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Dicearchus (fr. 41 Mirhady) on Pythagoras' Death¹

Abstract: The present study proposes a close reading of Dicearchus of Messana's account of the circumstances surrounding Pythagoras's death (fr. 41 Mirhady). As the analysis shows, the purpose of Dicearchus' account was to demonstrate that at the moment of the anti-Pythagorean revolt the philosopher was not welcomed in any of Italian cities because he was perceived as a danger to social and political stability. Such an interpretation of the authorial intention stems from a new reading of the scene of Pythagoras' death in the temple of the Muses. Considering Dicearchus' narrative as a whole it can be assumed that Pythagoras, as a suppliant, sought the protection of gods, and his death should be interpreted as the effect of the philosopher's isolation in the temple by the inhabitants of Metapontum. Moreover, the author of the present study considers the presence of the Muses in the story and the significance of this fact in the hypothesis concerning the essential role of the goddesses in the Pythagorean movement.

The circumstances surrounding the assault on the Pythagoreans' and Pythagoras' death are among the most challenging issues in Classical Studies.² The challenge stems from the sudden occurrence of the events themselves as well as from the uncertain status and late dating of the majority of the historical and biographical tradition. Most of the critical studies favour the opinion that the original sources confuse and mistakenly link two events that accompanied the anti-Pythagorean riots.³ Hypothetically, one of them, dated from the end of the 6th century to the 490s BC, may have been related to Pythagoras' death; the second, estimated to have happened in the mid-5th century, was allegedly organized directly against the Pythagoreans in Italian *poleis*. The scope of the events is equally doubtful: it is not certain whether the former was merely local — i.e. occurred in Kroton (and Metapontum)? — or whether the latter affected the whole southern Italy. It

¹ I would like to thank Gertjan Verhasselt for allowing me to use fragments of his edition of Dicearchus, and to Radosław Poniatiak and Bogdan Burliga who read and commented on my text at different stages of its composition.

² On available sources concerning Pythagoras' death see: Burkert 1972: 97–120 and 116–119, as well as Verhasselt 2014: 424–428.

³ See: e.g. Zhmud 2012: 97–102; Verhasselt 2014: 424–448.

needs to be stressed that, contrary to the popular conviction, Pythagorean lifestyle was not rejected in all cities, as it is evidenced by the case of Tarentum.

The present study offers a close reading of Dicearchus of Messana's account of the Pythagoreans' fall (fr. 41 Mirhady). However, it is not meant to be a reconstruction of the real circumstances surrounding Pythagoras' death. Its primary goals are to assess the historicity of selected elements of Dicearchus' narrative and locate them in their proper cultural contexts. This will enable a global assessment of Pythagoras' representation in Dicearchus's writing, and a verification of some deeply rooted convictions concerning the philosopher.

The following analysis has been inspired by Carl A. Huffman's text dedicated to the depiction of the Pythagoreans in the works of *peripatetikoi*.⁴ The American scholar points to the necessity of a comprehensive analysis of all the testimonies of the given ancient author. Taking Dicearchus as an example, he demonstrates how particular testimonies complement each other to create a general picture (e.g. of the Pythagoreans), and how a general picture can support analyses of the particular testimonies. This is particularly useful when the given testimony is shown in cover-texts in a neutral manner, or when for some reasons a neutral reading prevails in the examination. It can be assumed that in such a situation the author's attitude that is detectable in all the testimonies considered together can tell us more about the lost original narrative context than the information transmitted in cover-texts. The greatest interpretive obstacle with the testimonies such as Dicearchus' lies in their being severed from the initial context of the authorial narrative.⁵ Thus, considering the significance of Huffman's remarks, the present text could be treated as an appendix to his analysis. In the following close reading of fr. 41 I list a set of additional arguments that support his proposals. In particular, I focus on the information concerning Pythagoras's death in the temple of the Muses.

Dicearchus and Pythagoreans

Dicearchus belongs to the group of the earliest authors whose texts provide a basis for reconstructing the ways the Pythagoreans functioned as a movement. He is by no means equal to Aristotle or Aristoxenus of Tarentum—the authors of separate works on the Pythagoreans—but the

⁴ Huffman 2014.

⁵ See: Schepens 1997 and Mojsik 2016 (forthcoming).

testimonies of his that we know confirm that the biography and the opinions of Pythagoras are important part of his legacy.⁶

Taking into consideration the current knowledge of the titles of his works and their contents, the passages on Pythagoras may come either from *Life of Greece* (*Bíos Ἑλλάδος*), or from the work (mentioned once only in sources) *On Lives* (*Περὶ Βίων*).⁷ The former may have presented the beginnings and the development of Greek culture, and that is probably why it included the biographical notes on thinkers and philosophers. Nevertheless, it was not a biographical work *per se* as the surviving fragments are dedicated to types of life and models of (philosophical) life; apparently, the biographical details mentioned in it served as mere examples. As for the latter, rather than being the instances of biographical studies, the biographical facts about thinkers/philosophers may have been elements of a discussion on the relation between *bios theoretikos* and *bios praktikos*. Admittedly, there is only one known surviving fragment of *On Lives*, and it is difficult to speculate on the precise content of the whole or on the ways in which biographical data was used in it. That is why all the fragments containing biographical information and an analysis of selection and the connotative meaning thereof become of paramount importance.⁸

Although the assignment of the particular fragments on Pythagoras to the particular titles of the works is not the primary element of the present analysis, it has some influence on their interpretation. The work's context and its structure must have conditioned the narrative frameworks and the connotative meaning of the given passages. However, in the case of Dicearchus such a strategy cannot get us too far because of the scarcity of detailed information. To be precise, it has to be noted that one of the fragments (42)⁹ may have been part of *On the Soul*, and yet another (45)—of political writings (e.g. *Tripolitikos* or *Spartan Constitution*).

Generally speaking, throughout the 20th century the scholarly assessment of Dicearchus' attitude to the Pythagoreans was subject to change. Erwin Rohde and Werner Jaeger saw his

⁶ On Dicearchus as author see: Forthenbaugh, Schuetrumpf (eds) (2001).

⁷ See: Huffman 2014: 281: "None of his references to Pythagoras is ascribed to a specific work, and they probably come from *On Lives*." See also: Verhasselt 2014: 414 and n. 1650.

⁸ See: White 2001.

⁹ The page numbers of Dicearchus' fragments follow Mirhady's edition (2001). A new edition by G. Verhasselt—the follow-up of his PhD dissertation—is due shortly and will be published in section IVB of *Die Fragmente der Griechischen Historiker Continued* (published by Brill).

opinions as distinctly positive—both scholars assumed that Pythagoras had been represented as a paragon of practical life in the way preferred by Dicaearchus himself.¹⁰ Their interpretation of testimonies became prevalent in Classical Studies and can still be observed in Ch.H. Kahn’s biography of Pythagoras (2001, 68), who asserts that the Samian philosopher was perceived by Dicaearchus as a moral guide and social reformer. At the same time, Kahn emphasizes Dicaearchus’ and other Peripatetics’ accurate and balanced judgement of the Pythagorean tradition.

Such a valuation is shared by S.A. White, who, in his article on the development of the concept of wisdom in Dicaearchus’ works, claims: “What is clear is that Dicaearchus assigned Pythagoras a decisive role in the development of moral education. Wisdom henceforth was something for adults to pursue as a way of life, and the Pythagorean life of teaching and study long remained a model of the philosophical life.”¹¹ In the context of the evolving pattern of philosophical reasoning, the fact of identifying the changes that Pythagoras introduced in it may have led to such an assessment. White maintains that Pythagoras differed from the so-called “wise men” because he preferred to address large audiences and developed a rhetorical strategy consisting in adjusting both the content and the form of the speech to the expectations of the given group of listeners. Thus, according to Dicaearchus, while the Samian philosopher was an orator and teacher, the “wise men” were mostly lawgivers. Still, such an opinion does not exclude the possibility of a critical view of Pythagoras’ outlook on life, his decisions and his conduct.

