Pierre de Frédy, Baron de Coubertin

- A French historian and educator who revived the Olympic games at the end of 19th century.
- He believed that sports education must be a significant part of young people’s personal development.
- In 1894 together with Demitrios Vikelas, Coubertin founded the International Olympic Committee.
Pierre de Frédy, Baron de Coubertin

• According to David Young, Professor of Classics at the University of Florida, Baron Pierre de Coubertin assiduously promoted himself as the lone force behind the Olympics - and deliberately obscured the contributions of Evangelos Zappas and a handful of other, now mostly forgotten Greek and British advocates for the games.

• “He took an idea that others had been failing at, but working at for decades - he took that idea and claimed it as his own and made it work,” Young said. “The credit for the Olympics really goes to the good luck and hard work of several people.”
Pierre de Frédy, Baron de Coubertin

- “Coubertin was a very active sportsman and practiced the sports of boxing, fencing, horse-riding and rowing,” according to the committee’s Web site. “He was convinced that sport was the springboard for moral energy and he defended his idea with rare tenacity. It was this conviction that led him to announce at the age of 31 that he wanted to revive the Olympic Games.”

- Yet the Games had been revived in Athens four year before he was born in 1859 by Evangelos Zappas.
Evangelos Zappas

- A Greek businessman, philanthropist and the real founder of the modern Olympic Games.
- In 1856 he wrote to King Otto of Greece offering 400 shares in his steamship company so that the dividends could be used to establish the Olympic Games.
- In 1859, the Olympic Games were revived in a city square in Athens, Greece. Zappas died before the next Games that he had sponsored, but due to his bequeathing a large part of his fortune for the continued revival of the Olympic Games, they were held again in 1870, and 1875 at the Panathenian stadium in Athens
- [http://www.zappas.org/timeline.html](http://www.zappas.org/timeline.html)
Evangelos Zappas

- According to David Young, Zappas and other Greeks revived the Olympics with the intention of helping Greece return to its pre-eminence in Europe.
Zappeion Megaron

In 1896, in Athens the first modern Olympic Games took place, after the idea of the French Pierre de Coubertin to revive the games became reality. Although the number of participating athletes was low by current standards, it had the largest international participation for any sports event to that date. In spite of the absence of many of the time's top athletes, the Games were a success with the Greek public.
The Panathinaiko (Panathenaic) Stadium, which in the ancient times hosted the athletic portion of the Panathenaic Games in honor of the Goddess Athena, was rebuilt especially for the big event. The rebuilding was based on designs by architects Anastasios Metaxas and Ernst Ziller.

Ernst Ziller later became a Greek national, and in the late 1800s and early 1900s was a major designer of royal and municipal buildings in Athens, Patras and other major Greek cities.
The legend of Pheidippides, a Greek soldier, who was sent from the town of Marathon to Athens to announce that the Persians had been defeated in the Battle of Marathon became an inspiration for the creation of the marathon race. According to the legend, Pheidippides ran the entire distance without stopping and burst into the Senate, exclaiming "Νενικήκαμεν" (Nenikékamen, 'We have won' or 'We are victorious') before collapsing and dying of exhaustion.
The Greek water-carrier Spiridon Louis was the victor of the first modern day Marathon in 1896.

"Here the Olympic Victor was received with full honour; the King rose from his seat and congratulated him most warmly on his success. Some of the King’s aides-de-camp, and several members of the Committee went so far as to kiss and embrace the victor, who finally was carried in triumph to the retiring room under the vaulted entrance. The scene witnessed then inside the Stadion cannot be easily described, and even foreigners were carried away by the general enthusiasm."
Greece’s Dual Identity

- According to Alexander Kitroeff, *Wrestling with the Ancients: Modern Greek Identity and the Olympics*, Greece is experiencing a "dual identity, as heir to the classical tradition, and as a modern European state"

- "ever since its establishment almost two centuries ago, modern Greece has merged a deeply seated sense of continuity with ancient Greece into an equally deeply felt belief that it is part of a "civilized" (that is developed) Europe. Coubertin invited Greeks to play both roles in the context of the international Olympic movement. "... Coubertin himself became the first victim of the Greeks' overzealousness; ultimately however, the Greeks found their appropriate place as the guardians of tradition, even to Coubertin's satisfaction."
Greece’s Dual Identity

- Kitroeff sees the 2004 Olympics as the "ultimate test of Greece's ability to balance an Olympics steeped in tradition with one run efficiently." He traces this theme through the origins of the modern Olympic movement, the Athens Games of 1896 and 1906, the development of the Hellenic Olympic Committee (HOC), the appropriation of Greek antiquity and Hellenic imagery to Nazi purposes at the Berlin Olympics of 1936 (where Kitroeff treats the HOC harshly), Karamanlis's proposals in 1976 and 1980 to "redeem" the politicized Olympics by repatriating them to Greece, the failure of Greece's bid for the 1996 centennial Olympics, the successful bid for 2004, and the preparations for the 2004 games.