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Volume 8

Iamblichus:
On the Pythagorean Life

Translated with notes and introduction by
GILLIAN CLARK

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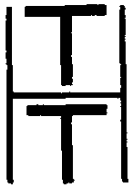

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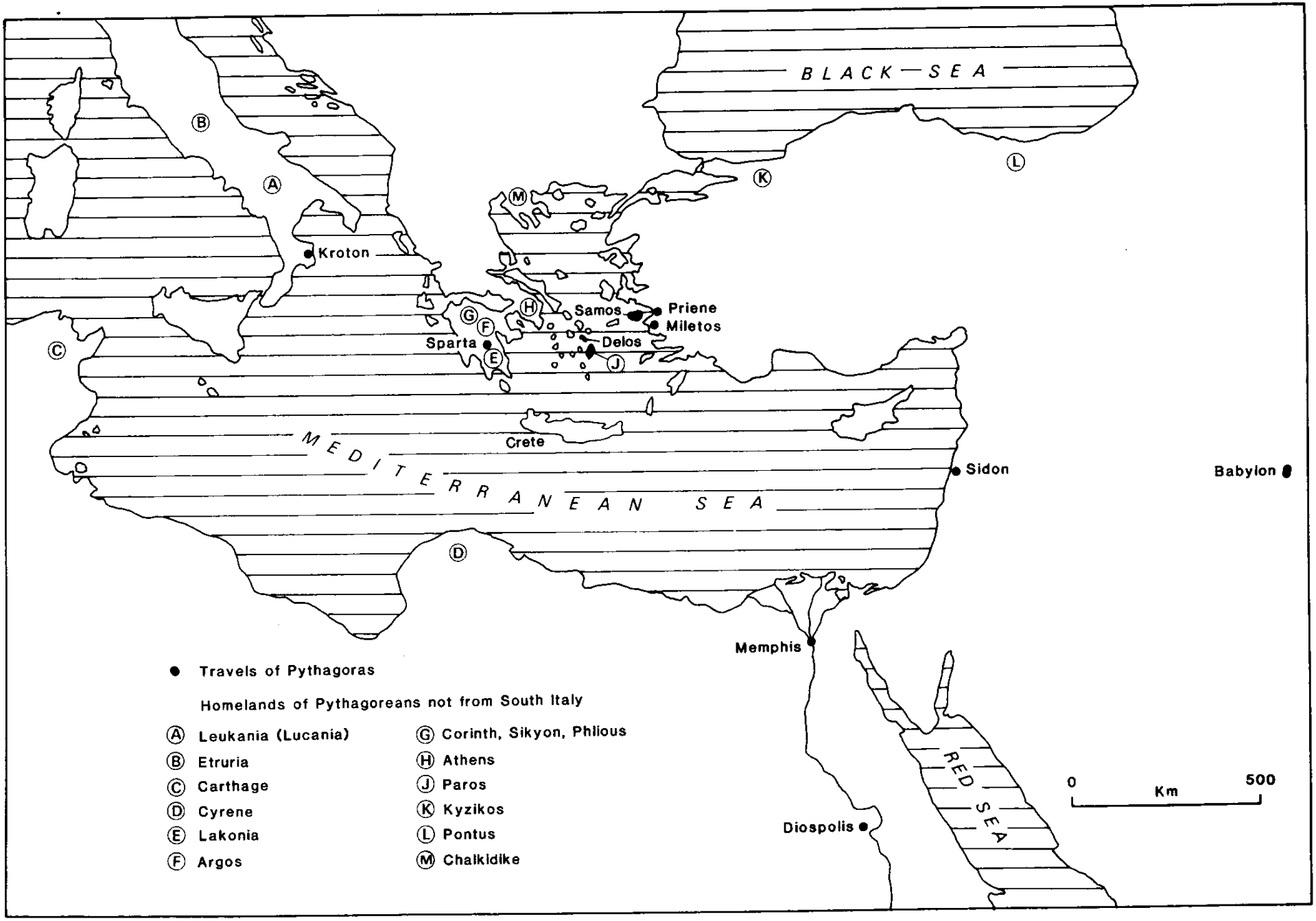
CONTENTS

ABBREVIATIONS

(These are standard abbreviations for periodicals and works of reference. For abbreviations of book-titles, see the Bibliography.)

ANRW	Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt, ed.H.Temporini (1972-)
GRBS	Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies
JHS	Journal of Hellenic Studies
JRS	Journal of Roman Studies
JTS	Journal of Theological Studies
LSJ	Liddell-Scott-Jones, Greek-English Lexicon
PLRE	Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire, ed. A. H. M. Jones (Cambridge 1971)
REA	Revue des Etudes Anciennes
REG	Revue des Etudes Grecques
RhM	Rheinisches Museum
TAPA	Transactions of the American Philological Association


BLACK SEA
MEDITERRANEAN SEA
RED SEA
Kroton
Samos
Priene
Miletos
Sparta
Delos
Crete
Sidon
Babylon
Memphis
Diospolis
0
Km
500
Travels of Pythagoras
Homelands of Pythagoreans not from South Italy
Ⓐ Leukania (Lucania)
Ⓑ Etruria
Ⓒ Carthage
Ⓓ Cyrene
Ⓔ Lakonia
Ⓕ Argos
Ⓖ Corinth, Sikyon, Phlious
Ⓗ Athens
Ⓙ Paros
Ⓚ Kyzikos
Ⓛ Pontus
Ⓜ Chalkidike


ITALY
Taras
Metapontion
Elea
Poseidonia
Sybaris
Thourioi
TYRHENIAN
SEA
Kroton
Kaulonia
Lokroi
Messene
Rhegion
IONIAN
SEA
Himera
Tauromenion
SICILY
Katana
Akragas
Syracuse
0
Km
100

INTRODUCTION

Why should Iamblichus, a Platonist philosopher of the fourth century AD, write about Pythagoras, a pre-Platonic philosopher or sage or religious genius of the sixth century B.C.? It was neither an easy nor an obvious task. Nobody was sure what exactly Pythagoras had taught, let alone what (if anything) he had written. Nor is it likely that there was a widespread desire to know more about him. A few philosophers in the early centuries AD were counted as Pythagorean, because of their concern with number as an organising principle of the universe, and a few people were "Pythagorean" in the popular sense: they were vegetarian, or they believed in reincarnation. But there was no major Pythagorean revival, and any need for information had recently been met by Iamblichus's senior contemporary Porphyry. Porphyry's *Life of Pythagoras* was not a special study, but part of a four-book history of philosophy from Homer to Plato. Iamblichus's book is also, conventionally, known as the *Life of Pythagoras* (hence the standard abbreviation VP, from *d e vita Pythagorica*), but that is a misleading translation. He uses, but does not duplicate, Porphyry. His title is *On the Pythagorean Life*, and his book was the introduction of a ten-volume sequence on Pythagorean philosophy. [1]

(i)

The Pythagorean life, Iamblichus tells us, is organised so as to follow God (VP 86, 137). Pythagorean lifestyle is a discipline for body and soul. Pythagoras himself, as Iamblichus presents him, is proof that the gods are concerned for human life: they send his godlike soul to be embodied so that he may enlighten humanity. Earnest commitment to the philosophic life, as manifested by Pythagoras and his followers, can make human souls worthy of being raised to the level of the divine. The

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[1] O'Meara chs.1-2 discusses Pythagoreans of the C2-3 AD and I.'s work *On Pythagoreanism* (see n.9 below). For I.'s use of Porphyry, see n.11 below.

Hellenic religious tradition, which Pythagoras assimilates and develops, offers divinely inspired teaching, profound religious experience, personal holiness and communal love. Iamblichus does not say explicitly that in all these respects Graeco-Roman religion can meet the Christian challenge, but the pagan-Christian debate of the third and fourth centuries is the necessary background to his book.

Throughout Iamblichus's lifetime Christianity was making converts, even in the philosophical schools and among his own friends. His biography is not entirely secure, but there is no serious reason to doubt the main outlines.[2] Born in Syria in the mid-third century AD, of a landowning family, he was educated probably at the Syrian capital, Antioch, and at Alexandria. Both cities were centres of Christian theology as well as Graeco-Roman philosophy. Anatolius, one of Iamblichus's teachers, probably became bishop of Laodicea: his work, and perhaps Iamblichus's too, was known to Eusebius of Caesarea (in Palestine) who was engaged in the presentation of Christian doctrines and refutation of pagan claims. Iamblichus also worked, in Rome or Sicily, with another Syrian: Porphyry, the pupil of Plotinus. Porphyry was more actively involved in the resistance to Christianity. His book *Against the Christians*, written in the late third or early fourth century, was later banned (unsuccessfully) by the emperor Constantine.

Iamblichus had returned to teach in Syria probably before the outbreak of what Christians knew as the Great Persecution, ordered by the emperor Diocletian in 303 and pursued with great

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[2] For what follows see PLRE 1.450-1, based on J. Bidez, "Le philosophe Jamblique et son école", REG 32(1919) 29-40; modified by Alan Cameron, "The date of I.'s birth", *Hermes* 96(1968)374-6, and by T. D. Barnes, "A correspondent of I.", GRBS 19 (1978) 99-106. J. Vanderspoel, "I. at Daphne", GRBS 29 (1988) 83-6, offers suggestions on the place where I. taught. On Anatolius, see O'Meara 23, and T. D. Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius* (1981) 168; on Porphyry, T. D. Barnes, "Porphyry against the Christians: date and attribution of the fragments", JTS ns24 (1973) 424-42, and A. Meredith in ANRW II.23.2 1119-49, esp.1125-37. See further Fowden, esp.40-1.

bitterness, especially in the Middle East, for the next decade. He was in Syria in 313,when Constantine became ruler of the western empire and declared his allegiance to Christianity, and may not have lived to see Constantine conquer the eastern empire in 324, and summon the Council of Nicaea. His favourite pupil Sopater waited for him to die before openly joining Constantine's court: Sopater was there by 326/7.

The Christian challenge, officially sanctioned by Constantine, forced a new presentation of Graeco-Roman religious thinking. So far as we know, Iamblichus met the challenge not by seeking to refute Christianity but by reaffirming his own tradition. But after his death he became the theologian of a conscious pagan revival under Constantine's nephew Julian, known to Christians as the Apostate.[3] Julian never knew Iamblichus: born in 322, and a secret convert to paganism, he discovered Iamblichus's work perhaps at the university of Athens, and admired it immensely, going so far as to rank Iamblichus with Plato as a philosophical theologian (Julian, *or.* 4.146a). Even in the fourth century many people would have disagreed, and in the twentieth century Julian's assessment has been dismissed as the enthusiasm of one crank for another — just like that of Iamblichus for Pythagoras. But both enthusiasms deserve attention.

It is easy to see why people have thought poorly of Iamblichus. He is a notoriously unclear writer. His respectful biographer Eunapius, only three generations of teachers away, remarks on what he made of a much more straightforward subject than Pythagoras, the life of his brilliant friend Alypius. "The text was obscured by its style: it was overshadowed by a thick cloud, and not because the facts were unclear, for he had a long account by Alypius for information. Moreover he made no mention of philosophical works." (Eunapius 460.) Many scholars working on the *Life of Pythagoras* have read that with feeling. Moreover Iamblichus practised theurgy, the ritual invocation of

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[3] JH esp. 181-9.

divine presences, which many people from Plotinus on saw as dangerously close to magic. So Iamblichus was typecast as an exponent of the Higher Nonsense, clouding Hellenic clarity with Syrian religiosity. It is only in the last twenty years that work on later Platonism and Iamblichus's place in it, and on theurgy and Graeco-Roman religious thinking generally, has made Julian's enthusiasm believable.[4]

Julian became sole emperor in 361, and appears to have made a shrewd assessment of the problems facing a pagan revival after nearly fifty years of state-subsidised Christianity. Graeco-Roman paganism had an ancient tradition, drawing on the glamorous wisdom of the eastern cultures. Its local civic cults united the simple faithful, and its mysteries provided for other religious aspirations. It could cite divinely inspired texts: Homer, Hesiod, Plato, Aristotle, the Orphic Hymns and the "Chaldaean oracles". But there was nothing comparable to Christian ethical and theological instruction, offered to all comers at weekly meetings: ethics and theology were for the elite who could afford to spend time with a philosopher. They were not linked with the civic cults, even though the gods were believed to be angered by failure to maintain moral standards. The emperor Maximin Daia, during the Great Persecution, had decided that what paganism lacked was a visible, integrated, spiritually authoritative priesthood. Julian, in his brief reign (361-3), went further, proposing basic religious teaching and a budget for

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[4] There is a classic denunciation of I. in J. Geffcken, *The Last Days of Graeco-Roman paganism* (ET 1978) 126-36. The gradual rise in I.'s reputation may be seen in CH (Lloyd, 1967), Larsen (1972), Wallis (1972), Dillon (1973) and Gersh (1978). For the revaluation of theurgy, contrast E.R.Dodds, "Theurgy and its relation to Neoplatonism", JRS 37(1947) 55-69, with Gregory Shaw, "Theurgy: rituals of unification in the Neoplatonism of I.", *Traditio* 41(1985)1-28; and see A. H. Armstrong, "I. and Egypt", *Les études philosophiques* 2-3 (1987)179-88. See also on 138 below.

charitable activities to make the pagan priesthoods an exact parallel to the Christian clergy. As emperor, he could supply the budget: it was the writings of Iamblichus which were to train the priests.[5]

(ii)

What, then, would the priests learn from Iamblichus? The aim of all the Platonist philosophers was that of Plato and Aristotle: the union of the philosopher's mind with the mind of God. Platonists held that reality is not the changing world which we see and touch, but the absolute values and unchanging being we discover by the exercise of reason. This reality is not itself God, who is beyond all our categories of thought, but God gives it being by thinking it. Human reason, the power to make sense of the world and to understand what reality is, is the aspect of human beings which is closest to the divine. (It would be misleading to make a distinction here between "mind" and "soul".) The more we engage in the activity of reason, the more we love and desire wisdom, the closer we are to God. Conversely, the more we involve ourselves in this transient material world, the further we are from God. The philosopher thus becomes a religious leader, not just an expert in argument.

