with the execution of the so-called Major Projects to Revitalise Athens. These works were overall co-funded by Greece and by the European Union structural funds, and formed the basis of the Master Plan so that Athens could function as an Olympic Host City, as this had been laid out for the first time within the framework of the Bid File for the Jubilee Olympic Games of 1996.

The four basic axes for the aforementioned Plan can be defined concisely as follows:

1) The Olympic Village at Lekanes Acharnon to the North.
2) The Athens Olympic Sports Centre (OAKA)
3) The Historical Centre of Athens
4) The Faliro Coastal Zone to the South.

Each of these axes was related to:

- The network of new, under-construction arterial road axes that assured correct traffic connections.
- The construction of a new metro system for Athens, a suburban railway and a new tram network.
- The relocation of Athens International Airport from Helliniko to Spata.
- The completion of the entire infrastructure networks including state-of-the-art telecommunications networks.
- The special programme for improving the natural environment and the quality of life for the general region of Athens, and the broader prefecture of Attica, going under the name ATTIKI S.O.S.

It was obvious that the Athens Bid File for the 2004 Olympic Games formed an integrated operational plan that incorporated the Major Projects that were already underway from the mid-nineteen nineties. Simultaneously, Athens created the prerequisites for rapid implementation of large-scale interventions, such as the "reclamation of the Coastal Front of the City" along the coast of the Saronic Gulf.

Moreover it was the proposal of the 2004 Bid File that created the prerequisites for the rapid implementation of works showcasing the historical centre of the city, including the major project of unifying the archaeological sites of Athens, or even the rapid implementation of a series of specific interventions in what were underdeveloped areas. Beyond the projects that concerned the programmes in the environmental and construction sector, the Bid File also incorporated works, measures and actions that promoted rapid modernisation for Athens and Greece, in line with its second decade of participation in the European Union. Crucial sectors, including Tourism infrastructure and services, health care, Security, telecommunications, the Media, information technology, all complemented the themed Master Plan for an historic city such as Athens, in a manner that convinced those who saw it that Athens could function as an "Olympic City for 2004".

The Bid File was submitted to the IOC in Lausanne, in August 1996. In October the Bid File was presented to the Evaluation Commission in Athens, in a specially formulated hall in the Zappeio Megaro. An Additional Report was subsequently added to the File in November 1996.

From February to August 1997, with funding from the ATHENS 2004 Olympic Games Bid Committee, the General Secretariat of Sport (GSS) and the Ministry of the Environment, Physical Planning and Public Works, twenty-one additional support studies were completed and two workshops were held with an emphasis placed on environmental and economic issues. These issue-based support studies formed additional scientific documentation for the Official Bid File. The conclusions drawn in these support studies were utilised in numerous presentations to the IOC Members, as well as to the experts of the IOC's competent committees.

These studies documented the effectiveness of measures that had been adopted in order to improve the quality of the natural environment around the capital. Additionally, they documented the capacity of the Greek economy to meet the demands of such an attempt.

Finally, both the Official Bid File and the studies supporting its contents, highlighted a unique series of proposals of the Athens candidature, that were related to the cultural content of organising the Games in the birthplace of Olympism.

In order to produce the aforementioned work, there was a collaboration of 120 specialist scientists; seven Universities and Research Institutes in Greece and abroad; and 50 jointly competent agencies of the broader Public Sector and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs).

The Bid File and its documentation with the aforementioned support studies, the meetings and the specialist scientists, formed one of the cornerstones for the success of the Bid and the award of the 2004 Games to Athens.

The First Steps of the Bid Committee

The first priority was to select who would be in charge of preparing the Bid File. The choice was straightforward as Petros Synadinos had the experience of preparing the File for the 1996 Bid alongside George Kandylis, as well as that
for the direct honorary award attempted by former Deputy Minister G. Lianis, which were a guarantee that the File would be properly researched and prepared.

On 4 July 1996, there was a simple ceremony to announce the logo for the Athens candidature for the 2004 Games. The Bid logo was simultaneously simple and sophisticated, showing a cauldron drawn in an abstract manner and the flames rising from that altar forming the letter “A” for Athens.

Nine days later, the first official appearance of the Bid Committee before the IOC Executive Board took place. On 12 July 1996, in Atlanta, the President of the Committee accompanied by Nikos Filaretos, IOC Member for Greece; Kostas Liaskas, member of the Board; the Deputy Managing Director; the Head of Operations; the Head of International Relations; and the head of the File Preparation team, presented the candidature of Athens and simultaneously indicated its new course.

