



XVIth Olympic Winter Games. Albertville, 1992

The Organising Committee of the XVIth Winter Olympics 1992 in Albertville prepared identical flower bouquets for the award of the winners and medallists of the Olympic competitions. The components of the Olympic bouquet were the already familiar red gerberas (*lat. Gerbera jamesonii*) and pure white daisies (*lat. Bellis perennis*), along with branches of fir (*lat. Abies*). The delicate gerberas in the bouquet symbolise joy and well-being, love, and happiness. The white daisies represent faithfulness, the strength of simplicity, and tenderness. The branches of the evergreen fir symbolise longevity, immortality, eternal youth, and strength. The bouquet was wrapped in silver foil, reminiscent of the sparkle of snow and ice.

According to the Organising Committee's plan, two types of award ceremonies were held: the presentation of flowers at the end of the final race or match at the competition venue (especially relevant for ice hockey, short track, speed skating, and curling, which took place indoors and where medals were awarded within 15 minutes after the competition), and the medal presentation on the snow platform in La Plagne, where a large number of spectators could be accommodated, and the entertainment aspect was most pronounced. Identical bouquets were used for both ceremonies.

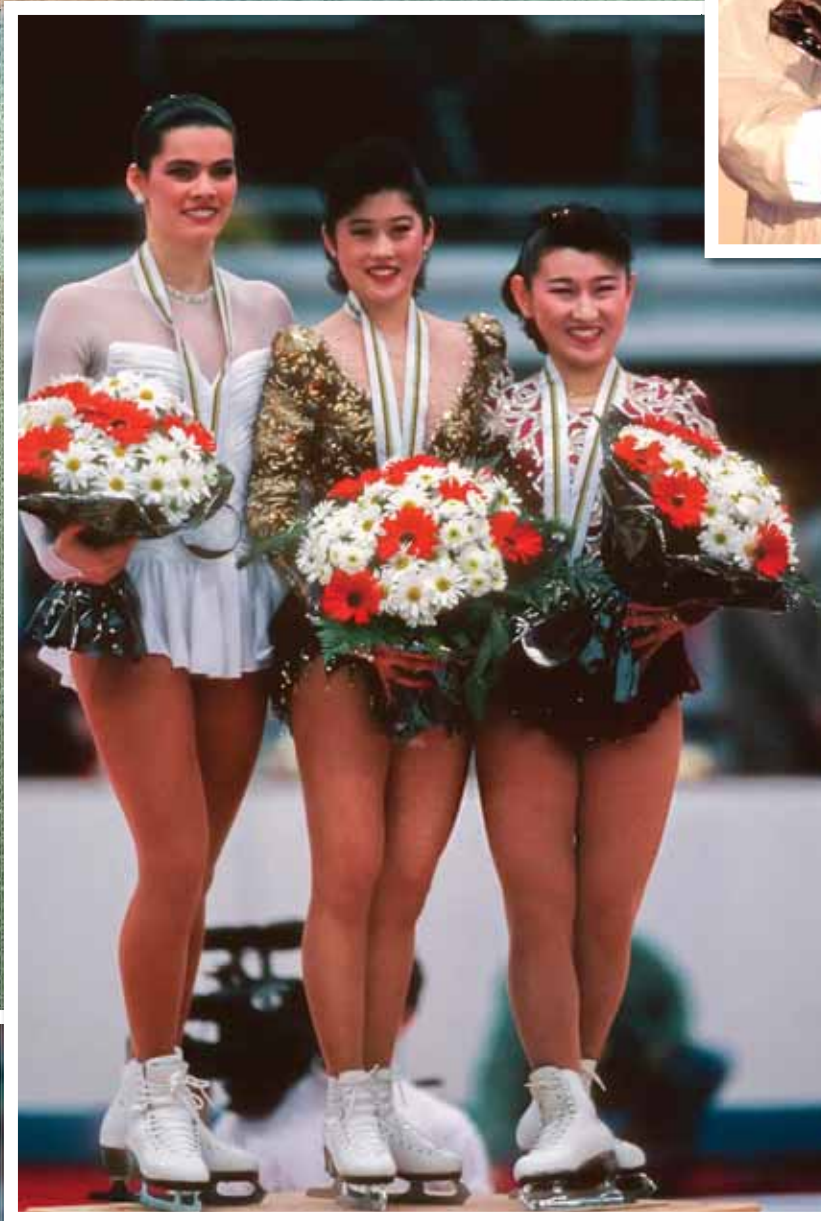
**Victory Ceremony for the women's 3x7.5 km relay biathlon.
1992, Albertville**



*Olympic bouquet for the XVIth
Olympic Winter Games of 1992
in Albertville*



Silver medallist in giant slalom at the Olympics, Carole Merle (France), with an award bouquet



Canadian alpine skier Kerrin Lee-Gartner, Olympic champion in downhill skiing, with a bouquet of flowers at the 1992 Winter Olympics in Albertville



Winners of the Olympic figure skating competition in the women's singles: bronze medallist Nancy Kerrigan (USA), champion Kristi Yamaguchi (USA), and silver medallist Midori Ito (Japan) celebrating their Olympic success



For the Olympic bouquet of the 1992 Games of the XXVth Olympiad in Barcelona, a flower with a dense and bright cap of delicate inflorescences resembling a little cloud — statice (*lat. Limonium*), and small white carnations (*lat. Dianthus Caryophyllus*) were chosen by the Organising Committee to remind of the Mediterranean vibe.

Statice, or sea lavender, is a genus of perennial herbs widespread in the Mediterranean. This plant requires little moisture and retains its original appearance for a long time, making it a symbol of memory, beauty, and longevity. In the Olympic bouquet, statice serves as a reminder to athletes of that significant day when they received their Olympic medals, and carnations, a symbol of Spain, embody love, friendship, resilience, and sincerity.

The Games of the XXVth Olympiad. Barcelona, 1992

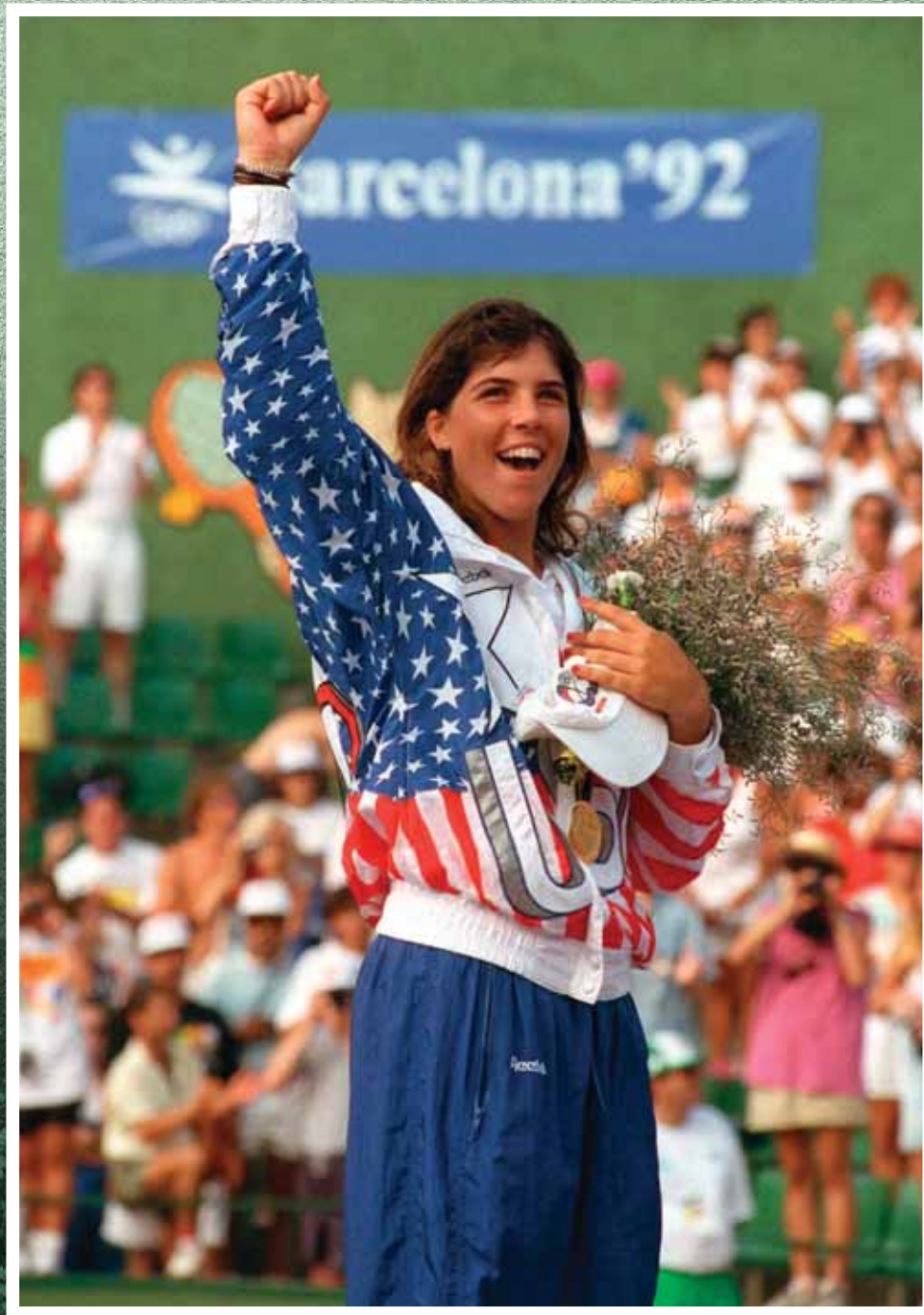


Olympic medals and bouquets are delivered for the Victory Ceremony



Vitaly Scherbo of CIF – men's gymnastic all-around Olympic champion celebrating his victory

American tennis player Jennifer Capriati, the Olympic champion in women's singles tennis, with Olympic awards





Women's figure skating (singles) winners with their Olympic awards: silver – Nancy Kerrigan (USA), champion Oksana Baiul (Ukraine), bronze – Chen Lu (China)

The Olympic bouquet for the winners of the XVIIth Olympic Winter Games of 1994 in Lillehammer was presented with white and yellow tulips (*lat. Tulipa*). White flowers are associated with purity and nobility, and yellow with joy, sun, prosperity, and success.

A bouquet of delicate first flowers, a symbol of spring and rebirth, signifies the organisers' pure intentions and their desire to give warmth and care to the winners of the Games.

For the events held at venues distant from the Medal Plaza, a celebratory ceremony for the winners and medallists of the Olympic competitions took place immediately after their completion – athletes were awarded original bouquets made of pine (*lat. Pinus*) branches, cones (*lat. Strobilus*), and frost-resistant flowers, adorned with festive ribbons.



XVIIth Olympic Winter Games. Lillehammer, 1994



◀ Bronze medallists of the women's 4x5 km relay – team of Italy – awarded after finishing in the event



Ukrainian figure skater Oksana Baiul, Olympic champion in women's singles, with a bouquet in her hands. 1994, Lillehammer



The Victory Ceremony in speed skating (5,000 m). From the left: silver medallists – team of the USA, gold – team of Italy, bronze – team of Australia



Italian Manuela Di Centa, a two-time Olympic champion in women's cross-country skiing (15 and 30 km)



The Olympic bouquet of the 1996 Games of the XXVIth Olympiad in Atlanta an exquisite work of floral art was designed by Mary Jo Means and. Five flowers were chosen, likely to echo the five Olympic rings. The blooms included sunflowers (*lat. Helianthus*), tiger lilies (*lat. Lilium lancifolium*), larkspur (*lat. Delphinium elatum*), cockscomb (*lat. Amaranthus*), tuberose (*lat. Polianthes tuberosa*) palm (*lat. Arecaceae*) leaves, and a laurel (*lat. Laurus nobilis*) branch.

The word "helianthus," or "flower of the Sun," comes from the Greek words "helios" (sun) and "anthemon" (flower). The sunflower, native to North America, symbolises resilience, vitality, optimism, faith in the future, abundance, luck, and well-being.

Lilies are an ancient symbol of purity, sincerity, love, loyalty, and noble origin. The orange lilies included in the Olympic bouquet signify success, gratitude, and respect.

Blue delphinium embodies regality, spirituality, new beginnings, and the joy of life. It emphasises the unique individuality of the recipient.

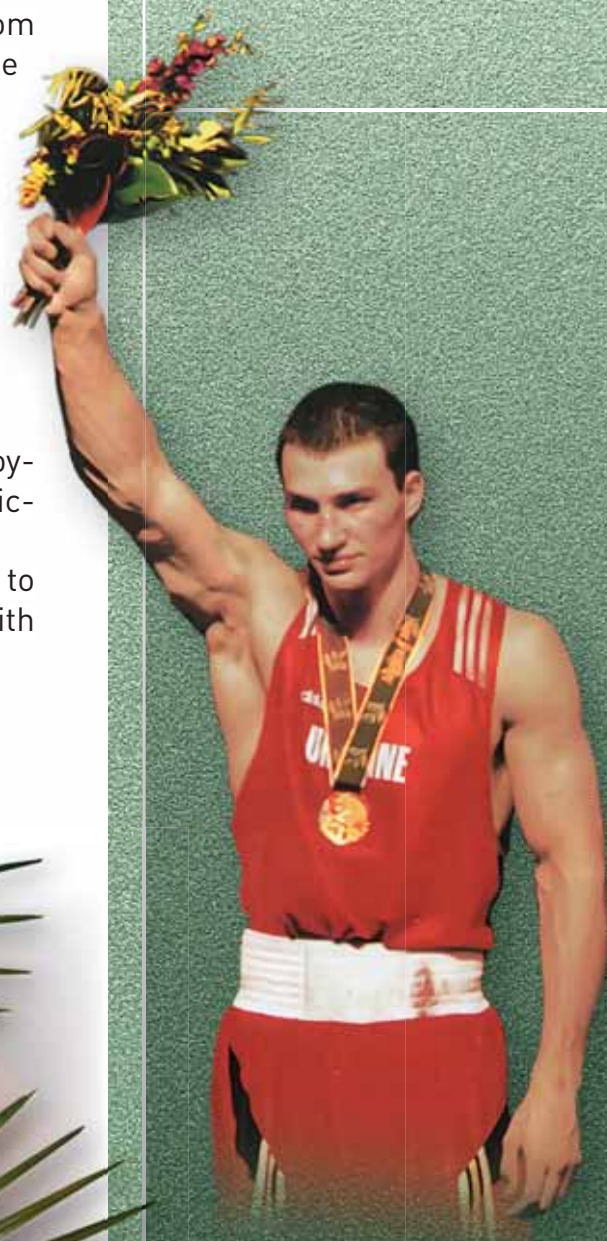
Red cockscomb is a symbol of immortality, faith, and loyalty. The palm branch, like the laurel branch, symbolises victory, triumph, peace, and eternal life.

The Olympic floral composition conveys the message to the winners: "You are a special person who enchants with your unique individuality."

Olympic bouquet of the 1996 Games in Atlanta



The Games of the XXVIth Olympiad. Atlanta, 1996



*Ukrainian Vladimir Klitschko,
Olympic boxing champion in
the weight category over 91 kg,
with Olympic awards*



Poster of the Games of the XXVIth Olympiad featuring the image of the award-winning Olympic bouquet. Bouquet for the winner. Author: American artist Comer Jennings. Atlanta, Georgia, USA

The floral composition for awarding the winners and medallists of the XVIIIth Olympic Winter Games of 1998 in Nagano consisted of traditional Japanese flowers – chrysanthemums (*lat. Chrysanthemum*). In the Land of the Rising Sun, the chrysanthemum is both a symbol of the sun and the nation. The stylised image of the sixteen-petal imperial golden chrysanthemum is the basis of the state emblem. For a long time, the depiction of this flower was considered sacred in Japan, and only the emperor and members of his family had the right to wear garments with chrysanthemum patterns as a sign of power, dignity, honour, and immortality. The chrysanthemum symbolises nobility, purity, faith, and love.

To allow spectators and team members present at the final stage of these Games to greet the winners and not wait until the evening Victory Ceremony, a decision was made to hold a preliminary award ceremony called the “Flower Ceremony,” during which athletes were presented with bouquets only. According to the International Olympic Committee, the tradition of holding Flower Ceremonies was initiated at the XVIIIth Olympic Winter Games in Nagano in 1998; however, photographs from previous Olympic Winter Games in Calgary (1988) and Albertville (1992) show athletes awarded with flower bouquets after the completion of Olympic events competitions.

