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Article in *The Classical Quarterly* · September 2016

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PYTHAGORAS' NORTHERN CONNECTIONS: ZALMOXIS, ABARIS, ARISTEAS

Apart from his teachings, wonders and scientific discoveries, Pythagoras was also known for his wide-ranging journeys. Ancient authors alleged that he visited many countries and nations from Egypt to India, stayed with the Phoenicians and the Ethiopians and talked to the Persian Magi and Gallic Druids. However, he never went to the North. If, nevertheless, he was eventually associated with the northern inhabitants, it is only because they themselves came into close contact with him. The first of them was Zalmoxis, a deity of a Thracian tribe, the Getae, who guaranteed them immortality after death (Hdt. 4.94).¹ Having described a blood ritual that the Getae practised to become immortal, Herodotus relates a story he heard from the Hellenes and Pontic Greeks. It goes that Zalmoxis was not a *daimōn* but a former slave of Pythagoras on Samos and, having adopted the doctrine of immortality from him, he returned to Thrace and converted his tribesmen to it with a cunning trick. He invited the most prominent of them to a men's hall (*ἀνδρείων*) for entertainment and told them that neither he nor they or their descendants would die, but would live eternally. Then, having constructed a secret underground chamber, he suddenly disappeared from the eyes of the Getae and hid in his shelter for three full years, being lamented as dead. Then he showed himself again to the Getae, thus persuading them of the truth of his promises (4.95).

The next guest of Pythagoras, already after his emigration to Croton, was Abaris, a priest of Apollo and a messenger of the most northern people, the happy Hyperboreans, with whom Apollo spent the cold part of the year.² Mentioned several times in the fifth-century tradition, for example, in the same book of Herodotus as Zalmoxis (4.36), the Hyperborean wonder-worker became the main speaker of a dialogue *Abaris* by Plato's student Heraclides of Pontus. From the Neoplatonic biographers of Pythagoras, Porphyry and Iamblichus, we hear that travelling around Greece and making wonders Abaris came to Croton and, when Pythagoras showed him his golden thigh, he recognized in him Hyperborean Apollo and became his student.³ This information is often regarded as going back via the Neopythagoreans Apollonius of Tyana (second half

¹ There is still no full dossier on Zalmoxis: K. von Fritz, 'Zalmoxis', *RE* 9A (1967), 2301–3 is too cursory. M. Eliade, 'Zalmoxis', *History of Religions* 11 (1972), 257–302 (a chapter from a book) gives extensive bibliography, but requires great caution. See also F. Hartog, *The Mirror of Herodotus* (London, 1988), 84–108; D. Asheri, A. Lloyd, A. Corcella (edd.), *A Commentary on Herodotus. Books I–IV* (Oxford, 2007), 647–9. For further bibliography, see J. Ustinova, *Caves and the Ancient Greek Mind* (Oxford, 2009), 100 n. 315 and J.N. Bremmer, 'Zalmoxis', *Brill's New Pauly* (Brill Online: <http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/browse/brill-s-new-pauly>).

² B. Centrone, 'Abaris l'Hyperboréen', *DPhA* 1 (1989), 44–6; K. Dowden, 'Abaris' (34), *Brill's New Jacoby* (Brill Online: <http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/browse/brill-s-new-pauly>).

³ Porph. *VP* 28; Iamb. *VP* 91–3, 135–6, 140–1.

of the first century A.D.) and Nicomachus of Gerasa (second century A.D.) to Heraclides of Pontus, who besides Abaris wrote also on Pythagoras and the Pythagoreans. A similar story of the golden thigh but without Abaris is reflected in Aristotle's work *On the Pythagoreans*, who states also that the Crotonians called Pythagoras 'Hyperborean Apollo' (fr. 191 Rose).

One more guest, who came admittedly after Pythagoras' death, is considered to be Aristeas of Proconnesus, the author of a poem *Arimaspea*, in which he described his journey to the lands of the Hyperboreans.⁴ Though Aristeas only reached the tribe of Issedones, he recounted of the Hyperboreans, the one-eyed hairy Arimaspi and the griffins guarding the gold, what he learnt from others (Hdt. 4.13), in so doing establishing himself as an expert in this field. According to Herodotus, 240 years later Aristeas suddenly appeared in Metapontum, where, as we know, Pythagoras had died and where until the mid fifth century there existed a large Pythagorean community, and told the Metapontians that, of all the Italiots, Apollo had come only to them and that he, Aristeas, accompanied the god in the shape of a raven. Before disappearing again, he ordered the Metapontians to build an altar and a statue of him, which was later done following consultations with the Delphic oracle (4.15).