We must, then, train ourselves to ignore disproportionate and irrelevant desires, and to meet only the genuine needs of our bodies and our communities. This is *askesis*, the Greek word for "training". Christian asceticism of the third and fourth centuries tended to move from salutary self-discipline to extremes of self-torment which only increased preoccupation with the body; philosophical asceticism aimed to regulate diet, sleep and lifestyle generally so as to free the mind for the hard intellectual work which prepares it to contemplate reality. Both the work and

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[5] Chaldaean oracles: see on 151 below. Pagan clergy: R.M.Grant, "The religion of Maximin Daia", in *Christianity, Judaism and other Graeco-Roman cults*, ed. J.Neusner (1975), vol.4.143-66; Julian, letter 84, ed.J.Bidez (1924) — with the caution that Gregory of Nazianzus (Or.4.111) and Sozomen (EH 5.16) may well exaggerate Julian's wish to emulate the Christian clergy.

the contemplation are called *theoria*, a word which has no single equivalent in English (particularly not "theory" in its modern sense of a hypothesis which awaits disproof).[6]

Iamblichus held (e.g. *On the Mysteries* 5.26) that the gods help us on our way: they respond to prayer and make supernatural guidance available to those who practise theurgy. This was a technique of ritual invocation, which the followers of Iamblichus held to be divinely inspired. The name "theurgy" was taken to mean "divine works" (in Greek, *theia erga* or *theon erga*). Iamblichus taught that the beings who appeared were not the gods themselves, but *daimones*, lesser spirits who give expression to that which, in the gods, is ineffable. The gods, being many, are themselves lesser than the One God, though immeasurably superior to mortals. *Daimones*, and below them heroes, bridge the gulf between divine and human.

Iamblichus disagreed with those who held that human souls are of the same nature as divine souls. He held that there are different classes of souls, and that human souls are not only by nature the lowest class, but are also contaminated by their mortal bodies. Theurgy, with the loving concern of the gods, purifies the soul from this contamination, and liberates it from the bonds of fate which control the material world. Iamblichus expounded theurgy in his commentary (now lost) on the Chaldaean Oracles, and in *On the Mysteries*, in which he responds to Porphyry's challenge that theurgy attempts to manipulate the gods, and that it abandons reason for superstition and dogmatism. He does not explicitly discuss it in *On the Pythagorean Life* (but see on 138): it was not a suitable teaching for an introductory text. Instead, he insists on the need for physical, moral and spiritual purification, for hard intellectual work in a range of disciplines based on mathematics, and for faith in the real theological content of traditional cults, divination, and supernatural happenings. Pythagoras both

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[6] See 58-9 (and note) and 159-60 on Platonism; 68-70 and note for the ascetic life. I.'s own development of Platonism is discussed in CH (Lloyd), Wallis, Dillon and O'Meara. Theoria: Dorothy Emmet, "Theoria and the way of life" JTS ns17 (1966) 38-52.

demonstrates the gods' concern to help us and exemplifies the way a human being should live and study. [7]

(iii)

So, without claiming that Iamblichus wrote *On the Pythagorean Life* as a primer for pagan clergy, we can read it as an example of the moral and spiritual training which Julian wanted priests to have. The philosopher Olympiodorus (*On Plato's Phaedo*, 123.3 Norvin) said Iamblichus was one of those whose chief concern was *hieratike*, the priestly task of mediating between gods and humans, rather than philosophy. Iamblichus would not have accepted this distinction, any more than the distinction between philosophy and theology: he wrote to train students of philosophy, who would become able to understand and transmit divine wisdom. When they had read the life of Pythagoras, and become convinced that Pythagoras was a divine soul sent to reveal the truth and teach human beings how to live, they were to continue with the *Protrepticus*, "Exhortation to Philosophy", which offers Pythagorean sayings and philosophers side by side with extracts from Plato and Aristotle. Thus encouraged, they advanced to a series of highly technical works on aspects of Pythagorean mathematics: that is, mathematics understood as the study of the structure of reality. These studies prepared them for Iamblichus's commentaries on selected texts of Plato and Aristotle, and on the Chaldaean Oracles, in which he expounded human understanding of God.[8]

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[7] *Daimones*: *On the Mysteries* 1.5.16-17. Souls: Steel part I, Finamore ch.2. Fate (*heimarmene*): see on 219.

[8] See the Bibliography for the *Protrepticus*. Two other Pythagorean works of I. survive: *On General Mathematical Science* (ed. N.Festa, Teubner 1891 repr.1975) and *The "Arithmetical Introduction" of Nicomachos* (ed.H.Pistelli, Teubner 1894 repr.1975). The titles of five others are in the contents-list of the manuscript (Florence, Laurentian Library 86.3, known as F) from which our copies of the extant texts derive. These titles are: *Arithmetic in Physics*, *Arithmetic in Ethics*, *Arithmetic in Theology*, *Pythagorean Geometry* and *Pythagorean Music*. A book on Pythagorean Astronomy, promised at the end of the book on Nicomachos, would bring the total to ten, the Pythagorean perfect number. O'Meara part I, esp.91-101, discusses the Pythagorean books overall and their relation to I.'s commentaries on Plato and Aristotle, which are discussed in detail by Larsen; fragments of the Plato commentaries are collected by Dillon.

We do not know how soon in his working life Iamblichus decided that Pythagoras was the ideal philosopher, nor to what extent he and his students followed the Pythagorean lifestyle he describes. It is unlikely that they observed a five-year silence for novices, or held their property in common: these features of Pythagorean communities are probably inspirational, just as the "primitive communism" of the earliest Christian church in Jerusalem was used to inspire charitable giving by property owners. Iamblichus himself, as described in late antique tradition, has much in common with his own Pythagoras. He too was known as "the divine"; he performed fewer miracles than Pythagoras, but his students were prepared to believe that when praying in solitude (but observed by slaves) he levitated and became golden in colour. He once, reluctantly, caused some spirits to appear, and he was aware of the recent presence of death. He also taught secret "truer doctrines", which his followers were reluctant to reveal to a Eunapius aged all of twenty. (Eunapius 458-9, 461.) But there were other late antique philosophers who were "holy men" in the same way, and Iamblichus is distinctively Pythagorean in his approach to mathematics rather than in his supernatural gifts. [9]

On the Pythagorean Life is chiefly concerned with lifestyle and human relationships, and Iamblichus's students could have practised most of what he preached. Here again, one did not have to be Pythagorean to approve of a disciplined and temperate way of life, mostly vegetarian and teetotal; avoidance of careless speech; training of memory; awareness of bonds with fellow-creatures and with gods, and willingness to accept the obligations these impose. Iamblichus's treatment of relationships between the sexes does deserve special notice. Most ancient philosophy deals with women's lives as an afterthought, briefly

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[9] Christian "communism" compared with Pythagorean: Luke T.Johnson, *Sharing Possessions* (1986). For the philosopher as "holy man" see Fowden, esp.36, and Cox ch.2; for I.'s main concerns in Pythagoreanism, O'Meara 210-5.

noting that educated women can manifest virtue in their domestic setting, and registering disagreement with Plato's radical proposal (always known as "wives and children in common") for extracting the most able women from domestic life. This is, in part, because so few women were serious students of philosophy, and those mostly wives or daughters (or, in the school of Epicurus, mistresses) of male philosophers. Plotinus, Porphyry and Iamblichus all knew women of this kind, but it was very rare for a woman to make an acknowledged contribution to philosophy.

Pythagoreanism not only remembered the names of more women than other schools did (though still only seventeen women as against two hundred and eighteen men, in the list with which Iamblichus ends): some of them were credited with philosophical treatises of which fragments survive. One, ascribed to Theano, deals with the metaphysical status of number, another, ascribed to Aesara, with the organisation of human nature. The others, ascribed to Theano, Periktione, Phintys and Myia, are concerned with domestic virtue. We need not dismiss these works as attempts, by men or collusive women, to keep women in their place. They set out to show that traditional female concern for a well-run household, healthy upbringing of children, tactful handling of husbands, personal modesty and frugality, are important manifestations of the harmony of the cosmos.[10]

Pythagoras's speech to the women of Kroton, as Iamblichus presents it (VP 54-7), is unusually aware of what is morally significant in women's daily lives. Pythagoras thinks they will see the importance of making and taking offerings to the gods with one's own hands, and of refusing to be preoccupied with appearance and expensive clothes: he actually praises them for the natural justice displayed in their informal, unwitnessed loans of clothes and jewels, the only possessions indisputably

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[10] Texts ascribed to Pythagorean women are translated and discussed in *A History of Women Philosophers* ed. Mary Ellen Waithe, vol.1 (1987) chs.1-4.

theirs. Moreover, he emphasises — at the women's request — the obligation of husbands to be faithful to their wives (VP 132). It is not unusual for ancient philosophers to point out that men demand chastity of (some) women, but should — being male — be able to control sexual desire more easily than women can. It is unusual to present marriage as a religious commitment, the wife being like a suppliant at her husband's hearth, and to argue that the husband's neglect of his wife may drive her into adultery (VP 48)

(iv)

Students of women in antiquity would very much like to know when these speeches were composed, and how far back we can trace a set of attitudes which have been assigned on the one hand to the fourth century BC or earlier, and on the other to Christian influence in the second or third century AD. This is one instance of a general problem about Iamblichus and Pythagorean tradition.

All information about philosophers before Plato depends on reports by later philosophers, who of course have their own concerns. For Pythagoras, the question is complicated precisely because there was a "Pythagorean Life", a lifestyle with major social and political implications, which was authorised by what "ipse dixit", "the Master said". What had the Master said?

Most scholars in the ancient world agreed that Pythagoras had left no writings (see on VP 90), that his followers had maintained an esoteric oral tradition, and that the tradition had faded out in the fourth century BC when the Pythagoreans had left South Italy. But Iamblichus, like Porphyry a little before him and Diogenes Laertius earlier in the third century AD, could have drawn on a very wide range of texts and interpretations. The question is whether he did.

A scatter of comment survives even from the fifth century BC, but the main lines of debate were established in the fourth century BC. Plato's pupils (Aristotle, Speusippos, Xenokrates) discussed what exactly Pythagoras taught about the relationship of number to God and to the material world, and what, if

anything, Plato owed him. In the next generation (Aristoxenos, Dikaiarchos, Herakleides of Pontus) the debate was more political: was Pythagoras an activist or a contemplative, did he train oligarchs to despise the people, was he a fraud? Some saw him as an archaic religious genius to be followed in simple faith, others as a rigorous modern intellectual who insisted on the higher mathematics. Then there was the question of Pythagorean influence on the politics of South Italy, which interested the Sicilian historian Timaeus.

None of this fourth-century material survives intact, though it can sometimes be traced in later writing. The tradition was complicated, from the third to the first centuries BC, by "pseudepigrapha", works ascribed to Pythagoras himself or to famous followers, all presenting the Pythagoreanism their authors wanted to see. Then, in the first and second centuries AD, attempts were made to harmonise Pythagoras and Plato in what are now called Neopythagorean writings. Iamblichus cites two of these authors, both of the second century AD: the mathematician Nicomachos of Gerasa (Jerash), and the wonder-worker Apollonius of Tyana, who claimed to rival the powers of Pythagoras. It is a moot point whether he read anybody else, or whether he got most of his material (including learned references to earlier authors) from Porphyry. [11]

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[11] The tradition about P. is extensively discussed by de Vogel, who thinks authentic early tradition survived; Philip, who is sceptical; and Burkert LS, who remarks (p.109) that every item of information about P. is contradicted somewhere in the tradition. The basic articles on sources are by E.Rohde, RhM 26 (1871) 554-76 and 27 (1872) 23-61: he argues that I. derived his material from Nicomachos and Apollonius. This is challenged by Philip in TAPA 90 (1959) 185-94, with bibliography of earlier discussion, on the grounds that Nicomachos is not known to have written a life of P., and that I.'s basic structure, content and purpose are very close to Porphyry's (the overall effect is different because I. adds ch.26, on music, from Nicomachos, and his own compilation of virtues 134-247). For Nicomachos see O'Meara 14-23, for Apollonius E.Bowie in ANRW II.16.2 1652-99, esp.1671-2. Porphyry's *Life of Pythagoras* is ed. and tr. by E. des Places (see Bibliography), and there is an English version in *Gods and Heroes: spiritual biographies in antiquity* ed.M.Hadas and M.Smith (1965). "Neopythagorean" writing is discussed by Dillon MP ch. 7.

Source-criticism, the painstaking attempt to distinguish sources and different levels of the tradition, has tried to tell us what Iamblichus does not. The results are disputed. Iamblichus believed, like other philosophers of late antiquity, that the great philosophers teach the same fundamental truths, and that apparent disagreements can be reconciled.[12] This is not the approach of a critical historian, and such people wish that it had not been Iamblichus who wrote what has proved to be the most extensive surviving account of Pythagoreanism. He does not, as a rule, name sources; he does not distinguish his own interpretations from earlier tradition; he is unclear and sometimes contradictory; he repeats material, sometimes for paragraphs at a time. Some scholars have been exasperated enough to conclude that Iamblichus was hopelessly muddle-headed, or that he died leaving a mass of notes which someone else edited badly. These are unnecessarily severe judgements: the defects of the *Life* (from our point of view) are not peculiar to Iamblichus. It is only the repetitions which are, I think, unparalleled, and they are partly to be explained by the structure Iamblichus uses. His account of Pythagoras's life includes moral comment, as is usual in ancient biography, but he then groups together material to demonstrate specific virtues. Repetitions are inevitable, and Iamblichus may have accepted them as an aid to memory — or even welcomed them as a proof that all virtues are one.[13]

(v)

The standard text of the *Life* is by L.Deubner, B. G. Teubner Verlag Stuttgart 1937 (revised by U. Klein, 1975).It is followed here, with the publisher's permission, with a few divergences which I have noted when, in my judgement, the question is important to TTH readers. Deubner's edition is learned, but difficult to use, as he has no space to explain his readings and references.[14]Some of the

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[12] H. J. Blumenthal, *Phronesis* 21(1976)72-9.

[13] I owe the suggestion on the unity of the virtues to Anne Sheppard.

[14] Deubner discusses his readings in the *Sitzungsberichte der königlichen preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaft, phil.-hist. klasse*, Berlin 1935, 612-90 and 824-7, but his concerns are mainly philological.

literature on Iamblichus refers to pages and lines in the Deubner-Klein text; some uses chapter-numbers or, more recently, paragraph numbers. I have included in the text both chapter and paragraph numbers, as well as the chapter headings which Deubner prints separately. My own notes refer throughout to paragraph numbers.