In 1998 for the first time in the Olympic history at the official Flower Ceremony, winners and medallists were honoured with elaborate bouquets. The composition of white, pink, yellow, and red chrysanthemums arranged around dried branches in the shape of a sphere, resembling a bird’s nest was awarded. This element added a unique texture and symbolism to the bouquet, representing warmth, protection, and the idea of a safe haven-fitting themes for athletes who had reached the pinnacle of their careers.

Medallists in women's freestyle skiing (moguls) at the first official Flower Ceremony in history. In the centre is Olympic champion Tae Satoya (Japan)



XVIIIth Olympic Winter Games. Nagano, 1998



French snowboarder Karine Ruby, Olympic champion in giant slalom, at the medal and bouquet Victory Ceremony





Winners of the Olympic biathlon competition (men's 4x7.5 km relay), Team Germany, at the Flower Ceremony. 1998, Nagano



Poster featuring Olympic memorabilia. The stamps depict the flowers included in the Olympic bouquet

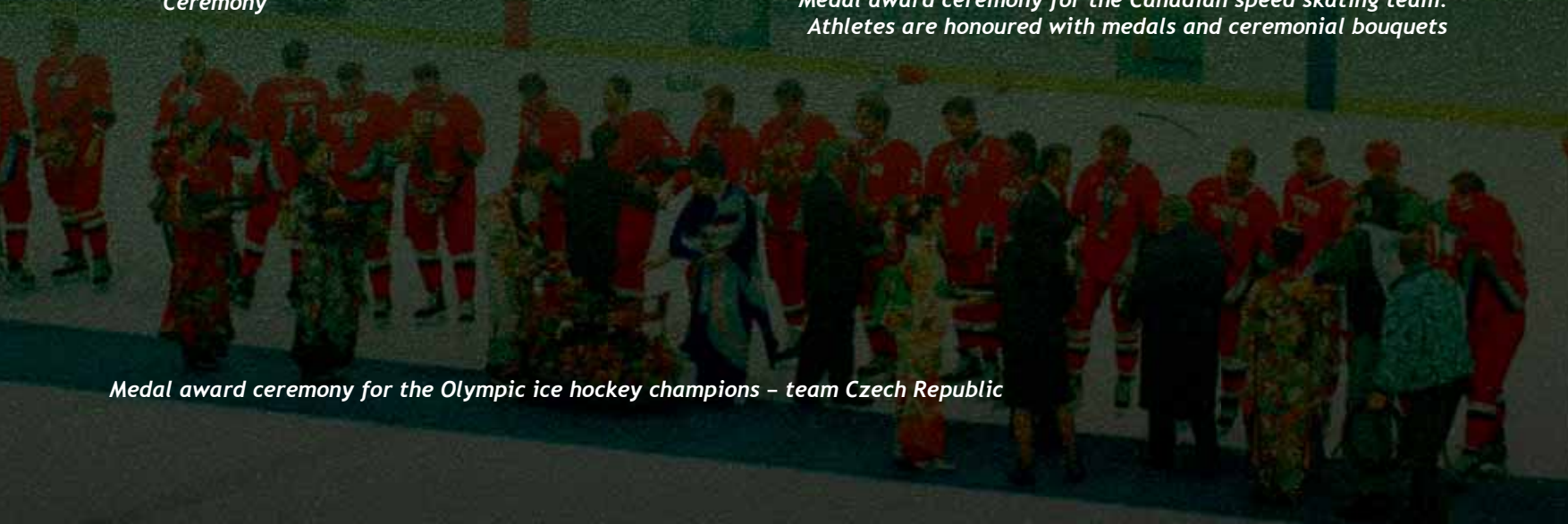


Olympic champion in women's figure skating (women's singles) Tara Lipinski at the Victory Ceremony



Medal award ceremony for the Canadian speed skating team. Athletes are honoured with medals and ceremonial bouquets

Medal award ceremony for the Olympic ice hockey champions – team Czech Republic



The Games of the XXVIIth Olympiad. Sydney, 2000

The unique floral composition of the Olympic bouquet for the 2000 Games of the XXVIIth Olympiad in Sydney was created using endemic flowers and plants from all over Australia.

The author of the concept and creator of the floral composition was Jamie Cree, managing director of Australian Flower Company, which produced over five thousand bouquets. The composition consisted of sixteen flowers, including the billy buttons (*lat. Craspedia*) and kangaroo paws (*lat. Anigozanthos*) from Western Australia, flannel flowers (*lat. Actinotus helianthi*) from Victoria, three varieties of grevillea (*lat. Grevillea*) from the tropical forests of Queensland, the evergreen wax flower (*lat. Chamelaucium*) from South Australia, the hammer banksia (*lat. Banksia grossa*) from the sandy soils of southwestern Western Australia, the waratah (*lat. Telopea speciosissima*) from New South Wales, and leaves of the white oak (*lat. Quercus alba*).

The creators of the Olympic bouquet aimed to showcase the diversity and beauty of Australia's flora – and they brilliantly succeeded! Through the language of Australian flowers, the organisers wished the winners and medallists of the Games prosperity, vitality, longevity, health, resilience, and patience in overcoming challenges.



Laura Wilkinson (USA) –
Olympic champion in women's
10-meter platform diving
at the medal award ceremony



◀ Victory Ceremony for triple
jump. On the Olympic podium:
silver medallist Tatyana
Lebedeva (RF), champion Tereza
Marinova (Bulgaria), bronze
medallist Olena Hovorova
(Ukraine) celebrating their
victory



Team of Australia, winners of the Olympic swimming competition (men's 4x200 m relay), at the medal award ceremony with medals, bouquets, and mascots. 2000, Sydney



MEDALLISTS' BOUQUET
BOUQUET DES MÉDAILLÉS

Games of the XXIII Olympiad · Jeux de la XXIIIe Olympiade

Ken Down

Poster featuring the main symbols of the Olympic Sydney, including the Olympic bouquet. The poster was created by Australian artist Ken Down





XIXth Olympic Winter Games. Salt Lake City, 2002

At the XIXth Olympic Winter Games of 2002 in Salt Lake City, during the Flower Ceremonies that took place after the final competitions at their conclusion site, athletes were greeted with vibrant bouquets of sun-flowers (*lat. Helianthus annuus*), yellow-orange gerberas (*lat. Gerbera jamesonii*), yellow roses (*lat. Rosas*), blue and violet statice (*lat. Limonium*). The bouquets were wrapped with yellow ribbons. Moreover, each evening at the official Victory Ceremony held at the "Olympic Medal Plaza," athletes were presented with bouquets of twenty five yellow roses shaped like an Olympic torch. The choice of roses for the bouquet was deliberate, as this flower is declared the national floral emblem of the United States. Through the Olympic bouquets of yellow roses, Americans expressed admiration, friendship, and respect for outstanding athletes, wishing them joy, happiness, and good health.

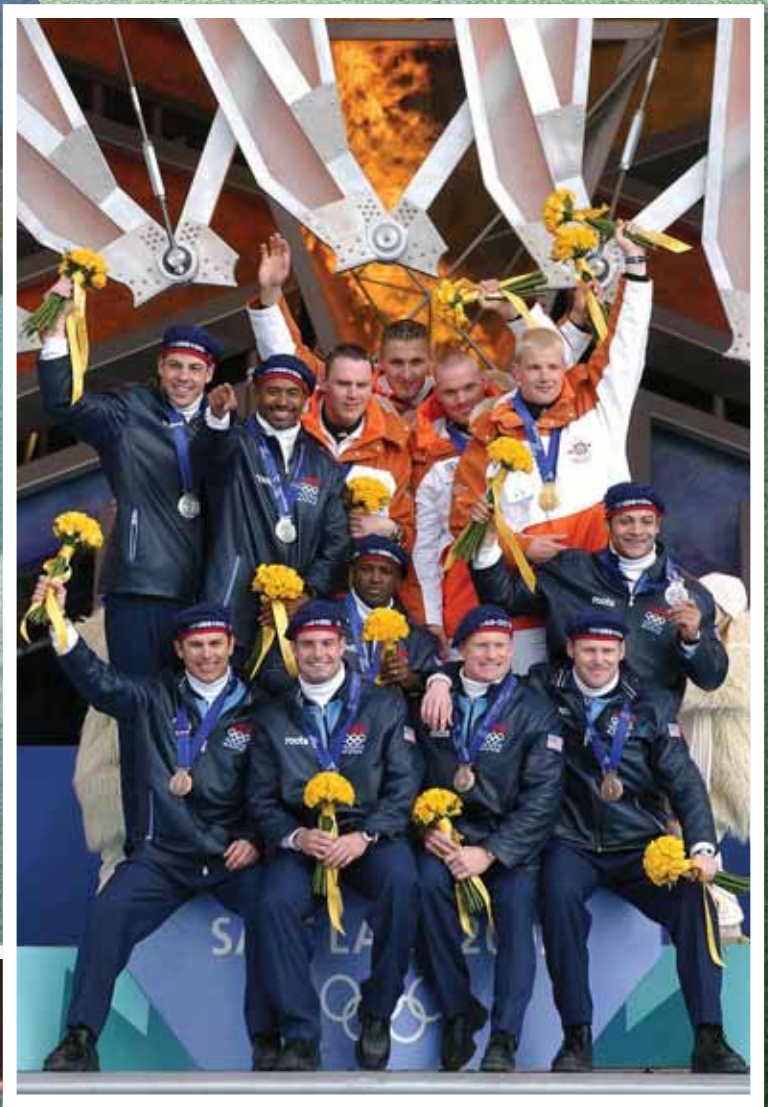


Austrian alpine skier Fritz Strobl, Olympic champion, with a bouquet during the Flower Ceremony, 2002, Salt Lake City





On the Olympic podium figure skating (women's singles): silver medallist Irina Slutskaya (Russia), champion Sarah Hughes (USA), and bronze medallist Michelle Kwan (USA) – with medals and bouquets. 2002, Salt Lake City



After the Victory Ceremony the winners and medallists of the Olympic bobsleigh competition. 2002, Salt Lake City



The Flower Ceremony after the first-ever women's bobsleigh Olympic competition. American athletes Jill Bakken and Vonetta Flowers celebrate victory. 2002, Salt Lake City



Before awarding the winners with olive wreaths – a symbol of noble Olympic ideals and victory – the organisers of the 2004 Games of the XXVIIIth Olympiad in Athens turned to the ceremony of awarding at the ancient Olympic Games. Several olive farms on the island of Crete provided the branches to make 5,513 wreaths. Besides olive crowns, special Olympic bouquets were prepared.

To create the Olympic bouquet at these Games, designers chose African daisies (*lat. Osteopermunus*), red roses (*lat. Rosa*), tansies (*lat. Tanacetium vulgare*), sea lavender (*lat. Limonium carolinianum*), goldenrod (*lat. Solidago*), and olive twigs completed the bouquets.

African daisies symbolise optimism and joy, as well as a cheerful mood, and wishes for success in all endeavours. Red roses in the bouquet is a wish for love, tansy promises of eternal life and purification, sea lavender represents beauty, romantic feelings, spiritual balance and peace, the goldenrod in Greece is endowed with magical properties: it is used to ward off evil spirits and drive away misfortune. And finally, the olive branch – a symbol of peace, health, longevity, purity, victory, and strength of spirit. That is how many good wishes the florists placed in one bouquet.

Victory Ceremony for women's freestyle wrestling (48 kg): silver medallist Icho Tesharu (Japan), champion Iryna Merleni (Ukraine), and Patricia Miranda (USA)

The Games of the XXVIIIth Olympiad. Athens, 2004



Iryna Merleni (Ukraine) Olympic champion in freestyle wrestling (48 kg), with an award olive crown and bouquet

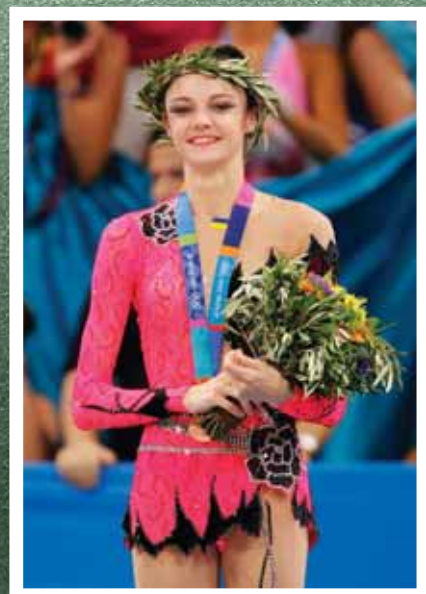




Chen Shih-hsín (Taiwan) - Olympic champion in taekwondo (up to 49 kg) with medals, an olive wreath, and a bouquet



Winner and medallists of the Olympic marathon in 2004 (from left): silver medallist Mebrahtom Keflezighi (USA), champion Stefano Baldini (Italy), bronze medallist Vanderlei de Lima (Brazil)



Ukrainian Anna Bessonova, bronze medallist in rhythmic gymnastics on the Olympic podium



The Olympic bouquet of the 2004 Games of the XXVIIIth Olympiad in Athens, preserved in the Olympic Museum in Athens

ATHENS 2004



The extravagant bouquet – used for both ceremonies – was prepared by the Italian florists for the winners and medallists of the XXth Olympic Winter Games of 2006 in Turin.

It was composed of azaleas (*lat. Azaleastrum*), camellias (*lat. Camellia*), rhododendrons (*lat. Rhododendron*), complemented with green leaves of the mentioned flowers, clusters of craspedia (*lat. Craspedia*), anthurium (*lat. Anthurium*), as well as red heliconia (*lat. Heliconia*) flowers and small dried flowers of gypsophila (*lat. Gypsophila*). The first very obvious association with the bouquet is a flaming torch. The winners, waving the bouquet like the Olympic flame, look very symbolic. Azalea is a symbol of peace and well-being, happiness, and joy; camellia represents purity and tenderness, rhododendron – love and fidelity. Craspedia embodies wishes for longevity, strong health, and success, and anthurium signifies abundance and prosperity. The flowers in the bouquet were a beautiful combination of red and white, and framed in green, they were associated with the colours of the Italian flag.

XXth Olympic Winter Games. Turin, 2006



German biathlete Ursula Disl – Olympic champion in the 4x7.5 km relay – at the Flower Ceremony



◀ Bronze medallists of the Olympic Winter Games in Turin – the French biathlon team – celebrating their success at the Victory Ceremony



Estonian skier Andrus Veerpalu – Olympic champion in cross-country skiing. 2006, Turin with the Olympic bouquet



Women's curling team (Sweden) at the Flower Ceremony



Austrian skier Felix Gottwald – two-time Olympic champion in Nordic combined – at the Victory Ceremony



The bouquet intended for the winners and medallists of the 2008 Games of the XXIXth Olympiad in Beijing was named "Hong Hong Hio Hio," which translates from Chinese as "Red Flame."

The floral composition included nine red Chinese roses (*lat. Rosa*), six St. John's wort flowers (*lat. Hypericum*), six leaves of hosta (*lat. Hosta*), six leaves of ophiopogon (*lat. Ophiopogon*), a bit of green Ti grass (*lat. Miscanthus sinensis*), all wrapped in golden silk. The nine roses (nine being a lucky number) symbolise the hospitality of the people of China, who are hosting the Games. Six varieties of other plants were chosen because six is a lucky number. St. John's wort flowers symbolise joy and inspiration; this plant brings luck and is associated with vitality and inspiration. Hosta leaves symbolise purity and faithfulness, harmony, and peace. In Japan and China, hosta is considered a sacred plant. Ophiopogon, or Japanese lilyturf, as a representative of lilies, symbolises purity.

During the Games, Olympic bouquets were arranged at the Fentai Flower Centre. The assembled Olympic bouquets were placed in an isolated waterproof box to preserve freshness to ensure no damage or loss of water and were transported in sealed vehicles at a stable temperature of 10–15 °C accompanied by security to the destination. It should be noted that only 6–8 hours passed from the time the flowers were gathered until they reached the hands of the athletes.

The Olympic award bouquet in form is a masculine, but it's flower composition is feminine. In this way, Chinese florists emphasised gender equality in Olympic sports.

The Games of the XXIXth Olympiad. Beijing, 2008

American swimmer, Olympic champion Ryan Lochte at the Victory Ceremony, 2008, Beijing



Victory Ceremony for the Olympic women's sabre fencing. 2008, Beijing





Chinese florists prepare flower bouquets for the Victory Ceremony at the 2008 Games of the XXIXth Olympiad in Beijing



Chinese volunteers prepare for the Victory Ceremony with flower bouquets

Australian athlete, Olympic champion in the 200 m freestyle swimming, Stephanie Rice, enjoys her victory at the Victory Ceremony



Bouquets of the XXIst Olympic Winter Games of 2010 in Vancouver are unique in their monochrome colour palette. Ten thousand green chrysanthemums (*lat. Chrysanthemum*) – green “Anastasia” – were used as a centre piece of the bouquets. Those were surrounded by St. John’s wort berries (*lat. Hypericum perforatum*), leatherleafes (*lat. Liriope muscari*), aspidistra (*lat. Aspidistra elatior*) leaves, and monkey grass (*lat. Ophiopogon japonicus*) for an all-green arrangement. The finished bouquets were tied with a blue bow. It was the most laconic bouquet in Olympic history.