Despite the generally positive validation of Dicaearchus’ account, its particular fragments have sometimes been perceived as ambiguous. The fr. 42, including the information about Pythagoras’ reincarnation in the body of the hetaera Alco, is one example of such an ambiguity. It was in this context that Fritz Wehrli wrote about the mockery of the ancient understanding of what soul and metempsychosis were (“die Wiedergeburt als Hetäre sieht aus wie Hohn”), and Burkert was sure that the information was a “sarcastic addition by Dicaearchus”.¹² The derision concerning the transmigration of soul was, by the way, likely to be expected from Dicaearchus—as other sources indicate, he displayed a negative attitude towards the conception of immortal soul.¹³

But it is Carl Huffman’s recent analysis that enables a comprehensive critical perspective on the existing testimonies. According to the scholar, if considered together, the message conveyed in

¹⁰ Rohde 1901: 110; Jaeger 1948: 452-461.

¹¹ White 2001: 213–214.

¹² See: Wehrli 1967: 53; Burkert 1972: 139.

¹³ Fr. 13-32 Mirhady; see also: Sharples 2001.

the fragments is, to a lesser or greater extent, negative, and some of Dicearchus' comments are distinctly ironic, if not spiteful. So, let us examine the content of the surviving fragments along with Huffman's interpretation.

Among all the testimonies that are available to us two long fragments that are attributed to Dicearchus come from Porphyry's *Life of Pythagoras*, one from Aulus Gellius' *Noctes atticae*, and one from Plutarch's *Questiones convivales*. In the following part of my paper I first introduce and briefly review the fragments 40, 42, 45, and then I focus on the fragment 41, which requires a separate, extensive analysis.

Dicaearch. fr. 40 (Porph. *VP* 18-19¹⁴): The description of Pythagoras' arrival in Kroton and the information about the speeches he delivered to various local groups appear in the biographical tradition of numerous authors.¹⁵ The earliest confirmation of these can probably be found in Antisthenes' (fr. 187 SSR), and the most detailed report in Iamblichus' (*VP* 9.45), who also relays the alleged content of the speeches. Dicearchus' reserved account, which survived in Porphyry's work, shows (as it is believed) Pythagoras in an unbiased manner. For different reasons this account is considered to be the most reliable document about the philosopher's arrival in Kroton. It was Huffman who managed to demonstrate that—taking into account certain items of the vocabulary used in the text—Dicearchus tried to show Pythagoras as a skillful rhetorician and a charismatic charlatan, who mesmerized and deceived the inhabitants of Kroton.¹⁶ A decisive argument supporting this claim is the use of the verb ψυχαγωγέω, which conveys the way of influencing the listeners, and which justifies such an understanding of the whole scene described in the account. It needs to be noted, however, that the word seems to have been used by Dicearchus himself—the hypothesis that it was added either by Porphyry or by some neo-Pythagoreans is rather improbable.

The above-mentioned claim is further strengthened by a close reading of the death scene (shown in fr. 41), which is to be analyzed in the following part of my paper.

¹⁴ In Wehrli's edition Dicearchus' account is limited to *VP* 18, but Mirhady includes—and probably is right to do so—paragraph 19 as well. See: Huffman 2014: 282, n 8.

¹⁵ Iustin. 20, 4; Diod. 10, 3, 2; Ov. *Met.* 15,65-477; see: Val. Max. 8, 15 ext. 1; Verhasselt 2014: 415–416.

¹⁶ Huffman 2014: 284: "He emphasizes Pythagoras' incredible charisma but the use of ψυχαγωγέω portrays him as employing illegitimate appeals to the emotions to 'beguile' and 'bewitch' his audience."

Dicaearch. fr. 42 (Aul. Gell. *NA* 4.11.14)¹⁷: Aulus Gellius' fragment contains a list of famous past incarnations of Pythagoras. Interestingly, the version quoted here was included both by Dicaearchus and yet another Peripatetic, Clearchus of Soli (fr. 10 Wehrli). The larger part of the list overlaps with the tradition known from the version that can be found, for example, in the writings of Diogenes Laertios (8.4). However, it is concluded with an element, which—as has been mentioned earlier—drew the attention of Wehrli and Burkert. According to Huffman, this apparently ironic reference to the hetaera Alco as an incarnation of the philosopher is directly related to Dicaearchus' representation of Pythagoras as one who mesmerizes and deceives the people of Kroton. It was therefore not a mere malicious joke but part of a well-conceived, general judgment. Whoever invented the hetaera—whether our author was the first one to do so is not important here—her presence in Dicaearchus' narrative was meant to strengthen the critical edge detectable in other fragments.

Dicaearch. fr. 45 (Plut. *QC* 719 a–b)¹⁸: Plutarch's information (not directly related to Pythagoras' biography) is by no means a significant contribution to our analysis. In one of his writings Dicaearchus is believed to have said that Plato's oeuvre featured a mixture of opinions by Lycurgus, Socrates and Pythagoras. The alleged context of that claim and the reasons for such a juxtaposition of the inspirational figures for the founder of Academy have been discussed by White (2001, 205). Huffman (2014, 285) guesses that if the fragment was somehow related to other testimonies, then—perhaps—Dicaearchus wanted to imply that through his *Dialogues* Plato also endeavored to mesmerize and deceive his readers so as to make them renounce their traditional customs and embrace radical innovations in the sphere of social and political life. The validity of such a presupposition, however, is linked inter alia to the question of whether the above-mentioned

¹⁷ "Pythagoram vero ipsum sicuti celebre est Euphorbum primo fuisse dictasse, ita haec remotiora sunt his, quae Clearchus et Dicaearchus memoriae tradiderunt, fuisse eum postea Pyrrum, deinde Aethaliden, deinde feminam pulchra facie meretricem, cui nomen fuerat Alco".

¹⁸ "οὐ γάρ τί που καὶ θεὸς δεῖται μαθήματος οἷον ὀργάνου στρέφοντος ἀπὸ τῶν γεννητῶν καὶ περιάγοντος ἐπὶ τὰ ὄντα τὴν διάνοιαν· ἐν αὐτῷ γὰρ ἔστιν ἐκείνῳ καὶ σὺν αὐτῷ καὶ περὶ αὐτόν. ἀλλ' ὅρα μὴ τι σοι προσῆκον ὁ Πλάτων καὶ οἰκεῖον αἰνιττόμενος λέληθεν, ἅτε δὴ τῷ Σωκράτει τὸν Λυκοῦργον ἀναμιννύς οὐχ ἤττον ἢ τὸν Πυθαγόραν, <ὥς> ᾤετο Δικαίαρχος. ὁ γὰρ Λυκοῦργος οἶσθα δῆπουθεν ὅτι τὴν ἀριθμητικὴν ἀναλογίαν, ὡς δημοκρατικὴν καὶ ὀχλικὴν οὔσαν, ἐξέβαλεν ἐκ τῆς Λακεδαιμόνος, ἐπεισέγαγεν δὲ τὴν γεωμετρικὴν, ὀλιγαρχίᾳ σώφρονι καὶ βασιλείᾳ νομίμῃ πρέπουσαν· ἡ μὲν γὰρ ἀριθμῷ τὸ ἴσον ἢ δὲ λόγῳ τὸ κατ' ἀξίαν ἀπονέμει·"

fragment came from the same work by Dicearchus as the other pieces did. If this was so, Huffman's explication is convincing; if not—we should not venture upon any definite judgment.