"Athens is a modern city, changing its face, being transformed into something even more beautiful", the President declared to the Members of the IOC Executive Board. Responding convincingly to the many questions of those present, she demonstrated the difference of the candidature for the 2004 Games compared to that for the 1996 Games. The presentation was not based on historical references, or references to the debt owed to antiquity; nor were any attempts made to bring up the familiar sentimental elements or any other form of moral obligation.

The IOC Members would soon note that the new candidature had a strategic approach regarding the importance of the first Games of the third millennium, which differed entirely from the usual practices. The Games were becoming ever larger and more commercial, athletes were increasingly producing doping-assisted performances, and efforts were made to exploit the Games politically. All this demanded a dynamic change, a turn to the human scale of things, meaningful simplicity, along with a well-run organisation, utilising contemporary methods in an environment that would highlight the new Athens, the new Greece. These were the main components of the general strategy used by the Bid Committee, throughout the twelve-month duration of the candidature, from 15 August 1996, when the File was submitted, to 5 September 1997, when Athens was selected as "the city that will have the honour and the responsibility to organise the Games of the XXVIII Olympiad".

On 14 August 1996, at 11:06 in the morning, the President of the Bid Committee, accompanied by the Deputy Managing Director and the head of the File Preparation team, submitted the three volumes of the Bid File at the IOC headquarters in Lausanne, fourth in line of submission. The first step was complete, and once it was taken there began a journey that was short in duration but had major importance and lots of action; the journey to the final selection.
The journey to the final judgement day had many important milestones and actions, of which the following stand out:

- October 1996: The IOC Evaluation Commission visited Athens
- March 1997: The five short-listed candidate cities were selected in Lausanne
- April - August 1997: IOC Members visits to Athens
- March - June 1997: The contents of the Bid File were presented to the National Olympic Committees
- March - September 1997: Participation in the Continental General Assemblies of the National Olympic Committees
- August 1997: The Organisation of the IAAF World Athletics Championships in Athens

During the final days of October 1996, Athens received the visit of the IOC Evaluation Commission, chaired by Thomas Bach. The Bid Committee had prepared for this visit, using modern means and methods to present its strategy at Zappeio, a place that had already been selected as the Committee’s headquarters: this space was both functional and symbolic, with a long history as part of the Olympic Movement.

Another factor that undoubtedly satisfied the members of the Evaluation Commission was the overwhelming positive response of the public to the Bid, which was viewed positively by 90% of residents at that time. Finally, the IOC Commission was impressed by the professionalism of the staff that formed the Bid Committee, particularly those individuals who were familiar to the Olympic Movement. Positive comments were received in particular for the contributions made by the private
sector in support of the Bid, which was obvious from a series of sponsorships, which might not have been quantitatively large in total, but represented the interest and faith placed by the Greek entrepreneurial world in the dream of hosting the Olympic Games in the city of their revival. All these points were included in the report and accompanied the candidature, both in the first crucial selection of the finalists among the candidate cities in March 1997, as well as the final selection on 5 September.

The Bid Committee preparations for the selection of Athens as one of the prevailing candidate cities in the short-listing of March 1997 went smoothly, without surprises, and with all the members of staff carrying out their duties to the full. The entire team was present in Lausanne and their presentation drew exceptional comments from the IOC Selection College and its Chairman Marc Hodler, IOC Member for Switzerland. The President of the Committee made the presentation for Athens as a Candidate City. The presentation was fifth in line, and took place at 12:05 noon of 6 March. The presentations were finished shortly after 18:30 that afternoon. On the following day, 7 March, at 13:00 the names of the cities short-listed for the final test were announced. Alongside Athens, Buenos Aires, Cape Town, Rome and Stockholm advanced to the next round. It was clear from the beginning that all presentations were excellently prepared, and the competition remained intense to the very end, while the outcome was uncertain. Despite this, the members of the Bid Committee felt from this very first presentation that the position of Athens was particularly strong. The strategy points selected; the manner in which they approached sensitive points; the messages utilised; the effort to bring out the new shape of Athens as a realistic vision, the team’s professionalism; and the contents of the File; all set out a new manner of Bid, convincing in its claim that something had changed in the old image of the country that had sought, clinging to its history and its references to antiquity, to attract the interest of the rest of the world.

Once the Lausanne result was announced, a marathon of preparation began for the visits of IOC Members to Athens, which, in accordance to the established practice at that time, were the sine qua non regarding the final judgement in September. Many days and hours were consumed in creating a suitable climate and environment in which to accomplish the Member visits, and this would truly show what unique arrangements Athens was preparing for the Games of 2004.

