



In ancient Greece the athletic Games had been a way of a religious communication with their gods. The Olympic Games had begun long before 776BC, the year of the 1<sup>st</sup> Olympic Games. The Greek youths were training their body harmoniously, through their music-gymnastic culture, practising at the same time their spirit and mind all through the inspiration of the “Sacred Olympic Flame”, which reenergized their athletic ideals every four years. The role of the ancient Olympians, beyond their own advancement, was to be a model for the youth towards a ready for action attitude in every aspect of their everyday life.

After the long years of their Golden Age the Olympic Games had finally been carried away from the “Metron Ariston”, the “Best Moderation”. The Hellenistic years and later, the influence of the Roman culture made over the ancient Olympic Spirit and the Games started to present a negative evolution. In the AD 393 every gymnastic activity was cancelled. The studio of Phedias became a Christian church. The earthquakes and the floods of the 6<sup>th</sup> century buried the sacred site of Altis and for the next fifteen centuries the name of Olympia was disappeared from the Venetian maps.

By 18<sup>th</sup> c. the intellectuals all over Europe studying Pausanias’ “Periigisis tis Ellados”, “A Tour Around Greece”, had enthused a noble interest over the ancient Olympic Spirit. The excavations, which started in 1829 in Ancient Olympia had been bringing to light the temples and the Stadium of Olympia. The inextinguishable Olympic Light was dazzling the humanity of our times globally in the prospect of the Olympic Spirit. In 1894 Baron de Coubertin activated the modern ‘Olympians’, who revived the Olympic Games in Athens, 1896.

In 1934 the members of the IOC gathered at the heart of Peloponnesus by the Temple of Athena Alea, where the marble head of “Hygeia”, representing a healthy profile of a woman had been found. Carl Diem proposed and the IOC decided to send the Sacred Olympic Flame into the Olympic Stadium. Since then the Torchbearers carry the sacred light all over the world bringing the message of the “Sacred Ekexeiria”, the inestimable truce!

The modern youths all over world join their hands in a polychromatic circle in a defending spirit of Games during the Olympic meetings. Since 1997 Hellas, the little home that has inspired the world with its bright athletic light has been advancing towards the 1<sup>st</sup> Olympic games of the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium enlivening the Ancient Greek Athletic Spirit. The enthusiastic Greek volunteers have been challenged to give away the dynamism of the modern Greek people at these international meetings, channelling the apotheosis of their own humanism. The Greek torch bearers start spreading the Olympic flame, the youth all around the world focus on its light and the whole Earth is shining!