In the light of the above explanation, the real connotative meaning of the three fragments (with the emphasis on the first two) seems ironic and implies a rather negative attitude towards Pythagoras. The mention of the hetaera, which draws the citizens' attention away from the socially and traditionally established behavior, could have metaphorically expressed a critical evaluation of the apparently alluring appearance and rhetorical skills of Pythagoras, thanks to which the philosopher cast a spell on the inhabitants of Italian towns (ἐψυχάγωγησεν) and convinced them to make revolutionary changes in their lifestyles. The potentially rebellious force of the philosopher's teaching can be seen in the influence it had on the so-called "liminal" groups: youth, children, women or barbarians (fr. 40). All these elements of Pythagoras' picture are distinctly seen in the description of the philosopher's death, which I am going to focus on now. On the one hand, the connotative meaning of this testimony strengthens Huffman's assertion; on the other hand, the fragment itself becomes more comprehensible if we take into consideration the valuations of Dicearchus' other fragments.

Dicearch. fr. 41

Dicearchus' account of Pythagoras' escape from Kroton and his death has survived in an extensive version in Porphyry's writing, and a short excerpt on the philosopher's death in the temple of the Muses is testified by Diogenes Laertios¹⁹ and Themistios. The latter is unfairly omitted in all the editions since he does not refer to Dicearchus as the author of the information. Yet, his testimony is worth considering because it includes a description of Pythagoras' journey, of an episode in Locri, and of the stopovers in Tarentum and Metapontum²⁰; first and foremost, however, it is significant because Themistios quotes almost the whole last sentence about the philosopher's death in the temple. Considering the itinerary of the escape, it is often assumed that

¹⁹ On Diogenes Laertios as the author of Pythagoras' biography, and about his attitude to sources see: Laks 2014.

²⁰ Such a version of Pythagoras' journey before his death can be read in, for example, Firm. Mat. 1.7.12: "Sed nec ibi illum diutius fortuna detinuit; nam nunc per Locros, nunc per Tarentum et per omnes paene Italiae oras fugitivus erravit".

Themistios quotes from Porphyry's work.²¹ Even if this is true, his version was subject to a significant re-composition.

The starting point for the following analysis, and its reference frame, is, of course, the longest testimony of Porphyry (*VP* 56-57):

Δικαίαρχος δὲ καὶ οἱ ἀκριβέστεροι καὶ τὸν Πυθαγόραν φασὶν παρεῖναι τῇ ἐπιβουλῇ. Φερεκύδην γὰρ πρὸ τῆς ἐκ Σάμου ἀπάρσεως τελευτῆσαι. τῶν δ' ἐταίρων ἀθρόους μὲν τετταράκοντα ἐν οἰκίᾳ τινὸς συνεδρεύοντας ληφθῆναι, τοὺς δὲ πολλοὺς σποράδην κατὰ τὴν πόλιν ὡς ἔτυχον ἕκαστοι διαφθαρῆναι. Πυθαγόραν δὲ κρατουμένων τῶν φίλων τὸ μὲν πρῶτον εἰς Καυλωνίαν τὸν ὄρμον σωθῆναι, ἐκεῖθεν δὲ πάλιν ἐς Λοκρούς. πυθομένους δὲ τοὺς Λοκρούς τῶν γερόντων τινὰς ἐπὶ τὰ τῆς χώρας ὅρια ἀποστεῖλαι. τούτους δὲ πρὸς αὐτὸν ἀπαντήσαντας εἶπεῖν 'ἡμεῖς, ὦ Πυθαγόρα, σοφὸν μὲν ἄνδρα σε καὶ δεινὸν ἀκούομεν· ἀλλ' ἐπεὶ τοῖς ἰδίῳ νόμοις οὐθὲν ἔχομεν ἐγκαλεῖν, αὐτοὶ μὲν ἐπὶ τῶν ὑπαρχόντων πειρασόμεθα μένειν· σὺ δ' ἐτέρωθί που βάδιζε λαβὼν παρ' ἡμῶν εἴ του κεκρημένος τῶν ἀναγκαίων τυγχάνεις.' ἐπεὶ δ' ἀπὸ τῆς τῶν Λοκρῶν πόλεως τὸν εἰρημένον ἀπηλλάγη τρόπον, εἰς Τάραντα πλεῦσαι· πάλιν δὲ κάκεῖ παραπλήσια παθόντα τοῖς περὶ Κρότωνα εἰς Μεταπόντιον ἐλθεῖν. πανταχοῦ γὰρ ἐγένοντο μεγάλαι στάσεις, ἃς ἔτι καὶ νῦν οἱ περὶ τοὺς τόπους μνημονεύουσιν τε καὶ διηγοῦνται, τὰς ἐπὶ τῶν Πυθαγορείων καλοῦντες. [Πυθαγόρειοι δ' ἐκλήθησαν ἢ σύστασις ἅπασα ἢ συνακολουθήσασα αὐτῷ.]²² ἐν δὲ τῇ περὶ Μεταπόντιον καὶ Πυθαγόραν αὐτὸν λέγουσι τελευτῆσαι καταφυγόντα ἐπὶ τὸ μουσῶν ἱερόν, σπάνει τῶν ἀναγκαίων τεσσαράκοντα ἡμέρας διαμείναντα.

Dikaiarchos and the more accurate authors, however, claim that Pythagoras too was present at the assault. For (they say) Pherekydes had died before his departure from Samos. Forty of his companions were caught together, while meeting in somebody's house, but most perished scattered across the city, wherever each happened to be. While his friends were being overwhelmed, Pythagoras first escaped to the refuge Kaulonia and then from there to Lokroi. When the Locrians heard this, they sent some of the elders to the borders of their land. These men approached him and said: 'Pythagoras, we hear that you are a wise and clever man. But since we have nothing to reproach to our own laws, we ourselves will try to stick with the present laws. You, go somewhere else and should you need anything of the necessities of life, take it from us.' After leaving the city of Lokroi in the aforementioned way, he sailed to Tarentum. When there too he

²¹ On his knowledge of Porphyry's works see: Vanderpoel 1995: 25–27. It would be equally justified to assume that both authors used the same or a similar source.

²² Nauck considered it to be a late explanatory note to the Porphyry's text.

again suffered similar things as around Kroton, he went to Metapontion. For everywhere great revolts broke out, which even now the locals recall and relate, calling them the revolts in the times of the Pythagoreans. Pythagoreans was the name of the entire party that had followed him. It is also said that Pythagoras himself died in the area around Metapontion²³, after he had fled to the temple of the Muses and had stayed there for forty days, due to lack of the necessities of life. [transl. G. Verhasselt]

DL VIII 40: φησὶ δὲ Δικαίαρχος τὸν Πυθαγόραν ἀποθανεῖν καταφυγόντα εἰς τὸ ἐν Μεταποντίῳ ἱερὸν τῶν Μουσῶν, τετταράκοντα ἡμέρας ἀσιτήσαντα.