The aim remained the same: to display a new image for Greece and the capabilities of its residents. The number of visits surpassed 100, from April to August 1997. Special reception rooms and rooms promoting the candidature were suitably prepared in the Zappeio; and services at the existing sports venues were organised in the best possible manner. A small group of volunteers, which included young diplomats from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, covered every movement of the IOC Members, tirelessly and professionally. By the end of August, 96 IOC Members had visited Athens, some more than once. The aim of the Committee was to approach the Members in a simple yet persuasive manner, focusing on the personal element, beyond the formal events that always accompanied these visits. The staff responsible for contacts with IOC Members used a personal approach, in order to touch each Member individually. All that was very human, low-key and with complete respect for their role in the Olympic Movement.

The Olympic Family Olive Grove

One of the most successful and inventive ideas, whose aim was to honour the presence of the IOC Members in Athens, was the creation of the “Olympic Family Olive Grove”. The idea was simple and innovative. In a pine-covered area near the centre of Athens, next to the venue that would host Modern Pentathlon, the Bid Committee created a park which included a small amphitheatre, an obelisk inscribed with the names of all IOC Members who were active in 1997, and corresponding space for each to plant a small one-year-old olive tree sapling, accompanied by the flag of the country for which they were Members, and carved at the base with their name, that would remain in the history of the Athens Olympic Games. According to Greek tradition, the olive tree is the symbol of victory, peace and fraternity, principles that are also ruling tenets of Olympism. In Greek myths, the olive tree was also a symbol of Nike, the goddess of victory, a prize awarded to Olympic victors in Antiquity. The olive trees at the Olympic Family Olive Grove bore the name of each Member who planted a tree, in order of Olympic Protocol. These olive trees would provide the branches from which the victors’ wreaths would be woven at the Athens Olympic Games, seven years later.

The planting procedure was also simple, but moving. Following a speech by the President of the Bid Committee, and to the sounds of the Olympic Anthem, each Member gave further life to a young olive tree, planting it in the appropriate place, below the flag of his country. The success of this idea was particularly evident due to the fact that up to the time of the Games, many Members requested to visit their olive tree, to watch it grow, and to be photographed alongside it, creating a timeless imprint of the past coexisting with the present and the very distant future.

Meeting the Olympic Family

In order to raise awareness in a broader segment of the Olympic Family, such as the National Olympic Committees, on the Candidature of Athens and the contents of the Bid File, and inform stakeholders, beyond those voting in the selection of 5 September, it was decided to make specific visits to the seats of National Olympic Committees over all five Continents. Over three months (March - June 1997), visits were organised to 43 NOCs. These were enthusiastically received by the Olympic Committees in question. Even though the Sydney Bid Committee had followed the same strategy to a great degree, no other competing candidate city for 2004 attempted such an
endeavour. The limited time between the short-listing of the cities to the crucial month of August when the World Athletics Championships were organised in Athens, did not permit visits to more Olympic Committees.

At the same time, the Bid Committee also took part in all the Continental General Assemblies of the National Olympic Committees and a large number of International Federations. The competent preparation of the candidature presentations, both technologically and semantically, played a major role in the final selection of Athens.

6th IAAF World Championships, Athens 1997

August 1997 was a particularly charged month, due to the hosting of the IAAF World Athletics Championships in Athens. This event had to succeed, as it was a final test before the crucial IOC Session that would take place in Lausanne, in September. This was a major sporting event, and its organisation would doubtless impact on the final selection of the city that would host the Games. The effect would be positive if the event should prove successful, and negative, if anything went wrong. At the same time the image of the Bid Committee also had to succeed, as besides the great athletes participating in the sporting events, a large number of Olympic Family members, who would be present in Athens for the Championships, required a high level of mobilisation and hospitality. In charge of organising all this was the then Deputy Minister for Sport; and the entire preparation mechanism worked perfectly also on the Bid Committee’s side.

Sixty-five Members of the IOC were present over the ten days of the championships, as were 2,266 athletes from 198 countries, and numerous journalists. There were no problems, either inside or outside the stadium. This gave the members of the Bid Committee a sense of optimism. Staff and volunteers responded to the demands of their role in the best possible manner. The Opening Ceremony of the Championships took place at the Panathinaiko Stadium under the supervision of composer Vangelis Papatheos, and impressed everyone and particularly the President of the IOC with its inventiveness and the international messages it contained. Accommodation, transport and several side events were organised by the Bid Committee for the IOC Members, as an indication of the manner and style in which they intended to operate during the 2004 Olympic Games.
The Election of Athens

The delegation of the Athens Bid Committee to Lausanne was one the smallest sent by a candidate city and arrived at the seat of the IOC a week before the Session.

