

Opening address by J. Siambis (Ι. Σιαμπής)

- Σεβασμιότατε Μητροπολίτη Μαντινείας & Κυνουρίας Αλέξανδρε
- Your Grace Metropolitan of Mantinea & Kynourea Alexandre

- Αξιότιμε Δήμαρχε του Δήμου Βαλτετσίου
- Honorable mayor of the Municipality of Valtetsi

- Dear nephew Tassos Tzioumis

- Distinguished members of the "Wide-Field Monitoring Of The Dynamic Radio Sky" International Workshop, 12 - 15 June 2007.

It is my pleasure to welcome you here in my ancestral village of Kerastari, and wish you an enjoyable and productive sojourn in the heartland of mythical Arcadia.

I will conclude my welcome with two brief stories that may relate to the workshop:

Last year I visited the village briefly and stopped to see my aunt, one of the oldest persons in the village, going blind with old age.

Like Homer, she told me the story of the Ancient Temple on the peak of the mountain over the village.

Odysseus, on his return from Troy to Ithaca and the re-establishment of his kingdom there, set out to sea again to fulfil the prophesy given by the soothsayer Teiresias during Odysseus' visit to Hades¹. Odysseus sailed the western coast of the Peloponnese and sent a team of sailors to the mountains in Arcadia, carrying their oars, with instructions to march inland till they found a place where the locals did not recognize what the oars were for. Finding that the villagers of Kerastari were unaware of the use of oars, his sailors sent word to Odysseus who then came and built a temple to Poseidon at the top of the Asea (Agios Elias) mountain, just above the village of Kerastari. In dedicating the temple to Poseidon, Odysseus sought to appease Poseidon for the blinding of Poseidon's son, the one-eyed Cyclops Polyfimos, in one of Odysseus' famous battles for survival on his return trip to Ithaca.

It goes to show the persistence of oral tradition from Odysseus to Homer to my old aunt.

¹ Homer, "The Odyssey: Vol. 1, Books 1 - 12", trans. by A.T. Murray (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1946 reprint), Book 11, lines 100 - 137, at pp. 393 - 397.

The other story is a quotation of a few lines from the modern Greek poem, Άξιον Εστί (“Axion Esti” or “Worthy It Is”), by Odysseas Elytis², that just so happens to describe this workshop:

“Ποιητή !!! Στον αιώνα σου, τι βλέπεις?
Βλέπω λείψανα παλαιών άστρων και
Γωνίες αρραχιασμένες του σύμπαντος
Που θα σαρώση η καταιγίδα που θα γεννήση ο νούς του ανθρώπου !”

*“Poet!!! In your times what do you see?
I see remnants of old stars and
dusty forgotten corners of the universe
that will be swept and illuminated
by the STORM TO BE CREATED BY MAN’S MIND!!!”*

So with poet Elytis inspired admonition let us begin our work!!

² Odysseas Elytis, *To Axion Esti* (Athens, Greece: Icarus Publishing Company, 1966), excerpt from pp. 65 – 66.