Dicaearchus, however, says that Pythagoras died a fugitive in the temple of the Muses at Metapontum after forty days' starvation. [transl. R.D. Hicks]

Them. Or. 23, 285b: αὐτός τε γὰρ ὁ Μνησάρχου τοσόνδε ἄρα ἀπέλαυσε τῆς πολυμνήτου σοφίας ὥστε μετανάστης αἰεὶ διεβίω διὰ τοὺς βασκαίνοντας καὶ κολούοντας, ἐκ Σάμου μὲν εἰς Κρότωνα διὰ Πολυκράτην, ἐκ Κρότωνος δὲ εἰς Λοκροὺς διὰ Κύλωνα· Λοκρῶν δὲ οὐχ εἷς ἦδη, ἀλλὰ πάντες Λοκροὶ οὐχ ὑπέμειναν Πυθαγόρου τὴν ἀρετὴν, ἀλλὰ μετεστήσαντο εἰς Τάραντα καὶ παρέπεμψαν· Ταραντῖνοι δὲ αὖθις, ὥσπερ φορτίον, εἰς Μεταπόντιον· οὗ δὲ καὶ ἐτελεύτησεν ἐν τῷ τεμένει τῶν Μουσῶν, τετταράκοντα, ὥς φασιν, ἡμέρας φεισάμενος σίτου.

As for the son of Mnesarchus himself [i.e., Pythagoras], he, of course, was so possessed of that much famed wisdom that he spent his whole life on the move because of those who envied and discredited him. He went from Samos to Croton because of Polycrates, and from Croton to Locri because of Cylon. At Locri, it was not one person but the whole citizen body who could not abide Pythagoras's virtue and consequently made him leave and sent him to Tarentum. The Tarentines again sent him off, this time to Metapontum, like an item of cargo; and there he died in the precinct of the Muses, having taken no food, as they tell it, for forty days. [transl. R.J. Penella]

There are some perceptible discrepancies between the surviving versions. First, I need to point to the disproportion in the amount of the relayed information—only Porphyry relates the whole scene of the escape. Surprisingly, details of Dicaearchus' account cannot be found among the numerous versions of the circumstances surrounding the philosopher's death as presented by Diogenes Laertios (8. 39–40). Themistios, in turn, summarizes the description of the journey in such a manner that it looks like an enforced or unintentional one (*sent him off ... like an item of*

²³ About ἐν δὲ τῇ as referring to the stasis at Metapontum rather than to the country at Metapontum cf. below pp. 14-15.

cargo). Only the last sentence of the account appears in the writings of all three authors in a similar form:

1. (Porph.) λέγουσι τελευτῆσαι καταφυγόντα ἐπὶ τὸ μουσῶν ἱερόν, σπάνει τῶν ἀναγκαίων τεσσαράκοντα ἡμέρας διαμείναντα;
2. (DL) φησὶ δὲ Δικαίαρχος τὸν Πυθαγόραν ἀποθανεῖν καταφυγόντα εἰς τὸ ἐν Μεταποντίῳ ἱερόν τῶν Μουσῶν, τετταράκοντα ἡμέρας ἀσιτήσαντα.
3. (Them.) οὗ δὴ καὶ ἐτελεύτησεν ἐν τῷ τεμένει τῶν Μουσῶν, τετταράκοντα, ὥς φασιν, ἡμέρας φεισάμενος σίτου.

What arrests our attention is a similar syntax, the same number of days, and the use the phrase ἱερόν τῶν Μουσῶν / τὸ μουσῶν ἱερόν / τῷ τεμένει τῶν Μουσῶν in each case. What differs them is the way they describe the lack of means to live: σπάνει τῶν ἀναγκαίων (Porph.), ἀσιτήσαντα (DL). The phrase φεισάμενος σίτου, used in Themistios' version, should rather be understood as the philosopher's decision to refrain himself from eating. In the very same version there is no information about the philosopher's escape to the temple (καταφυγόντα in Porphyry and DL). This probably stems from the choice of a different interpretation (and different narrative frames) of the whole story, which he locates in a much broader context of the enforced (by Polykrates and Kylon) peregrinations of Pythagoras. That is why the philosopher comes to be perceived as "an item of cargo" which "Tarentines sent off to Metapontum". Themistios' version is to a certain degree a re-interpretation and re-composition of the information from an earlier source. Thus in this form it is rather significant for the assessment of the development of the Pythagorean tradition; it is, however, of little value for the reconstruction of Dicearchus' account. For this reason, in the following analysis I focus mostly on the versions of Porphyry and Diogenes Laertios.

Let us briefly consider the interpretations of Dicearchus' fr. 41 up to the present. Even a superficial reading of the secondary literature brings somewhat selective analyses and arbitrary juxtapositions of various testimonies so as to achieve a narrative unity. Both approaches are complementary because the interest in the cult of the Muses, the role of *mousike* in the Pythagorean tradition, or Pythagoras' migration to Metapontum required combining the testimonies of different provenance. However, the main problem lies in the liberty with which scholars tend to combine the documents, irrespective of their origin, contexts and chronology of particular motifs or versions that

can be found in the biographical tradition.²⁴ But polynarrativity is the constitutional trait of the Pythagorean tradition, and such a juggling of the testimonies without prior analysis based on our knowledge about the author, the cultural context within which he wrote, and without taking into account all the obstacles resulting from the process of the text transmission in the ancient world cannot lead to any convincing conclusions.²⁵

Below I recall a few selected examples. Perhaps the best known are the hypotheses by I. Lévy and P. Boyancé. The former, almost a century ago, tried to reconcile Dicearchus' testimony with the other tradition concerning the philosopher's death, and, drawing on Satyros' fragment (fr. 11 Schorn), came to the conclusion that Dicearchus' description presented Pythagoras' suicide.²⁶ He also suggested identifying the temple of the Muses in Metapontum with the *mouseion* in front of Pythagoras' house as we know it from Timaeus' testimony. Boyancé, in turn, slightly developed Lévy's proposal and tried to prove that the *mouseion* should be identified as the philosopher's grave, around which there must have arisen a hero cult (see: Iust. 20.4, Cic. *de fin.* 5.2.4).²⁷ This led other scholars to the conclusion that Pythagoras must have been responsible for setting up the temple in Metapontum, or at least inspired it.²⁸ As a consequence, the information about the goddesses' cult in the city, about the philosopher's death in the temple, as well as about the cult in Kroton became the evidence of the popularity of the so-called "Pythagorean mouseion".²⁹ This last inference allowed for demonstrating the continuity between the religious dimension of the Pythagorean society and the way Plato's Academy, in which the cult of the Muses played a key role, was organized.³⁰

Yet another aspect of Dicearchus' testimony, which drew scholars' attention, is connected with the hypothesis that assumes the existence of the philosopher's house in Metapontum. A large part of the tradition, beginning with Aristotle and Aristoxenus, suggests that the philosopher moved

²⁴ See e.g. Boyancé 1937, Hardie 2004, and Provenza 2013 and 2014.

²⁵ See: Huffman 2014a, 2: "(...) there are many Pythagorases and many Pythagoreanisms in this book. No one Pythagoras or Pythagoreanism emerges because there is not one Pythagoras in the ancient sources and different modern interpreters derive a different picture even from the same sources".

²⁶ Lévy 1927: 67–68.

²⁷ Boyancé 1937: 233–247, particularly 235, n. 2.

²⁸ See e.g. Giannelli 1963: 79; Carter 2006: 173.

²⁹ Hardie 2004; see Boyancé 1937: 233–247.

³⁰ See Riedweg 2002, 14.

to this city before his death.³¹ This has led certain scholars to the conclusion that if Pythagoras died in Metapontum, that was because—as some testimonies imply—his house was there.³²

S. A. White, in turn, in his otherwise brilliant reconstruction of the development of philosophy as shown by Dicearchus, attempts to demonstrate that Pythagoras' fasting and his death in the temple testify to his exceptional religiousness.³³ In the context of our general knowledge of the Pythagorean society and the role religious rules played in it such an assertion is possible to be accepted. Still, it remains in stark contrast with the picture that emerges from Dicearchus' account.