Aspidistra is a symbol of abundance, the green chrysanthemum signifies wisdom, dignity, and longevity, and feverfew, belonging to magical plants, symbolises light, goodness, and is used to ward off evil spirits. The choice of colour by the creators of the composition emphasised that the green colour has long been considered a symbol of happiness and joy, harmony and health, luck and abundance, vitality, and wisdom. Additionally, this colour, as a symbol of the environment, represents the green rural areas of British Columbia and Canada.

According to the rules of the International Olympic Committee, flowers for Olympic bouquets must be grown in the country hosting the Olympic Games. The bouquet presented to the demanding jury was composed of flowers grown in Canada but during the summer. In February, it was impossible to obtain them in the required quantity. Therefore, the chrysanthemum for the bouquet was delivered from Chilliwack in British Columbia, and all other components were from Ecuador.

The bouquet is well perceived both in men’s and women’s hands. It became the winner among twenty-three nominees presented by the Vancouver Organising Committee. A team of twenty-two florists led by June Strandberg and Margitta Schultz assembled 1,800 bouquets. The team included women with physical and mental disabilities, those struggling with drugs and alcohol, victims of violence, and those who wanted to change their lives for the better. Working on creating Olympic bouquets is an opportunity to change lives and become part of such a grand global event as Olympic Games.

XXIst Olympic Winter Games. Vancouver, 2010



South Korean figure skater Kim Yong Ah – Olympic champion in women’s singles – with a medal and a bouquet. 2010, Vancouver





Medallists of the Olympic cross-country skiing events (30 km mass start): silver medallist Marit Bjørgen (Norway), winner Justyna Kowalczyk (Poland), and bronze medallist Aino-Kaisa Saarinen (Finland) at the Flower Ceremony. 2010, Vancouver



Italian athlete Arianna Fontana celebrates her success at the Flower Ceremony – 3rd place in short track speed skating (500 m). 2010, Vancouver



Vancouver 2010





The Games of the XXXth Olympiad. London, 2012

The floral composition for the 2012 Games of the XXXth Olympiad in London was designed by Susan Lapworth, a florist at Jane Packer in London. The flowers and herbs in the bouquet were grown in the U.K. and assembled by floristry students across the country. The winning bouquet included four types of roses (*lat. Rosa*) – three pink “Aqua,” three orange “Mari Claire,” three yellow “Ilios,” and three green “Wimbledon,” complemented by twelve stems of English lavender (*lat. Lavandula*), six stems of rosemary (*lat. Rosmarinus officinalis*), six stems of apple mint (*lat. Mentha suaveolens*), and six wheat (*lat. Triticum*) ears. The bouquet was bound with a lilac ribbon with the inscription “London 2012.”

It is no coincidence that roses became the main component of this composition, as they are the national symbol of Great Britain. Wheat embodies wishes for prosperity and wealth. The colours of the bouquet reflected the colours of the Olympic rings. Lavender, rosemary, and mint were intended to enhance the solemnity of the winners with their aroma.

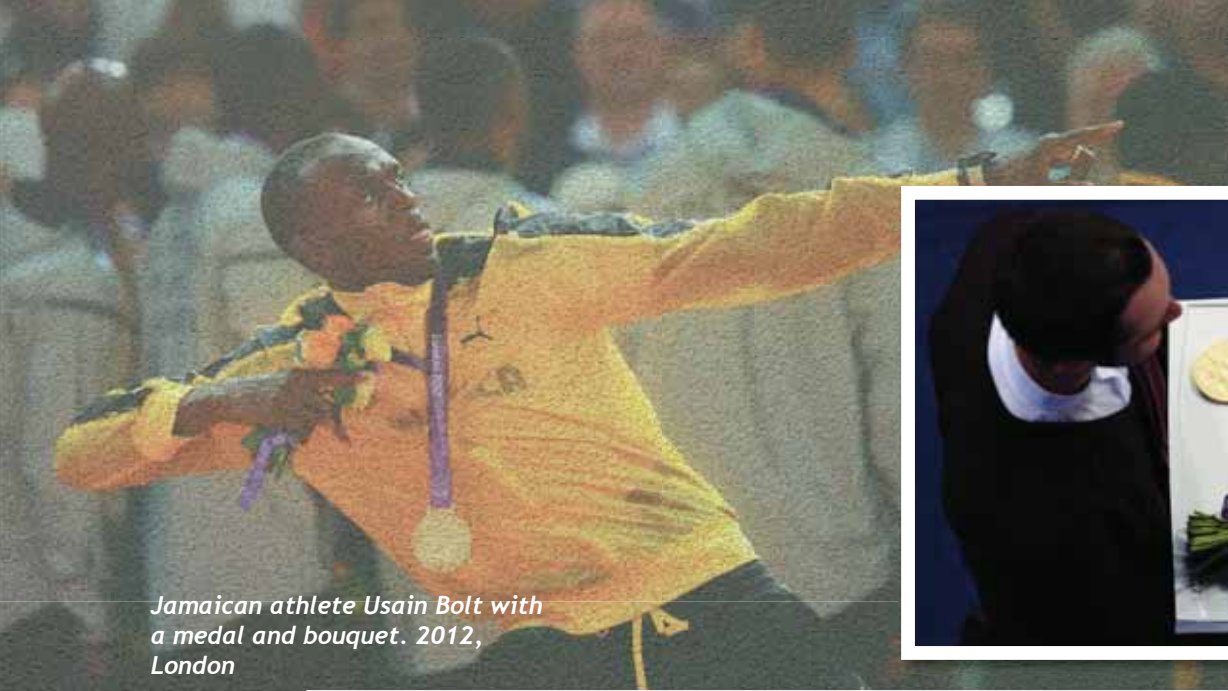
To export the bouquet abroad, the winners and medallists had to obtain permission from a FERA plant quarantine inspector for the export of wheat. In addition to the winning bouquets, thirty compositions were made for the Opening Ceremony and 130 for event decoration.

Interestingly, the 2012 Games in London were the first in Olympic history where men presented flowers and medals while women accompanied the athletes.

Kateryna Tarasenko, Yana Dementieva, Anastasiia Kozhenkova, Nataliia Dovichko (Ukraine) – Olympic champions in the women’s quadruple sculls – with medals and bouquets

Ukrainian Oleksandr Usyk – Olympic champion in boxing (91 kg). 2012, London





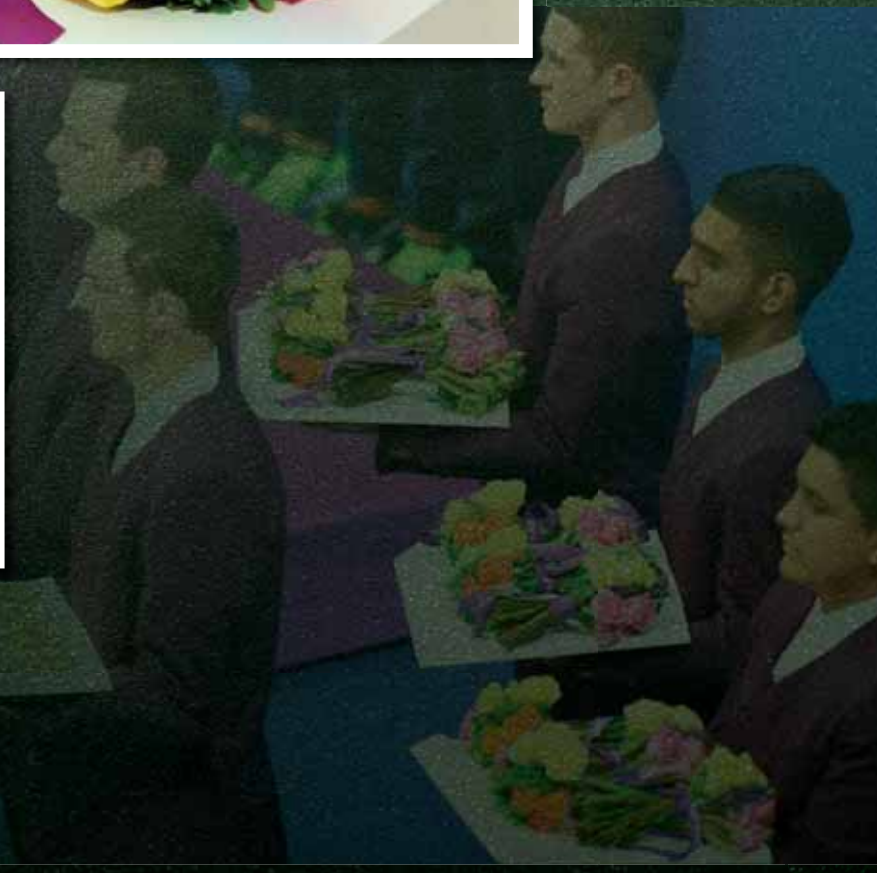
Jamaican athlete Usain Bolt with a medal and bouquet. 2012, London



Winners' bouquets of the 2012 Games of the XXXth Olympiad in London



American athletes, winners of the Olympic basketball tournament, enjoy the Victory Ceremony



From the twenty proposed designer compositions for the winners of the XXIInd Olympic Winter Games of 2014 in Sochi, a bouquet in the “patchwork” style was selected, embodying the official visual image of the Games, and having the motto “Hot. Cool. Yours.” The floral composition consisted of two types of chrysanthemums – white and green, as well as blue statice. The bouquet was complemented with laurel branches and yellow solidago.

Blue statice, symbolising success, deep trust, and memory, visualises the Black Sea, ice, and the sky over Sochi. The bouquet was complemented with laurel branches – a symbol of victory, eucalyptus representing the flora of Krasnodar Krai – a symbol of life and vitality, yellow solidago – a symbol of victory, and emerald salal leaves. The weight of the composition was slightly over 100 grams. Interestingly, this bouquet does not lose its colour or size even when dried.

The bouquet was bound with a blue ribbon provided by the International Olympic Committee with the inscription “Sochi 2014.” However, unlike the ribbons from previous Olympic Games, which were cut at an angle, the ends of this ribbon were cut straight.

At the XXIInd Olympic Winter Games, champions and medalists received bouquets twice: first during the Flower Ceremony immediately after the announcement of the results, and second during the solemn Victory Ceremony, which took place every evening at 20:14 at the Medals Plaza in the Olympic Park, where athletes received medals and flowers.

XXIInd Olympic Winter Games. Sochi, 2014



South Korean Kim Yuna – silver medallist in women’s singles figure skating – with a medal and bouquet. 2014, Sochi





Flower Ceremony after the men's single figure skating event. 2014, Sochi



Olympic champion Dario Cologna (Switzerland) wiping tears of joy during the Flower Ceremony



Australian snowboarder, silver medallist of the XXIInd Olympic Winter Games, Torah Bright at the Victory Ceremony

At the 2016 Games of the XXXIst Olympiad in Rio de Janeiro, winners and medallists did not receive Olympic bouquets. In the interest of sustainable development and environmental preservation, the organising committee decided to present a three-dimensional logo of the Games instead of bouquets, which embodies the mountains, sun, and sea of Rio in the form of winding lines resembling the silhouettes of people dancing and holding hands. Executed in the colours of the national flag of Brazil – blue, yellow, and green – it symbolises interaction and energy, harmony in the diversity of colours and flags of the participants' countries, the exuberance of nature, and the Olympic spirit.

However, Yannis Malandrakis, the mayor of the Cretan district of Platanias, appealed to the organising committee of the 2016 Games with a request to award the champion of the Games of the XXXIst Olympiad in marathon running with an olive cut from the world's oldest olive tree, whose age ranges from 3 to 5 thousand years. This tree is called "monumental" due to its size and whimsical shape. The diameter of the trunk at the base is 4.5 metres, and the perimeter is 12.5 metres. This olive has become an international symbol of peace, education, culture, and care for nature.

The gift from Greece – the cradle of the ancient Olympic Games – was handed over by the head of the Greek delegation in Rio de Janeiro, the president of the International Olympic Academy, Isidoros Kouvelos. The Greek national team, appearing first at the Olympic Stadium, traditionally called for peace and friendship among the peoples of the world through the olive branches.

Three-dimensional logo of the Games, which the organisers of the 2016 Games in Rio de Janeiro presented to athletes replacing bouquets



The Games of the XXXIst Olympiad. Rio de Janeiro, 2016



XXIIIrd Olympic Winter Games. Pyeongchang, 2018



Continuing the tradition started at the 2016 Games in Rio de Janeiro, at the XXIIIrd Olympic Winter Games of 2018 in Pyeongchang, winners and medallists were given the Games' mascot – a white tiger cub named Soohorang – during the Victory Ceremony.

Each Soohorang given to the medallists was adorned with a gold, silver, or bronze hat and a paper flower called "Eosa-kwa." This paper flower has a long history: it was given to those who passed the national exams in literature and martial arts during the Joseon Dynasty (1392–1910). By doing so, the organisers emphasised recognition of the athletes' achievements in accordance with Korean tradition and preserved an element of the flower ceremony, giving it significance for the host country, South Korea.

White tiger cub Soohorang – the mascot of the XXIIIrd Olympic Winter Games of 2018 in Pyeongchang was presented during the Victory Ceremony



American alpine skier Mikaela Shiffrin – Olympic champion in giant slalom – with the Olympic mascot. 2018, Pyeongchang





The Olympic bouquets of the 2020 Games of the XXXIInd Olympiad in Tokyo were named “bouquets of victory.” Made from flowers grown in three prefectures along the northeast coast of Japan, the bouquets became an embodiment of the tragic events that struck these territories in 2011: a 9.0-magnitude earthquake and tsunami that led to the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear disaster. The organising committee of the 2020 Olympics put in a lot of effort to create a floral composition that would reflect the memory and strength of the people affected by the natural disaster and symbolise the unwavering hope for recovery. The bouquets of victory were made up of tulip gentians (*lat. Lisianthus*), sunflowers (*lat. Helianthus*), eustoma (*lat. Eustoma*), and aspidistra (*lat. Aspidistra*). Eustoma, symbolising purity, tenderness, and openness, were grown in Fukushima prefecture. After the agricultural industry was devastated, a non-profit organisation was founded to cultivate flowers, aiming to bring hope for economic recovery.

The Games of the XXXIInd Olympiad. Tokyo, 2020





Sunflowers, symbolising pride, longevity, and strong family ties, were grown in Miyagi prefecture. Parents who lost their children due to the earthquake planted these flowers on the hill where their children sought refuge from the tsunami. Each year, the hill is covered with yellow sunflowers, the flower of which became a symbol of the residents of Miyagi affected by the 2011 natural disaster.

Iwate prefecture is widely known for the production of lisianthus flowers, which are part of the Olympic bouquet. More than half of the lisianthus grown in Japan comes from Iwate, making it a symbol of the region.

Aspidistra symbolises a city ready to warmly welcome athletes from around the world to the largest sporting event every four years.

Designers paid attention to the arrangement as well: all the flowers in the bouquet were placed in such a way that each of them could be seen from any angle under which the athletes held them during the Victory Ceremony. The flowers, with their short stems, were placed in a small pouch filled with a water-based gel, allowing the plants to stay beautiful and fresh for about 7 days. The Olympic composition is completed with a blue ribbon that binds the bouquet. At the 2020 Games, over 1,000 bouquets were presented, each adorned with a mascot of the games, Miraitowa. The Games' mascot was created from two hieroglyphs that translate as "future" and "eternity." By winning their medal, each athlete forever inscribes their name in history.

Mete Gazoz of Turkey, the Olympic archery champion, celebrating his victory





XXIVth Olympic Winter Games. Beijing, 2022

For the first time in Olympic history, at the XXIVth Olympic Winter Games of 2022 in Beijing, artificial flower bouquets were used to award the winners and medallists. These bouquets were made using the traditional Shanghai technique of wool knitting, which originated in China during the Han (206 BC–220 AD) and Tang (618–907 AD) dynasties and is part of Shanghai's intangible Cultural Heritage. A distinctive feature of knitted flowers is that they never wither.