This translation is offered because none known to me gave readers enough help in understanding what Iamblichus is talking about, and it is a long job to find out. The classic English version, by Thomas Taylor "the Platonist" (1818), has some notes; the German version by M.Albrecht (1963) has brief and sensible notes; the "Krotoniate speeches" (VP 47-57) are translated, with detailed notes, by de Vogel; I found all these helpful.[15] But the greatest help was given by Dr.Anne Sheppard, of Royal Holloway and Bedford New College, London, who found time to read and comment on both text and notes. I am most grateful to her.

Dr.Andrew Barker, of Warwick University, saved me from several errors on musicology, and kindly allowed me to see his own draft of ch.26, which will appear in volume II of his *Greek Musical Writings*. Dr. D.R.Dicks, and Professor H.A.Hine of St.Andrews, helped with the astronomy in 31. Professor D.J.O'Meara, of Fribourg, sent me some important material from his *Pythagoras Revived* before its publication in 1989. My colleagues in Liverpool, especially Henry Blumenthal and Noreen Fox, have been pressed into service on questions ranging from metaphysics to lice (see on 184; I owe the reference to Professor Peter Wiseman of Exeter). My teaching in Manchester helped to set Iamblichus in his theological context. Margaret Gibson and Christa Mee have shown their usual benevolent efficiency. The camera ready copy was produced by *Liverpool Classical Monthly*. The publication was made possible by a generous grant from the Wolfson Foundation.

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[15] Taylor's translation was reprinted, in a limited edition, by J.M.Watkins (London 1965). A revision of his version, by K.S.Guthrie, is included in *The Pythagorean Sourcebook*, ed.David R.Fideler (1987): this has to be used with caution for any scholarly purpose. I have not seen the Italian version by L.Montoneri (1973) noted in O'Meara 242.

IAMBLICHUS: ON THE PYTHAGOREAN LIFE

1 Preface. The philosophy of Pythagoras. Preliminary invocation of the gods. The usefulness and difficulty of the undertaking.

(1) All right-minded people, embarking on any study of philosophy, invoke a god. This is especially fitting for the philosophy which takes its name from the divine Pythagoras (a title well deserved), since it was originally handed down from the gods and can be understood only with the gods' help. Moreover, its beauty and grandeur surpass the human capacity to grasp it all at once: only by approaching quietly, little by little, under the guidance of a benevolent god, can one appropriate a little. (2) Let us, then, for all these reasons, invoke the gods to guide us, entrust ourselves and our discussion to them, and follow where they lead. The school has long been neglected, hidden from view by unfamiliar doctrines and secret symbols, obscured by misleading forgeries, impeded by many other such difficulties — let us disregard all that. Sufficient for us is the will of the gods, which makes it possible to tackle problems even more insoluble than these. And after the gods we shall take as our guide the founder and father of the divine philosophy, first saying a little about his ancestry and country.

2 Pythagoras' family, country, upbringing and education; his travels abroad, return home and subsequent departure for Italy; a general account of life as he led it.

(3) Ankaios, founder of Same in Kephallenia, is said to have

1-2 I.'s opening recalls Plato's *Timaeus*, a fundamental text for Platonist philosophers: Timaeus, traditionally a "Pythagorean visitor", invokes the god (27c) before beginning his cosmological discourse. The combination of careful study and divine guidance, exemplified in the Life (and stated at 31) is characteristic of I. (see Introduction).

2 Pythagoreanism was not wholly neglected in the early centuries AD: see O'Meara ch.1 (with bibliography). But there is no evidence for Pythagorean brotherhoods after the C4 BC diaspora (see 252-3, and 29-30n). Symbols: 82-6 and note, 103-5. Forgeries: known as pseudepigrapha, works assigned to known Pythagoreans (cf.198) from the C3 BC on; fragments are collected by Thesleff 1965, and discussed by Thesleff and Burkert in *Entretiens Hardt* 18 (1971), Pseudepigrapha I, ed.K.von Fritz.

been a descendant of Zeus (whether it was some outstanding quality or greatness of soul which brought him this reputation) surpassing the other Kephallenians in intellect and thought. The Delphic oracle told him to assemble a colony from Kephallenia, Arcadia and Thessaly, with additional members from Athens, Epidaurus and Chalcis. He was to lead all these to settle in an island known, from the excellence of its soil, as Darkleaf, and was to call the city Samos, after Same in Kephallenia.

(4) The oracle went like this:

Ankaios, colonise the sea-washed isle
Called Samos, not Samé: its name is Leafy.

Samian cults and sacrifices, transferred from the places from which most of the men came, demonstrate that the colonies came from the places I have named; and so do the ties of kinship and alliance made by the Samians. They say that Mnesarchos and Pythais, the parents of Pythagoras, were of the house and family of Ankaios the colonist. (5) Such is the high birth ascribed to Pythagoras by his fellow-citizens; but one of the Samian poets says he was the son of Apollo:

3-4 Samian foundation-legends: Graham Shipley, *A History of Samos 800-300 BC* (1987). Kephallenia is one of the Ionian Islands, off the coast of NW Greece.

5-8 Versions of P.'s human ancestry are discussed by Philip 185-7. Herakleides of Pontus, a student of Aristotle, said that P. had been Aethalides, son of the god Hermes who conducts mortals to the afterlife, and who had given him the gift of retaining memory through death. Hermes was also the god of words, and thus of persuasive speakers and of priests (cf.I. *On the Mysteries* 1.1, and 12n below). But Apollo, patron of the Muses (45, 170, 264) and communicator to mortals of the will of Zeus, is the inspiration of poets and philosophers, and is especially suitable for P. His cult-title Pythios (found at Kroton, 50 and 261) honours him as god of the Delphic oracle, where his priestess the Pythia spoke truth in gnomic form (105, 161); the name Pythagoras can, by ancient etymological methods, mean "spoken by the Pythia" or "speaking like the Pythia" (DL 8.21). Apollo was also musician, purifier and healer (cf.64, 68, 208) and was identified with Helios, the Sun, focus of much late antique piety (JH 148-53). I.'s philosophy does not allow a god to beget a human being: the divine is separate from the material world. But it does allow for a pure soul which descends to the material world, without being contaminated or losing its connection with the divine (cf.Plato, *Phaedrus* 248c, and O'Meara 37-9), to help with the "preservation, purification and perfection" of this world. Such a soul has an appropriate physical home (e.g. 5, 9-10, 15-16 for beauty, serenity and effortless ease, and 71 for P.'s assessment of students); the resultant "holy man" has exceptional awareness both of events still hidden from others (36, 142) and of the

Pythagoras, borne to Zeus-beloved Apollo
By Pythais, the fairest of the Samians.

I must explain how this story came to prevail. Mnesarchos the Samian was in Delphi on a business trip, with his wife, who was already pregnant but did not know it. He consulted the Pythia about his voyage to Syria. The oracle replied that his voyage would be most satisfying and profitable, and that his wife was already pregnant and would give birth to a child surpassing all others in beauty and wisdom, who would be of the greatest benefit to the human race in all aspects of life. (6) Mnesarchos reckoned that the god would not have told him, unasked, about a child, unless there was indeed to be some exceptional and god-given superiority in him. So he promptly changed his wife's name from Parthenis to Pythais, because of the birth and the prophetess. (7) When she gave birth, at Sidon in Phoenicia, he called his son Pythagoras, because the child had been foretold by the Pythia. So we must reject the theory of Epimenides, Eudoxos and Xenokrates that Apollo had intercourse at that time with Parthenis, made her pregnant (which she was not before) and told her of it through the prophetess. (8) But no-one who takes account of this birth, and of the range of Pythagoras' wisdom, could doubt that the soul of Pythagoras was sent to humankind from Apollo's retinue, and was Apollo's companion or still more intimately linked with him. So much, then, for the birth of Pythagoras.

(9) Mnesarchos returned from Syria to Samos with great profits

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workings of the universe (31,66), and inspires awe (Fowden 33-8). I.'s students saw him as one such. But I. does not deny that P. was a theophany of Apollo (30, 91-2, 134-6, 140-3): Cox ch.2 argues for deliberate ambiguity about the divine on earth. Of those who took the traditional line that P. was literally "son of Apollo",Epimenides (135-6, 222; Vatai 35-6) was a C6 BC sage; Eudoxos a brilliant C4 mathematician, pupil of Archytas (for whom see 127n); Xenokrates a successor of Plato as head of the Academy, who visited Sicily and wrote on P. (DL 4.13, Dillon MP 22-39).

9 DL 8.1 says Mnesarchos was a gem-engraver: see Nancy Demand, *Phronesis* 18(1973)91-6. The travels and studies are designed to let P. absorb all forms of traditional wisdom (158-9) and need not be historical. Kreophylos links him to the "sons of Homer"who were authorities on the recitation of Homer's poetry. For Pythagorean exegesis of Homer, who was also among the sacred texts of late antique philosophy, see Lamberton esp.31-43. Pherekydes (184, 252) was a C6 BC sage, traditionally the first prose-writer on nature and the gods, who shares some prediction-stories with P. (KRS 50-71, Philip 188-9, West chs.1-2).

and extensive resources. He built a temple to Apollo with a dedication to Apollo Pythios, and gave his son a many-sided education in the most important subjects. He took him to Kreophylos, to Pherekydes of Syros and to almost all those outstanding in religious matters, undertaking to have him thoroughly and adequately taught, so far as was possible, about what concerns the gods. Pythagoras grew up surpassing in beauty all persons known to history, and in good fortune most worthy of a god. (10) After his father's death he continued to grow in earnestness and self-control, and while still a very young man, full of courtesy and modesty, he was well thought of even by the eldest citizens. Everyone turned to look on seeing him or hearing his voice, and anyone he looked at was struck with admiration, so it was quite understandable that most people were convinced he was the son of a god. Fortified by these beliefs about him, by his education from infancy and by his godlike appearance, he made still greater efforts to show himself worthy of his privileges. He regulated his life by worship, study and a well-chosen regime: his soul was in balance and his body controlled, his speech and action showed an inimitable serenity and calm; no anger, mockery, envy, aggression or any other perturbation or rash impulse, took hold of him. It was as if a benevolent spirit had come to stay in Samos.

(11) Before he was quite adult his fame had reached the sages Thales at Miletos and Bias at Priene, and the

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11 Thales (KRS II) and Anaximander (ib.III) are traditionally the earliest presocratic philosophers, working in the first half of the C6 BC. Bias counts rather as a sage (44, 83; A.R.Burn, *The Lyric Age Of Greece* (1960) 207-9). The "long-haired lad" cf.30: young men of Ionian Greek descent marked their adulthood (aged 16-18) by cutting their long hair as an offering to Apollo; but the story is probably transferred from P.'s namesake the boxer (DL 8.47-8; see 21-5n) and does not prove that P. was c.18 in the mid 530s, when Polykrates established control. See Shipley (o.c. 3-4n) ch.4 for the chronology of Polykrates, and on the suggestion that an earlier Polykrates ruled c.570-40 BC. There is in fact no secure chronology of P.'s life. The C2 BC chronographer Apollodorus equated his acme or "peak" (traditionally, age 40) with the year at which Polykrates's tyranny was at its height, 532 BC. This may be right, and may come from a good source, Aristoxenos (see 233n). Even if it is not, we have no better guess than c.530 for P.'s eventual departure for Italy (see 33n), when on I.'s internal chronology (19) he was 56!

neighbouring cities too. "The long-haired lad in Samos" became a catch-phrase, as people in many cities talked about the young man, sang his praises, and treated him like a god. When he was about eighteen the tyranny of Polykrates was beginning to gather strength. He foresaw where it would lead, and how much it would hinder his purpose and the love of learning which mattered to him above all. So he left by night, undetected, with one Hermodamas surnamed "the Kreophylian" and said to descend from the Kreophylos who was Homer's host and became his friend and teacher in everything. With him, then, Pythagoras travelled to see Pherekydes, Anaximander the natural philosopher, and Thales at Miletos. (12) He spent time with each in turn, talking with them to such effect that they all took him to their hearts, astonished at his natural ability, and shared their thoughts with him. Thales in particular received him with joy. He was amazed at the difference between Pythagoras and other young men, which was even greater than the report which had gone before him. He shared with Pythagoras such learning as he could, then, blaming his old age and weakness, urged him to sail to Egypt and consult especially the priests at Memphis and Diospolis. He himself, he said, had been furnished by them with what gave him his popular reputation for wisdom. But he had not been blessed with such advantages of natural endowment and training as he could see in Pythagoras, so from all this he foretold that if Pythagoras associated with the priests he had indicated, he would become the most godlike of mortals, surpassing all others in wisdom.

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12 Egypt: Diospolis ("City of Zeus", Egyptian Thebes) housed the sanctuary of Zeus Ammon. Greek indebtedness to Egyptian religious tradition, vividly attested in Herodotus II (and Plato, *Timaeus* 22a and 24bc), was renewed in late antiquity (see Fowden). I.'s dispute with Porphyry about theurgy, *On The Mysteries (Of Egypt)* is in the persona of the Egyptian priest Abammon, speaking for the subordinate to whom Porphyry addressed his *Letter To Anebo*; and a much-revered collection of religious writings from Egypt was ascribed to the Egyptian god Thoth, hellenised as Hermes Trismegistus - hence the Hermetic Corpus. See A-J Festugière, *La Révélation d'Hermès Trismégiste*, 4 vols 1944-54; Garth Fowden, *The Egyptian Hermes: a historical approach to the late pagan mind* (1987).