An analogical doubt accompanies Antonietta Provenza's explanations. She claims that the information about the death in the temple of the goddesses of *mousike* should be understood in a much larger context of the role of music in the Pythagoreans' lives (2014, 80): "La versione secondo cui Pitagora sarebbe morto a Metaponto nel santuario delle Muse lascia emergere la stessa considerazione del sapiente come individuo sacro alle Muse: la sua morte non profana il luogo di culto, ma segna un ritorno a quell'armonia che egli ha costantemente perseguito." However, this beautiful, poetic representation of Pythagoras's death as a return to harmony has nothing to do either with Pythagoras, or Dicearchus.

The only comprehensive analysis of the testimony under consideration can be found in Dicearchus' fragments edited by G. Verhasselt (2014). (Werhli's few sentences can hardly be treated as a satisfactory assessment of the rather long text.³⁴) Verhasselt summarizes the current state of research (which is a great asset of his work) and points to the fact that Dicearchus' version of Pythagoras' death was already known in ancient times, and the traces of this knowledge are seen in the writings of Firmicus Maternus, Arnobius or Tzetzes.³⁵ Despite the unquestionable quality of the commentary, some parts of Dicearchus' account require a further, meticulous interpretation. This is particularly important when the explanations are not sought in other testimonies within the bibliographical tradition, but in a close reading of the whole text as well as in the social and cultural contexts that can illuminate the information included in the source.

Dicearchus' account defies a 4th-century widespread tale, according to which during the uprising in Kroton Pythagoras was absent (Verhasselt 2014, 425-427). Describing the uprising

³¹ Arist. fr. 191; Aristox. fr. 18. See: Burkert 1972: 116–119.

³² See: Boyancé 1937: 233–247; Giannelli 1963: 79 and n. 4.

³³ White 2001: 211, n. 36.

³⁴ Wehrli 1967: 53.

³⁵ Verhasselt 2014: 419–432.

itself, the author informs us that 40 companions of the philosopher were captured (ληφθῆναι) in the besieged house and that the remaining, scattered majority were killed in other parts of the city (διαφθαρῆναι). Seeing that his companions were defeated (κρατουμένων τῶν φίλων), Pythagoras escaped to Kaulonia to save his life (σωθῆναι).

Here arises the first interpretive problem—taking into consideration the commonly accepted biography of the philosopher, we should expect his “return” to Metapontum, the city in which Pythagoras is believed to have spent the remaining years of his life.³⁶ However, if we accept the opinion that Timaeus was wrong when he claimed that the house was in Kroton (or that it was the mistake of Porphyry, who quoted Timaeus), then it would be reasonable to assume that the philosopher lived in Metapontum for a time that would be sufficient for his daughter to become a leader of juvenile and later adult groups in religious celebrations.³⁷ Nevertheless, for a certain reason, in Dicearchus’ account Pythagoras begins his escape by going to Kaulonia’s port first.³⁸ This means that the philosopher is heading west, not east, in the direction of Metapontum. But the whole narration implies that this city will be his final destination.

To the east of Kaulonia there are Lokroi. Here Pythagoras is not even able to enter the territory of the polis as he is confronted with the elders or members of the council [of elders] (πυθομένους δὲ τοὺς Λοκροὺς τῶν γερόντων τινὰς ἐπὶ τὰ τῆς χώρας ὅρια ἀποστεῖλαι), sent by the inhabitants. The “dangerous charismatic charlatan”, as Huffman has it, is politely yet firmly asked not to cross the boundaries of the polis.³⁹ The picture that emerges from the first part of the Locrians’ speech (σοφὸν μὲν ἄνδρα σε καὶ δεινὸν ἀκούομεν) is a consistent representation of Pythagoras in fr. 40 (according to Huffman’s aforementioned interpretation). The Locrians seem to be aware that, using a few words only, Pythagoras is capable of making them change their lifestyle, and therefore they declare straight away: ἀλλ’ ἐπεὶ τοῖς ἰδίοις νόμοις οὐθὲν ἔχομεν ἐγκαλεῖν, αὐτοὶ μὲν ἐπὶ τῶν ὑπαρχόντων πειρασόμεθα μένειν.

³⁶ See: Burkert 1972: 112.

³⁷ Tim. FGrH 566 F 131; see: Burkert 1972: 112, n. 18; Vallet 1974; Lippolis, Garaffo, Nafissi 1995: 206; Giacometti 2005: 91–93. The fragment by Timaeus—which provoked numerous misunderstandings—as well as the dilemma “Kroton or Metapontum” deserve a separate study, and I hope I will present my reflections upon these issues in a separate article.

³⁸ The information concerning the port of Kaulonia (which is Kroton’s colony) may imply that Dicearchus meant a boat trip from Kroton—similar to a route between Lokroi and Tarentum.

³⁹ Huffman 2014: 284. For other explanations of the meeting with the Locrians see: Verhasselt 2014: 429. About the Locrians’ traditionalism see: Demosth. *Or.* 24, pp 139–141.

Sent away by the Locrians, Pythagoras sails to Tarentum (εἰς Τάραντα πλεῦσαι). Here, as Dicaearchus notes, the situation is similar to the one in Kroton, which means that there are riots or at least anti-Pythagorean attitudes. That is why Pythagoras moves on to Metapontum. Here the account's author adds a remark that at the time μεγάλοι στάσεις (anti-Pythagorean attitudes) were omnipresent, by which he must have meant the Greek cities in Italy. Moreover, he informs that the memory of them lives on in the oral tradition (μνημονεύουσιν τε καὶ διηγοῦνται) of the cities' inhabitants, which in itself is a very interesting clue as to possible sources that may contain the information about the events.

Here the manuscript contains a sentence that is commonly believed to be have been added by a copyist (Πυθαγόρειοι δ' ἐκλήθησαν ἡ σύστασις ἅπαντα ἢ συνακολουθήσασα αὐτῷ.) and everything confirms that such an assumption is correct⁴⁰. The information about μεγάλοι στάσεις in Greek cities in Italy was immediately followed by a sentence containing the information about Pythagoras' death in Metapontum. I have already indicated that this last sentence is usually considered out of the context of the whole account of Pythagoras' death and interpreted as, for example, the proof of the philosopher's religiousness, or of the significance of the Muses for the Pythagoreans. Sometimes it is arbitrarily juxtaposed with the testimonies of Timaeus (FGrH 566 F 131), or Trogus/Iustinus (20.4), which leads scholars to construct far-fetched interpretive proposals. However, considering the whole context of Dicaearchus' account, we may look at the fragment from a completely new angle. In the narrative about the Pythagorean revolt the emphasis is put on Pythagoras' escape and his subsequent wanderings that led to his death, and not on the philosopher's relations with the Muses and “un ritorno a quell'armonia, che egli ha costantemente perseguito” (Provenza 2014, 80).

Also, the choice of Metapontum as the last shelter in the context of Pythagoras' wanderings across southern Italy does not imply his deliberate return to the city in which he lived regularly. In Dicaearchus' account the sequence of the cities which Pythagoras visits on his escaping route seems rather accidental and is probably the result of the opportunities that unexpectedly crop up during the journey. The sentence about his death in Metapontum gives only the information about the escape to the temple of the Muses and forty days of fasting. This version of Dicaearchus' account, based on the oral tradition prevailing in southern Italy, does not seem to link the philosopher with the city.

⁴⁰ The explanation, included in the narrative, who the Pythagoreans are was certainly not written by Dicaearchus. In all probability, this is the effect of relocating the marginal gloss to the text itself.