In later times Pythagoras' contacts with the legendary characters gave grounds to regard them as the Pythagoreans. Thus, in Strabo Zalmoxis, called Πυθαγορείος τις (16.2.39), taught the Getae to abstain from animal food which prohibition they still observe (7.3.5). For Clement of Alexandria Zalmoxis was one of Pythagoras' followers (*Strom.* 4.8.58). Hippolytus counts him among those Pythagoreans who escaped fire in Croton and fled to Greece (cf. Aristox. fr. 18 on Lysis and Archippus); later he sends him to teach Pythagorean philosophy to Gallic Druids (1.2.18, 1.25.2). The fantastic novel *The Wonders beyond Thule* by Antonius Diogenes, used as a source in Porphyry's biography of Pythagoras, features the adventures of two wonderful pupils of Pythagoras, Astraeus and Zalmoxis; the latter was regarded as a god among the Getae.⁵ In Iamblichus Zalmoxis is again listed among the Pythagoreans, alongside Archytas, Lysis, Empedocles and others (*VP* 104), and he is presented as giving the Getae the laws he has learned from Pythagoras (173). Most late accounts of Zalmoxis the Pythagorean go back ultimately to a biography of Pythagoras from a learned biographical handbook, probably of the late Hellenistic/early Roman period, which was used by Clemens, Hippolytus, Antonius Diogenes and all the late biographers of Pythagoras.⁶

Pythagoras' meeting with Abaris over time accrued ever more fabulous new details. Iamblichus, for example, gives four versions of it (*VP* 90–3; 135–6; 140–1, 147; 215–21), the last of which, deriving from Apollonius of Tyana, brings together Abaris,

⁴ J. Bolton, *Aristeas of Proconnesus* (Oxford, 1962), with earlier literature; J.N. Bremmer, *The Early Greek Concept of the Soul* (Princeton, 1983), 25–40; J.N. Bremmer, *The Rise and Fall of the Afterlife* (New York, 2002), 33–40; A. Ivantchik, 'La datation du poème l'Arimaspée d'Aristéas de Proconnesse', *L'Antiquité Classique* 62 (1993), 5–67; S. West, 'Herodotus on Aristeas', in C.J. Tuplin (ed.), *Pontus and the Outside World* (Leiden, 2004), 43–67; Corcella (n. 1), 582–6. Full dossier with succinct commentary: K. Dowden, 'Aristeas' (35), *Brill's New Jacoby* (Brill Online: <http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/browse/brill-s-new-pauly>).

⁵ Phot. *Bibl.* 110a22–8; Porph. *VP* 14–15. For further references, see L. Zhmud, *Pythagoras and the Early Pythagoreans* (Oxford, 2012), 73–5.

⁶ See E. Howald, 'Handbücher als Quellen des Diogenes Laertius', *Philologus* 74 (1917), 119–30; H. Jäger, *Die Quellen des Porphyrios in seiner Pythagoras-Biographie* (Diss., Zürich, 1919), *passim*; I. Lévy, *Recherches sur les sources de la légende de Pythagore* (Paris, 1926), 111–16; W. Burkert, *Lore and Science in Ancient Pythagoreanism* (Cambridge, MA, 1972), 100–1.

Pythagoras and the Sicilian tyrant Phalaris. The Pythagoreans, in their turn, says Iamblichus, believed in everything that was told about Abaris and Aristaeas (*VP* 138). Much more intriguing than these late stories is the fact that in the catalogue of the Pythagoreans in Iamblichus (*VP* 267) that goes back to Aristotle's student Aristoxenus appeared the names of Abaris the Hyperborean and Aristaeas, though no longer of Proconnesus but of Metapontum.⁷ Since Aristoxenus' list is a historical source of primary importance based chiefly on documentary evidence, the appearance in it of two figures, one of whom belongs to legend and the other, though historical, could have become a Pythagorean only after his death, makes an odd impression. Though the biographical genre does not exclude the supernatural as such, Aristoxenus felt no sympathy for the miraculous side of Pythagoreanism and tried to offer a more rationalistic image of Pythagoras,⁸ so that he must have had serious grounds to include these personages in his catalogue. This consideration prompts us to examine afresh the early stages of the tradition about Pythagoras' encounters with representatives and connoisseurs of the northern people and the character of their contacts. It may help to note in advance that I consider discussion on the supposed Graeco-Scythian shamanism which was advanced by K. Meuli and E. Dodds and developed by W. Burkert as closed, and will not touch this topic.⁹