3 Pythagoras' voyage to Phoenicia and studies there; his subsequent visit to Egypt.

(13) Thales had helped him in many ways, especially in making good use of time. For this reason he had renounced wine, meat, and (even earlier) large meals, and had adjusted to light and digestible food. So he needed little sleep, and achieved alertness, clarity of soul, and perfect and unshakable health of body. Then he sailed on to Sidon, aware that it was his birthplace, and correctly supposing that crossing to Egypt would be easier from there. (14) In Sidon he met the descendants of Mochos the natural philosopher and prophet, and the other Phoenician hierophants, and was initiated into all the rites peculiar to Byblos, Tyre and other districts of Syria. He did not, as one might unthinkingly suppose, undergo this experience from superstition, but far more from a passionate desire for knowledge, and as a precaution lest something worth learning should elude him by being kept secret in the mysteries or rituals of the gods. Besides, he had learnt that the Syrian rites were offshoots of those of Egypt, and hoped to share, in Egypt, in mysteries of a purer form, more beautiful and more divine. Awestruck, as his teacher Thales had promised, he crossed without delay to Egypt, conveyed by Egyptian seamen who had made a timely landing on the shore below Mount Carmel in Phoenicia, where Pythagoras had been spending most of his time alone in the sanctuary. They were glad to take him on board, hoping to exploit his youthful beauty and get a good price if they sold him. (15) But on the voyage he behaved with his habitual self-control and decorum, and they became better disposed to

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14 Syria: homeland of I., who was born at Chalcis and returned to teach probably at Apamea (see Introduction note 2), and of Porphyry (originally Malchus of Tyre). Mochos (according to Strabo 16.757) lived before the Trojan war and originated the theory of atoms: Dillon MP 143 thinks the name may be a version of Moses. It is odd that I. does not include Jewish wisdom (see A.Momigliano, *Alien Wisdom* (1975) ch.4), unless he saw it as Babylonian or Chaldaean: Porphyry (*Life Of P.*11) has P. learn Hebrew dream-interpretation. Other sources take P. to Arabia and India (Philip 189-91).

him. They saw something superhuman in the lad's self-discipline, and remembered how they had seen him, just as they landed, coming down from the summit of Mount Carmel (which they knew to be the most sacred of the mountains, and forbidden to ordinary people), descending at leisure, without turning back, unimpeded by precipice or rock-face. He had stood by the boat, said only "Are you bound for Egypt?" and when they agreed had come on board and sat down where he would be least in the way of nautical tasks. (16) Throughout the voyage — three days and two nights — he had remained in the same position. He had not eaten or drunk or slept, unless he had dozed briefly, unobserved, where he sat, secure and undisturbed. Moreover, to their surprise, the journey had been straight, continuous and direct, as though some god were present. So, putting all this together, they concluded that there really was a divine spirit travelling with them from Syria to Egypt, and they completed the voyage with extreme reverence. Their language and behaviour to each other and to him was more decorous than usual, until they beached the boat on the shore of Egypt — a landing blessed by fortune and wholly untroubled by waves. (17) There he disembarked, and all of them respectfully lifted him out, passed him from one to another and seated him where the sand was entirely clean. They built an improvised altar before him, on which they scattered such fruit as they had, as a kind of first-fruits of the cargo. Then they set sail for their destination. His body was out of condition from his long fast, so he did not oppose the landing or the sailors' lifting and handling him; and when they left he did not long hold back from the fruits which lay before him. He ate what he needed to restore his strength, and reached the neighbouring villages safely, maintaining throughout his accustomed serenity.

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16 "Divine spirit": in Greek, *daimon theios* (cf.30). See Détienne, *Daimon*, for earlier Pythagorean usage; for later antiquity, Frederick E.Brenck S.J. in ANRW II.16.3 pp.2094-8. I. ranks *daimones* below gods (and archangels and angels) but above heroes and humans (*On The Mysteries* 1.5.16-17): see further Finamore ch.2.

4 His studies in Egypt, subsequent visit to Babylon and meeting with the magi; his return to Samos.

(18) From there he visited all the sanctuaries, making detailed investigations with the utmost zeal. The priests and prophets he met responded with admiration and affection, and he learned from them most diligently all that they had to teach. He neglected no doctrine valued in his time, no man renowned for understanding, no rite honoured in any region, no place where he expected to find some wonder. So he visited all the priests, profiting from each one's particular wisdom. (19) He spent twenty-two years in the sacred places of Egypt, studying astronomy and geometry, and being initiated — but not just on impulse or as the occasion offered — into all the rites of the gods, until he was captured by the expedition of Kambyses and taken to Babylon. There he spent time with the Magi, to their mutual rejoicing, learning what was holy among them, acquiring perfected knowledge of the worship of the gods and reaching the heights of their mathematics and music and other disciplines. He spent twelve more years with them, and returned to Samos, aged by now about fifty-six.

5 His studies in Samos on his return, and remarkable skill in educating one who shared his name; his visits to the Greeks and the discipline he practised on Samos.

(20) Some of the elders recognised him, and admired him as much as ever: they thought him more beautiful, wiser, and more godlike. His country publicly requested him to benefit them all by sharing his ideas. He made no objection, and tried to set out his teaching in symbolic form, exactly in the way he had been

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18 "doctrine" translates *akousma*: see 82-6n.

19 Kambyses's expedition was 525 BC. I.'s narrative brings P. into contact with many famous people (Thales, Epimenides, Polykrates, Empedokles amongst others) who cannot all fit into a possible lifetime. Babylonian astronomy and mathematics, including "Pythagoras' theorem", influenced Greek mathematics in the C5 BC - not necessarily via the Pythagoreans (Burkert LS IV.1, VI.1).

20 "symbolic": see 82-6n.

trained in Egypt, even though the Samians did not much care for this method and did not give him the appropriate attention. (21) Nobody joined him or showed any serious desire for the teachings he was making every effort to establish among the Greeks. He felt no contempt or scorn for Samos, since it was his country, but he wanted his countrymen at least to taste the beauty of his doctrines, if not by their own choice then by a well-devised plan. So he kept his eye on a gifted and well-coordinated ball-player at the gymnasium, one of those who were athletic and muscular but lacked financial resources, reckoning that this man would be easy to persuade by the offer of a generous subsidy without trouble to himself. He called the young man over after his bath, and promised to keep him supplied with funds to maintain his athletic training, if he would learn — in instalments, painlessly, consistently, so as not to be overburdened — some teachings which he himself had learnt from foreigners in his youth, but which were already escaping him through the forgetfulness of old age. (22) The young man accepted, and persevered in the hope of maintenance, and Pythagoras set out to instil in him arithmetic and geometry. He demonstrated every point on a drawing-board, and paid the young man three obols per figure (geometrical figure, that is) in return for his trouble. He did this for some considerable time, introducing him to study with great enthusiasm and excellent method, still paying three obols for each figure learnt. (23) But when the young man, led down the right path, had some grasp of excellence and of delight and progress in learning, and Pythagoras saw what was happening, that he would not of his own choice abandon his studies — indeed that nothing could keep him from them — he pretended that he was poor and could not afford the three obols. (24) The young man said "I can learn, and receive your teachings, without that", and Pythagoras

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21-5 The gymnasium, hallmark of Hellenic culture, was an obvious place for philosophers to recruit students from the governing elite (37, 245). P. the athlete (DL 8.12-13, 47) won an Olympic victory in boxing (in 588 BC, another date which cannot fit) by using new techniques.

retorted "But I cannot afford the necessities of life even for myself, and when one has to work for one's daily needs and food it is quite wrong to be distracted by timewasting things like drawing-boards". The young man, reluctant to lose the thread of his studies, said "I will provide for you in future as you have done for me I will pay you back three obols per figure". (25) He was now so taken by Pythagoras' teaching that he was the only Samian to leave with him. His name was Pythagoras too, but his father was Eratokles. He wrote the books on massage, and on replacing the dried-fig diet for athletes with a meat diet — these are wrongly ascribed to Pythagoras son of Mnesarchos. About this time, it is said, Pythagoras aroused great admiration at Delos, where he had gone to visit the so-called "bloodless" altar of Apollo Genetor, and to worship him. From there he visited all the oracles, and stayed in Crete and Sparta because of their laws. After study and examination of all these, he returned home to investigate what he had as yet neglected. (26) First he built a lecture-room in the city, still called "Pythagoras' semicircle", where the Samians now discuss public affairs: they think it proper to make their investigation of what is right, just and expedient in the place founded by one who gave his attention to all these. (27) Outside the city he took over a cave for his own philosophical work, and there he spent most of the night, as well as the day, in the pursuit of useful learning, with the same idea as Minos son of Zeus. He was quite different from those who later made use of his teachings: they prided themselves on a little learning, but he perfected his knowledge of heavenly matters, using the whole of arithmetic and geometry in his demonstrations.

6 His reasons for moving to Italy and his sojourn there; a general view of Pythagoras' character and philosophy.

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25 Apollo Genetor (35) was offered only "fruits of the earth": for his cult, see DL 8.13, and Détienne GA 46-7. P.'s respect for the laws of Crete and Sparta parallels that of Plato in the *Laws*.

27 Minos king of Crete retired every nine years to a cave, and emerged with laws which, he said, Zeus had given him (Valerius Maximus 1.2.ext.1).

(28) But he deserves yet more admiration for what he did next. His philosophy had already made great advances; all Greece admired him and all the best people, those most devoted to wisdom, came to Samos on his account, wanting to share in the education he gave. His fellow Samians dragged him into every embassy and made him share in all their civic duties. He realised that if he stayed in Samos, obedient to his country's laws, it would be hard for him to do philosophy; and all the earlier philosophers had continued their careers abroad. So, taking all this into account, and wishing to avoid political business (or, some say, objecting to the contempt for education shown by those who then lived on Samos), he left for Italy, resolved to take as his homeland a country fertile in people who were well-disposed to learning. (29) On his first visit, to the famous city of Kroton, he made many disciples [it is reported that he had there six hundred people who were not only inspired to study his philosophy, but actually became "coenobites" according to his instructions. (30) These were the students of philosophy: the majority were listeners, whom the Pythagoreans call "acousmatics" (hearers)]. In just one lecture, they say, the very first which Pythagoras gave to the assembled populace on landing alone in Italy, more than two thousand people were so powerfully attracted by his words that they never went home, but with their wives and children built a huge Auditorium, and

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29-30 I follow Deubner in thinking the passage in [ ] misplaced, though it can make sense (Minar p.29-30) if the 600 are one section of the 2000: see on 80. "Coenobites", Greek *koinobioi* is rare in non-Christian literature, and there may be conscious rivalry with Christian monasticism as it developed in the late C3 AD. For the parallels, especially with Athanasius, *Life Of Antony*, see A-J Festugière, EPG 443-61. Cox 52-4 thinks there is no deliberate parallel, but see her ch.6 for the *Life* in the context of pagan challenge to Christianity. Burkert SD points out that Pythagoreanism, as described by I., is the closest non-Christian parallel to the Christian churches, in terms of lifestyle, organisation and authority. Philip 138-46 suspects simple back-projection of Christian patterns; but J.S.Morrison, CQ ns 6(1956) 150-1 argues for an archaic Greek male brotherhood, as in the "messes" of Crete and Sparta. For Hyperborean Apollo, see on 91-3. Greater Greece see 166n. Spirits in the moon, Détienne *Daimon* 140-67: the moon rules time and these spirits direct the material, "sublunary" world, which is bound by the laws of the universe (see 219n). For sublunary *daimones* in I., Dillon ANRW p.901.

founded what everyone calls "Greater Greece". They took their laws and ordinances from Pythagoras as if they were divine commands, and did nothing except by them, and they continued in harmony with the whole group of students. The people who lived nearby praised them and blessed their good fortune. They had their property in common, as Pythagoras had told them, and from then on they counted him among the gods, as a good and kindly spirit. Some called him Apollo Pythios, some Hyperborean Apollo, some Apollo Healer (Paian), some said he was one of the spirits who live in the moon; some said one, some another, of the Olympians, who had appeared in human form to the people of that time for the benefit and amendment of mortal life, and to grant mortal nature the saving spark of happiness and philosophy. No greater good has ever come, or ever will come, as a gift from the gods. So, even now, the saying "the longhair from Samos" means something worthy of great respect. (31) Aristotle, in his *The Philosophy of Pythagoras*, says that the Pythagoreans make a distinction as follows, guarding it among their most secret teachings: among rational beings there are gods, and humans, and beings like Pythagoras. This was a perfectly reasonable belief about him, since through him there came to be a true understanding, according with reality, of gods and heroes and spirits and the universe, the various movements of the spheres and stars, eclipses and eastward motion and anomalies, eccentrics and epicycles — everything in the universe, heaven and earth and the beings between, visible and invisible. This understanding in no way conflicted with what can be seen or can be grasped by the intellect. Rather, it established among the Greeks all the exact sciences and branches of knowledge, everything that gives the soul true vision and clears the mind

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31 Aristotle: fr 192 Ross (W.D.Ross, *Aristotle Fragmenta Selecta* 1955). See KRS VII esp.228-32, Philip ch.5-6, Barnes II.76-81, for his account of Pythagoreanism. Astronomy: for Pythagorean astronomy see D.R.Dicks, *Early Greek Astronomy to Aristotle* (1970) ch.4, and Burkert LS IV. Pythagoreans appear to have held that the earth, as well as the moon, sun, planets and "fixed stars", rotated around a central fire; their distances apart were in harmonic proportion, and their movement produced the "music of

blinded by other practices, so that they may see the real principles and causes of all there is. (32) The best form of civic life, community living, the principle "friends have all in common", worship of the gods and respect for the departed, lawgiving, education, control of speech, mercy towards living things, self-control, temperance, alertness of mind and likeness to god — in a word, all good things: all these, through him, were seen by lovers of learning to be desirable and worthy of effort. So, as I have just said, it was with good reason that they so greatly admired Pythagoras.

7 Characteristic examples of his actions in Italy and his public speeches.

(33) Next I must say how he went abroad and where first, and what he said to whom on what subjects: that will make it easy for us to understand his concerns at that period of his life. It is said that on arriving in Italy and Sicily he found that some cities had been made subject to others, some for years and some recently. These he filled with the spirit of freedom through his disciples in each, rescued and liberated them: Kroton, Sybaris,

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the spheres" (see on 64-7). Later astronomers, using this or another (geocentric or heliocentric) model, added refinements to explain the "anomalies", that is the observed movements of the heavens which do not fit the model. Thus "eccentrics" are movements not centred on the earth, and "epicycles" are circles the centre of which moves round the circumference of a much larger circle: both appear in writings of the C3 BC and have no known Pythagorean connection. "Eastward motion" translates Greek *hypoleipsis*, the technical term for the apparent movement of planets eastward along the ecliptic: they are always being "left behind" (Greek *hypoleipesthai*) by the stars, which appear to move westward. Again, this is not connected with early Pythagorean theory. The "beings between" may be those sometimes postulated (Aristotle, *On the Heaven* 293b 21-30) to explain why lunar eclipses are more frequent than solar eclipses: they block the view of the moon from the earth. For the rest of the paragraph cf.58-9 and note.

