

## Epilogue

It is not so often that an epilogue is prepared for a volume of a *Symposion*. However, the international *Symposion* on Achievements, Milestones, and Challenges in Biomedical and Health Informatics (BMHI) that was held in Athens on October 29, 2022, had a particular task and a request to each of the participants. The request was to provide an expert's insight of their entire scientific career into their domains and have a self-critique view on the achievements, milestones, and challenges.

Each participant provided an in-depth review of their domain by sharing experiences, knowledge, and insights. We have read papers with a *De Profundis* approach, soul searching, very emotional, revealing the challenges one may face to be able to reach the envisaged goal. We know from literature that the strongest messages are coming through poetry. The quest for knowledge and truth is a never-ending journey of humanity, and one of the best poems reflecting this search is "Ithaka" by the Greek poet Constantine P. Cavafy (1863-1933) as translated by Edmund Keeley:

### ITHAKA

As you set out for Ithaka  
hope the voyage is a long one,  
full of adventure, full of discovery.  
Laistrygonians and Cyclops,  
angry Poseidon- don't be afraid of them:  
you'll never find things like that on your way  
as long as you keep your thoughts raised high,  
as long as a rare excitement  
stirs your spirit and your body.  
Laistrygonians and Cyclops,  
wild Poseidon- you won't encounter them  
unless you bring them along inside your soul,  
unless your soul sets them up in front of you.  
May there be many a summer morning when,  
with what pleasure, what joy,  
you come into harbors seen for the first time;  
may you stop at Phoenician trading stations  
to buy fine things,  
mother of pearl and coral, amber and ebony,  
the sensual perfume of every kind-  
as many sensual perfumes as you can;  
and may you visit many Egyptian cities  
to gather stores of knowledge from their scholars.  
Keep Ithaka always in your mind.  
Arriving there is what you are destined for.

*But do not hurry the journey at all.  
Better if it lasts for years,  
so you are old by the time you reach the island,  
wealthy with all you have gained on the way,  
not expecting Ithaka to make you rich.  
Ithaka gave you the marvelous journey.  
Without her, you would not have set out.  
She has nothing left to give you now.  
And if you find her poor, Ithaka won't have fooled you.  
Wise as you will have become, so full of experience,  
you will have understood by then what these Ithakas mean.*

*Translated by Edmund Keeley/ Phillip Sherrard  
The poem is from [www.cavafy.com](http://www.cavafy.com)*

For the search of scientific knowledge, we have now the tools and methodology of the scientific process and of evidence-based reasoning. As we were travelling into this linear evolving scientific process, we have recently encountered a new and very tiny agent, an unknown virus, causing a pandemic, which for the last three years has disrupted the human activities across the globe causing millions of deaths and financial losses. Due to the scientific process, epidemiology, informatics, data analytics, and biology, we were able to devise mechanisms of immunization in a remarkable fast way to defend ourselves. However, during this period we realized how much we do not know, how vulnerable we are, and how other beliefs may endanger the arrival on a safe port. It is evident that in the Health Sciences we do not have a kind of periodic table as in Chemistry, where all the elements (known and unknown) are mapped and what we need is just to research ways to find the unknown elements (of course, this is still an enormous scientific task). In the Health Sciences, we are out in the vast ocean having as tools the scientific process and evidence-based reasoning, which are now enhanced by Biomedical and Health Informatics, trying to learn and acquire knowledge in order to understand the principles of the entire domain. So, we need to pursue further this long scientific journey for the quest of scientific knowledge and truth. The journey to Ithaka needs many, many, many, indeed many more years, but it is a wonderful and challenging journey.

Athens, 29.10.2022  
John Mantas, Editor