

Christianity and Hellenic Culture\*

by

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## CHRISTIANITY AND HELLENIC CULTURE

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I do not profess any expertise in the subject which I am about to discuss because my everyday activities are not directly related to it. I have never devoted any extensive or intensive effort to study the meaning of Christianity and Hellenic Culture. Therefore, I feel somewhat embarrassed to undertake to address you on the unique educational genius of the undying influence of the Greek spirit and our Christian faith throughout the ages. In fact, as I am trying to find some words to thank our parish for the honor to ask me to speak here tonight, I cannot fail but remember a cartoon that I saw a few years ago in one of the Boston newspapers. There was a fellow who just received his doctorate in nuclear physics after many years of study at MIT. He was walking with his parents out of the auditorium where the graduation exercises took place and he was saying, "Mother and father, I really do appreciate everything you have done for me and all the hardships you suffered to see me through school. From now on, any questions you may have on nuclear physics, please do not hesitate to call on me."

Well, Father Christon and members of the Board, thank you very much for your kind invitation to speak on Christianity and Hellenic Culture. If you have any questions regarding nuclear reactors, please do not hesitate to call on me.

However, in spite of my shortcomings, first as an individual who was born in the presence of the Parthenon, second as a Christian, and third as an individual who has spent most of his life in school, I do have a responsibility to be concerned about our privileged spiritual and intellectual heritage which is reflected in the Christian and the Hellenic Ideals. I would, therefore, like to discuss the subject briefly from these three standpoints, in an effort to emphasize its unique and living relevance to our society.

#### THE GREEK IDEAL

The Greek Ideal, or the Greek Paideia as Plato calls it, or the Christian Paideia as Gregory of Nyssa calls it, or the Hellenic Culture as it is known today, are all synonymous and very broad terms. They describe the noblest of the human endeavors, the full development of the intellect of the individual, and they are inclusive of such contemporary expressions as civilization,

tradition, education, literature, art, religion etc. Throughout the ages the concept of Greek Paideia remains as the very essence of scholarship and scholarly activity with variations in its specific purposes.

More precisely, in ancient times, the Greek Ideal had as its primary objective the eudaimonia of the individual, the felicity of the individual. This prosperity and happiness is achieved through life of activity in accordance with reason, philosophy and broad and deep interests in the arts, the letters, poetry and the study of nature. Generally, eudaimonia is achieved when the individual develops an inquisitive mind and raises and attempts to answer difficult questions such as: Who am I? Where am I going? Why am I here? How did I appear? What do I see in my environment? How should I behave with regard to my fellow men? What are my social responsibilities? What depends on my own free will? and many other age old questions.

It is evident that it is impossible for me to even attempt to outline the answers the ancient Greeks gave to these questions. The reason is not only because the initiators of our Western Civilization gave answers to many questions. The reason is not only because the founders of tyranny, aristocracy, monarchy, communism and

democracy preoccupied themselves with many problems which have been intriguing and challenging the human mind throughout the ages. The reason is mostly because the Greeks with their anthropocentric attitude toward life presented a large variety of answers in accordance with the different philosophical schools which they created. Beginning with the literary, philosophical and historical epics of Homer and Hesiod and proceeding with the lyric poetry of Archilochos, the poetry and Theognis, and the scientific philosophy of Thales, Anaximandrus, Anaximenes and Democritus we could easily spend hours and hours in order to comprehend the meaning of their work. We could make it a lifetime's effort to understand the thought of the Orphics, or the Pythagoreans, or the Sophist philosophers. We need indeed time and deep study to familiarize ourselves with the Greek tragedies and the minds of their authors such as Aeschylus, Euripides and Sophocles, or with Greek comedy as represented by the comedies of Aristophanes, or with the Greek artists and architects such as Praxiteles and Pheidias. We need competence and scholarship to analyze the thoughts of Plato, Aristotle, the Stoics, the Skeptics and the Epicureans. We indeed could write diatribes and disquisitions in our attempt to elucidate the dialectic method of Socrates or the political and social struggles of the ancient Greeks.

Well, it is self-evident why even a superficial  
and  
survey of the glory that was Greece, which flourished over  
a short period of a few hundred years, is not possible.