33-5 Kroton: Vatai p.42-5. P. might have heard about it from Demokedes of Kroton (see 261-2n.), physician to Polykrates of Samos, or have known about its cult (attested on coins) of Pythian Apollo. I. dates P.'s arrival to 516-3 BC (35); Justin, epitomator (C3 AD) of Pompeius Trogus (C1 AD), who probably follows the Sicilian historian Timaeus (C4-3 BC), sets it after a disastrous defeat of Kroton by Lokroi, which was probably c.540-30 BC (Justin 20.4; T.Dunbabin, *The Western Greeks* 1948, 358ff). P. then engages in moral rearmament. For

Katana, Rhegion, Himera, Akragas, Tauromenion, and others. He also made laws for them, acting through Charondas of Katana and Zaleukos of Lokroi, which gave them for many years to come excellent government and the well-deserved envy of their neighbours. (34) Faction, disagreement, in a word, divergence of opinion, he utterly abolished, not only among his followers and their descendants for (it is said) many generations, but in general from all the cities of Italy and Sicily, both in their domestic affairs and in their relations with each other. There was a pregnant saying, like the advice of an oracle, which summed up and epitomised his beliefs: he addressed it to everyone everywhere, both the few and the many. "These things are to be avoided by every means, eradicated by fire or iron or any other means: disease from the body, ignorance from the soul, luxury from the belly, faction from the city, division from the household, excess from everything." This was an affectionate reminder to everyone of the best beliefs. (35) This, then, was his characteristic way of life, in speech and action, at this time.

8 His visit to Kroton, his actions on his first visit and his address to the young men.

A more detailed account of what he said and did may be needed. He arrived in Italy, then, in the sixty-second Olympiad, in which Eryxias of Chalkis won the foot-race. At once he was gazed at and followed about, just as he had been when he sailed to Delos. There the people in the island had marvelled that he offered prayers only at the altar of Apollo Genetor, who alone receives no blood sacrifice. (36) This time, travelling from Sybaris to Kroton, he came upon some fishermen on the shore. They were still hauling in their net, full of fish, under water, but he told them how big a catch they were pulling, giving the exact number of fish. The men said they would do whatever he told them, if it proved to be true. He told them to count the fish carefully,

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what is known of Charondas and Zaleukos see Dunbabin 68-74; 172 below adds some otherwise unknown legislators from Rhegion (von Fritz p.57 thinks Theaitetos there = Theokles 130 = Euthykles 267). Other South Italian and Sicilian cities: Dunbabin ch.10-12.

35-6 Apollo Genetor: see 25n. Other examples of superhuman powers 134-6, 142-3; see on 68-70.

and to let them go alive. What was even more remarkable, not one of the fish died while he stood by, though they were out of water for all the time it took to count them. He gave the fishermen the price of their catch, and went on to Kroton. They spread the story, and told everyone his name, which they learnt from the servants. Those who heard wanted to see the stranger, and that was easy, for his appearance was such as to strike awe into those who saw him, and made them aware of his true nature. (37) A few days later he went to the gymnasium. The young men flocked round him, and tradition says that he addressed them, urging them to respect their elders. He demonstrated that in the universe, in life, in cities, in nature, that which comes before is more honoured than that which follows in time. Thus sunrise is more honoured than sunset, dawn more than evening, beginning more than end, coming to be more than passing away. Likewise natives are more honoured than incomers, and similarly in colonies the founders and settlers of cities receive more honour. In general, the gods are more honoured than spirits, spirits more than demigods, heroes more than humans, and among them those who caused the birth of the younger ones. (38) He said this to induce them to value their parents more highly. They owed them, he said, all that gratitude that would be felt by a man who had died for the one who had been able to bring him back to life. It was just to love above all, and never grieve, those who are our earliest and greatest benefactors. Our parents alone are our first benefactors, even before our birth, and ancestors are responsible for all the achievements of their descendants. We cannot go wrong if we show the gods that we do good to our parents before all others. The gods, we may suppose, will pardon those who honour their parents above all, for our parents taught us to honour the gods. (39) That is why Homer exalts the king of the gods with that very title, calling him "father of gods and mortals", and why many other makers of myths have given us the story that the rulers of the gods competed to have for themselves the love of their

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37-57 Krotoniate sermons: de Vogel ch.6 discusses these in detail, and argues for C4 BC circulation preserving authentic tradition.
39 Ethical interpretation of a dubious myth. Traditionally, this was first done by Theagenes of Rhegion, C5 BC; examples from late antique

children, which is divided between the parents who are joined together. That is why each took on the role both of father and of mother. Zeus brought forth Athena, Hera brought forth Hephaistos, each offspring of the sex opposite to that of the parent, so as to share in a love which was more remote from them. (40) All present agreed that the judgement of the immortals was sure. Then he told the Krotoniates that, as their founders were kin to Herakles, they must willingly obey their parents' commands. They had heard how he, a god, underwent his labours in obedience to a senior god, and had founded the Olympics in honour of his father, as a victory-celebration of his achievements. The path to success in their relations with one another was to treat their friends as if they would never be enemies, and their enemies as if they would soon be friends, and to practise in courtesy to their elders the good will they had for their parents, and in kindness to others the fellow-feeling they had for their brothers. (41) Next he talked about self-control. Youth, he said, was the testing-time of nature, when desires are at their strongest. He advised them to consider that this, alone among the virtues, deserved the efforts of boys and girls, women and old people, and especially young men. Furthermore, he said, self-control alone embraces the good of body and soul alike, safeguarding health and the desire for the best habits of life. (42) This was obvious, he said, from the opposite way of living. Greeks and foreigners fought at Troy, and many fell victim to terrible disasters in the war or on the voyage home, all for one

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philosophy in Sheppard ch.4 and in Lamberton. Zeus swallowed Metis ("shrewdness") after a warning that her child would be greater than he; Athene sprang fully-armed from his head.

40 Herakles: see 50 and note.

42 The leading families of (Opuntian) Lokroi, in central Greece, sent two girls to serve in Athene's temple at Ilion (Troy) in expiation of the rape of Cassandra there by their ancestor Ajax the Less (who was honoured by cult at Western Lokroi in South Italy). This practice, supposed to continue for a thousand years after the fall of Troy, was suspended in the C4 BC but resumed in the C2 BC. See further F.Walbank, *A Historical Commentary On Polybius* II (1967) 335. "Men of virtue" translates *hoi kaloi kagathoi ton andron*.

man's lack of control. The god decreed both a ten-year and a thousand-year sentence for this one crime, prophesying both the capture of Troy and the Locrians' sending back the maidens to the temple of Athena Ilias. He also encouraged the young men to seek education, telling them to reflect how absurd it would be to think intelligence the greatest asset, and use it to deliberate on other matters, but not to invest any time or effort in training the intelligence. Concern for the body, like friends of no account, quickly leaves us in the lurch, but education, like men of virtue, remains with us until death — and for some even after death, creating immortal fame. (43) He gave them many other arguments, some from history, some from philosophy, to show that education is the collective genius of those outstanding in every subject, for their discoveries have become the education of others. Education is by its nature so important, that whereas other objects of praise either cannot be got from someone else (like strength and beauty and health and courage) or cannot be kept if you give them away (like riches and office and many others), education can be got from someone else and can be given away without loss. (44) Again, some things cannot be got by human effort, but we can all be educated by our own choice, and can then be seen to take up our country's business not out of self-conceit, but because of our education. It is upbringing which distinguishes humans from beasts, Greeks from foreigners, free men from household slaves, and philosophers from ordinary people. And philosophers are so far above the rest, that whereas seven men from one city — their own — had been found to run faster than the rest at Olympia, only seven men in the whole inhabited world could be counted among the first in wisdom. But in later times, his own times, one man surpassed all others in philosophy: this was what he called himself, "philosopher" (lover of wisdom) not "sage". (45) This, then, is what he said to the young men in the gymnasium.

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44 "Philosopher": see 58n. For the seven wise men (the Seven Sages) see Burn (l.c. n.11); Strabo 262 says that in one Olympic race the first seven runners were all from Kroton.

9 His address to the Thousand who governed the city, on the best ways of speaking and habits of life.

The young men told their fathers what Pythagoras had said, and the Thousand summoned him to the council. First they thanked him for what he had said to their sons, then they asked him, if he had good advice for the people of Kroton, to give it to those in charge of government. He advised them first to found a temple of the Muses, to preserve their existing concord. These goddesses, he said, all had the same name, went together in the tradition, and were best pleased by honours to all in common. The chorus of the Muses was always one and the same, and they had charge of unison, harmony and rhythm, all that goes to make up concord. He explained that their power extends not only to the most splendid objects of thought, but also to the concert and harmony of being. (46) Next he said that they must think of their country as a deposit made with them all by the mass of citizens, and must manage it so that they could hand on to their descendants what was entrusted. And that would certainly be so, if they treated all the citizens fairly, and attended above all to what is just. People know that justice is needed everywhere, so they made the myth that Themis ranks with Zeus as Dike does with Pluto and as law does in cities, in order to make it clear that a man who does not deal justly with his charge thereby commits a crime against all the universe. (47) He said that councillors should not swear by any of the gods: they should deal in words which would be trustworthy without oaths. They should so manage their own households that their political principles could be referred to the standard of their private conduct. They should be generously disposed towards their children, for among other animals only people can grasp that idea, and each should

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45 Nothing is known of the political composition of the Thousand, the council which ruled Kroton. For the Muses, see P.Boyancé, *Le Culte Des Muses Chez Les Philosophes Grecs* (1936) part 3 ch.1.

46 Themis is the personification of (customary) law, the way things should be; Dike of justice. For Pluto see 123.

47"among other animals": reading *monous...eilephotas*, as in the

behave to the woman who shares his life in the awareness that his contracts with others are set down in documents and inscriptions, but his contract with his wife is recorded in their children. They should try to be loved by their descendants not by nature, for which they were not responsible, but by choice, for that is a benefit voluntarily given. (48) They should also be resolved that they would know only their wives, and that their wives should not adulterate the line because their partners neglect and injure them. A man should think that his wife was brought to him in the sight of the gods, like a suppliant, taken with libations from the hearth. He should set an example of discipline and self-control both to the household of which he is head and to those in the city; he should ensure that no-one does the slightest injury to anyone, so that instead of committing surreptitious crimes in fear of the legal penalty, they strive for justice out of respect for his nobility of character. (49) As for action, he urged them to reject inactivity: good, he said, was nothing other than the right moment for any action. The greatest crime is to alienate parents and children. The best man is the one who can himself foresee what is beneficial, the second best he who realises, from the experience of others, what is profitable, and the worst he who waits until he learns from suffering to see what is best. People who seek honour will not go wrong if they copy those who win races: their aim is not to injure their opponents, but to achieve victory. People engaged in politics should help their supporters, not obstruct their opponents. Anyone who wants a truly good reputation, he said, should be as he would like to appear to others. Good advice is less holy than praise, for advice is needed only for people, but praise is required

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manuscripts. Deubner emends so that "other animals grasp this idea, if no other".

48 A suppliant invoked the protection of the god by contact with a sacred place. The hearth is one such, sacred to Hestia, the unmarried daughter of Zeus. Anyone who took the suppliant's right hand (as in the marriage ritual) accepted responsibility for his or her welfare.

for the gods. (50)He concluded by saying that, according to tradition, their city was founded by Herakles when he drove the cattle through Italy. He was injured by Lakinios, and unwittingly killed Kroton, who had come at night to help him, thinking he was one of the enemy. Herakles then promised to found a city named Kroton at his tomb, if he himself achieved immortality. So they were bound to administer it justly, in gratitude for the kindness Herakles had returned. Having heard him, they founded the temple of the Muses, and sent away the concubines it had been their custom to keep. And they asked him to speak separately to the children in the Pythaion, and the women in the temple of Hera.

10 His advice to the children of Kroton, in the Pythaion, on his first visit.

(51) He agreed, and began by telling the children never to start a quarrel or to fight back against the ones who did, and to work hard at their education, which was called after their time of life. Then he said that a good child would find it easy to stay a good person throughout life, but one with a bad disposition at this critical time would find it difficult, not to say impossible, to finish well from a poor start. Further, he showed that the gods love children best of all, and that is why, when there is a drought, the cities send them to ask the gods for water: the divine power will listen most readily to them, and they alone, being always pure, have permanent permission to be in sacred places. (52) That, he said, is why everyone paints or portrays

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50 Several cities in South Italy and Sicily had cults of Herakles, who - according to legend - had visited them in the course of his tenth labour, driving the cattle of Geryon from the west to the Peloponnese. DS 4.24.7 tells the story that Herakles promised to found Kroton, and (8.17) how the Delphic Oracle instructed Myskellos to do so. The Lakinian promontory was just south of Kroton.

51-2 "Called after their time of life": children are *paides*, education *paideia*. Apollo killed the monster Pytho, and earned his title Pythios, while still a baby, but is usually portrayed as a youth. Melikertes was the son of Ino-Leukothea, who jumped with him into the sea at the Isthmus of Corinth; Archemoros was killed by a snake, at Nemea, while his nurse showed the Seven Against Thebes where to find water.

Apollo and Eros, the gods who most love humans, as children. And everyone agrees that some of the games where you win a crown were founded because of children: the Pythian games after a boy had defeated Pytho, the Nemean and Isthmian for the sake of children, after the deaths of Archemoros and Melikertos. And besides these stories, when Kroton was founded, Apollo promised the leader of the settlement to give him descendants if he took a colony to Italy. (53) So they must realise that Apollo had a special concern for their birth, and all the gods had a special concern for childhood, and they must deserve the love of the gods and practice listening so as to be able to speak. They should start at once on the path they would tread to old age, following those who had gone before and not answering back to their elders. Then they might reasonably expect, later on, that younger people would respect them. It is agreed that these moral discourses made everyone stop using the name Pythagoras, and call him instead "the divine".