Li Meili, a designer and one of the project leaders at Hengyuanxiang company, inherited the traditions of the Shanghai technique of wool knitting. With the support of the All-China Women's Federation, the company involved seven knitting societies in Beijing, Shanghai, Tianjin, Jiangsu, and Zhejiang in the bouquet-making process.

Adhering to the concept of sustainable development, the company "Hengyuanxiang Group" – the official sponsor of the 2008 Games of the XXIXth Olympiad and the XXIVth Olympic Winter Games 2022 – took over the provision of Olympic bouquets for the Victory Ceremony.

Olympic medal winners received an Olympic bouquet during the daily Victory Ceremony, starting on February 5, at the



Li Meili is a designer and one of the project managers of the Hengyuanxiang company to create the 2022 Olympic bouquet





Olympic bouquet of XXIVth Olympic Winter Games of 2022 in Beijing



The Olympic mascot of the 2022 Games – Panda Bing Dwen Dwen with bamboo branches

Medals Plaza in the Beijing and Zhangjiakou Olympic Park, and immediately after the competition, the winners and runners-up were presented with an Olympic souvenir – the 2022 Games mascot Bing Dwen Dwen, decorated a wreath woven from branches of pine, bamboo and plum, known as the “Three Friends of Cold,” symbolising stability and vigorous vitality.

One thousand two hundred and fifty-one bouquets of 16,731 flowers were made for award ceremonies of the winners and medallists of the XXIVth Olympic Winter Games.

Seven plants were included in the Olympic flower composition: a rose symbolising friendship, a Chinese rose – perseverance, a lily of the valley – happiness, a hydrangea – unity, a laurel leaf – victory, a fragrant osmanthus – a harvest, and an olive branch – peace. The composition is completed by a blue-blue ribbon with the inscription “Beijing 2022,” which is reminiscent of ice and snow with its colours.

In most of the modern Olympic Games, the Olympic wreaths have been replaced by bouquets of flowers – real works of floristry, the embodiment of elegance and sophistication, each flower of which has a special meaning according to the language of flowers.





The Games of the XXXIIIrd Olympiad. Paris, 2024

While planning the victory ceremonies, the Organising Committee for the 2024 Games of the XXXIIIrd Olympiad has decided not to present flower bouquets to the winners of the Olympic competitions. Based on the principles of sustainable development, it was decided to transform the parks and gardens of Paris into floral displays of naturally growing plants, allowing not only the athletes but also everyone present to admire and enjoy the fruits of nature and the art of floristry both during the Olympic Games and the Paralympic Games duration.

The organisers still designated the so-called Flower of the Olympiad – Dahlia in brilliant red – to represent the Olympic Flame. This emblematic flower, embodying the Olympic passion, lit up the streets, gardens, and parks of the Games' host city.

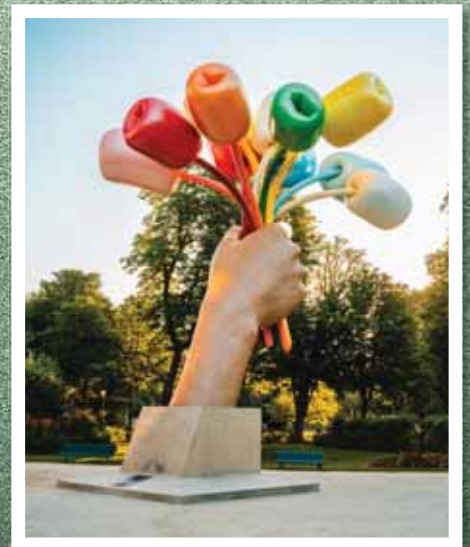
The Frances Olympic Flame Dahlia was created specifically for the Paris 2024 Olympics as a unique and symbolic addition to the Games. The Dahlia stands out with vibrant colours – fiery shades of red, orange, yellow – that evoke the image of the Olympic flame.

In essence, the Frances Olympic Flame Dahlia is more than just a beautiful flower, it symbolises the Olympic spirit and integrates local French culture into the global celebration.

The adventure of this exceptional variety began in the laboratories of the Parc Floral de Paris, where the Olympic Dahlia came to life in jars meticulously supervised by the flower creator Christophe Kneblewski.

Its petals in the colours of the Olympic flame underline the emotional connection between the flower and the spirit of the Games.

The entire Parisian landscape was transformed into a vibrant canvas of colours, indulging everyone into the tenderness of floral celebration.



*Bouquet of Tulips (2019). Jeff Koons
Gardens of the Petit Palais in Paris
(height – 12.62 m, width – 8.35 m
wide, weight – 34 tons).
Reference to the hand of
the Statue of Liberty holding the
torch. Flowers are associated
universally with optimism,
rebirth, vitality of nature,
and the cycle of life*



Christophe Kneblewski – creator of the flower of the Olympiad – Frances Olympic Flame Dahlia



Dahlia – the Frances Olympic Flame – adorned streets, boulevards, parks, and gardens of Paris



Olympic champion in sabre fencing Olga Kharlan of Ukraine with the award medal and special Prize of the Organising Committee, Paris Games 2024 – a limited edition of the Olympic poster in the giftbox



Chapter 4. Prizes

A Historical Background

The tradition of awarding commemorative prizes to the winners of athletic competitions dates back to ancient times. Among ancient trophies, the Panathenaic amphorae hold a special place.

In Ancient Greece, the winners of the Panathenaic Games, one of the largest religious and political festivals held in Athens in honour of the city's patron goddess Athena, were awarded Attic amphorae – clay vessels crafted with meticulous care and decorated by the finest craftsmen, filled with sacred olive oil from Plato's Academy Grove located in the suburbs of the city.

The first Panathenaic amphorae were presented in 566–565 BC, and they were used to honour the winners until the second century BC as a symbolic representation of the sacred significance of the event. The award Panathenaic amphorae featured a black-figure painting style. They were easily recognisable by the following characteristics: a floral ornament adorned the neck of the amphorae, an image of Athena Promachos with a spear and shield was placed on the front side, Doric columns with roosters symbolising the spirit of competition were depicted on both sides, the inscription “Award from Athens” was located near the left column, and a scene representing the victorious athlete's sport was depicted on the back side of the amphorae.

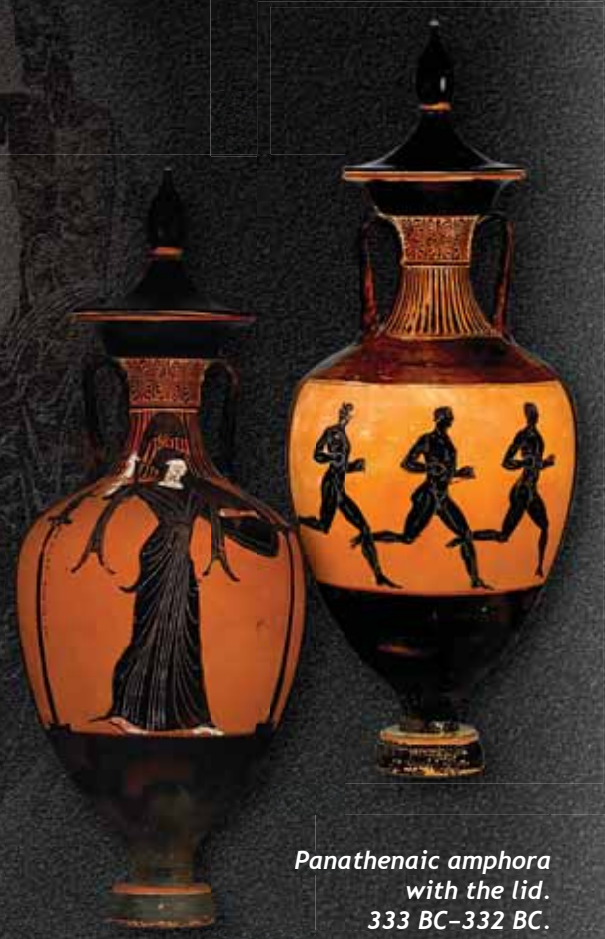
The shape of the Panathenaic amphorae changed over time: from barrel-shaped with a narrow neck and cone-shaped sharp bottom to more elegant and feminine forms. The painting of the Panathenaic amphorae was entrusted to many famous Athenian vase painters such as Exekias, Euphronios, Kleophrades, and others.

The oldest surviving Panathenaic amphora is the “Burgon Vase” (circa 560 BC), which is kept in the British Museum in London. The recipients of these first awards valued them highly because they were accompanied by significant symbols and represented prestige and achievements, reflecting the recognition of the athletes' skill and dedication. They became treasured keepsakes for the athletes, not only as symbols of victory but also as practical items that held great value in daily life.



*The Burgon vase
560 BC. British
Museum, London*





*Panathenaic amphora
with the lid.
333 BC–332 BC.
British Museum, London*



*Panathenaic prize amphora,
525–500 BC. Attributed to the
Kleophrades Painter. Greek,
Attic. Metropolitan Museum
of Art, New York*



In the cultures of various nations, the types of awarding prize objects varied, but their value remained extremely high.

In the Roman era, gladiatorial combat was a popular form of entertainment, and the victors were often rewarded with prized possessions and symbolic trinkets. This practice formed the foundation for the concept of rewarding excellence in sports.

The Romans widely used a system of rewards during the time of the Empire. One of the trophies was a cup perceived as a symbolic vessel filled with sacred meaning. The base of the cup embodied the prototype of the earth, the bowl symbolised the home or house, and the lid represented the roof of the house providing reliable protection. The strict and solemn form of the cup emphasised its special role. This type of trophy – the cup – is widely used even today.

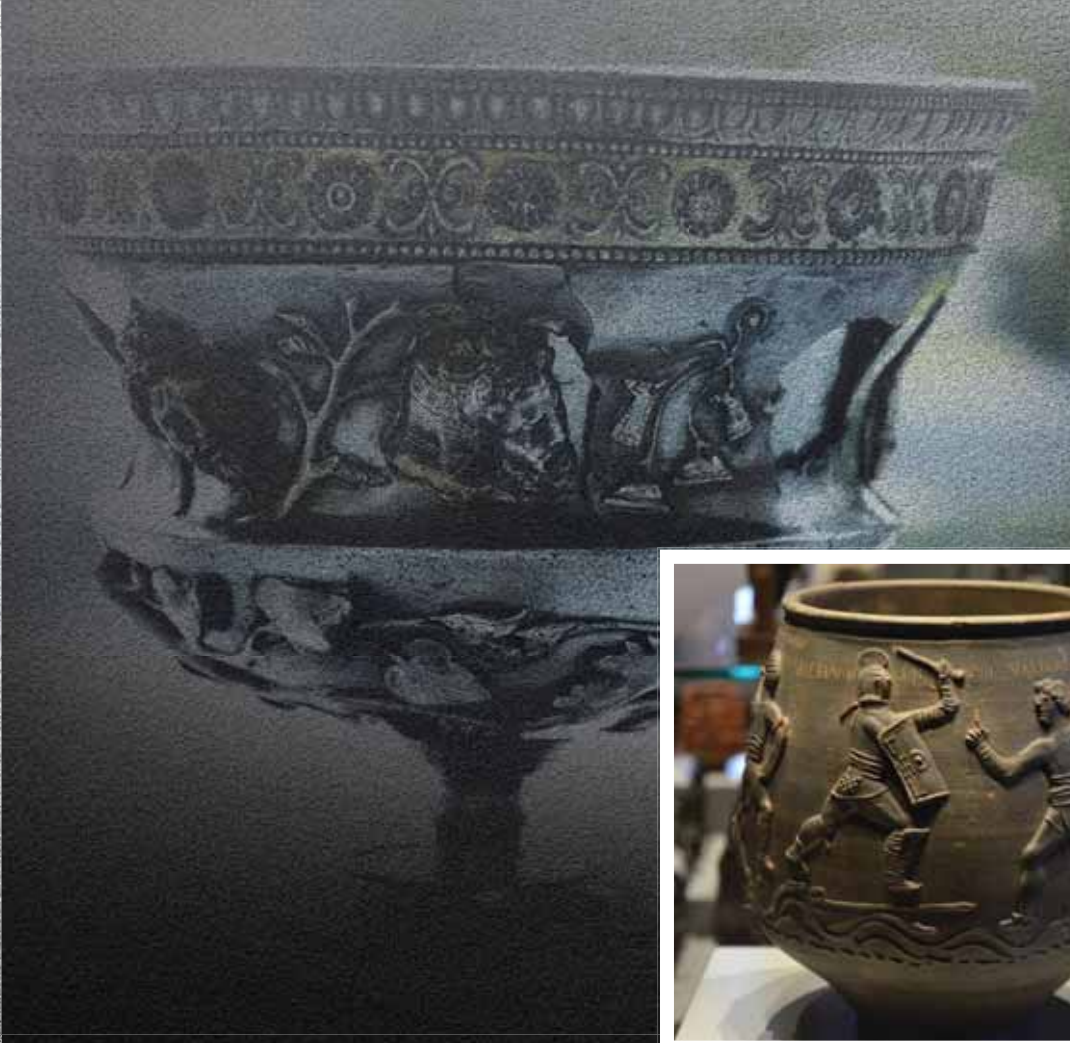
During the Viking era, the cups were regarded as trophies by the fierce and ruthless Scandinavian warriors (8th–11th century). They were generously adorned with motifs such as figures, shield knots, skulls, and other ancient Scandinavian protective symbols.



*Roman glass pyxis with lid.
1st half of 1st century.
Metropolitan Museum of Art,
New York*



Viking silver cup . Replica



*Roman Lycurgus Cup.
Glass, dichroic, later
gilt-silver ornament
mounted to rim and foot.
4th century.
British Museum, London*

*Roman – British Colchester Vase. 175 AD,
Colchester Castle Museum, Camulodunum*



Viking age silver cup



*Carolingian cup from the vale of York Viking hoard.
9th–10th century. British Museum, London*



During the Middle Ages, knights, as a sign of victory in tournaments received various prizes, including cups made of ceramics, silver, gold, bone, glass, and crystal, often embellished with precious gemstones. Knights were also awarded shields, swords, and armour as symbols of their valour and bravery, serving both as recognition of their achievements and as an enhancement of their status and rank in society.

In the Renaissance era, the history of sports trophies took a new turn. The influence of this cultural renaissance was immense, transforming trophies from simple symbols into intricately crafted awards. The Renaissance marked a more formal recognition of sporting feats, introducing the concept of awards that could be touched and admired. Among these were cups, plaques, and medals.

The oldest documented English horse racing prizes in the world are the Carlisle Bells, awarded during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I in 1599 for the historic British horse race on a 1,566-metre (173-yard) plain in the Carlisle Bell Horse Race held at Carlisle Racecourse in Cumbria, England. These bells have earned their place in history and are now kept in the Carlisle Guildhall Museum.

In the 16th century, winners of competitions were awarded cups mounted on stands, intended for holding drinks, sometimes adorned with enamel, precious stones, and metals. By the late 17th century, winners of sporting events were awarded cups, plates, and other items – trophies made of silver.

An example of this is the Kyp Cup (1699), a silver chalice with two handles presented to winners of horse racing events in New England. For a long time, trophies were fashioned with handles and shaped like a cup or jug. Winners in archery competitions were awarded a trophy – a silver arrow. The Scorton Silver Arrow traces its origin to 1673. The original silver arrow trophy, crafted with precision and elegance, serves as a symbol of excellence in archery and was provided by Henry Calverley, who also won the first event. It is awarded as a prestigious prize in an archery competition held in Scorton, a village in North Yorkshire, England.

In the later part of the 18th century, winners were awarded not only cups and silver trophies but also silver coffee and table sets, candelabra, jugs, and other valuable items. At the beginning of the 19th century, a new tradition emerged – awarding winners with so-called challenge trophies, which the athlete held until the next competition, where the winner had to defend their title to retain the trophy; otherwise, it passed to the new victor.

This tradition became commonplace after King George III awarded a bare-knuckle boxer with an ornate belt in 1810. Challenge trophies are still used in sports today and are extremely prestigious. In the 19th



*Award cup. Gilded silver.
Early 17th century. Hungarian Silver:
The Nicolas M. Salgo Collection.
London*

*The Carlisle Bells are still contested
for despite dating back to 1559*





16th-century silver stem cup.
Hunting competition award.
Metropolitan Museum of Art,
New York



Chalice of the Abbot Suger of Saint-Denis. French 12th
Century (mounting); Alexandrian 2nd/1st Century BC (cup).
The National Gallery of Art, Washington DC



Medieval award cup, 1615-1648.
Parcel gilt silver. Nuremberg, Germany



The Scorton Silver Arrow traces its origin back to 1673. Archery competition award

century, cups, plates, plaquettes, statuettes, and championship belts became widely used for honouring the winners of sports competitions. Among these are the Ascot Gold Cup (1807), Eglinton Trophy (1839), Goodwood Cups (1856), Doncaster Cup (1858), America's Cup (1848), The FA Cup (1871), The Claret Jug (1872), Wimbledon Trophy (1877), Calcutta Cup (1879), Stanley Cup (1892), and others.