ZALMOXIS

The first account, on Zalmoxis, already clearly shows the principles according to which Pythagoras was later associated with the remaining characters. The starting point is always some resemblance, real or imaginary, between the teachings and practices of Pythagoras and the teachings and practices of those with whom he was brought together in the legendary tradition. The Pontic and Hellenistic Greeks, with whom Herodotus communicated, had perceived a resemblance between Pythagoras' teaching of metempsychosis, which was often identified with the doctrine of immortality (cf. Ion of Chios, B 4 DK), and the religious beliefs of the Getae (a resemblance which was certainly superficial and in no way pointed out the real contacts between them), and made Zalmoxis not just a student but a slave of Pythagoras. Herodotus did not fully believe in this legend, yet reported it as it suited his own notions of the intercultural communications. The roles of the giving and the receiving sides were prearranged and depended on Greek notions of those whom they ought to learn from and those whom they should teach. In the case of the contacts of Pythagoras with the Oriental people, he was always an active participant and they were his wise teachers. Herodotus, for example, suggested that some Greeks whose names he will not reveal borrowed metempsychosis from the Egyptians (2. 123), thus mistakenly interpreting Egyptian belief in the immortality of the soul. With regard to the people living to the north of the Greeks, whether real or mythical, the giving or simply the stronger side turned out to be the Greek wise man.¹⁰

⁷ The Aristoxenian provenance of the catalogue was suggested by E. Rohde and H. Diels and supported by W. Burkert and M. Timpanaro Cardini; see Zhmud (n. 5), 109–13.

⁸ See L. Zhmud, 'Aristoxenus and the Pythagoreans', in C.A. Huffman (ed.), *Aristoxenus of Tarentum* (New Brunswick, 2011), 223–49.

⁹ See recently Bremmer (n. 4 ['Rise and Fall']), ch. 3; Zhmud (n. 5), 207–20.

¹⁰ Interestingly, Plato's image of Zalmoxis as both the Thracian god and king and the partisan of the holistic medicine (*Chrm.* 156d–157e) did not receive further development, perhaps because,

Indeed, bringing together Pythagoras and the Getae on the basis of their beliefs, the story passed by Herodotus sharply contrasts their cultural and intellectual level. The Thracians lived a miserable life and were simple-minded (κακόβιοι καὶ ὑπαρρονέστεροι), but Zalmoxis understood the Ionian manner of life and more civilized customs through associating with the Greeks and especially with Pythagoras, one of the wisest among them (Ἑλλήνων οὐ τῷ ἀσθενεστάτῳ σοφιστῇ), which allowed him to achieve success in the homeland. We should recall here that Pythagoras' σοφία, widely attested in the fifth-century tradition,¹¹ included an element of the political and practical shrewdness, which was generally peculiar to the archaic σοφοί and positively viewed by the common people. Heraclitus, acknowledging Pythagoras' σοφίη and πολυμαθίη (B 129 DK), calls him κοπίδων ὀρχηγός (B 81 DK). This accusation of being the 'originator of swindles' might be related to Pythagoras' speeches to various groups of the Crotonians, first mentioned by the Socratic Antisthenes.¹² The latter applies to Pythagoras the Homeric epithet for Odysseus, πολύτροπος, denoting a clever, knowledgeable person, but one less than scrupulous in his means. In this sense too Zalmoxis was a true student of Pythagoras. Interestingly, in Hellanicus' paraphrase of Herodotus' account the quality of the teacher is transferred to the student: λέγουσι δέ τινες ὡς ὁ Ζάμολιξις ἐδοῦλυσσε Πυθαγόρα Μνησάρχου Σαμίῳ καὶ ἐλευθερωθεὶς ταῦτα ἐσοφίζετο (*FGrHist* 4 F 73).

Since the Greeks knew of Pythagoras much more than of Zalmoxis, in the later tradition, as we have seen above, Zalmoxis the Pythagorean has been richly endowed with features of his former master: he studies astronomy with the Egyptians, teaches philosophy to the Druids and abstention from animal food to the Thracians, and so on. The opposite transfer is also attested, though much less often: thus, the Hellenistic biographer Hermippus (c.200 B.C.) makes Pythagoras hide in the underground chamber and then reappear (*FGrHist* 1026 F 24). Now, not infrequently the similarity between Pythagoras and Zalmoxis was treated in scholarship as pointing besides their teachings of immortality to the other features which might have been common to them or transferred from one to another *already in the legend* preserved by Herodotus. I. Linforth guessed that the Getae's nickname, οἱ ἀθανατίζοντες, was originally applied to the Pythagoreans, while P. Boyancé and J. Morrison thought to discover in Zalmoxis' communal meals in the *andreion* the earliest allusion to the analogous practice of Pythagoras and the Pythagoreans, either on Samos or in Croton.¹³ F. Hartog turned the principle of the structural parallels into his working method, whereby basically anything said on Zalmoxis reflected ('the mirror of Herodotus'!) something in Pythagoras: 'The Black Sea Greeks are mocking the pair of them by mocking the one through the other.'¹⁴ Methodologically this seems to be a rather dubious procedure, even if we do not go