11 His address to the women of Kroton, in the temple of Hera, on his first visit.

(54) His address to the women began on the subject of sacrifices. If someone were going to offer prayers for them, he said, they would want it to be a good man, such as the gods would favour. So they too must set the highest value on goodness, so that the gods will be ready to respond to their prayers. He told them that what they planned to offer the gods should be made with their own hands and carried to the altar without the help of servants: cakes, pastry models, honey, incense. They should not honour the divine power by bloodshed and death, nor should they spend much at one time as though they had no intention of coming back. As for their relationship with their husbands, they should realise that even fathers concede it is natural for a woman to love the man who has married her more than the man who gave her birth. So it is right not to oppose your husband, or else to count it as your victory when he has got his way. (55) It was to this meeting of women that he made his famous remark: "A woman who has slept with her husband may

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55 The famous remark is ascribed to Theano at 132. Sexual intercourse caused (brief) ritual pollution : Robert Parker, *Miasma*(1983) 74-5. Women's loans: cf.Aristophanes, *Women At The Assembly* (Ekklesiazousai) 446-51: the more

go that same day to the temples; if it was not her husband, never." He also urged them to say little, and that good, all their lives, and see that what others could say of them was good. They should not ruin their inherited reputation and disprove the myth-makers, who saw the justice of women in their lending clothes and jewels, when someone else needed them, without a witness, and without any lawsuits and quarrels arising from the loan. So they told of three women who, because of their cooperation, used one eye in common. If they had told that story of men, saying that the one who had the eye first cheerfully gave it back and willingly shared what he had, no-one would have believed it: it is not in men's nature. (56) That one called wisest of all, he said, the god or spirit or godlike human who created human language and invented all the words, saw that women have a very close connection with piety, and named each stage of a woman's life after a god. An unmarried girl is *kore*, one given to a man is *nymphe*, one who has borne children is *meter*, one who has seen her children's children has the Doric name *maia*. And it accords with this that the oracles of Dodona and Delphi are revealed through a woman. Tradition says that his praise of piety caused so great a change in them, in favour of simplicity of dress, that not one of them ventured to wear her expensive clothes, and they dedicated all these — thousands of them — in the temple of Hera. (57) He is said also to have explained that a famous instance of a man's virtuous conduct to his wife occurred near Kroton, when Odysseus refused to accept immortality from Calypso at the cost of deserting

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striking because clothes and jewels were their only acknowledged possessions. The three women are the Graiai (see Mark Griffith on Aeschylus, *Prometheus Bound* 793-800). "To say little and that good" attempts to translate Greek *euphemein*, which means both "speak well" and "be silent".

56-7 For names as revealing the true nature of things, see Lamberton 39, 86-90, 164-73; for the divine origin of language (as in Plato, *Kratylos)* and especially of divine names, see Sheppard 90-l and 138-41. Kore is Persephone, daughter of Demeter who is sometimes equated with Kybebe, the Phrygian Great Mother or Meter. Nymphs are lesser deities of rivers and springs. Maia is the mother of Hermes. The location of Odysseus's wanderings in Sicily and Italy is said by Strabo(1.23) to go back to Hesiod.

Penelope. Now it was for the women to show their nobility of character to their husbands, and redress the balance of fame. Tradition says that these addresses brought Pythagoras outstanding honour and enthusiasm from the people of Kroton and from there throughout Italy.

12 His beliefs about philosophy, and why he was the first to call himself "philosopher".

(58) Pythagoras is said to have been the first person to call himself a philosopher. It was not just a new word that he invented: he used it to explain a concern special to him. He said that people approach life like the crowds that gather at a festival. People come from all around, for different reasons: one is eager to sell his wares and make a profit, another to win fame by displaying his physical strength; and there is a third kind, the best sort of free man, who come to see places and fine craftsmanship and excellence in action and words, such as are generally on display at festivals. Just so, in life, people with all kinds of concerns assemble in one place. Some hanker after money and an easy life; some are in the clutches of desire for power and of frantic competition for fame; but the person of the greatest authority is the one who has chosen the study of that which is finest, and that one we call a philosopher. (59) Heaven in its entirety, he said, and the stars in their courses, is a fine sight if one can see its order. But it is so by participation in the

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58-9 Herakleides of Pontus claimed (fr.129 Wehrli) that P. invented the term "philosopher"; cf. DS 10.10.1, P. said only the gods have wisdom (*sophia*): the most we can have is the love of wisdom (*philosophia*). Burkert LS 65 disputes the claim. In the festival analogy, *theoria* moves from its original sense of "seeing" or "visiting" (especially by a delegation sent to an oracle or a religious festival) to its philosophical usage of "intellectual vision", which requires both hard intellectual work and the focussing of the mind on changeless reality, not worldly concerns (Dorothy Emmet, JTS ns 17(1966)38-52). On the tradition of P. as contemplative, see L.B.Carter, *The Quiet Athenian* (1986) 133-7. The cosmic order was often used as an argument for the existence of (visible) gods. I. here makes P. give a Platonist account (expanded at 159-60) of reality. We cannot have knowledge of anything which (like the cosmic order) changes, or is different in relation to different things: we can only have a belief which is, for the

primary and intelligible. And what is primary is number and rational order permeating all there is: all things are ranged in their proper and harmonious order in accordance with these. Wisdom is real knowledge, not requiring effort, concerned with those beautiful things which are primary, divine, pure, unchanging: other things may be called beautiful if they participate in these. Philosophy is zeal for such study. Concern for education is beautiful too, working with Pythagoras for the amendment of humanity.

13 Several examples of Pythagoras' ability to give rational education to beasts and non-rational animals.

(60) If we may believe the many ancient and valuable sources who report it, Pythagoras had a power of relaxing tension and giving instruction in what he said which reached even non-rational animals. He inferred that, as everything comes to rational creatures by teaching, it must be so also for wild creatures which are believed not to be rational. They say he laid hands on the Daunian she-bear, which had done most serious damage to the people there. He stroked her for a long time, feeding her bits of bread and fruit, administered an oath that she would no longer catch any living creature, and let her go. She made straight for the hills and the woods, and was never again

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moment, correct. Such objects of belief owe not only their qualities (e.g.beauty) but their very existence to transcendent unchanging "forms" (Plato's term) or universals, here called "primary and intelligible" because they are prior to other existents and they can be known. "Participation" (*metousia, metechein*) is the technical term for the relationship of particular things to transcendent reality. Aristotle discussed what Pythagoreans meant by number as primary, and how it related to Plato's "forms": see references at 31n. In the last sentence of 59, "together with P." seems the only possible sense for the Greek *autoi*.

60 Non-rational animals are analogous to the part of the human soul which, in Plato's threefold division (*Republic* 4), is not itself rational but can obey reason. Deubner thinks P.'s power is called *analytikon* in the medical sense, "relaxing", not in the philosophical sense "analysing": he is probably right, since I. does not say that the non-rational animals followed a rational argument. I think the translation "he inferred...not to be rational" gives the only possible sense of the Greek; but if the Greek is right, the argument is unconvincing.

61 The first appearance of the most notorious Pythagorean tenet: no

seen to attack even a non-rational animal. (61) At Taras he saw an ox, in a field of mixed fodder, munching on ripe beans as well. He went over to the oxherd and advised him to tell the ox to abstain from beans. The oxherd made fun of his suggestion. "I don't speak Ox," he said, "and if you do you're wasting your advice on me: you should warn the ox." So Pythagoras went up and spent a long time whispering in the bull's ear. The bull promptly stopped eating the bean-plant, of his own accord, and they say he never ate beans again. He lived to a very great age at Taras, growing old in the temple of Hera. Everyone called him "Pythagoras' holy bull" and he ate a human diet, offered him by people who met him.

(62) He happened once to be talking to his students, at the Olympic games, about omens and messages from the the gods brought by birds, saying that eagles too bring news to those the gods really love. An eagle flew overhead: he called it down, stroked it, and let it go. It is clear from these stories, and others like them, that he had the command of Orpheus over wild creatures, charming them and holding them fast with the power of his voice.

14 The starting-point of his system of education was recall of the lives which souls had lived before entering the bodies they now happen to inhabit.

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beans. Ancients and moderns have offered many explanations: beans (*vicia faba*, the broad bean) have special affinities with human flesh; their nodeless stems offer human souls a route to earth from the underworld; bean-induced flatulence disturbs dreams (106); beans mean votes (260). The preferred modern explanation is favism, an acute allergic reaction to beans and especially their pollen, which results from a genetic deficiency widespread in southern Italy. See Détienne GA 49-51; M.Grmek, *Diseases in the Ancient World* (ET 1989) ch.5. The "human diet" of the ox would be grain-based (like that of horses).

63 The second famous tenet: reincarnation, which requires the immortality of the soul (for possible versions of the argument, Barnes I.6; for the tradition, Philip ch.10). The Homer passage is *Iliad* 17.51-60: *Iliad* 16. 849-50 might allow the identification of Euphorbos with Apollo (Burkert LS 140-1, with other explanations). The "popular stories" are in DL 8.4-5 and DS 10.6.2: P. recognised a shield which proved to have "Euphorbos's" written inside, in archaic letters.

(63) In educating humans he had an excellent starting-point: it was something, he said, which had to be understood, if people were to learn the truth in other matters. He aroused in many of those he met a most clear and vivid remembrance of an earlier life which their souls had lived long ago, before being bound to this present body. He gave indisputable proofs that he himself had been Euphorbos son of Panthoos, the opponent of Patroklos, and the lines of Homer he most frequently recited, or sang to a melodious accompaniment on the lyre, were those on the death of Euphorbos:

"His hair, like the hair of the Graces, braided with gold and silver, was soaked with blood. A man grows a flourishing olive-sapling in a lonely place, where a spring of water bubbles up, a lovely luxuriant tree, swaying in the breezes which blow from all sides, and laden with white flowers. Then a gust of wind, sudden and violent, uproots it from its trench and stretches it out on the ground. Such was Euphorbos, son of Panthoos, with his ash spear, when Menelaos son of Atreus killed him and stripped off his armour."

We will pass over the popular stories of the shield of this Euphorbos, which is dedicated, with other Trojan spoils, to Argive Hera at Mycenae. The one point we wish to make from it all is this: Pythagoras knew his own previous lives, and began his training of others by awakening their memory of an earlier existence.

15 How he first led people to education, through the senses; how he restored the souls of his associates through music, and how he himself had restoration in its most perfect form.

(64) He thought that the training of people begins with the senses, when we see beautiful shapes and forms and hear beautiful rhythms and melodies. So the first stage of his system of education was music: songs and rhythms from which came healing of human temperaments and passions. The original

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64-7 Music: see on 115. Music of the spheres, see 82n: the harmonic ratios (fourth, fifth and octave) which can be constructed from the first four numbers

harmony of the soul's powers was restored, and Pythagoras devised remission, and complete recovery, from diseases affecting both body and soul. It is especially remarkable that he orchestrated for his pupils what they call "arrangements" and "treatments". He made, with supernatural skill, blends of diatonic and chromatic and enharmonic melodies, which easily transformed into their opposites the maladies of the soul which had lately without reason arisen, or were beginning to grow, in his students: grief, anger, pity; misplaced envy, fear; all kinds of desires, appetite, wanting; empty conceit, depression, violence. All these he restored to virtue, using the appropriate melodies like mixtures of curative drugs.

(65) When his disciples, of an evening, were thinking of sleep, he rid them of the daily troubles which buzzed about them, and purified their minds of the turbid thoughts which had washed over them: he made their sleep peaceful and supplied with pleasant, even prophetic, dreams. And when they got up, he freed them from the torpor, lassitude and sluggishness that comes in the night, using his own special songs and melodies, unaccompanied, singing to the lyre or with the voice alone. He no longer used musical instruments or songs to create order in himself: through some unutterable, almost inconceivable likeness to the gods, his hearing and his mind were intent upon the celestial harmonies of the cosmos. It seemed as if he alone could hear and understand the universal harmony and music of the spheres and of the stars which move within them, uttering a song more complete and satisfying than any human melody, composed of subtly varied sounds of motion and speeds and sizes and positions, organized in a logical and harmonious relation to each other, and achieving a melodious circuit of subtle and exceptional beauty.

(66) Refreshed by this, and by regulating and exercising his reasoning powers thereby, he conceived the idea of giving his

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govern both music and the cosmos (Aristotle, *On The Heaven* 290b12-291a28). The quotation from Empedokles (67) is fr.129, translated KRS 218-9; see also Barnes II.193-205. He came from Akragas in Sicily and may have

disciples some image of these things, imitating them, so far as it was possible,through musical instruments or the unaccompanied voice. He believed that he, alone of those on earth, could hear and understand the utterance of the universe, and that he was worthy to learn from the fountain-head and origin of existence, and to make himself, by effort and imitation, like the heavenly beings; the divine power which brought him to birth had given him alone this fortunate endowment. Other people, he thought, must be content to look to him, and to derive their profit and improvement from the images and models he offered them as gifts, since they were not able truly to apprehend the pure, primary archetypes.

(67) When people cannot look directly at the sun, because of the brilliance of its rays, we find ways to show them an eclipse, with a deep container of water or a film of pitch or a black-backed mirror, sparing their weak eyesight and devising an alternative way of understanding, which they are happy to accept even though it is less exact. Empedokles too seems to have said this, in riddling words, about him and his exceptional and god-given endowment:

> Among them was a man of exceptional knowledge,
> who had very great riches of understanding,
> one who ruled over all works of wisdom.
> When he reached out with the full range of his mind
> he easily surveyed everything there is,
> over ten or twenty generations of men.

"Exceptional" and "surveyed everything there is" and "riches of understanding" and other such expressions allude to his uniquely refined endowment of vision, hearing and thought.

16 The purificatory regime which he too employed; the more advanced practice of friendship which also prepared those suited to philosophy.

(68) This, then, is how he used music for the "arrangement"

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had Pythagorean contacts in the mid C5 BC: his *Purifications* (cf.68) opposed animal sacrifice because the animal might be the home of a reincarnated human soul.

68-70 The pagan ascetic life: training (*askesis*) of body and mind by self-

of souls. He also practiced another kind of purification of the mind and soul together, using a variety of methods. He required vigour in tackling the hard work of learning and training; and it was a basic rule for those who undertook them to apply ingenious trials and chastisements and onslaughts "by fire and sword" to the self-indulgence and greed which are innate in all of us. No bad man could endure these and persevere. He also taught his disciples to abstain from all living things and from certain foods which hinder the pure and keen operation of reason; to "hold their peace" or to be entirely silent, which trained them for years in the control of the tongue; and to practice intense and unremitting pursuit and practice of the most abstruse theoretical studies.

