

The Future of Hellenic *Paedeia* in a Democratic Society --The Basis of all *Paedeia*/Education and Culture

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*There is a tremendous need for a revolution in the field of paedeia or education and cultural upbringing. Many talk about education and the need for more funds, facilities, etc. Few talk about the need to **reinvent paedeia** as our relatively recent Hellenistic ancestors did in generating the Renaissance of Europe. There is an analogous need at this time for new renaissance that will take us out of the new darkness that has befallen upon the materialistic “civilized” man. I will not elaborate much on this point for much has been written and discussed, but most people have a good feeling of what is meant and they understand that education is to produce civilized persons as opposed to “barbarians”. It should be understood also that the educational effort must be made at all levels and not just at the highest level. The same topics must be nourishing character at all levels of education, but with varying degrees of complexity.*

The last renaissance that brought Europe out of its medieval darkness was predominantly due to Hellenic Paedeia. This diachronic(time- tested) method of the ancient Greeks in educating and developing a society, especially a democratic one, is poised to do its miracle for mankind once again.

*It is the purpose of this presentation to a) mention the essence or the characteristics of this immortal culture, b) name a few of the major and familiar contributions that the ancient Hellenes made to the world and c) summarize in a couple of charts as to why the future of Hellenic Paedeia can be bright and is the true catalyst for the new needed renaissance; **The Person and its Values, Economy and Ecology coming together in an ecumenical model for balanced education and culture development, in order to shape and support the future of mankind.** We, both Hellenes and Phil-Hellenes alike, have a mission to point the direction education must take. One can not hope for a multi-ethnic society to co-exist in harmony without proper and common paedeia. Hellenic Paedeia is the cement that will hold society together. Are we up to the challenge for such an historic mission? The points that I will make are simple but not simplistic.*

A quick refresher is presented on the characteristics, the contributions of our Hellenic culture, and how the Hellenic *Paedeia* in a broader sense will shape the world, as it has not done since the time of the Renaissance. One can not tell where a cultural characteristic ends and where a contribution begins, and what the actual shape that *Paedeia* will finally take; but it does not matter. It will be very beneficial for those who will recognize the train coming and will get on it sooner rather than later. Homer, the civilizer of humanity, keeps reminding us for almost 3,000 years that Hellenism is like the leaves of the tree that no one doubts the green leaves will be back in the Spring time. Hellenism’s revival is only a matter of time, but our efforts will shorten the duration of the new “dark age” that has befallen on many of our schools and our society in general, in spite of our phenomenal progress in technology:

*«Οἴη περ φύλλων γενεή, τοίη δε και ανδρών.
Φύλλα τα μεν τ’άνεμος χαμάδις χέει,άλλα δε
θ’ύλη*

*Τηλεθόσσα φύει, έαρος δ’επνίγεται ώρη,
Ως ανδρών γενεή η μεν φύει η δ’απολήγει.»*

“As is the generation of leaves on the ground so is that of humanity. The wind scatters the leaves on the ground, but the live timber burgeons with leaves again in the season of spring returning. So one generation of men will grow while another dies. (Iliad 6.146-150).”

Characteristics of The Hellenic Culture

Below is shown a composite of 16 chosen characteristics of the Greek culture that influences our lives. These are interacting characteristics of Hellenic *paedeia* and culture, which do not quite fit in a cornucopia depiction and from which they overflow. It is overflowing (**Το Κέρας Της Αμαλθείας Έχει Πράγματι Ξεχειλίσει!**).