The key question in the present analysis is how to understand the information about the philosopher's death in the temple? Considering the aversion to Pythagoras in other cities, his taking refuge in the temple cannot, as it seems, be perceived as merely factual, i.e. without a deeper significance. Both Porphyry and Diogenes Laertios call it an “escape to the temple” and not a deliberate decision to go to a place chosen earlier. In such a case the search for an explanation in other testimonies concerning Pythagoras' life (and his links to the Muses) will not lead to any reasonable conclusion. A much better strategy is to interpret the events described here first in relation to the whole of Dicearchus' account and then to verify it by referring to the cultural context of the archaic and classical epochs. The conclusions thus drawn may be examined against the knowledge originating from the other authors' testimonies.

If we do not analyze the sentence in isolation but take into consideration the whole of Dicearchus' account, the death in the temple is merely the last phase of Pythagoras' escape. Additionally, other narrative details distinctly point to the aversion that the inhabitants of southern Italian cities displayed towards the philosopher. It is worth noting that the Locrians were willing to give him a supply of provisions if he gave up the idea of entering the polis (βάδιζε λαβὼν παρ' ἡμῶν εἴ του κεχρημένος [τῶν ἀναγκαίων] τυγχάνεις). This piece of information is particularly interesting in the context of the explanation that concludes the account — during the escape to the temple in Metapontum Pythagoras had no food (σπάνει τῶν ἀναγκαίων [Porph.] - ἀσιτήσαντα [DL]). Taking into consideration the whole narrative, the instances of particular cities offer a spectrum of Italian Greeks' attitudes towards the Pythagoreans. In some of the cities (Kroton, Tarentum) there broke out revolts, putting the Pythagoreans' lives at risk. The attitude of others may be illustrated by the opposition Lokroi–Metapontum. The first one does not allow the philosopher to enter the *polis* but offers him a means for a further journey. The second one apparently lets him in but refuses to supply him with food. This may be the result of entering the *polis* without the inhabitants' consent or the effect of a course of subsequent events. The second possibility becomes more probable if we interpret ἐν δὲ τῇ (περὶ Μεταπόντιον) as referring to στάσις (uprising) which breaks out in the city, and not as the usually supposed χώρα. In such a situation, the escape to the temple (καταφυγόντα) would be an effect of the course of events.

Irrespective of the aforementioned way of the detailed interpretation of Dicearchus' account, the connotative meaning of the last sentence seems clear—Pythagoras escapes to the temple as a result of the danger and, deprived of food, dies in it. Such a reading of the sentence can be supported by a reference to the Greek patterns of social and religious life. First of all, from the religious standpoint, death in the temple was pollution (*miasma*) for the *polis*—thus it cannot be

perceived as a visit paid to the friendly gods. Secondly, shelter in the temple, especially one sought by a stranger, ought to be perceived as a reference to the rights of a supplicant—a person who, facing perils, seeks protection of gods.⁴¹ In most cases such gestures and actions were the results of being exposed to an ultimate danger. Ancient sources give numerous examples of the situations in which people at risk of losing their lives ask gods for guardianship and, consequently, become imprisoned in a *temenos* or temple. The best-known example of the kind, not very distant chronologically from the events under consideration, is the story of the Spartan regent and general Pausanias' death (Th. 1.133-134). Iustinus (20.2) informs us about the murder of fifty youths and a priest, who found refuge in the altars of Athena in Syris, committed by the inhabitants of Metapontum, and about the religious troubles the act brought upon the perpetrators. In many cases the information about *asylia* is recalled in the sources just because instances of breaking it were rife.⁴² Most often we hear of the attempts to starve supplicants to death and of the removals of the bodies so as to avoid pollution. Therefore, it can be assumed as obvious that in the archaic and classical epochs individuals seeking refuge in temples do not do so voluntarily but in cases of an absolute necessity. Moreover, as the space dedicated to gods and to communication gods, the temple is not a good place for dying, neither for the dying nor for the community which takes care of the sanctuary.⁴³

It should also be noted that the phenomenon of *hiketeia* appears several times in Pythagorean *akousmata* as an exceptionally important institution.⁴⁴ Generally, *akousmata* and *symbola* indicate the importance of an appropriate attitude to religion in the lives of the Pythagoreans. The model of life that they followed was based on the recommendation to avoid pollution at all cost and to retain chastity in their relation to gods. If the Pythagoreans, for fear of desecrating the sacred, introduced a ban on urinating sunwards (DL 8.17), how would they have reacted to the pollution resulting from the occurrence of death in the temple?

All this suggests that the interpretation according to which the stay and the death in the temple were Pythagoras' voluntary and deliberate decisions is rather unconvincing. Firstly, this is

⁴¹ On the phenomena of *asylia* and *hiketeia* see: Schlesinger 1933; Gould 1973; Chaniotis 1996; Rigsby 1996; Dreher (ed.) 2003; on *miasma* see: Parker 1983.

⁴² See: Gould 1973, particularly pp. 82–85.

⁴³ Parker 1983: 32–48.

⁴⁴ E.g. Iambl. VP 84: “It is not right for a man to pursue his own wife; for she is a suppliant”; see: Gemelli Marciano 2014.

not evident in Dicearchus' account (or at least not in Porphyry's and Diogenes Laertios' versions). Secondly, if the philosopher had simply wanted to die, for example, out of nostalgia for the killed friends (as some of the sources maintain), he would not have had to go to the temple (or even: he should not have done so). This is more than obvious in view of our knowledge about Pythagoras' attitude to the sacred and the well-known reluctance of the Pythagoreans to cause death (and their attitude to suicide, for that matter). Both arguments are related to the Pythagorean belief in the transmigration of souls.⁴⁵ But if Pythagoras had been living in Metapontum for a certain period of time, both his avoidance of the city and his escape to the temple would have required a further explanation.

To sum up, the information about the escape and the fact of taking shelter in the temple must be understood as signifying a state of danger. This is clear in Dicearchus' account, according to which Pythagoras moves on to save his life (σωθῆναι). The information about the lack of means to live for forty days can, considering the context of the life in ancient Greece, be interpreted as the effect of the philosopher's isolation in the temple.

One detail of Dicearchus' account, i.e. the choice of goddesses, in whose sanctuary Pythagoras took refuge while in Metapontum, requires a further consideration. The question is connected, as we saw earlier, with a more general hypothesis concerning the (significant) role of the Muses in the functioning of the Pythagorean school. The problem can be seen in Antonietta Provenza's article (2014) mentioned earlier. But one of the first scholars that referred to the fragment from Dicearchus' account in this particular context was Pierre Boyancé, the author of the work about the cult of the Muses among Greek philosophers.⁴⁶ Since the time of his publication the thesis about the role of the Muses in the functioning of the school has been repeated in an almost unaltered form (with few minor exceptions).⁴⁷ As it seems, Boyancé's arguments have a rather fragile basis in the sources, and most of the (late) testimonies were, on the one hand, inspired by the model of a philosophical school that was fashioned after Plato's Academy, and, on the other hand, were the result of the clash between the neo-Pythagoreans and the Platonic tradition, and of the

⁴⁵ See: e.g. Palmer 2014: 218–220.

⁴⁶ Boyancé 1937.

⁴⁷ See: e.g. Linfert-Reich 1971; Vallet 1974; Hardie 2004; Carter 2006: 173; Wittenburg 1990: 121 about Boyancé's books as "un'esauriente analisi della tradizione dei Mouseia".

attempts to re-write the history of Pythagoreanism.⁴⁸ As the problem reaches far beyond the scope of the present article, I will limit myself to listing the most important objections against the hypotheses prevailing in the scholarly research so far.⁴⁹

Firstly, the reasoning is built up upon the assumption that the versions of the speeches given by Pythagoras to the inhabitants of Kroton, which can be found in Iamblichus' book (VP 9.45), are credible.⁵⁰ They mention the proposals to introduce the cult of the Muses perceived as the goddesses taking care of social order and harmony.⁵¹ At present, their authenticity is not only questioned but totally rejected.⁵² In their surviving form, they must be a fabrication of Iamblichus or his neo-Pythagorean source.

