



turing orally and by the 8th century BCE it yielded the epics of Homer and Hesiod. Homer's Iliad and Odyssey remain to this day the exemplary models of literature and the fountainheads that have never stopped nourishing the Hellenic mind. What is noteworthy is that as soon as they

appeared they provided humanity with perfect art—an enigma and paradox that puzzles scientific research. Comprising 15,693 and 12,110 verses, respectively, they were passed down from generation to generation, until they were put in writing in the 6th century BCE. This is the Classical Period, which will endow the civilized world with all kinds of treasures through the Hellenic language: tragedy and comedy, philosophy and science, rhetoric and history. Who doesn't know the great men and women who were immortalized thanks to the Hellenic language: Sappho, Pythagoras, Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, Aristophanes, Plato, Aristotle, Philolaus, Demosthenes, Herodotus and Thucydides?

Lingua Franca



From 300 BCE to 300 CE, thanks to the deeds of Alexander the Great, the Hellenic language will become the international language of the ancient world. From Gibraltar to Mesopotamia and from Turin to the Nile everyone will come to know how to speak like a Hellene—and also how to be like a Hellene.

Scholars in great centers of learning, such as Alexandria, will play a decisive role in collecting, documenting, classifying, interpreting and disseminating the treasures of the Hellenic language that had been accumulated throughout the centuries. It is thanks to the diligence and ingenuity of these scholars that we have

come to know whatever we know about Hellenic Letters, although unfortunately—we must admit—there is much more that will probably stay for ever unknown due to the vicissitudes of deplorable historical events (e.g. the destruction of the Library of Alexandria) and natural disasters.

Sailing through Byzantium



The Hellenic language will be truly blessed by becoming the language of the Holy Bible: the Old Testament was translated into Hellenic (during the last three centuries of the 1st millennium BCE) and the New Testament was originally written in Hellenic (between 70 and 125 CE). At the same time, it is this language that offered the new faith the possibility to express its experience of the Divine through a highly sophisticated means, which had for centuries explored the depths of the human psyche. The great Fathers of the Church will indeed put new wine in old wineskins inaugurating in this way an innovative phase in the development of the Hellenic language. Accordingly, fresh linguistic treasures will be created: liturgical poetry, theological articulation, hagiographical narrative. Christianity, at least in the East, will perpetuate and promote Hellenicity by speaking and thinking in the language of the Hellenes—although not without tension and second thoughts.

The First Steps of Neo-Hellenism

Around 1200 CE the folk and more popular versions