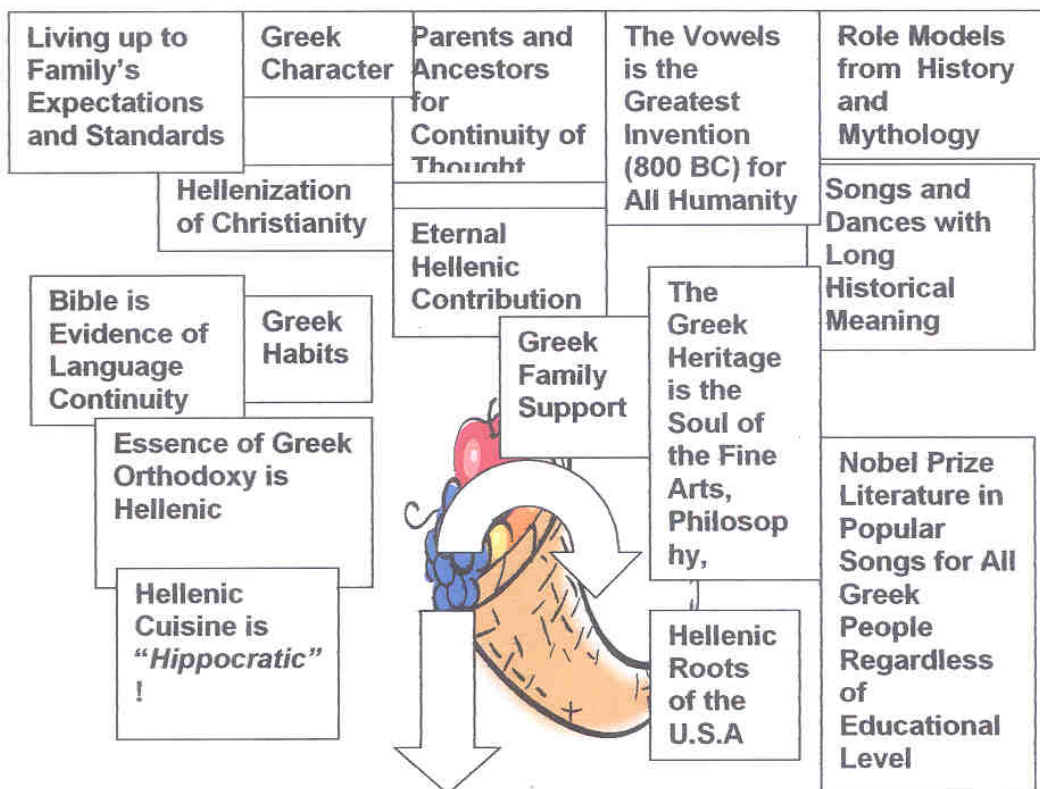
This background can not be ignored, but has to be our basis for individual and family action. Let us silently ponder on the significance and impact on our lives of the items randomly depicted here:

- (1) Role Models from History and Mythology; (2) Songs and Dances with Long Historical Meaning; (3) Bible as Evidence of Language Continuity; (4) Eternal Hellenic Contributions of the highest order; (5) The Greek Heritage as the Soul of the Fine Arts, Philosophy, Theology, and Sciences; (6) Parents and Ancestors for Continuity of Thought; (7) Hellenization of Christianity; (8) Family Support; (9) Greek Character; (10) Greek Habits; (11) Living up to Family's Expectations and Standards; (12) The Invention of the Vowels (800 BC), perhaps the Greatest invention for All Humanity; (13) Nobel Prize Literature in Popular Songs for All Greek People Regardless of Educational Level; (14) Essence of Greek Orthodoxy being Hellenic; (15) Hellenic Cuisine is "Hippocratic" and (16) Hellenic Roots of the U.S.A. Other characteristics could be added to the above.

Photo 1 - Cornucopia overflowing with Greek Characteristics and Contributions to each one of us and the world.

Composite of Interacting Characteristics that Make up Hellenic Paedeia and Culture

To Κέρας της Αμαλθείας Είναι Ξεχειλισμένο!