Secondly, the testimony concerning the speeches has been juxtaposed with the information (preserved only by Iamblichus) about offerings to the Muses in Milon's house, just before the attack.⁵³ This testimony, too, has a rather fragile basis—and I will point to only two problematic aspects of it.

First, we need to note that the phrase *mouseia thysai* that Iamblichus used in his description of the scene was confirmed as late as in the 4th century. Similarly, the term *mouseion* acquired its religious connotation relatively late, and the earliest confirmations from the 5th century are in stark contrast with the meanings that can be found in Iamblichus' account.⁵⁴ Besides it is clear that

⁴⁸ See: Dillon 2014; Flinterman 2014.

⁴⁹ See: Mojsik 2011. My thorough examination of all the testimonies will be presented in a separate paper.

⁵⁰ The fragment by Iamblichus (VP 35.264) about the return to the cult of the Muses in Kroton after the fall of the school and the realization of wrongdoings committed against the Pythagoreans is, in my opinion, connected with the speeches and thus fictional as well.

⁵¹ By the way, such a function of the Muses—as taking care of social order and harmony—is very poorly documented; the earliest and circumstantial evidence appeared in the Hellenistic epoch. Mojsik 2011: 155–156; see also: Dillon 2014: 11: “(...) an interesting projection back of the Platonist doctrine of the Muses as principles of order onto Pythagoreanism by Iamblichus in his *Pythagoric Life*”.

⁵² See: e.g. Rowett 2014: 116: “The earliest sources, relayed in Diogenes and Porphyry, record none of the content of these speeches. Yet Iamblichus, somewhat implausibly, recounts each one in detail, but without naming any authority. Perhaps he is using the opportunity to elaborate his own Pythagorean moral teaching, or that of his source (conceivably Apollonius).”; Huffman 2014: 283: “Iamblichus, writing over 600 years later, provides the text of the four speeches given at Kroton, but these are a fabrication of the later tradition.”

⁵³ Iambl. VP 35. 261: ὥστε μετ' ὀλίγας ἡμέρας, μουσεῖα θυόντων αὐτῶν ἐν οἰκίᾳ παρὰ τὸ Πύθιον, ἄθροοι συνδραμόντες οἷοί τ' ἦσαν τὴν ἐπίθεσιν ἐπ' αὐτοῦς ποιήσασθαι.

⁵⁴ Ar. *Ran.* 93, Eur. *Hel.* 174; fr. 88.

Iamblichus quotes after Apollonios, about whom he writes much earlier that the author enriched the accounts of predecessors with previously unknown details.⁵⁵ Considering the fact that the predecessors are Aristoxenus and Nicomachus, and remembering neo-Pythagoreans' attitude to the history of the society, we should question the credibility of the information. As this version of the events was unknown in the 4th c., it is unlikely that the version from the Roman times was more accurate than, for instance, Aristoxenus'. Besides, the addition of the information about the Muses to the story of Pythagoras—whether by Apollonios or Iamblichus—is clearly justified both on the narrative level of the biography⁵⁶, and on the level of cultural reality of the 2nd and the 3rd centuries A.D.⁵⁷ Even more so if we remember the neo-Pythagoreans' endeavors to demonstrate the Academy's derivative status when compared with the Pythagorean society.

Thirdly, the information (attributed to Timaeus [FGrH 566 F 131]) that the street where Pythagoras' house stood was named *mouseion* is also recalled in the given context. However, this testimony is interpreted superficially, without delving into an analysis of the exact pronunciation or the narrative context of the source information.⁵⁸ Still, it is enough to point to the fact that according to most of the authors quoting Timaeus, the naming of the street was an act of the inhabitants of Kroton or Metapontum, which took place after Pythagoras' death.⁵⁹ The act could not have occurred in the 5th century as the term *mouseion* originates from a later period of history, which has not been noted so far.

Thus, out of the whole Pythagorean tradition, the fragment by Dicearchus remains the only solid basis for speculation on the links between the Muses, Pythagoras and the Pythagorean lifestyle.⁶⁰ Yet, upon closer examination, we can see that Dicearchus' testimony does not suggest

⁵⁵ Iambl. *VP* 35, 254: ἐπεὶ δὲ καὶ Ἀπολλώνιος περὶ τῶν αὐτῶν ἔστιν ὅπου διαφωνεῖ, πολλὰ δὲ καὶ προστίθῃσι τῶν μὴ εἰρημένων παρὰ τούτοις [my emphasis - TM]. On the Pythagoreans preparing new, genuine version of the history of the society see: Dillon 2014a; Flinterman 2014.

⁵⁶ Mojsik 2011: 61–62: at the moment of the attack, the Pythagoreans make offerings to the Muses that—according to Iamblichus—take care of social order and *homonoia*. On late (and borrowed from Plato) idea of the Muses and *mousike* as principles of order cf. e.g. Dillon 2014, *passim*.

⁵⁷ On another wave of interest in the Muses in this period see: e.g. Sahin 1999, particularly pp. 212–219.

⁵⁸ Mojsik (2016 - forthcoming).

⁵⁹ See: Iust. 20.4; Iambl. *VP* 30.170–171; Val. Max. 8.15 ext.1.

⁶⁰ I put aside the (occasionally used) information, coming from the collection *akousmata*, that the Pythagoreans called the Pleiades the Muses' lyre (Arist. Fr. 159), or the comparison between the pleasure that one can derive from goodness and justice to the harmony of the Muses (Porph. *VP* 39). See: e.g. Linfert-Reich 1971: 16, and Riedweg's remark (2002: 28): "Verschiedene Zeugnisse deuten darauf hin, dass die Musen im religiösen und kosmologischen Denken der

any relation between Pythagoras and the Muses. What can be drawn from this author's text as a most rudimentary conclusion is the suggestion that this is a poliadic cult of the Muses (and not a cult of any Pythagorean goddesses).⁶¹ Besides, in the scene of the philosopher's death the emphasis is put on the escape to the temple and the search for asylum by assuming the role of a suppliant. The whole corresponds both to Dicearchus' narrative about Pythagoras' wanderings and the aversion towards him in Italian cities, as well as to the social and religious realities of the epoch.

The hypothesis that the cult of the Muses in Metapontum—like the one in Kroton, known from the speeches included by Iamblichus— must have been inspired by Pythagoras seems improbable, too. Considering the currently available testimonies, this is pure fiction, stemming from an excessively frivolous use of the testimonies of incomparable value, prepared by different authors, and reporting on events from different settings.

A justification for the above interpretation can be found in the general knowledge about the development of the cult of the Muses in the archaic and classical epochs. There is no doubt whatsoever that even if we reject the weak hypothesis about the links between the Pythagoreans and the Muses, the information about the existence of the cult in Metapontum at the beginning of the 5th century remains valid. The general analysis of literary, epigraphic, iconographic and archaeological testimonies confirms that the cult did not start earlier than in the 5th century.⁶² The earliest reliable sources come from the second half of this century.⁶³ However, we need to remember that what we consider here is not the instance of an insignificant homage but the whole, separate temple dedicated to the goddesses, the phenomenon which was rare and confirmed in testimonies much later—in most known cases the Muses appear surrounded by other gods, without a separate *temenos*. Such is the situation in Epidauros or in Dion, to give just a few examples.⁶⁴ Thus the cult

Pythagoreer in der Tat eine nicht unwichtige Rolle spielten.” Considering the fact that the Pleiades were also called Rheia's hands and the sea—Kronos' tears, these gods should also be included in the Pythagoreans' cosmological system (and their cult practices). On the context of the proper understanding *akousmata/symbola* see: Gemelli Marciano 2014, particularly p. 135, n. 18.

