
Journal of Religious Culture

Journal für Religionskultur

Ed. by / Hrsg. von

Edmund Weber

in Association with / in Zusammenarbeit mit
Matthias Benad, Mustafa Cimsit, Natalia Diefenbach, Martin Mittwede,
Vladislav Serikov, Ajit S. Sikand, Ida Bagus Putu Suamba & Roger Töpelmann

Goethe-Universität Frankfurt am Main

in Cooperation with the Institute for Religious Peace Research /
in Kooperation mit dem Institut für Wissenschaftliche Irenik

ISSN 1434-5935 - © E.Weber – E-mail: e.weber@em.uni-frankfurt.de; info@irenik.org

irenik.org/publikationen/jrc; <http://publikationen.ub.uni-frankfurt.de/solrsearch/index/search/searchtype/series/id/16137>;

<http://web.uni-frankfurt.de/irenik/ew.htm>; <http://irenik.org/>; <http://www.wissenschaftliche-irenik.org/>

No. 227 (2017)

Ithaca and Ithacas;

Cavafy's Reflections in Fr Moyses' Poetry

By

Iakovos Menelaou*

* PhD Cand., MTh, MA, BA

Introduction:

In this article, I focus on Fr Moyses' third poetic collection, *Αθωνικά Ποιήματα* (*Athonite Poems*),¹ and intend to show the influences in this poetic collection of the widely known Modern Greek poet, C. P. Cavafy (1863-1933). The attention is drawn on *Athonite Poems* in particular, since, compared with Fr Moyses' other poetic collections, this one includes a significant number of poems, which show close relation between Fr Moyses and Cavafy. The paper breaks new ground in the field of Modern Greek Studies, as Fr Moyses, a monk on Mount Athos who writes Christian poetry, has been influenced by Cavafy; a poet who frequently presents himself as a pagan opponent of Christianity and openly speaks about homosexuality.² Fr Moyses' poetry is important, because it combines the strong Orthodox character with Cavafy's influences; a combination which is something new in Modern Greek literature.

Fr Moyses was born in Athens, in December, 1952. His former, lay name was Ioannis Mavrikis. He has been a monk on Mount Athos, since August, 1974; he belongs to Koutloumousiou Monastery.³ Mount Athos, which is in the Halkidiki peninsula of Greece, could be characterized as survival of Byzantine religious life and a jewel of Orthodox monasticism.⁴ It is not only a living museum of Byzantine heritage whose architectural and natural beauties are world-renowned, but it continues with its important role in Orthodoxy: the quite living out of the monastic life.⁵ In Mount Athos, there are twenty monasteries and several *sketes* and *kellia*. The twenty monasteries constitute autonomous region within the sovereignty of the Greek state.⁶

From his school days, Fr Moyses expressed a great interest in poetry. He published poems in youth journals, while he was a member of 'Σύλλογος Ελλήνων Λογοτεχνών' ('Greek Litterateurs Society') in 1968-71 and 'Χριστιανική Λογοτεχνική Συντροφιά' ('Christian Literary Company') in 1972-74.⁷ In 1996, Fr Moyses became a member of 'Εταιρεία Λογοτεχνών Θεσσαλονίκης' ('Litterateurs Company of Thessaloniki') and 'Εθνική Εταιρεία των Ελλήνων Λογοτεχνών' ('National Company of Greek Litterateurs'). Since 2002, he has been a member of 'Φιλολογικός Σύλλογος Παρνασσός' ('Parnassos Philological Society'), and since 2005, an honorary member of 'Εταιρεία των Φίλων του Λαού' (Friends of People Company).⁸ His memberships in the above literary groups show his love and interest in poetry and that his poetry is recognizable by Greek readers.

Since he was a child, Fr Moyses felt the calling of Mount Athos. He was moved by Mount Athos' incense, icons, crosses, psalmodies and monks.⁹ He loved Christ, Byzantine and classical music, painting and literature (especially Papadiamantis, Dostoevsky, Solomos and Makrygiannis). He used to go to the theatre and lectures.¹⁰ Going to Mount Athos as a visitor, he was impressed by the beauty, calm and kindness of monks. These elements made him want to stay permanently on Mount Athos.¹¹ Fr Moyses loves Mount Athos, because of

¹ Μοναχού Μωυσέως Αγιορείτου, *Αθωνικά Ποιήματα* (Athens, 1995). My translation.

² Such as the poem 'Myres' Alexandria, A.D 340'. In C. P. Cavafy, *The Collected Poems*, translated by Evangelos Sachperoglou, edited by Anthony Hirst, introduction by Peter Mackridge (Oxford, 2008), 187-191.

³ Editor's notes in Μοναχού Μωυσέως Αγιορείτου, *Αθωνικό Ψαλτήρι* (Athens, 2007), p. 51.

⁴ John Anthony McGuckin, *The Orthodox Church: an Introduction to its History, Doctrine, and Spiritual Culture* (West Sussex, 2011), p. 37.

⁵ McGuckin, *The Orthodox Church*, 37.

⁶ McGuckin, *The Orthodox Church*, 37.

⁷ Editor's notes in Μωυσέως Αγιορείτου, *Αθωνικό Ψαλτήρι*, 51.

⁸ Editor's notes in Μωυσέως Αγιορείτου, *Αθωνικό Ψαλτήρι*, 51.

⁹ Μοναχού Μωυσέως Αγιορείτου, *Αγιορείτικο Μεσονυκτικό* (Athens, 2005), 14-16.

¹⁰ Μωυσέως Αγιορείτου, *Αγιορείτικο Μεσονυκτικό*, 21.

¹¹ Μωυσέως Αγιορείτου, *Αγιορείτικο Μεσονυκτικό*, 22, 25.

the tranquility and peace of his cell and because he experiences the virtue of such a special place.¹²

He has published four poetic collections: *Ηπειρωτική Ηλιοφάνεια (Mainland Sunshine)*,¹³ *Αγιορείτικες Πέτρες (The Stones of Mount Athos)*,¹⁴ *Αθωνικά Ποιήματα (Athonite Poems)*¹⁵ and *Αθωνικό Ψαλτήρι (Athonite Psalter)*.¹⁶ In addition, some of his poems have been published in poetic anthologies and journals and some others have been set to music.¹⁷ His poetry has been awarded prizes from ‘Χριστιανική Ένωση Νέων Κηφισιάς’ (‘Christian Union of the Youth of Kifisia’) in 1971, ‘Χριστιανική Λογοτεχνική Συντροφιά’ (‘Christian Literary Company’) in 1985, ‘Διεθνής Εταιρεία Ελλήνων Λογοτεχνών’ (‘International Company of Greek Writers’) in 1995 and ‘Μακεδονική Καλλιτεχνική Εταιρεία: Τέχνη’ (‘Macedonian Artistic Company: Art’) in 2006.¹⁸