Nevertheless, there are certain important attributes of Hellenic Culture which I must emphasize:

1. The first attribute is the richness, the forcefulness and the clarity of the Greek language. There is no other language in the World, with the exception of French during the 17th century, which achieved such a high degree of development as the ancient Greek language. The reason is that ancient Greeks possessed such fertile, creative, and imaginative minds, they were concerned about such a large variety of subjects and they had such a genuine desire to answer so many scientific questions that they needed to perfect their means of expression to a degree which left no room for ambiguity. They needed to develop their language to a level of elegance and conceptual diversity which would allow them to communicate the most involved religious, political, social, medical, artistic, literary, scientific or any other type of thought lucidly and concisely. "The Greeks had a word for it" not only because they loved to engage in disquisitions pertaining to themselves, to their environment and their origin and fate

but also because they felt the need to do so as a means to achieve eudaimonia. I cannot overemphasize the importance of this aspect of the Hellenic heritage. It is an attribute which played and still plays a primary role in all Christian and Western Civilizations, namely in all the Hellenocentric nations. I will return to this point later.

2. The second important aspect of Hellenic Culture is the variety, spontaneity, versatility and unrestricted freedom of thought which it represents. For ancient Greeks, an individual does not only need faith in order to begin his ascendancy to prosperity and happiness but also knowledge. This knowledge, of course, is consistent with the intellectual development and it is acquired through education. Education, in the broadest and deepest sense of the word, is the central theme of Hellenic Culture and it is conceived without any barriers whatsoever. It is precisely this barrier-free educational environment which allowed the Greek people to develop so rapidly in so many different ways and to create historic intellectual monuments ranging from the mythologic cosmogony of Hesiod, to the exaltation of the mind by Plato, to the mysticism of the Pythagoreans, to the sensual interpretation of Nature by the Epicureans and to the everlasting logic of Aristotle.

This historical fact is of great import to western man who still lives in the bright light of the freedom loving ancient Greek spirit. It is the unique characteristic which distinguishes the mentality of all Hellenocentric nations and their Cultures from all other asiatic, african or oriental civilizations. I wish I had more time to belabor the point in great detail. Nevertheless, it will suffice to recall one of the recent archaeological discoveries. Specifically, it has been recently proven that the Greek civilization is of Semitic origin. The Minoic civilization of Knossos was created by Semites who came from Egypt to Crete. However, when this civilization was transferred to Mycenae by the Mycenaean invaders of Crete, it began to change form and to rid itself of its Semetic ancestry. In particular, it freed itself of all preconceived barriers. On the contrary, the Semites that went from Egypt to Palestine did not follow a similar path. This Semitic group was the first to be concerned about the existence of a unique God and about the rules that govern the social aspects of man's life and his relation to God. Most of their ideas in this regard we use still today. However, the Jewish people were in a sense one-sided. They built into their mental attitudes restrictions which forbade them from broadening their outlook outside the realm of ethics. The Greeks liberated themselves of all



barriers from the very beginning of their development and thus succeeded to revolutionize the history of mankind. The Greeks recognized no obstacles to originality and creativity and thus bequeathed to us the values of classical antiquity which still remain timeless sources of inspiration.

An immediate consequence of this great achievement is that anybody who is truly initiated in its teachings necessarily acquires similar qualities. He feels the urge to ascend intellectually, to work creatively and to emphasize not only the material goods of life but primarily the offsprings of the mind. This is the reason why Hellenic Culture remains immortal during the past 3,000 years and will remain immortal. Its very conception includes explicitly all the elements of self-evolution since it calls for an active participation in its ideals rather than a passive adoption of its past laurels.

3. The third characteristic of Hellenic Culture is its historical value. This historical value does not stem only from the fact that in the ancient documents we find names and dates related to the events of the period. Its magnificence lies in the realization that our own way of thinking began with Greece. Awareness of Greek history

helps us understand the roots of our society and teaches us the nobility of the pursuit of an ideal, the ideal of education or paideia, as a means to a meaningful life. The history of Greece is not the history of one particular nation but of a group of nations to which physically and intellectually we belong, because our history begins with Greece. That is why we always return to Greece. To be sure, our return to Greece, our spontaneous renewal of its influence does not mean that by acknowledging the greatness of the Greeks we have given them an unchallengeable authority over us. On the contrary, we always return to Greece because she fulfills some need of our own life even though this need may be different at different times.

(Give story of Galatea and Pygmalion)

Well, I will not burden you any further with my superficial survey of Hellenic Culture and the eudaimonia of the individual which is its primary objective. I would only like to reiterate and stress the point that this multifaceted heritage is not only a literary, intellectual and historical privilege, but, mostly, synonymous and demanding responsibilities of every self-respecting human being. These responsibilities are bestowed on us not only for geographical reasons but also for religious reasons.

