

Pindaric Ode for the London Olympics 2012

Commissioned by the Mayor of London, Boris Johnson

Composed and translated by Armand D'Angour

Behold this new Olympic torch, the flames
that first blazed forth at Greece's early dawn:
Now give a rousing welcome to these Games,
on London's riverbanks reborn.

ἴδεσθε καινὸν πῦρ τόδ' Ὀλυμπικόν,
ὅ γ' ἐξέλαμψε πρόσθε καθ' Ἑλλάδα.
ἀλλ' ἠδέως δέχεσθε τᾶθλα
Λονδινίου ποταμοῦ παρ' ὄχθας.

Applaud as rival teams, in sport allied,
march in from the far corners of the earth.
The poet now must emulate their stride
and craft an ode to sporting worth.

ὑμνεῖτε δ' αἶγλην ἀντιπάλων σοφῶν,
στρατὸς γὰρ ἦλθεν ἐκ περάτων χθονός·
καὶ χρῆ μεγίσταις ᾧδ' ἀοιδόν
ἀμφ' ἀρεταῖσι καθ' ἄρμ' ἐλαύνειν.

A countless throng of watchers will observe
the dazzling relays of the running-teams,
watch rival oarsmen straining every nerve,
and gymnasts on the balance-beams.

πλῆθος θεατῶν μυρίον ὄψεται
ὄρμην τρεχόντων καὶ λιπαρὰν χάριν,
σπουδὴν τ' ἐρεσσόντων ἐταίρων
ἀκροβατῶν τε δοκοῦς πατούντων.

The crowds will view with wonder and delight
the rider urge her horse about and back,
the skillful archer draw his bowstring tight,
the lightning bolt around the track.

θεάσεται δὲ χάσματι τοξότην
τείνοντα νευράν, καὶ ποδὶ σωφρόνως
τὸν ἵππότην στρέφοντα πῶλον
ἀστεροπῆς τε σέλας θεούσης.

The drums will volley and the pipes play loud
as tales of victory are daily told;
the stands will echo to the cheering crowd
when victors raise the prize of gold.

πρέψουσι δ' αὐλοὶ καὶ τύπανον βρόμῳ
τιμῆς φλεγούσης πολλὰ καθ' ἡμέραν·
ὄχλος δ' ἀϋσει καλλίνικε
χρῦσε' ἄεθλ' ἐσιδῶν φέροντας.

Now welcome all to Britain's sea-girt land:
join London's Mayor and company within.
To all who strive may fortune lend a hand:
applaud, and let the Games begin!

δεῦτ' αὖτε γῆν ἐς τήνδε περιόρουτον·
ἀρχῶν γὰρ ἄγχι καὶ πρύτανις βαρῦς.
νίκη δ' ἀρίστοις αἰὲν ἔστω·
νῦν κρότος, αἶψα δὲ τᾶθλ' ἀγέσθω.

Winners in the Ancient Greek Olympic Games were honoured with Victory Odes, the greatest composer of which was Pindar (c. 522-443 BC). The tradition was revived at the Athens Olympics of 1896, and again at Athens in 2004. The Mayor of London commissioned this Ode to be delivered at the Opening Session of the International Olympic Committee at the London 2012 Olympic Games.