Examples of Eternal Hellenic Contributions of the Highest Order – Immense Contributions equals Immense Pride for Hellenes and Phil-Hellenes alike

Just picking up one of the 16 items mentioned above, that of **Hellenic Contributions**, and expanding it in terms of examples, one can feel the immensity of the Hellenic weight that we carry and against which we and the world must measure our current performance ! It is for this reason that author Thomas Cahill in his *Why Greeks Matter* (2003) concludes his book with the following:

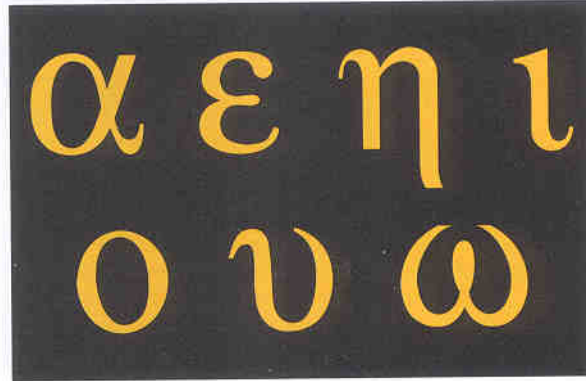
“There was nothing the ancient Greeks did not poke their noses into, no experience they shunned, no problem they did not attempt to solve. When the world was still young, they set off at the first light and returned early from the agora, their arms full and their carts loaded down with every purchase, domestic and foreign, natural and artificial, they could lay their hands on. Whatever we experience in our day, whatever we hope to learn, whatever we most desire, whatever we set out to find, we see that the Greeks have been there before us, and we meet them on their way back”. Όταν εμείς πηγαίνομε, συναντάμε τους προγόνους μας να επιστρέφουν!!

Here are a few key examples of Hellenic contributions as a refresher:

- (1) Thales “the Father of Philosophy”;
- (2) Hippocrates, “the Father of Medicine” ;
- (3) Herodotos, “the Father of History”;
- (4) Aristotle, “the Father of the Natural Science”;
- (5) Democritos, “the Originator of the Atomic Theory”;
- (6) Euclid, Apolonios, Pythagoras, Archimedes, Pappus, Caratheodory, and many others are synonymous with Mathematics;
- (7) Pericles is identified with the true meaning of Democracy;
- (8) The noble pan-Hellenic idea of the Olympic Games, to bring peace and understanding among states and inspire the youth, was fully developed by the year 776 BC, and went on for nearly 1200 years before becoming victims of over-commercialization and religious intolerance;
- (9) The Greek Heritage is the soul of the Fine Arts, Philosophy, Theology, and Sciences;
- (10) The essence of the Greek Paideia would include epic poetry, lyric poetry, tragedy, comedy, myths, rhetoric, architecture, sculpture, painting, music, dance, astronomy, physics, biology, medicine, history, logic, metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, political theory, aesthetics, theology and religion, and countless more;
- (11) Greek Paideia was ecumenical in scope, which eventually became the motive force for modern Renaissance, and stands as the foundation of our Western Civilization;
- (12) The Manolis Andronicos name is now synonymous with modern archaeology;
- (13) Considering the above contributions, it should not be surprising that Greek words and roots are to be found in about one third of the vocabulary of the English and other European languages and constitute approximately three quarters of our scientific and technical vocabulary. If one counts the less recognizable Greek words that have come to English via Latin, the likely percentage of Greek influence rises to 55-60% in total;
- (14) Often neglected to be mentioned by writers, is the greatest of all Hellenic inventions, the one that made written communication possible for people of all strata: the invention of the vowels around 800 B.C., and its transfer to what is now Italy a few decades later, to evolve to another form of the Greek alphabet, known as the Latin alphabet. This invention allowed for writing down any sound, thus forming words and sentences readable by the masses. It was a giant leap frog jump from the hieroglyphics and spread knowledge beyond the limited few experts!! This invention made informed thinking and debate on any issue possible to ordinary people and gradually led to democracy. The Hellenic language may be the greatest of all gifts to humanity by the ancient Greeks. Enjoy “news item” below(Photo 2) from The Greek Gazette, “announcing” the discovery of vowels in 800 B.C.:

Photo 2- Vowels as the greatest Hellenic invention giving power to the people and leading to Democracy

“



Vowels unveiled yesterday by Professor Mouros. Oracles predict a bright future for α, ε, ι, ο and υ, but not ω and η. ”

The Real Products of Hellenic Culture and Paedeia - Who Deserves the Title of a Hellene?