The design of trophies became an art form, reflecting the spirit of each sport. In the 20th century, trophies evolved into more than just awards; they became living chronicles of cultural and historical significance, capturing the hearts of sports enthusiasts. They are not merely objects but embodiments of dedication, passion, and triumphs preserved in time.

Athletes may be the only people in the world who can boast the largest number of exceptional trophies, as sports competitions have allowed for the honouring of winners since ancient times.

The tradition of awarding prizes during the Olympic Games dates back to 1896. In addition to Olympic medals, winners and outstanding athletes were awarded a variety of commemorative gifts and prizes from sports organisations and VIP admirers of Olympic sports at the early Olympic Games (1896–1904).

In 1908, prior to the Games of the IVth Olympiad, the IOC decided to stop awarding valuable gifts to winners, justifying the decision with the amateur status of the participants in the Olympic competitions. As a result, the valuable prizes provided by the Organising Committees of the Games were given a new status – that of the Challenge Prizes – with which they were awarded at subsequent Games from 1908 to 1920.

At its XXIInd Session in Rome in 1923, the IOC decided to discontinue the practice of awarding Challenge Prizes.

At the Games of the VIIIth and IXth Olympiads, the Organising Committees awarded commemorative gifts to the winners on their own behalf.

Later, the adopted IOC regulations were violated by International Federations on special occasions. For example, at the IIIrd Olympic Winter Games of 1932 in Lake Placid (USA), the World Bobsleigh Championship was held simultaneously with the Olympic tournament. The winner – who became both the Olympic champion and the World champion – was awarded the Martino Cup by the relevant International Federation.

At the 1936 Games of the XIth Olympiad in Berlin, the Athenian newspaper *Vradini* donated an ancient Corinthian helmet (6th century BC) for the marathon winner, and the International Amateur Boxing Federation (AIBF) introduced the tradition of awarding the best technical boxer of the Olympic Tournament, regardless of his ranking with the Challenge Prize – the Val Baker Cup, which is still being presented nowadays.

You are invited to explore these and many other stories in this chapter of the book.



*The Queen's Cup, Ascot, 1861:
a Victorian Silver Trophy*

Melbourne Cup Trophy (1867)



Queen's Plate Trophy (1867)



Ascot Gold Cup (1807)



Wimbledon Trophies



The Claret Jug (1872)



America's Cup (1848)



The Games of the Ist Olympiad. Athens, 1896

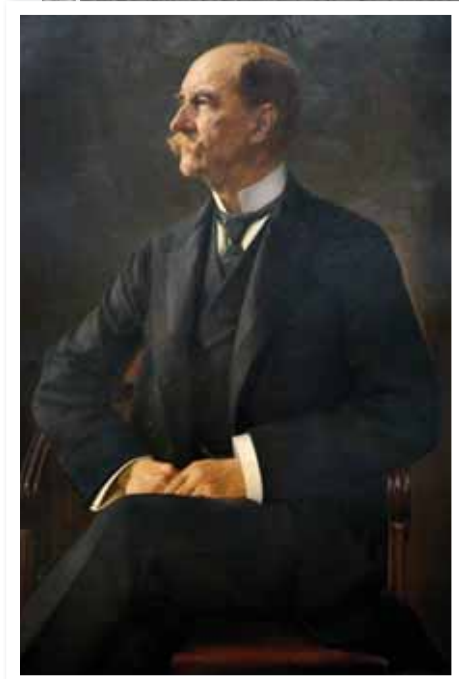
The tradition of celebrating the winners of athletic competitions with commemorative awards was continued at the Games of the Ist Olympiad in 1896 in Athens.

The awarding ceremony took place in a solemn atmosphere on the last day of the Games, just before their closing. The best athletes were awarded by HM King George I of Greece. The winners of some competitions were awarded special prizes. The most significant ones were distributed to the favorite of the public and the pride of the Greek people, the winner of the marathon, Spyridon Louis.

The first winner of the Olympic marathon, an event that was of great symbolism and importance for the Greeks and admirers of ancient history, received several prizes. The first prize was a 15 cm high silver cup, presented by the French philanthropist, linguist, historian, and Hellenophile Michel Bréal, who proposed including the marathon race in the Olympic programme. The cup he commissioned to be awarded to the winner of the first marathon was created in Paris by an anonymous silversmith according to Bréal's instructions.

The top part of the cup featured the inscription "Olympic Games 1896, the prize for the victory in the marathon, the gift from Michel Bréal." The engraving was made in Greek (as Mr. Michel Bréal personally requested this in his letter to the President of the IOC, Dimitrios Vikelas). The lower part of the cup decorated with various aquatic plants, flying birds, and insects, along with swimming ducklings implied a connection to the Battle of Marathon. It is well known that the area of the Marathon Plain is marshy, and the battlefield had turned into a swamp over the years.

Bréal's silver cup is currently safekept in the Cultural Centre of the Stavros Niarchos Foundation, which acquired the prize at Christie's auction on 18 April 2012.



All the prizes were given by HM King George I at the special ceremony on the last day of the Games



ΟΛΥΜΠΙΑΚΟΙ ΑΓΩΝΕΣ
1896
ΜΑΡΑΘΩΝΙΟΝ ΑΘΛΟΝ
ΕΔΩΚΕ ΜΙΧΑΗΛ ΜΠΡΕΑΛ



The Bréal Silver Cup – award for the first-ever winner of the Olympic marathon race. Stavros Niarchos Foundation Cultural Centre

Motivated by Bréal's actions, the renowned Greek antiquities dealer Prof. Ioannis Lambros presented the marathon winner with an ancient black-figured ceramic vase depicting running athletes representing dolichodrome under the guidance of Hellanodikai on it (6th to early 5th century BC). Mr. I. Lambros had previously obtained permission from the King of Greece for this gift. If a foreigner had become the winner, all the necessary formalities for exporting the antique item abroad would have been fulfilled.

It is interesting that in 1896, Scribner's Magazine claimed that Spyridon Louis had presented the ancient vase to the National Archaeological Museum in Athens, but no records of that donation were preserved in the museum's archives. For a long time, the whereabouts of the skyphos were considered unknown.

In 2014, the director of the National Archaeological Museum, Mr. George Kavvadias, recognised the skyphos in a book published by the University of Münster.

That same year, the Archaeological Museum of the University of Münster handed over the Greek skyphos from the sixth century BC to the Olympic Games Museum in Olympia.

The second cup presented to Spyridon Louis was made by Sidney Noel Co. from a metal alloy with silver electroplating. The height of the cup was 19 cm, its base was made in the form of a caryatid, the cup was decorated with flowers, and the inscription "Olympic winner marathon runner Spyridon Louis, 776–1896" was engraved on it.

The cup appeared on the cover of the magazine The Acropolis with the headline "Everything about Olympic Games winners" and a subtitle indicating that it was a "silver cup given to Spyridon Louis by Sidney Noel's company manager, Mr. Konstantinidis" (in reality, the cup was made not of silver but of silver-plated metal).



Michel Bréal - a French linguist, historian, and Hellenophile who proposed including the marathon in the programme of the Games of Olympiad





Cup awarded to the winner of the marathon race from the company Sidney Noel. 1896

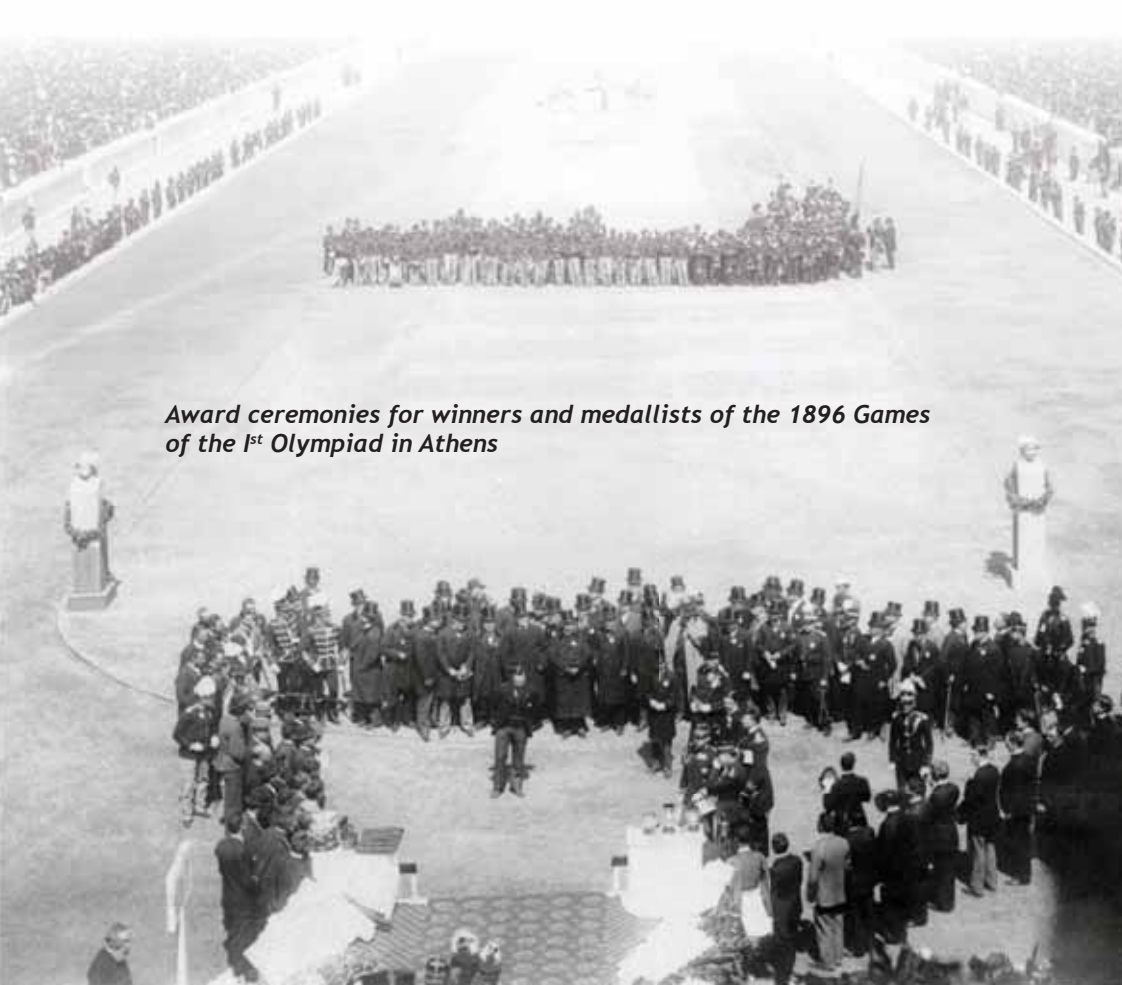


Ancient Greek skyphos (6th century BC) – a gift from Ioannis Lambros to the winner of the marathon race at the Games of the 1st Olympiad

The winner of the first ever Olympic marathon was given many unofficial gifts. So, the first gift presented to the Olympic marathon winner was a gold chain from the president of the Jewelers' Guild, Mr. P. S. Kiparissis, who accompanied Louis to the athlete's recreation room at the stadium along with Prince George. The Chairman of the Archaeological Society and the Prosecutor General of the Supreme Court, Mr. Dimosthenis Tsivanopoulos, presented Spyridon Louis with a ring featuring an ancient precious stone as a gift. There were numerous proposals to give Spyridon Louis lands, houses, estates, and other valuables, which were condemned by the public as they distorted the Olympic idea and the significance of victory itself. After all, in ancient times, Olympic winners were only awarded olive wreaths, which had moral value and allowed the athlete to cherish the prestige of victory itself.

Special prizes were prepared for the winners of other athletic competitions included in the programme of the 1st Olympic Games and were handed over to the Organising Committee of the Games. A beautiful silver cup given by the Athenian Club was presented to the foil fencing competition winner Eugene-Henri Gravelotte (France).

The prize is undoubtedly a work of art. The top of the cup is made in the form of a crown, and the body is decorated with an ornament containing plant motifs. The cup stands on four elegant legs adorned with palmettes (palm leaves). It is mounted on a round granite base, to which a plaque in the form of an unfurled scroll with an engraving about the 1896 event is attached.



Award ceremonies for winners and medallists of the 1896 Games of the 1st Olympiad in Athens

PRESENTATION
OF PRIZES



The silver cup given by the Athenian Club was presented to the foil fencing competition winner Eugene-Henri Gravelotte (France)



Mr. Pantelis Karassevdhas, the winner of the 200 m army rifle shooting competition, was awarded a rifle.

Mr. Ioannis Phrangoudhis, Olympic champion in 25 m high-speed pistol shooting, was awarded a pistol.

American athlete James Connoly, a winner Hop, Step and Jump (Triple Jump) was presented a silver cup from Prince George.

The Crown Princess Sophie (nee Princess Sophie of Prussia) presented a beautiful silver cup to Robert Garrett of Princeton University (USA) — shot put and discus throw competitions winner.

A silver cup was given by the King to Tom Burke of Boston (USA), of 100 m and 400 m dash winner.

Ellery Clark, high and broad (long) jump winner was awarded a silver dish.

William Hoyt, pole vault winner was presented a silver pot.

Commemorative prize-cup intended for the winning team in the boat race, which did not take place due to adverse weather conditions.

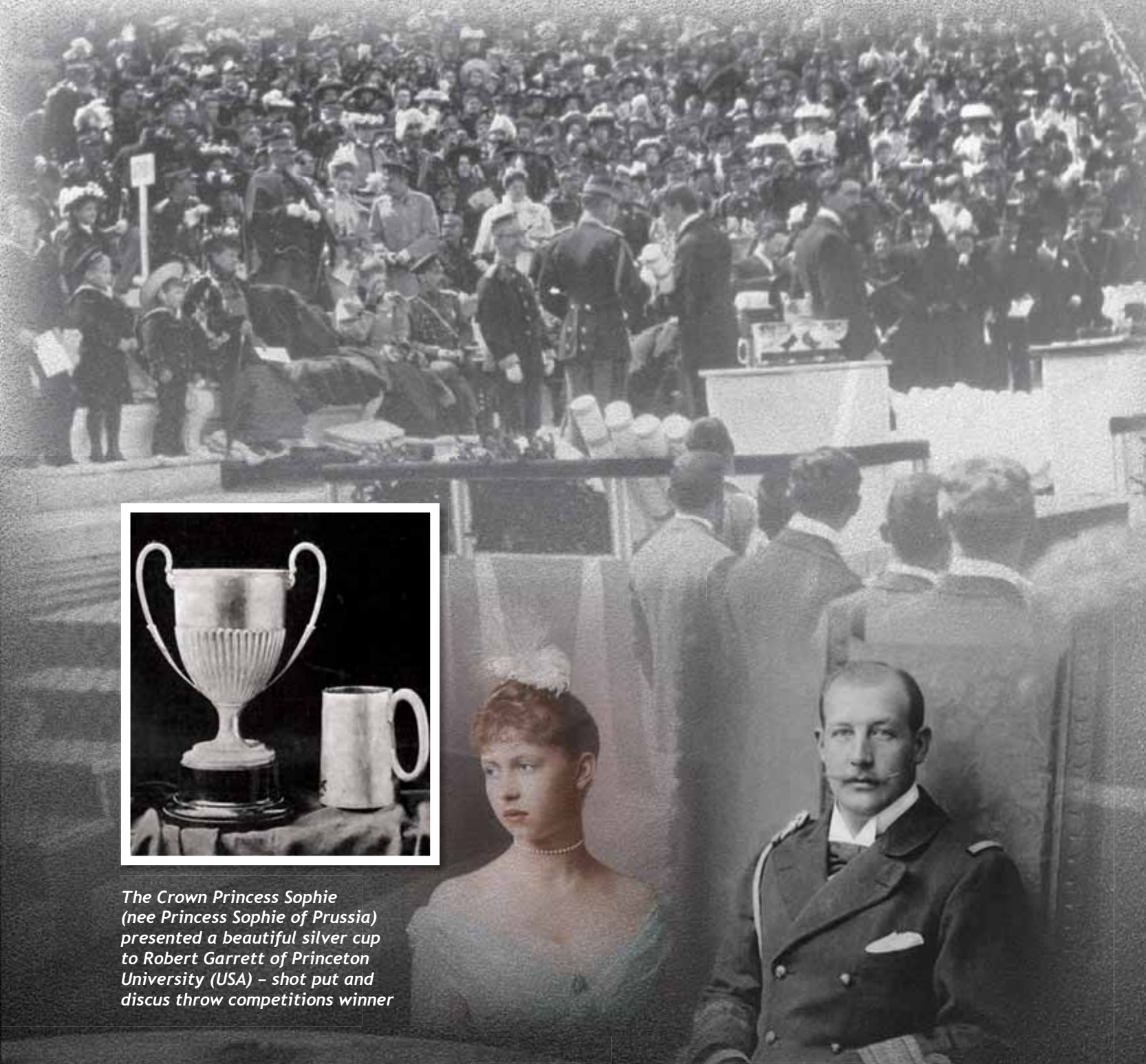
All prizes were given by HM King George I at a special ceremony just prior to closing on the last day of the Games.