Also, Fr Moyses has written several books about monastic life and Mount Athos, like *Άγιον Όρος και Κοινωνία (Mount Athos and Society)*¹⁹ and *Ορθόδοξος Μοναχισμός (Orthodox Monasticism)*.²⁰ He wrote books, like *Ο Όσιος Τελώνης και ο Άγιος Άσωτος (The Blessed Publican and the Prodigal Saint)*²¹ which analyze aspects of Orthodox Christianity, as well as others in the form of personal diary which describe his monastic life, like *Αγρυπνία στο Άγιον Όρος (Vigil on Mount Athos)*²² and *Αγιορείτικο Μεσονυκτικό (Midnight on Mount Athos)*.²³

In *The Blessed Publican and the Saint Prodigal*, Fr Moyses deals with certain issues of Orthodoxy. He discusses the parable of the prodigal son and his repentance, the significance of the Three Holy Hierarchs in Orthodoxy, the role of the cross and the Orthodox education of children. Some of these issues are also reflected in his poetry. For instance, in the poems ‘Η Επιστροφή του Ασώτου’ (‘The Return of the Prodigal’)²⁴ and ‘Η Υποδοχή του Ασώτου’ (‘The Reception of the Prodigal’),²⁵ Fr Moyses, who obviously alludes to the parable of the prodigal son,²⁶ attempts to show the role of *metanoia* or repentance in Orthodoxy. After his return to his paternal home, the words of the prodigal son in the two poems denote his repentance and confession. The prodigal son appears to understand that it was a mistake to leave his father’s home. Thus, the issue of Fr Moyses’ poems is repentance.

According to Arvanitis, Fr Moyses’ contribution to poetry is significant. Fr Moyses uses free verse, but his lyrics are harmonic and their content is strictly associated with asceticism.²⁷ His poems are characterized by a lyrical atmosphere, which links with Orthodox tradition.²⁸ Pillas maintains that the perfume of Orthodoxy permeates the poetry of Fr Moyses, while love and true faith constitute the main characteristics of his poems.²⁹ They contain a

¹² Μοναχού Μωυσέως Αγιορείτου, *Αγρυπνία στο Άγιον Όρος* (Thessaloniki, 2004), 18, 26.

¹³ Μοναχού Μωυσέως Αγιορείτου, *Ηπειρωτική Ηλιοφάνεια* (Ioannina, 1984). My translation.

¹⁴ Μοναχού Μωυσέως Αγιορείτου, *Αγιορείτικες Πέτρες* (Ioannina, 1985). My translation.

¹⁵ Μωυσέως Αγιορείτου, *Αθωνικά Ποιήματα*, My translation.

¹⁶ Μωυσέως Αγιορείτου, *Αθωνικό Ψαλτήρι*. My translation.

¹⁷ Μωυσέως Αγιορείτου, *Αθωνικό Ψαλτήρι*, 51-52.

¹⁸ Μωυσέως Αγιορείτου, *Αθωνικό Ψαλτήρι*, 52.

¹⁹ Μοναχού Μωυσέως Αγιορείτου, *Άγιον Όρος και Κοινωνία* (Athens, 2009). My translation.

²⁰ Μοναχού Μωυσέως Αγιορείτου, *Ορθόδοξος Μοναχισμός: Συνοπτική Αναφορά στην Ιστορία, την Αζία και την Προσφορά του* (Athens, 1995). My translation.

²¹ Μοναχού Μωυσέως Αγιορείτου, *Ο Όσιος Τελώνης και ο Άγιος Άσωτος* (Athens, 2010). My translation.

²² Μωυσέως Αγιορείτου, *Αγρυπνία στο Άγιον Όρος*. My translation.

²³ Μωυσέως Αγιορείτου, *Αγιορείτικο Μεσονυκτικό*. My translation.

²⁴ Μωυσέως Αγιορείτου, *Αθωνικά Ποιήματα*, p. 47. My translation.

²⁵ Μωυσέως Αγιορείτου, *Αθωνικά Ποιήματα*, p. 48. My translation.

²⁶ Luke 15: 11-32.

²⁷ Nikos Arvanitis in Μωυσέως Αγιορείτου, *Αθωνικό Ψαλτήρι*, 52.

²⁸ Arvanitis in Μωυσέως Αγιορείτου, *Αθωνικό Ψαλτήρι*, 52.

²⁹ Antonios Pillas in Μωυσέως Αγιορείτου, *Αθωνικό Ψαλτήρι*, 53.

pure care and interest for people as well as deep spirituality, while some poems illustrate great understanding of people's spiritual state.³⁰

Paschos states, that Fr Moyses' poems are characterized by a distinctive way of confronting contemporary society's burning questions and by illuminating them with the Orthodox tradition and monastic experience. This element attracts Fr Moyses' readers.³¹ Also, Nikolaidis asserts that Fr Moyses' poems are characterized by depth and real substance, which denote the tragedy of human in nowadays.³²

In contrast, Cavafy was among the first poets who wrote openly about homoerotic love. After 1919, he wrote poems in which a first-person speaker speaks about a male beloved.³³ The majority of Cavafy's characters are homosexual. Poems which allude to the past depict both homosexual and heterosexual characters. Poems set in Byzantium represent clearly homosexual characters and finally, poems which refer to modern times could be seen as homo-erotic.³⁴ Such poems are: 'Μέρες τοῦ 1896' ('Days of 1896')³⁵ and 'Θέατρον τῆς Σιδῶνος (400 Μ. Χ.)' ('Theatre of Sidon (A. D. 400)').³⁶

Cavafy's poetic theology is formed by elements of Greek and Roman religion.³⁷ In his poems, there are ancient Greek gods, like Zeus and Poseidon, but at the same time gods from Asia,³⁸ as in the poem 'Ο Δαρειῶς' ('Darius').³⁹ Cavafy's theology is expressed in his poetry through personal experience and dilemmas in life.⁴⁰ Christianity constitutes another important framework of myth for Cavafy, since he used it in order to transmit his vision.⁴¹ In Cavafy's poetry, the Christian Church attacks any fleshly pleasures and sensuality with its ideal view of the human body,⁴² as in the poem 'Θέατρον τῆς Σιδῶνος (400 Μ.Χ.)' ('Theatre of Sidon' (A.D. 400)).⁴³

In the poem 'Μύρης· Ἀλεξάνδρεια τοῦ 340 Μ.Χ.' ('Myres: Alexandria, A.D. 340'),⁴⁴ Cavafy describes the portrait of a pagan lover, who appears at the funeral of his Christian friend. Although the friend was a Christian, according to Cavafy, he lived exactly like the rest of his pagan company.⁴⁵ Cavafy, who presents himself as the pagan lover of the poem, feels his paganism is under threat.⁴⁶ Moreover, Cavafy asserts that he knows nothing about Christianity, while his marginal position in the poem is reminiscent of a catechumen in the early church.⁴⁷ He withdraws, because he cannot face the truth: that Myres, his Christian friend, belongs to the Christians.⁴⁸

Fr Moyses' poetry is significant, because although he has been influenced by Cavafy, he does not proceed simply to imitate Cavafy's poems. In contrast, Fr Moyses adopts Cavafy's techniques and adjusts them to the needs of his own poems. In that way, he creates

³⁰ Pillas in Μουσέως Αγορείτου, *Αθωνικό Ψαλτήρι*, 53.

