



**UNIVERSITY OF PELOPONNESE  
FACULTY OF HUMAN MOVEMENT AND  
QUALITY OF LIFE SCIENCES  
DEPARTMENT OF SPORTS ORGANIZATION  
AND MANAGEMENT**

**MASTER'S THESIS**

**“OLYMPIC STUDIES, OLYMPIC EDUCATION, ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT OF  
OLYMPIC EVENTS”**



**The eternal fire and the cult of goddess Hestia in Olympia and the  
Greco-Roman world. Is the Olympic Flame of the modern era well  
founded and linked with the ancient tradition?**

by, Konstantinos Vas. Antonopoulos  
B. Sc. / Dept. of History & Archaeology  
University of Athens

Supervised by Dr. Evangelos Albanides

Sparta, August 2014





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## **Acknowledgements**

Most of the scholars have dedicated some study or paper of theirs to their parents or family. I will not be an exception to this custom. So, I dedicate this Thesis to my mother Sofia and my two sisters Magda and Labrini because they have endured one after the other many Olympic problems and they have prevailed.

Among some other millions on this planet, they belong to this special type of social athlete, the one who competes far from the lights of publicity, of glory and of profit, at some very hard and demanding competitions, private and public, and despite all odds, manage to “Keep their sacred Flame burning”

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## **Introduction – Justification**

Since the dawn of philosophical thinking, fire is central to the materialistic approach of the world. The production of fire by man was a groundbreaking discovery in the history of civilization. Fire sustains and renews life.

Added to its main properties as a source of heat and light, fire, due to its diverse power, acquired many other beneficial uses. Fire was and in many cases is still lit by man not just for practical, but also for symbolical and metaphysical reasons (fertility, well-being, purifying, healing, salvation and destruction, for sacrifices etc.). The charm, the warmth, the comforting glow, but also the power of fire to dissolve and recompose, to destroy and to regenerate, to melt, to transform the most durable material -the metal - stamped indelibly human psyche and contributed decisively to evolution of material culture. Hence, it is not surprising that fire became an important, diachronic element of every religion of the globe or, in some cases, the core. In the Hellenic and Roman antiquity, fire possesses a prominent role as a feature of mythology and religion.

In the Sanctuary of Zeus in Olympia, the site where the splendid games were held, among other gods and heroes, Hestia, the goddess - patroness of each house and city, was also worshiped in one of the chambers of the Prytaneion of the Eleans. After a silence of many centuries, humanity, as in the ancient times, again enjoys the Olympic Games the greatest of all celebrations throughout the world.

Ever since 2003 that I started working as an archaeologist for the Ephorate of Antiquities of Olympia, and after I have studied the history of the ancient Olympic Games, I became familiar with the ancient tradition according to which the sacred flame was burning permanently in the Sacred Altis, in Prytaneion, on the altar of Goddess Hestia (Paus. V.15,9). This flame was never quenched, due to its importance and role, and only if by accident became extinct, it should be lit by sun rays with a special concave mirror, as Plutarch, the historian, biographer and essayist of the 1<sup>st</sup> century CE informs us. All these years, I was experiencing the Lighting Ceremonies of the Olympic Flame for the different Olympic Games (Athens, Torino, Beijing, Vancouver, Singapore, London, Sochi), totally thrilled, as most of the people attending this

solemn custom. On the contrary, I felt that something it not right each time the Sacred Flame of Olympia was extinguished during the Closing Ceremony of the Olympic Games. Quenching the flame, first and foremost constitutes an insult, not to say crime against the historical reality. At the same time for Olympism constitutes a self – contradicting act which violates reason and logic. How is it possible the flame that was kindled in order to symbolise and express global peace, solidarity, unity, friendship, and many other meanings to become extinct?

Participating in the Master's program on the Olympic Studies, a collaboration of the University of Peloponnese with the International Olympic Academy, I had the chance to study and learn Olympic History. In 1936, Pierre de Coubertin, probably also fascinated by the charm of the flame he saw burning in the cauldron of Berlin's Olympic Stadium, he addressed to the athletes who participated in the games with these words: «*And you, Athletes, remember the flame which lit by the rays of the sun has come from Olympia in order to light and warn our epoch. **Keep the sacred flame burning***». In his mind, apart the meanings and properties presented above, the Olympic Flame provided the missing link between the ancient sanctuary of Olympia and the host city of the Games, becoming the bridge connecting the ancient games with the modern ones.

Although Coubertin was speaking theoretically when he advised athletes and humanity to "Keep the sacred flame burning", he gave me a puss to write a Thesis on this topic and provided me with the basic argument that I will process at the last chapter: why humanity should have only a symbolic sacred fire?

## Methodology

This study, in the first section (Part A) through the ancient literature and the papers of several scholars examines the origins, the symbolism, the use and the role of fire in the religious and the secular life of the Greco – Roman World. Different myths and stories related to the concept of fire are presented, highlighting thus its qualities, properties, and diachronic power over the human soul and life.

In the second section (Part B), the historical steps and the facts towards the establishment of the institution of the Ceremony of the Lighting of the Olympic Flame in Olympia and the Torch Relay are investigated and discussed.

The two sections will provide the data for answering the central research question of this study: **Is the tradition of quenching the Olympic Flame during the closing Ceremony of the modern Olympic Games well based on real facts and rituals of antiquity, or such a choice constitutes a major misconception that contradicts the historical and archaeological sources?**

At the third section (Part C.) the problematic of the modern distortion and misrepresentation of the real facts and events of the past will be processed. It will be argued that the two modern ceremonies of the lighting and of the extinguishing of the Olympic Flame, in addition with the recent phenomenon of its new competitor, “the Pseudo – Olympic or the Panathenaic Flame of the Youth Olympic Games”, have by now created threatening conditions for the integrity of the cherished global Symbol. The big and constantly increasing “crowd” of other flames which are related to sporting events, enforces the danger of devaluation and degeneration of the Olympic Flame. To prevent the degradation of the Flame, this study will argue the need for major reformations that will restore the historical validity and will help the Olympic Movement correct and continue its brilliant course in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

## **PART A. Antiquity**

### **Chapter I.**

#### **Philosophical and Ethnographical approach of the concept of fire.**

##### **a. Philosophical approach**

###### **i. Heracleitus**

The status of fire as an element, presented problems throughout antiquity. The Herakleiteian doctrine, the "cosmology of fire", the idea that the "everlasting fire"<sup>1</sup> had created the world, that alone, and not a god neither man, is widely known. Fire plays a central role in Heracleitus. The world can be understood as a fire. Fire is Heracleitus' first principle; all things are exchanged for fire and fire for all things. Fire changes into various other elements in a cosmic cycle, although the details of this cycle are unclear. Heraclitus equates Fire, λόγος, and God/Zeus as the divine ruling order by referring to "the thunderbolt that stirs all things."<sup>2</sup>

###### **ii. Parmenides**

Parmenides, immediately after Heraclitus, is considering the "ethereal fire" a cosmological principle, thus giving the "Herakleiteian concept of cosmic fire an ideal interpretation" (Μερακλής, 2003)

###### **iii. Empedocles of Acragas**

Empedocles of Acragas asserts that matter consists of four elements - earth, air, fire & water - a theory that is later supported and embellished upon by Aristotle. This concept influenced the philosophical basis for the next advance in the science of matter - alchemy.

###### **iv. Theophrastus**

Theophrastus at the beginning of his treatise "De Igne" ('On Fire') noted that "*of the simple substances fire has the most special powers*": much of the rest of the work is concerned with describing its various manifestations, and coming to terms with the problem of how such an element can only exist in the company of a material substrate, and how it can generate itself

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1 . "This world, which is the same for all, no one of gods or men has made. But it always was, is, and will be: an ever-living Fire, with measures of it kindling, and measures going out".

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.heraclitusfragments.com/categories/fire.html#>

and be generated in such a variety of ways. Heat, flame, and light are different species of fire in many theories, including that of Aristotle. Fire's dynamic properties and its natural tendency to move upwards in space, figure in all kinds of physiological and cognitive theories. In many biological theories, fire's special status is linked to breath, and life itself.

In Stoic physics, fire is the one element which remains constant even when one particular world-order comes to an end. The Stoic Cleanthes insisted that fire, as heat, gave the whole world its coherence (Simon Hornblower et al, 2012).

In the history of civilization, however, the production of human fire was a truly groundbreaking invention. More directly, in popular culture, a genital or regenerative power was attributed to fire, as we can accept by monitoring some customary symbolic actions, which in fact were taking place in critical moments throughout the year (tropical sun or revocation time - summer and winter tees, New Year. Etc.). Meraklis in his essay published in the special issue of the scientific magazine "Epta Imeres" (Seven Days) in 2003, argues that "a distinct line connects the cosmogonic substance of fire, as presented by the Herakleitus, with the regenerative and fertility properties which imply different popular rituals with archaic origin retained to modern times". The genital power of fire is also reflected in the custom of the lighting of *the new fire*, action commonly used to treat infected epidemic diseases or to protect against such attacks, even in the recent era. As a precondition, before the fire was renewed, every other fire burning in the city, village or house should be extinguished. (Μερακλής, 2003). In his essay commenting the myth of the Lemnian women and Philostratus' account regarding the pyrphoria<sup>3</sup> being held in the island of Lemnos, Burkert considers the myth a reflection of the new years' ritual, where a ship, representing the Argonauts bears new fire from the island of Delos, allowing households to be reformed.(Simon Hornblower et al, 2012)

## **b. Ethnographical approach**

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<sup>3</sup> Phil.Her. 53.5-7 : "...And the island of Lemnos is purified every year for the deed once done to the men on Lemnos by their wives at Aphrodite's instigation. The fire on Lemnos is extinguished for nine days. A sacred ship from Delos, however, carries the fire, and if it arrives before the offerings for the dead, it puts in nowhere on Lemnos, but rides at anchor off the headlands out at sea until sailing into the harbor is permitted by divine law. For then, while invoking chthonian and ineffable gods, they keep pure, I think, the fire that is out on the sea. Whenever the sacred ship sails in and they distribute the fire both to its new abode and to the forges of the artisans, from that source is the beginning of new life".

In the Indian mythology, a special place among the "brilliant" gods (devas) possess the agni, personification of fire, "What opens the gate of darkness," according to the Rigveda, the sacred text of Hinduism. This characterization is of particular interest as it not only gives a vivid picture of the fire with the glow of an open glade in the dark, but more importantly, it puts forward an idea with universal dissemination: the belief that the fire works as a gateway to the world of darkness, the unknown, the "other world", as formidable as it is, people need to come from time to time in contact with him, when resorting, mollifying, to the dead forefathers, holding and distributing the wealth of the land when, of course, should send their dead to the world - that is always with fire: literally, the funeral pyre, or metaphorically, by lighting a candle(Zαικόφσκι, 2003).

In the Babylonian epic of Gilgamesh there are several allusions to the fire as a natural phenomenon produced by lightning(Mαντζάνας, 2011).

The cremation, a practice particularly prevalent among Indo-European peoples, retreated in front of the advance of Christianity, not without resistance: the 10th century yet, the Slavs, according to the testimony of their contemporary Arab historian al-Masouni, continued to burn their dead and with them, their favorite animals, weapons and jewelry. With the advent of Christianity, the funeral pyres were limited to the dimension of the candles used for the overnight vigil of the dead. As 'gateways' the fires were kept in the Christian world only occasionally for the safe passage of heretics and witches to the "unreturned" world. It is likely that the Slavic word vampire, opyr '(undead vampire) originate directly from the perception that the dead returns treacherously because he was not burnt, he did not pass the fire. The belief that the hearth, the place that fire is burning, is a crossing from one world to another has universal dissemination. Being the material trace of the intangible fire, ash is considered the carrier of its fertile and wealth bringing properties and power (Zαικόφσκι, 2003).

All Iranian religions before Zoroastrianism, are observing the ancient cult of the charm, glamor and purifying quality of fire. The cult of fire was preserved in Zoroastrianism, where fire is the earthly form of heavenly, infinite and divine light. The fire is the vital flame of creatures and of reproduction. "The fire is ahora Mazda's son, Zaratostra. Ahora Mazdha, himself and the fire

of his mind protect Zaratostra. The opponent's spirit, ahriman, stirs the fire and darkness and smoke. The Zent-avesta and Pahlavi texts emphasize the duty of worship of light". (Αγουρίδης, 2003) According to ancient rabbinic tradition, when Adam realized the first dark, God gave him two bricks to build the first fire. From friction fire was kindled and together the spirits or deities were created of relatively beneficial or destructive nature. The "passport ceremonies" in which fire plays a more or less literal, not symbolic role the instinctive human tendency to change and renewal is discerned (Αγουρίδης, 2003). In the Old Testament the spirit of fire enters the life of Israel very early when God's promise to the sterile Abraham that he will become the father of a great nation is confirmed by the spirits of fire. <sup>4</sup> The seven-branched candlestick (menorah) was ordered and designed by God Himself to be a perpetual light in His Tabernacle. Repeatedly, the God of the Old Testament presents himself in the symbols of fire. Nevertheless it must be said that the God of the Old Testament, although he is as from fire he does not destroy when approached by people, whom he wants to save. The "fire" in the New Testament retains its traditional concepts received from the Old Testament, but all these fiery meanings of the past obtain a new eschatological meaning in the Christian Church<sup>5</sup>. (Αγουρίδης, 2003)

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4 Gen. 15:17 : " It came to pass that, when the sun went down, and it was dark, behold, a smoking furnace, and a flaming torch passed between these pieces". <http://perseus.uchicago.edu/perseus/cgi/citequery3.pl?dbname=GreekTexts&getid=1&query=NT%20Gen.%2015.17>

5 Matth, 25:41 "...Then he will say to those at his left hand, 'You that are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels'"

## Chapter 2.

### Gods and heroes of Fire of the ancient Hellenic mythology and religion.

#### a. Prometheus

For humans, fire meant power, but also awe. In antiquity, fire had divine connotations. This assumption is clearly reflected in the many and imaginative stories of gods and heroes of the antiquity. Prometheus, the titan – god probably ranks among the most important and popular figures of the Hellenic mythology. Prometheus, “.....after creating men is said to have stolen fire and revealed it to men. The gods were angered by this and sent two evils on the earth, women and disease; such is the account given by Sappho and Hesiod”<sup>6</sup> The ancient literature holds a very special place for Prometheus “...the clever and crafty, bitter beyond all bitterness, who has sinned against the gods in bestowing honours upon creatures of a day, thief of fire...”<sup>7</sup> . Fire, his powerful gift to mankind, kindled the human civilization. Prometheus’ generous act violated the boundary between the earthly and the heavenly places. Prometheus becomes a mediator between humans and gods, and teaches humans forethought, how to make provision for the necessary. His name echoes the Sanskrit word “pramantha” by which the Hindu were referring to the wood they used for the lighting of the fire.

The myth was so strong that survived, transformed and incorporated in the beliefs of the later western societies. The sacrifice of one for the saviour of many, the price that should be paid for knowledge and the woman as the source of woes, are core doctrines of the Christian religion.

According to Hesiod (Hes. Theog. 507) Prometheus<sup>8</sup> was son of the Titan Iapetus by Clymene, and brother of Atlas, Menoetius, and Epimetheus. In his work Protagoras, Plato delivers us a comprehensive resume of Prometheus:

*"Once upon a time there were gods only, and no mortal creatures. But when the time came that these also should be created, the gods fashioned them out of earth and fire and various*

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<sup>6</sup> Sappho, Fragment 207 (from Servius on Virgil) (trans. Campbell, Vol. Greek Lyric I)

<sup>7</sup> Aeschylus, *Prometheus Bound* 944 ff

<sup>8</sup> The name Prometheus signifies "providence" in contrary with name Epimetheus which means «later thought."



*mixtures of both elements in the interior of the earth; and when they were about to bring them into the light of day, they ordered Prometheus and Epimetheus to equip them, and to distribute to them severally their proper qualities. Epimetheus said to Prometheus: 'Let me distribute, and do you inspect. This was agreed, and Epimetheus made the distribution [of claws and fur and other attributes] . Thus did Epimetheus, who, not being very wise, forgot that he had distributed among the brute animals all the qualities which he had to give--and when he came to man, who was still unprovided, he was terribly perplexed. [.....]Prometheus arrived to examine his distribution [of gifts to animals and men], and saw that whereas the other creatures were fully and suitably provided, man was naked, unshod, unbedded, unarmed; and already the destined day was come, whereon man like the rest should emerge from earth to light. Then Prometheus, in his perplexity as to what preservation he could devise for man, stole from Hephaistos and Athena wisdom in the arts together with fire--since by no means without fire could it be acquired or helpfully used by any--and he handed it there and then as a gift to man. Now although man acquired in this way the wisdom of daily life, civic wisdom he had not, since this was in the possession of Zeus; Prometheus could not make so free as to enter the citadel which is the dwelling-place of Zeus, and moreover the guards of Zeus were terrible: but he entered unobserved the building shared by Athena and Hephaistos for the pursuit of their arts, and stealing Hephaistos's fiery art and all Athena's also he gave them to man, and hence it is that man gets facility for his livelihood, but Prometheus, through Epimetheus' fault, later on (the story goes) stood his trial for theft.*

*And now that man was partaker of a divine portion [i.e. of the arts originally apportioned to gods alone], he, in the first place, by his nearness of kin to deity, was the only creature that worshipped gods, and set himself to establish altars and holy images; and secondly, he soon was enabled by his skill to articulate speech and words, and to invent dwellings, clothes, sandals, beds, and the foods that are of the earth. "*

Many writers, poets and historians of the greek and roman antiquity were inspired by the myth of Prometheus. Herodotus, Callimachus, Apollonius Rhodius, Diodorus Siculus, Strabo, Virgil, Oppian, Ovid, Aelian, Virgil, Pliny the Elder, Seneca, Philostratus, Nonnus and others, made references in their works, shorter or longer, to the fascinating myth of Prometheus. But

it is Aeschylus who dedicated a trilogy to the martyr - god and highlighted his sympathy and devotion to the human race, to the extent that he suffered eternal tortures because of his generosity against Zeus' will.

In Aeschylus' trilogy "Prometheus", we are in detail informed that the hero – titan was the savior and the benefactor of human race. He saved men from destruction by Zeus, who was "*..desiring to bring the whole race to an end and create a new one in its place...*"<sup>9</sup>. Apart the use of fire, Prometheus taught men the art of writing, astronomy, mathematics, navigation, medicine, architecture, the art of prophecy, working in metal, and all the other arts<sup>10</sup>.

Zeus' answer to Prometheus' acts was immediate and fierce: He ordered Hephaestus to chain him to a rock in Scythia, which was done in the presence of Cratos and Bia. Refusing further to submit to Zeus' will, Prometheus was sent together with the rock to which he was chained, into Tartarus<sup>11</sup>. But suffering did not stopped there for Prometheus: after returning to earth for a while, he again was chained to mount Caucasus where an eagle, which every day, or every third day, devoured his liver, which was restored again in the night<sup>12</sup>.

The heroic Titan released from his torture by Herakles with the consent of Zeus, offering, thus his son the opportunity to gain immortal fame. The Greek mythographer Pseudo-Apollodorus (2<sup>nd</sup> cent.A.D.) gives us a synopsis of Prometheus' adventures: "*Prometheus, after forming men from water and earth, gave them fire, which he had hidden in a stalk of giant fennel to escape the notice of Zeus. When Zeus found out, he ordered Hephaistos to rivet the body of Prometheus to Mount Kaukasos, a Skythian mountain, where he was kept fastened and bound for many years. Each day an eagle would fly to him and munch on the lobes of his liver, which would then grow back at night. That was the price that Prometheus paid for stealing fire, until Herakles set him free later on*"<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Aeschylus, Prometheus Bound 228 - 258

<sup>10</sup> Prometheus Bound, 252, 445, &c., 480, &c

<sup>11</sup> Horat. Carm. ii. 18, 35

<sup>12</sup> Apollon. Rhod. ii. 1247, &c. iii. 853, Strab. xv. p. 688, Philostr. Vit. Apoll. ii. 3, Hygin. Poet. Astr. ii. 15, Aeschyl. Prom. 1015, &c.

<sup>13</sup> Pseudo-Apollodorus, Bibliotheca 1. 45 (trans. Aldrich)

Zeus hadn't finished by just punishing Prometheus for the stealing of the fire. Men, should also pay for insulting gods: *"...But afterwards Zeus who gathers the clouds said to him in anger: 'Son of Iapetos, surpassing all in cunning, you are glad that you have outwitted me and stolen fire--a great plague to you yourself and to men that shall be. But I will give men as the price for fire an evil thing in which they may all be glad of heart while they embrace their own destruction.'*

*So said the father of men and gods, and laughed aloud. And he bade famous Hephaistos make haste and mix earth with water and to put in it the voice and strength of human kind, and fashion a sweet, lovely maiden-shape, like to the immortal goddesses in face [Pandora] . . . But when he had finished the sheer, hopeless snare [Pandora the first woman created by the gods], the Father sent [Hermes] . . . to take it to Epimetheus as a gift. And Epimetheus did not think on what Prometheus had said to him, bidding him never take a gift of Olympian Zeus, but to send it back for fear it might prove to be something harmful to men. But he took the gift, and afterwards, when the evil thing was already his, he understood..."*<sup>14</sup>

In the house of Epimetheus, who made Pandora<sup>15</sup> his wife, was a closed jar which he should not open. But Pandora, out of pure female curiosity, opened the lid and thus, all the evils escaped. Another version of the myth says that all human ills were contained in a box that Pandora carried to earth and the moment that she opened it all escaped and spread over the earth, Hope alone remained.

Lastly, the myth of Pandora was in later times reversed, but with the same pessimistic results: the box was staffed not with evils but with all the blessings of the gods. The moment Pandora opened the vessel all the winged blessings flew away.

Prometheus' gift to men was so important that consequently they started honoring him in different ways. Pseudo-Hyginus,<sup>16</sup> the Roman mythographer of the 2nd Cent CE reports that people, in their sports competitions included a torch relay, commemorating Prometheus' stealing of the fire from the gods.

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<sup>14</sup> Hesiod, Works and Days 42 ff (trans. Evelyn-White)

<sup>15</sup> Her name means "All-gifted"

<sup>16</sup> "...a practice for the runners to run, shaking torches after the manner of Prometheus." Pseudo-Hyginus, Astronomica 2. 15 (trans. Grant) (Roman mythographer C2nd A.D.)

Pausanias<sup>17</sup> is more detailed and descriptive when reporting the torch races in honor of Prometheus that were organized in Attica. He informs us that athletes starting from the altar of Prometheus in the Akademia outside the city of Athens were running towards the city each one holding a burning torch. The winner was the one who finished first the competition with his torch still alight.

#### **b. Phoroneus**

On the other hand, Pausanias highlights another tradition that he came across in his travels to Greece, which deviates from what is broadly known and accepted regarding the delivery of the fire to humans. He is reporting an altar with an undying flame in Argos, dedicated by the locals to **Phoroneus**, whom they consider as the real provider of the fire<sup>18</sup>. They also believed that he had been the first who offered sacrifices to Hera at Argos, and to have united the people, who until then had lived in scattered habitations, into a city which was called after him "Phorônikon"<sup>19</sup>. Phoroneus, according to myths, was son of the river Inachus and the nymph Melia and also he is said to be the first man and first father of men. The Argives were offering funeral sacrifices to him at his tomb in Argos<sup>20</sup>. According to a later theory, king Phoroneus provided his people in Argos the knowledge of the lighting and the use of fire and the art of metallurgy, from the Telchines. This approach is linking Phoroneus with the late-hittite institution of the king – metal worker, who was the absolute ruler of the metal and he was controlling the iron and its use. Archaeological digs have uncovered palaces containing forges and storerooms for iron ore (Κακριδής, 1986, Τόμος 2, 295).

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<sup>17</sup> Pausanias, Description of Greece I. 30. 2 (trans. Jones)

<sup>18</sup> Pausanias, Description of Greece II. 19.5 "...next to this statue is a fire which they keep burning, calling it the fire of Phoroneus. For they do not admit that fire was given to mankind by Prometheus, but insist in assigning the discovery of fire to Phoroneus".

<sup>19</sup> Pausanias, Description of Greece II, 15

<sup>20</sup> Pausanias, Description of Greece II, 20

### c. Hephaistus.

During the Bronze and early Iron age, metallurgy was of high importance for society, which led to its close connection with religion and politics. In this frame, Hephaistus, one of the twelve gods, had fire as his specialty and became the patron of metalworking.

Hephaistus, in Homer's Iliad<sup>21</sup> is considered son of Zeus and Hera, although according to Hesiod and later sources, Hephaistus appears to have been born by Hera alone .

Mythology has connected Hephaistus with fire, specifically in its natural form found in volcanos and used as a powerful instrument for arts and crafts. As previously already presented, Aeschylus considers Prometheus to have stolen fire, source of all arts, from its owner, Hephaistos<sup>22</sup>.