The special medal presented by the King and a silver cup was given to Thomas Burke – the 100 m and 400 m dash winner

Commemorative prize-cup intended for the winning team in the boat race, which did not take place due to adverse weather conditions





The Crown Princess Sophie (nee Princess Sophie of Prussia) presented a beautiful silver cup to Robert Garrett of Princeton University (USA) – shot put and discus throw competitions winner



Cup from HRH Prince George was presented to the triple jump winner American James Connolly

The next day, foreign participants of the Games and honoured guests were invited to a gala banquet to mark the end of the Games at Kephissia, where another pleasant surprise awaited them.

Georgias Vroutos a renowned Greek artist who had studied under the best Italian sculptors as Antonio Canova, Adamo Tadolini and Tantolini, in his desire to express his feeling towards the Olympic ideal, created a bust of Winged Nike, in plaster of Paris, for the foreign Olympic victors.

The sculptor depicted the symbol of victory as a beautiful girl, her wings being attached in an unusual position without disrupting the image of the young beauty. Symbolically, the sculpted portrait of Nike was placed on a pedestal with an olive wreath and a palm branch, representing victory and peace. On the reverse side, the master engraved "1st Olympiad 1896", and on the right side of the base, his initials "G.V."

Each copy of the bust was sent to the Organising Committee so that it could be presented to the victors as a commemorative gift from the Athenian sculptor.

21 sculptures of Winged Nike were distributed during the closing banquet to the foreign victors of the Games at the Hotel Grand Bretagne on April 3.

The newspaper Skrip on 6 April 1896, stated, "... our foreign guests were deeply moved and expressed their sincere gratitude upon receiving such a significant gift."



Georgios Vroutos – professor of sculpture of the Athens School of Fine Arts, creator of the Nike prize for foreign Olympic winners of the 1896 Games of the 1st Olympiad in Athens



Winged Nike – a plaster award sculpture for foreign winners of the Games of the 1st Olympiad, which was presented at the farewell banquet at the Hotel Grande Bretagne in Athens. Dimensions: 24x14x13 cm, weight: 886 g. Olympic Museum. Athens, Greece.



The Games of the IInd Olympiad. Paris, 1900

At the Games of the IInd Olympiad in 1900 at Paris, the winners and prize-winners of the Olympic competitions were awarded with plaques and diplomas. In some sports there were monetary rewards and valuable commemorative prizes.

According to the trends of that time, the commemorative prizes were bowls and cups, plaques, objects of decorative art – bronze statuettes and sculptures.

For instance, Gustave Sandras (France), the winner of the gymnastics individual all-around competition, was presented with a large bronze sculpture of a running girl of very significant size (more than 50 cm).

The winners of the men's coxed pair rowing competition, François Brandt, Roelof Klein, Hermanus Brockmann (Netherlands) and an unknown coxswain (France), received a bronze sculpture of a young singing woman named La Chanson. The figure of the young woman symbolises the greatness of youth's achievements, surpassing even time itself. It is interesting to note that the winners were only given the most optimistic part of the bronze sculpture *Temps et Chanson* created by Auguste Paris, which had won a gold medal at the Universal Exposition in 1889.

Ray Ewry (USA), the winner of the standing high jump event, was awarded a silver cup. The cup is adorned with a floral ornament, and in the centre, there is an engraving in English: "First prize. Standing high jump. Winner Ray Ewry, New York Athletic Club. Olympic Games. Paris. France. 15 July 1900. Height 5.11 – world record (1.655 m)."

Hermann Barrelet (France), the winner of the single sculls rowing competition, received an elegant French vase adorned with flowers and water plants.

The Olympic winners in sailing – the Swiss team – were presented with a porcelain sculpture of a running girl with a flowing fabric and a wreath.



Gustave Sandras – the Olympic winner in individual gymnastics with awards and commemorative prizes. 1900



The prize for the winner of the standing high jump competition, American athlete and member of the New York Athletic Club, Ray Ewry. 1900, Paris



The French vase as the award for the winner in the single sculls rowing competition, French athlete Hermann Barrelet



Auguste Paris, a French sculptor and the creator of the award-winning sculpture *Le Temps et La Chanson*



The bronze sculpture *Le Temps et La Chanson* by Auguste Paris, the award for winners in the coxswain pairs rowing competition. 1900



A silver prize was awarded to the winners of the polo competition, a mixed team of John Beresford, Denis St. George Daly, Alfred Rawlinson from Great Britain, and Foxhall Keene, and Frank MacKey from the USA.

A bronze plaque from the Ministry of War was presented to the winner of the carrier pigeons competition. The plaque depicts Goddess Athena with a flag in the left and releasing a carrier pigeon with the right hand. Around her, a cannon and small temples. At the bottom, the plate is decorated with little pigeons and laurel branches. The plate mounted on the large, wooden plaque (46x32 cm) with a large carved pigeon at top and scenes of carrier pigeons engraved around top.

The United States team, victorious in the men's eight rowing competition at the 1900 Universal Exposition, received a bronze sculpture, a replica of Antoine-Louis Barye's masterpiece Panther Attacking a Stag, made by a Swiss monastic brotherhood in Paris. The inscription on the bronze plaque reads, "Universal Exposition. 1900. Rowing Regatta August 26. Men's Eight. Rowing. First Prize."

The crew that finished third in the Olympic junior men's rowing competition was honored with a silver cup.

Obviously, there were other prizes, but unfortunately, no reliable information about them has survived.

Trophy for carrier pigeons competition. Artwork. Created by Louis Convers, produced by Fumiere et Gavignot. Dimensions: 31.5x20 cm. Weight with wooden support 3,400 g



Charles Edward Sands (USA) – the winner of the golf competition with trophies





The prize-cup was awarded to the winners of the Olympic polo competition, a mixed team from Great Britain and the USA. 1900, Paris



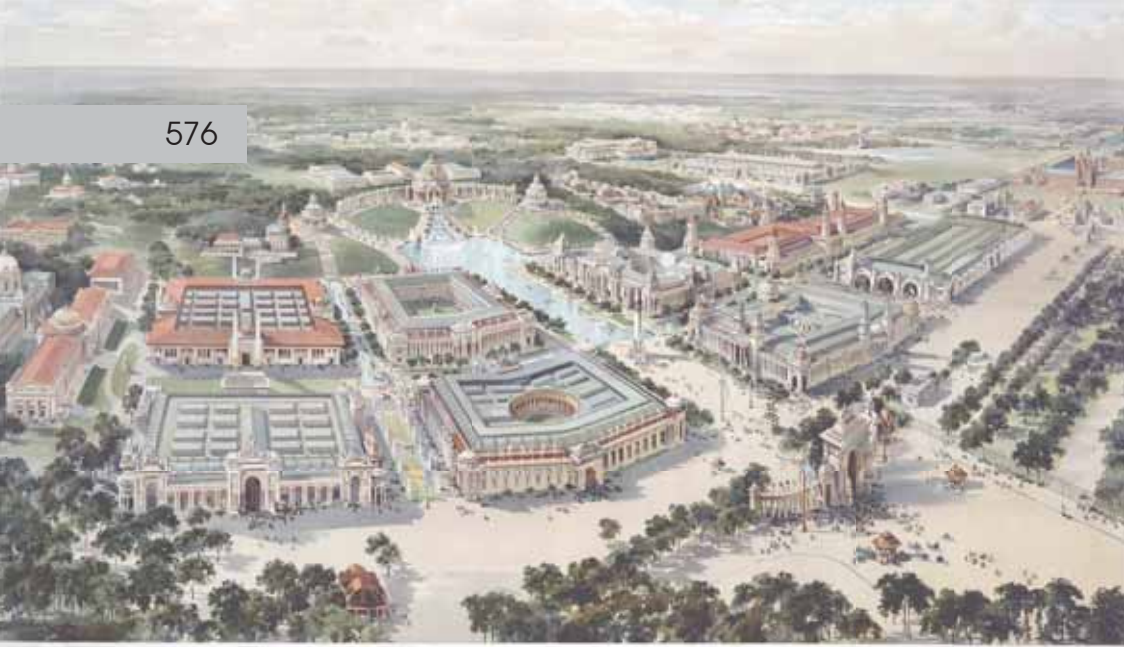
The sculpture of a young girl became the prize for the winners of the 1900 Olympic sailing competition



The award prize for the athletes who took the third place in the Olympic rowing competition among juniors. 1900, Paris



The bronze sculpture Panther Attacking a Stag, the award for winners in the eights rowing competition. It was a replica of Antoine-Louis Barye's work created by the Swiss monastic brotherhood in Paris

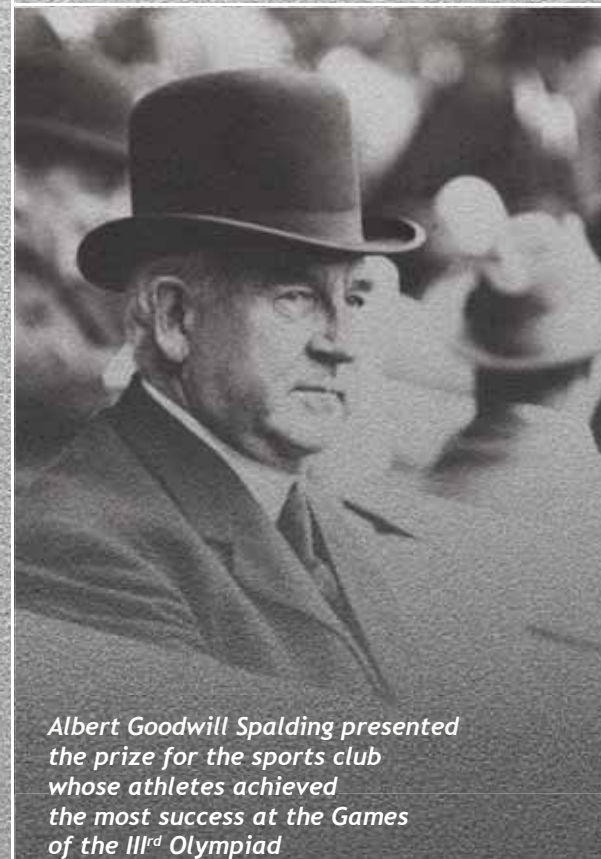


WORLD'S FAIR, ST. LOUIS, 1904.
 CELEBRATING THE CENTENNIAL OF ACQUISITION OF LOUISIANA TERRITORY.
 OPENS APRIL 30, 1904. CLOSES DEC. 1, 1904.

The 1904 Games of the IIIrd Olympiad held in St. Louis, were interesting because the Organisers of the Games presented a large number of commemorative cups for the winners in various events.

The award cups were presented by the following dignitaries and in the following events respectively: David Rowland Francis, a prominent political and public figure in the United States who served as the mayor of St. Louis and governor of the state of Missouri, – for the winner of the marathon; Frederick J. V. Skiff, the director of the Louisiana Purchase Exposition, – for the winner of the 100-metre run; A. L. Shapleigh, Chairman of the Committee on Physical Culture, Louisiana Purchase Exposition Company, at the 1904 Games, – for the winner of the 400-metre run; Norris R. Gregg, the financial director of the Louisiana Purchase Exposition, – for the winner of the 1500-metre run; Isaac Stacker Taylor, the chief architect of the exposition, who designed the best commercial, residential, industrial, and government buildings in St. Louis, – for the winner of the discus throw; Goodman King, one of the directors of the exposition, deputy chairman of three committees:

The Games of the IIIrd Olympiad. St. Louis, 1904



Albert Goodwill Spalding presented the prize for the sports club whose athletes achieved the most success at the Games of the III^d Olympiad





*Olympic Spalding Point prize-cup, awarded to the New York Athletic Club at the Games of the IIIrd Olympiad.
1904, St. Louis*



manufacturing and humanitarian sciences, anthropology and aetiology, – for the winner of the shot put; Corwin H. Spencer, the first Vice-President of the Exposition, – for the winner of the weightlifting competition; John S. Huyler, one of the largest chocolate and confectionery manufacturers in America, – for the winner of the long jump; Abram G. Mills – for the winner of the 800-metre run; Charles J. Dieges – for the winner of the 56-pound weight throw; H. H. Baxter – for the winner of the pole vault; R. Wells Jr. – for the winner of the 16-pound hammer throw; J. J. Lawrence – for the winner of the 200-metre hurdles; George B. Parker – for the winner of the 400-metre hurdles; William G. Thompson – for the winner of the 200-metre run; W. J. Kinsella – for the winner of the steeplechase. Lemp Boys presented a cup for the winner of the triple jump; Albert Goodwill Spalding – for the most successful sports club at the Games.

Let us take a look at some of the cups.

For the winner of the marathon, a special award was presented by David Rowland Francis, the president of the Organising Committee who opened the Games of the IIIrd Olympiad and personally started this historic race. The prize-cup, which is a piece of art, is a vase with two ring-like handles. Its shape can be classified as Roman urns with hanging laurel wreaths. The neck of the vase is in the form of a flower, on which a winged Nike is placed, rising above the earthly globe and swirling waters, with a wreath to honour the winner. The reverse side of the prize bears the inscription: “Presented by David R. Francis.”



Distinguished American civic and political leader David R. Francis presented a prize for the winner of the marathon at the Games of the IIIrd Olympiad

David R. Francis's prize for the victory in the marathon at the Games of the IIIrd Olympiad





Silver prize-cup donated by J.A. Holmes for the winner of the Olympic running high jump competition. The prize was presented to Samuel S. Jones, representing the New York Athletic Club. 1904, St. Louis



Frederick J. V. Skiff, the director of the Louisiana Purchase Exposition, presented a cup for the winner of the Olympic athletics competition in the 100-metre race. Skiff's cup resembles an ancient vase with two handles. The body of the cup is adorned with a winged Nike holding a winner's wreath, rising above the earthly globe. The neck of the prize-cup is decorated with an ornament of the feet of Hermes in winged sandals.