(69) For the same reasons he enjoined abstinence from wine, frugal diet, and rationing of sleep; spontaneous contempt for fame, wealth and the like, and resistance to them; sincere reverence for those who have gone before, unfeigned goodwill and fellow-feeling for one's peers, willing encouragement, without envy, of those younger than oneself, and friendship of all for all. Friendship of gods for humans, through piety and

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examination, by a lifestyle which allows the real needs of the body to be met without spiritual disturbance, and by peace and quiet (Fowden 57). See 96-100 for the daily regime, and 29-30n for the Christian parallels. Purification is a concept of great importance to I. Building on Plato (*Phaedo* 64a, 67cd; *Republic* 521c) he hopes to purify the soul from the contamination of desire and of material existence, both by hard rational thought and by rituals which, in earlier tradition, had "purified" blood-guilt, insanity and other forms of ritual impurity. *Philia*, here conventionally translated "friendship", is a sense of belonging: as the force of attraction, balanced by the force of repulsion ("strife"), it keeps the universe in being. For I. it is *philia* which unifies each level of reality; it is also *philia* which links the higher and lower levels, making it possible for the human soul, with the gods' help, to approach the divine. *Philia* also brings about "sympathy" (shared feeling) in the lower levels of reality which are bound by the laws of the cosmos (*On The Mysteries* 3.27): an event at one place has effects elsewhere which can be interpreted by those specially gifted in "divination" (as at 36 and 92). This is "artificial mantic", the reading of signs within the sensible world, and it is different from "natural mantic" in which the soul, released in ecstasy or dream, contemplates the causal principles of the world. Dreams (70) are, traditionally, sent by gods or *daimones* when the soul is free from the sleeping body. See further 138n.

worship based on knowledge; friendship of one doctrine for another, of soul for body and the reasoning part for the unreasoning, achieved through philosophy and the study it entails; friendship of people for one another: fellow-citizens through a healthy respect for law, different peoples through a proper understanding of nature, a man with his wife or brothers and intimates through unswerving partnership;in short, friendship of all for all, including some of the non-rational animals through justice and natural connection and partnership; even the mortal body's pacification and reconciliation of the opposing powers hidden within itself, through health and a lifestyle and practice of temperance which promotes health, and imitates the flourishing of the cosmic elements. (70) All these may be summed up in that one word "friendship", and Pythagoras is the acknowledged founding father of it all.

He was also the cause of his disciples' holding converse with the gods in the form best suited to us, waking visions and dreams. Dreams do not come to the soul which is turbid with anger or distracted with grief or pleasure or some other shameful desire — and especially not if the soul suffers that most unholy and intractable ailment, ignorance. Pythagoras, with supernatural power, healed all these, purified the soul and rekindled the divine spark in it, restored and redirected to the object of thought that divine eye whose security, as Plato says, is more important than that of a thousand bodily eyes. Only to the one who sees with that eye, having strengthened and articulated it with the proper aids, is the true nature of things perceptible. His purification of the mind was directed to this, and this was the character and aim of his system of education.

17 Pythagoras' examination of followers when they first approached him, and his methods of testing their characters

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69 The Greek text would allow the "non-rational animals" to be friends with each other or with humans. I think the reference is to the "social animals" (philosophers were impressed with bees).

70 The Plato reference is *Republic* 527de.

before he began their introduction to philosophy.

(71) Since this was the education he could offer his disciples, he would not immediately accept young men who came and wanted to study with him, until he had put them through an examination and made a judgement. He asked first how they got on with their parents and other members of the family. Then he considered whether they laughed at the wrong moment, whether they could be silent and whether they talked too much, what their desires were, which of his students they knew and how they behaved towards them, how they spent their days, what made them happy or sad. He also considered their physical form, their walk and their general coordination, using their physical characteristics as visible evidence of the habits of soul that could not be seen.

(72) The person he had examined was then sent away and ignored for three years, to test his constancy and his genuine love of learning, and to see whether he had the right attitude to reputation and was able to despise status. After this, he imposed a five-year silence on his adherents, to test their self-control: control of the tongue, he thought, is the most difficult type of self-control, a truth made apparent to us by those who established the mysteries. During this time each one's property was held in common, entrusted to particular students who were called "civil servants" and who managed the finances and made the rules. If the candidates were found worthy to share in the teachings, judging by their life and general principles, then after the five-year silence they joined the inner circle: now, within the veil, they could both hear and see Pythagoras. Before this they were outside the veil: they never saw Pythagoras and shared his discourses only through hearing, and their character was tested over a long period. (73) If one failed the test, he was given double

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72 "Mysteries" are literally things to be kept silent, specifically things known only to initiates in the mystery-cults, who were under oath not to reveal them. Philosophers often used "mystery-language" of philosophic doctrines (Sheppard ch.4). For the "civil servants" and the "inner circle" see 80n.

his property, and his fellow-hearers (that is what all Pythagoras' followers were called) built a grave-mound for him as if he were dead. When they met, they behaved as if it were someone else: the man they had moulded, expecting that his studies would produce a good man, they spoke of as dead. The people who found learning hard they thought of as handicapped and sterile.

(74) So if someone, after having given them good hopes of him from his assessment on appearance and walk and coordination, after the five-year silence, after the experiences of initiation into mystic rites afforded by the great teachings, after the tremendous purifications of the soul which result from such profound doctrines, bringing to birth in everyone a keen and clear awareness in the soul — if, after all this, he was still found to be difficult to rouse and slow to follow, they would build a grave-mound and set up a tombstone in the school (it is said they did so for Perillos of Thourioi and for Kylon, a commander of Sybaris, whom they rejected) and expel him from the auditorium, loading him with gold and silver (for they had common stores of these, administered by people suited to the task whom they called, from their office, "managers"). If they ever met him in another context, they held him to be anyone rather than the man who, for them, was dead.

(75) That is why Lysis, reproaching one Hipparchos for sharing his teaching with mere adherents who have not been properly inducted and who lack learning and instruction, says:

"You say we should philosophise in public, for whoever comes along. Pythagoras said not, and so you learnt, Hipparchos, in all seriousness. But you did not keep the teaching safe. You had a taste of Sicilian high living, man, though you should have got the better of it. If you change, I shall rejoice; if not, you are dead. It is right, they say, to keep in memory his commands on divine and human matters, and not to share the goods of wisdom

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74 Kylon: see 248; Perillos is not otherwise known. "Managers": see 80n.
75-7 Lysis (185, 249-50) was one of the "last Pythagoreans". He escaped from the C5 revolt (see 248-64n) to Achaia in mainland Greece, then went to Thebes where he taught Epaminondas. The letter ascribed to him is written

with people whose souls are not remotely purified. It is not right to hand out to chance-met persons what was achieved with so much effort and toil, nor yet to expound to the uninitiated the mysteries of the Two Goddesses of Eleusis — those who do either are equally wrong and impious.

(76) Think how long a time we spent cleansing the stains which were ingrained in our breasts, until, with the passage of the years, we were able to receive his words. As dyers cleanse and treat with a mordant the parts of the garment which need to be dyed, so that the dye will be fast and will never fade or be lost in the wash, so that wonderful man prepared the souls of those who had fallen in love with wisdom, so that he should not be disappointed in one of those he hoped would become good men. He did not purvey false words or the snares with which most sophists, working for no good purpose, entrap young men: he knew about divine and human affairs. But those others make his teaching a pretext and do terrible things, hunting young men in the wrong way and of set purpose.

(77) So they make their pupils intractable and wilful. They pour doctrines and divine discourses into troubled, turbid characters, as if you were to pour clear, pure water into a deep well choked with mud: it stirs up the mud and the water disappears. Teachers and pupils of this kind are alike: there are great shaggy thickets growing round the minds and hearts of those whose passion for learning is impure, overshadowing all that is gentle and mild and reasonable in the soul and preventing the reasoning power from growth and development in the open.

Perhaps I should first name their mothers, Self-indulgence and Greed: each one has many children. (78) From Self-indulgence spring unholy wedlock, corruption, drunkenness, unnatural pleasures, and passionate desires which pursue their

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in "Pythagorean Doric" (see 241), consciously terse and rich in images: see Thesleff in *Entretiens Hardt* (2n), and Delatte *Litt* II. DL 8.42 makes the addressee Hippasos (see 80n). A mordant (76) is a chemical (e.g. alum) which "bites" the fabric so that the dye takes.

object even to the pit and the precipice. Desires have compelled some not to hold back even from their mothers or their daughters; thrusting aside, like a tyrant, the city and the law, they twist their victim's arms behind his back and drag him off by force, like a captive, to thrust him into total ruin. The offspring of Greed are robbery, piracy, parricide, temple-robbing, poisoning, and all their siblings. So we must first clear the scrub in which these passions flourish, using fire and iron and all the techniques of learning, rescue the reason and free it from these great evils, and only then plant in it some useful learning from our store."

(79) Pythagoras thought it as essential as that to devote so much care to learning before one practices philosophy. He set the highest value on teaching and sharing of his doctrines, and made the most detailed investigation, testing and assessing the beliefs of those who came to him, and deploying varieties of teaching and numerous kinds of scientific knowledge.

18 How and why Pythagoras divided his disciples into kinds.

(80) Now let us discuss how he divided those he had assessed according to their merit. It was not right that all should have the same share of the same, for not all were alike in nature; but neither was it right that some should share in all the most valuable teachings and some in none at all, for that would be a failure of community feeling and fairness. But by giving each the appropriate share of the relevant teachings he ensured benefit for all, so far as they were capable, and also safeguarded the

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80 There are conflicting traditions here. The main problem was whether the true tradition was preserved by Hearers ("acousmatics") or Learners ("mathematics": *mathemata*, "things learnt", were not restricted to what we call maths until the mid C4 BC): see Burkert LS II.5. Philip 138-46 argues that the problem derives from Aristoxenos in the C4 BC: he wanted enlightened "Learners" rather than the hippy "Hearers" familiar as Pythagoreans in C4 comedy. I. wants the Learners to be the acknowledged Pythagoreans: in 81 they do not acknowledge the Hearers, in 87 they do. The two passages stand together in I. *On General Mathematical Science* (ed. N.Festa 1891, p.76.19ff), but there the first passage

principle of justice by giving each one the teaching he deserved. So, on this system, he called some Pythagoreans and some Pythagorisers (just as we call some people Atticists and some Atticisers): the distinction of names appropriately marked out some as real followers and some as aspirants to their status.

(81) He ruled that the Pythagoreans should have their property in common and should live together in perpetuity; the others were to keep their private property but should meet and study together. That is how the succession to Pythagoras came to take both forms. There were also two kinds of philosophy in another way, for there were two kinds of people undertaking it, the Hearers and the Learners. The Learners were acknowledged as Pythagoreans by the others, but did not themselves acknowledge the Hearers, saying that their concerns derived not from Pythagoras but from Hippasos. (Some say Hippasos came from Kroton, some from Metapontion.)

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reverses Hearers and Learners: that is, the Learners acknowledge the Hearers as a lower grade, but the Hearers claim that true Pythagoreanism is obedience to P.'s word, not the false model of further research established by the C5 BC mathematician Hippasos (88, 246-7). I. has probably modified the first passage, in the *Life*, to give what he thinks is the right result (Burkert LS 193-4). The groups inside and outside the veil (72), like the Pythagoreans and Pythagorisers (80) are meant to correspond to Learners and Hearers respectively (89). Philosophers of I.'s time also distinguished committed followers (*zelotai*) from those who came to listen (*akroatai*): Fowden 39. Tradition on the lifestyle of the Hearers is not consistent, and probably reveals adaptations and compromises. At 29-30, if the text is right, the Hearers live with their families (unlike the coenobite Learners) but their property is in common; at 81 Pythagorisers keep their private property. 89 end appears to mean (cf.72) that "civil servants" (*politikoi*) "managers" and "legislators" are alternative names for the Pythagoreans who administer the community's affairs, but at 129 and 150 *politikoi* are engaged in ordinary civic life. Civic life required participation in civic cult, especially sacrifice: this may explain why, at 150, hearers and civil servants may make animal sacrifices, and why Pythagorean meals may include sacrificial meat (98, 109; 85 offers an argument that human souls do not migrate into those animals it is lawful to sacrifice, compare Empedokles fr.136-7, translated KRS 319). See further Détienne GA ch.2. I. himself thought human souls, being rational, did not migrate into non-rational animals (Wallis 120). The C5 AD philosopher Proclus, a strict vegetarian, also tasted meat at public sacrifices (Marinus, *Life of Proclus* 12 and 19).

(82) The Hearers' study of philosophy consists of maxims without demonstration or argument: "do this", and the other pronouncements of Pythagoras. They try to preserve these as divine teachings; they make no claim to speak for themselves, nor do they think it right to speak, but they hold those who have acquired the most axioms to be the best equipped for wisdom.

These maxims are of three kinds, the "what is?", the "what is the most?" and the "what is to be done or not done?". The "what is?" are like this: "What is 'the islands of the blest'? The sun and moon." "What is the oracle at Delphi? The tetract; it is also the harmony in which the Sirens sang." The "what is the most?" are like this: "What is the most just? Sacrifice." "What is the wisest? Number, and the next is that which gives things their names." "What is wisest among human skills? Medicine." "What is finest? Harmony." "What is strongest? Judgement." "What is best? Happiness." "What is truest? That people are wicked."

82-6 "Maxims" translates *acousmata* ("things heard"), which are also *symbola* (103-5): that is, cryptic statements which hide the truth from the uninitiated (cf.226-7) and serve as tokens of recognition for initiates. I. wrote a (lost) treatise on symbols (Larsen p.61 and 88-9), perhaps concerned with their use in theurgy (as in *On the Mysteries* 1.21). See further Philip ch.9, Burkert LS II.4; other interpretations of *symbola* in Plutarch, *Moralia* 727-8, and in I. *Protrepticus* ch.21.

82 The "islands of the blest" were traditionally the home of good people, or heroes, after death; so also were the sun and moon, see further Détienne *Daimon* 140-67. The "tetract" is the number-series 1, 2, 3, 4 arranged as a triangle of dots. Speusippos (successor of Plato as head of the Academy) said Pythagoreans equated 1 with point, 2 with line, 3 with plane and 4 with solid: the progression of numbers symbolised, or generated, the physical world. See Philip ch.6, especially 97-8 note 5. The first four numbers add up to the "perfect number" 10, and include the harmonic ratios of fourth, fifth and octave (see 115-21n) which govern the music of the spheres (see 64-7n) and the song of the Sirens, identified by Plato *Republic* 616b-617e with the music of the spheres (KRS 233): each Siren sang one of the eight notes of the octave. (See further Lamberton 230-2.) The Delphic oracle reveals all truth, and the tetract is the fundamental truth of the universe. For the giver of names see 56-7n.