Being delicate and sickly from his birth, Hera disliked him and threw him from Olympus. Thetis and Eurynome, saved him and offered him a cave which became his shelter and workshop. He secretly stayed with them for nine years working as a smith, making for them a variety of ornaments and jewels (Homer Iliad 18. 136).

Hephaestus returned to Olympus, but he was destined to relive another cruel expell from heaven, this time by his father. During a quarrell between Zeus and Hera, Hephaistus defended his mother making Zeus furius so much that he violently ousted him from Olympus. Hephaestus once again fell from "heaven" to earth (Homer Iliad 1. 568) this time in the island of Lemnos<sup>23</sup> which finally became his second home.

Hephaestus had his forge in his own palace on the mountain Olympus (Hom. Il. xviii. 370, &c.) where he crafted all his exquisite works to be used by gods and men. Hephaistus' workshop(s) are stated to be in Mochylos mountain in the island of Lemnos or at the volcanic mountain of

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<sup>21</sup> Homer, Iliad 18. 136 ff (trans. Lattimore)

<sup>22</sup> "[Kratos to Hephaistos:] Your own flower, flashing fire, source of all arts, he [Prometheus] has purloined and bestowed upon mortal creatures . . . Why do you not detest a god most hateful to the gods, since he has betrayed your prerogative [fire] to mortals?"

<sup>23</sup> "He caught me by the foot and threw me from the magic threshold, and all day long I dropped helpless, and about sunset I landed in Lemnos, and there was not much life left in me. After that fall it was the Sintian men who took care of me

Aetna in Sicily or at Lipara Islands<sup>24</sup>. In later sources he is connected with other mythical figures like his twin sons Kabeiroi<sup>25</sup>, Kedalion, the Cyclopes with their sons who are all considered to be Hephaistos' assistants working at his forge under his guidance.

In the Orphic hymn, the common belief that Hephaistos represented the world of fire is more than clear. Air, sun, moon, and stars, light are Hephaistos' substances and he, through fire, is everywhere, in all dwellings, cities, tribes and the mortal bodies<sup>26</sup>. Thus, he shares common characteristics with Hestia and moreover, by controlling body heat, he is present in every animal and in every human.

The fall of the "noble master of light"<sup>27</sup> from the sky to earth, signifies the common understanding of the peoples and of the ancient Greeks, that fire on earth arrived from the sky (Κακριδής, 1986, Τόμος 2, σελ. 195). The fact that Hephaistos was lame<sup>28</sup> and consequently needed support to be able to work and produce his masterpieces, according to some scholars symbolises that fire needs a structure like a furnace, hearth, or kiln to be preserved for the further elaboration of the different raw materials and elements by man.

During the Troian war, Hephaistos dueled the river Scamandrus and totally prevailed, fact which signalizes that fire is more powerful than water.

Klytotekhnhês'<sup>29</sup> relation with fire, element from which technology derived<sup>30</sup>, lead to the broad belief that he brought forth civilization. The god of forges, anvils and bellows, was

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<sup>24</sup>Apollonius Rhodius, *Argonautica* 3. 36: "Hephaestus himself had gone early to his forge and anvils in a vast cavern on a floating island [of Lipara], where he used to turn out all kinds of curious metalwork with the aid of fire and bellows." (trans. Rieu)

<sup>25</sup> The twin sons Kabeiroi at the forge of Lemnos had as their equivalent Palikoi, also twins who were helping their father Hephaestus at his Sicilian forge.

<sup>26</sup> "Strong, mighty Hephaestus, bearing splendid light, unwearied fire, with flaming torrents bright: strong-handed, deathless, and of art divine, pure element, a portion of the world is thine: all-taming artist, all-diffusive power, 'tis thine, supreme, all substance to devour: aither, sun, moon, and stars, light pure and clear, for these thy lucid parts [of fire] to men appear. To thee all dwellings, cities, tribes belong, [fire] diffused through mortal bodies, rich and strong."

<sup>27</sup> Plato, *Cratylus* 400d & 407c (trans. Fowler)

<sup>28</sup> either after his fall from Olympus or because he was born like this

<sup>29</sup> Hephaestus' one of the poetic titles which mean "Famed Worker".

<sup>30</sup> The slow-burning stalk of the fennel was used in ancient times as a torch and a means to transport fire from one place to another. In this way it came to be associated with the god, and his torch-race festivals featured the plant.

believed to be the male equivalent to goddess Athena,<sup>31</sup> since he, also like Prometheus, have taught men arts and how to create well designed and useful objects for the everyday life. Hephaistus, shortly after his divorce from Aphrodite, tried violently to be erotically connected with Athina. According to some tales<sup>32</sup>, the result of his attack was the birth of Erichthonius, who became King of the Athenians. Although Gaia finally became Erichthonius's natural mother, Athena raised him as her own child on the rock of the Akropolis. Taking also into consideration that Hephaistus helped Zeus to beget Athina, this special relation of the two gods, perhaps explains why in Athens the two gods were worshipped almost together in common temples and festivals. Interestingly enough, according to Pausanias account, Hephaestus was, among many gods and heroes, worshipped at Olympia, where he shared an altar with Warlike Zeus. On this altar, Oenomaus used to sacrifice to Warlike Zeus whenever he was about to begin a chariot-race with one of the suitors of Hippodameia<sup>33</sup>. Another account of Pausanias also relates Hephaestus to Olympia, since Pheidias decided to represent him among other gods on the pedestal supporting the gold and ivory statue of Zeus in the great temple of Olympia (Paus. IV, 5.11.8.)

The creation of Pandora from clay and water has as a precondition the art of pottery which lies in Hephaestus's jurisdiction. Moreover, his unification with Aphrodite signifies the necessary mingling of fire and earth for the production of the forms and beings, or in another level, the mix of the beauty of crafts with the beauty of nature. (Κακριδής, 1986, Τόμος 2, σελ.196).

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<sup>31</sup> Plato, Critias "Hephaestus and Athena, who were brother and sister, and sprang from the same father, having a common nature, and being united also in the love of philosophy and art, both obtained as their common portion this land [Athens] (trans Bury)

<sup>32</sup> Pseudo-Apollodorus, Bibliotheca 3. 187: "Erikhthonios [king of Athens], according to some, was the son of Hephaestus and Kranaus' daughter Atthis, while others say his parents were Hephaestus and Athena, in the following manner. Athena went to Hephaestus because she wanted to make some weapons. But he, deserted by Aphrodite, let himself become aroused by Athena, and started chasing her as she ran from him. When he caught up with her with much effort (for he was lame), he tried to enter her, but she, being the model of virginal self-control, would not let him; so as he ejaculated, his semen fell on her leg. In revulsion Athena wiped it off with some wool, which she threw on the ground. And as she was fleeing and the semen fell to the earth, Erikhthonios came into being." (trans. Aldrich)

<sup>33</sup> "...Not far from it stands another altar of Alpheius, and by it one of Hephaestus. This altar of Hephaestus some Eleans call the altar of Warlike Zeus." Paus. IV, 5.14.6

#### **d. Kabeiroi, Idean Daktiloi, Corybantes and Curetes, Telchines**

Apart the skillfull god – artisan, other mythical figures, gods, deamons and warriors, were related to metallurgy and the use of fire: Kabeiroi, Idean Daktiloi, Telchines. At the different regions, where mythology places their activity, (Lemnos, Crete, Rhodes, Cyprus) the archaeological surveys have located and unearthed important hubs of civilization.

These beings shared common with Hephaistos physical characteristics, the defect of whom makes the god of fire so likeable and so funny among the gods of Olympus. All his subordinate deities and demons of fire and metallurgy look alike the villains dwarfs Telchines, the mysterious short-bodied Kabeiri, the one-eyed Cyclops and the "charmners" Idaian Dacktili who are alleged to have the size of a finger (Γιούργος, 2003).

The Kabeiri were renowned smiths, twin sons of the god Hephaistos and Kabeiro, a sea divinity from whom they obtained their name. They were Hephaistus' assistants at the forge at the island of Lemnos, where the historian Hellanicus places the discovery of fire and the art of armory by Sintians, the prohellenic tribe which invented metal arms and used them to attack their neighbors (Κακριδής, 1986, Τόμος II, σελ. 293).

Kabeiri also were considered sea demons, connected with the mysteries of Samothrace which were performed in honour of the goddesses Demeter, Persephone, and Hekate. If we consider Kabeiri as gods of volcanos, ie chthonic deities related to fire, then they could be related to the productiveness of the earth where the volcanic soil is extremely rich in materials and substances from the interior of the earth and therefore very fertile. Thus, the relationship of Kabeiri with the chthonic deities Demeter, Persephone and Hades of the Eleusinian Mysteries who are related to the fertility and the regenerative power of the earth, and the ithyphallic Hermes, which is a fertile symbol, could be understood (Παπαθανασίου, 2003).

According to Strabo and other writers, Kabeiri, like the Corybantes and Curetes, were ministers of the great gods. The Cretan Kouretes and the Idean Daktyloi were represented as shield-clashing, dancing warriors of the orgies.

Telchines, were occult beings not of a certain number, also related to fire, since they were alleged inventors of crafts and arts. Using their skills, they made images of the gods by brass



and iron, and also they crafted important instruments like the sickle of Cronos and the trident of Poseidon. Telchines were also related or confused with the Idaean Dactyls / Curetes. Strabo stated that a number of Telchines formed the group of Curetes who accompanied Rhea to Crete, and helped her to raise the infant Zeus. By their frenzied dance of clashing spear and shield they prevented the cries of Zeus to be heard from his father, the Titan Kronos (Cronus) who otherwise would have devoured him.

The ancient sources increase the number of Couretes up to nine and describe them as earth-born armed warriors. Strabo preserves an older testimony, according to which "... both the Kouretes (Curetes) and the Korybantēs (Corybantēs) were the offspring of the Daktyloī Idaioī (Idaean Dactyls)..."(Strabo, 10. 3. 22)

Couretes were considered the inventors of the of metalworking and other rustic arts. Moreover, the Idaean Hercules along with his four brothers, Daktyloī or Curetes, by some sources are considered founders of the Olympic Games when they reached Olympia from Crete. Hercules (the Idean) defined the length of the stadium, organized foot races with his brothers and crowned the winner with a branch from an olive tree (Pausanias, 5. 7. 6 - 10).

Diodorus Siculus, delivers to us a comprehensive report with the tales and theories regarding these gods: "*The first of these gods [native to Krete] of whom tradition has left a record made their home in Krete (Crete) about Mount Ide (Ida) and were called Daktyloī Idaioī (Idaean Dactyls). These, according to one tradition, were one hundred in number, but others say that there were only ten to receive this name, corresponding in number to the fingers (daktyloī) of the hands.*

*But some historians, and Ephoros is one of them, record that the Daktyloī Idaioī were in fact born on the Mt Ide which is in Phrygia and passed over to Europe together with Mygdon; and since they were wizards (gonta), they practised charms and initiatory rites and mysteries, and in the course of a sojourn in Samothrake they amazed the natives of that island not a little by their skill in such matters. And it was at this time, we are further told, that Orpheus, who was endowed with an exceptional gift of poesy and song, also became a pupil of theirs, and he was subsequently the first to introduce initiatory rites and Mysteries to the Greeks. **However this may be, the Daktyloī Idaioī of Krete, so tradition tells us, discovered both the use of fire and***

*what the metals copper and iron are, as well as the means of working them, this being done in the territory of the city of Apta at Berekynthos [in Eastern Mysia], as it is called; and since they were looked upon as the originators of great blessings for the race of men, they were accorded immortal honours. [cont.]” Diodorus Siculus, Library of History 5. 64. 3 - 5 (trans. Oldfather)*

One of the conclusions of the above passage is the belief that metallurgy was a difficult and complicated art which needed divine support, knowledge and skills, and doses of enchantment. Metal workers were considered as wise men and sorcerers and they very carefully protected their guild and the secrets of their craft. In all these unions / groups of god – smiths and daemons (Koryvantes, Couretes, Idean Dactyloi, Kabeiri, Telchines, Cyclops) the scholars see warrior associations and guilds and metal workers organised in unions and secret clubs who were inventors of arts, creators of magnificent objects and art works through the powerful and mystical element of fire and those who brought civilization to humans. They were also serving mystic cults and ceremonies and had among their duties the upbringing and tutoring of gods (Zeus, Poseidon) that their mothers – goddesses (Rhea, Adrasteia & Demeter etc) had entrusted them (Κακριδής, 1986, Τόμος 2, 294).

#### **e. Hestia**

Equivalent to the male gods and other mythical figures closely related to fire that were previously presented, Hestia, attained an important position in religion, since her presence was considered a prerequisite for the progress and prosperity of the society. All the household and many of the public rites were taking place at her hearth at the center of the house and of the city.

In the Greek-English Lexicon Lidell – Scott, we come across to the several meanings of the world *ἑστία* , or *ἱστία*: 1.hearth of a house 2. the house itself, home 3. household, family, 4. altar, like *ἑσχάρα*, 5. metaph., of places which are to a country as the hearth to a house, as a metropolis<sup>34</sup> . The lines bellow will attempt to draw the outline and provide some

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<sup>34</sup> [http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus:text:1999.04.0057:entry=e\(sti/a](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus:text:1999.04.0057:entry=e(sti/a)

explanation regarding the cult Hestia and the reason why it inspired the contemporary tradition of the lighting of the Olympic flame.

Hestia was the first-born daughter of Rhea and Cronus, one of the twelve gods. She was responsible for the fire burning on the hearth of every house and of the city and accordingly the patron of the sacrificial flame. Myths, starting from her birth adventures, describe how Hestia obtained her important duties.

She had the same luck with the other children of Rhea, which Cronus swallowed after their birth to avoid being deprived from his authority. Although Hestia was the first to be devoured at birth, after Zeus capsized Cronus, she was the last to be disgorged<sup>35</sup>, becoming the personification of a paradoxical phenomenon: although she was the eldest of her brothers and sisters (Demeter, Hera, Hades, Poseido, and Zeus) after Zeus overruled Cronus, she came back to life last, so she was the youngest<sup>36</sup>. Later, Hestia received, but rejected<sup>36</sup> the marriage proposals of the two gods Apollon and Poseidon and preferred, after Zeus's permission, to remain an eternal virgin. Thus, Hestia became the curator of the hearth in Zeus' palace and accordingly to all hearths of Zeus' subjects<sup>37</sup>, both in their homes and cities.

Hearth became the sacred center of every house and Hestia the goddess who was protecting the prosperity of every home and family and provided the domestic happiness. This special place in every house was serving as an altar where the family offered its sacrifices to the gods. Since Hestia was the goddess of the sacred fire, the ritual demanded to be the first, before any other god, to be honoured and thus she received the first part of the sacrifice<sup>38 39</sup>.The

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<sup>35</sup> Pseudo-Apollodorus, *Bibliotheca* 1. 4 - 7 "He [Kronos, Cronus] then married his sister Rhea. Because both Ge (Earth) and Ouranos (Heaven) had given him prophetic warning that his rule would be overthrown by a son of his own, he took to swallowing his children at birth. He swallowed his first-born daughter Hestia, then Demeter and Hera, and Poseidon and Hades . . . When Zeus was grown, he engaged Okeanos' (Oceanus') daughter Metis as a colleague. She gave Kronos a drug, by which he was forced to vomit forth first the stone and then the children he had swallowed. With them Zeus fought a war against Kronos and the Titanes." (trans. Aldrich)

<sup>36</sup> Hes. Th. 453 : "But Rhea was subject in love to Cronos and bore splendid children, Hestia, Demeter, and gold-shod Hera [455] and strong Hades, pitiless in heart, who dwells under the earth, and the loud-crashing Earth-Shaker, and wise Zeus, father of gods and men, by whose thunder the wide earth is shaken" English Translation by Hugh G. Evelyn-White. *Theogony*. Cambridge, MA., Harvard University Press; London, William Heinemann Ltd. 1914.

<sup>37</sup> Hom. Hymn. in Ven. 18: "...So Zeus the Father gave her a high honour instead of marriage, and she has her place in the midst of the house and has the richest portion. In all the temples of the gods she has a share of honour, and among all mortal men she is chief of the goddesses..."

<sup>38</sup> Pind. N. 11 : "Daughter of Rhea, you who have received the town hall under your protection, Hestia, sister of Zeus the highest and of Hera who shares his throne, welcome Aristagoras to your dwelling, and welcome to a place near your

same applied during sacrifices at the sanctuaries of the gods (Hom. Hymn. in Ven. 31). The flames of the fire burning on the hearth of private houses, cities and sanctuaries, were climbing in the sky, carrying the prayers and offerings of the people to the Olympian Gods. This fire reflected god's permanent blessing on the people who lived in accordance with laws and social norms.

Although we have adequate literary accounts regarding the domestic religion, physical evidences are sporadic. Only few fixed hearths have been found in Classical and Hellenistic houses. Where there is a lack of a built fireplace, portable braziers that burned charcoal were used for heating and cooking and were the likely substitutes for a built fireplace. (Tsakirgis, *Domestic Architecture*, 2010:441) All important instances of the family life like birth, marriage, and death, especially in the Athenian society, were accompanied accordingly with the appropriate passage rites at the family hearth. Newborns, brides, and new slaves were initiated into the family by various rituals at or around the hearth. In Argos the death of the head of the family required the extinguishing of the hearth fire and the fetching of new unpolluted fire (Simon Hornblower et al, 2012).

Apart Hestia, also other deities were recognized in household rites like Zeus Herkeios, who often appears in literary sources. There are cases of houses with actual large altars, but more frequently portable altars made of terra-cotta or stone are found. (Tsakirgis, *Domestic Architecture*, 2010:441).

It was widely believed that Hestia was dwelling among the family in their house and was regarded as the inventor of the art of house construction<sup>40</sup>.

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splendid scepter his companions, [5] who, in honoring you, guard Tenedos and keep her on a straight course; often they worship you, first of the gods, with libations, and often with the savor of burnt sacrifice" Hymn for Aristagoras of Tenedos on his installation as President of the Council 446 B.C., Trans. Diane Aronson Svarlien. 1990

<sup>39</sup> Paus. 5.14.4. "...My narrative will follow in dealing with them the order in which the Eleians are wont to sacrifice on the altars. They sacrifice to Hestia first, secondly to Olympic Zeus, going to the altar within the temple, thirdly to Zeus Laoetas and to Poseidon Laoetas. This sacrifice too it is usual to offer on one altar. Fourthly and fifthly they sacrifice to Artemis and to Athena, Goddess of Beauty, sixthly to the Worker Goddess.." English Translation by W.H.S. Jones, Litt.D., and H.A. Ormerod, M.A., in 4 Volumes. Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press; London, William Heinemann Ltd. 1918

<sup>40</sup> Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History* 5. 68. "...Hestia discovered how to build houses, and because of this benefaction of hers practically all men have established her shrine in every home, according her honours and sacrifices..." 1 (trans. Oldfather)

In case of a threat, foreigners could seek and find protection at the hearth (Hom. Od. 14. 159;<sup>41</sup>) either of the house where they were hosted, or of the city, which was considered as a broad family. Thus, the domestic and the public hearth, served as an asylum for the suppliants and also as the place where formal or sacred oaths were sworn.

In most cases, the public hearth was located in a special assigned hall of the prytaneum, somewhere in the center of the city, where Hestia received sacrifices by the prytanes. In prytaneium, the officials were hosting the guests and foreign ambassadors of the city. According to the tradition, when the city founded a colony, then on the new city's public hearth, should also burn an eternal fire which the emigrants would have brought from their metropolis (Pind. Nem. 11.1.). Malkin, in a recent work of his, stresses that when an individual or a group of people was leaving his household or respectively his city of origin for some other, practices have been developed both in domestic and collective life, that created symbolic and ritual links between nodes. Practises which were preserving the exile's rights for returning to his home community: *"..a bride taking fire from the hearth at home to the hearth of her new husband: a military commander taking fire from the hearth at the home city to ignite a sacrificial fire en route: an oikistés taking fire from the koiné estia (common hearth) to initiate the fire in the new collective home, the colony. With many sites far away from each other, the web of individual homes and new homes and of mother cities and colonies seems to have provided the mental maps of Archaic Greeks with definite network characteristics"* (Malkin, 2011:211). Supporting this network, the sacred fire played this of enormous importance role in antiquity.

The discussion, whether the religious officials (male – priests), or the priestesses were responsible for the eternal flame in the Prytaneia has not led to some clear and solid results. The literary sources indicate that there were several variations and combinations and it seems that every city followed its own pattern. At Ephesus, a couple (hasband and wife) served Hestia for one year. Regarding the exclusion or not of women from the Prytaneion, there are several cases in which women had an active role in the prytaneion. Pythia was involved in a

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<sup>41</sup> In Homer the hearth is a sacred object, but is not a goddess, like the later "Ἑστία". It only occurs in this form of oath; the ordinary word for 'hearth' in Homer is "ἑσχάρη". W. Walter Merry, James Riddell, D. B. Monro, 1886

ritual at the Delphi prytaneion and in some cities, including Athens, women played certain ritual roles (Sourvinou-Inwood, 2003:179). Plutarch informs us that in Greece, in contrast to Rome, whenever there was an eternal fire, as at Delphi and Athens, it was tended not by virgins, but by women past the age of marriage<sup>42</sup>.

On the topic, Sourvinou argues: *“As for Hestia's priesthoods, the gender of the priest differs from one city to another; it can be either male or female. With regard to Athens, we know that there had been female personnel tending the fire, but we cannot be certain that Hestia had a priestess for her cult at the prytaneion. However, there was a priestess of Hestia on the Acropolis. This suggests that if a priesthood had been involved in her cult at the prytaneion besides the women tending the fire, that priesthood would have been held by a woman.”* (Sourvinou-Inwood, 2003:179-180).

If ever the fire of Hestia's hearth was quenched, it was not allowed to be lit again with ordinary fire, but only from a clear and pure source such as sun rays (Pl.,Numa,9.5-6 (William Smith, 1890).

Very intriguing for scholars has been the co-existence or co-reference of Hestia with Hermes. (Hom. Hymn. xxxii. 10, Paus. 10.11.3.) Many of them have tried to explain with different theories why the goddess often appears together with Hermes. Jean Robert argues *“In its polarity, the couple Hestia-Hermes expresses the tension which is proper to the archaic representation of space. Space needs a center, a fix point from which directions and orientations can be defined. But space is also the locus of motion, and that implies the possibility of transitions, of passage from any point to any other”*. (Robert, 1996:2) Furthermore he notices that *“Hestia and Hermes are everywhere where people make fire, trace limits, build walls and a roof over their heads. Together, they are the gods of orientation and of the tracing of limits”* (Robert, 1996:2). Thomson in her essay, attempts to attribute to the term “Hestian” the standpoint and perspective grounded in the private sphere and the term “Hermean” the standpoint and perspective grounded in the public sphere. (Thompson, 1994: 40) Earlier, Meredith Clarke Hoppin observed that: “In the dialectical relation between female and male, the household (oikos) and the state (polis) are complementary as well as

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<sup>42</sup> Pl.,Numa,9.5-6

antithetical, and they define one another. Furthermore, this relation often interacts dynamically with others, so that all are influenced and transformed" (Thompson, 1994:38 quotation from Hoppin 1983, 300). Thomson believes that the recovery of the Hestian perspective is of paramount importance for establishing more equitable relations, both between the sexes and between the private/public spheres (Thompson, 1994: 51).

In later times there was a trend to attribute to Hestia various properties and characteristics of other divinities, such as Cybele, Gaea, Demeter, Persephone, and Artemis and to mystically place the sacred hearth not only in the centre of the earth, but even in that of the universe. (Orph. Hymn. 83; Plut. Numa, 11.)

In Olympia, Hestia and Poseidon are presented together on one of the many offerings of Micynthus (Paus. 5. 26.2). Furthermore, according to Pausanias' reports, on the pedestal supporting the gold and ivory statue of Zeus, among other gods and deities, Hestia is represented next to Hermes.

In the east pediment of the Parthenon, representing the birth of goddess Athena among the figures that survived were three goddesses, who were seated to the right of centre. Of this complex, the figure on the left who is on the point of rising and tucks her right foot in to lever herself up is perhaps Hestia. To her right, the two other figures are representing Dione, and her daughter Aphrodite. However, another suggestion is that the two figures on the right are the personification of the Sea (Thalassa) in the lap of the Earth (Gaia).

Since every prytaneum was regarded as sanctuary of the goddess, there was no need for Hestia to have a separate temple. This explains why there were only a few sanctuaries or temples dedicated to Hestia in Greece. One of them existed in Hermione, consisted only by an altar (Paus. 2.35.2.) and another in Sparta (Paus. 3.11.11.). During the sacrifices, pilgrims offered her fruits, water, oil, wine, and cows of one year old. (Hesych. l. c. ; Hom. Hymn. xxxi. 3, xxxii. 6; Pind. Nem. xi. 6.)