It was Alexander the Great who raised the question as to who deserves the title of a Hellene. Paraphrasing his speech at Opis in Mesopotamia some 2300 years ago, not all Hellenes deserve the title of a Hellene but many non-Greeks qualify very well by their knowledge and attitude. For all of us to qualify for the noble title, we must hold the points discussed above as the ideal targets, and must demand excellence from ourselves and of our respective leadership in the quality of living. Then we can confidently say we are good human beings because we value ***Philomatheia*** - love of learning, ***Philotimia*** - love of honor, honor-bound, dignity, pride, and having a clean name or reputation, ***Philoxenia*** - love of being hospitable, especially to strangers and the needy, ***Philofronesis*** - love of prudence and common sense; and, ***Philanthropia***--Philantropy, Love of mankind; ***Adelphotes***- a great Hellenic Fraternity for Hellenes and Phil-Hellenes alike; ***Agape Zoes*** - - Zest for Life, the Eu Zen; ***Agape***-- I was born not to hate but to love says the great Sophocles, to be repeated later, amplified and further interpreted by the Deity of Christendom. It is the above mentioned characteristics, which, when acquired, form the character of a true Hellene and Phil-Hellene. As such, we do not only know how a Greek heart beats, but that it really beats *Hellenically* in a cultural and educational sense.

Photo 3 - Products and Dividends from Hellenic Paedeia and Culture

(See Photo below and also The Hellenic Tree of Wisdom at the end of this presentation).

Expected Product from Hellenic *Paedeia* and Culture:

- **A Great Hellenic Fraternity—For Greeks and Phil-Hellenes alike**
- ***Philomatheia*** - love of learning
- ***Philotimia*** - love of honor, honor-bound, dignity, pride, and having a clean name or good reputation.
- ***Philoxenia*** - love of being hospitable, especially to strangers and the needy
- ***Philophronesis*** - love of prudence and common sense
- ***Philanthropia***-philanthropy
- ***Agape Zoes*** –love for life

BELIEVING AND AIMING FOR THESE TARGET RESULTS, YOUR HEART NOW “BEATS HELLENICALLY” AND YOU DESERVE THE TITLE OF A “HELLENE” REGARDLESS OF YOUR BIOLOGICAL DNA. IT IS THE HELLENIC CULTURAL DNA THAT COUNTS

The Basis of all *Paedeia*/Education - The Future of Hellenic *Paedeia* in a Democratic Society

Photo 4 below is a triangular representation where three key Hellenic words, Person (*polites*), Ecology (*oikologia*) and Economy (*oikonomia*) are at the apexes of the triangle. They form the basis for a balanced education, where the needs of the individual (the citizen), the logic for the environment that sustains *anthropos* and the laws of nature and society {that support and limit our activities for having a vibrant and sustainable (*αειφόρος*) economy} in order to make a living. Our institutions are operating within the area of the three key apexes of the triangle and are fed by the key democratic (Hellenic) values which are also inside the triangle. As such, these values constantly fertilize the educational process, thus producing a sustainable (*αειφόρος*) ecumenical product of *paedeia* for the needs of the 21st century and indeed the third millennium. Thus, Hellenic *Paedeia* is not only the past but, indeed, the future for all humanity. It has to be, since there are no longer economic borders for the nations of the world. Please study this chart and arrive at your own conclusions. If you believe in democratic values, and especially if you are an AHEPAN, you will recognize the Hellenic values for a democratic society; if you are a philosopher, social scientist /sociologist, or anthropologist, you will recognize the anthropocentric view that *anthropos* (person) is the central theme, which, without him, civilization is immaterial or can not exist; if you are an economist or any professional, you will see your place, and, if you are an environmentalist, you know you can not ignore the issues that impact on the environment . What else is there?