They say that Pythagoras praised the poet Hippodamas of Salamis for his lines

Whence do you come, O gods, how came you to be as you are?
Whence do you come, O people, how came you to be so wicked?

(83) These, then,are examples of that kind of maxim; each is a "what is the most?" This is the same as what is called the wisdom of the seven sages, for they did not ask "What is the good?" but "What is the most good?", not "What is the difficult?" but "What is the most difficult?" (the answer is "to know yourself"), not "What is the easy?" but "What is the easiest?" (the answer is "to follow habit"). So these maxims are probably derived from that kind of wisdom, since the seven sages lived before Pythagoras.

Maxims about "what is to be done or not done?" are like this: "One must have children" (so as to leave successors to worship the gods). "One must put the right shoe on first." "One must not walk on public roads, take holy water or use the baths" (because it is not certain, in all these circumstances, that those sharing with us are pure). (84) Other examples are "Do not help to unload a burden" (because it is wrong to encourage lack of effort) "but help to load it up". "Do not seek to have children by a rich woman." "Do not speak without a light." "Pour a libation to the gods over the handle of the cup, as an omen, and so that no-one drinks from the same place." "Do not wear a seal-ring with the image of a god, lest it be defiled: it is a cult-image, which should be set up in the house." "A man must not persecute his wife, for she is a suppliant: that is also why we lead the bride from the hearth, taking her by the right hand." "Do not sacrifice a white cock, for he is a suppliant, sacred to Men: that is also why he tells the time." (85) "Never give advice which is not in the best interest of the one who seeks it: advice is holy." "Work is good, pleasure of all kinds is bad: we come looking for punishment and must have it." "One should make sacrifice, and

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83 The prohibition on public baths may have helped to inspire the scruffy Pythagoreans of C4 comedy (quotations in DL 8.36-8).
84 *Men* is Greek for month, and is the name of a Babylonian deity.

go to holy places, barefoot." "One should not leave one's path to go to a temple, for we must not make the god an incidental task." "It is good to die, if you stand your ground with wounds in front: if not, not." "The souls of humans may enter any living creature except those it is lawful to sacrifice. So we must eat only sacrificial animals, those that are fit to eat, not any other living creature."

Such, then, are these maxims: the most extensive are concerned with the proper sacrifices on all occasions, the other honours to the gods, transmigration from this place and the right method of burial.

(86) Some maxims have to have an additional saying, as that one should have children in order to leave a replacement to worship the gods, but some have no explanation added. Some of the explanations seem to have been there from the beginning, others are later additions, as in "Do not break bread: it is not favourable for the judgement in Hades". Attempts to explain such things are not Pythagorean, but were made by ingenious outsiders trying to give a plausible reason. In this instance, to explain why one should not break bread, some say one should not separate that which unites (for in the old days friends shared one loaf, as barbarians do), others that one should not make a bad omen by breaking or crumbling at the outset.

But all these precepts about what to do or not to do aim at the divine. That is the principle: all of life is so ordered as to follow the god, and that is the rationale of this philosophy. (87) People behave absurdly when they seek the good anywhere but from the gods: it is like living in a country with a monarchy, cultivating some citizen who holds a lesser office and ignoring the one who rules all. That, the Pythagoreans think, is what people do. Since God exists and is lord of all, obviously we must ask our lord for what is good. For everyone gives good things to those they love and delight in, and the opposite to those for whom they feel the opposite.

Such, then, is the wisdom of these Pythagoreans.

One Hippomedon of Asine, a Pythagorean, one of the Hearers, said that Pythagoras had in fact given explanations and proofs of all the axioms, but because the axioms were passed on by many people, each lazier than the one before, the explanations had been lost and the hard sayings remained. But those Pythagoreans concerned with the teachings (the Learners) accept that those others (the Hearers) are Pythagoreans, but claim that they themselves are more so and what they say is true. And this, they say, is the reason for the disparity.

(88) Pythagoras came from Samos, in Ionia, when Polykrates was tyrant and Italy at its peak of prosperity, and the leading men in the cities became his associates. But the older men were involved in politics and had little leisure, so he gave them the bare instructions: it was hard to find time for the teachings and proofs, and he thought they would benefit as much from knowing what to do even without the reason for it, just as a doctor's patients get better although they have not been told the reasons for his instructions. But with the young men, who could work hard at their studies, he went into the proofs and discussed the teachings. So they (the Learners) derive from this group, the others (the Hearers) from the first group. As for Hippasos, he was indeed a Pythagorean, but because he was first to make public the sphere constructed from twelve pentagons he was lost at sea for his impiety: he got the reputation of having discovered it, but it all came from "that man" — that is what they call Pythagoras: they do not use his name.

(89) The Pythagoreans say this is how geometry was made public. One of the Pythagoreans lost all his property, and because of this misfortune he was allowed to make a living from geometry. Pythagoras called geometry "enquiry".

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87 Hippomedon's town is a conjecture: see Deubner.

88 The "sphere constructed from 12 pentagons" is the dodecahedron. You can make a sphere (Greek *sphairos*, ball) by constructing a dodecahedron in soft fabric and stuffing it: hence in Plato, *Timaeus* 55c, the dodecahedron is "the sphere of the all" (see 15ln). Dodecahedrons were also, it seems, cult-images, and Burkert LS 460 suggests the impiety was a public mathematical analysis.

89 Perhaps a misreading of Herakleitos fr.129 (DL 8.6) which says P. practised enquiry (Burkert LS 408-9); cf.199 for the publication of geometry.

This, then, is the information we have on the difference of subject-matter and the two groups of men who heard Pythagoras. Those inside and outside the veil, those who hear and see and those who hear without seeing, and those divided into "inside" and "outside" are to be equated with the two groups I have described. The "civil servants", "managers" and "legislators" should also be equated.

19 The many ways of useful education that Pythagoras discovered; his encounter with Abaris, and how he brought him to the highest wisdom by yet another way.

(90) It is worth knowing how many ways of education Pythagoras discovered, always giving the share of wisdom appropriate to each person's nature and capacity. Here is a striking example. When Abaris the Scythian came from the Hyperboreans, he had no experience of Greek education, was not an initiate, and was advanced in years. Pythagoras did not lead him through complex studies, but instead of the five-year silence and the long period of hearing and the other trials, he made him capable at once of hearing his own declared beliefs, and expounded to him, as briefly as possible, the treatise *On Nature* and another *On the Gods*.

(91) Now Abaris had come from the Hyperboreans, and was a priest of their Apollo: an old man, very wise in sacred matters. He was returning from Greece to his own country, to deposit the

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90 Here two treatises are ascribed to P. Others are listed by DL 8.6-8, who notes that some say P. wrote nothing. Porphyry (*Life of P.* 57) and many modern scholars agree. I.252-3, a parallel passage with Porphyry, does not say this, but 146, 158 and 198-9 acknowledge doubts about authorship. At 146 *On The Gods* is identified with the *Hieros Logos*, by P. or his son Telauges, which is taken to mean "Sacred Book":but a *hieros logos*, the story which explains a cult or ritual, need not be written. Delatte *Litt* part I tries to reconstruct a verse Hieros Logos with very early elements, surviving within the "Golden Verses" later ascribed to P..There is a forgery called *Hieros Logos* at 259. Thesleff 1965 155-86 collects and discusses all fragments ascribed to P.

91-3 The Hyperboreans ("beyond the north wind") were a legendary race

gold collected for the god in the temple in the land of the Hyperboreans. On his journey he passed through Italy, saw Pythagoras and thought him very like the god whose priest he was. He was convinced, by most sacred tokens which he saw in Pythagoras and which he had, as a priest, foreseen, that this was no other: not a human being resembling the god, but really Apollo. He returned to Pythagoras an arrow, which he had brought when he left the temple as a help against difficulties he might meet on his lengthy wanderings. Riding on the arrow, he crossed impassable places — rivers, marshes, swamps, mountains and the like; and by speaking to it, so the story goes, he could achieve purifications and drive away plagues and tempest from from the cities which asked his help.

(92) In Lakedaimon, at least, there was no plague after the purification he carried out, thought the land had often before been afflicted because its situation is so unhealthy: Mount Taygetos looms above and the heat is stifling. Knossos in Crete was the same, and there are other testimonies to the power of Abaris. When Pythagoras received the arrow, he did not think it strange, or ask why Abaris gave it to him, but — like one who is truly a god — privately took Abaris aside and showed him his golden thigh, as a token that he was not deceived. He also told him exactly what was deposited in the temple, giving him sufficient proof that he had not guessed wrong, and added that he had come for the welfare and benefit of humanity. For that reason he was in human form, so that people should not think the presence of a superior being strange and disturbing, and run away from his teaching. He told Abaris to stay there and help in the amendment of those who came, and to share the gold he had collected with those companions who had been led by reason to confirm in action the precept "friends have all in common". (93) Abaris remained, and, as I said, Pythagoras taught him natural

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distinguished, like their southern counterparts the Ethiopians, for piety: the gods acknowledged this by feasting with them, and when Apollo was not at Delphi this was one reason for his absence. For Abaris (140-1, 147, 215-9) see J.D.P.Bolton, *Aristeas Of Proconnesus* (1962) esp. 157-8. Apollo is an archer, hence the arrow; Abaris's travels may be an image

science and theology in summary form. Instead of divination by inspection of sacrifices he taught him divination by numbers, which he thought purer, more divine, and more closely connected with the heavenly numbers of the gods. He also taught Abaris other practices suited to him.

But, to return to the reason for this story, Pythagoras sought to instruct people in different ways, according to the nature and capacity of each one. Not all these ways have been handed down, and it would be difficult to go through all the ways that are remembered. (94) So let us go through a few, the best known examples of Pythagorean training, and the records of the standard practices of those men.

20 The special practices of Pythagorean philosophy; how he handed them down and how he exercised each new generation embarking on philosophy.

He first considered, in testing people, whether they could "hold their peace" (that was his expression), and whether they could learn all they heard and keep it safe and secret; then whether they were modest. He showed more concern for silence than for speech. He considered everything else too, lest they should be volatile or uncontrolled in giving way to passions and desires, and he was particularly interested in how they dealt with anger and desire, whether they were ambitious for victory or honour, and whether they were quarrelsome or friendly. If, after careful scrutiny, he thought they had good characters, he looked at their ability to learn and their memory: could they quickly and clearly follow what was said, did they show contentment and self-discipline in their studies? (95) He also considered their natural tendency to gentleness (he called it "arrangement"), for he thought a savage temper was hostile to a

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for the flight of the soul apart from the body (Bolton ch.7). On the theory that both Abaris and P. were shamans, see Philip 159-62. For P. as theophany of Apollo see on 5-8. The golden thigh is discussed by Burkert LS 159-60: probably the best explanation is that visitors to the underworld are wounded or branded in the thigh, but P. can make the journey safely. On divination see 68-70n.

programme such as his, bringing in its train lack of modesty,shamelessness, lack of control, untimely action, difficulty in learning, rejection of authority, dishonour, and their consequences; from mildness and gentleness come the opposite. So he investigated all this in his testing, and trained his disciples to achieve these things, and selected those suited to the benefits of his wisdom and tried to lead them on to knowledge in this way. But if he saw that someone was not suited, he expelled him as a stranger and an alien.

21 The daily regime which Pythagoras established and handed on to his followers for careful observance; some precepts in accordance with the practices.

I shall go on to the regime, occupying the whole day, which Pythagoras handed on to his followers. This is what was done, in accordance with his instructions, by those who followed where he led:

(96) They took a morning walk, alone, and in places where peace and quiet were appropriate, where there were shrines or sacred groves or other delights of the heart. They thought it wrong to meet people before one's own soul is stable and one's mind adjusted, and this tranquillity, they thought, helped to settle the mind, whereas it is disturbing to get up and immediately push one's way through crowds. So all the Pythagoreans always chose the places most suited to sanctity. Only after the morning walk did they meet each other, preferably in sanctuaries, but otherwise in similar places. They used this time for teaching, study and the amendment of character.

(97) After this period of study they turned to the care of the body. Most were oiled and ran races; a smaller number wrestled in the gardens and groves, some jumped with weights or shadow boxed; they chose the exercises which best promoted physical strength. For lunch they had bread with honey or honeycomb, but they took no wine during the day. After lunch they were

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97 Oil: used by athletes to protect the skin, and make it easier to scrape off dust.

concerned with the management of the community, and also with the affairs of outsiders through the prescription of laws: they were willing to deal with all administrative questions in the afternoon. When evening came, they went for walks again, but not in private as they did in the morning: they walked in twos or threes, recalling what they had learnt and exercising themselves in their admirable practices. (98) After the walk they took a bath, then went to their mess: not more than ten people ate together. When the fellow-diners met, there were libations and offerings of incense and frankincense. Then they began dinner, so as to finish before sunset. They had wine, barley-bread and wheat bread, a side-dish, cooked and raw vegetables; meat, from sacrificial animals, was set out, but they rarely had fish or seafood — some of it, for various reasons, they thought was not good to eat. (99) After this dinner there were libations, then reading: the custom was for the youngest to read, and the eldest to decide what should be read and how. Before they left, the wine-steward poured them a libation, and when they had made it the eldest instructed them as follows: "Do not harm or destroy a cultivated plant which bears fruit, and do not harm or destroy any living creature which is not harmful to the human race. (100) Moreover, think and speak as you ought about the races of gods, spirits and heroes, and likewise about your parents and benefactors; help the law and fight lawlessness." When this was said, each one went home. They wore clean white clothes and used clean white bedclothes: these were linen, as they did not use fleeces. They disapproved of hunting and did not use it as a form of exercise. These, then, were the instructions given to the mass of the Pythagoreans for their daily life, food and occupations.

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98 "Side-dish" translates Greek *opson*, which means whatever was available to eat with the basic bread - usually meat, but with Pythagoreans that could not be assumed.

100 Gods, spirits and heroes: see 16n. "Help the law": Delatte *Pol* 49-50 thinks this required acting as informer, as in Plato's *Laws*. White linen clothes were worn by those preparing for initiation, so Pythagoreans lived always in readiness (Burkert LS 190-1); cf.153, 155.