contrary to the dominant trend, Plato depicts Zalmoxis' physicians as superior to Greek physicians: they cure the soul with magical charms (ἐπιδοαί) and are said to be able even to give immortality (ἀπαθανατίζειν); cf. Γέτας τοὺς ἀθανατίζοντας in *Hdt.* 4.93. See M.L. McPherran, 'Socrates and Zalmoxis on drugs, charms, and purification', *Apeiron* 37 (2004), 11–33.

¹¹ Heraclitus (B 129 DK), Ion of Chios (B 4 DK), Empedocles (B 129 DK), Antisthenes (fr. 51 Declava Caizzi), Alcidas (14 A 5 DK); *Dissoi logoi* (90.6 DK). See Zhmud (n. 5), 33–5.

¹² Fr. 51 = V A 187 SSR. The tradition of these speeches is reflected also in Dicaearchus (fr. 33) and Timaeus (*ap. Iust.* 20.4).

¹³ I. Linforth, 'ΟΙ ΑΘΑΝΑΤΙΖΟΝΤΕΣ (Herodotus iv. 93–96)', *CPh* 13 (1918), 23–33; P. Boyancé, *Le Culte des Muses chez les philosophes grecs* (Paris, 1937), 134; J. Morrison, 'Pythagoras of Samos', *CQ* 6 (1956), 135–56.

¹⁴ Hartog (n. 1), 98; cf. 'Zalmoxis refers us to Pythagoras; Pythagoras refers us to Zalmoxis' (101).

as far as Hartog. The Greek neighbours of the Thracians hardly knew of Pythagoras more than that he was a σοφός renowned for his doctrine of immortality. At least, these are two points which can be safely extracted from their narrative; the rest is speculative. No Greek source ever called the Pythagoreans ἀθανατίζοντες, Pythagoras' life on Samos is completely out of reach for us, in Croton the Pythagoreans gathered in Milon's house (Aristox. fr. 18), not in any special *andreion*, whereas Pythagoras addressed his speeches not only to the archons but also to women, youths and children.¹⁵ Though the Greeks interpreted Thracian religious customs and beliefs in terms familiar to them, this was an *interpretatio Graeca*, not *Pythagorica*.

By far the boldest attempt to read Pythagoreanism through 'Zalmoxism' (using Hartog's terms) was Burkert's suggestion¹⁶ that the subterranean chamber does not really belong in the Zalmoxis tradition, because in Strabo Zalmoxis dwelt on the holy mountain. If this motif is not Thracian, argues Burkert, it must be Greek, imputed to Zalmoxis as 'a slavish imitation of Pythagoras'. An ancient pre-Herodotean version, even if in a distorted form, is to be found in the account of Hermippus, mentioned above. In his satirical setting, while Pythagoras hid in an underground room, his mother informed him about current events. After some time Pythagoras did ascend, all withered and skeleton-like, betook himself to the assembly and declared he had returned from Hades, and to prove it he read out to them everything that had happened in his absence. The lawgivers became so convinced of his divine nature that they sent their wives to him in order that they would learn some of his doctrines (*FGrHist* 1026 F 24). The presence of Pythagoras' mother in Hermippus' account, asserts Burkert, shows that this account cannot be a parodic transference to Pythagoras of what Herodotus had reported of Zalmoxis; it is rather 'a rationalizing version of something quite different'. Further reconstruction changes Pythagoras' mother, μήτηρ, into Δημήτηρ, living in the Underworld, Pythagoras himself into 'a hierophant in the cult of Demeter', and his hiding in the underground room into 'a ritually enacted *katabasis*'.