³¹ Pantelis Paschos in Μουσέως Αγορείτου, *Αθωνικό Ψαλτήρι*, 58-59.

³² Ioannis Nikolaidis in Μουσέως Αγορείτου, *Αθωνικό Ψαλτήρι*, 63-64.

³³ Mackridge in Cavafy, *The Collected Poems*, xix.

³⁴ Mackridge in Cavafy, *The Collected Poems*, xix.

³⁵ Cavafy, *The Collected Poems*, 166-169.

³⁶ Cavafy, *The Collected Poems*, 144-145.

³⁷ Γιάννης Δάλλας, *Ο Ελληνισμός και η Θεολογία στον Καβάφη* (Athens, 1986), 76.

³⁸ Δάλλας, *Ο Ελληνισμός και η Θεολογία στον Καβάφη*, 78.

³⁹ Cavafy, *The Collected Poems*, 124-125.

⁴⁰ Δάλλας, *Ο Ελληνισμός και Η Θεολογία στον Καβάφη*, 81.

⁴¹ Philip Sherrard, *The Marble Threshing Floor: Studies in Modern Greek Poetry* (Evia, 1992), 90.

⁴² Sherrard, *The Marble Threshing Floor*, 108-109.

⁴³ Cavafy, *The Collected Poems*, 144-145.

⁴⁴ Cavafy, *The Collected Poems*, 186-194.

⁴⁵ Sherrard, *The Marble Threshing Floor*, 112.

⁴⁶ David Ricks, 'Cavafy and the Body of Christ', *Journal of the Hellenic Diaspora* 27 (2001), 19-32; at 25.

⁴⁷ Ricks, 'Cavafy and the Body of Christ', 25.

⁴⁸ Ricks, 'Cavafy and the Body of Christ', 25.

something new; he writes Christian character poems, which deal with our modern world. Thus, Fr Moyses could be characterised as a Christian poet, influenced by, but not imitating, Cavafy. In his poems, there are significant elements garnered from the Orthodox tradition, like titles and notions which allude to Orthodox monasticism. Such poems are: ‘Στην Θάλασσα του Αγίου Όρους’ (‘In the sea of Mount Athos’),⁴⁹ ‘Στην Πύλη του Μοναστηρίου’ (‘At the Monastery’s gate’)⁵⁰ and ‘Το Άβατο’ (‘The Inaccessible’),⁵¹ which clearly allude to Mount Athos’ monastic life.

The renaming of Cavafy’s ‘Ithaca’ in Fr Moyses

‘Ιθάκη’ (‘Ithaca’)⁵² is possibly one of the most recognizable of Cavafy’s poems and, indeed, of Modern Greek poetry in general. ‘Ithaca’ alludes to the homeland of Odysseus in Homer’s *The Odyssey*.⁵³ According to Marguerite Yourcenar, Cavafy’s poetry is characterized by release from illusion and surrender to destiny. ‘Ithaca’ is seen by Yourcenar as a message of hope and a warning for disappointment which always lurks in life.⁵⁴ In Stefanos Poulis’ opinion, Cavafy speaks about consideration of life, man’s inner fight against sin, man’s destination in life and his final goal. ‘Ithaca’ exhorts man in spiritual battle in order to find his route.⁵⁵

‘Ithaca’ opens by describing a journey:

*When you set out on the journey to Ithaca,
pray that the road be long,
full of adventures, full of knowledge.*⁵⁶

Cavafy refers to his reader and evokes an atmosphere, where the poet counsels the reader. He advises him that he should pray to have a long journey, with a wide range of useful adventures and knowledge. As becomes apparent, the journey will be a spiritual one, which will help the reader to broaden his horizons.

The importance of this journey is to go ahead.⁵⁷

*The Laestrygonians and the Cyclopes,
the raging Poseidon do not fear:
you’ll never find the likes of these on your way,
if lofty be your thoughts, if rare emotion
touches your spirit and your body.
The Laestrygonians and the Cyclopes,
the fierce Poseidon you’ll not encounter,
unless you carry them along in your soul,
unless your soul raises them before you.*⁵⁸

By mentioning the Laestrygonians, Cyclopes and Poseidon, Cavafy, again, alludes to Homer’s *The Odyssey*. The Laestrygonians were giants who destroyed the ships and killed

⁴⁹ Μουσσεώς Αγορείτου, *Αθωνικά Ποιήματα*, 57. My translation.

⁵⁰ Μουσσεώς Αγορείτου, *Αθωνικά Ποιήματα*, 62. My translation.

⁵¹ Μουσσεώς Αγορείτου, *Αθωνικά Ποιήματα*, 65. My translation.

⁵² Cavafy, *The Collected Poems*, 36-39.

⁵³ Hirst in Cavafy, *The Collected Poems*, 215.

⁵⁴ Φίλιππος Σέρραρντ, *Η Μαρτυρία του Ποιητή* (Athens, 1998), 12.

⁵⁵ Στέφανος Πουλής, *Θρησκευτικές Αντιλήψεις του Κων/νου Καβάφη* (Athens, 1989), 42-43.

⁵⁶ Cavafy, *The Collected Poems*, 37. Translation by Sachperoglou.

⁵⁷ Πουλής, *Θρησκευτικές Αντιλήψεις του Καβάφη*, 43.

⁵⁸ Cavafy, *The Collected Poems*, 37. Translation by Sachperoglou.

Odysseus' men, while the Cyclopes were a savage race of one-eyed giants who lived in Sicily. Polyphemus was the most famous Cyclops and he was son of Poseidon, the god of the sea.⁵⁹ Odysseus blinded Polyphemus and outraged Poseidon, who obstructed Odysseus' attempt to reach Ithaca.⁶⁰

According to Odysseus' description in *The Odyssey*, 'Cyclopes were fierce lawless people who never lift a hand to plant or plough but just leave everything to the immortal gods'. 'They had no assemblies of making the laws, nor any established legal codes, but live in hollow caverns in the mountain heights.'⁶¹ Moreover, Polyphemus is presented by Odysseus to assert that 'Cyclopes care nothing for Zeus with his aegis, nor for the rest of the blessed gods, since they are much stronger than they are.'⁶²

Regarding Laestrygonians, Odysseus mentions that their chief was Antiphates. Odysseus declares that when he and his men encountered Antiphates, the latter 'made his murderous intentions clear, pouncing on one of his men to eat him for supper.' Antiphates's wife is described as 'a woman of mountainous proportions; the sight of her appalled them'. Yet, Odysseus says that they were 'more like giants than men. Standing at the top of the cliffs, they began pelting his flotilla with lumps of rock such as an ordinary man could barely lift.'⁶³

In Cavafy's poem the Laestrygonians, Cyclopes and Poseidon constitute the difficulties that someone meets in life. Cavafy appears to be optimistic, as he asserts that he should remain focused on Ithaca, which represents the final target and destination in life.⁶⁴ This is what a person should attempt to reach, overcoming any obstacles he encounters on his route. Borrowing the idea from *The Odyssey*, Cavafy modifies this idea, by giving it a more general character. In that way, he addresses all people separately, advising them to find their orientation.⁶⁵