Some time around the 6<sup>th</sup> century or earlier, Hestia was dislodged from the 12 elite gods by Dionysos. This move changed the balance existed between male and female deities creating an advantage in number of gods over goddesses. According to scholars, this reflects a society that was becoming increasingly patriarchal. (Dixon-Kennedy, 1998)

Hestia and the ideas that she represented, were venerated by the Romans under the name of Vesta. Although the Greek and Roman goddesses are in reality identical, the Roman worship of Vesta differed in several points from that of Hestia in Greece as it will be argued in the following article

## f. Vesta

### The origins of the cult

The qualities, ideas and characteristics of Hestia were also attributed to Vesta, the equivalent goddess of the Romans. Although the two goddesses had similar duties and their privileges and rituals almost coincided, nevertheless, there were also several differences.

Vesta, Saturn's daughter, was also the goddess of purity, hearth and fire of the Romans. She was responsible for the household and therefore had an altar in every Roman house. She was specially treated during the religious ceremonies and firstly invoked at the sacrifices as in Greece. Vesta was closely related with the Penates, the household gods of the Romans, protectors of the family and of the state. It was believed that both, the images of the Penates and the eternal fire of Vesta was brought from Troy by Aeneas<sup>43</sup>. All the officials before they ascended to their duties, were obliged to sacrifice both to the Penates and Vesta. (Virg. *Aen.* ii. 296, &c., x. 259, v. 744) In Lavinium, the city that Aeneas founded at the site that he first disembarked when he arrived in Italy, temples were erected in honor of Vesta, and the Trojan Penates.

The founding myths of the city of Rome reveal the importance of the goddess Vesta. Before Rome, Alba Longa, founded by Aeneas' ascendants, was the most important city of Latium. When Amulius overruled his bother Numitor king of Alba Longa, forced his niece Rhea Silvia to become a Vestal Virgin, (probably to prevent her from bearing successors). But one night she

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<sup>43</sup> Early gods who inhabited the family storage cupboard—the penus. Regarded as the providers of victuals, they were worshipped privately with images and offerings of food. Sometimes identified with the Dioscuri or Cabiri, the two Penates were later regarded as the guardians of the nation. Legend says that they were brought to Rome from Troy by Aeneas and were kept in the temple of Vesta, depicted as two seated soldiers armed with spears.



was raped by Mars while she was sleeping and thereby became the mother of the twins Romulus and Remus. From Alba Longa, the twins, after they were saved from Amulius' scheming, set out to found the later to become "eternal city" (Dixon-Kennedy, 1998).

### **Vesta's cult and temple in Rome**

Numa Pompilius, the successor to Romulus as king of Rome, renowned for his wisdom and his piety, among other beneficiaries, taught the Romans how to worship their gods and clearly Vesta was one of the most important. During his reign, he built the Vesta's Temple and he was the first who appointed the Virgins of Vesta.

In Rome, Vesta was honoured at her own separate temple where the eternal flame was burning. Once a year, on June 15, the ashes of the tended fire were ritually thrown into the Tiber. The temple, which was built in imitation of a primitive round hut, is situated on the southern part of the Forum Romanum, next to Regia (the Royal House) and the Atrium Vestae. Besides the sacred fire also the Palladium, an effigy of Athene (Minerva) believed to have been brought by Aeneas from Troy, was kept here<sup>44</sup>. In a narrow approach, it should not be considered a true temple in that its space was not inaugurated, nor did it contain an image of Vesta. Although the temple was hosting the perpetual fire, itself, caught fire and was destroyed several times.<sup>45</sup> Few meters farther lie Regia's remains, the alleged home of the Roman kings, later the seat of the pontifex maximus, who was the chief priest and the administrative and spiritual superior of the Vestal Virgins. Right behind Vesta's Temple was the Atrium Vestae, the dwelling of the Vestal Virgins. Their sumptuous residence is characterized by a large court decorated with three water basins, the remains of which are still to be seen. Together, these three buildings represented the religious and moral center of the Roman State.

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44 Dion. Of Hallic., Rom. Antiq. 2.65.2. "...For they say that nothing is more necessary for men than a public hearth, and that nothing more nearly concerned Romulus, in view of his descent, since his ancestors had brought the sacred rites of this goddess from Ilium and his mother had been her priestess. Those, then, who for these reasons ascribe the building of the temple to Romulus rather than to Numa seem to be right, in so far as the general principle is concerned, that when a city was being founded, it was necessary for a hearth to be established first of all, particularly by a man who was not unskilled in matters of religion".

45 [http://penelope.uchicago.edu/~grout/encyclopaedia\\_romana/romanforum/vesta.html](http://penelope.uchicago.edu/~grout/encyclopaedia_romana/romanforum/vesta.html)

Over time the significance of Vesta's cult grew dramatically as it was believed that Rome would exist as long as the eternal flame kept burning. Only her servants, the Vestal Virgins, who were taking care the sacred flame were allowed to enter Vesta's temple. Her festival, the Vestalia (7–15 June), became one of the most important events of the religious calendar, as Vesta was regarded as the national guardian of the Roman republic. (Dixon-Kennedy, 1998). Ovidius in the 6<sup>th</sup> book of his poetic work "Fasti" where he aspired to concentrate the myths, the history and tradition of each month of the Roman Calendar, he is referring to the 9th of June, the day of the Vestalia, the religious festival day of Vesta. His text, although in poetic language, constitutes one of the most interesting accounts relating to the intrinsic meaning of the cult of Vesta. Ovidius through his work tells us a lot about Vesta, her temple, cult, its origin and possible founder. Also he provides some explanation regarding the issue of Vesta's virginity, respected also by her attendants. Furthermore we learn about contemporary theories of the cosmology of the days of the early Roman Empire, when the earth was considered a sphere, hanging in space, yet it is seen as the center of the visible universe. Ovidius compares the round shape of Vesta's temple to the round earth. Both the goddess and the known world are earthly and celestial at the same time. Both are supported by an immense fire.

### **The Vestal Virgins**

Plutarch's work about the Life of the Roman King Numa, and Dionysius' of Halicarnassus book on Roman Antiquities, are two important sources of adequate information concerning the institution of the Vestal Virgins as the responsible body for the sacred hearth and the sacred flame of Vesta, the might guard of Rome. As we learn from the literature, there were six Vestals, who were between six and ten years of age, when they were appointed by the emperor, in his role as chief priest (Pontifex Maximus), to serve for thirty years, learning, according to Dionysius of Halicarnassus, the sacred rites during the first ten years, performing them during the second ten, and teaching them during the last ten. During this time, the Vestals were to remain chaste, tend the eternal flame, safeguard the sacred objects within the

Temple of Vesta, and perform bloodless sacrifice throughout the year on behalf of and for the Roman people (Takács, 2008: 83). Additionally, they were responsible for sprinkling and purifying the shrine each morning with water, drawn from the Egerian fount. In later times it was allowed to employ any water from a living spring or running stream, but not such as had passed through pipes. When used for sacrificial purposes it was mixed with muries, that is, salt which had been pounded in a mortar, thrown into an earthen jar and baked in an oven (Ovid. Fast. III.11; Propert. IV.4.15; Plut. Num. 13; Festus, s.v. Muries). They assisted moreover at all great public holy rites, such as the festivals of the Bona Dea (Dion Cass. XXXVII.45) and the consecration of temples (Tac. Hist. IV.53), they were invited to priestly banquets (Macrob. III.13.11<sup>o</sup>; Dion Cass. XLVII.19).

The senior of the vestals was entitled Vestalis Maxima, or Virgo Maxima (Ovid. Fast. IV.639; Suet. Jul. 83, p1190 Domit. 8; Orell. Inscript. n2233, &c.; ἡ πρεσβεύουσα, Dion Cass. LIV.24;b ἡ ἀρχιερεία, LXXIX.9). Other titles for the head priestess are also attested: Vestalium vetustissimam (Tacit. Ann. XI.32) and tres maximae (Serv. ad Virg. Ecl. VIII.82)<sup>46</sup>.

Vestal's life should be unstained and a clear example of virtuous, close to supernatural excellence. The social expectation for a Vestal was to be infallible. There was almost zero tolerance to any behaviour that diverged from the ideal standard. For example, wearing brightly coloured clothes or making jokes was blameworthy for a Vestal (Cornell, 1981).

Undoubtedly, remaining a virgin throughout her priesthood was the most important obligation, a fundamental regulation that a Vestal should protect and respect.

### **Honors attributed to the Vestals**

Reading Ovid's, Plutarch's, Dionisius' Hal. and other authors' accounts, it becomes clear that the Vestal Virgins, due to the national importance of the cult of Vesta, were serving one of the most intense offices existed in Rome. The Vestals' religious authority equaled them with men priests. When they appeared in public they were always escorted by a lictor who was carrying

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<sup>46</sup> William Ramsay, M.A., Professor of Humanity in the University of Glasgow, on pp1189-1191 of William Smith, D.C.L., LL.D.: A Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities, John Murray, London, 1875. [http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/secondary/SMIGRA\\*/Vestales.html](http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/secondary/SMIGRA*/Vestales.html)

the fasces<sup>47</sup>, insignia of praetors and consuls. When a Vestal by chance met on her way a criminal as he was led to punishment, she had the right to demand his release, provided it could be proved that the encounter was accidental. While attending games, the priestesses were sitting with the senators, privilege which attests their special position in the Roman society and the qualities of the male social sphere that they were able to enjoy and experience.

They were keepers of wills and important documents such as treaties, and were able to possess their own wills and bequeath property in their own right without the use of a tutor. Their priesthood was part of the college of pontiffs. In compensation for holding such powers, however, the priestesses had to remain in a virginal state or, rather, in a perpetual state of being between unmarried and married (Takács, 2008: 83).

### **Punishments of Vestals**

The Vestal Virgins were reflecting the condition of the state. When things were good and prosperous, the people felt secure and knew that the Vestals were going about their duties chaste and pure. The converse was true as well, for if things were precarious in Rome, it meant that the Vestals were up to no good. One of them must have performed the sacred rites in a state of uncleanness (Rosauer). Dionysius of Halicarnassus stated that Romans believed that the Sacred Fire in the Temple of Vesta was directly tied to the fortunes of the city.<sup>48</sup> As Cicero explained, so long as the Sacred Fire burned, the City of Rome would endure. If, due to the lack of carefulness of the priestess the flame was quenched, on discovery, she was stripped and scourged by the Pontifex Maximus, and he rekindled the flame by the friction of two pieces of wood from a *felix arbor* (Dionys., Plut., Val. Max. II. cc.;

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<sup>47</sup> (In ancient Rome) a bundle of rods with a projecting ax blade, carried by a lictor as a symbol of a magistrate's power. It was also used as an emblem of authority in Fascist Italy. (translate.google.com)

<sup>48</sup> Dion. Of Hallic., Rom. Antiq. 2.67.5. " There are many indications, it seems, when a priestess is not performing her holy functions with purity, but the principal one is the extinction of the fire, which the Romans dread above all misfortunes, looking upon it, from whatever cause it proceeds, as an omen that portends the destruction of the city"

Festus, s.v. Ignis) 49 Attested by Plutarch there also an alternative method existed to rekindle the sacred fire if it was extinguished, from the rays of the sun with the use of metallic mirror<sup>50</sup>. Real or alleged loss of chastity by a Vestal, made her guilty of the dreadful sin of incestum (or incestus). It was an offense that immediately brought sore punishment. Scholars agree that purity infraction and letting the fire go out, were connected and were leading, at least in early times, to the same punishment: death penalty. In case that the keepers of the fire were teens or even younger Vestals, their life was saved if they were mistaken but they could not avoid whipping. On the contrary, the seducer of a Vestal would be punished by flogging to death. (Takács, 2008).

Professor William Ramsay in the lemma of Vesta at the “Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities” (London, 1875) is describing the origins and the procedure for the fulfillment of the dreadful punishment: “..According to the law of Numa she was simply to be stoned to death (Cedrenus, Hist. Comp. p148, or p259, ed. Bekker), but a more cruel torture was devised by Tarquinius Priscus (Dionys. III.67; Zonaras, VII.8) and inflicted from that time forward. When condemned by the college of pontifices, she was stripped of her vittae and other badges of office, was scourged (Dionys. IX.40), was attired like a corpse, placed in a close litter and borne through the forum attended by her weeping kindred, with all the ceremonies of a real funeral, to a rising ground called the Campus Sceleratus, just within the city walls, close to the Colline gate. There a small vault underground had been previously prepared, containing a couch, a lamp, and table with a little food. The Pontifex Maximus, having lifted up his hands to heaven and uttered a secret prayer, opened the litter, led forth the culprit, and placing her on the steps of the ladder which gave access to the subterranean cell, delivered her over to the common executioner and his assistants, who conducted her down, drew up the ladder, and

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<sup>49</sup> William Ramsay, M.A., Professor of Humanity in the University of Glasgow, on pp1189-1191 of William Smith, D.C.L., LL.D.: A Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities, John Murray, London, 1875. [http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/secondary/SMIGRA\\*/Vestales.html](http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/secondary/SMIGRA*/Vestales.html)

<sup>50</sup> Plut. Num. 7 “.. And this they usually effect by means of metallic mirrors, the concavity of which is made to follow the sides of an isosceles rectangular triangle, and which converge from their circumference to a single point in the centre. When, therefore, these are placed opposite the sun, so that its rays, as they fall upon them from all sides, are collected and concentrated at the centre, the air itself is rarefied there, and very light and dry substances placed there quickly blaze up from its resistance, the sun's rays now acquiring the substance and force of fire”.

*having filled the pit with earth until the surface was level with the surrounding ground, left her to perish deprived of all the tributes of respect usually paid to the spirits of the departed. In every case the paramour was publicly scourged to death in the forum (Plut.Num. 10,<sup>o</sup> Fab. Max. 18, Quaest. Rom. vol. VII p154, ed. Reiske; Dionys. II.67, III.67, VIII.89, IX.40; Liv. IV.44, VIII.15, XXII.57; Plin. Ep. IV.11; Suet. Dom. 8; Dion Cass. LXVII.3, LXXVII.16, and fragg.XCI, XCII; Festus, s.v. Probrum et Sceleratus Campus)”.*

Quite interesting is the story of Aemilia, the Vestal known by the miracle of the rekindling of the flame of Vesta. The fire had been extinguished when her new pupil was left in charge by Aemilia to watch over it. The criticism about the conducts that could have caused the extinction of the fire ceased when Aemilia, who was innocent, but distracted by what had happened, prayed to Vesta, and the eternal flame was reestablished. Dionissius of Hal. described the scene as follows: “...[Aemilia] stretched out her hands toward the altar and in the presence of the priests and the rest of the virgins cried: "O Vesta, guardian of the Romans' city, if, during the space of nearly thirty years, I have performed the sacred offices to thee in a holy and proper manner, keeping a pure mind and a chaste body, do thou manifest thyself in my defense and assist me and do not suffer thy priestess to die the most miserable of all deaths; but if I have been guilty of any impious deed, let my punishment expiate the guilt of the city." Having said this, she tore off the band of the linen garment she had on and threw it upon the altar, they say, following her prayer; and from the ashes, which had been long cold and retained no spark, a great flame flared up through the linen, so that the city no longer required either expiations or a new fire”. (Dion. of Hal, Rom. Ant. II,68,3). The historical period in which this episode occurred is unknown. Dionysius mentions this story defending the manifestations of the gods in the care of human affairs and affirms that who regards those manifestations as incredible didn't look deeply in the history to know that the gods are favourable to the good and hostile to the wicked; the goddess Vesta manifested herself in favor of those virgins who have been falsely accused.

Although the order of the Vestal Virgins was in existence for over one thousand years, there are only ten recorded convictions for unchastity and these trials all took place at times of political crisis for the Roman state. Between the First Punic War and the end of the Republic

there were only two occasions on which Vestal Virgins were condemned for incestum - the famous scandals of 216 B.C. and 114- 3 B.C (Cornell, 1981) Floronia and her sister priestess Opimia, were two of the six Vestal Virgins serving in 216 BCE in the temple of Vesta, who were convicted for licentious behaviour. Floronia's lover, Lucius Cantilius, a scribe and a member of a minor order of the priestly college, was beaten to death. Both vestals were either buried alive or committed suicide before she could be entombed. The devastating defeat of the Romans by Hannibal and the Carthaginians at Cannae in the same year was perceived as retribution for Floronia and Opimia's misdeeds(Lightman, 2008).

It has being argued by scholars that the charge of crimen incestum<sup>51</sup> was used as a socio - political instrument in times when Rome's governing body and authorities had no other way to control the masses. When the state was facing a crisis or a turmoil (war, plague, famine etc) Vestals would often be accused of losing their virginity and being sacrificed in order balance between man and the gods be restored and the security and future of Rome to be ensured. Rosauer believes that: *"..Through interment in the earth, the procreative power of the Vestal was transferred to the land. This act ensured that Rome would produce bountiful crops in order to feed the people. Vestals were interred near the Colline Gate, a site of economic importance. The items placed within the tomb were symbolic of the ritual life of the Vestal (see Appendix 1). The goddess determined whether the Vestal lived or died in her earthly chamber, freeing the accusers of any direct role in the death of a woman viewed as so vital to the continuance of the state. Such attention to detail in the execution of a chosen woman of Rome was symbolic of the importance of her role to the well- being of the people.... They were often innocent victims of political struggle, used as sacrificial scapegoats to silence the masses."* (Rosauer).

The institution of the Vestal Virgins is considered by scholars as a peculiar phenomenon, since they were able to cross or walk on the fine lines between the firmly separated worlds of males and females. (Rosauer).

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<sup>51</sup> The sin of the Vestal Virgins (incestum) is different from other religious offences because of the way it was dealt with by the pontifices and the manner of its punishment.

They enjoyed a position of unrivaled high prestige within the social order of Rome, but at the same time, their life was in constant threat. The Vestal was the personification of the ideal Roman woman. Her daily tasks and services performed in an idealistic way as an attendant of Vesta were the archetypal for the duties and responsibilities of the woman in an archaic Roman household.

### **The end of the Vestals**

Constantine's "official" conversion to Christianity and the different edicts prohibiting the sacrifices to the old gods by his successors, did not immediately end the practices associated with the Roman State Religion, the Temple of Vesta continued to operate, like it was the case with all the sanctuaries of the empire. Like other non-Christian cults, it was banned in 394 CE by Theodosius I. The last Vestal known by name, Coelia Concordia, resign from the order and in the same year when she became a Christian. Despite Theodosius edict, it seems that Vesta's Temple in Rome, was turned at an unknown point to a Temple of Cybele/Rhea, (earth goddess and the mother of Vesta), served by a solitary Vestal. As it was always the case, Vesta was represented only by the living flame, but a statue of Cybele, adorned with jewellery had been placed in the Temple.

According to the fifth-century Greek historian Zosimus, however, in 408 AD, during the siege of Rome by the Visigoths, Serena, wife of General Stilicho and niece of Emperor Theodosius, invaded the temple and took the necklace from the statue of Cybele. As soon as she put the necklace around her neck, a very old woman stepped out from the shadows to chastise her for this act of impiety. This woman, writes Zosimus (Zos.N.Hist.163), was the last Vestal, still carrying out her duties in the abandoned temple. When the Vestal protested, Serena ordered her attendants to carry the old woman out. Although Zosimus does not state anything, it is possible that Serena also made her servants to quench the Sacred Fire. As she was dragged from the temple, the Vestal called on her goddess to punish Serena, her husband and children for the terrible sacrilege.



As Zosimus comments, Serena suffered justly for her impieties toward the gods. Within the year, Stilicho, Serena's husband was executed and a little later, after being falsely accused of conspiring with the Goths, she suffered the same fate. The end of the city of Rome came in 410 AD, when Alaric leading the Visigoths conquered and pillaged the eternal City.

**Caca, the Roman goddess of fire.**

Interestingly enough, in the Roman Pantheon Caca was another goddess, next to Vesta but clearly not so popular, who was also related to fire. She was regarded as the sister of Cacus whom was said to have betrayed to Hercules by showing him where Cacus had hidden stolen oxen; in return, she was given a shrine with a perpetual flame in her honor at which the Vestal Virgins worshipped. (Oxford Classical Dictionary)

## Chapter 3.

### The Prytaneion, home of the sacred eternal fire of Hestia

#### a. The origins and development of Prytaneion.

The explanation of the tradition, of keeping the sacred fire burning on the common hearth, goes back to the prehistoric times, when it was a difficult and slow process to make fire. To keep a fire burning continually at the hearth was very advisable, because of the difficulty in those days of procuring fire.

In prehistoric communities, hearth developed as a symbol of residence. All the family members were gathered around the hearth in the center of the house so as they feel comfortable, safe, and enjoy the benefits of life. The hearth in each house was not only useful for the daily needs of the family, but at the same time, it served as an altar for the sacrificial ceremonies. Equally, or even more important was the hearth of a city, the common home of all the citizens, who considered themselves as a big family. Because of its importance, the place that the fire was burning was deified becoming goddess Hestia. It seems that in communities of that age, the hearth of the chief or king was especially important, for practical, religious and societal reasons. This applied not only in prehistoric and ancient Greek tribes but to most nations of the world. The King or chief, was responsible for maintaining this permanent fire, duty that he entrusted to young women who in the case of Rome should be daughters (virgins) or slaves (William Smith, 1890:523).

In the Mycenaean age the king's throne-room, in megaron form, was the architectural centre of the palace and in the very centre of that room was a low round hearth aprox. 4 m in diameter. After the fall of monarchies, the kings' hearths as political centres and sites for asylum and the entertainment of foreign visitors, were succeeded by official state hearths housed in Public buildings called prytraneia. (Simon Hornblower et al, 2012).

Fraser argues that originally the Prytaneion was the house of the *prytanis* who in the old times (anciently) was the king, or perhaps the chief or headman of a petty independent town (Fraser J.G., 1885, 147). According to the Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities, the nearest modern parallel of the Prytaneion of antiquity may be considered the town-hall, although its inherent religious character and its additional state purposes contributed to its much higher

importance. As a necessary condition, the capital of every Greek state (Paus. 1.43; 5.15) not the small towns or villages, should have a Prytaneion, where the common hearth was hosted (William Smith, 1890). To unify Attica, Theseus eliminated the various local prytaneia in favor of a single Prytaneion in Athens. By the era of Thucydides, the possession of a βουλευτήριον and a πρυτανεῖον had become essential to the Greek idea of a πόλις and this lasted at least until the 2nd cent AD, if we take into consideration Julius Pollux<sup>52</sup> account :*“There are on this (an acropolis) the prytaneion and the hearth of the city, at which dine those coming on a public embassy and those thought worthy of Sitiesis because of some deed, and he who might have been honored as aeisitos.”* (Miller,1992:219)

Prytaneion was the head-quarters, the seat of the magistrate (s) known as prytani(e)s, (Fraser J.G., 1885:146) officials with authority nearly equivalent to the king from who(m) its name derives. In Aristotle’s “Politics” among other valuable information, we find some more alternative names for these officials, whose authority derived by the common hearth: Archons, Kings and Presidents<sup>53</sup>.

From the prehistoric times and throughout antiquity if the community decided to relocate or to create a new colony, then, the undying fire was taken carefully from the hearth and carried to the new settlement to lit the common altar of the new homeland. This sacred space served as asylum for the seekers and location for the reception of guests and ambassadors and also were the city maintained at the public expense its distinguished citizens.

Influenced by the shape of the athenian Tholos where the prytanes dined, Fraser assumed that a round - house was the typical shape of the Greek Prytaneion. In that view, the Greek Prytaneum and the Italian temple of Vesta have common origin, argument which Fraser takes further by saying that the so-called Temple of Vesta in Rome was originally not a temple, but the king's house (Fraser,1885:154; William Smith, 1890:523).

Again, in the Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities we read about the transformation of the necessity of the communities of the early times to a religious ceremony afterwards,

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52 Jullius Pollux (Greek: Ίούλιος Πολυδεύκης,) from Naukratis of Egypt was a Greek grammarian and sophist, scholar and rhetorician of the 2nd century AD.

53 Aristot. Pol. 6.1322b “..And connected with this is the office devoted to the management of all the public festivals which the law does not assign to the priests but the officials in charge of which derive their honor from the common sacrificial hearth, and these officials are called in some places Archons, in others Kings and in others Presidents.

theory which is attested and enhanced further in the shape of the primitive chief's dwelling that survives in civilised Greek and Roman states. Also, we learn that "when one state or πόλις absorbed others, which previously had separate πρυτανεία, the chief town alone retained a πρυτανεῖον common to all: that is to say, a single βασιλεὺς replaced the many chiefs, and his single palace contained the common hearth for the sacred fire" (William Smith, 1890:523). This theory is also supported in the ancient literary sources (Thuc. 2.15; Plut. Thes. 24,) where there are testimonies regarding the abrogation of the separate prytaneia, in favor of a common prytaneion in the capital. It is also important the fact that the term Prytanis survived in some states, as at Rhodes, and continued to be the title of the chief magistrate.