This interpretation has convinced many scholars,¹⁷ yet if we look at its initial premise, we find that the subterranean chamber *does* indeed belong in the Zalmoxis tradition. According to Strabo (7.3.5), Zalmoxis lived not *on* the mountain but in a cavernous place or dwelling (ἀντροῦδες τι χωρίον) that was inaccessible to anyone else, i.e. in the cave at the bottom of the mountain.¹⁸ This perfectly matches both with Herodotus' report and with a much wider tradition of the underground dwellers such as Amphiarus in Oropus and Trophonius in Lebadea, whom Strabo mentioned along with Zalmoxis (16.2.39).¹⁹ If this is the case, no grounds remain for denying that Hermippus' version is a satirical transference of a known motif from the slave to the master, as was commonly considered earlier.²⁰ Hermippus added to the fourth-century

¹⁵ See n. 12 above.

¹⁶ Burkert (n. 6), 158–61.

¹⁷ See, for example, F. Graf, 'Orpheus: a poet among men', in J. Bremmer (ed.), *Interpretations of Greek Mythology* (London, 1987), 80–106, at 91–2; J. Bollansée, 'Commentary on *FGrHist* 1026 F 24', in J. Bollansée (ed.), *Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker continued*. Fasc. 3: *Hermippus of Smyrna* (Leiden, 1999), 269–70; C. Riedweg, *Pythagoras: His Life, Teaching, and Influence* (Ithaca, NY and London, 2005), 56–7; sceptically: Hartog (n. 1), 101; cautiously: J.N. Bremmer, 'Descents to hell and ascents to heaven in apocalyptic literature', in J. Collins (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Apocalyptic Literature* (Oxford, 2014), 342.

¹⁸ So Bollansée (n. 17), 271; Ustinova (n. 1), 102 n. 323.

¹⁹ It was thoroughly analysed by Ustinova (n. 1), 89–104. See also E. Rohde, *Psyche* (London, 1925), 106 n. 13.

²⁰ E. Rohde, 'Die Quellen des Iamblichus in seiner Biographie des Pythagoras', *RhM* 26 (1871),

biographical tradition a number of fables, which present Pythagoras in a highly unfavourable light, yet virtually nothing coming from his pen possesses any historical value for Pythagoras' biography.²¹ Just as easily as he invented Pythagoras' father being an engraver of stones or seals, or added to the Pythagorean *symbola* a prohibition 'to walk past any place where an ass has crouched down', or alleged that Pythagoras took his philosophy from the Jews and the Thracians (*FGrHist* 1026 F 21, 23), so he could enrich the motif of the underground chamber by the image of Pythagoras' mother as his accomplice.

In retrospect, it should be noted that, while the tradition on Zalmoxis' contacts with Pythagoras evolved, the Getan *daimōn* has been subjected to the increased civilizing influence of the Greek wise man; without losing his (semi-)divine status he becomes more of a Pythagorean philosopher. This may be due to the influence of the biographical handbook, the common source of most of the late references to Zalmoxis.²² On the contrary, Pythagoras' image remained largely unaffected by the supernatural qualities of his student, if we disregard Hermippus' parody of the mocking legend on Zalmoxis the man, not god. It might be expected that the legendary tradition from the outset linked Pythagoras with Zalmoxis through a common element of wonders, but on closer inspection this is not so. It was Pythagoras' doctrine of the immortality of the soul and his σοφία, including practical shrewdness, which attracted the attention of the Hellepontine and Pontic Greeks and brought him into connection with Zalmoxis. This fully corresponds to the character of the fifth-century tradition on Pythagoras, which was, on the one hand, practically devoid of any mention of his wonders and supernatural qualities and, on the other, included his manifold wisdom and teaching of metempsychosis as the two most prominent elements.²³ It is from the mid fourth century, in the generation of Eudoxus, Xenocrates, Aristotle and Heraclides Ponticus, that Pythagoras begins to regularly appear in an environment of the legendary and the supernatural. Certainly, the core of the legendary tradition goes back to Pythagoras' own times, yet the fifth-century sources reflect the other image of Pythagoras.

ABARIS

Turning to the second of Pythagoras' northern connections, I would like to point out that since Herodotus' times the two basic principles of interpreting intercultural contacts—the resemblance and the prearrangement of the roles—are by no means antiquated. They are used just as successfully in scholarly and para-scholarly literature devoted to Pythagoras, the Hyperboreans and Abaris. Thus, in the recent book of Peter

554–76 and *RhM* 27 (1872), 23–61 = repr. in E. Rhode, *Kleine Schriften* (Tübingen, 1901), 2.102–72, at 106 n. 1; Rohde (n. 19), 263 and n. 69; P. Corssen, 'Der Abaris des Heraklides Ponticus', *RhM* 67 (1912), 20–57, at 43–5; Lévy (n. 6), 39–41; I. Lévy, *La légende de Pythagore: de Grèce à Palestine* (Paris, 1927), 133. See also H.B. Gottschalk, *Heraclides of Pontus* (Oxford, 1980), 118.