Photo 5 further defines key elements of Hellenic *paedeia* in terms of 12 Hellenic words or concepts which have defined both ancient Hellenic education and modern western thought since the Renaissance. Credit is given here to Rev. Dr. Demetrios Constantelos who discussed the 12 words in his booklet “The Greeks;Their Heritage and Its Value Today”(1996 Hellenic College Press). It is this kind of education which will produce an integrated and balanced person with character (a character of Hellenic measure avoiding extremes and fanaticism that will have both technical and human skills with which to make a living and also live well (το ευ

ζην or the pursuit of real happiness), and be more suitable and flexible for a globalized or ecumenical world. Again, Hellenic *Paedeia* is likely to have more of a future than a past. At least, it appears that way, if there is to be a future for our world, Greek or not.

Photo 4 - The Future of Ecumenical Hellenic Paedeia -The Education Model in a Democratic World

The Three-Pillar Model for *Paedeia* -Values, the Person, Economy and Ecology
 Constitute the Focus of the Academic Institutions

(Please note that Institutions and Values inside the triangle space constantly fertilize and condition the learning climate to produce sustainable education and culture for the benefit of both the individual and the whole).

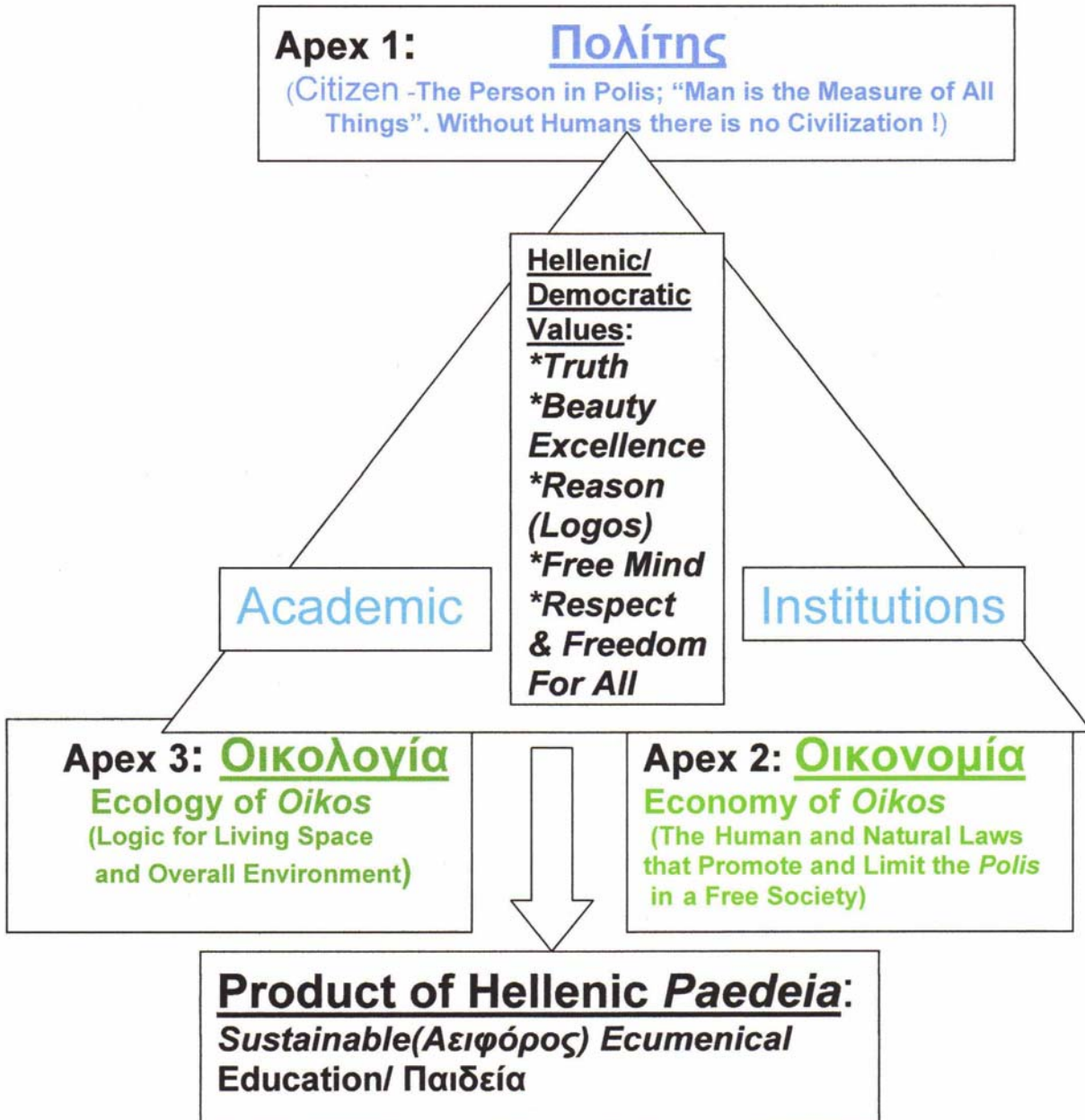
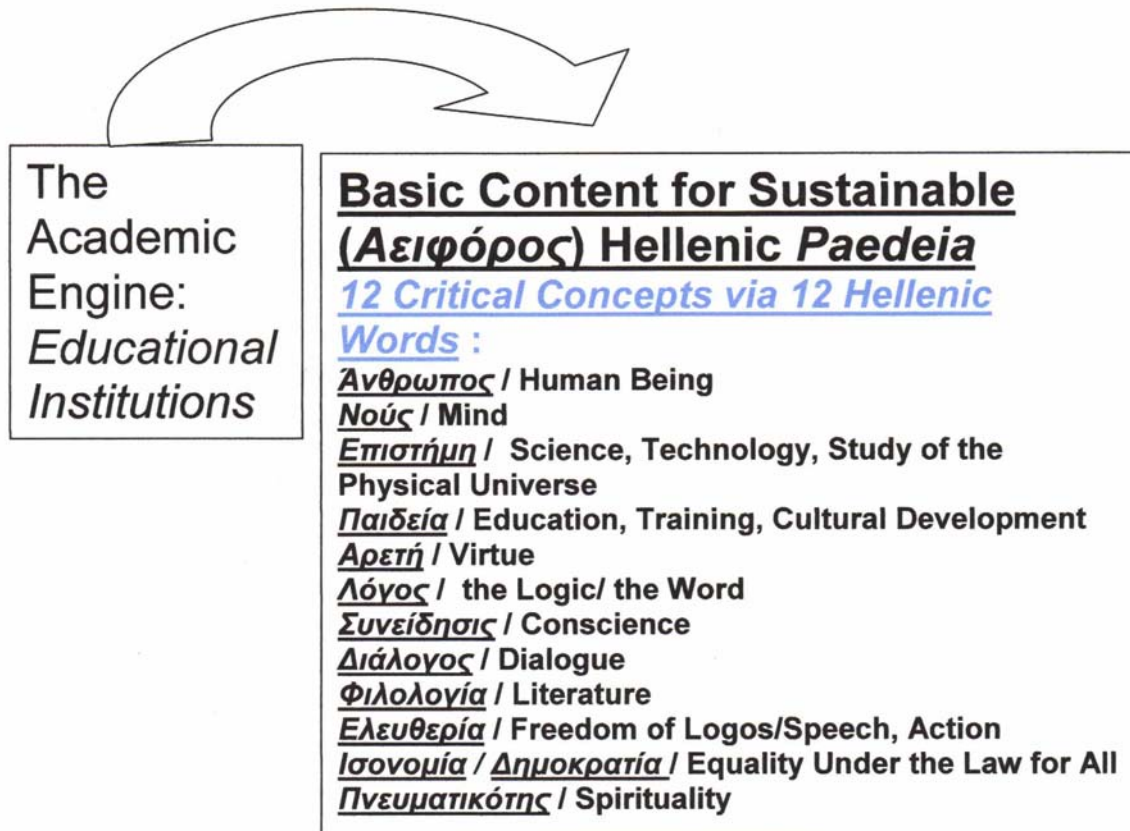