## **b. The Prytaneion and the SE building of Olympia**

### **i. The Prytaneion of Olympia**

As mentioned before, a sacred fire was burning permanently on the altar of goddess Hestia, in every sanctuary. In Olympia this altar was situated in the Prytaneion of Eleans, a building at the north - western corner of the precinct, directly opposite the gymnasium. The Prytaneion of the Eleans, was one of the civic buildings, the headquarters of the sanctuary, where the magistrates, the high officials who supervised the sacrifices, had their seat.<sup>54</sup> The Prytaneion was also used for meals for magistrates and invited guests, and it was here that the athletic victors were invited to dine. Its initial core dates to the late sixth or early fifth century BCE, but was repeatedly remodeled and enlarged later (Papachatzis, 1979:275).

Elis, the city organising the festival and the games, clearly considered and treated Zeus' sanctuary as a vital component for its identity from the early sixth century BCE, so it's not totally surprising the fact that the city's Prytaneion was at Olympia, where its official decrees were put up and not in the capital of the city-state. In the 470s BCE, Elis underwent a *synoikismos* which seems to have augmented its self-confidence and made the capital eager to manifest its presence in the sanctuary more prominently in the fifth century BCE. The temple of Zeus, the major new addition to the sanctuary, the Bouleuterion, the reconstruction

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<sup>54</sup>Given the distance between Elis and Olympia (>36 km) the civic nature and use of the Prytaneion at Olympia only make sense as part of the strong desire to demonstrate Elean ownership of the Sanctuary. Prytaneion also the site of a hearth to Hestia: Sinn 1996: 79.

of stadium, the renovation of Pelopion and the Prytaneion can be viewed as a new big project completed until the second quarter of the fifth century BCE for the architectural embellishment of the Sacred Altis (Ekroth, 2012:112).

Miller argues that, due to the the sacrosanct character accorded to Elis because of the Olympic Games, also attested to Polybius<sup>55</sup>4.73.6—10;), the Prytaneion at Olympia was in some sense a hearth common to all Greeks. (Miller, *Ancient Greek Athletics*, 2006:87).

The Prytaneion of Olympia was rebuilt many times in antiquity so that its plan for any one period of time cannot be fully recovered. Dörpfeld, who published the building concluded to only two phases corresponding to the Greek and the Roman Prytaneion.

Miller, in his comprehensive study on Prytaneia (Miller S. , *The Prytaneion: Its Function and Architectural Form*, 1992) reviews the architectural remains and the archaeological data derived from the excavation of Prytaneion of Olympia after a re-examination at the site, according to which at least four major phases of construction were recognised. The first phase of the buiding, divided into two sub-phases lasted until the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of the 4<sup>th</sup> century BCE, when it was destroyed, either due to the earthquake of 374 BCE, or because of the autrosities during the battle of Eleans and Arcadians in 364 BCE. (Miller, 1992: 89) The building was reconstructed in the middle of the fourth century BCE and stood until the second century CE. Nevertheless, the preserved “ship—shaped structure”, around which the later Prytaneion was constructed is the only monument known to be from an earlier period. According to scholars, this structure could be the hearth of Hestia of the Geometric period. (Miller, 1992: 91, Drees, 1968:124).

The two major areas of the Olympia’s prytaneion mentioned in Pausanias’ account, was the room of the hearth of Hestia, and the dining room which is quite difficult to be recognised in the architectural remains. Miller argues that despite the bad preservation of the different areas and rooms (hearth, dining room, courtyard and subsidiary rooms) of the edifice, “*the prytaneion at Olympia can be said to have had the essential elements of a prytaneion*” (Miller, 1992: 91)

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55 “To me it seems that they owed these laws and customs originally to the wide extent of their arable land, and still more to the fact that their lives were under the protection of religion; for, owing to the Olympic assembly, their territory was especially exempted by the Greeks from pillage; and they had accordingly been free from all injury and hostile invasion”. Polyb. Hist. 4.73.10

The sacred hearth of the Eleans, where the eternal fire was burning, was contained into the Prytaneion and according to a Pausanias' account, the ashes produced by the eternal fire of Prytaneion were transported to the altar of Zeus once per year on the 19<sup>th</sup> day of the Elafios month (by the end of March). Thus, the altar of Zeus grew bigger all the time (Papachatzis, 1979:267).

This chamber is very difficult to be distinguished. Archaeologists (Vikatou, 2006, Dress), taking into consideration Dorpfeld's account and plan, believed that hearth of Eleans, although not even fragments have been found, was located throughout antiquity in a central room of 6.80 metres square<sup>56</sup> but Miller argues that this space does not belong to the original phase of prytaneion.

Another chamber in Prytaneion, located either in the west or north wing, was used as the dining room where the Eleans offered the honorary banquet for the Olympic victors<sup>57</sup>. Wells found under the later Prytaneion, all containing animal bones and pottery of the kind used for eating and drinking, attest to the literary sources that dining took place here in the Archaic and Classical periods (Ekroth, 2012:112). An altar of Pan was also hosted in Prytaneion, on the right of the room of the heart, for which Pausanias doesn't provide any further details.

The Eleian priests responsible for the sacrifices, started every time from the altar of goddess Hestia and then they proceeded to the next most important one that belonged to Zeus<sup>58</sup>. Archaeologists have argued that this altar was not the hearth in Prytaneion but a second altar, the old hearth of Pisatans (Papachatzis, 1979:268).

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<sup>56</sup>Paus. 5.15.9 "[9] In the Town Hall itself, on the right as you enter the room where they have the hearth, is an altar of Pan. This hearth too is made of ashes, and on it fire burns every day and likewise every night. The ashes from this hearth, according to the account I have already given, they bring to the altar of Olympian Zeus, and what is brought from the hearth contributes a great deal to the size of the altar." English Translation by W.H.S. Jones, Litt.D., and H.A. Ormerod, M.A., in 4 Volumes. Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press; London, William Heinemann Ltd. 1918.

<sup>57</sup> Paus. 5.15.12 "The Eleans also have a banqueting room. This too is in the Town Hall, opposite the chamber where stands the hearth. In this room they entertain the winners in the Olympic games" English Translation by W.H.S. Jones, Litt.D., and H.A. Ormerod, M.A., in 4 Volumes. Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press; London, William Heinemann Ltd. 1918.

<sup>58</sup> Paus. 5.14.4, *ibid*, comm.39

## ii. The SE building of Olympia.

Interestingly enough, Hestia had another cultic edifice in the sanctuary of Olympia, the so-called south-east building, which together with the Echo-hall formed the south-east limit of the Altis' enclosure. The building was erected during the first half of the 5th century BCE and it seems that operated until the 1st century BCE, when it was demolished to make way for new buildings. The shrine has different architectural phases. In its initial phase from which very few traces survive, the building was comprised by two corner rooms, a backing wall and an atrium, twenty-nine metres long and twenty-three metres wide. In the 2nd quarter of the fourth century BCE, after a strong earthquake, the building was restored and obtained a doric colonnade as a facade towards the Altis, with eighteen columns along the front and eight columns at each side. This colonnade surrounded the main core of the building, comprised by a row of four rooms. Of the final rectangular building (36.42 by 14.66 metres) parts of the architectural members and terracotta gutter with palmette decoration have survived. Because of the superimposed Roman structures, when Pausanias visited Olympia in the second century CE, the shrine was no longer visible as it had been replaced by the House of Nero and other buildings (Vikatoy, 2014). Archaeologists (Mallwitz, 1972: 202—205; Kondis, 1958: 19-27) believe that this is the temple of Hestia in Xenophon's accounts<sup>59</sup> in front of which the hostilities between the Eleans and the Arcadians took place during the Olympiad of 364 BCE. Miller refuted the various points adduced by Kondis and Mallwitz as evidence for a shrine of Hestia separate from the prytaneion at Olympia, claiming that literary sources (Pausanias, Xenophon) but also archaeological evidence lead us to identify the Prytaneion as Hestia's shrine (Miller, 1992: 91).

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<sup>59</sup> Xen. Hell. 7.4 "When, however, they had pursued the enemy to the space between the senate house and the temple of Hestia and the theatre which adjoins these buildings, although they fought no less stoutly and kept pushing the enemy towards the altar, still, since they were pelted from the roofs of the porticoes, the senate house, and the great temple, 26 and were themselves fighting on the ground-level, some of the Eleans were killed, among them Stratolas himself, the leader of the Three Hundred" Xenophon in Seven Volumes, 1 and 2. Carleton L. Brownson. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA; William Heinemann, Ltd., London. vol. 1:1918; vol. 2: 1921.

## Chapter 4.

### Methods of maintenance, transportation and lighting of fire.

#### a. Maintenance and Transportation of Fire

The discovery of fire definitely was not a sudden invention but, like many other discoveries and inventions, a product of a protracted process and mature legacy knowledge (Μαντζάνας, 2011:315).

In Africa, in various sites and settlements of the late Archaic and early Lower Paleolithic period, traces have been found of charred wood whose age is estimated at around 1.5 million years, maybe longer. However, in these early cases we are not entirely sure whether the fire was created by natural causes or if it was human controlled. It seems likely that in these cases, and during a very long period of Archaic and Lower Paleolithic (from 2.6 to 1.3 and from 1.3 to 0.12 million years ago) the practice of lighting the fire was unknown and that different human species that lived during this very long period, were supplied fire by natural phenomena and were able to maintain it somehow (Μαντζάνας, 2011:316). This practice of borrowing fire from natural phenomena or from other groups who already possessed it, continued until recently. According to several travelers' narrations of past centuries, all low-tech tribes knew the fire, although it is not certain if all of them knew how to light it.

Important was the practice of borrowing fire in ancient Greece. Herodotus has preserved the story of Aristodemus, the only warrior who returned alive to Sparta after the battle of Thermopylae, that his fellow citizens not only despised him and did not talk to him, but also they were not giving him fire<sup>60</sup>.

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<sup>60</sup> Hdt.7.229-232: "...There's a story that Leonidas released two injured men from service. Eurytus chose to stay & died fighting, and Aristodemus went home. Others say Aristodemus was serving as a messenger: he dallied on the way back to the army & in that way avoided dying at Thermopylae. Back in Sparta he was labeled a coward. No one would speak to him or give him fire. But he restored his honor fighting at Plataea..."



One more example of fire lending from the literature is attested in the work “Poimenika”<sup>61</sup> of the poet Logos (3rd century AD) where Daphnis, wanting to see Chloe, pretended that the reason for his coming to her house was to borrow fire. Chloe’s parents logically objected that there were nearest neighbors than theirs.

#### **b. Methods of lighting of fire.**

Throughout antiquity and in many cases until the recent to us decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the most popular techniques for lighting fire was friction and percussion, especially the second. Friction had different variations, (sawing, grooving etc) but the most known and widely used method was the friction of two wooden elements (πυρείεξ), where fire was created by the heat caused by friction from the rotation of the turning vertical element, the auger, on the horizontal stationary grate.

This method was apparently in use since the Middle Palaeolithic and has since enjoyed widespread, worldwide use. One of the earliest references is in the Homeric Hymn to Hermes. The whole process is analyzed by the author of the comments of Argonautica of Apollo of Rhodium (Scholia in Appolonii Rhodii Argonaytica, 108, 7-10), indicating the names of the two main gear, the auger and storefs (ignitabulum or incitabulum). (Μαντζάνας, 2011:319)

The method of ignition with percussion is considered by modern scholars to be the oldest. However, gradually in large parts of the prehistoric societies it was replaced, by friction which was a more easily applicable method and the required materials not so hard to find. The discovery of the steel gave the final victory to the method by impact, at least in technologically advanced societies.

The sparsity of the ancient sources in terms of details of the procedure of generating fire, is partly replenished from analogue approach of the experimental archeology and from the data of ethnography.

In a paper presented at the scientific meeting in 2011 of the Museum of Greek Folk Art by the title “Fire: source of life, strength and expiation” Christos Matzanas reviewed several ancient

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<sup>61</sup> Λόγγου Ποιμενικά, 3. 6. 3.1-2 (Longi, Pastoralia)

and medieval literary sources with reports regarding the two methods of lighting fire. Furthermore he provides valuable data from his experiments and also his ethnographic comments and remarks on tradition being followed until recently in Greece and other regions. Apart the above mentioned techniques, and also what interests the most this study, is the ignition of the flame by sun rays, through the intervention of lens or concave mirror. This was mostly the case of the sacred flame that could not be taken from elsewhere but from a clear and pure source such as the sun<sup>62</sup>. Berthold Laufer, in an early study, provides information regarding the material of which the burning-lenses were made (crystal stone or glass). He argues that the first burning-lenses were cut from crystal, not from glass and that the effect of a burning-lens was perfectly known at the classical times (Laufer, 1915). In many cases, specific incendiary biconvex lens (glass) of glass or rock crystal are attested in literary sources, like in the dialogue between Strepsades and Socrates the characters in Aristophanes<sup>63</sup> comedy "Clouds". Another similar account is preserved by Lactantius who states "If you hold in the sun an orb of crystal filled with water, fire is kindled from the light which is reflected from the water, even in the most severe cold" <sup>64</sup>.

Pliny (23-79), in his Natural History, delivers in two different passages information about burning-lenses, both of crystal and glass. In his first reference about crystals, he preserves the following information: "I find it stated in medical authors that crystal balls placed opposite to solar rays are the most useful contrivance for cauterizing the human body"<sup>65</sup>. In the other passage it is remarked "If glass balls filled with water are exposed to sunlight, they produce such a vigorous heat that they will ignite clothes"<sup>66</sup>. In the Orphica, or Lithica of Orpheus, a poem of late antiquity, crystal lenses and their properties are mentioned. In this work (verses

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<sup>62</sup> Plut. Num. 9.6 "And if by any chance it goes out,..... then they say it must not be kindled again from other fire, but made fresh and new, by lighting a pure and unpolluted flame from the rays of the sun".

<sup>63</sup> Arist. Nep. 766: Στρεψιάδης: "ἤδη παρὰ τοῖσι φαρμακοπόλαις τὴν λίθον/ταύτην ἐόρακας, τὴν καλήν, τὴν διαφανῆ,/ἀφ' ἧς τὸ πῦρ ἄπτουσι; Σωκράτης: τὴν ὕαλον λέγεις;"

<sup>64</sup> Lact. "De Ira Dei", 10

<sup>65</sup> Pliny, Natural History, xxxviii, 10, §.28

<sup>66</sup> Pliny, Natural History, xxxvi, 67, 5 199

170 -184) the magical properties believed to be inherent in stones, are described and revealed by the seer Theodamas to Orpheus. It is described that when a crystal is placed on dry wood-shavings, while the sun-rays strike it, smoke will soon arise, then fire, and at last a bright flame, regarded as sacred fire. No sacrifice is more pleasing to the gods than when offered by means of such fire (Laufer, 1915: 175). Isidoros, Bishop of Sevilla in a work of the the 7<sup>th</sup> cent. CE attests that when a crystal opposed to solar rays attracts fire to such a degree that it ignites arid fungi or leaves<sup>67</sup>.

Most widely used and most effective, judging by the words of Pliny the Elder, were the concave mirrors (*specula concava*) made from bronze and topped by a silver or lead foil. Placed against the sun rays, after some moments, the device created enough heat so that the rod with the flammable material attached at its edge easily caught fire.

Theophrastus in his treatise “On fire” also refers to mirrors and the reflection of the sun on smooth surfaces of glass, copper and silver<sup>68</sup>. Another similar account is found in Euclid’s study “On catoptrics”, where he reports that “fire lights concave mirrors mounted in the sun”<sup>69</sup>. The renowned doctor and philosopher Galen of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century CE in his treatise “Peri Krasesos” he informs us that centuries before, Archimedes fired the Roman fleet at Syracuse with mirrors (*πυρραία*), and he additionally lists the materials used for the lighting of the fire thereby<sup>70</sup>.

The most detailed description of the process of lighting a fire from sun’s rays and specifically for rekindling Vesta’s sacred fire when was by accident burned out can be found in Plutarch’s text where the life of the Roman king Numa is narrated. (Plut. Num. 9.6 see Ap. I)

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67 Isidoros, Origines, Xvi, 13, 1: “*Hic (ciystallus) oppositus radiis solis adeo rapit flammam ut aridis fungis vel foliis ignem praebeat.*”

68 Theoph. On F. 73. «ὅτι δ’ ἀπὸ μὲν τοῦ ἡλίου φῶς ἄπτουσι τῇ ἀνακλάσει ἀπὸ τῶν λείων... ἐξάπτεται δὲ ἀπὸ τε τῆς ὑέλου καὶ ἀπὸ τοῦ χαλκοῦ καὶ τοῦ ἀργύρου τρόπον τινὰ ἐργασθέντων...»

69 Euclid, On Catoptrics, 30: “*ἐκ τῶν κοίλων ἐνόπτρων πρὸς τὸν ἡλίου τεθέντων πυρ ἐξάπτεται*”

70 Gal. De Temp. (3,2). “*οὕτω δὲ πῶς, οἶμαι, καὶ τὸν Ἀρχιμήδην φασι διὰ τῶν πυρραίων ἐμπρῆσαι τὰς τῶν πολεμίων τριήρεις*”. Furthermore, *ibid*, 1, 657-658: “*ἀνάπτεται δ’ ἐτοίμως ὑπὸ πυρραίου καὶ ἔριον καὶ στυπεῖον καὶ θρυαλλίς καὶ νάρθηξ καὶ πᾶν ὅ τι ἂν ὁμοίως ἢ ξηρόν τε καὶ χαῦνον*”

## Chapter 5.

### Fire facts from the hellenic antiquity.

#### a. The two eternal flames of Athens

Several literary sources and scholars preserve the information about two eternal fires in Athens, one at the Prytaneion, and the other on the Akropolis, at the old temple of Athena Polias. The Prytaneion where the sacred flame of the city, the "unquenchable fire" of the goddess Hestia<sup>71</sup> was kept, is regarded as one of the earliest public buildings of ancient Athens. Its construction north of the Acropolis, in the Agora, beneath the subsequent Tholos (Dome), dates back to the time of Solon (1st third of the 6th century BCE). However, archaeologists have not yet brought to light its remains. The building constituted the archaic heart of the city, which housed copies of the soloneian legislation.

On the Akropolis there was also a perpetual fire, preserved in front of the statue of goddess Athena Polias made of olive wood, the most sacred object in all Athens. This statue was kept at the old Temple<sup>72</sup> that Erechtheus dedicated to Athena. Strabo gives the ever burning lamp<sup>73</sup> as the distinguishing feature of the old temple of Athena Polias. Some years later, Pausanias<sup>74</sup> described this perpetual fire in details: *"..But the most holy symbol, that was so considered by all many years before the unification of the parishes, is the image of Athena which is on what is now called the Acropolis, but in early days the Polis (City). A legend concerning it says that it fell from heaven; whether this is true or not I shall not discuss. A golden lamp for the goddess was made by Callimachus [7] Having filled the lamp with oil, they wait until the same day next year, and the oil is sufficient for the lamp during the interval, although it is alight both day and night. The wick in it is of Carpasian flax,1 the only kind of flax*

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<sup>71</sup> [http://www.eie.gr/archaeologia/gr/02\\_DELTIA/Prytaneion.aspx](http://www.eie.gr/archaeologia/gr/02_DELTIA/Prytaneion.aspx)

<sup>72</sup> Odysseus, portal of the Hellenic Ministry of Culture: " a Doric, peripteral structure with six columns on the short sides and twelve on the long sides. The interior arrangement was quite unusual. The east part of the temple consisted of a distyle pronaos with antae and a naos divided into three naves by two rows of columns. Inside the naos was the wooden cult statue (xoanon) of the goddess Athena. The east part of the temple consisted of three rooms, each dedicated to the worship of Poseidon-Erechtheus, Hephaistus and Boutes" [http://odysseus.culture.gr/h/2/eh251.jsp?obj\\_id=8244](http://odysseus.culture.gr/h/2/eh251.jsp?obj_id=8244)

<sup>73</sup> Strabo, 9.16. "The city itself is a rock situated in a plain and surrounded by dwellings. On the rock is the sacred precinct of Athena, comprising both the old temple of Athena Polias, in which is the lamp that is never quenched, and the Parthenon built by Ictinus, in which is the work in ivory by Pheidias, the Athena."

<sup>74</sup> Paus. 1.26.7

*which is fire-proof, and a bronze palm above the lamp reaches to the roof and draws off the smoke. The Callimachus who made the lamp, although not of the first rank of artists, was yet of unparalleled cleverness, so that he was the first to drill holes through stones, and gave himself the title of Refiner of Art, or perhaps others gave the title and he adopted it as his."*

This palm above the lamp was probably a metal chimney made in the shape of a palm-tree, the stem being hollow and serving as a flue. The lamp was tended not by virgins, as the vestals at Rome, but by old women, as at Delphi. During the first Mithridatic War the tyrant Aristion, was accused that himself living in luxury, he impiously allowed the lamp to be quenched for lack of oil. As previously presented, Plutarch informs us that this flame it must not be re-lighted from any other fire, but only with pure and unde-filed flame procured from the sun . (Cooley, 1899: 368)

### **b.Torch Relays**

The torch relay (lampadhdromia or lampadhphoria) was a team event with ceremonial origins which involved physical abilities. Despite the demand for fast transportation of the flame and the rivalry which created, its religious character outweighed the competitiveness. The purpose of the torch relay in antiquity, as today, was to pass on the sacred fire from one point to another as fast as possible, without being extinguished. Torch relay was considered a light athletic event. The participants belonged to different age categories (men, adolescents, preteens). There was even a case of young females' torch relay the one that was being held in honor of Artemis in the goddess' sanctuary in Vravra, Attica. The torchbearers were running naked, as seen on many vase paintings, wearing sometimes a diadem made of flame-shaped straws, made from bone or wood, placed upright. Every time the torch relay was terminated before the altar of the honored god, where the fire for the sacrifice was ignited from the torch of the athlete who finished first. (Gialouris, 1982:248) As it was the case of the altar of Prometheus in the Academy of Athens, there was an altar also at the starting of the relay. The general director and supervisor of the torch relays was the "Archon Vasilefs" who was responsible for the religious operations and functions of the state. The relay was conducted

among teams of 10, 40 even 48 participants that were formatted by each tribe depending on the state. The distance to be covered also varied: In the Panathenaean Games, the torchbearers had to run from Academia to Acropolis, a distance around 2,5 Km. At Delphi during the festival of Eumeneia the participants were running for 1,5 Km from the gymnasium to the altar of Apollo and in Epidaurus they covered 800 m. The runners were distributed at different spots of the route in order to run equal parts, as it is the case with the modern relays. The most important and crucial element of the race was the succession of the runners and the fastest possible swift of the torch.

An interesting alteration of the torch relay was *aphippolambas*, which was conducted with horses. Here also the riders should pass the flame succeeding one another in the fastest possible way. *Aphippolambas* was more impressive and spectacular comparing to normal *lampadephoria*, because the element of speed was more intense. The covered distances were longer but with less participants. The origins of the equestrian torch relay are placed in Thrace from where it was imported to Athens and specifically to Peiraeus along with the cult of Artemis Vendis (Gialouris, 1982:251) who became very popular in the 5th and 4th century BCE. Vendis is considered the Thracian counterpart of Artemis, deity of wild nature and the protector of life. A relief from the British Museum, London (BM 2155, 400–375 BC) shows a procession at the Bendideia festival. Bendis depicted as Artemis with all her huntress attributes, standing to the right, approached by a group of mortal votaries, eight naked athletes led by two officials, perhaps trainer and sponsor. The first official carries a torch and so identifies the athletes as members of a torch race relay team. In some contexts, this deity has mixed features and has been also identified as Hekate, the Great Goddess, Phosphoros and many others. (JANOUCHOVÁ, 2013: 96). In 404 BCE we have the recorded existence of a Bendis sanctuary in Piraeus (Xen. Hell. 2.4. 11), located in the eastern part of the port, next to the temple of Artemis Mounychia. The festival, incorporated into the Athenian state's religious system, was celebrated on Thargelion 19–20, with the main event being the day procession (*pompe*) starting from the Prytaneion, and finishing at the sanctuary in the port.

The evening torch-race and the all-night celebration was followed by a sacrifice at the existing sanctuary<sup>75</sup>.