²¹ Fr. 18–24 Wehrli = *FGrHist* 1026 F 1, 21–7. See Wehrli, commentary on fr. 18–24; differently: J. Bollansée, *Hermippos of Smyrna and His Biographical Writings. A Reappraisal* (Leuven, 1997), 44–52. On the alleged *katabasis* of Pythagoras, see Zhmud (n. 5), 216–18.

²² See n. 6 above.

²³ For wisdom, see n. 11 above; to interpret σοφιστής as 'expert on wonders' (Burkert [n. 6], 211) does not stand up. Metempsychosis: Xenophanes B 7 DK, Ion B 4 DK, possibly Empedocles B 129 DK. On the early tradition in general, see Zhmud (n. 5), 25–60.

Kingsley, once an English classical scholar and now an American pop-guru,²⁴ entitled *A Story Waiting to Pierce You*, the land of the Hyperboreans turns out to be Mongolia, whereas Abaris becomes a shaman of the Mongolian tribe, the Avars, who initiated Pythagoras into the depths of Oriental spiritual tradition.²⁵ The deciding factors in such an identification are, first, the coincidence of the name Abaris with the Greek appellation of the Avars (οἱ Ἀβάρεις), whom the Byzantines encountered for the first time in the mid sixth century,²⁶ and, second, an arrow that Abaris carried with him—an arrow was held in great esteem by the Mongolians.²⁷ Revealingly, the Hyperboreans in Kingsley are turned from the northern people into an Oriental people, which is to say into a people who, according both to ancient and to modern notions, are allowed to be the teachers of the Greeks. All this strikingly resembles the eccentricities of August Gladisch, who in the mid nineteenth century identified the Hyperboreans with the Chinese.²⁸ Generally, rationalization of ancient mythical geography—the Hyperboreans, the one-eyed hairy Arimaspi and the griffins guarding the gold, as described by Aristeas, was and still is such a fascinating enterprise²⁹ that I only unwillingly leave this topic and turn to the early evidence on Abaris.

The first to mention Abaris were Pindar (fr. 270 Snell, cf. *Pyth.* 10.41 on the Hyperboreans) and Herodotus (4.36), who did not want to talk much about his wonders, then Plato (*Chrm.* 158b-c) and Lycurgus the orator (fr. 14, 5a-b Conomis). Abaris came from the land of the Hyperboreans, when the entire *oikoumenē* was stricken by a plague (Lycurgus) at the time of Croesus (Pindar); he abstained from food (Herodotus), in his hands he carried an arrow, a sign of Apollo (Herodotus, Lycurgus), he learned oracles from Apollo and predicted the future (Lycurgus). In Plato's *Charmides* Abaris and Zalmoxis appear as healers who used ἐπιφθοαί to treat the sick.³⁰ This indicates that by this time he was related, if not with Pythagoras, at least with his Thracian student, as having the powers of magical healing. Was it Heraclides Ponticus, the author of the dialogues mixing philosophy with myth and fantasy, who made the next step directly linking Abaris with Pythagoras, as is widely thought in modern scholarship,³¹ or did this

²⁴ He is featured recently in: A. Versluis, *American Gurus. From Transcendentalism to New Age Religion* (Oxford, 2014), 181–7.

²⁵ P. Kingsley, *A Story Waiting to Pierce You: Mongolia, Tibet and the Destiny of the Western World* (Golden Sufi Center, 2010). For very strong positive reviews on the book, see L. Gemelli, *Gnomon* 84 (2012), 36–40; G. Shaw, *Ancient Philosophy* 32 (2012), 171–6.

²⁶ See F. Curta, *Southeastern Europe in the Middle Ages, ca. 500–1250* (Cambridge, 2006).

²⁷ On these two items, see already G. Moravcsik, 'Abaris, Priester von Apollon', *Körösi Csoma-Archivum*, Suppl. 1 (1936), 104–18.

²⁸ A. Gladisch, *Die Hyperboreer und die alten Schinesen* (Leipzig, 1866); cf. the reaction of O. Curtius: 'seine mit dem Tone vollster Siegesgewissheit vorgetragenen Auseinandersetzungen gehen aber von den bedeutungslosesten Analogieen aus <...> und zeigen nur, dass dem geistvollen Manne das Augenmass für die Wahrscheinlichkeit bereits abhanden gekommen war'; see O. Curtius, 'Hyperboreer', *Roscher Lexicon* (Leipzig, 1884–1890), 1.2829.