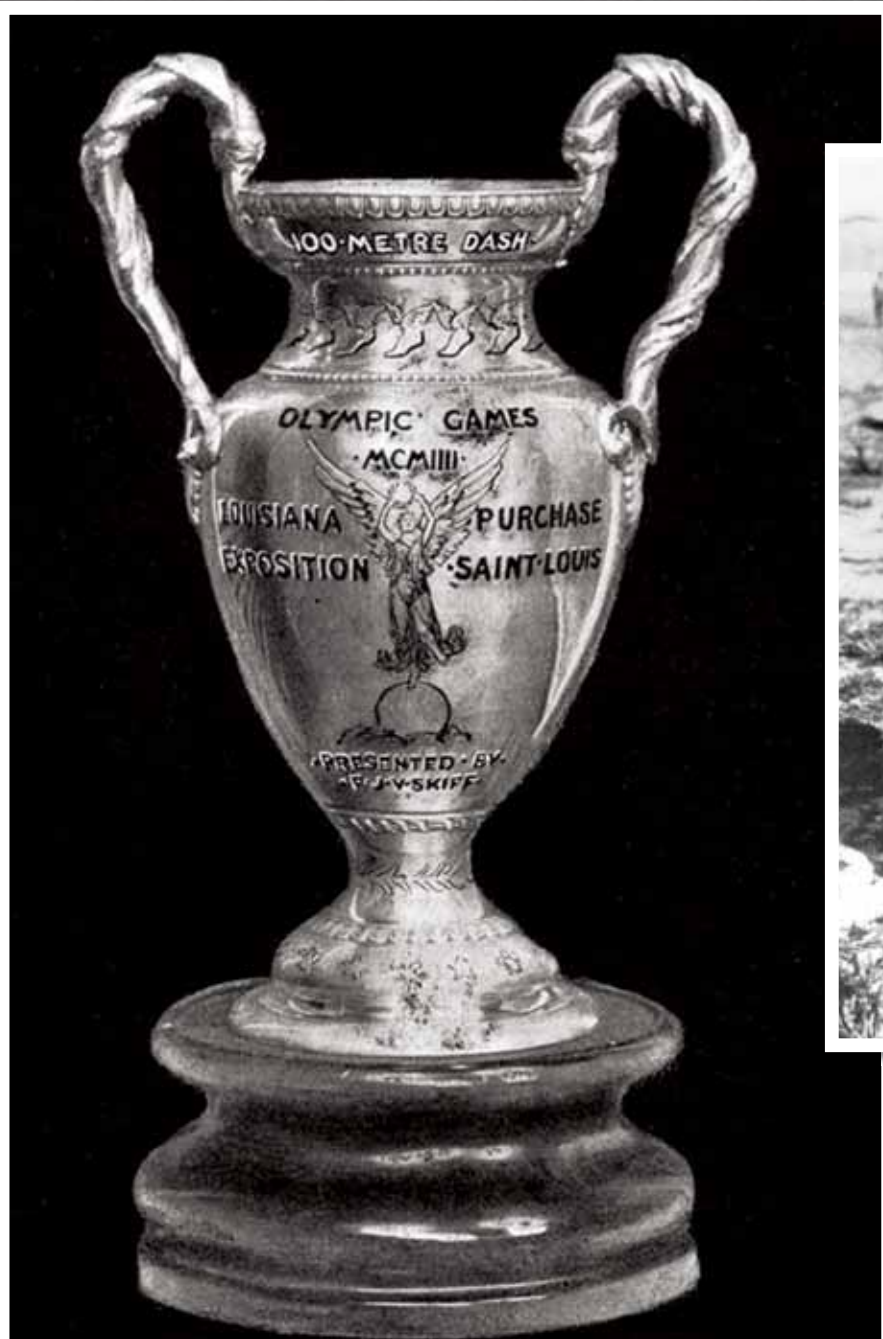
The cup bears the inscription: "100-metre dash. Olympic Games. MCMIII. Louisiana Purchase Exposition. Saint Louis. Presented by F. J. V. Skiff." The base of the cup is adorned with a laurel branch, and the bottom is decorated with pentagram stars, ancient symbols that protect against all evil.

Norris R. Gregg, the Financial Director of the Louisiana Purchase Exposition, presented the cup for the winner of the 1,500 m race. It is a metal vase shaped like an ancient Greek amphora with two handles, placed on a round chocolate-coloured base. The cup was awarded to James Lightbody, a representative of the Chicago Athletic Club and a three-time Olympic champion in the 800 m, 1,500 m, and 2,590 m steeplechase.

The silver cup donated by J.A. Holmes was presented to the Olympic champion in the running high jump, American athlete Samuel S. Jones, representing the New York Athletic Club. The cup, which has two handles in the form of rosettes, does not have any other ornaments. The cup is engraved with the inscription: "Running High Jump. Winner S. S. Jones."



Frederick J. V. Skiff – Director of the Louisiana Purchase Exposition in St. Louis, 1904, who presented the prize for the winner of the 100m race



F.J.V. Skiff's prize for the Olympic champion in the 100m race

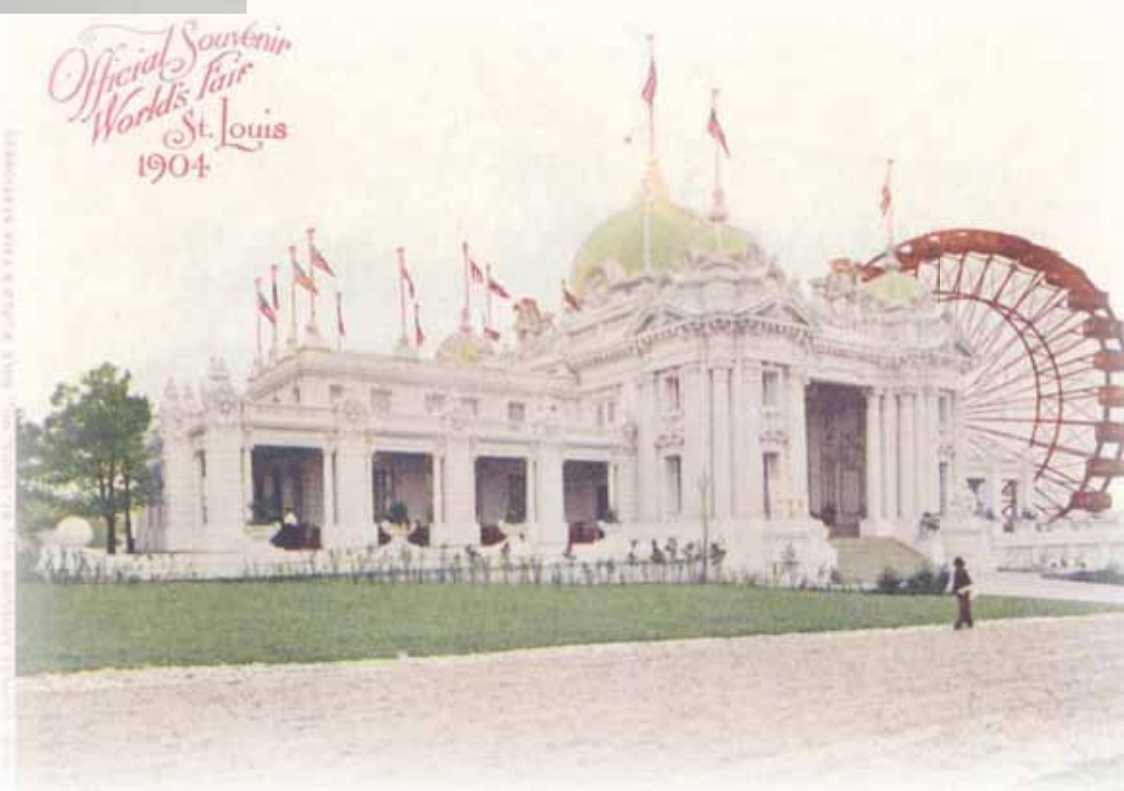


Olympic champion Archibald Hahn with F.J.V. Skiff's prize. 1904, St. Louis

Director of the Louisiana Purchase Exposition Frederick J. V. Skiff presenting the prize for the victory in the Olympic 100m race to Archibald Hahn. 1904, St. Louis



Official Souvenir
World's Fair
St. Louis
1904



Albert Goodwill Spalding, the American businessman, manager and sports official, presented a silver cup for the sports club whose athletes won the largest number of awards at the Games of the IIIrd Olympiad. The award was presented to the New York Athletic Club. Spalding's cup, which is a true masterpiece, is distinguished by its beautiful shape. The two handles are adorned with double rosettes. The body of the cup is decorated with an overlay in the form of the foot of the ancient Greek god Hermes in winged sandals (the patron of youth and trade), framed by an olive wreath. The composition is crowned with a small medallion depicting the head of a woman in a Jacobin hat, symbolising free Louisiana, with the winner's wreath against the backdrop of a rising sun. In her hands, she holds a tablet with the inscription "PAX" ("PEACE"). The upper part of the medallion bears the inscription "Universal Exposition," and the lower part reads "St. Louis USA 1904." The base of the prize-cup is delicately adorned with flower petals to complement the motifs decorating the cup handles. The cup is placed on a round chocolate-coloured base.

Albert A. Pope presented a special Cup for the bicycle race winners. It was a flower-ornate handled silver cup on wooden base, with engraved text "The Olympic Cup. St. Louis Exposition 1904. Bicycle Race Prize. Presented by colonel Albert A. Pope." The artwork was created by Mermod A. Jaccard Jewelry, Saint Louis. Dimensions (14x26,5 cm. 598 g.)



Albert Augustus Pope, one of the greatest importers, promoters and manufacturers of bicycles and automobiles in the USA, presented a special silver award for the bicycle race winner at the Games of IIIrd Olympiad 1904 in St. Louis

Pope Manufacturing Co. Famous Chainless Bicycles

Equipped with two-speed gear, coaster brake, and cushion frame.

All Standard Chain Models

Eastern Department,
Hartford, Conn.

"Columbia"
"Tribune"
"Cleveland"
"Crawford"

Western
Department,
Chicago, Ill.

"Crescent"
"Monarch"
"Rambler"
"Imperial"

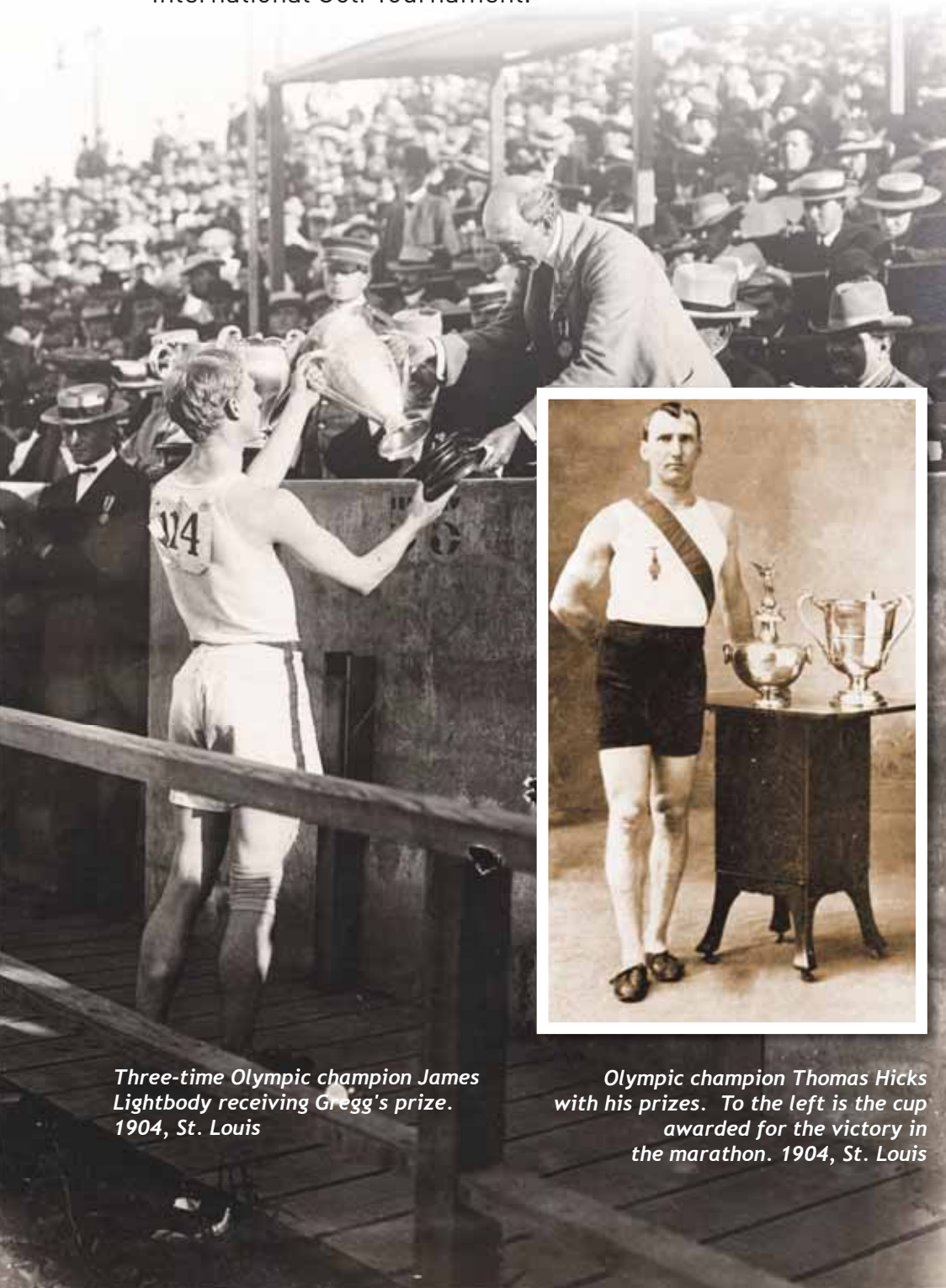
Call us for our
new catalogue prices,
and we will send you
a copy free of charge.





*Silver award prize donated by Albert A. Pope for the bicycle race winners.
The artwork was created by Mermod A. Jaccard Jewelry, Saint Louis. Dimensions: 14x26,5 cm. 598 g.*

A special prize was presented for the winner of the Olympic golf tournament in the individual category. In 1903, in preparation for awarding the winners of the future international Olympic golf tournament, the American silversmith company Reed & Barton from Taunton, Massachusetts, presented the design of an award cup. It is an elegant, beautifully decorated silver cup placed on a large pedestal of deep black colour. The cup is adorned with flowers and thistles, an ancient symbol of nobility and also a symbol of Scotland, where, it is believed, the game originated. The plant is also the emblem of the most noble and ancient chivalric Order of the Thistle, which has the motto "No one harasses me with impunity." The central part of the cup's body depicts the building of the Glen Echo golf club, the venue of the future competition. The cup is inscribed with "International Golf Tournament."



Three-time Olympic champion James Lightbody receiving Gregg's prize. 1904, St. Louis



Olympic champion Thomas Hicks with his prizes. To the left is the cup awarded for the victory in the marathon. 1904, St. Louis



Olympic winner and winner of the Olympic golf tournament in the individual competition Canadian George Lyon with the prize

Award-cup for the winner
of the Olympic golf tournament



Presentation drawing of the award-cup for golf. Reed & Barton Company, 1903



Intercalated Olympic Games. Athens, 1906

The 1906 Intercalated Games or the Second International Olympic Games in Athens was an international multi-sport event that was not officially recognised by the IOC.

Celebrating the tenth anniversary of the 1896 Games, 854 athletes (848 men and 6 women), from 20 countries competed in 78 events in 14 disciplines, comprising 12 sports.

The winners were awarded medals and diplomas.

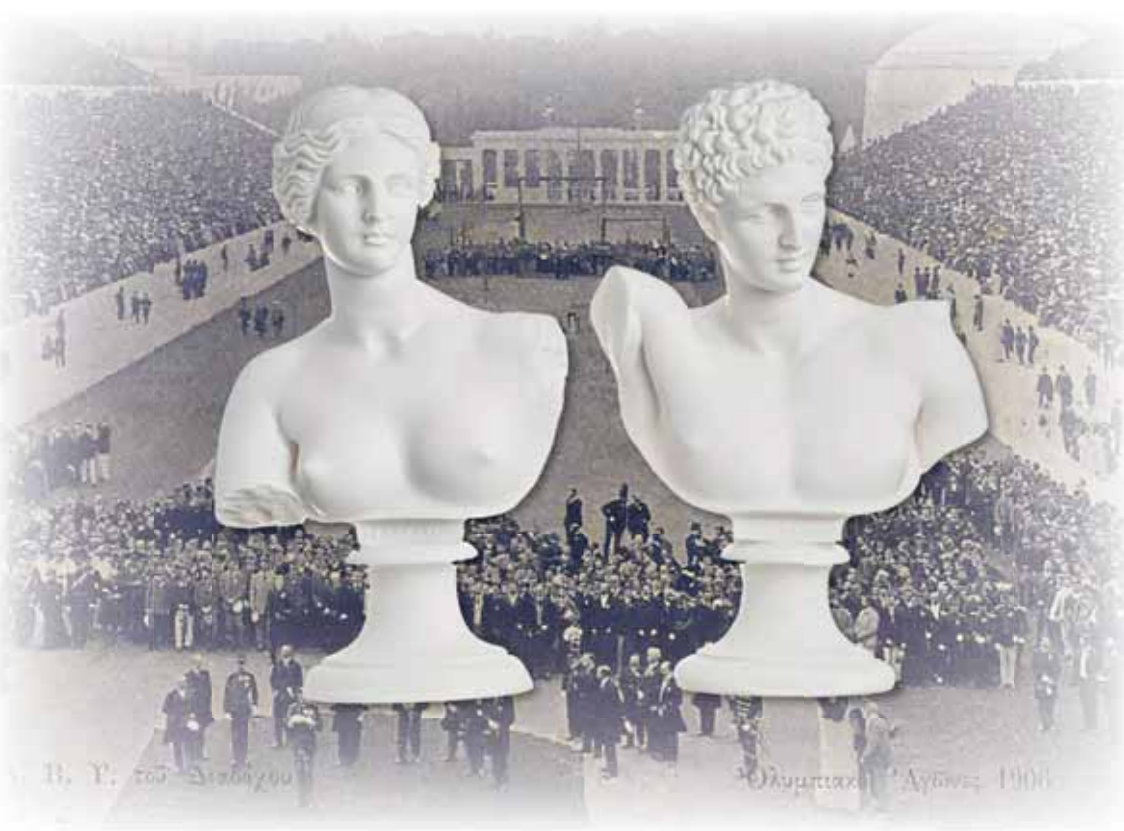
Except for the award medals and diplomas, commemorative medals, fifty special awards were presented to the winners of the Olympic competitions.