⁶¹ See: Giacometti 2005: 92: “(...) il filosofo peripatetico non parla di uno „stenopos” denominato Mouseion all'indomani della morte di Pitagora, ma di un Mouseion preesistente alla sua venuta a Metaponto.”

⁶² Mojsik 2011.

⁶³ E.g. SEG 51 (2001): 713 (Larisa); see: A. Tziafalias, AD 52 B' 2 (1997) [2003] 523 no. 19; IG I³ 369.66, 86 (Athens).

⁶⁴ Epidauros: V.K. Lamprinouidakis, 'Anaskaphe Epidauroy', *Praktika tes en Athenais Archaialogikes Etaireias* 139 (1986): 151–159, il. 125–137; Dion: DS 17.16.3–4; see: Mari 2002.

in Metapontum at the turn of the 6th and the 5th centuries appears to be an exception, different from a—hypothetical but still convincing—reconstruction of the cult's evolution.

Such a late dating of the cult's beginnings stems from the assumption that the Muses, originally functioning as the guardians of poets, could not have appeared in the sphere of cult as, in this very function, they were not an important socio-religious phenomenon. The change that occurred in the 5th century was an effect (one of many) of the spread of schools and the fact of associating the goddesses with the educational process as well as intellectual development. Originally, this phenomenon can only be observed in vase iconography, where over the span of the 5th century the Muses are gradually and more often represented with a papyrus scroll, a burin, and in the educational context.⁶⁵ But it was the introduction of the cult of the Muses to Plato's Academy that, from our perspective, should be thought of as a watershed event.⁶⁶ And it seems that when it comes to this and some other issues, later sources on Pythagoras were influenced by the way the functioning of Plato's school was represented.⁶⁷

For the sake of the present analysis it is sufficient to demonstrate that the cult of the Muses in the form it is known from Dicearchus' account started no earlier than in the 4th century, and that the information about the circumstances of Pythagoras' death cannot be taken as an argument that would confirm the Pythagoreans' links to the Muses.

Summing Up

Probably all scholars agree that, in terms of a storyline and hard facts, the accounts of Pythagoras' life and death are not consistent with each other, and that they provide a material for at least several different biographies. The descriptions of the circumstances surrounding the philosopher's death are the best examples of the problem. Taking out one of the testimonies from the historiographic context, and the analysis of the information included in it irrespective of its origin, of the authorial intention, of the place of the motif in the (original) narrative structure, and of the meanings

⁶⁵ See: Queyrel 1988; Glazebrook 2005; Small 2005: 68: "A history of the appearance of the Muses in the visual arts clearly marks the increasing association between the Muses and learning".

⁶⁶ Murray 2004: 374: "(...) it was Plato's appropriation of the Muses for the newly emerging discipline of philosophy that ensured their survival into the age of prose".

⁶⁷ The best known example of attributing Pythagoras a(n) (allegedly) Platonic innovation is linked with the concept of *philosophia*. See: Burkert 1960.

generated by primary and secondary cultural contexts will not facilitate our reaching legitimate conclusions. Even more so because we do not analyze a diachronic picture of the Pythagoreanism as such, but we want either to establish how probable certain events at the time of Pythagoras in the 6th and 5th centuries were, or to assess the state of the research on the Pythagoreans in, for example, the 4th century.

The most important aim of the present analysis was a thorough examination of various aspects and meanings of Dicearchus' account, and *not* a reconstruction of the real circumstances of the philosopher's death or of the valid picture of him and his society. Because of the late dating of the testimonies, we still do not know how faithful Porphyry and Diogenes Laertios were in passing on the account of this author. As it seems, there is at least one element of his tale that belongs to a later period and *not* to the late Archaic epoch—the information about the cult of the Muses. Still, in its most substantial part, the tale of the circumstances surrounding the fall of the Pythagoreans and Pythagoras' death should be treated as corresponding to Dicearchus' original account, and, in such a form, it needs to be considered as a relatively reliable testimony to the state of research in the late 4th century. Such a claim is justified by the representation of the philosopher's escape (in its form rather not typical for the later, apologetic, biographical tradition) and by the information about the local tradition. The latter definitely seems more reasonable in the context of the late 4th century, especially if we take into account Dicearchus' background. Besides, later authors, while looking for ways of verifying fictional data, resort to other sources than an anonymous oral tradition.⁶⁸

When analyzed globally, Dicearchus' testimony seems to carry slightly different overtones than ones suggested by selective readings of the crucial fragment. Only when we remember the whole route and circumstances accompanying the escape, can we see that the death in Metapontum was not shown as a pure, "neutral" fact. The logic of the events presented by Dicearchus implies that that was not a casual visit to the temple of Pythagoras' favourite goddesses. If the whole account is, basically, a description of the escape and the negative attitudes that the inhabitants of numerous *poleis* displayed towards the philosopher, whose society, in their opinion, was responsible for μεγάλοι στάσεις, then the last stage of the event, leading to Pythagoras's death, should not be different in its overtones from the rest of the narrative. But if we assume that the reception Pythagoras met with in Metapontum ought to have been more cordial (according to the majority of the traditional accounts, he had been living there for some time), we need to explain why he reached the place at the very end of his wanderings. Particularly in view of the fact that the

⁶⁸ See: Ulacco 2016 (forthcoming).

escaping route takes him west of Kroton, that is in the opposite direction from Metapontum. Obviously, here we can sidestep the whole problem, pointing to our superficial knowledge of the assault on the Pythagoreans in Kroton, and of the escape, and even suggest that the choice of the direction was accidental. Nevertheless, it is intriguing to note that his death in Metapontum is the last stage of his escape, and that even in this city he is met with hostility. Within the whole narrative frame the escape to the temple may be comprehended only in the context of *asylia*—i.e. the description of the incident was meant to present Pythagoras as a helpless suppliant. Therefore, the information about the lack of means to live suggests the philosophers' isolation and starvation, leading to his death. Such an interpretation of the story is further strengthened by the connection ἐν δὲ τῇ (περὶ Μεταπόντιον) with στάσις (*uprising*) which breaks out in the city, and not with supposed χώρα. In such a situation, the escape to the temple (καταφυγόντα) would be an effect of the course of events.

If we accept the above version of what happened, this means that the purpose of Dicearchus' account was to demonstrate that at the moment of the anti-Pythagorean revolt the philosopher was not welcomed in any of the Italian cities because he was perceived as a danger to social and political stability. On the one hand, such a reading strays from the current interpretations which assume that Dicearchus presented the philosopher as a moral guide, a social reformer, or as an example of *praktikos bios*. On the other hand, the picture that emerges from the above interpretation should be seen as corresponding to the meaning of other fragments by the same author, notably fr. 40 and 42, as proposed in the interpretation by Huffman. There is an observable logical relation between the picture of a hetaera, who drew the inhabitants' attention away from socially sanctioned and traditional behavior, the picture of a skillful rhetorician, who cast a spell on the inhabitants of Italian cities and persuaded them to radically different lifestyles, and the representation of the circumstances surrounding the fall of a charismatic who wandered along south Italian coast and was starved in the temple. The picture can be read as ironic, or even negative, but for want of a broader narrative context in which Dicearchus included these pieces of information, I abide by my assertion that this is by no means a favorable representation of the philosopher of Samos.

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