²⁹ See, for instance, E.D. Phillips, 'The legend of Aristeas: fact and fancy in early Greek notions of East Russia, Siberia, and Inner Asia', *Artibus Asiae* 18 (1955), 161–77; A. Mayor, 'Heaney M. Griffins and Arimaspeans', *Folklore* 104 (1993), 40–66.

³⁰ See n. 10 above.

³¹ This was suggested for the first time by A.B. Krische, *De societatis a Pythagora conditae scopo politico* (Diss., Göttingen, 1830), 37–8. See further H. Diels, 'Ein gefälschtes Pythagorasbuch', *AGPh* 3 (1890), 454 ff. = repr. in W. Burkert (ed.), *Kleine Schriften zur Geschichte der antiken Philosophie* (Darmstadt, 1969), 266–87, at 283 n. 39; Rohde (n. 19), 327 n. 108 (with reservations, cf. n. 74 below); O. Voss, *De Heraclidis Pontici vita et scriptis* (Diss., Rostock, 1896), 56–8; Corsen (n. 20) 29, 38–41; A. Rehm, 'Zum Abaris des Herakleides Pontikos', *RhM* 67 (1912), 417–24, at 421–3; W. Bertermann, *De Iamblichi vitae Pythagoricae fontibus* (Diss., Königsberg, 1913),

happen even earlier?³² Indeed, Heraclides seems to be a very suitable person for making such a move. A παραδοξολόγος, according to Timaeus (fr. 94 Schütrumpf), and a fabulist, inclined to fiction (μυθώδη καὶ πλασματίαν ὄντα), according to Plutarch (fr. 58), he brought together in his writings many of those who had reputations as miracle-workers: Pythagoras, Empedocles, Abaris, Aristetas, Hermotimus and even Zoroaster (fr. 55). One of his dialogues was named after Abaris (fr. 130–2), who appears also in the work *On Justice* (fr. 24B); the Hyperboreans in general are mentioned in his work *On Soul* (fr. 49); in the dialogue *On the Women who Stopped Breathing* (fr. 82–95) he depicted Empedocles and Pythagoras. It is quite possible, therefore, that Heraclides could have arranged Abaris' encounter with Pythagoras. But if he did, why cannot we find reliable traces of this event before the time of Apollonius and Nicomachus?

Though Heraclides was a popular writer and his dialogues were widely read, the remaining fragments of his *œuvre* do not attest that Abaris and Pythagoras had met each other; every time they figure separately.³³ The evidence once adduced by Diels is later than Iamblichus and does not persuade: Proclus says that 'Pythagoras in his exposition addressed to Abaris (ἐν τῷ πρὸς Ἄβαριν λόγῳ) demonstrates the eye to be comparable to fire' (*In Tim.* v.2, 8.7–10 Diehl). Diels's suggestion that these words go back to Heraclides, whose name is absent, needs arguments which he did not provide; his idea that Pythagoras' legend as attested in Aristotle's *On the Pythagoreans* (Diog. Laert. 8.11 = fr. 191 Rose) is dependent on Heraclides, is obviously wrong.³⁴ Proclus' evidence was included in O. Voss's collection of Heraclides' fragments,³⁵ but was omitted from Wehrli's edition.³⁶ In the last edition of Heraclides it is included in the 'Incerta' (fr. 149A) with a reference to Diels, which makes an impression of circularity. It is much more probable that Proclus' note goes back to a late work *Λόγος πρὸς Ἄβαριν*, attributed to Pythagoras, in which he introduces an old and uneducated Hyperborean priest to his teaching.³⁷ This follows from the setting of their encounter in Iamblichus, *VP* 90–3, where Pythagoras 'taught him, in the shortest way possible his treatises *On Nature* and *On the Gods*'.³⁸

More relevant for our issue is the fact that in the Hellenistic traditions on Pythagoras and Abaris these two persons never intersect. Pythagoras featured in most Hellenistic collections of philosophical biographies,³⁹ none of which knows anything of Abaris.

45–50; P. Boyancé, 'Sur l'Abaris d'Héraclide le Pontique', *REA* 36 (1934), 321–52; C.J. de Vogel, 'On Iamblichus *V.P.* 215–219', *Mnemosyne* 18 (1965), 388–96; F. Wehrli, *Herakleides Pontikos* (Basel, 1969²), 86 ('wahrscheinlich'). Doubts were expressed by Burkert (n. 6), 103 n. 32, and criticisms by Gottschalk (n. 20), 120–6.