If a person is characterized by lofty thoughts, then he has nothing to fear. There are no Laestrygonians, Cyclopes or Poseidon. This means that there are no impenetrable problems in anyone's route to his final destination: Ithaca. Cavafy motivates his readers to leave aside any negative thoughts, the Laestrygonians, Cyclopes and Poseidon.⁶⁶ A man should overcome any passions and malice and everything which might obstruct his route to Ithaca.⁶⁷

Attempting to explain the symbolism of Laestrygonians and Cyclopes in Cavafy's poem, we could say that they symbolise the problems that a person confronts in life. Laestrygonians and Cyclopes are imaginary giants and only that. Their mountainous dimensions make them appalling, however they do not exist in reality. Similarly, by advising his reader that he will not encounter the Laestrygonians and Cyclopes, Cavafy intends to show to him that he will not find any mountainous problems with giants' dimensions. Cavafy implies that there are no insurmountable problems in life.

Through this symbolism, Cavafy attempts to show that problems exist only in the human mind, at an imaginary level. Lofty thoughts dissipate the imaginary mountainous problem, since they do not really exist. According to Cavafy, problems similar to the Laestrygonians and the Cyclopes have no real existence, if we focus on our aim and clear our minds from negative thoughts.

In the same way, Poseidon does not really exist. There are no jealous gods with vindictive intentions. As opposed to Poseidon who persecuted Odysseus throughout his journey

⁵⁹ Hirst in Cavafy, *The Collected Poems*, 215.

⁶⁰ Hirst in Cavafy, *The Collected Poems*, 215.

⁶¹ Homer, *Odyssey* (intr. P. Jones, tr. E. V. Rieu, revised tr. D. C. H. Rieu) 9: 84-116.

⁶² Homer, *Odyssey* 9: 256-278.

⁶³ Homer, *Odyssey* 10: 61-100.

⁶⁴ Πουλής, *Θρησκευτικές Αντιλήψεις του Καβάφη*, 43.

⁶⁵ Πουλής, *Θρησκευτικές Αντιλήψεις του Καβάφη*, 43.

⁶⁶ Πουλής, *Θρησκευτικές Αντιλήψεις του Καβάφη*, 45.

⁶⁷ Πουλής, *Θρησκευτικές Αντιλήψεις του Καβάφη*, 45.

(because he blinded Polyphemus), God does not punish us. Cavafy shows that we will not find any gods like Poseidon, who wants to punish us. In contrast, Cavafy makes us conclude, that if we face the future with optimism, God will be our companion to reach our destination.

It could be said, that although Cavafy populates his poems with pagan gods, through the description in this poem, he actually seems to believe in the Christian God, who is not envious of mortals. In an indirect way, Cavafy rejects the model of jealous gods with human passions, promoting the pure values of Christianity. If someone persists in his goal, God will escort and help him reach there. Cavafy juxtaposes ancient Greek gods with Christian God. Whereas Greek gods create obstacles and obstruct humans to proceed, Christian God is nothing like that. In contrast, he always supports humans and rewards their efforts.

Cavafy encourages his readers to have lofty thoughts and emotions in their mind, because these are prominent elements for their journey to Ithaca.⁶⁸ In 'Ithaca',⁶⁹ Cavafy describes the beauty of the journey, acquisition of personal experience and ascension of man from 'earth to sky':⁷⁰

*that you may visit many an Egyptian city,
to learn and learn again from lettered men.*

*Always keep Ithaca in your mind.
To arrive there is your final destination.
But do not rush the voyage in the least.
Better it last for many years;
and once you're old, cast anchor on the isle,
rich with all you've gained along the way,
expecting not that Ithaca will give you wealth.⁷¹*

Cavafy says that the journey to Ithaca should be a long one. A person has to learn a lot throughout this journey, while Ithaca should be constantly in his mind, because this is his goal. In that way, Cavafy implies that Ithaca will give hope and constitutes the main motivation to travel.

Ithaca is the final destination and target, but the journey to Ithaca what is fundamentally beneficial. So, providing the journey is long, then the more beneficial it is. Ithaca will not make us rich. In contrast, the travel to Ithaca will provide us with experience ('visit many an Egyptian city'),⁷² knowledge and strength ('learn and learn')⁷³ which is the profit and value of this journey. When in old age, the traveller will be happy from what was gained during this journey.

Also, according to Cavafy, even if you think that you have been deceived, because Ithaca has been proved poor, you should just bear in mind one thing; the wisdom you gain from Ithaca:

⁶⁸ Πουλής, *Θρησκευτικές Αντιλήψεις του Καβάφη*, 45.

⁶⁹ Cavafy, *The Collected Poems*, 37-39.

⁷⁰ Πουλής, *Θρησκευτικές Αντιλήψεις του Καβάφη*, 43.

⁷¹ Cavafy, *The Collected Poems*, 39. Translation by Sachperoglou.

⁷² Cavafy, *The Collected Poems*, 39. Translation by Sachperoglou.

⁷³ Cavafy, *The Collected Poems*, 39. Translation by Sachperoglou.

*If then you find her poor, Ithaca has not deceived you.
As wise as you've become, with such experience, by now
you will have come to know what Ithacas really mean.⁷⁴*

The importance of Ithacas is the wisdom which they provide. Everyone gains wisdom ('as wise as you've become'),⁷⁵ if he persists in reaching his Ithaca. Cavafy declares that there are many Ithacas, implying that everyone has his or her own goal. Once you follow your destiny and try to fulfil your goals, the whole process through to the end will make you a wise person.

In general, Cavafy speaks about a spiritual journey with a final destination: Ithaca. Ithaca, which is the goal in life of any person, should always be in his mind and constitutes the motive for reaching the goal. Nonetheless, the importance of this journey is not only to reach the final destination, Ithaca, but the experience someone gained, throughout this journey. The journey provides a person with three prominent ideals, that he needs: wisdom, experience and knowledge.

According to Cavafy, these are the values that someone should gain throughout his life. The main characteristic of the poem is the atmosphere of counsel, since in the whole poem, Cavafy advises his reader what he should do until reaching his final destination; what ideals he should seek to find and gain during the journey. In addition, Cavafy advises his reader to pray for a long fruitful journey in order to understand its benefits.

In Fr Moyses' poetic collection *Αθωνικά Ποιήματα (Athonite Poems)*⁷⁶ there are two poems which recall Cavafy's 'Ithaca'. These are: 'Ίδιοι Καιροί' ('Same Times')⁷⁷ and 'Αθωνας Ιθάκη' ('Athos Ithaca').⁷⁸ Firstly, in 'Same Times', Fr Moyses speaks about a journey:

*You can always find a ship
to travel and forget
with waves, moon, sun
to leave or find the calamities⁷⁹*

In the above lines, Fr Moyses maintains that we can always travel if we want to forget. Fr Moyses uses vocabulary which recalls Cavafy's poem. In the former's poem, we see words like 'να ταξιδεύεις' ('to travel') and 'καράβι' ('ship'), while in the latter's poem we have words like 'ταξείδι' ('travel') and 'λιμένας' ('ports').⁸⁰ In both poems, we have similar words which describe a journey and allude to port and ship. This element makes the atmosphere in the two poems identical, as both describe the same scenography: a ship leaving or arriving at a port.