The atmosphere in the Swiss city could be called discreetly festive. The Candidate Cities’ staffs were attempting to get noticed at every opportunity. The pavilions for each city were set up in the reception area of the Palais de Beaulieu, and each attempted through its composition to highlight those points which in their opinion would influence the votes of IOC Members in the final selection on 5 September.

Despite the fact that previous such votes had shown that most Members made their decision some time before the crucial week, the final presentation made by each Candidate City, before a demanding Session, always has a part to play. This is where the final proposals by each city are presented, their final commitments are supplied and the defining adjustments are made that will mark the unique features of each Bid Committee. This ends the first, important phase of the endeavour and each city hopes that it shall be the one to go on to the second and harder phase of organising the Olympic Games.

The preparation of the presentation team had commenced three months before, and continued in Lausanne. Besides the President, the presentation team comprised the Mayor of Athens, the Deputy Minister for Sport, and the Bid Committee Head of Operations, head of Sports and head of Strategy, the writers of the Bid File, the Governor of the Bank of Greece, Olympic Gold medalist Nikos Kaklamanakis, and the two IOC Members for Greece, Nikos Filaretos and Lambis Nikolaou, also President of the HOC.

The order of the presentations was decided by drawing lots and was:

- 10:00-10:55 Stockholm
- 11:15-12:10 Cape Town
- 12:30-13:25 Athens
- 15:00-15:55 Buenos Aires
- 16:15-17:10 Rome

The presentation of Athens went smoothly. The two IOC Members for Greece commenced the proceedings, as is customary, then the Deputy Minister for Sport and the Mayor of Athens continued. Besides an innovative film that accompanied the main presentation by the President of the Bid Committee, the presentation also included a recorded speech by the Prime Minister of Greece, who repeated the guarantees of the Greek Government to the IOC for the implementation of the obligations undertaken by Greece in the Bid File.

The proposal of Athens included, besides an analysis of the basic motto: “Athens can host the Games, Athens wants to host the Games and Athens is unique”, a plan developing the Cultural Olympiad, throughout the entire four years preceding the Games. The presentation stressed those parts in particular; emphasising not the historical past of Greece and its ties to Olympism, as everybody had expected, but the new Greece, the image of the capital of a small country of the present and the future, with clear indications of very rapid growth. At the same time, the presentation discreetly touched on the will to re-establish the principles of Olympism within the modern Olympic Movement, with a strong dose of romanticism and an attempt to stress all its positive component elements. The presentation also documented the high level of existing sports infrastructure in Attica and the overwhelming
will of the Greek people, over 92% of whom sought to host the Games. Finally, the unique proposal of Athens that the Olympic Flame should take a route covering all five Continents and all previous Olympic Host Cities proved particularly attractive. The President of the Bid Committee ended her presentation with the following phrase: “Give us this chance, today, and we will make you proud. We will give you an Olympics that is good for the Games. This is our promise to you, and with three thousand years of history behind us, it is a promise we are destined to keep.”

Only three questions were raised after the end of the presentation, and these concerned the Olympic Village, traffic in Athens and the economic capacity of Greece to undertake a major project on the scale of the Olympic Games. The answers provided were comprehensive, as the Media admitted immediately afterwards.

After the final presentation of the day, which was that of Rome, the members of the delegation expressed their optimism as they waited anxiously for the final decision by the IOC Members. At 18:51:50 on 5 September 1997, IOC President Juan Antonio Samaranch announced the results of the vote that would give the Games of the XXVIII Olympiad to Athens, the city where the modern Olympic Games had been revived 101 years earlier.

Athens had been highly successful in the voting that had taken place between the IOC Members; particularly if one calculates that the difference of 25 points in the final round with Rome was a record compared to all previous such votes. Already, from the first round of results, there was a significant difference in favour of Athens, that narrowly managed to miss the required majority of 54 votes in favour (from the 107 IOC Members), in the third round of voting (an additional round of voting had been held between the two cities that had originally tied - Buenos Aires and Cape Town), during which only 2 votes were lacking.

The final results of all the rounds of voting were the following:

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The triumph of Athens was met with enthusiasm, not only by the thousands of Greeks who had swarmed to the area surrounding the Zappeio, but also by the international Press and the Media. Many were surprised, because up to the final moment, Rome appeared to be the firm favourite, which in fact acted in favour of the discreet presence of the Athens Bid Committee throughout the preceding period.
Crowds gather around the Zappeio, the Bid headquarters in Athens, waiting for the announcement of the 2004 Host City.
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"...and the city... is Athens!!!"
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