To see this clearly, I will now discuss our heritage from the point of view of Christianity.

### THE CHRISTIAN IDEAL

The Christian Ideal has as its objective the happiness of the individual, makariotis to be precise. In other words, the Christian ideal is the intellectual and spiritual development of the individual while he is preparing for the kingdom of Heaven. This is achieved with the continuous efforts of every Christian to distinguish between the good and the evil on his own free will and as his own personal responsibility, and to approach God through the help of the Word of God and the salvation brought to us by Jesus, our Lord. This may be an inadequate description of the Christian Ideal but will suffice for my purposes.

Now, the question is "what are the exact instruments which man must use to achieve makarioteta"? To answer this question, we must divert for a moment and look into the first steps of our faith.

After the preaching, crucifixion and resurrection of our Lord, that is, after the teaching of the Word of God and the offer of salvation to humanity by the Son of God, Christianity passed through three stages of

development which are tautly interwoven with Hellenic Culture and Greek traditions. The first stage is the spreading of our religion, the second is its establishment and the third is its flourishing. Let us briefly examine each one of these stages of development.

After the resurrection of Jesus, the Apostles had to decide whether Christianity was a strictly Jewish religion or whether the Gospel of Jesus should be brought to the entire humanity. At this historical moment, Paul's opinion prevailed and it was decided that the Christian thought should be conveyed to all human beings. An immediate consequence of this decision was that the teaching and catechesis should be done in Greek. The reasons for the choice of the Greek language were many.

The first was a simple pragmatic reason. The known world of the times was the Roman Empire created through the conquest of the empire of Alexander the Great. The conquerors occupied administratively and politically the disorganized empire of Alexander the Great but were conquered by the Greek spirit. The Roman Empire remained hellenistic in its cultural outlook as it had been conceived by the Macedonians. Therefore, the Greek language was a sine non quo tool for the Apostles. Parenthetically, I should mention here that

the Roman Ideal, expressed in terms of the ability of the Romans to organize, administer and legalize a society, has been the third important influence on Western man but its discussion is outside the scope of my talk.

Returning to our theme, I must emphasize that it was not only the language as a collection of words which lead the Apostles to adopt Greek as a means to communicate the Gospel. Even more important yet were the wealth of the language in literary forms, metaphors, categories of thought and concepts. And certainly the conciseness of expressions afforded by Greek and the facility<sup>with</sup> which one could articulate difficult and refined ideas without leaving much room for misconceptions, must also have been a decisive factor.

Another reason for the adoption of the Greek language was that the first Christians, who were of Jewish descent, had been hellenized and they had already begun proselytizing in Greek. Greek was spoken in many synagogues of the Mediterranean as we can deduce from the writings of the Jewish philosopher Philo of Alexandria.

Still another reason was that the hellenized people were receptive to the salvation being offered by

the Word of God. Perhaps this came about because, for a period of time, the Greek Ideal had overemphasized the power of the intellect and thus it had left the average individual devoid of hope. The variety of philosophical schools that were initiated, the emphasis of the achievements of the mind and the novelty of the problems discussed may have left the man on the street behind and may have given him the disappointing impression that his everyday life with his family and his fellowmen was of no consequence. This feeling of emptiness was being filled by the Gospel and the sacrifice of Jesus. Thus, perhaps the advantages and the weaknesses of the Greek tradition made the existing mental environment conducive to the spreading of Christianity.

For all these and other reasons, the kyregma of the new faith began in Greek and an unavoidable gradual interpenetration of the Hellenic and Christian thoughts was initiated. Of course, there were basic differences in the objectives: eudaimonia versus makoriotes and simple human mind, the "nous" of Plato, versus the Word of God.

We can follow the process of gradual interpenetration of the two thoughts by reading the letter of Clement, Bishop of Rome, to the Corinthians. This letter is very revealing because it helps us understand how the

logic of Greek paideia was diffusing more and more into the Christian religion. To be specific, St. Paul had written to the Corinthians to convince them to settle the disputes among their factions and to resolve differences in their interpretations of the Christian faith. His arguments were primarily appealing to the feelings rather than the reason of the Corinthians. After the death of St. Paul, the Corinthians continued their quarrels and discords. It is then that Clement of Rome addressed the Corinthians. In the manner of ancient rhetorical art he proves to them by many well chosen examples the tragic effects of party strife and disobedience. He declares that the Church of Corinth does not represent an isolated community but a part of a universal whole which requires an inner discipline similar to that of the citizens of a well organized state. Clement's letter is not written in the form of a dogmatic order but constitutes a prototype of Greek logic, rhetoric and argumentation. It is full of examples taken from the Greek tradition and the recent experiences of the Greeks with the Romans. The problem is analyzed not only as a question of faith but also as a philosophical question which pertains to the practical needs of everyday life. Brotherly love and concord are presented not only as God-given blessings but also as meaningful living experiences.

