



**OLYMPIC REVIVAL,**  
by Konstantinos  
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Kostas GEORGIADIS follows in the footsteps of David YOUNG, who published his renowned historical book: *The Modern Olympics – A Struggle for Revival*, in 1996. GEORGIADIS (dean of the International Olympic Academy) has succeeded in finding even more sources from the various archives (in Greece) and in this way was able to bring the history of those early efforts by both Greek and foreign initiators back to us.

His book begins with the chapter on "Reviving the Olympic Games in Greece up to the mid-19th Century", but this chapter mainly mentions the efforts of the proud and liberated Greeks to revive ancient customs, including the Olympic Games. The Greeks in those days were a fierce competitive people and they organised "*Festivals of the Common People*". GEORGIADIS describes these early efforts with a great eye for details, which are enlightening for any reader. Translated poems, a description of the various events, and information on historical, classical and ecclesiastical backgrounds are valuable elements in this chapter. In this chapter, GEORGIADIS also mentions the name of the Greek poet Panagiotis SOUTSOS, author of the memorandum to the Greek Foreign Minister in those days, Ioannis KOLETTIS, in which memo SOUTSOS proposed that Panhellenic Games should be held every year. This in fact was the beginning of the efforts to bring the Olympic Games back to Greece. In the next chapter the history of the ZAPPAS Olympics from 1859, 1870, 1875 and 1888-9 is described and again with detailed descriptions of the artistic and sports competitions. In chapter 3, Dr. William Penny BROOKES and his Wenlock Olympic Games are discussed. Thanks to earlier authors like David YOUNG and Don ANTHONY, much information has become available during the past decade about the important role Dr. BROOKES played in reviving the Olympic Games, as a precursor to baron Pierre de COUBERTIN. However, GEORGIADIS does certainly not downgrade COUBERTIN'S role in the reviving of the Olympic Games. After all, it was he who took the initiative for the Founding Congress for the International

Olympic Committee in 1894, in the Sorbonne, Paris. Chapter 4 is dedicated to this Congress, to the role of the *Panhellenic Gymnastic Club* in Athens, and especially to the important role from Demetrios VIKELAS, who represented Greece at the Congress and who was to be elected the first President of the IOC and whose efforts finally succeeded in implementing the Games in Athens in 1896. In the following chapters, the developments and activities leading up to these first Olympic Games of the Modern Era are given, and most interesting in these descriptions are the details (and photographs) from the many documents found in various archives in Greece and in the IOC-archive. Most of this history on the birth of the Olympic movement and about the first Olympic Games has already been written down by other authors, but GEORGIADIS has been able to write this complete history down in a new and very readable way. The history of the Athens Olympic Games from 1896 and the Greek preparation leading up to those Games is very interesting, as many new information have been brought to light. Most of the photographs in these chapters are known, as they earlier also appeared in other publications. Chapter 8 is dedicated to the proposal, which was launched by the Organizing Committee Athens 1896, that the games should be permanently held in Athens and to the various reactions in the local Greek and international press on this issue; immediately followed by the reaction from some of the members of the International Olympic Committee. The Second Congress at Le Havre (France) is also discussed in this chapter. The final chapter (9) sums up the significance of the institution of the Olympic Games for Greece in the nineteenth century. To quote a few sentences from this chapter:

*"All the efforts of Greece, England, and other countries would not however have been pulled together had it not been for the inspired initiative of Pierre de Coubertin, that far-sighted and most able man. His thinking was shaped by his own liberal ideas, permeated little by little by those of classical Greek athletics. His preoccupation with pedagogical matters led him to conceive of reviving the Olympic Games as an institution so that it became a means of developing an individual in harmony of body and mind, and also a means for the pacific bringing-together of peoples."*

The book ends with a long list of Notes, accompanying each chapter; with a very good Bibliography showing not only the titles of the sources, but also indicating where they can be found; and finally with an Index.