

Ode to Athens

For the Olympic Games, Athens 2004

Armand D'Angour

Blessed precinct of the land of Athena,
Immortal City of Theseus and of the sons of Erechtheus,
We will sing of you, whence Athenians of old
And heroes once set forth to the Games
Of shining Olympia.
Now as for a second time with good fortune
You have welcomed these contests here
Let us celebrate you with Pindaric song.

Come to the world's centre, young men and women,
Gathering from countless lands afar,
Rejoicing in strength and firm in purpose
To achieve victory, and in the cause of peace
Eager to compete.
To the winners there will be grateful reward
For their marvellous skills,
So let us extol them with glorious music.

Let the desired gift of success alight
On each Olympic victor in turn, as God grants it
To those who deserve it and whose turn it is to win.
But with God's favour may light eternal also shine on the City
In return for her hospitality and goodwill.
O Mother-city of wisdom, famed of all Hellas,
Now receive in gladness this thanks-offering of words
Finessed in ancient style;
And in finale with upraised voices let us praise you
at the height of your glory.