Time does not permit me to pursue the analysis of Clement's letter any further. It suffices only to repeat that it is an important historical evidence attesting to the growth of the amalgamation of the Greek and Christian traditions during the end of the 1st Century.

2. The next stage of development of Christian thought comes with the establishment of Christianity during the 2nd and 3rd Centuries. In this stage the blending, the "synkrisis," of Greek and Christian Cultures became even stronger and more explicit. It occurred under the following circumstances.

After its first steps, Christianity was subjected to cruel and barbarous persecutions and was experiencing violent objections on behalf of the pagan majority. Christians soon found out that it was not enough for them to talk about the magnificence of their faith and expect their opponents to be convinced and converted. On the contrary, the defense of Christianity had to employ philosophical arguments throughout because otherwise it had no chance of surviving even amongst those who were lending a sympathetic ear to its preachings. The problem had only one solution, namely the combination of the Greek philosophical tradition with the Christian faith in a unique whole and within the same individual. This is exactly



what happened for the first time in the persons of Clement of Alexandria and his student Origen. Their exemplary mixing of the two worlds resulted in an effective synthetic form of Christian thought at a time when Christianity was undergoing one of the most crucial moments of its existence.

Clement and Origen recognized the expediency for the synthesis both from the point of view of survival of Christianity and from the point of view of continuation of Hellenic thought as it had been molded by Socrates and Plato. Thus they became the founders of Christian philosophy. This philosophy was not as broad as that of Aristotle or the Stoics. It was primarily centered around theology. For our purposes, its meaning lies not so much in its object but rather in the way of thinking which it employed as a means to present the faith and knowledge of Christianity.

The mixing of the Christian religion and the Greek intellectual tradition assisted the men of the times to comprehend the large number of common points which existed between the two developments when viewed from the standpoint of education. It became apparent that education was the common denominator of both. The synthesis brought to the surface for the first time the historic

evolution of the human intellect, a fact which had been completely overlooked by the Greeks because of their preoccupation with their own civilization. Another important result was the transformation of the Greek idea about the unification of the World through Greek Culture to the Christian idea of unity through the Word of God which uses as an instrument Greek philosophical thought. Thus, education, which is one of the central ideas of Plato, ceased to be an end in itself but became a means for spiritual ascendance, in accordance with the Word of God.

In short, Clement's and Origen's synthesis did not only assist Christianity to survive and expand in a hostile environment but also placed the Greek thought in its proper historical philosophical context. However, in spite of its expediency and necessity, Clement's and Origen's synthesis could not last very long, particularly as conceived by Origen. The reason is that Origen's theological philosophy was neither productive nor creative and did not emphasize the contributions which ought to be demanded of Greek Culture. In order to understand this criticism we must now turn to the third stage of development of Christian thought, namely, the period of flourishing.

3. Christianity was recognized as a religion of the Roman Empire by Emperor Constantine during the 4th Century. At the end of the 4th Century, Emperor Theodosius instituted Christianity as an official religion of the Empire. This achievement, however, created serious problems for Christians. To be precise, Christianity would not be capable to live up to the responsibilities which its new status entailed until it succeeded in resolving its internal differences regarding its objectives and credo and until it could attract the large number of educated people who were still opposing it.

The people who were still opposing the beliefs of Christianity were not only cultured intellectuals but they were also politically and socially very strong. They represented a large fraction of the elite class so that they could not be easily overlooked. They were individuals with very high standards and they could not be approached with naive arguments.

Thus, Christianity had to prove that it not only proposed to displace the idols which Society had associated with deep-rooted traditions for many centuries, but also and mostly so, that the Christian Culture could offer cause and inspiration for meaningful intellectual development as did the existing paideia. This task was successfully confronted by the giants of our Church, the Fathers

of our Church, Basil and the two Gregories, who completed the integration of the Greek Ideal and Christian ethics in a constructive and creative manner. They conceived of a philosophy which addressed itself to all human needs, ~~X~~ be ~~to~~ <sup>they</sup> spiritual or intellectual. This philosophy has been transferred to us by the Holy Fathers through their preachings and it has been exemplified by their works which are as much religious as they are philosophical and literary masterpieces of the times.