**b. Euchidas' feat.**

Quite interesting and enlightening is a passage from Plutarch's narration of Aristedes' Life (Plut.Ar.20.5), regarding Euchidas' feat. After the battle of Plataea (479 BCE), the Delphic oracle told the Greeks not to sacrifice until they had cleansed the pollution caused by the Persians and rekindled their altars with pure fire from the public hearth at Delphi. Plutarch tells the story of Euchidas' an "ultramarathon man" who in the same day went running all the way from Plataea to Delphi and back in order to bring the sacred fire to his compatriots. He was so much exhausted that after he handed his countrymen the sacred fire, he expired. To commemorate his deed the Plataeans gave him burial in the sanctuary of Artemis Eucleia.<sup>76</sup>

**c. The kindling of the altar of Zeus as the purpose of the Olympic Games.**

In Philostratus' "On Gymnastics", an hymn to the ideal athlete of the classical era, with adequate anecdotal material, we find a very intriguing account: that it was the religious festivities in honor of Zeus that gave rise to the Olympic Games. It is known also from other literary sources that during the first Olympiads the only discipline was a foot race of a 600 feet in the stadium of Olympia. According to Philostratus account, the stadion race was connected directly to the altar. The athletes stood one stadion distant from the altar of Zeus, on which were placed the sacrificial offerings to Zeus. A priest standing next to the altar signaled the

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<sup>75</sup> In Plato's *Republic*, (*Rep.* 327a; 328a) Socrates tells the story of the last night when he went to Peiraeus with his friend Glaucon to pray, and to see the procession held at the Bendideia festival in the port. Incidentally, they met Adeimantus and Polemarchus, who told Socrates of the evening torch-lit horserace and the all-night celebration (*pannychis*) to come. He is then persuaded to stay for the horserace (*Rep.* 354a). When Socrates spoke about the procession, he mentioned his desire to see how the procession was held, as it was the inauguration ceremony of the Bendideia. (JANOUCHOVÁ, 2013: 96)

<sup>76</sup> Interestingly enough, the 15th race by the title "Euchidios feat" was organized on 9-10th May 2014. The organization comprised two ultra-marathon races: one from Platea to Delphoi and back with a total of 215 Km covered and the other from Platea Delphoi with a distance of of 107 Km. The organisers included in the opening ceremony a lighting of a flame prior to the starting of the race in Delphoi.

For more details visit: <http://www.euchidiosathlos.gr/>

start of the race by waving a lighted torch. The runner who finished first was proclaimed Olympic victor and was given by the priests the privilege of lighting the fire on Zeus' altar for the great sacrifice. <sup>77</sup> Archaeologists believe that in the archaic times the stadium was part of the sacred Altis and its western edge was located in front of the Altar of Zeus and in later times moved progressively farther from the heart of the religious center of Olympia. and increasingly more room was created for spectators. (Miller, 2006:94). As C. Durandez stresses, this account of Philostratus was given to much credit and attention by the organisers of the 1936 Olympic Games to historically justify the new institution of the torch relay from Olympia to Berlin: *"Finally, there are good grounds for thinking that it was precisely the practice of transmitting sacred fire – the practice which forms the basis of races with torches – which gave rise to the first, nascent, Olympic Games in Greece, the history of which begins with the first known Olympiad, held in 776 B.C., and at which Corebos of Elis won the track races. Diem and Umminger are in agreement on this; they base their conclusion on a clear and concise text to that effect in Chapter V of Pilostratos's Gymnasia.[... ]Other writers take the view that in a race of this kind each competitor started the race with his own torch; this view is supported by illustrations on a number of pieces of pottery which date back to before the fifth century B.C. This modest beginning to the Olympic Games was, as Umminger says, a simple origin imbued with religious sentiment and comprising in its entirety a touching dignity".* (Durandez C. , 2000: 19)

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<sup>77</sup> Philostr. Gym. 5: "στάδιον δὲ ὧδε εὐρηται: θυσάντων Ἡλείων ὀπόσα νομίζουσι, δέκετο μὲν ἐπὶ τοῦ βωμοῦ τὰ ἱερά, πῦρ δὲ αὐτοῖς οὕτω ἐνέκειτο. στάδιον δὲ οἱ δρομεῖς ἀπέιχον τοῦ βωμοῦ καὶ εἰστήκει πρὸ αὐτοῦ ἱερεὺς ἕξ' ἑξ' λαμπαδίῳ βραβεύων, καὶ ὁ νικῶν ἐμπυρίσας τὰ ἱερά"



## **PART B. Modern Times.**

### **Chapter 6.**

#### **The introduction, establishment and the role of the Olympic Flame in the Olympic Movement.**

##### **VII. The Olympic Flame as a symbol.**

The lighting of the Olympic flame, being hosted at the Archaeological Site of Olympia, is probably the most solemn of all the ceremonies witnessed at the Games, a set of artistic and theatrical acts that honors the human spirit and existence.

For many people, the Olympic flame represents the same positive values that the use of fire produces, especially *“man’s power to resist the wishes of the gods, as well as man’s ability to define his own future through knowledge”*. (Skiadas, 1997: 21) At the same time, the Olympic Flame underlines the connection between the ancient and modern Olympic Games and constitutes one of the strongest symbols of the modern Olympic Movement. According to the Olympic Charter, Olympic flame is the flame which is kindled in Olympia under the authority of the IOC. As such, the Olympic flame, as the other symbols (flag, motto, anthem, emblems, etc) may for convenience, be collectively or individually referred to as *“Olympic property”*<sup>78</sup>.

Juan Antonio Samaranch, sharing at the Olympic Review (issue 2000) his impressions and experience of the torch relay wrote: *“The thousands of people who carry the torch will remember throughout their lives this indirect and symbolic participation in the Games of the XXVII Olympiad in Sydney. In addition, there are tens of thousands of people who, all along the route, gather to encourage and applaud the runners. The torch relay, in which I myself took part in 1992 in Barcelona, creates a historic event wherever it passes. The reception in both urban and rural areas, where the majority of spectators are children and young people, unquestionably serves to promote sport and Olympism. The boys and girls alike, certainly aspire to play a role in sport one day. The Organizing Committees of the Olympic Games*

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<sup>78</sup> OL. CHARTER, 1.13

*consider it their duty to promote the history of Olympism and the flame through the media. This contribution to education, while limited, is very important”.*<sup>79</sup>

A symbol like the Olympic Flame and the Torch Relay can transform and enlarge meanings. According to Dr. Henri POURET, *“a symbol is the living proof of the realization of abstract ideas”*. These symbols and ceremonies *“confer on the Games a festival character which distinguishes the latter, as a four-yearly festival of youth, from an ordinary world sports championship - which is what the Games would be without those ceremonies, rituals and symbols”*<sup>80</sup>. Completely aware of their function, Pierre de Coubertin enjoyed very much the use of symbols and ceremonies. Strengthening Coubertin’s beliefs and efforts, Carl Diem has written in 1961: *“The Olympic Games cannot be considered as an assemblage of sports competitions: neither can they be considered as events designed to test the limits of human capacity. On the contrary, they are especially concerned with the development of the aesthetic dimensions and of the beauty which emerge on the occasion of these festivals and form an integral part of it”*. Working towards the same direction, both Coubertin and Diem emphasized to the festival character within sport, due to the atmosphere of excitement that they produce. The flame and the torch relay, added to the previously existing symbols and ceremonies, assisted the direct understanding among peoples and they shaped the Olympic Games into a major element of universal culture. (Durandez, 1985: )

Before proceeding, a necessary distinction should be made between the two rites, the lighting of the Olympic Flame firstly and the Torch Relay secondly: although they constitute two very close connected ceremonies, each activity bears each own origin, as we already argued, each own symbolism and messages.

In the Olympic context, Coubertin attempted to base the ceremonies relating to sport on four pillars / principal factors: 1. a sense of history 2. an educational content 3. an artistic projection and 4 . an underlying religious element. (Durandez C. , 2000 ) All the above characteristics are incorporated in the Olympic flame.

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<sup>79</sup> JUAN ANTONIO SAMARANCH , OlympicReview,2000, Editorial.

<sup>80</sup> Durandez Conrado, ‘The torch: The great Olympic Symbol’ *Olympic Review*, 1985 October No. 216 p. 620-627

## **b. Historical steps towards 1936 Olympic Games in Berlin.**

### **i. The first sparks**

Interestingly enough, fire and torches as means for heightening the effect of the first olympiads of the modern era, have appeared very early, under the influence of the ancient customs, and prepared the way until the turning point of the 1936 Berlin Olympiad, when the double institution of the lighting of the Olympic Flame ceremony and the torch relay was established and remained almost unchanged to the present time.

Even before the rebirth of the Olympic Games, Pierre de Coubertin, on the occasion of the International Congress of Paris for the re-establishment of the Olympic Games, possibly imitating ancient customs, he included in the programme of June 17th 1894 foot races with torches ("Courses à pied aux flambeaux") (Borgers, 1998: 140). In 1896, in the frame of the Olympic Games of Athens, the organisers had undertaken a series of symbolic revivals, including a torch light processions for several occasions<sup>81</sup>. Although the closing ceremony was scheduled for the ninth day (2<sup>nd</sup> of April) they begun unofficially two days earlier, on March 31<sup>st</sup> with a torch light procession where more than 10.000 people took part, *forming a shinning torrent of humanity participation* (Georgiades, 2003: 192). This massive procession in the heart of Athens within the framework of the celebrations scheduled for the seventh day, was one of the most impressive of the fringe events of the Games that left splendid impressions to all those who witnessed it.

In the Mid – Olympiad of 1906 in Athens, the illuminations and a torch relay were included as elements of the lavish celebrations. (Skiadas, 1997: 19)

Berlin was to have hosted the 1916 Olympic Games which were cancelled due to the first World War. At a dinner on 27 June 1912, closing the Stockholm Games, Pierre de Coubertin

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<sup>81</sup> One of them was organized for the end of the fifth day (March 29) of the Games in Piraeus: "Thousands of spectators thronged the streets, and assembled on the quay to witness there a spectacle, never seen before in this part of the world. The whole town seemed enveloped in a mass of light. It was as if one found one's self suddenly transferred into fairyland. Myriads of flaming gaslights were; this splendor was enhanced by Bengali fires, which were kept burning constantly, flaming and whose reflexion shone on the calm sea. Every ship, everywhere lying in harbor had suspended on her mast and cordages Venetian lamps of all shades and colors. The different Corporations, escorted by the crews of the ships, bearing torchlights assembled in the square before the customhouse and walked in procession all along the quay". (PIERRE DE COUBERTIN et al, Athens, 1897:92)

addressed the guests stating *“through our mediation a great people has received the torch of the Olympiads from your hands, and has thereby undertaken to preserve and if possible to quicken its precious flame”* (Borgers, 1996:12). Borgers (1996) presents the idea that perhaps Pierre de Coubertin can be referred to as the “re-igniter” of the Olympic flame, with further comments made by de Coubertin at the closing of the 1932 Games in Los Angeles *“May the Olympic Torch follow its course throughout the ages for the good of a humanity ever more ardent, courageous and pure”* (IOC, The Olympic flame and torch relay, Olympic Museum of Lausanne, 2011).

## ii. The 1928 Amsterdam Olympic Games

Although it is common knowledge that the olympic flame and the torch relay made their debut for the 1936 Berlin Olympiad, it is less known that the flame was lit for the first time in the Olympic Stadium of Amsterdam for the 1928 Olympic Games without a special ceremony and with the lack of any international cooperation or participation. The flame was actually ignited, not at the Opening Ceremony but in the evening, when the stadium was lit up” (Müller, 1994:108 in Cahill, 1998:182). For the duration of these Games, the smoke from the flame by day and the glow of its fire at night announced that the Olympic Games were in progress. It has not been possible for scholars to determine who should be given credit for the introduction of the flame at the 1928 Olympic Games. Jam Wills, the architect who designed the Olympic Stadium in Amsterdam and was nominated the Olympic Golden Metal of Architecture, constructed above it a high tower which was named ‘Marathon Tower’. On the top of the tower an altar was placed where the ‘sacred’ flame was burning during the Games<sup>82</sup>. The flame in Amsterdam was linked with the torch race in honor of the god Pan, after the victory of Greeks against Persians in the battle of Marathon, tradition which is

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82 The Marathon Tower, was to be a slender tower surmounted by four balconies for the trumpeters on the occasion of the Marathon Race; above this the openings for loudspeakers were planned, by means of which the results of the events would be announced, and higher still a large stone bowl, where, during the day, a black column of smoke, and after dark, a high flame would indicate for miles around where in Amsterdam the Olympic Games were being held. Ol.Report, 1928, p.189

attested by the historian Herodotus<sup>83</sup>(Skiadas, 1997: 23). Despite the fact that the flame constituted a new element introduced at the Olympic Games, apart the reports concerning the Marathon Tower, at the 1928 Official Olympic Report there are no information regarding the symbolism of the flame and the manner of the lighting and extinguishing the fire during the Opening and Closing Ceremonies. Nevertheless, a pair of torch bearers is depicted over the altar of Olympic light on the commemorative medal of this Olympiad.

### **iii. 1932: the next step in Los Angeles' Olympiad**

At the 1932 Los Angeles Olympiad, the flame was present once again. As in Amsterdam, it was decided “...to erect a large torch above the central arch of the peristyle, so designed that it would fit in with the general architecture of the Stadium, embracing a special arrangement by which a flame could be lighted at an appropriate moment during the Opening Ceremony and kept burning continuously until the termination of the Closing Ceremony. This Olympic Torch, which was 107 feet high, was constructed of concrete surmounted by a bronze fixture in the shape of a bowl. After many experiments, a practical means was developed of producing a suitable flame which could be ignited and regulated from an invisible location and could be plainly seen both by night and by day” (Off. Olympic Report of the Committee of Xth Olympiade, 1933: 64). The Olympic Report, written with an eloquently and in poetic language, informs us about the manner that the Olympic flame was lit during the Opening Ceremony: “The hush, as the plaintive music dies away, is punctuated by the roar of a distant cannon. Then another blast and another, and another, ten in all, at intervals of five seconds. Someone points high above the trumpeters, where the Olympic Torch rears its stately shaft. From the

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<sup>83</sup> Herodotus, Histories 6. 105. 1 (trans. Godley) : "While [the Athenians were] still in the city [at the start of the Persian War], the generals first sent to Sparta the herald Philippides, an Athenian and a long-distance runner who made that his calling. As Philippides himself said when he brought the message to the Athenians, when he was in the Parthenian mountain above Tegea he encountered Pan. Pan called out Philippides' name and bade him ask the Athenians why they paid him no attention, though he was of goodwill to the Athenians, had often been of service to them, and would be in the future. The Athenians believed that these things were true, and when they became prosperous they established a sacred precinct of Pan beneath the Akropolis. Ever since that message they propitiate him with annual sacrifices and a torch-race”.

*brass bowl a wisp of smoke rises, then a tiny tongue of flame rapidly grows into a gorgeous golden glaze, symbolic of the Olympic spirit that has pursued its way down the ages, takes shape to continue its illumination throughout the sixteen days of the Games”*

The following phrase (words) of Coubertin appears on the noticeboard of the stadium: *‘May the Olympic Flame continue its course down the generations, for the good of mankind which will become more alert, pure and brave’* (Skiadas, 1997: 23). This flame is again directly linked with Ancient Greece. It is clear that its symbolic value had already been well established in the mind and heart not only of the officials but also of the fans of Olympism. At the 1932 Official Olympic Report we read: “Forty nations actually sent their representatives, to sustain the flame of the Olympic Torch and to carve again in imperishable form the inspiring Olympic doctrine of good sportsmanship and peace and better understanding among the peoples of the earth”. The front cover of the Time Magazine (is.26.07.1932) depicting an athlete gazing at the flame burning in the altar of the Los Angeles Olympic Stadium, and imagining the ancient games, leave no doubt that flame was connected with ancient Greece.

#### **d. The Official debut at the 1936 Berlin Olympic Games.**

It was only after two years, during and after the close of the 31st Session of the International Olympic Committee in Athens in 1934 celebrating the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the revival of the modern Olympic Games, that a chain of discussions and interactions marked the start of what is now an Olympic tradition. The members of the Session were invited to participate in an excursion to Olympia. Halfway, the party stopped for lunch at Teghea. It was in this beautiful town, or some days earlier in Athens, that the torch race issue was discussed and the foundations for the modern Olympic flame were laid. The protagonists of these conversation were Prof. Dr. Karl (Carl) Diem respectively President and Hon. Secretary of the Organising Committee of the Berlin Games and Mr. Jean Ketseas, member of the International Olympic Committee for Greece. After long discussions, all the present members of IOC and HOC unanimously supported this attractive proposal, they accepted with enthusiasm the idea of lighting the fire in Olympia and conducting the torch relay to Berlin. A marble tablet recording

the visit of the members of the International Olympic Committee was placed at the desire of the inhabitants of Tegea as a reminder of this historic decision to the modern generation<sup>84</sup>.

Walter Borgers, member of the Diem-Archives in Cologne, who investigated and presented the origins of the modern Olympic Flame and Torch Relay, has described in his book by the title "Olympic Torch Relays 1936 – 1994" the chain of the events leading to the creation of the institution of the Olympic Flame and the Torch Relay, as the IOC has officially cleared them out. On page 19 he says: *"...the actual approval of the proposal took place at the meeting in Athens on 18 May 1934, when questions concerning the dedication ceremonies as a means of regulating the time were discussed, too. On 22 May, in Tegea, the enthusiastic Olympic Committee talked over the plan and on 23 May at the banquet at Olympia, details of its implementation were resolved, especially with the Hellenic Olympic Committee."* The course of events presented here was also published by Henri Pouret in 1974 in the *Revue Olympique*, using the documents that were available to him. Later, Karl Lennartz defended W. Borgers' writings against Athanassios Kritsinelis' manifestations presented during the Young Participants' 36th Session at International Olympic Academy in Olympia in the summer of 1996. Kritsinelis in his paper by the title "Lighting Ceremony of the Olympic Flame. Technical Specifications of the Olympic Torch Relay" attributed the idea of the torch relay to the German participant Duke of Magdeburg and the Councillor of State, Carl Ritter von Halt. Another participant at the same IOA session in Olympia 1996, Elizabeth A. Hanley from the USA, defended Kritsinelis' findings and at a paper on "Aesthetics and Sport in the Olympic Flame Torch Relay: An Historical Analysis from 1936-1996" (in: *Olympic Perspectives*, London,

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84 The Greek text, translated by John Ketseas, runs as follows: «Tegea, with its ancient monuments and its beautiful landscape, has inspired the members of the International Olympic Committee who gathered on 22 May 1934 under the shade of these secular plane trees in this sacred site, and they conceived the idea of organizing a relay of the Apollo flame from Olympia to Berlin, which was led from 20 July to 1st August 1936 with much success. In commemoration of this event which drew the attention of all mankind to the Hellenic spirit, which established the Olympic truce and preached for peace and cooperation between the nations of the world, towards the ideals of Art, Science, the prosperity and development of man, the League of the Tegeans has laid this plaque today, the 17th of August 1936, date on which the inhabitants of Tegea organize each year the games in honour of Athena Alea and the goddess Hygeia to glorify the Assumption of the Virgin» (POURET, 1976)

85 "Une Plaque Commemorative Olympique méconnue en Grèce". *Bulletin Officiel du CIO*, N° 77, 1961, p. 15f., "A propos de la plaque commemorative de Tehea (Grèce)", *Bulletin Officiel du CIO*, N° 78, 1962, pp. 34ff.

Ontario 1996, pp. 227-235) she expressed her doubts regarding the issue of Carl Diem being the first one who had had the idea of staging the Olympic torch relay. Lennartz did not hesitate to call nonsense<sup>86</sup> the allegations of the two authors and he concluded with a heavy dose of sarcasm: “How many “historians” will then base their publications on those two papers, quote them extensively and go on producing similar nonsense.”

The grandeur of the Olympic Flame is such, that it is natural to have people fighting for the title of introducing the flame into the Games<sup>87</sup>. There is no doubt that the ceremonial of the transporting the flame to the Olympic Stadium was worked out by Carl Diem to a high degree of perfection. Nevertheless, the eminent Greek archaeologist and writer Alexandros Philadelphus came up with the thought of lighting the flame following the ancient model and connecting it to the ‘light of Apollo’. As Eleftherios Skiadas stresses in his well documented study, it was Philadelphus who suggested to Ioannis Ketseas the method used in antiquity, who immediately adapted it and forwarded it to Carl Diem (Skiadas, 1997: 35 - 37). In the Report of the 36th Session of the International Olympic Academy (1996, Olympia, Greece) there is an article by Athanassios Kritsinelis, the former technical director of the flame lighting ceremonies in Greece, about the torch relay. Kritsinelis writes about how the Olympic Torch was lit for the first time, for the 1936 Berlin Games and in his essay shares a thought of his: *“Have you ever thought what would have been the fate of this most important symbol of Olympism, if the flame had been lit, the first time, with a match or lighter or even a mirror, by some well-dressed gentleman? It would probably have degenerated, whilst now, through constant improvements, it has become a divine, inviolable, heavenly institution. Millions of eyes around the world are watching the ceremony, with tears in their eyes when Apollo, god of the Sun, gives his vitalizing flame to illuminate and warm the site of the Olympic Games”*. Who can argue this statement?

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86 “If the two authors Kritsinelis and Hanley had taken the pains of consulting the minutes of the relevant session (18 May 1934) and of checking the list of IOC-members, they would have realized what sort of nonsense they had written”. (LENNARTZ, 1997: 11 )

87 Skiadas, Eleftherios G., The Olympic Flame, the torch of centuries, Athens 2004 Bid Committee Athens : Mikros Romios Ltd, 1997, p. 34



Leaving aside some well written essays, it seems that among scholars, there is ignorance or ambiguity regarding the person who provided the idea and the details for the procedure and method of the lighting of the Olympic Flame. The reason for this scientific “tug of war” is probably due to the confusion and jumble of many officials of the Olympic Movement and authors who have dealt with the Olympic Flame, treating the two different ceremonies as one (Skiadas, 1997: 35 - 37).

On the 19<sup>th</sup> July 1936, at the eve of the lighting ceremony in Olympia, Al. Philadelphus gave a public speech on the topic of the Olympic Flame at a specially organised gala at the Semiramis hotel in Kifissia (Athens), attended by important personalities of those times. One year earlier, he had the chance to discuss his idea with a member of the Berlin Olympic Games Organising Committee who communicated it to the other members, creating thus a positive climate for its fulfillment (Skiadas, 1997: 36). For his valuable services, Alexandros Philadelphus received a German Award for the Olympic Games 1st Class<sup>88</sup> and also became member (πάρεδρος) of the Hellenic Olympic Committee (Skiadas, 1997: 36). Despite his contribution, it is J. Ketseas who gained international acknowledgment by scholars as a friend and partner of Carl Diem, but maybe also because he deliberately withheld the important role played by Alexander Philadelphus and present as his own the idea of lighting the flame by sun’s rays<sup>89</sup>.

Alexandros Philadelphus’ name was officially restored in 2005. At the Official Olympic Report of the XXVIII Olympiad we read: *“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*

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<sup>88</sup> Deutsches Olympia Ehrenzeichen Erster Klasse : The medal was awarded to those having made an important contribution to the organisation and execution of the Olympic Games of 1936.

<sup>89</sup> W. Borgers totally ignores Philadelphus at his account about the method of ignition of the flame is quoting Ketseas who keeps for himself the origin of the idea: “The method of initial ignition of the fire, based on an ancient model, was provided by Jean Ketseas, Diem’s friend and ally in the creation of the Olympic Academy, on the basis of studies of Plutarch: “The method of lighting the Olympic Flame was fixed after I wrote to my friend, Dr Diem, that while reading Plutarch’s verses (The Life of Numa Pompilius) I had found the description of the way in which the Ancient Greeks re-ignited the sacred fire (when it chanced to go out), by putting a piece of wood into the focus of a concave mirror that was exposed to the rays of the sun” (Borgers, 1998: ).

*Olympia and enriching the idea with a plethora of symbols derived from "Apollonian light" was the inspiration of Alexandros Philadelphias, a Greek archaeologist and author" (Efharis Skarveli et al, 2005:37)*

Going back to the 1936, at the historical for Olympia and Olympism moments, we read at the Official Report about all the preparations done with great care and thoroughness. The first great Olympic event, took place between February 6th and 16th when the Fourth Olympic Winter Games were held at Garmisch-Partenkirchen. Their success exceeded all expectations. The Organizing Committee managed to offer great moments for the 28 participating nations and the 756 sportsmen who competed, "in a programme of events that was carried out without a mishap of any kind". The German Chancellor was present at the opening and closing ceremonies, and also lent an air of festivity to various competitions through his presence. The Olympic Fire, not lit in Olympia, burned brightly at the top of the wooden tower on the Gudiberg peak at the height of the ski jump. (Of. Olympic Report, (Ed) Dr. Friedrich Richter, 1937: 82)

After all the discussions and the painstaking arrangements, the big moment for the ceremony of the lighting of the Olympic flame for the Berlin Games had come and it took place in the afternoon on 20<sup>th</sup> of July. The main village roads were adorned with Greek and Olympic flags. Technicians from Athens had renewed all communication media – the telegraph, and telephone. Also, the train station and the post office were at their best. Many local inhabitants had taken positions already since dawn in the archaeological site in order to obtain a good view of the ceremony. Fourteen Greek girls dressed in ancient costumes accompanied Koula Pratsika, the "High Priestess", who in a processional and solemn manner managed, after the preparations made by prof. Peristerakis, to set alight the tinder, using the sunbeams, imitating her ancestors. During the ceremony, the fire was placed on an altar. The officials of the Greek and the German State spoke a few words. A proclamation of Pierre de Coubertin was also read who was present but due to his age unable or unwilling to read it by himself (Skiadas, The Olympic Flame, the torch of centuries, 2004). Then, the first bearers took the oath. They swore to comply with the Olympic laws for the good of mankind and the progress of civilization. Right after, around 12.00 noon the first runner, the young Greek

athlete Kostantinos Kondyllis, lit his torch from the altar and began the race. The fire had begun its journey to Berlin. Thanks to technology (telephone, wireless transmitters, etc) details of the ceremony along with the speeches travelled rapidly to the four corners of the world. The citizens and guests of Berlin were informed immediately about the happenings in Olympia, due to a special telephone link and through radio. In the afternoon, a large German airplane flew over sacred Altis in salute, performing aerobatics and leaving five rings of smoke. The Olympic flame traveled 3,075 kilometres from Olympia to Berlin, crossing seven countries. The journey took 11 days and 12 nights, and the torch was carried in relay by 3,075 runners. On 1st August at 12.50 p.m. - the appointed time - the flame reached Berlin, and after a small rest at 4 p.m. it started off again for the stadium. The Games had already been inaugurated; the flag had been hoisted ; and the anthem sung. At 5.20 p.m. the 110,000 spectators and the 4,000 athletes from 51 countries in the Olympic Stadium welcomed the last of the torchbearers - the German athlete Schilgen, who, after completing the final lap, placed the Flame in the great bowl in which it would burn until the end of the Games.