Moreover, the climate in the two poems is very similar, since we meet an identical tone which counsels the reader. Fr Moyses attempts to advise his reader in the same way that Cavafy does. As we have already seen in the above lines, Fr Moyses advises his reader 'να ταξιδεύεις και να λησμονάς' ('to travel and to forget'), while in the next lines he exhorts him: 'να μετράς τ' άστρα' ('to count the stars'), 'να λες εγώ γύρισα όλο τον κόσμο' ('to say, I went around the whole world'), 'να γράφεις εντυπώσεις, ποιήματα' ('to write impressions, poems'), 'να γυρίζεις στην Αθήνα' ('to return to Athens'). Then Fr Moyses continues in the same atmosphere of counsel: 'ν' αφήνεις κάτι πίσω σου' ('to leave something behind you'), 'να σε

⁷⁴ Cavafy, *The Collected Poems*, 39. Translation by Sachperoglou.

⁷⁵ Cavafy, *The Collected Poems*, 39. Translation by Sachperoglou.

⁷⁶ Μουσσεώς Αγορείτου, *Αθωνικά Ποιήματα*.

⁷⁷ Μουσσεώς Αγορείτου, *Αθωνικά Ποιήματα*, 38. My translation.

⁷⁸ Μουσσεώς Αγορείτου, *Αθωνικά Ποιήματα*, 75. My translation.

⁷⁹ Μουσσεώς Αγορείτου, *Αθωνικά Ποιήματα*, 38. My translation.

⁸⁰ Cavafy, *The Collected Poems*, 38.

θυμούνται με καλά λόγια' ('to remember you with fine words'), 'να λες στα παιδιά σου' ('to say to your children').⁸¹

During the journey, Cavafy's reader should gain experience, knowledge and wisdom. This is what Fr Moyses exhorts his reader to do, as well. Fr Moyses states that we should leave and forget, go around the world in order to gain experience and knowledge, through travelling, and count the stars, alluding to a process of spiritual pursuit, which presupposes wisdom. He also advises us to keep notes on these experiences and write poems, which is also a spiritual work to gain wisdom. He also says that we should leave something to our children in order for them to remember us.

In these lines, Fr Moyses preaches the same ideals as Cavafy: experience, knowledge and wisdom, which can be acquired during a journey. Cavafy and Fr Moyses present this triptych (experience, knowledge and wisdom) as a worthy one. A person should travel and gain these values, because these are the profits of a proper way of life. Cavafy advises his reader that he should travel to many Egyptian cities,⁸² while Fr Moyses advises his reader that he should travel around the world.⁸³ Although this suggests an actual travel, we should see it as an allegory. Commonly, the two poets consider the journey an important part of any person's life.

In addition, Fr Moyses' use of the conjunction 'να' is also an expressive way used by Cavafy in 'Ithaca'.⁸⁴ Although one could say that the use of this conjunction is not odd at all, the way it is used by the two poets is identical, as they both use it repeatedly to draw readers into the atmosphere of counsel. Cavafy advises twice: 'να εὔχεσαι νᾶναι μακρὸς ὁ δρόμος' ('pray that the road be long'),⁸⁵ while in the next lines he writes: 'να σταματήσεις σ' ἐμπορεῖα Φοινικικά' ('that you may stop at Phoenician emporia'), 'τὲς καλὲς πραγμάτειες ν' ἀποκτήσεις' ('acquire all the fine wares'), 'σὲ πόλεις Αἰγυπτιακὲς πολλὰς νὰ πᾶς' ('that you may visit many an Egyptian city'), 'να μάθεις καὶ νὰ μάθεις ἀπ' τοὺς σπουδασμένους' ('to learn and learn from lettered men'), 'πάντα στὸν νοῦ σου νᾶχεις τὴν Ἰθάκη' ('always keep Ithaca in your mind'); and finally he mentions: 'καὶ γέρος πᾶ ν' ἀράξεις στὸ νησί' ('and once you're old, cast anchor on the isle').⁸⁶

Interestingly, the repetition of this conjunction followed by second person singular imperative appears in both poems eight times. This shows not only Cavafy's persistence in using this form, but also Fr Moyses' persistence in following Cavafy's forms in a modified version. The frequency of the conjunction 'να' in the two poems gives an identical atmosphere.

Another similarity between the two poets is the fact that both designate one specific destination. As we have already seen, Cavafy clearly denotes Ithaca as the destination, while Fr Moyses, indirectly, identifies Athens:

*to say, I went around to the whole world
to write impressions, poems
to return to Athens
and become benefactor.*⁸⁷

As opposed to Cavafy who points to Ithaca as the obvious final destination in his poem, Fr Moyses implies Athens. Fr Moyses advises his reader that he should travel around the world,

⁸¹ Μουσσεῶς Αἰγυπτίου, *Αθωνικά Ποιήματα*, 38. My translation.

⁸² Cavafy, *The Collected Poems*, 38.

⁸³ Μουσσεῶς Μοναχοῦ Αἰγυπτίου, *Αθωνικά Ποιήματα*, 38.

⁸⁴ Cavafy, *The Collected Poems*, 37-39.

⁸⁵ Cavafy, *The Collected Poems*, 36, 37. Translation by Sachperoglou.

⁸⁶ Cavafy, *The Collected Poems*, 38. Translation by Sachperoglou.

⁸⁷ Μουσσεῶς Αἰγυπτίου, *Αθωνικά Ποιήματα*, 38. My translation.

and then return to Athens to become a benefactor. By using the verb ‘γυρίζω’ (‘return’ or ‘go back’), Fr Moyses implies that his reader should depart from a place and then return to the same place. The denotation of Athens as departure and final destination place is expressed in the phrase ‘να γυρίζεις στην Αθήνα’ (‘return to Athens’). Thus, in his poem, Athens constitutes departure point and arrival place. In that way, Fr Moyses implies that someone should always return to his home place, because this is where he belongs.

It could be also said that in the above lines, Fr Moyses conveys the main target of the poem. This is to depart from Athens, have a fruitful journey around the world, gaining valuable ideals such as experience, knowledge and wisdom. Then, you should return to Athens and become a benefactor, which means that you should help other people to find their destination in life. This also means that a person should share his knowledge and experience with other people. In addition, as opposed to the mythical dimensions given by Cavafy in his poem, Fr Moyses gives a more realistic perspective of the travel, as the mythical travel of Odysseus to Ithaca is replaced by Athens.