Sophia, the Princess of Greece, presented two awards: a silver inkwell for the winner in the men's single lawn tennis event and the Cooper Cup for the athletes finishing third in the mixed doubles tennis event. Municipal Council of Athens presented a marble statue of Goddess Athena, work of the famous Greek sculptor Georgios Vroutos for the winner in the marathon.

The Athenian Chamber of Trade introduced Hermes statuette to the winner of rope climbing competition.



Paul Harry Pilgrim (USA), winner of the 400m and 800m races with trophy vases and laurel wreaths



◀ *Busts of Aphrodite and Hermes were made to award the winners of the 1906 Olympic Games by the outstanding sculptor Louis Émile Gilliéron. They were excellent fragment copies of the great ancient Greek sculptures – Hermes and the Infant Dionysos by Praxiteles, also known as Hermes of Olympia, and the Aphrodite of Melos, more famously known as the Venus de Milo*



A copper cup presented by HRH Princess Sophia of Greece to the athlete finishing third in the mixed doubles tennis event



A silver inkwell presented by HRH Princess Sophia of Greece to the winner of the men's singles in lawn tennis



Nikolaos Aliprantis (right) and Georgios Aliprantis (left) with different special awards on the table



A statuette of Hermes presented by the Athenian Chamber of Trade to the winner of the rope climbing competition



A large silver badge awarded to Martin Sheridan for his victory in the discus throw competition

Many other prizes were handed over to the Organizing Committee of the 1906 Games to be awarded to outstanding athletes and teams who distinguished themselves at the Second International Olympic Games in Athens.

Education Secretary of France presented a porcelain vase.

Mouratis Brothers – Greeks from Great Britain – donated a large silver cup to the Organising Committee.

P. and K. Botasi brothers presented different prizes manufactured in gold and silver.

N. Kanellopoulos presented a statue of Hermes and a statue of Aphrodite.

Lord Mayor of Rome (Italy) presented a bronze copy of the Capitoline Wolf statue in Rome.

The state of Hungary presented a copy of the Honvéd monument in Budapest for awarding the Greek team.

Viktor Balck, the IOC member for Sweden, presented a copper copy of the ancient discus thrower sculpture for the Greek Gymnastics Club.



Enrico Cruciani Alibrandi, Italian politician and mayor of Rome, donated a prize to the Olympic winner (1906)



◀ A bronze sculpture of the Capitoline Wolf (a miniature copy) presented by the Lord Mayor of Rome



A bronze sculpture of the Honvéd Monument (a copy of the national defenders' monument in Budapest, Hungary) was provided by the Hungarian government to award the Greek team. The sculptor was György Zala (1890)



A marble sculpture of the Greek goddess Athena was provided by the Municipal Council of Athens to award the marathon winner. The sculptor was Georgios Vrontos

A copper copy of the Greek sculpture Discobolus by Myron was provided by IOC member Colonel Viktor Balck to award the Greek Gymnastics Club



IOC member for Sweden, Colonel Viktor Balck, provided a special prize for the Greek Gymnastics Club

Special cups created by Émile Gilliéron were given to the winners of discus throwing in the Greek and free style, and a number of athletics competitions.

A large silver badge was presented to the winner of free style discus throwing Martin Sheridan USA.

Émile Gilliéron was a person who produced the majority of the prizes awarded to the winners of the 1906 Games.

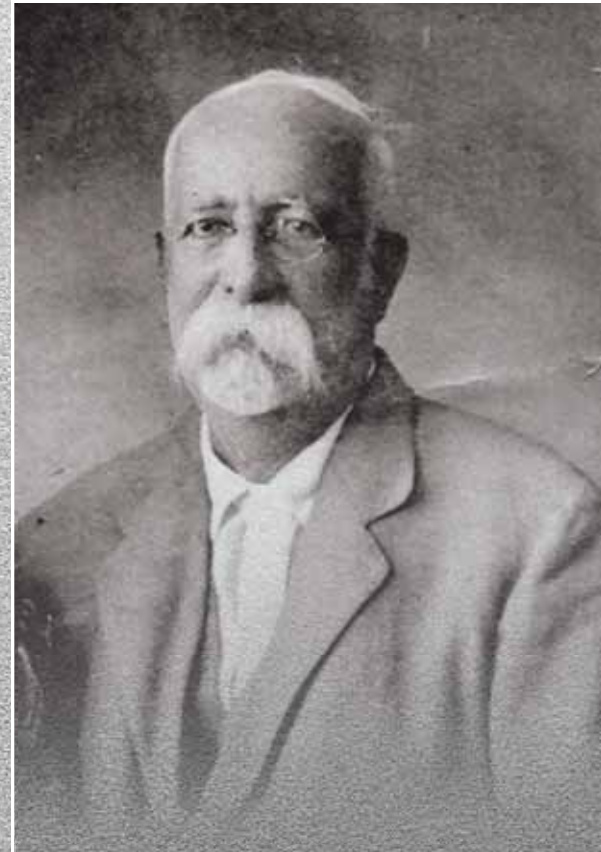
Louis Émile Emmanuel Gilliéron was a Swiss artist and archaeological draughtsman best known for his reconstructions of Mycenaean and Minoan artefacts from the Bronze Age, the official artist of the 1896 Olympic Games and the 1906 Mesolympics.

Émile Gilliéron was a key figure when it came to creating a new Olympic iconography. His field experience that he had gained through collaboration with major archaeological excavations in Greece in the second half of the 19th century provided him with ideas and reference models that served as a foundation for this new Olympic iconography. Drawing from his archaeological knowledge, he used multiple reproduction techniques. He collaborated with archaeologists such as Heinrich Schliemann, Arthur Evans, and Georg Karo, describing and restoring ancient artifacts. Gilliéron frequently obscured the distinction between his own restorations and the original material, sometimes overshadowing the ancient material with his own creations.

The winner of the 1906 Intercalated Games was awarded a trophy – a replica of an ancient Greek kylix from Mycenae (1550–1500 BC) – made by Louis Émile Gilliéron. It is kept at the Olympic Museum, NOC of Greece, Athens



Trophy designs for the 1906 Mesolympics, Émile Gilliéron



Louis Émile Emmanuel Gilliéron was a Swiss artist and archaeological draughtsman best known for his reconstructions of Mycenaean and Minoan artefacts from the Bronze Age, the official artist of the 1896 Olympic Games and the 1906 Mesolympics





The winner of the 1906 Olympic marathon was awarded a prize - replica of an ancient Greek vase (kantharos), made by Louis Émile Gilliéron. It is on display at the Olympic Museum in Thessaloniki, Greece



Sports Organisations of various countries, as well as prominent public figures, repeatedly proposed rewarding Olympic Games winners with commemorative gifts in addition to Olympic medals and diplomas.

The British Olympic Council, after discussing these proposals, decided to allow awarding of commemorative prizes, presented that their value did not exceed £100–£300, and that they would not remain in the possession of the winners longer than until the next Olympic Games, making them challenge.

A special contract was drawn up between the recipient and the President of the National Association under the control of the British Olympic Council for each prize, and in the following years, the International Olympic Committee was responsible for ensuring compliance with these rules. This way, the principle of amateurism was upheld, as Olympic Games winners did not receive any awards other than Olympic medals and diplomas.

The Organising Committee of the 1908 Games of the IVth Olympiad in London received twelve prizes for awarding the winners. Nine of them were presented during the award ceremony, while the remaining three were handed over to the International Olympic Committee for future presentation.

The Games of the IVth Olympiad. London, 1908



The Challenge Prizes of the 1908 Games of the IVth Olympiad in London



The British Fencing Association initiated the Challenge Prize for the winners of Olympic competitions – a bronze vase, which was a brilliant replica of the Ionic amphora from 380–360 BC known as the Pourtalès Vase. Pourtalès was a late red-figure vase painter from Athens, a unique artistic personality. The vase created by him is a bell-shaped crater. The original Pourtalès Vase is exhibited in the British Museum (London). The award-winning bronze replica of the vase, made by the company Mappin & Webb, was mounted on a pedestal with reliefs depicting the battle between the Horatii and the Curiatii. The pedestal was created by Jane E. Cook based according to the design by Edwin Godwin and A. Hollinghead. The French team got to own this cup, having become the champion in the team épée fencing competition



Madame Lucy Maud Montgomery De Pembroke, donated a Challenge Prize for the Olympic athletics events in discus throwing in the Greek style. This prize, measuring 55x35x23 cm, is a brown wooden sculpture of a discobolus placed on a wooden base. The prize honoured American athlete Martin Sheridan, a two-time Olympic champion in discus throwing (free and Greek styles)



The municipal authorities and sports organisations of the city of Prague, the birthplace of the Sokol movement, initiated a Challenge Prize for outstanding achievements in gymnastics, officially called the Prize of the Royal Capital City of Prague for the Olympic Games in London-1908. It was a bronze sculpture that was so heavy that two guards had to help the winner move it from the podium. The creator of the prize, Weight Thrower, was the prominent Czech sculptor-realist Emanuel Halman, who worked at the Prague Academy of Fine Arts. The recipient of this prize was Italian gymnast Alberto Braglia, an Olympic champion in the all-around competition



Sixteen individuals who won gold medals in rowing received a souvenir to commemorate their victories – a silver-plated oar in a red leather gift case



On 25 July 1908, the award ceremony took place. Her Majesty Queen Alexandra personally presented the medals and Challenge prizes to the winners. She was assisted by members of the British Olympic Council, George Stuart Robertson and Theodore A. Cook. The prizes included:

1. A sculpture from HM King of Greece – for the marathon race.
2. The Prague Sculpture – for the gymnastics competitions.
3. The Montgomery statuette – for the discus throw.
4. The Prince of Wales Cup – for cycling (100 km race).
5. The Hurlingham Club Cup – for polo.
6. The Goldsmith & Silversmith Cup – for wrestling.
7. The Lord Westbury Cup – for clay pigeon shooting.
8. The British Fencing Association Cup, reproduced from the Pourtales vase, – for fencing competitions.
9. The cup founded by Count Brunetta d'Usseaux – for swimming.
10. The statuette presented by Count Brunetta d'Usseaux – for rowing.
11. The Football Association Trophy of England.
12. The vase presented by the President of the French Republic for yachting.



Her Majesty Queen Alexandra awarded the Italian athlete Dorando Pietri with a Gold Cup for his demonstrated will to win. 1908, London

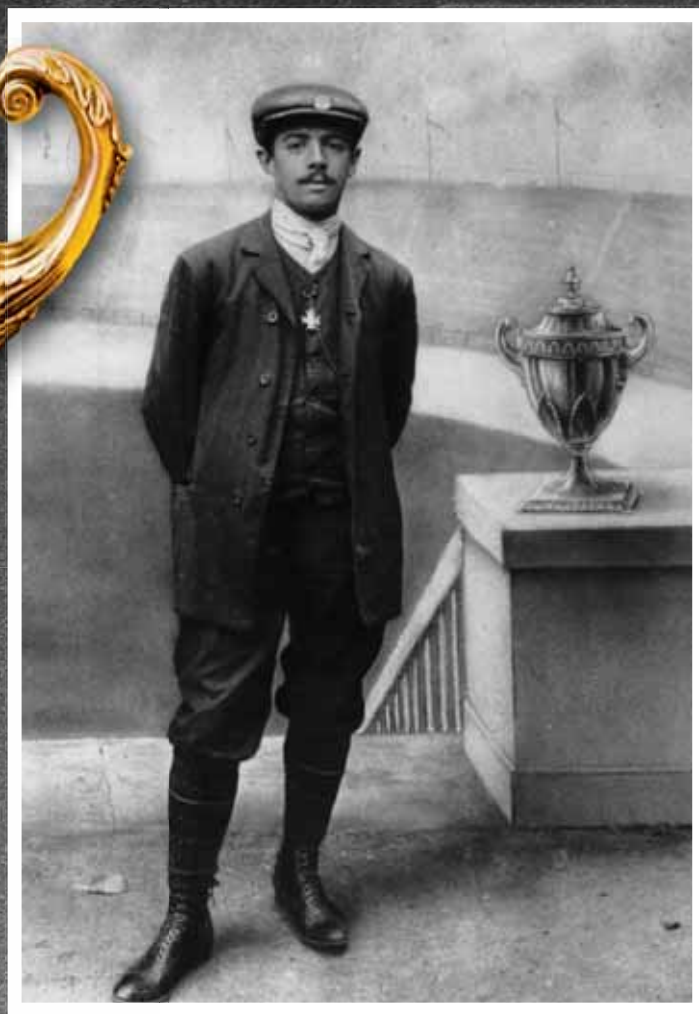




Award-winning Dorando Pietri with the Gold Cup



The Gold Cup (gilted silver) presented to the Italian marathon runner Dorando Pietri at the 1908 Games of the IVth Olympiad in London



Count Eugenio Brunetta d'Usseaux, an Italian nobleman, colleague of Pierre de Coubertin, a member of the IOC, and its general secretary since 1908, donated two Challenge Prizes to the British Olympic Council for the winners of Olympic competitions in rowing and swimming. The Challenge Prize for awarding Olympic winners in rowing is a bronze sculpture of Athena-Pallas, solemnly leaning on a shield placed on the ground. The beautiful goddess directs her thoughtful gaze at the statue of the winged goddess Nike held in her palm, rising above the globe with a winner's wreath in her hands. The winged Nike is a copy of the original work by the ancient Greek sculptor Pheidias from Olympia. However, originally, in ancient Olympia, Nike was held by Zeus in his right hand. The bronze statue was created by Alice Ney-Wetherbee. Dimensions: 93x45.5x42.5; weight: 33.8 kg. The Challenge Prize was awarded to the British team, the winner of the Olympic competition in men's eight rowing.

The Challenge Prize presented by Count Eugenio Brunetta d'Usseaux for long-distance swimming was a masterpiece of jewellery art as it was created by the Italian jewellery company Janetti Padre & Figli (Janetti Father and Sons). The silver cup, measuring 28x19x11 cm, is adorned with decorative laurel garlands and an ornate floral ornament. It has a classic shape two-handled Greek Cantharos (Cup with two vertical handles which often extend high above the lit of the cup).

The cup bears the inscription in Italian: "Challenge Cup for Swimming. IV Olympiad. London 1908." The base of the cup, or its pedestal, is decorated with a laurel branch wreath and the inscription "Presented by Eugenio Brunetta d'Usseaux."

The cup was presented as a gift to Olympic swimming champion Henry Taylor (Great Britain).



Count Eugenio Brunetta d'Usseaux, member of the Italian Olympic Committee, with his daughter



The Athena-Pallas sculpture, presented by Count Brunetta d'Usseaux, for the winning team in the Olympic eight rowing competition. Dimensions: 93x45.5x42.5; weight: 33.8 kg





Challenge Prize presented by Count Brunetta d'Usseaux to the winner of the Olympic 1,500 m swimming competition. Created by Janetti Padre & Figli (Janetti Father and Sons). Dimensions: 28x19x11 cm

HM King George I of Greece presented a Challenge Prize for the winner of the Olympic marathon. It was a bronze sculpture by Jean-Pierre Cortot called *The Soldier of Marathon Announcing the Victory or the Dying Pheidippides*. The marble original of the sculpture, created in 1834, is exhibited in the Louvre (Paris). The bronze version of the sculpture was cast in 1880 at the bronze foundry of Ferdinand Barbedienne. Its dimensions are 65.8x72x38 cm, and it weighs 31.2 kg.

The magnificent bronze sculpture reminds us of a triumphant page in ancient Greek history – the glorious victory in one of the greatest land battles of the Greco-Persian Wars, which took place on 12 September 490 BC, near the plain of Marathon, approximately 42 km from Athens. The news of the devastating defeat of the Persian army in the Marathon Valley was brought to Athens by the messenger Pheidippides, who ran immediately after the battle for over 40 km to the city. Having exclaimed, “Joy to you, we’ve won!” the warrior died. The plot of this legend inspired Jean-Pierre Cortot to create this magnificent sculpture. The sculptor placed an olive branch in the dying warrior’s hand.

This prize was awarded to the American athlete John Hayes, who finished second after Italian Dorando Pietri, but Pietri was disqualified, so Hayes became the Olympic champion.



HM King George I of Greece commissioned a prize for the winner of the Olympic marathon



*Jean-Pierre Cortot, creator of the sculpture *The Soldier of Marathon Announcing the Victory*, a bronze copy of which became an Olympic Challenge prize*