The relationship between this torch relay run of the modern Olympic Games and the ancient festival was expressed in the brochures published in connection with this event, these being designed in an especially artistic manner. The reproduction of a Hellenic relief from the Palazzo Colonna in Rome was utilized for the cover which depicts two Erotes as torch bearers. ((Ed) Dr. Friedrich Richter, 1937:126)

Full of enthusiasm for the flame, Pierre de Coubertin sent a message to the athletes participating in the Berlin Games: *"Athletes, remember the fire which, lit by the sun's rays, has come from Olympia to lighten and warm our times... Be careful to keep the sacred flame alive."* At the closing ceremony, following the example of Los Angeles Games, the Olympic Flame was extinguished at 7.37 p.m., as the sun sank below the horizon. The Olympic Games of 1936 were almost perfect, judging by the presence of Olympic moral and spirit among athletes and officials and by the spectators who were most enthusiastic, most open in the expression of their feelings and most numerous. Carl Diem played an important and decisive part in ensuring the success of the Games as a sporting event. Powerful but tragically ironic were the lines that Adolf Hitler addressed to the World for the 1936 Olympic Games:

*“Sporting and chivalrous competition awakens the best human qualities. It does not sever, but on the contrary, unites the opponents in mutual understanding and reciprocal respect. It also helps to strengthen the bonds of peace between the nations. May the Olympic Flame therefore never be extinguished”*. ((Ed) Dr. Friedrich Richter, 1937: 6)

The big gap due to WW II until the next Olympic Games of London in 1948, although it could have worked as a factor of oblivion, did not prohibit the first repetition of the lighting ceremony of the Olympic Flame and the Olympic Torch Relay. Nevertheless, around 1940, during World War II, these symbols that nowadays have universal impact were disputed before they managed to continue their course in the world of the Olympic Movement. There was criticism regarding their possible nazistic origins. The organising committee of the Winter Games of 1948 in St. Moritz, the first Games to be held after the War, decided against continuing with the “Nazi” introduction of the torch relay. The IOC later decided to continue with the idea of a torch relay for the 1948 summer Olympic Games in London. (Cahill, 1998: 183)

Since the 1948 London Olympic Games and steadily ever since, the ceremony of the lighting of the Olympic flame and the torch relay has remained practically without major changes. The Olympic Flame has become a cherished symbol for the whole of mankind, which emphasize not only the ancient source of the Olympics but also the internationalism of the modern Games.

### **The Flame of the Winter Olympic Games.**

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the first symbolic fire used for the Olympic Winter Games was the 1936 Olympics in Garmisch-Partenkirchen that preceded the Summer Olympiad in Berlin. This flame, of course, was not lit in Olympia, nor it was celebrated with a torch relay. It was years later, in view of the Olympic Winter Games in 1952 in Oslo, that the first relay took place but its departing point was not Olympia. It was the valley of Morgedal in Norway, a place that is considered as the birthplace of skiing, as a reminder of the origins of

this sport. The flame was lit in the hearth of the chalet belonging to Sondre Norheim, a legendary figure in Norwegian skiing.

The first time that the Flame lit in Olympia for Winter Olympic Games was for the Innsbruck Games in 1964, where it was transferred with a torch relay. Ever since, the flame of the Olympic Games, every four and after the Lillehammer 1994 Winter Olympics every two years departs from Olympia and reaches the Olympic Stadium with a torch relay, after is being lit by the Head priestess with the traditional, let's say the ancient method.

## PART C. Problematic and Conclusion

### Chapter 7.

#### Extinction of the Olympic flame: an ancient omission or a modern sacrilege?

- a. Scrutinizing the official documentation of the Olympic Flame's Lighting Ceremony

The lighting of the Olympic Flame and the Torch Relay from the temple of Hera in Olympia has no predecessor or parallel in antiquity.

Following the Berlin Games, the attention of the Olympic Movement was mostly given to the Torch Relay and not to the Ceremony of the Lighting of the Olympic Flame. Very frequently the term "Olympic Flame" is replaced with the term "Olympic Torch" as if the medium could ever be more important than the symbol itself. The very same official web site of IOC uses the term "Olympic Torch" referring to both traditions / ceremonies. This tendency has influenced scholars who they focus more on the topic of the torch relay than the ignition of the flame and consequently, the audiences follow this slippery road.

The modern torch-relay's idealised scope, to draw the attention of the world about the forthcoming Olympic Games and to spread the message of solidarity, unity and peace, was served in antiquity by the declaration of the Olympic Truce by the polis of Elis. The specially appointed Eleian sacred spondophoroi, were traveling throughout the Hellenic world to declare the commencement of the period of the Olympiad that every city – state should respect at least the cessation of war and guarantee the safe passage of participants and pilgrims on their way to Olympia and back home. Paul Cartledge, in a recently published paper by the title "Not carrying the torch: a modern invention-and an ancient omission" goes further, arguing that for the Olympic Games in antiquity *"there was no need or place, therefore (it might be urged), for the invention of such a quasi- or fake-religious ritual as the modern Olympic torch-relay"*. (Cartledge, 2013: 78)

Leaving aside the telegraphic confrontation of such an important issue, what could be very surprising for a scholar who studies the antiquity, especially the history of the ancient Olympia

and of the sacred fire, is the perfunctory text on the official web site of the International Olympic Committee, regarding the origins of the Olympic Flame. The visitor of [www.olympic.org](http://www.olympic.org), at the relevant section, is reading : “ *The Ancient Greeks considered fire to be a divine element, and they maintained perpetual fires in front of their principal temples. This was the case in the sanctuary of Olympia, where the Ancient Olympic Games took place. The flame was lit using the rays of the sun, to ensure its purity, and a skaphia, the ancestor of the parabolic mirror used today for lighting the Olympic flame*<sup>90</sup>. *A flame burned permanently on the altar of the goddess Hestia, and such fires were also lit on the altars of Zeus and Hera, in front of whose temple the Olympic flame is lit today*”<sup>91</sup>. The exact text which also suffers from generalisation, is also being used at the “Olympic Torch Relay Factsheet”, updated in June 2014 (IOC, JUNE 2014) and a similar but a little more detailed at the handout “The Olympic flame and the Torch Relay” issued by the Olympic Museum of Lausanne, 2013.

The first misconception that this official and very widely viewed text produces, is located in the second part of the very first sentence. As argued previously in this study (Part A. Ch.3.a.) the Ancient Greeks did not maintain perpetual fires in front of their principal temples (maybe with a very few exceptions) but in one of the chambers of the Prytaneion, a public building, not a temple, situated in the center or very close to it, of their cities or sanctuaries. The misleading information continues in the next sentence: Zeus’ Temple, the principal temple of the sanctuary of Olympia, of course had no such permanent flame, but as mentioned two sentences later at the disputed IOC text, contradicting to what is stated here, *the perpetual flame was burning at the altar of the goddess Hestia*, and not in front of the principal temple of Olympia. But immediately, again a new mistake strikes with the statement: “*and such fires were also lit on the altars of Zeus and Hera, in front of whose temple the Olympic flame is lit today*” . It is not very clear, but it seems that the meaning of this account is that perpetual,

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<sup>90</sup> The meaning of the phrase is damaged / disrupted. The meaning is being given correctly with this proposition: “*The purity of this fire was guaranteed by the ignition technique: the flame was obtained by the rays of the sun. Captured at the centre of a recipient called a skaphia, the ancestor of the parabolic mirror used today for lighting the Olympic flame, the rays caused an intense heat which allowed a flame to be obtained*” The Olympic flame and the Torch Relay, Ed. Olympic Museum Lausanne, p. 4, Lausanne, 3rd edition, 2013

<sup>91</sup> <http://www.olympic.org/olympic-torch-relay-origin-values-ceremony> (retrieved 2/9/2014)

sacred flames (of the goddess Hestia?) were also lit on the altars of Zeus and Hera. How is it ever possible?

Nevertheless, the most damaging part of the text, regarding the historical accuracy is the following sentence: *“The flame was lit using the rays of the sun, to ensure its purity, and a skaphia, the ancestor of the parabolic mirror used today for lighting the Olympic flame”* . Although its meaning is disrupted, this phrase creates the allegation that for every Olympiad in antiquity, a new perpetual (?) flame was lit, by sun’s rays. This flame is called “Olympic Flame”. Unless the author of this unsubscribed text uses a source of information other than ancient literature, which is totally inadmissible, such ceremonies taking place in the Sanctuary of Olympia are nowhere attested. Nowhere in the ancient literature the term “Olympic Flame” is met. Clearly in this text, there is a big confusion between the eternal, sacred flame of Hestia, burning permanently at the goddess’ altar in the Prytaneion of Olympia, and the fire being lit for the big sacrifice on the altar of the supreme god, and to the others, during the quadrennial festival, the Olympic Games, in honour of Zeus.

Regarding this text, another objection could be raised against the certainty of the account that the parabolic mirror is the descendant of “skafion”. In previous chapters we have presented and examined the literary sources that provide the name and the description of the ancient instrument, but since such an apparatus has not yet been found in excavations, it is risky and unreliable to make such a strong allegation, without any reservation, that the parabolic mirror is the descendant of the skafion. Additional to the literary accounts regarding the use of concave mirrors (skafia – specula concava) as instruments for lighting a fire, and specifically for kindling the sacred fire of goddess Hestia, is the chronological objection. Forbes, in his book about ancient technology, correctly stresses: *“..... Plutarch claims that the sacred fire of Vesta was thus<sup>92</sup> relighted, but Festus seems right in saying that the fire sticks were used, for mirrors did not go back to the time when the worship of vesta was established and it is hard to believe that such a newfangled thing as a mirror would be introduced in the ancient cult of the Goddess. We have of course the story that Archimedes set the Roman fleet afire with concave mirrors at Syracuse, but this seems technically impossible. Still mirrors must have been used*

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<sup>92</sup> with a parabolic mirror



*from time to time for Euclid is quite positive that “with concave mirrors set against the sun fire is lighted”.* (Forbes, 1966:13)

Apart the above, there is a series of other, very weak points and arbitraries related to the ceremony of the lighting of the Olympic flame: nowhere in the literary sources vestal virgins are attested in Olympia. It is not correct to rule out such hypothesis, since it is true that someone should have been responsible for the maintenance of the sacred flame in Olympia's Prytaneion<sup>93</sup>. But unless Vesta's cult was transferred from Rome to Olympia, which it would be an edgy theory for someone to support, probably some older women<sup>94</sup> or the priests or the prytaneis of the sanctuary of Zeus were taking care the flame with the help of servants. Nevertheless, by now, almost every person, even the scholars, are ready to believe without a second thought the existence of vestal virgins in Olympia in antiquity, due to the power of the perfectly (most of the times) executed modern solemn ceremony. What also could be an argument easy to support, is that, due to the repetition of the lighting ceremony, in combination with the official accounts of the IOC that were previously presented about the origins of these rites, by now, a certainty have been established to wide parts of audiences and fans of sports and olympism around the globe, that the lighting ceremony was every time taking place prior the Olympic Games of antiquity.

In the same way, the millions of the spectators that viewed the Lighting Ceremony, while watching the Olympic Flame becoming extinct at the Closing Ceremony of the Olympic Games, believe that something similar was happening in antiquity.

#### **b. The extinction of the Olympic Flame**

Although it took a lot of effort to present the origins of the lighting ceremony of the Olympic Flame it would be not so hard to assume how we ended at the tradition of the extinction of

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<sup>93</sup> “The attested number of priests or priestesses of Hestia is extremely small, one may wonder how the cult was normally who actually took care of the religious duties and supervised them” (Kajava, 2004) In addition, Kajava is discussing an from Olympia (IvO 473) of the 212-213 CE where the name of Klaudia Tyche is preserved. She is possible to have been goddess Demeter Chamyne and Hestia for life for the koino of the Arkadians. (Kajava, 2004: 10)

<sup>94</sup> Since wherever in Greece a perpetual fire is kept, as at Delphi and Athens, it is committed to the charge, not of virgins, but of widows past the age of marriage.

the Olympic Flame. Going back at the 1928 Amsterdam Olympiad, when the flame was lit for the first time and kept burning throughout the duration of the Games. The lack of information especially regarding its symbolism and role, indicates the fact that it was a primitive and tentative initiative. The fire was used mostly as a signal and at the same time for the embellishment and the beautification of the Stadium. That is why it was not even mentioned at the official Olympic Reports, either at the Opening or the Closing Ceremony. On the contrary, we are informed about the lowering and the handing over of the Olympic flag<sup>95</sup>. Because Amsterdam's flame had no special meaning or symbolism, it explains perfectly why it was extinguished.

Things were different in 1932 Olympic Games. The flame had the appropriate attention and recognition, although its symbolisms were not clearly discussed and defined. As was examined in the previous Chapter, the Flame was ignited in a celebratory atmosphere during the Opening Ceremony. Respectively, at the Closing Ceremony of the Xth Olympiad, the Flame was extinguished in a solemn but melancholic atmosphere, following the paradigm of the previous Olympiad and thus, creating a tradition followed to the modern times.

When it was the time for 1936 Olympic Games, first the Winter and then the Summer ones, the extinction of the flame was unquestionable. No one thought that, in the mean time, some important evolution / development had taken place: the flame was not lit in Berlin's Stadium, but in ancient Olympia, a place of high sacredness, by a method that in antiquity produced a sacred fire destined to burn eternally, the perpetual fire of goddess Hestia.

In the Official Olympic Report of the XI Olympiad in Berlin we read: "The most significant and striking of the ceremonial aspects connected with the Olympic Games is the Olympic Fire. Ignited during the opening ceremony, it burns day and night at the Olympic Stadium and other scenes of competition during the period of the Games. Only when the Olympic Flag is

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<sup>95</sup> "When Count DE BAILLET LATOUR had finished his address there was a flourish of trumpets and five salute shots were fired at the same time as the Olympic flag was slowly, very slowly hauled down, signifying that the Ninth Olympic Games were at an end .. A short and simple function concluded the ceremony. This consisted in the silk Olympic flag being handed over by the Town Council of Paris, where the Games in 1924 were held, with a few suitable words to the president of the International Olympic Committee, who in turn, likewise with suitable words, handed it to the representative of the town of Amsterdam, whom he requested to take care of it for four years and in 1932 to hand it over to the Municipality of LOS Angeles where the next Games are to be held. Then the overcrowded Stadium emptied itself for the last time" ((Ed.) G. VAN ROSSEM, 1928: 914)

lowered at the end of the closing ceremony is the Fire extinguished. ((Ed) Dr. Friedrich Richter, 1937: 119)". Maybe the blame for such a "sacrilege" rests on Philadelphus' shoulders, who should have warn the Organising Committee that such a flame, different from any other in the world, should not be extinct, and prevent it from happening. He should have made the suggestion this sacred Flame to be kept burning in Olympia on a special altar in the Prytaneion and also in Berlin the city where it was transferred with the torch relay. And he should have proposed this eternal Olympic Flame to be guarded and tended as in antiquity by the contemporary vestals. Finally, he should have advised the organisers of the Olympic Games to revive another custom, that of the **"conveying / borrowing of the flame"** from an existing source, from the eternal sacred flame of Olympia. Two actresses in shifts from the team of the priestesses could have been present to symbolically but also actually safeguard the eternal Olympic Flame. With a carefully documented and executed solemn ceremony they would be able to give the Flame for the implementation of the diferrent Olympic events around the world (American, Australian and now the European Games). The Ceremony of the Lighting by the sun rays of the Olympic Flame could have be preserved for the quadrennial Olympic Games so as every time the Flame could be renewed. Also, the Olympic Flame could have been preserved at the Olympic Stadium or the Town Hall of the City that have hosted Olympic Games, as in antiquity they had the principal eternal fire at the Metropolis, and the "daughter" flame at the collony.<sup>96</sup>

Maybe C.Diem and P.Coubertin, after they have realised the success of their choise, to establish the flame as a medium of connection of the ancient and the modern Olympic Games, they stopped curating their "child", and thus are also responsible for not changing the custom of the extinction of the Flame. Because of these negligences, phenomena which are very disappointing and dangerous for the purity and integrity of the symbolisms of the Flame have recently appeared and are being discussed at the consequive pages.

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<sup>96</sup> In 1996, after the flame-lighting ceremony was held in Olympia and its relay across Greece, the flame of the Atlanta Olympiad arrived in Athens on 6 April. To mark the Centennial of the Games, a special celebration was organised in the Panathenaic Stadium. Representatives of the 17 cities that had hosted the Summer Games before Atlanta were present. Each of them received a safety lamp, whose flame was lit from a main torch. During the next 21 days, these flames were celebrated in each of the former host cities, while the main flame burned in Athens. These flames were extinguished when the main flame left Athens to fly to Los Angeles Source Official Olympic Report of the 1996 Atlanta Olympic Games

c. **The Pseudo – Olympic Flames**

i. **The Panathenaic Flame of the Youth Olympic Games.**

When history is not respected, and issues that came up during the creation of a new institution or organisation are not confronted, then problems are caused at a later time that may prove hard to be solved.

The last two years, a phenomén of degeneration has appeared in the Olympic Movement, regarding the Olympic Flame. Because of a very bad IOC's decision, a new institution has appeared in the Olympic World: the "Flame" (without any adjective, as the officials were stressing) **of the Youth Olympic Games**. This Flame, which has officially being lit already two times in the Panathenaic Stadium in Athens for the 1<sup>st</sup> Winter and 2<sup>nd</sup> Summer Youth Olympic Games for Innsbruck and Nanjing respectively, circumvents article 13 of the Olympic Charter, which predicts that: "The Olympic flame is the flame which is kindled in Olympia under the authority of the IOC".<sup>97</sup>

The local community of Hleia and the Municipality of Ancient Olympia was both times alerted and protested. In the case of Innsbruck Games, the protests, as reflected at the local media were mostly limited to the resolution issued by the City Council of the Municipality of Ancient Olympia and the abstention of the Mayor E. Kotzias from the Ceremony of the Lighting of the Flame in Athens where he was officialy invited.<sup>98</sup>

In the case of 2<sup>nd</sup> YOG in Nanjing, the local community was informed the last days of 2013 by the media about the possible scenario the Flame to be lit again in Athens and not in Olympia as expected (it was not clear that time if it was a final decision or not). Immediately upon

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<sup>97</sup> The Olympic Charter, although revised recently (September 2014) has no such provision for

<sup>98</sup> "The City Council unanimously decided at the urgent special meeting last Wednesday evening that the Municipality of Ancient Olympia not to be represented by the Mayor at the Ceremony of the Olympic Flame for the 1<sup>st</sup> Winter Youth Olympic Games in INNSBRUCK of Austria. The consensus was absolute in the City Council, which adopted the resolution and through it sent a message to the whole world on the subject of symbols and ideals of Olympism, whose guardian is the municipality of Ancient Olympia. All the speakers have emphasized the need to safeguard the institution of the lighting of the Olympic flame in Olympia also for the Winter Youth Olympic Games...' translation from: <http://www.ilialive.gr/>

hearing the news, the City Council of the Municipality of Olympia, after thorough discussion, again, released in 18.01.2014 a resolution, protesting against the option of the Ceremony taking place in Athens.

Reinforcing the efforts of the Municipality of Ancient Olympia, other local institutions<sup>99</sup>, organizations and individuals, also expressed their objection against this decision and tried to prevent this surprising change of the tradition from being realized. On 02.21.2014, the issue was discussed at the Hellenic Parliament after an official question to the Ministry of Culture and Sports placed by Mrs Effie Georgopoulou - Saltari, member of the Parliament of the Opposition party. The Deputy Minister of Culture and Sports Mr. J. Hadrianos announced the full alignment of the Hellenic Government with the disastrous for the sacred symbol decision of the IOC. In his speech, he stressed that by this decision, the Olympic Flame was protected!! The words of Mr. Adrianos caused great disappointment to the local community and the authorities who considered that a straight derogation and insult both against the Symbol and Olympia. With different activities and manifests, like the petition that was signed by a large group of cyclists who participated in a race from Ancient Elis to Ancient Olympia<sup>100</sup>, people protested against the forthcoming event at Athens.

All the protests in Olympia culminated on April 30, 2014 the very same day and time that the Ceremony of the Lighting of the Olympic Flame was being held at the Panathenaic Stadium. Until that day, efforts were made from the Municipality to finally host the Ceremony at its natural and legitimate site in Olympia, but without result. During a big gathering in front of the Old Town Hall, all the representatives of authorities, and among them the Head of the Administration of the Region of Western Greece, the Mayor, members of the Parliament, officials and many professionals and residents of Olympia and Elia, expressed their disapproval and disappointment for this arbitrary and irregular change of the tradition.

Finally, the Olympic Flame lit on Wednesday in Athens for the 2014 Youth Olympic Games that took place in Nanjing, China this August. After a beautiful dancing happening titled

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<sup>99</sup> Terra Olympia, Institute for Olympism, send a letter to the Head of the State, Mr. Karolos Papoulias, President of the Hellenic Republic, requesting his actions for the protection of the sacred symbol. Proti Newspaper 01.02.2014

<sup>100</sup> This race took was held on 13.04.2014. Read more here about the race and the petition at: [www.ilialive.gr](http://www.ilialive.gr)

“Caryatids”, the new High Priestess Katerina Lechou lit the Flame and promptly delivered it to the first torchbearer, Greece’s 17-year-old fencing champion Marios Yiakoumatos.

Then the Hellenic Olympic Committee president Spyros Kapralos handed over the Flame to his Chinese counterpart, Liu Peng to take it to the organizing committee of the Youth Olympics. The event took place in the presence of the Honorary President of the International Olympic Committee, Jacques Rogge, who introduced the idea of the Youth Olympics during his tenure as the IOC President from 2001 to 2013 and presided over the first Games. Also present was the President of the Hellenic Republic, Karolos Papoulias<sup>101</sup>.

During the Ceremony in Athens, there was a small group of people peacefully protesting outside the Panathenaic Stadium, without causing any trouble, also because of the presence of strong Police forces.<sup>102</sup>

The Flame<sup>103</sup> lit for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Youth Olympic Games of Athens, constitutes a new, unofficial yet, institution: the Panathenaic Flame, a real competitor and threat of the Olympic Flame. Or should it be called a new Scandal of the Olympic Movement? Despite the fact that for the 1<sup>st</sup> Youth Olympic Games of History in Singapore in 2010 the flame was properly lit in Olympia, unfortunately, for reasons that are not clear, the patrons of the Olympic Movement decided to deprive the original Olympic Flame from the Youths of the World. As if the YOG is of secondary importance for the Olympic Movement, and, totally against the Olympic Charter, the flame that was lit in Athens and was official, without any hesitation, named “Olympic”<sup>104</sup>. What can someone expect from now and on, but an obscure future for the world symbol.

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<sup>101</sup> Source: Newspaper Kathimerini April 30, 2014 (15:21)

[http://www.ekathimerini.com/4dcgi/w\\_articles\\_wsites5\\_1\\_30/04/2014\\_539355](http://www.ekathimerini.com/4dcgi/w_articles_wsites5_1_30/04/2014_539355)

<sup>102</sup> Source: Newspaper “Patris” 01.05.2014 - <http://www.patrisnews.com/nea-enimerosi/ellada/ileiaki-diamartyria-kai-sto-kallimarmaro#.VAN16fkSiSo>

<sup>103</sup> Fake, Imitation, Pseydo - Olympic, Monkey Flame and many other adjectives have been given to this Flame that was finally lit in Athens.