Photo 5. Implementing Sustainable *Paedeia* / Education for Developing Human and Technical skills via the Emphasis of Fundamental Concepts and Fields of Study.

(The critical concepts depicted here are the core tools for developing cultured citizens and professionals of character in any profession of a free and democratic society; and further constitute major headings of the myriad sub-classifications of technical and humanities professions).



Conclusion

An individual trained in the above manner is much more likely to be (1) a balanced person not only on how to make a living, but also on how to live well; (2) a person with character and skills; capability/potential; (3) a person having the ευ ζην philosophy for the pursuit of happiness; (4) an individual that uses Μέτρον / Measure to moderate and avoid extremes; and, (5) be a member of a society with ecumenical education ready for Globalization without any economic national borders!

The tree of Wisdom below(Photo 6) summarizes the essence of character development in a different manner.

The Tree of Hellenic Wisdom

**How Does One Earn the Title of a True Hellene?
By Acquiring the eight Characteristics listed below from
Diachronic Greek Wisdom!**

(Please study the Tree of Wisdom below and “enroll “ in studying the ancient Greeks because, as Thomas Cahill says, when modern man is going, he meets them on their way back!!).

Agape--“I was Born Not to Hate but to Love”(Antigone of Sophocles)

Zoe(το ευ ζην)- - Zest for Life. The Good Life is Worth Living to the Fullest

Philofronesis--Love of Prudence and Common Sense