Although Ithaca is an existing place, the overall description and, of course, Odysseus’ travel is a mythical one. Thus, the allegory of a fruitful travel links to the myth of Odysseus. On the other hand, Athens has nothing to do with myth, as this is Fr Moyses’ birthplace. While Cavafy uses myth, Fr Moyses uses personal experience which give his poem a realistic character. The fruitful travel, although still an allegorical one, gains a true dimension or at least closer to reality than Homer’s myth.

Also, in some lines before the end of the poem, Cavafy writes that when you will be an old man, you will be happy, because you gained many things during this journey.⁸⁸ Fr Moyses mentions in the last lines of the poem, that when the years pass and we have children, we will speak to them about the benefits of our travel:

*And it is really fine
to leave something behind you
to remember you with nice words
to say to your children
I am a national benefactor
I am a national poet.⁸⁹*

The common element in the two poems is the fact that the poets imply that at the end, and when we will be in advancing age, we will see what we acquired throughout the journey. We will be happy, because only then we see the real value of the journey and the final destination (Ithaca in Cavafy and return to Athens in Fr Moyses).

Cavafy says that only as an old man you will cast an anchor, implying that only then you will understand the real purpose of the journey. In advancing age, you understand the significance and value of the process to reach Ithaca, because you will be rich in experience, knowledge and wisdom. This means that you gained everything you should gain and as an old man you enjoy your achievement. You understand that you learnt, according to Cavafy,⁹⁰ implying that this is a kind of trophy.

In a similar way, Fr Moyses maintains that when the reader is old and has children, he will be happy as a result of the experience of the journey. This implies that after the journey, the reader will benefit from it, since now he has experience, knowledge and wisdom, as Cavafy also states. Nonetheless, Fr Moyses adds another element. His reader will be happy

⁸⁸ ‘and once you’re old, cast anchor on the isle, rich with all you’ve gained along the way’. Translation by Sachperoglou in Cavafy, *The Collected Poems*, 39.

⁸⁹ Μουσέως Αγιορείτου, *Αθωνικά Ποιήματα*, 38. My translation.

⁹⁰ ‘to learn and learn again from lettered men’. Translation by Sachperoglou in Cavafy, *The Collected Poems*, 38.

because he has not just been helped by the journey, but also because he helped people, becoming national benefactor and poet.⁹¹ As a result, the trophy of Fr Moyses is a double one, since he has been benefited by journey, but he also benefited other people, as well.

To sum up, the two poems have very similar meaning because of the following factors. Firstly, there is the description of one journey to one specific destination. Secondly, the purpose of the journey is not just to reach this destination, but also to gain all the important ideals that the journey offers (experience, knowledge, wisdom). Thirdly, when you will reach an advancing age, you realize the real significance of the journey and enjoy the fruits of this beneficial travel. Finally, Fr Moyses follows the same method as Cavafy, since both poets create an atmosphere of counsel in their poems, using identical syntactical forms.

The next poem of Fr Moyses which demonstrates influences from Cavafy's 'Ithaca'⁹² is the poem 'Athos Ithaca'.⁹³ As we can see, Fr Moyses decides to put in the title of his poem, together with Athos, another place name: Ithaca. Inevitably, the title of Fr Moyses, 'Athos Ithaca' recalls Cavafy's 'Ithaca'.⁹⁴

Again, the meaning of the poem has to do with a journey and its final destination. In addition, Fr Moyses uses the same atmosphere of counsel that he used in 'Same Times'⁹⁵ which alludes to Cavafy. Fr Moyses' opening describes this journey:

*He called Athos Ithaca and Athens Troy
he travelled and came*⁹⁶

Here, we have a traveller who left Athens and went to Athos, intending to become a monk. Athos is called by Fr Moyses' traveller Ithaca, illustrating Cavafy's impact, and denotes Odysseus' prospective place of arrival. In addition, the departure place, which is Athens, is called by Fr Moyses' traveller Troy, alluding to Odysseus' place of departure, after the end of the Trojan War.

Fr Moyses draws a parallel between Odysseus and a prospective monk. Similar to Odysseus who left Troy and met many difficulties until he reached Ithaca which is his native place, the prospective monk leaves Athens and travels to Athos in order to find a place to settle. Nonetheless, according to Fr Moyses, the prospective monk's journey does not end just as he arrives on Athos, because he needs to work until he finds the real purpose of his journey.

Fr Moyses advises the young monk that this journey requires courage and pain: 'this travel wants braveness; it wants pain a fine tear'.⁹⁷ Even if the prospective monk believes that he reached his final destination, in truth, according to Fr Moyses, the journey is longer than what he believes:

*In churches be calm and do not think
of what other people, you left below, say
enjoy the glorious obscurity
the integrity of politeness
because you may believe that you arrived
but Ithaca is still far.*⁹⁸

⁹¹ 'I am national benefactor/I am national poet' in Μουσσεώς Αγιορείτου, *Αθωνικά Ποιήματα*, 38. My translation.

⁹² Cavafy, *The Collected Poems*, 36-39.

⁹³ Μουσσεώς Αγιορείτου, *Αθωνικά Ποιήματα*, 75. My translation.

⁹⁴ Cavafy, *The Collected Poems*, 36-39.

⁹⁵ Μουσσεώς Αγιορείτου, *Αθωνικά Ποιήματα*, 38. My translation.

⁹⁶ Μουσσεώς Αγιορείτου, *Αθωνικά Ποιήματα*, 75. My translation.

⁹⁷ Μουσσεώς Αγιορείτου, *Αθωνικά Ποιήματα*, 75. My translation.

⁹⁸ Μουσσεώς Αγιορείτου, *Αθωνικά Ποιήματα*, 75. My translation.

Fr Moyses' last lines are obviously reminiscent of Cavafy's 'Ithaca'.⁹⁹ Cavafy advises his reader to pray for the road to be long and not to rush the voyage,¹⁰⁰ while Fr Moyses attempts to make his reader understand that the final destination of the journey is far away and he has not reached it yet, even if he has arrived on Athos. The common element here is the fact that both Cavafy and Fr Moyses advise the reader and the prospective monk, respectively, not to rush the journey to reach their destination, because there are a lot of things they should learn, during their travels. Fr Moyses' advice is not to be complacent, because the road is longer than what the prospective monk believes.

Even if Fr Moyses' poem does not speak clearly about someone's decision to become a monk, we should consider that Fr Moyses' words imply such a decision. In the first line of the poem, Fr Moyses says that the traveller called Athos, Ithaca. In addition, when Fr Moyses advises the traveller that this travel requires courage and suffering, reminds us of an older monk advising a younger one. By advising him to be calm in churches, to enjoy the glorious obscurity and ignore what lay people say, Fr Moyses tries to induce the young monk to his new life in the monastery. 'Glorious obscurity' denotes the isolation of monks in monasteries, and especially that of Mount Athos, while 'the others', that Fr Moyses mentions, are laymen who, perhaps, cannot understand why someone becomes monk.