<sup>104</sup> “Youth Olympic Flame Lighting Ceremony Kicks Off Nanjing 2014 Torch Relay” NYOG Official Website 2014-04-30-17:16 <http://www.nanjing2014.org/a/20140430/022238.htm>, (retrieved 28/08/2014)

“Youth Olympic flame burns brightly for Nanjing 2014” 30/04/2014 IOC Official Website (retrieved 28/08/2014)

<http://www.olympic.org/news/youth-olympic-flame-burns-brightly-for-nanjing-2014/230574>

## ii. The Special Olympics' Flame

Moments before this Thesis is delivered, the Flame Issue is again at the front page of the local newspapers. On Thursday 04.09.2014, at noon, it was the turn of Alexandroupolis to host a ceremony of lighting of the flame for the European Special Olympics to be held from 09 – 20 September 2014 in Antwerp, Belgium. Again, it was not the first time that a flame was ignited for the Special Olympics using the prototype of the Olympic Flame. The ceremony was held in the archaeological site of Ancient Zone Mesembria, Alexandroupolis,(Northern Greece). It was attended by many officials, and among them the President of Special Olympics Hellas Gianna Despotopoulos, the Deputy Minister of Sports J. Hadrianos, the mayor of Alexandroupolis, Vangelis Lampakis, the Chairman of the Organizing Committee of European Special Olympics of «Antwerp 2014», Guido Kestens, and the president of Special Olympics Europe - Eurasia, Mrs Mary Davis.

The ceremony was a copy of the one which takes place in the Sacred Altis of Olympia. The role of the priestesses were kept by the gymnasts of the Rhythmic Gymnastics of Special Olympics Hellas and students of the dance school of Phocas Evangelinos, who artistically supervised the entire event. High Priestess was the gymnast of the Rhythmic Gymnastics of the Special Olympics Hellas, Iliana Symeonidi. The event was presented by Alexis Kostalas – the same person who presents the ceremony in Ancient Olympia - and the athletes of Special Olympics Hellas, John Stratigopoulos. After the Ceremony the torch relay began that will last five days and will pass from the cities of Komotini, Kavala, Thassos, Thessaloniki and Athens.

J.Spirounis, journalist, commenting this news stressed: *“The institution of the Olympic Flame is slowly fading and for this responsible are the Greeks themselves who believe that it is an attraction for tourists, to impress them with their Olympic roots. After the ceremony held for the Youth Olympic Games in Nanjing at the Panathenaic Stadium in Athens, another ceremony came to cause turbulence, more concern and frustration. [.....] At the same time, the bodies of Elis and Olympia once again show that they do not have the powers to preserve one of the most important institutions of the Olympic movement based on the centuries of history of Ancient Olympia and now it is perforated. [...]The Ceremony of the Lighting of the Olympic*

*Flame for the Summer and Winter Olympics, is one of the few that are left to connect Greece and Ancient Olympia with the Olympic movement worldwide.[...] And if such things exist in the minds of the “immortals”<sup>105</sup> IOC it is a crime in Greece not to be able to preserve institutions with a history of thousands of years and to create caricature ceremonies of lighting of the flame, just only to give Olympic glow to other minor sports.”<sup>106</sup>*

### iii. The Paralympic Flame <sup>107</sup>

During the Sochi 2014 - XIth Paralympic Winter Games, Stoke Mandeville became the first place in history that was involved in the Paralympic Torch Relay, outside of the Games hosting country. The first ever Heritage Flame lit at Stoke Mandeville Stadium in Aylesbury, Great Britain in a historic moment for Paralympic Movement. As it was decided on 29 August 2013 from Sochi Paralympic Games and for all the consecutive Paralympiads, a ceremony will take place before every future summer and winter Paralympic Games, which will celebrate the history of the Paralympic Games and Buckinghamshire's position as the birthplace of the Paralympic Movement. According to this decision, Stoke Mandeville has already being established as the birthplace of the Paralympic Flame, the counterpart of Ancient Olympia for Paralympic Movement.

Sir Philip Craven, IPC President said: “The Torch Relay is a significant event in the staging of every Paralympics and it is fitting that for each future edition of the Games we celebrate Stoke Mandeville’s rich history and proud heritage as the Paralympic Movement’s spiritual birthplace.”By always hosting a leg of the Paralympic Torch Relay ahead of each Games we

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<sup>105</sup> The members of the International Olympic Committee are unofficially named “Immortals” by the Greek people.

<sup>106</sup>

<http://www.ilialive.gr/%CE%BA%CE%BF%CE%B9%CE%BD%CF%89%CE%BD%CE%AF%CE%B1/item/%CE%BD%CF%84%CF%81%CE%BF%CF%80%CE%AE-%CE%BF%CE%BB%CF%85%CE%BC%CF%80%CE%B9%CE%B1%CE%BA%CE%AE-%CF%86%CE%BB%CF%8C%CE%B3%CE%B1-%CF%80%CE%AC%CF%83%CE%B7%CF%82-%CF%87%CF%81%CE%AE%CF%83%CE%B5%CF%89%CF%82.html>

<sup>107</sup> Sources: 1. Official Website of the International Paralympics Committee <http://www.paralympic.org/>  
2. Official Website of the Stoke Mandeville’s Stadium <http://www.stokemandevillestadium.co.uk/>



are ensuring that the role of Sir Ludwig Guttmann and Stoke Mandeville in helping to create the foundations for what is now one of the world's biggest sporting events is communicated around the world and never forgotten."

#### **iv. The Marathon Flame**

Another potential competitor flame of the Olympic Flame that has been institutionalised already seven years now is the Marathon Flame and the Marathon Torch Relay. *"The Marathon Flame is aimed at becoming a symbol of human will and international peace, at promoting the ideals of the Marathon race all over the world, at serving the principles of sports and at promoting the participation in running as a way of living. On 2007, acting on behalf of the Hellenic Athletics Federation (SEGAS) and the Municipality of Marathon, the Organizing Committee of the Athens Marathon, the Authentic, enacted the Marathon Flame, which now forms a new symbol of the International Marathon movement. The logo of the "Marathon Flame" expresses the anthropocentric philosophy of the Marathon Movement. The Flame-Man is at the centre of this logo. It is the "flame" that each man has inside him and helps him win the marathon course of our creative life. The Flame represents the strength of will that allows the simple and single man-citizen-runner to successfully overcome the hard times of everyday life. In the moments of steep grades we daily face, the Flame stands up and with great will and exaltation finishes successfully the "good and noble" daily round. The main subject of the Marathon movement is the simple and single runner, who along with thousands of others could make the difference and promote a different way of quality life and communication. In this way, the triangular torch of the logo shows the evolution of the Marathon movement that was born from one single incident during time and it keeps getting bigger ever since, and at the same time promotes the course of every race that is run within the city borders, giving life to the city and expanding its potentials for better living quality. The message of "Will Knows No Limits" seems to be the most suitable one for the Marathon Flame and allows its naming as Flame of Will as well".* The above excerpt is taken from the official

Athens Classic Marathon website where we can also be informed about the history and other features of the Marathon Flame<sup>108</sup>.

Every November, one day before the Athens Marathon, the Authentic the Marathon Flame is lit inside the archeological site of the Tomb of Marathon. Interestingly enough, the ceremony of the lighting of the flame, although it borrows and uses elements from the Olympic ceremonial, as for example a chorus of dancers, nevertheless it is differentiated at many parts. The fire is being lit not by a priestess but from a man dressed as an ancient hoplite (the imerodromos) who ignites the altar not by sun's rays using a mirror but with some instrument (lighter or matches)<sup>109</sup>. According to the Organisers of the Marathon Race, *"This ceremony is aimed at keeping, developing and promoting the historical importance of the Marathon Battle in 490 BC for modern culture, and at the same time at making the story of the ancient imerodromos famous; a person who ran from Marathon to Athens transferring the message of victory, an act that inspired the institution of the Marathon race"*<sup>110</sup>. Present at this event are the Greek Authorities, representatives of IAAF, AIMS and Officials from the Municipalities of the marathon course.

The First Lighting of the Marathon Flame took place on November 3rd, 2007 at the site of the Marathon Tomb, under the auspices and in the presence of the Greek Ministers of State, Tourism and Culture.

The Marathon Flame has an inherent, exceptional element: after the torch relay the flame is transferred and hosted in the Marathon Race Museum in the Municipality of Marathon where *"Thousands of visitors can see the Marathon Flame every year, as a symbol of fraternization and cooperation among all marathon races worldwide. It is from there that the flame travels through out the continents in the framework of the exchanges taking place between the*

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<sup>108</sup> Source Official Web Site of the Athens Classic Marathon, The Authentic

[http://www.athensauthenticmarathon.gr/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=157&lang=en&Itemid=](http://www.athensauthenticmarathon.gr/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=157&lang=en&Itemid=)

<sup>109</sup> It was not possible to retrieve information from the official web site of the Athens Classic Marathon, The Authentic regarding the specific method used for the ignition of the fire

<sup>110</sup> Source Official Web Site of the Athens Classic Marathon. The Authentic

[http://www.athensauthenticmarathon.gr/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=157&lang=en&Itemid=](http://www.athensauthenticmarathon.gr/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=157&lang=en&Itemid=)

*"Athens Marathon. The Authentic", SEGAS, the Municipality of Marathon and other international marathon races".* With this provision, the organisers solved once and for all the demand of the Marathon Flame for organisations across the world and they don't have to ignite it every time prior its journey for some Marathon Race.

Since 2007, the Marathon Flame has been travelled and hosted to the following cities: Boston and Chicago (USA), Genova (Italy), Belgrade (Serbia), Shanghai and Xiamen (China), Mumbai (India), Vienna (Austria), Prague (Czech Republic), Omsk (Siberia - Russia), Toronto and Ottawa (Canada), Quito (Ecuador), Maritzburg (South Africa), Mexico City (Mexico) and Antarctica.

#### **v. The Alexander's Marathon Race Flame**

The Marathon Flame is also being sent to northern Greece and it is being used for the Alexander the Great International Marathon Race. The handover of the Marathon Flame is being held at the archaeological site of Pella. During a ceremony which also includes dancing, speeches and other artistic elements, the representative of the City of Marathon and the representative of the Hellenic Athletics Federation deliver the Flame of Marathon to the organizing committee. The Flame is being placed on a special altar inside the archaeological site, and it is being re-named to now named to "The Alexandian Flame"<sup>111</sup>. Also a torch relay is being held following the course of the "Alexander the Great International Marathon Race" the start of which has previously being given at Pella, the historical capital of Macedonia and finishes at Thessaloniki, the respective modern one.

#### **vi. The Olympic Fire in Lausanne**

The most "provocative" flame, more than all those mentioned above is the so - called "Olympic Fire" which burns eternally at a cauldron outside the Olympic Museum in Lausanne,

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<sup>111</sup> Official Web Site of the "ALEXANDER THE GREAT" International Marathon

<http://www.atgm.gr/index.php/el/%CF%80%CE%B1%CF%81%CE%B1%CE%BB%CE%BB-%CE%B5%CE%BA%CE%B4%CE%B7%CE%BB%CF%89%CF%83%CE%B5%CE%B9%CF%82/%CF%86%CE%BB%CF%CE%B3%CE%B1->

next to the headquarters of the International Olympic Committee. According to Trip Advisor, the biggest touristic portal in the world wide web, this Olympic Fire is number 4 attraction of the city of Lausanne. As the author believes, it was intentionally not called "Olympic Flame" because it would be not easy for IOC to justify its decision to have it, since it is clear and unquestionable to all the Olympic Family and the fans of Olympism that the Olympic Flame belongs to Ancient Olympia. Nevertheless, since nowhere in the IOC's documents or at the official web site is attested such a term or symbol as an "Olympic Fire" probably only for marketing reasons president J.A. Samaranch in 1994 silently and unofficially decided its presence there, at the seat of the IOC in Lausanne. Probably this is the reason why in google it is not easy at all to retrieve information about this flame, which, in any case has no validity and it is just one of the many fires, and not the authentic Olympic Flame.

## **Chapter 8.**

### **The Olympic Flame Survey.**

The Olympic Flame Survey was specially designed and implemented in order to support the topic being discussed in this Thesis. It was conducted with the support of ‘Terra Olympia’ Olympic Institute.

The first research scope was to determine if visitors are willing to accept a possible new image of the Archaeological Site of Olympia, other than the one that they have just witnessed, with a perpetual Olympic Flame in an appropriate place in it. Furthermore, one more desired and planned outcome was to canvass whether they would agree with a second, also dramatic change of the tradition regarding the Olympic Flame: the sacred symbol to be kept eternally burning after the Closing Ceremony at the City which have hosted the Olympic Games and thus, preventing its extinction.

The main target group of the survey was the visitors of the Archaeological Site of Olympia. There was also an on line version addressed to a facebook community by the title “Dimos (Municipality) Arxaias Olympias” numbered 1813 members who were asked to fill in the questionnaire those who have visited the site of Ancient Olympia the last 5 years.

The physical part of the research was conducted at the big parking area of the Archaeological Site of Olympia, at the roots of the hill of the Museum of the History of the Olympic Games of Antiquity, the period between 18 – 21 of August 2014 for four hours daily (10.00 – 14.00). It was a quite interesting experience that not only provided answers, statistical data and figures regarding the research questions of the Survey, but also offered a chance for many very educative and enlightening short discussions with visitors from the different corners of the world on topics related to Olympism and Cultural Heritage. During one of these discussions a visitor commented about the lack of any sign regarding the Olympic Flame inside the Archaeological

Site of Olympia<sup>112</sup>. Similar deficiency not noticed before was spotted at the official leaflet of the Ministry of Culture and Sports that is being given to the visitors with the purchased ticket. The online part of the research was conducted the period 21 - 24 August 2014.

In total, 105 answers were received, 83 of which were given on the printed copy and 22 through internet. Google Forms was the instrument used to construct and implement the questionnaire.

The questionnaire is comprised by 16 fields. Both at its physical and digital form was filled anonymously in two languages: English and Greek. The fact that the survey was only bilingual had an impact on the sample, since not all the visitors who spoke these languages were willing to participate to the survey and the opposite. The average total time needed for filling the questionnaire was less than 5 minutes. The outcomes of the Survey are presented at the Appendix II both in a percentage format and also as diagrams .

The full analysis of the collected data is out of the interests of the present study and they will be presented separately in some future paper. Nevertheless, the answers given for three of the questions, because of their essentiality for this Thesis, are highlighted here.

More specifically, regarding the question: *“Throughout antiquity, the eternal\* (never extinguished), sacred flame of Olympia was burning in Prytaneion. Would you like to see a permanent flame burning again inside the archaeological site of Olympia?”* **86%** of the visitors answered Yes, **10%** I am not sure and **5%** answered No.

*At the question “If a permanent flame will be established in the site of Olympia, would the connection between modern and ancient Olympic Games be enhanced?”,* **53%** answered quite positively (Definitely) and a **5%** disagreed (I don’t think so).

Finally, at the question: *“The Olympic Flame should not be extinguished during the closing ceremony of the modern Olympic Games but for the sake of its symbolism should be preserved eternally at the Olympic Stadium of every city that have hosted Olympic Games”* **58%** answered “Definitely” and only a **10%** answered “I don’t think so”

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<sup>112</sup> The tiny sign informing about the ceremony of the Olympic Flame at the altar of the Temple of Hera it was worn out and has been removed the early months of 2014. From the administration of the archaeological site there is no announcement regarding if and when the sign will be replaced.

## Conclusion

The sacred Olympic Flame, one of the most distinguished and essential symbols of Olympism and integral part of the Olympic heritage, was examined in its totality and presented in this Thesis. At the first part, the journey to the prehistoric times and antiquity, where the historical roots of the universal symbol lie, offered us the chance of an overview of how fire, this substantial and sine qua non element for existence was tamed and entered the human life. Added to the thousands of the studies, essays and papers worldwide that have dealt with this topic, the fundamental, diachronic and universal belief that fire kindled the human civilisation was stressed once more. The belief, common to every culture on the planet, that fire was and still remains one of the basic and necessary conditions for survival, progress, development and prosperity, is attested in many forms at the mythology traditions and religions of past cultures but also in many of the contemporaries.

Being inspired by the ancient Hellenic mythical figures, with the one of Prometheus and of Hestia/Vesta being the prominent among them, different personalities of the Olympic Movement revived the two major rituals that were established in the frame of the worship of the above mentioned deities, the torch relay, on one hand and the lighting from sun's rays of the eternal sacred fire. Without doubt of those who played a protagonistic role for this unique outcome, the institution of the Olympic Flame and the Torch Relay, Pierre de Coubertin and Carl Diem are the most conspicuous of all the executives who deserve the credits. The archaeologist Alexandros Philadelphus who have studied antiquity, became the key person who unlocked the door of history and allowed the birth of the symbol with the appropriate method that he suggested. J. Ketseas also facilitated the whole process.

Including the one in 1936, 18 ceremonies for the summer, 14 for the winter and one for the Youth Olympic Games have taken place in Olympia. Many officials, journalists and authors have used the term "sacred" to describe the Olympic Flame which is being kindled in

Olympia<sup>113</sup>. Yet no one so far, has raised an argument against the extinction of such a flame. Not even those who with their decisions and actions delivered to humanity this fascinating and powerful symbol have thought that they create and enhance a huge conceptual and moral controversy by extinguishing the Olympic Flame. How is it possible the universal, spiritual and uniting light, kindled in Olympia, to have a life of only 15 days? Doesn't this custom condemn humanity to spiritual darkness until the next Olympiad, until the next lighting ceremony? Should we believe that the Olympic Movement and Olympism are alive only during the Olympic Games when the Flame is burning and the rest of the period are in hibernation? Are the organisers of the Classical Marathon Race mistaken because they have chosen to keep the Marathon Flame burning all year around and to convey/ deliver this genuine flame, not its imitation, to all the other Marathon Races around the World, instead of lighting new flames here or there?

The Olympic Flame which illuminates the hopes for peace, friendship and solidarity among peoples and countries, constitutes one of the few symbols that unite our world, a world of borders, conflicts and discrimination of many kinds. In our times, there are many, maybe hundreds of eternal, mostly commemorative flames, burning around the world for reasons related to wars or killings and deaths<sup>114</sup>. At the other side stands the Olympic Flame, a symbol connected with positive meanings and feelings, at its pick of universal recognition and

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<sup>113</sup> "The Flame is one of the most distinguished and essential symbols of Olympism. It is an integral part of the Olympic heritage, which links the Games of Antiquity, with the modern ones. It plays the part of a timeless bridge that connects the past with the present and the next day of humanity. The Olympic Flame is also the sacred symbol of friendship, peace and harmonious coexistence of peoples, noble competition and fair play. When passed in the hands of people of all ages, of both sexes, of different cultures, education and origin, it actually underlines all these elements that unite humanity rather than divide it." HOC President Mr Spyros I. Capralos, May 10<sup>th</sup> 2012 source: <http://www.hoc.gr/> - (retrieved 29.08.2014)

"At this sacred land of Ilia that hosted for 1200 years the Ancient Olympic Games, we, its current habitants, can only be inspired by Sacred Altis and the Ancient Stadium and envision Ancient Olympia as a World City, as a Center of Sports Ideals, as a symbol of Culture and Peace. I am particularly moved, as I am given the great honor and opportunity from my status as the Mayor of Ancient Olympia, at this time of the Lighting of the Flame, to address the people all over the world and send the message that lies encapsulated within the Light of Olympia. "Keep some place in thy heart for the glow of the sacred flame, so you shall be the best ambassadors of the Olympic Ideals." The Mayor of Ancient Olympia Mr Eftymios Kotzas May 10<sup>th</sup> 2012 source: <http://www.hoc.gr/> - (retrieved 29.08.2014)

Also: "Sacred flame finishes tour of Southeast Asia" source: Official Site of 2008 Olympic Torch Relay <http://torchrelay.beijing2008.cn/en/journey/jakarta/news/n214319419.shtml> (retrieved 29.08.2014)

<sup>114</sup> Some of them are mentioned in Wikipedia: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eternal\\_flame](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eternal_flame)



respect. According to what was previously discussed and stressed in this study the supreme Olympic Symbol is now facing a big challenge: to keep its identity and attractiveness and resist to declination and degeneration created by its many copies and competitors not only in Greece but also elsewhere.

IOC, a powerful, global organisation responsible not only for the organisation of the Olympic Games but also for the dissemination of the ideals of Olympism in the society, should urgently take measures (some of them were suggested here) to protect what in the Olympic Charter is considered as its property.

That is the purpose of this Thesis: the enhancement and safeguarding of the inspiring Olympic Flame. No words can express better the scope of this Thesis, other than the very same poetic thoughts that Dr. Henri Pouret has shared with us:

*“To tell the truth, every time I witness the lighting of the Olympic flame, I am deeply moved and shaken, moved by the brightness of the Peloponnesian sun which lights the fire and shaken because I have been allowed to witness the birth of a flame which springs to life and starts on a long journey. I often compare this birth of the flame to the genesis of athletic effort when, before the contest, the athlete moves to the starting line or when the thrower concentrates. We are then witnessing a mindsoaring beginning, a start, tinged with a feeling of anxiety about what will happen to that which has been created. In front of a rising flame we are filled with feelings of joy and fear at the same time when we think that this flame may flicker and become extinguished before reaching its goal. Dreaming in front of a fire is a wonderful way of creating images. Thanks to the fire, Prometheus' gift, man has light, heat, he can melt metals and become the master of matter. Man is the only living being who can guide fire, shape it, rekindle it and work with matter. Thanks to the fire he becomes the master of the world, the king of nature. Olympia is the starting point of an admirable relay race which will cover thousands of kilometres and in which will participate a great number of athletes, all proud and happy for the right to carry this torch, torch which in French is the masculine name for Flame which shines so gloriously.*

*This flame brings to all men of good will an image of peace and elevation. In this meditation on the flame we find the deep roots of the Olympic movement: the supremacy of Olympia —*

*the enthusiasm of the Games— the relay of generations and the celebration of athletic contests in front of this great witness, this flame, which has come from Greece...*

*If we have gathered here once more, it is to keep this sacred flame burning and find in our deliberations new reasons for happiness and hope in the face of the fraternity of men. I invite you to follow Pierre de Coubertin's advice: «Keep the sacred flame burning.» (POURET, 1976: 123)*

Dr. Pourret's exhortation must be realised for the good of the Olympic Movement and of humanity, not only symbolically, but also practically: the sacred, eternal flame of humanity and of the Olympic Games should return to its home land and burn eternally at the only appropriate place in the world, the site of Olympia and at the City halls of every city that have organised Olympic Games.