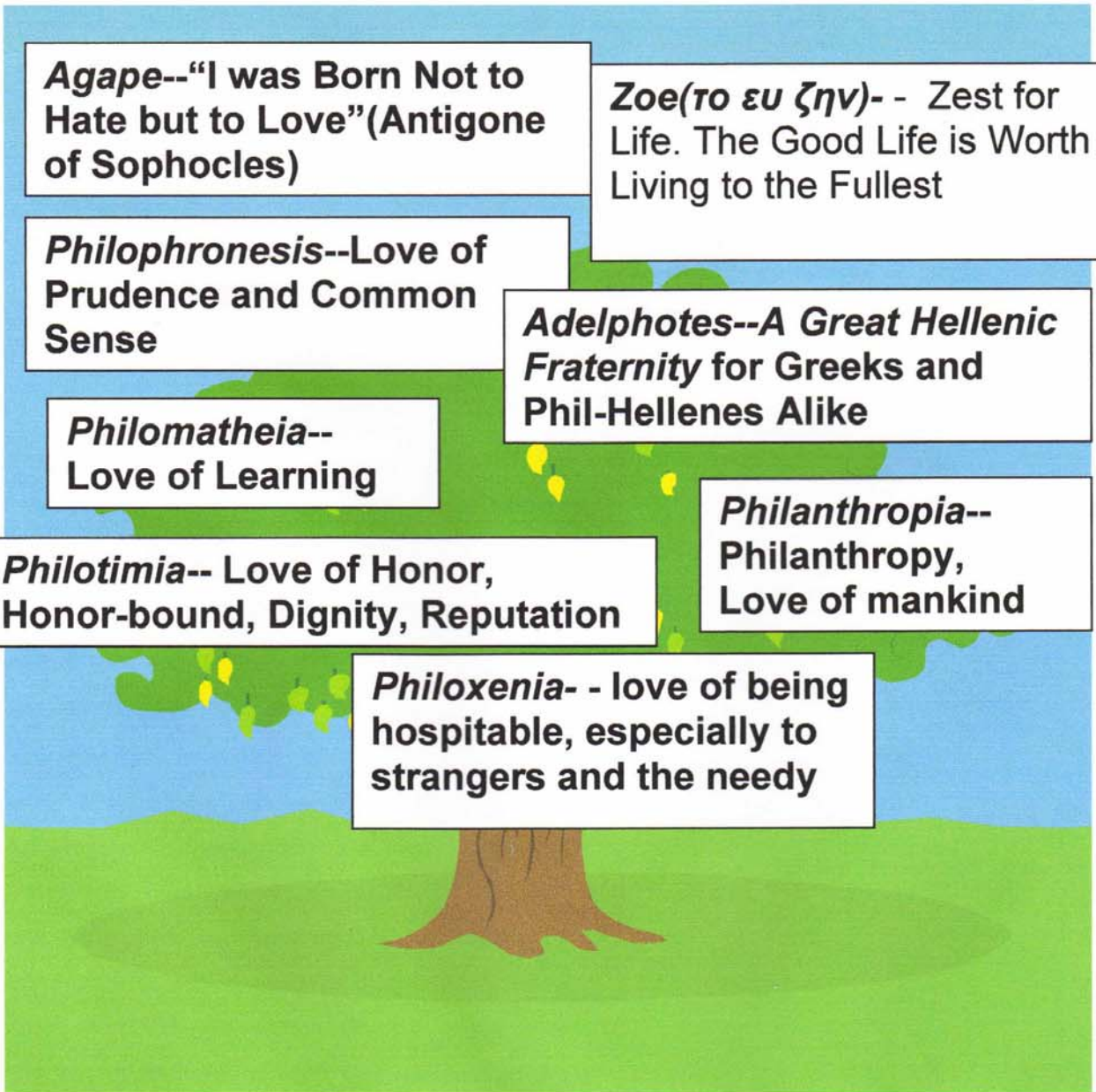
Adelphotes--A Great Hellenic Fraternity for Greeks and Phil-Hellenes Alike

**Philomatheia--
Love of Learning**

Philotimia-- Love of Honor, Honor-bound, Dignity, Reputation

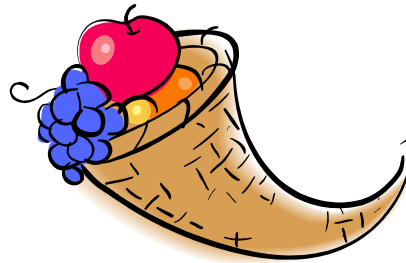
**Philanthropia--
Philanthropy,
Love of mankind**

Philoxenia- - love of being hospitable, especially to strangers and the needy



The “fruits” on the tree are the Products of true Hellenic Education and Culture. If you believe in the above Character attributes and strive to acquire them, then you deserve the title of a Hellene regardless of your biological DNA. In becoming a Cultured and Educated human being, it is the cultural and educational DNA that counts.

Note: Analogous sentiments were expressed by Alexander the Great in 324 B.C., speaking to his multi-ethnic audience and troops at the city of Opis in Mesopotamia.



The core ideas of this paper were presented by the author at the 2008 Forum of the American Foundation for Greek Language and Culture (AFGLC) on March 7, 2008 at the University of South Florida. Also, parts of it were presented at the Prometheus Educators at Corona, NY, on February 1, 2008.

- The author is the President of the American Foundation for Greek Language and Culture for the Tri-State Region (AFGLC). Since his retirement as Corporate Executive at Scott Paper Company in 1994, Dr. Yiannos has dedicated his time and other valuable resources for the advancement of Hellenic Paedeia, via various projects and organizations. He views Hellenic Paedeia as critical to the survival of the Western Civilization.