

Pythagorean Knowledge from the Ancient to the Modern World:  
Askesis, Religion, Science

# Episteme in Bewegung

Beiträge zu einer transdisziplinären Wissensgeschichte

Herausgegeben von Gyburg Uhlmann  
im Auftrag des Sonderforschungsbereichs 980  
„Episteme in Bewegung.  
Wissenstransfer von der Alten Welt  
bis in die Frühe Neuzeit“

Band 4

2016

Harrassowitz Verlag · Wiesbaden

Pythagorean Knowledge  
from the Ancient to the  
Modern World:  
Askesis, Religion, Science

Edited by  
Almut-Barbara Renger and Alessandro Stavru

2016

Harrassowitz Verlag · Wiesbaden

Die Reihe „Episteme in Bewegung“ umfasst wissenschaftliche Forschungen mit einem systematischen oder historischen Schwerpunkt in der europäischen und nicht-europäischen Vormoderne. Sie fördert transdisziplinäre Beiträge, die sich mit Fragen der Genese und Dynamik von Wissensbeständen befassen, und trägt dadurch zur Etablierung vormoderner Wissensforschung als einer eigenständigen Forschungsperspektive bei.

Publiziert werden Beiträge, die im Umkreis des an der Freien Universität Berlin angesiedelten Sonderforschungsbereichs 980 „Episteme in Bewegung. Wissenstransfer von der Alten Welt bis in die Frühe Neuzeit“ entstanden sind.

Herausgeberbeirat:

Eva Cancik-Kirschbaum (Freie Universität Berlin)

Anne Eusterschulte (Freie Universität Berlin)

Kristiane Hasselmann (Freie Universität Berlin)

Andrew James Johnston (Freie Universität Berlin)

Jochem Kahl (Freie Universität Berlin)

Klaus Krüger (Freie Universität Berlin)

Tilo Renz (Freie Universität Berlin)

Wilhelm Schmidt-Biggemann (Freie Universität Berlin)

Gedruckt mit freundlicher Unterstützung der Deutschen Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG).

Abbildung auf dem Umschlag:

© Melanie Wiener / melaniewiener.de

Bibliografische Information der Deutschen Nationalbibliothek

Die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek verzeichnet diese Publikation in der Deutschen Nationalbibliografie; detaillierte bibliografische Daten sind im Internet über <http://dnb.dnb.de> abrufbar.

Bibliographic information published by the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek

The Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie; detailed bibliographic data are available on the internet at <http://dnb.dnb.de>.

Informationen zum Verlagsprogramm finden Sie unter

<http://www.harrassowitz-verlag.de>

© Otto Harrassowitz GmbH & Co. KG, Wiesbaden 2016

Das Werk einschließlich aller seiner Teile ist urheberrechtlich geschützt.

Jede Verwertung außerhalb der engen Grenzen des Urheberrechtsgesetzes ist ohne

Zustimmung des Verlages unzulässig und strafbar. Das gilt insbesondere

für Vervielfältigungen jeder Art, Übersetzungen, Mikroverfilmungen und

für die Einspeicherung in elektronische Systeme.

Gedruckt auf alterungsbeständigem Papier.

Druck und Verarbeitung: ☉ Hubert & Co., Göttingen

Printed in Germany

ISSN 2365-5666

ISBN 978-3-447-10594-1

# Preface

*Andrew James Johnston and Gyburg Uhlmann*

Since its inception in July 2012, the Collaborative Research Centre (CRC) 980 “Episteme in Motion. Transfer of Knowledge from the Ancient World to the Early Modern Period”, based at the Freie Universität Berlin, has been engaging with processes of knowledge change in premodern European and non-European cultures.

The project aims at a fundamentally new approach to the historiography of knowledge in premodern cultures. Modern scholars have frequently described premodern knowledge as static and stable, bound by tradition and highly dependent on authority, and this is a view that was often held within premodern cultures themselves.

More often than not, modern approaches to the history of premodern knowledge have been informed by historiographical notions such as ‘rupture’ or ‘revolution’, as well as by concepts of periodization explicitly or implicitly linked to a master narrative of progress.

Frequently, only a limited capacity for epistemic change and, what is more, only a limited ability to reflect on shifts in knowledge were attributed to premodern cultures, just as they were denied most forms of historical consciousness, and especially so with respect to knowledge change. In contrast, the CRC 980 seeks to demonstrate that premodern processes of knowledge change were characterised by constant flux, as well as by constant self-reflexion. These epistemic shifts and reflexions were subject to their very own dynamics, and played out in patterns that were much more complex than traditional accounts of knowledge change would have us believe.

In order to describe and conceptualise these processes of epistemic change, the CRC 980 has developed a notion of ‘episteme’ which encompasses ‘knowledge’ as well as ‘scholarship’ and ‘science’, defining knowledge as the ‘knowledge of something’, and thus as knowledge which stakes a claim to validity. Such claims to validity are not necessarily expressed in terms of explicit reflexion, however – rather, they constitute themselves, and are reflected, in particular practices, institutions and modes of representation, as well as in specific aesthetic and performative strategies.

In addition to this, the CRC 980 deploys a specially adapted notion of ‘transfer’ centred on the re-contextualisation of knowledge. Here, transfer is not understood as a mere movement from A to B, but rather in terms of intricately entang-

led processes of exchange that stay in motion through iteration even if, at first glance, they appear to remain in a state of stasis. In fact, actions ostensibly geared towards the transmission, fixation, canonisation and codification of a certain level of knowledge prove particularly conducive to constant epistemic change.

