

Olympic Revival The Revival of the Olympic Games in Modern Times



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The present study focuses on the relationship between the reconstitution of the Olympic Games and the way in which the political and cultural identity of the modern Greek state was shaped and defined.

It is an attempt to shed light on the role of Greek tradition in the revival of the Olympic Games - an aspect hitherto not given the attention it deserves in the literature in various languages. If we look closely at the new sources, we shall find that, so far from being the work of a single individual, Pierre de Coubertin, the reestablishment of the Olympic Games was in fact the result of very various intellectual trends and multiple factors in different countries.

This approach, coming from a Greek, is not meant to belittle the part played by Pierre de Coubertin, who, as the bibliography shows, was the main inspiration of the notion of bringing back the Olympic Games in the last decade of the nineteenth century.

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The new evidence called in to complement all previous research was located by systematic research among the texts and sources extant in various archives in Greece. The greater and most important part of these new sources comes from the unpublished archive of Demetrios Vikelas, first president of the IOC, which contains many texts relating to the first two operational years of the IOC. Furthermore, a lot of valuable unpublished information included in the archive of the Hellenic Olympic Committee as well as in other archives, was used as a basis in order to highlight unknown aspects of the Athens 1896 Olympic Games.

Special reference is made to the first attempts in Greece, the well-known Zappas Olympics, to revive the Olympic Games, the William Penny Brookes's ideas and efforts to create an Olympic Movement in England through the bodily and spiritual development of the British working class, and their contribution to the creation of a proper substructure for making the Olympic Games truly international. The personalities of Pierre de Coubertin and Demetrios Vikelas, the way in which Greece received the proposal-wish of the 1894 Founding Congress for the first Olympic Games to be held in Athens and the efforts of all Greeks to meet the demands of such a task, as well as the idea of the permanent staging of the Games in Athens, are some of the issues also presented in the current study.