In any case, the poem should be seen as another indication of influence from Cavafy's 'Ithaca'.¹⁰¹ As we have already seen, we have very similar titles, while the two poems describe a journey. Also, Fr Moyses, in a way similar to Cavafy, advises the young monk not to be in a hurry to reach his destination, because this is a long journey. Especially, the last lines in Fr Moyses allude to Cavafy. It is not only the fact that Fr Moyses advises the young man to have a long journey, as Cavafy also does with his reader, but moreover the fact that the final point of this long voyage in the two poets is the same: Ithaca.

Another basic common element between Cavafy's 'Ithaca'¹⁰² and Fr Moyses' 'Athos Ithaca',¹⁰³ is that both allude allegorically to a spiritual travel. As we have seen, Cavafy asserts that the importance of the journey is to gain the main ideals that the journey offers: experience, knowledge and wisdom.¹⁰⁴ Fr Moyses has been influenced by Cavafy's process of spiritual travel, but in this case, he adapts it to the needs of his familiar surroundings: that of life in the monastery. This time, Cavafy's triptych of ideals is replaced by two other ideals. These are patience and ignorance. Fr Moyses implies that the prospective monk should be patient throughout the journey, and he should ignore what a layman says about his decision to live in a monastery.

Fr Moyses draws a parallel between Athos and Cavafy's Ithaca. We have a person who is looking for his route in life. The prospective monk of his poem is presented to call his final destination Ithaca, instead of Mount Athos. In that way, Fr Moyses intends to show that the young monk believes that he found the ending of his spiritual travel, since Ithaca is the final destination in Cavafy. Nevertheless, Fr Moyses' advice is to continue looking for the ideals of the monastic life. The fact that the young monk reached Mount Athos, or Ithaca and became a monk is just the beginning of his new life.

In a similar way to Cavafy, whose poem has an atmosphere of counsel, Fr Moyses creates a similar climate. Fr Moyses advises the young monk of his poem 'μη συλλογάζσαι τι

⁹⁹ Cavafy, *The Collected Poems*, 36-39.

¹⁰⁰ 'pray that the road be long' and 'but do not rush the voyage in the least'. Translation by Sachperoglou in Cavafy, *The Collected Poems*, 39.

¹⁰¹ Cavafy, *The Collected Poems*, 36-39.

¹⁰² Cavafy, *The Collected Poems*, 36-39.

¹⁰³ Μουσέως Αγιορείτου, *Αθωνικά Ποιήματα*, 75. My translation.

¹⁰⁴ As I have already shown, analyzing Cavafy's Ithaca, the ideals are: experience, knowledge and wisdom. Fr Moyses, also, promotes these three ideals in his poem 'Same Times'.

λένε οι άλλοι' ('do not think of what other say') and 'να χαίρεσαι την ένδοξη αφάνεια' ('enjoy the glorious obscurity').¹⁰⁵ The advisory character of Fr Moyses' poem recalls that of Cavafy, who also advises his reader saying: 'τὸν ἄγριο Ποσειδῶνα δὲν θὰ συναντήσεις' ('the fierce Poseidon you'll not encounter') and 'νὰ εὔχῃσαι νᾶναι μακρὺς ὁ δρόμος' ('pray that the road be long').¹⁰⁶

Following Cavafy, Fr Moyses uses, again, the conjunction 'να' in order to exhort the young monk to work and drive him in the correct direction of thought: to enjoy monastic obscurity. In addition, Fr Moyses' prohibition to the young monk to draw attention to laymen's speech is reminiscent of Cavafy's words to his reader not to be afraid of Poseidon. Both poets try to give hope and strength to their interlocutors in order to continue their journey. As Poulis asserted,¹⁰⁷ Cavafy expresses religious elements; however, Fr Moyses strengthens these religious elements.

In general, Fr Moyses modifies Cavafy's Ithaca. His poems are obviously inspired by Cavafy. However, he enriches them with elements that the reader does not see in the latter. In 'Same Times',¹⁰⁸ Fr Moyses replaces Cavafy's single trophy with a double one. On the one hand, Cavafy says that the aim of the journey is to gain all the values that it offers. Nonetheless, Fr Moyses asserts that in accepting the values of the travel, you should become a national benefactor. Through the experience and all the values you acquired, you should help other people.

In 'Athos Ithaca',¹⁰⁹ Fr Moyses transfers readers, mentally, to his familiar surroundings; that of Mount Athos. He is an old monk, who advises a younger monk. In that way, the poem has a sound religious character, enriched by the monastic atmosphere of Mount Athos. Fr Moyses' speech is descriptive and truthful, since he speaks as a real monk. His words are truthful, because he describes monasticism as someone who experiences the monastic life. Fr Moyses is not a layman who speaks about the monastic life as a visitor. Even if the reader considers that the poem constitutes an imaginary speech, the words of Fr Moyses reveal his closeness to monasticism. Fr Moyses reminds us that he is a monk, who writes poetry. Especially in 'Athos Ithaca', Fr Moyses takes the idea of Ithaca from Cavafy and writes something new. He writes a poem with sound Christian character about monasticism, by changing the name of Ithaca to Athos.

'Athos Ithaca' is a poem closely related to monasticism and its Christian character is revealed through the importance of monasticism in Orthodoxy. Monasticism is a mystery, in which a person leaves modern society in order to join the monastic community. Although a monk leaves modern world, he loves life and society.¹¹⁰ Also, he has to be devoted to *asceticism*.¹¹¹ He should seek the real freedom far from any passions. The only way to gain this freedom is through *asceticism*, which is the fight against human desires, and obedience, which helps monk to fight selfishness.¹¹² The target of monasticism is love for God and people.¹¹³

By saying to the young monk that he did not reach the end of his journey in the poem, Fr Moyses alludes to *asceticism*. He advises the young monk that he should be focused on a continual *asceticism* in order to gain the real freedom and fulfil the goal of monasticism which is

¹⁰⁵ Μουσέως Αγορείτου, *Αθωνικά Ποιήματα*, 75. My translation.

¹⁰⁶ Cavafy, *The Collected Poems*, 36-38.

¹⁰⁷ I mentioned Poulis's opinion earlier.

¹⁰⁸ Μουσέως Αγορείτου, *Αθωνικά Ποιήματα*, 38. My translation.

¹⁰⁹ Μουσέως Αγορείτου, *Αθωνικά Ποιήματα*, 75. My translation.

¹¹⁰ Αρχιμανδρίτου Χριστόδουλου Κουτλουμουσιανού, *Η Παρουσία του Μοναχού στον Σύγχρονο Κόσμο* (Mount Athos, 2011), 7, 12.

¹¹¹ Χριστόδουλου Κουτλουμουσιανού, *Η Παρουσία του Μοναχού*, 12.

¹¹² Χριστόδουλου Κουτλουμουσιανού, *Η Παρουσία του Μοναχού*, 18.