The Fathers preach that theology is a great science based on outstanding education and study and on the philosophical training of the intellect. This science is a part of the whole culture of the World and, in particular, of the anthropocentric Greek Culture with the exception of Greek religion.

The Fathers are not talking about a neoclassicism. They declare that they are natural heirs of all Greek traditions except religion and thus they transfer this dynamic heritage to all Christians for further development and advancement. They praise the value and challenging importance of Greek poetry, literature, and rhetoric. They emphasize the leading role that these subjects should play in the education of youth. They restate that education is not only the means for intellectual development but also

the method which an individual must use to reach God. The last remark is a goal for every Christian and it is discharged with the help of the Holy Spirit but under strictly personal responsibility.

Thus, the Ideal of Christianity is identified with the Greek Ideal but under the guidance of the Word of God. In other words, to the edifice of Greek education, the Fathers add the study of the Holy Scriptures. The Holy Bible is offered not as another piece of literature but as a confirmation and climax of one's spiritual growth.

Alas, I must again interrupt prematurely the analysis of the meaning of the work of the Fathers of our Church. Summarizing, however, let me recapitulate that the Holy Fathers, with their historical awareness, with their outstanding Hellenic educational background and with the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, have succeeded in channeling Christianity into the route of everlasting fertility. They did so by means of a perfect physical and spiritual union, by means of a perfect symponia, of the Greek and Christian Ideals. This is why our privileged historic, literary, and spiritual heritage and responsibilities do not come to us only for geographic reasons but primarily because of spiritual reasons. Makariotis, as an

objective of Christianity, does not ignore eudaimonia of the Greek Ideal. Makariotis includes eudaimonia as an instrument to guide man to ever higher intellectual levels, that is to closer proximity of God.

(MAKE REMARKS ABOUT OVER-EMPHASIZED VIEWPOINTS)

It seems to me that the preceding inspiring and challenging conception of the Greek Ideal in the context of Christianity is not fully appreciated by many a contemporary man. For this reason, I would like now to turn to the third part of my talk and examine our heritage from the point of view of science and technology. To do so in the proper historical sequence, I ought to trace the transplantation of the Greek Ideal to Western Europe via the Arabs, the dispersed Jews and the Byzantines and I ought to follow the influence of the Greeks on the scientific and technical evolution through the Middle Ages, the Renaissance and the period of the industrial revolution. However, such a course would take me too far afield and therefore I will proceed directly to the present.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

To some of you it may sound superfluous that I have chosen to look at our heritage from the standpoint of science and technology and indeed it is. Basically, I

may be attempting to compare apples with oranges and thus I may be misleading you into a futile argument. Yet, there is a problem which cannot be overlooked. Quite often many scientists or progressive individuals argue as follows: All the history of Christianity and Hellenic Culture is really very interesting if you have the time to read about it. But today we live in the age of supersonic planes, we live in the century of nuclear fission and nuclear fusion bombs, we work and enjoy abundant goods, we have more cars than roads to drive them on or garages to park them in, we have "Telstar" and we have this and we have that, so what is the relevance of the archaic ideas to our achievements? We have developed a pure scientific way of thinking which can attack any problem from strange particles in high energy physics, to the elements and structure of living cells, to the ingredients of the atmosphere of Mars, so what is the practicality of Protagoras' sophisms or of the erroneous conclusions of the other pseudo-scientists of antiquity to our purposes? etc. etc.

Superficially many of these questions are justified and very often they apparently admit only convincing negative answers. But let us look at some of these issues a little more carefully and as objectively as it is "Hellenically" possible.

1. Consider first science. The purpose of science is the acquisition and correlation of knowledge which leads to a better understanding of our physical environment. Well, what's new? Is that not exactly the purpose of the scientific philosophy of the Ionian philosophers or Aristotle? Is that not exactly one of the objectives of the Greek Ideal? Are we not using still today the logic of Aristotle, the geometry of Euclides or the mathematics of Archimedes? To be sure, we have contributed, enlarged and corrected our scientific concepts. But is that not exactly what the Greek Ideal teaches us not only with its words but mostly with the variety of its deeds? Where then is the antithesis and dichotomy?