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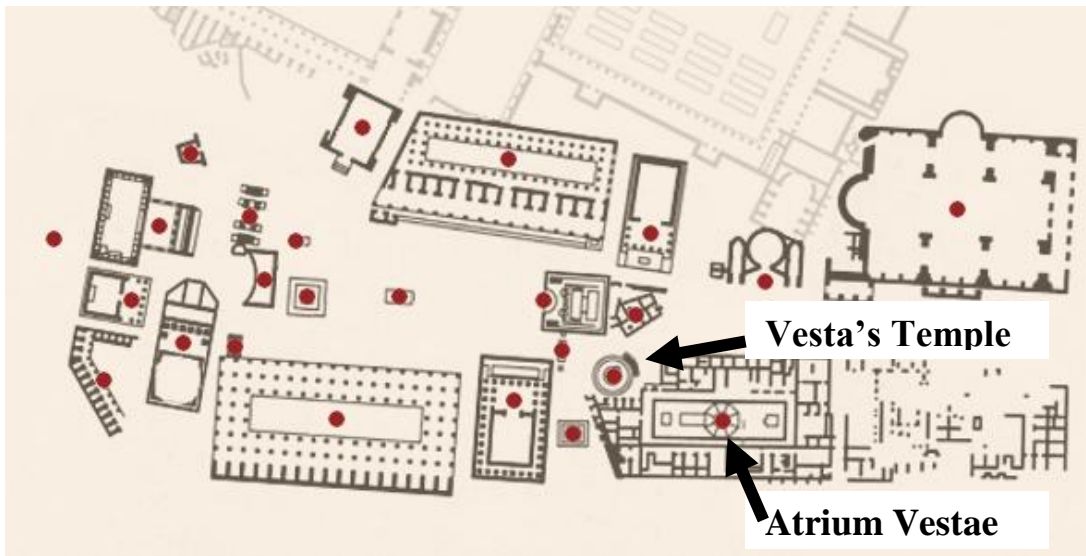
# Appendix II - Plates



**The eternal fire and the cult of goddess Hestia in Olympia and the Greco-Roman world. Is the Olympic Flame of the modern era well founded and linked with the ancient tradition?**



Pl. 1 Red-figure Bell Krater with Prometheus Fire-Lighter - See more at: <http://artgallery.yale.edu/collections/objects/red-figure-bell-krater-prometheus-fire-lighter>



Pl. 2 Plan of the Roman Forum. [http://penelope.uchicago.edu/~grout/encyclopaedia\\_romana/romanf/romanforum.html](http://penelope.uchicago.edu/~grout/encyclopaedia_romana/romanf/romanforum.html)



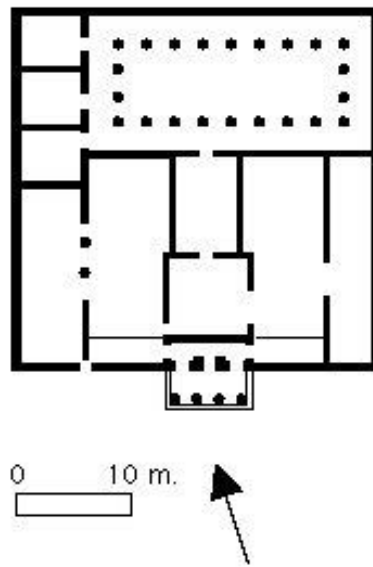


Pl. 3 Vesta's temple. View from the Palatine Hill  
[http://penelope.uchicago.edu/~grout/encyclopaedia\\_romana/romanf/vesta.html](http://penelope.uchicago.edu/~grout/encyclopaedia_romana/romanf/vesta.html)



Pl. 4 Atrium Vestae

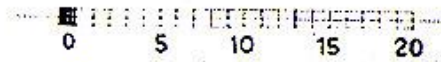
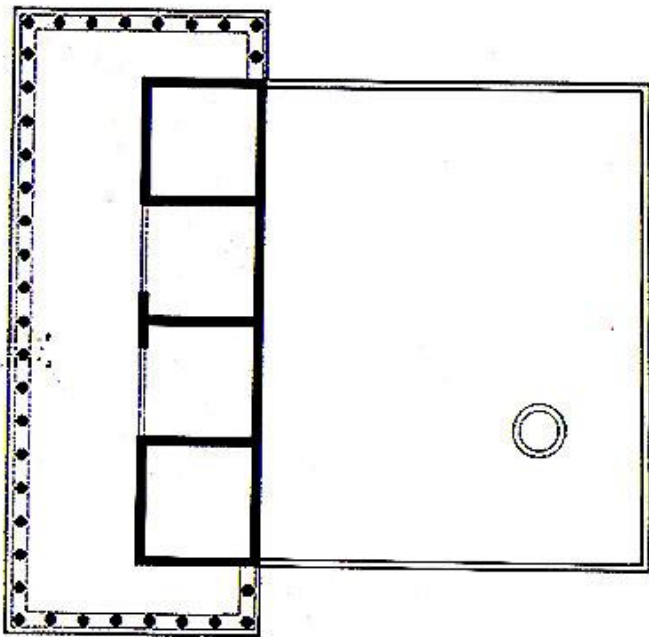
## Olympia, Prytaneion



Pl. 5 Plan of Prytaneion of Olympia



Pl. 6 View of Prytaneion of Olympia



Pl. 7 Plan of the Southeastern building of Olympia



Pl. 8 Amphitrite and Hestia, Berlin F 2278, Staatliche Museen zu <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/image?img=Perseus%3Aimage%992.07.0343>



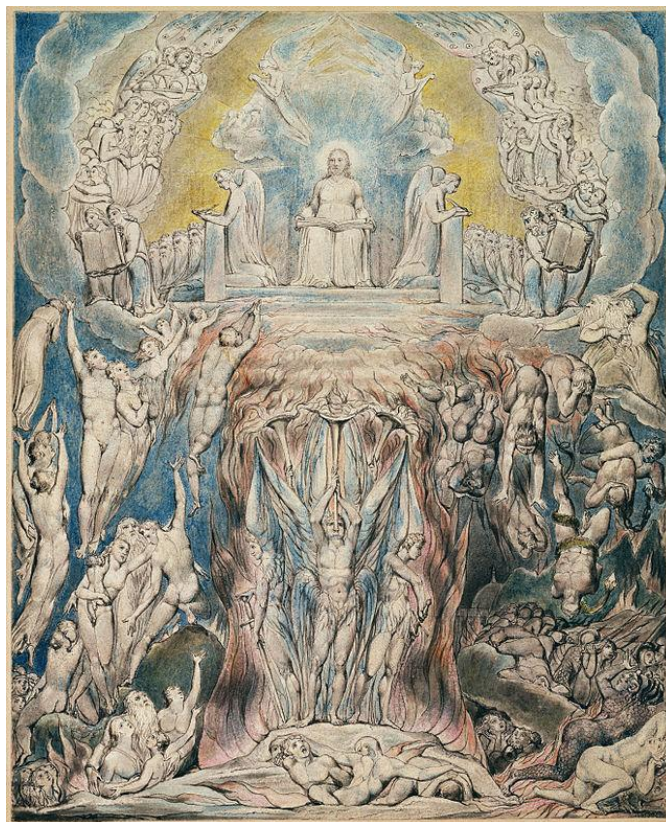
Pl. 9 Winner of a torch relay, standing before the altar framed by a priest. London, British Museum



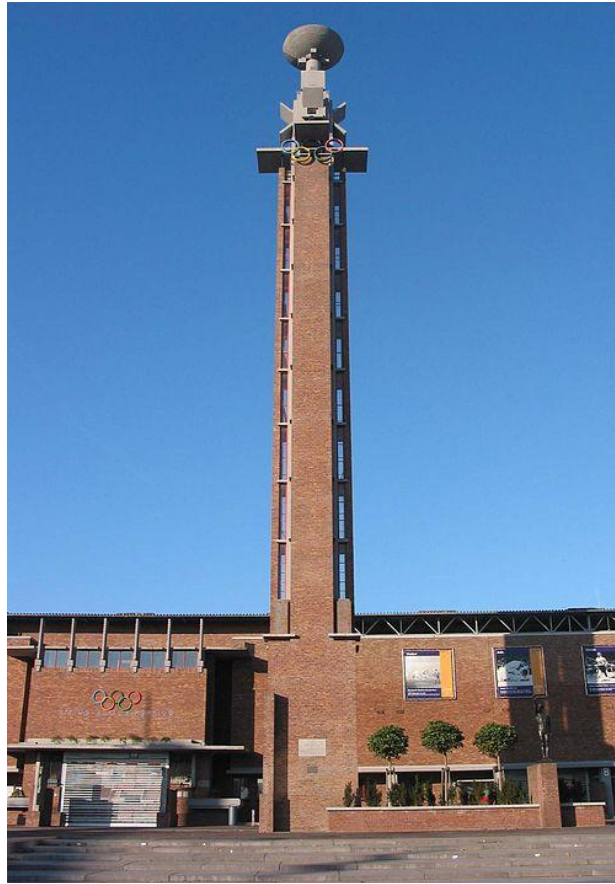
Plate 10 Two men working at fire. Toledo Museum of Art.  
<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/image?img=Perseus%3Aimage%991.10.0189>



Pl. 11 Stamp of the Hellenic Post issued for the lighting of the Olympic Flame of 1968, (Skiadas, The Olympic Flame, the torch of centuries,



Pl. 12 [William Blake's](#) "The Day of Judgment printed in 1808 to the [Robert Blair's](#) poem "[The Grave](#)".



Pl. 13 The Marathon Tower. Olympic Stadium. Amsterdam. Image from Wikimedia Commons is by Vincent Steenberg



Pl. 14: Participation medal from the 1928 Amsterdam Games by by Johann Wienecke (ANS 1942.129, gift of Mr. and Mrs. S.H.P. Pell) <http://ansmagazine.com/Winter03/Circle>



Pl. 15. The illuminated Marathon Tower and Stadium Square -  
(Olympic Report, Amsterdam 1928)



Pl. 16: Times Magazine 1932. (Skiadas, 1997: 23)



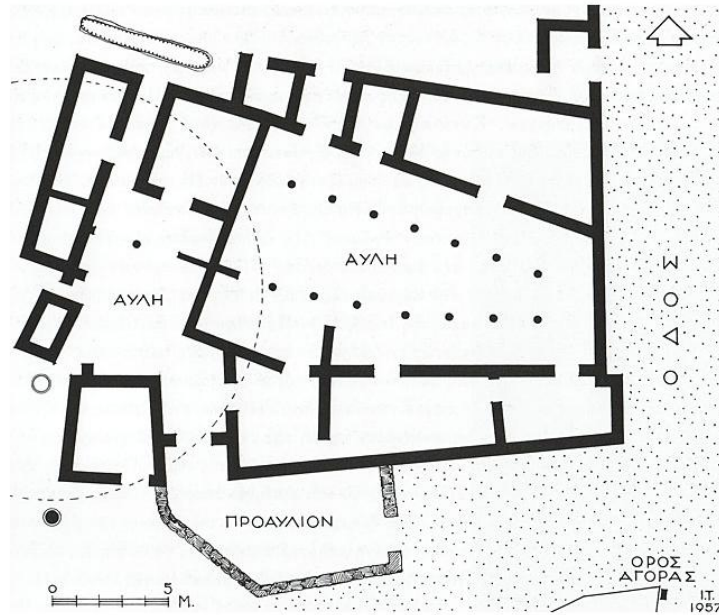
Pl.17 Marble votive relief dedicated to the goddess Bendis © The  
of the British Museum  
[http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection\\_online/collection\\_details/collection\\_image\\_gallery.aspx?assetId=366255&objectId=39&partId=1](http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_details/collection_image_gallery.aspx?assetId=366255&objectId=39&partId=1)



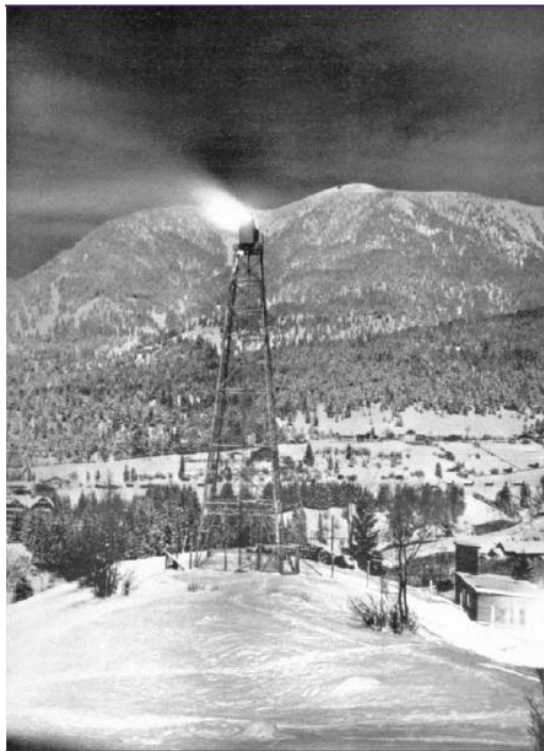
Pl. 18. Figures of three goddesses from the east pediment of the Parthenon representing from left to right Hestia, Dione and Aphrodite. © The Trustees of the British Museum

[http://www.britishmuseum.org/explore/highlights/highlight\\_objects/figures\\_of\\_3\\_goddesses.aspx](http://www.britishmuseum.org/explore/highlights/highlight_objects/figures_of_3_goddesses.aspx)





Pl. 19 Plan of the Prytaneion of the Athenian Agora. With dotted lines position occupied by the subsequent Tholos (Dome) is marked.  
[http://www.eie.gr/archaeologia/gr/02\\_DELTIA/Prytaneion.aspx](http://www.eie.gr/archaeologia/gr/02_DELTIA/Prytaneion.aspx)



Pl. 20 : For the first time at the Olympic Winter Games blazed on 6, 1936 the Olympic flame

# NANJING 2014

Search New

## Youth Olympic flame burns brightly for Nanjing 2014



30/04/2014

The flame for the second Summer Youth Olympic Games in Nanjing, China, was lit today in the Panathenaic Stadium in Athens, Greece. This marks the start of the Virtual Torch Relay which gives fans around the world the chance to get involved in the Youth Olympic Games via an interactive app before the flame arrives in China in August for the physical torch relay ahead of the Games.

Pl. 21 The Pseudo - Olympic or Panathenaic flame of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Summer Youth Olympic Games in Nanjing, China copyright [www.olympic.org](http://www.olympic.org)



Pl. 21 The Olympic ?? Fire in Lausanne.

source:

<http://vintage.johnnyjet.com/folder/archive/WheresJohnny06232010>.



Pl 22: Hannah Cockroft creating the Heritage Flame at Stoke Mandeville in March 2014. © • Getty Images  
<http://www.paralympic.org/news/first-ever-heritage-flame-lit-stoke-mandeville-historic-moment-paralympic-movement>



Pl. 23 The Marathon Flame <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2010/oct/31/greek-marathon-restore-finances>



**UNIVERSITY OF PELOPONNESE  
FACULTY OF HUMAN MOVEMENT AND  
QUALITY OF LIFE SCIENCES  
DEPARTMENT OF SPORTS  
ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT**

**MASTER'S THESIS**

**“OLYMPIC STUDIES, OLYMPIC EDUCATION, ORGANIZATION  
AND MANAGEMENT OF OLYMPIC EVENTS”**

## **THE OLYMPIC FLAME SURVEY**

**18 – 24 August 2014**

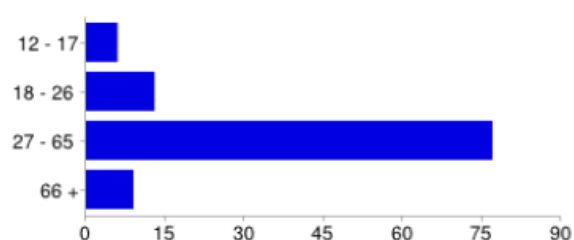


**Total Answers: 105**

**© Konstantinos V. Antonopoulos**

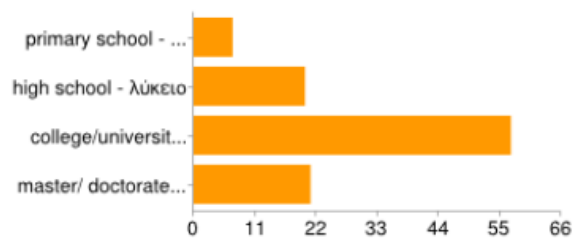
**Implemented with the voluntary support of  
Alexadra Sotiropoulou  
Teacher at the Grammar School of Ancient Olympia  
Paraskevi Kalantzi  
Student, Ionian University, Corfu**

### Your age range - Ηλικία



12 - 17	6	6%
18 - 26	13	12%
27 - 65	77	73%
66 +	9	9%

### Your Education - Εκπαίδευση



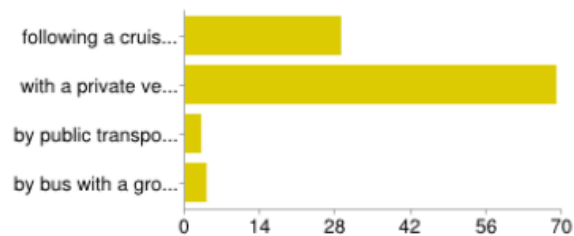
primary school - δημοτικό	7	7%
high school - λύκειο	20	19%
college/university - πανεπιστήμιο	57	54%
master/ doctorate - μεταπτυχιακό / διδακτορικό	21	20%

### Your sex - Φύλλο



male - άνδρας	44	42%
female - γυναίκα	55	52%

### You came to Olympia... - Ήρθατε στην Ολυμπία....

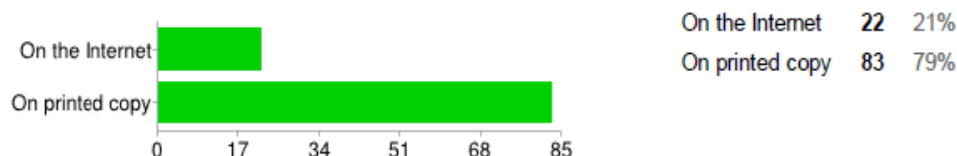


following a cruise - με κρουαζιέρα	29	28%
with a private vehicle - με ιδιωτικό όχημα	69	66%
by public transportation - με δημόσια συγκοινωνία	3	3%
by bus with a group - με οργανωμένο γκρούπ	4	4%

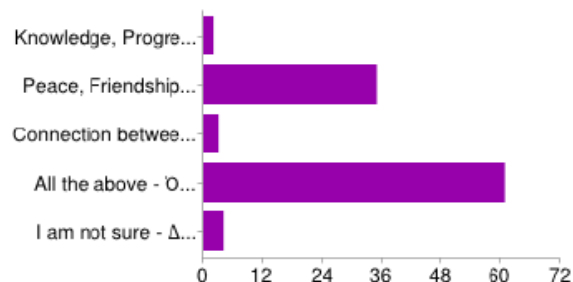
## Your Country of Origin - Τόπος διαμονής

SCOTLAND ΑΘΗΝΑ, GERMANY, PORTUGAL, NETHERLAND, ΕΛΛΑΔΑ, ΝΕΑ ΖΗΛΑΝΔΙΑ, ΑΥΣΤΡΑΛΙΑ, ΙΤΑΛΙΑ, ΕΓΥΡΤ, U.S.A., U.S.A., ΝΕΑ ΖΗΛΑΝΔΙΑ, U. K., U.S.A., ΙΤΑΛΙΑ, CANADA, ΠΕΙΡΑΙΑ, ΝΑΟΥΣΑ, U.S.A., U.S.A., GERMANY, U.S.A., ENGLAND, ENGLAND, ΘΕΣΣΑΛΟΝΙΚΗ, ΠΥΡΓΟ, ΑΥΣΤΡΑΛΙΑ, ΑΥΣΤΡΑΛΙΑ, CANADA, CANADA, ΚΑΛΑΜΑΤΑ, U.K., ΙΣΠΑΝΙΑ, ΙΣΠΑΝΙΑ, ΣΟΥΗΔΙΑ, ΒΕΛΓΙΟ, ΑΥΣΤΡΑΛΙΑ, ΑΥΣΤΡΑΛΙΑ, U. K., ENGLAND, ΕΛΛΑΔΑ, CANADA, ΑΘΗΝΑ, ΕΛΛΑΔΑ, SLOVENIA, ΑΘΗΝΑ, ΠΕΡΙΣΤΕΡΙ Ν. ΑΤΤΙΚΗΣ, ΑΘΗΝΑ, ΑΘΗΝΑ, ΑΘΗΝΑ, ΓΑΛΛΙΑ, ΚΙΑΤΟ, CANADA, CANADA, GERMANY, ΑΘΗΝΑ, ΕΛΛΑΔΑ, ΓΑΛΛΙΑ, ENGLAND, ΕΛΛΑΔΑ, ΟΛΥΜΠΙΑ, ROLAND, ROLAND, U.K., ΣΠΙΑΝΤΖΑ, CANADA, CANADA, ΕΛΛΑΔΑ, ΓΑΛΛΙΑ, ΛΑΡΙΣΑ, ΣΠΙΑΝΤΖΑ, ΑΥΣΤΡΑΛΙΑ, ΚΥΠΡΟΣ, ΠΥΡΓΟ, ΑΘΗΝΑ, ΙΣΠΑΝΙΑ, ΙΣΠΑΝΙΑ, ENGLAND, ΠΕΙΡΑΙΑ, ΙΤΑΛΙΑ, ΙΤΑΛΙΑ, JAPAN, ATHENS, GREECE, ΕΛΛΑΔΑ, ΠΥΡΓΟΣ, ΠΥΡΓΟΣ, ΕΛΛΑΔΑ, HELLAS, BRAZIL, PORTUGAL, GREECE, ΠΥΡΓΟΣ, GREECE, GREECE, ΑΘΗΝΑ, ΑΘΗΝΑ, ΕΛΛΑΔΑ, ΓΕΡΜΑΝΙΑ, GREECE, GREECE, ΕΛΛΑΔΑ, GREECE, ΟΛΥΜΠΙΑ, ΧΑΛΚΙΔΑ

## You completed this questionnaire...

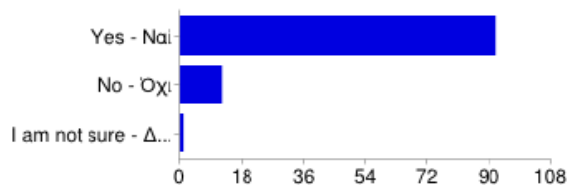


## What do you believe is the symbolism of the Olympic Flame?



Knowledge, Progress, Civilization, Prosperity - Γνώση, Πρόοδος, Πολιτισμός, Ευημερία	2	2%
Peace, Friendship, Solidarity, Unity - Ειρήνη, Φιλία, Αλληλεγγύη, Ενότητα	35	33%
Connection between the ancient games and the modern ones - Σύνδεση των αρχαίων με τους σύγχρονους αγώνες	3	3%
All the above - Όλα τα παραπάνω	61	58%
I am not sure - Δεν είμαι σίγουρος/η	4	4%

The Olympic Flame for the modern Olympic Games is ignited in the Archaeological Site of Olympia by sun's rays some months before the event and it is transferred to the host city with a torch relay. Did you know that before you visited Olympia (or before you completed this questionnaire? )

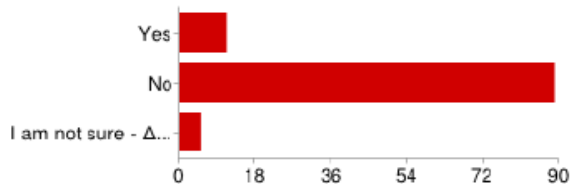


Yes - Ναι	92	88%
No - Όχι	12	11%
I am not sure - Δεν είμαι σίγουρος/η	1	1%

### The Olympic Flame was the main reason that made me visit Ancient Olympia

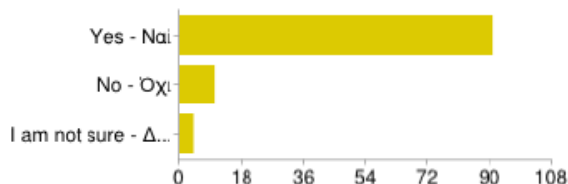


### Before you visited Olympia, did you expect to see a flame burning in the site?



Yes	11	10%
No	89	85%
I am not sure - Δεν είμαι σίγουρος/η	5	5%

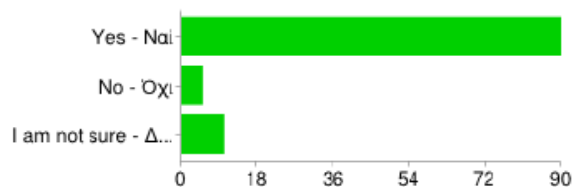
### Have you ever watched (live, on tv, or on internet) the Ceremony of the Lighting of the Olympic Flame?



Yes - Ναι	91	87%
No - Όχι	10	10%
I am not sure - Δεν είμαι σίγουρος/η	4	4%

Throughout antiquity, the eternal\* (never extinguished), sacred flame of Olympia was burning

in Prytaneion. Would you like to see a permanent flame burning again inside the archaeological site of Olympia?

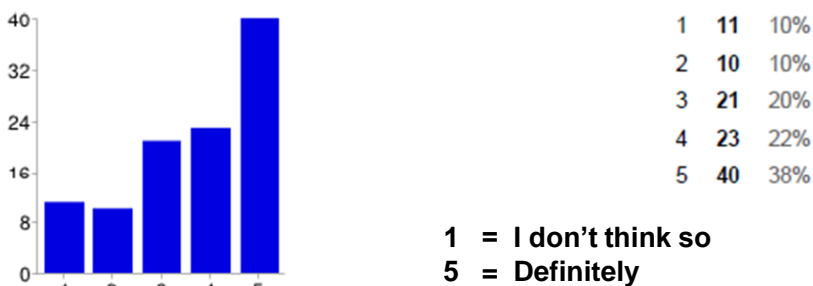


Yes - Ναι	90	86%
No - Όχι	5	5%
I am not sure - Δεν είμαι σίγουρος/η	10	10%

If a permanent flame will be established in the site of Olympia, would the connection between modern and ancient Olympic Games be enhanced?



Under the condition that the Ceremony of the Lighting of the Olympic Flame will be preserved, it would be a strong reason for me to re-visit Olympia if a permanent flame will be established inside the archaeological site.



The Olympic Flame should not be extinguished during the closing ceremony of the modern Olympic Games but for the sake of its symbolism should be preserved eternally at the Olympic Stadium of every city that have hosted Olympic Games.





## Comments

Most enjoyable visit. I have learnt a lot.

Σε σχέση με την απάντηση 6, ο ερωτώμενος ήρθε στον Ολυμπία κάνοντας ωροστόπ.

Keep the spirit. :)

ΤΥΧΗ ΑΓΑΘΗ.....

Yes, but not in the stadium. Because other events are taking place in.

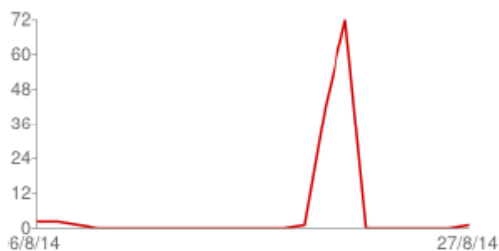
Wonderful visit, thank you for all the work to show past history. Loved it!

Σε σχέση με την ερώτηση 9, ο ερωτώμενος θεώρησε πως η Ολυμπιακή Φλόγα συμβολίζει το χρήμα.

Θα μπορούσε να συνδυαστεί με διάφορα δρώμενα και αναπαραστάσεις.

## Thank you - Ευχαριστούμε

### Αριθμός καθημερινών απαντήσεων



Με την υποστήριξη της



# THE OLYMPIC FLAME SURVEY

18 – 24 August 2014

© Konstantinos V. Antonopoulos

## Photos