¹¹³ Χριστόδουλου Κουτλουμουσιανού, *Η Παρουσία του Μοναχού*, 21.

love. We meet God, only if we are wholly devoted to Him.¹¹⁴ A monk can come close to God, when *ascesis* becomes his main duty.¹¹⁵

Ascesis should be accompanied by vigil and prayer. According to Fr Moyses' words in *Vigil on Mount Athos*, vigil constitutes prominent work for monks. God comes in the middle of the night and talks to monk. This is a beneficial moment for monks.¹¹⁶ Also, in this book, Fr Moyses asserts that prayer is communication with God and fulfilment of His will. A monk should ignore everything and focus on prayer.¹¹⁷ This is what Fr Moyses means in the poem, by telling the young monk to be patient. His arrival on Mount Athos is just the beginning of his monastic life. He has to draw his attention to *ascesis*.

In *Orthodox Monasticism*, Fr Moyses asserts that monasticism is strictly associated with Orthodoxy and it is the perfect fulfilment of the gospels. *Ascesis* plays significant role in a monk's life and presupposes self-control, fasting, standing and ordeals.¹¹⁸ *Ascesis* in tranquillity, in combination with prayer, directs monk to holiness.¹¹⁹ It means the elimination of any fleshly desires which are works of devil. *Ascesis* destroys demonic traps, fleshly desires and avarice.¹²⁰ A monk joins the monastic community in order to be a member of a new, better dwelling. In this community, he has to be obedient.¹²¹

In *Orthodox Monasticism*, Fr Moyses also writes that *ascesis* has no end. It constitutes the route to *theosis* (deification).¹²² These words are reminiscent of his advice to the young monk, that his arrival on Mount Athos is just the beginning of his new life. Thus, in 'Athos Ithaca', Fr Moyses exhorts the young monk to *ascesis* in order to reach *theosis*. And this is another basic element which gives Fr Moyses' poem Christian character.

Theosis is a distinctive feature that characterizes Orthodoxy and assumes central importance in its overall theological framework.¹²³ It is the ultimate goal toward which all people should strive and the blessed end for which all things were made.¹²⁴ *Theosis* of man constitutes central subject, prominent aim and purpose and, finally, religious ideal of Orthodoxy.¹²⁵ In Orthodoxy, *theosis* is the very substance of Christianity, because it describes the descent of God to the limit of our fallen human condition and presupposes the union of the created beings with the Divinity.¹²⁶

There is richness of forms of the spiritual life in Orthodoxy, but monasticism remains the most classical of all.¹²⁷ The goal of the monastic life is union with God in renunciation of the life of the present world. To reach this union with God, a monk needs continual effort, unceasing vigil and prayer.¹²⁸ So, Fr Moyses' 'Athos Ithaca' is an Orthodox poem, since it alludes to the role of monasticism and its importance in Orthodoxy. By advising the young monk, that he should not believe that he reached the end, Fr Moyses implies the significance of *ascesis* in the monastic life. *Ascesis* is the only means for the young monk to reach *theosis*

¹¹⁴ Μουσέως Αγιορείτου, *Αγρυπνία στο Άγιον Όρος*, 62.

¹¹⁵ Μουσέως Αγιορείτου, *Αγρυπνία στο Άγιον Όρος*, 62.

¹¹⁶ Μουσέως Αγιορείτου, *Αγρυπνία στο Άγιον Όρος*, 64.

¹¹⁷ Μουσέως Αγιορείτου, *Αγρυπνία στο Άγιον Όρος*, 59.

¹¹⁸ Μουσέως Αγιορείτου, *Ορθόδοξος Μοναχισμός*, 53, 78.

¹¹⁹ Μουσέως Αγιορείτου, *Ορθόδοξος Μοναχισμός*, 78.

¹²⁰ Μουσέως Αγιορείτου, *Ορθόδοξος Μοναχισμός*, 81.

¹²¹ Μουσέως Αγιορείτου, *Ορθόδοξος Μοναχισμός*, 81.

¹²² Μουσέως Αγιορείτου, *Ορθόδοξος Μοναχισμός*, 82.

¹²³ Daniel B. Clendenin, 'Partakers of Divinity: The Orthodox Doctrine of Theosis', *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 37/3 (September 1994), 365-379; at 366.

¹²⁴ Clendenin, 'Partakers of Divinity', 366.

¹²⁵ Clendenin, 'Partakers of Divinity', 366.

¹²⁶ Clendenin, 'Partakers of Divinity', 366.

¹²⁷ Vladimir Lossky, *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church* (Cambridge, 2005), 17.

¹²⁸ Lossky, *The Mystical Theology*, 18.

and union with God. Fr Moyses' poem is a Christian one, because it is associated with the substance of monasticism, which is *ascesis*.

Conclusions

In this paper, I attempted to demonstrate the influences from Cavafy in Fr Moyses' poetry. We focused on Cavafy's 'Ithaca' and its reflection in Fr Moyses' 'Same Times' and 'Athos Ithaca'. Similarly to Cavafy, in 'Same Times' Fr Moyses attempts to advise his reader to seek a long and beneficial journey, from which he will gain experience, knowledge and wisdom. These values constitute the reward of the travel. However, Fr Moyses adds a second reward arising from the journey which is not only to receive benefit from the journey, but also to help other people through their own experience, knowledge and wisdom.

In 'Athos Ithaca', Fr Moyses combines in the title of his poem Cavafy's Ithaca with Mount Athos. In that way, Fr Moyses transfers readers to the monastic life of Mount Athos. The poem recalls Cavafy's advisory character, but in this case, Fr Moyses advises a new monk about monastic life. Having the role of an older monk, Fr Moyses explains to a younger monk that arriving on Mount Athos is just the beginning of the monastic life.

According to Tsiropoulos, Fr Moyses' poems recall Cavafy's expression and forms, and they convey thoughts, observations and emotions which are written with kindness and stochastic mind.¹²⁹ Also, Gounelas asserts that Fr Moyses' poetry deals with history, saints and Byzantium and travels outside Greece. Fr Moyses seeks simple words and images which obviously derive from Mount Athos' atmosphere.¹³⁰ Fr Moyses' words are characterized by devoutness and are inspired by holy tradition and history.¹³¹

Fr Moyses poems possess a special meaning and spirituality, since they represent readings of a monk-poet, in which he is also present.¹³² If poetry is a kind of prayer, this is what Fr Moyses' intends to do. His poetic contribution is his prayer which is obvious in his poems. Through his poetry, Fr Moyses intends to help his readers.¹³³ His poems are characterized by the perfume of spiritual fragrance.¹³⁴

¹²⁹ Kostas Tsiropoulos in Μωυσέως Αγιορείτου, *Αθωνικό Ψαλτήρι*, 59.

¹³⁰ Soteris Gounelas in Μωυσέως Αγιορείτου, *Αθωνικό Ψαλτήρι*, 57.

¹³¹ Antonis Vazintaris in Μωυσέως Αγιορείτου, *Αθωνικό Ψαλτήρι*, 61.

¹³² Presbyter Konstantinos Kallianos in Μωυσέως Αγιορείτου, *Αθωνικό Ψαλτήρι*, 55.

¹³³ Presbyter Konstantinos Kallianos in Μωυσέως Αγιορείτου, *Αθωνικό Ψαλτήρι*, 55.

¹³⁴ Paschos in Μωυσέως Αγιορείτου, *Αθωνικό Ψαλτήρι*, 59.