Well, many may argue that ancient science was not based on experiment. As much as this argument is true, it does not imply that all the conclusions of ancient science are dubious. In fact, even though experimentation in antiquity was not as sophisticated as it is today there is ample evidence that the Greek scientists did use experimental procedures. (For example, Democritus)

Another objection is that early science used unreasonable models to interpret physical phenomena. But what is the definition of "reasonable" in science? Is the wave-particle nature of matter reasonable? Is the concept



of temperature reasonable? Just think about it. And do not forget that many of the ancient models were adequate for many many centuries.

Personally, I feel that derogatory criticisms addressed to Greek scientific philosophy are signs of smallness and a misrepresentation of the issue. The importance of Greek science does not lie in the results that were derived but in the questions which were raised and the fact that so many questions were raised and so many answers were given. We should not forget that even today, to a large extent, we express our own scientific discoveries in terms of a vocabulary developed by ancient Greeks.

2. Next let us consider another category of objections stemming from the availability of goods created by technology. There can be no doubt that the possibilities of modern technology constitute a unique phenomenon in the history of mankind. For the first time man has the power to explore and exploit his material environment to produce all the goods necessary for a comfortable life of all human beings. This power has not been yet fully employed. For the first time, however, it is available and I feel certain that in a period of a few generations two billion people will no longer be living under conditions of misery and deprivations.

Technology, however, as amazing, as humane and as necessary as it is, it is not an ideal. Comparison of Christianity and Hellenic Culture with technology constitutes either an unforgiveable confusion which represents ignorance of the subject or unnecessary enthusiasm resulting from the intensity of the transient period which we are currently undergoing. The Ideal of life is not the means that man uses to conserve and increase his material superiority over the animal kingdom. The Ideal of life is the deliberate and diligent pursuit of intellectual growth. It is exactly for this reason that the Christian-Hellenic Ideal is relevant to our society even more so today than ever before. This Ideal is not incompatible with technical progress. On the contrary, it is our only hope to satisfy our spiritual and intellectual needs and to make our life qualitatively different from that of other beings.

To be sure, as much as the Christian-Hellenic culture is relevant to our society, so is technology. Without technology, the objectives of our heritage are enjoyed only by a fortunate few. With the possibilities of technology, these objectives become available to ever increasing numbers of individuals.

Well there are other objections and arguments of the issue of ideals versus technology. Their analysis, however, convinces me at least, that the whole issue is ill conceived and misconstrued. I will not burden you any more so that I can leave some time for questions.

In concluding, let me say that looking back at my presentation on the meaning of Christianity and Hellenic Culture and on their relevance to our technocratic society. I find that whatever I had to discuss I could have summarized it in a poem by the Greek poet, Cavafy. The poem is called "Ithaca" and in it the poet compares life with Ulysses' trip to Ithaca. I will read you a translation of this poem by Dalven.

## ITHACA

C.P. Cavafy

Translated by  
Rae Dalven

When you start on your journey to Ithaca,  
then pray that the road is long,  
full of adventure, full of knowledge.  
Do not fear the Lestrygonians  
and the Cyclopes and the angry Poseidon.  
You will never meet such as these on your path,  
if your thoughts remain lofty, if a fine  
emotion touches your body and your spirit.  
You will never meet the Lestrygonians,  
the Cyclopes and the fierce Poseidon,  
if you do not carry them within your soul,  
if your soul does not raise them up before you.

Then pray that the road is long.  
That the summer mornings are many,  
that you will enter ports seen for the first time  
with such pleasure, with such joy!  
Stop at Phoenician markets,  
and purchase fine merchandise,  
mother-of-pearl and corals, amber and ebony,  
and pleasurable perfumes of all kinds,  
but as many pleasurable perfumes as you can;  
visit hosts of Egyptian cities,  
to learn and learn from those who have knowledge.

Always keep Ithaca fixed in your mind.  
To arrive there is your ultimate goal.  
But do not hurry the voyage at all.  
It is better to let it last for long years;  
and even to anchor at the isle when you are old,  
rich with all that you have gained on the way,  
not expecting that Ithaca will offer you riches.

Ithaca has given you the beautiful voyage.  
Without her you would never have taken the road.  
But she has nothing more to give you.

And if you find her poor, Ithaca has not defrauded you.  
With the great wisdom you have gained, with so much experience,  
you must surely have understood by then what Ithacas mean.

Well, my friends if all the arguments which I presented in my talk are not convincing, I have no more to tell you but one thing only. Let our love and devotion to our Christian and Hellenic heritage become our Ithaca, and that of our children, and that of our grandchildren.

And if we find her poor, Ithaca has not defrauded us  
With the great wisdom we have gained, with so much experience  
We must surely have understood by then what Ithaca means.

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