In collaboration with the publishing house Harrassowitz the CRC has initiated the series "Episteme in Motion. Contributions to a Transdisciplinary History of Knowledge" with a view to showcase the project's research results and to render them accessible to a wider scholarly audience. The volumes published in this series represent the full scope of collaborating academic disciplines, ranging from ancient oriental studies to medieval studies, and from Korean studies to Arabistics. While some of the volumes are the product of interdisciplinary cooperation, other monographs and discipline-specific edited collections document the findings of individual sub-projects.

What all volumes in the series have in common is the fact that they conceive of the history of premodern knowledge as a research area capable of providing insights that are of fundamental interest to scholars of modernity as well.

# Contents

<i>Almut-Barbara Renger &amp; Alessandro Stavru</i> Introduction .....	1
<b>I Orphika</b>	
<i>Alberto Bernabé</i> Transfer of Afterlife Knowledge in Pythagorean Eschatology .....	17
<i>Francesc Casadesús Bordoy</i> The Appropriation of the Figure of Orpheus and Orphic Doctrines: An Example of Pythagoras' Artful Knavery ( <i>kakotechnie</i> )? .....	31
<i>Luc Brisson</i> The Making of Pythagoreanism: Orpheus, Aglaophamus, Pythagoras, Plato .....	45
<b>II Metempsychosis</b>	
<i>Richard McKirahan</i> Philolaus on the Soul .....	63
<i>Sylvana Chrysakopoulou</i> Is Parmenides a Pythagorean? Plato on <i>Theoria</i> as a Vision of the Soul .....	77
<i>Gabriele Cornelli</i> Aristotle and the Pythagorean Myths of Metempsychosis .....	93
<i>Bernd Roling</i> Pythagoras and Christian Eschatology: The Debate on the Transmigration of Souls in Early Scholasticism .....	103
<b>III Tropos tou biou</b>	
<i>Maurizio Giangiulio</i> Aristoxenus and Timaeus on the Pythagorean Way of Life .....	121
<i>Claudia Montepaone &amp; Marcello Catarzi</i> Pythagorean <i>Askesis</i> in Timycha of Sparta and Theano of Croton .....	135
<i>Ilaria Ramelli</i> The <i>Sentences of Sextus</i> and the Christian Transformation of Pythagorean Asceticism .....	151

*Irini Fotini Viltanioti*

Porphyry's *Letter to Marcella*. A Literary Attack  
on Christian Appropriation of (Neo)Pythagorean Moral Wisdom? ..... 163

*Luca Arcari*

Reinventing the Pythagorean Tradition  
in Pseudo-Justin's *Cohortatio ad Graecos* ..... 185

*Dirk Baltzly*

Transformations of Pythagorean Wisdom and Psychic *ἀσκησις*  
in Proclus' *Timaeus Commentary* ..... 199

*Ada Palmer*

The Active and Monastic Life in Humanist Biographies of Pythagoras ..... 211

*Jan N. Bremmer*

Richard Reitzenstein, Pythagoras and the *Life of Antony* ..... 227

#### **IV Dietetics & Medicine**

*Stavros Kouloumentas*

The Pythagoreans on Medicine: Religion or Science? ..... 249

*Andrew Barker*

Pythagoreans and Medical Writers on Periods of Human Gestation ..... 263

*Hynek Bartoš*

Iamblichus on Pythagorean Dietetics ..... 277

#### **V Music**

*Antonietta Provenza*

The Pythagoreans and the Therapeutic Effects  
of the Paean between Religion, *Paideia*, and Politics ..... 293

*Emidio Spinelli*

"Are Flute-Players Better than Philosophers?"  
Sextus Empiricus on Music, Against Pythagoras ..... 305

#### **VI Number & Harmony**

*Leonid Zhmud*

Greek Arithmology: Pythagoras or Plato? ..... 321

*Eugene Afonasin*

Pythagorean Numerology and Diophantus' *Arithmetica*:  
A Note on Hippolytus' *Elenchos* I 2 ..... 347



<i>Anna Izdebska</i>	
The Pythagorean Metaphysics of Numbers in the Works of the Ikhwān al-Ṣafā' and al-Shahrastāni .....	361
<i>Christiane L. Joost-Gaugier</i>	
Pythagoras and the "Perfect" Churches of the Renaissance .....	375
<i>Wilhelm Schmidt-Biggemann</i>	
Kabbalah as a Transfer of Pythagorean Number Theory: The Case of Johannes Reuchlin's <i>De Arte Cabalistica</i> .....	383
<i>Samuel Galson</i>	
Unfolding Pythagoras: Leibniz, Myth, and <i>Mathesis</i> .....	395
<b>VII Refractions</b>	
<i>Tengiz Iremadze</i>	
The Pythagorean Doctrine in the Caucasus .....	411
<i>Beate Ulrike La Sala</i>	
Ibn Sīnā's and Al-Ghazālī's Approach to Pythagoreanism .....	423
<i>Denis Robichaud</i>	
Marsilio Ficino and Plato's Divided Line: Iamblichus and Pythagorean Pseudepigrapha in the Renaissance .....	437
<i>Hanns-Peter Neumann</i>	
Pythagoras Refracted: The Formation of Pythagoreanism in the Early Modern Period .....	453
<b>Appendix: Three Texts on Pythagorean Way of Life</b>	
Pythagoras, the Wandering Ascetic: A Reconstruction of the <i>Life of Pythagoras</i> According to al-Mubashshir ibn Fātik and Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'a (ed. <i>Emily Cottrell</i> ) .....	467
Two Humanist Lives of Pythagoras (ed. <i>Ada Palmer</i> ) .....	519
<b>Indexes</b>	
Index of Topics .....	527
Index of Passages .....	543
Index of Ancient Names .....	555
Index of Medieval and Modern Names .....	563
Notes on Authors .....	575