³² Lévy (n. 6), 23–57, 34–6; Lévy (n. 20), 48, 52; Burkert (n. 6), 103 n. 32.

³³ Note that Abaris is flying on the arrow in *On Justice* (fr. 24B), whereas Pythagoras is featured in the dialogue *On the Women who Stopped Breathing* (fr. 84–6).

³⁴ Diels (n. 31), 283 n. 39.

³⁵ Voss (n. 31), 56.

³⁶ He related it to the 'Verbindung der beiden Wundermänner in der späteren Legende', Wehrli (n. 31), 86.

³⁷ Lévy (n. 6), 25 n. 5, 79–81; H. Thesleff, *The Pythagorean Texts of the Hellenistic Period* (Åbo, 1965), 169–70; A.-J. Festugière (ed.), *Proclus, Commentaires sur le Timée* (Paris, 1967), 3.30 n. 2; Centrone (n. 2), 45.

³⁸ καὶ τὸ περὶ φύσεως σύγγραμμα καὶ ἄλλο τὸ περὶ θεῶν ὡς ἐν βραχυτάτοις αὐτὸν ἀνεδίδαξεν (*VP* 90, cf. 93), trans. Dillon-Hershbell. *On Nature* is, then, *Λόγος πρὸς Ἄβαριν*. Schütrumpf wrongly attributes *VP* 90–3, on which see pp. 13–15 below, to Heraclides, fr. 149B ('Incerta').

³⁹ His biographies were written by Aristoxenus, Dicaearchus, Neanthes of Cyzicus, Clearchus of Soli, Hermippus of Smyrna, Satyrus, Hippobotus, Sotion of Alexandria, Heraclides Lembos, Sosicrates and Anonymous in Diodorus Siculus. See Zhmud (n. 5), 63–72.

Hellenistic biography was the most important, though indirect, source for Diogenes Laertius' work on famous philosophers. Excerpts from Heraclides' works made by the biographers play quite a prominent role here: Diogenes cites him as an authority fourteen times, twice for Pythagoras (fr. 84 and 86). No trace of Abaris is to be found in this rich material. Since Diogenes Laertius ignored Nicomachus and Apollonius, on whom Porphyry and Iamblichus relied heavily, and the Neoplatonists, in their turn, paid almost no attention to the Hellenistic biographers after Aristoxenus and Dicaearchus,⁴⁰ it seems quite natural that Abaris appeared in Porphyry and Iamblichus and not in Diogenes. The Hyperborean priest of Apollo most probably entered the biographical genre in the Imperial age.⁴¹

The Hellenistic sources in which Abaris is present are silent also about his journey to Italy. Whereas in Lycurgus we read that Abaris came to Athens as a Hyperborean envoy,⁴² in *On Hyperboreans* by Hecataeus of Abdera he comes to the Greeks and to the Delians, in particular.⁴³ The paradoxographer Apollonius (second century B.C.) says he prevented a plague in Lacedaemon by prescribing a placating sacrifice to the gods (ch. 4); this echoes a note in Pausanias that some attribute to Abaris the Hyperborean a temple to Kore Soteira in Sparta (13.3). The first five *mirabilia* in Apollonius' collection, on Epimenides, Aristeeas, Hermotimus, Abaris and Pherecydes, most probably derive, perhaps via the *Amazing Stories* of Bolus of Mendes,⁴⁴ from Theopompus, who is mentioned in chapter 1 and used in chapter 5 (cf. *FGrHist* 115 F 67, 69–70). After these wonder-workers—τούτοις δὲ ἐπιτηγνόμενος—comes Pythagoras, son of Mnesarchus (ch. 6), legendary stories about whom stem from Aristotle (fr. 191). There is no indication that either Theopompus or Apollonius the paradoxographer knew of any encounter of Abaris with Pythagoras.⁴⁵ In Strabo Abaris together with Anacharsis figure as the Scythians, idealized barbarians, famous for their modesty, simplicity and justice (7.3.8). This is the first attestation of a tendency to transform Abaris into a Scyth, in which capacity he was predominantly known in Late Antiquity.⁴⁶ The only scrap of evidence that might suggest Abaris' presence in Italy is a note by Hippostratus, an author of the Sicilian genealogies (third century B.C.), which dates Abaris in the fifty-third Olympiad (568/565).⁴⁷ Rohde surmised that Hippostratus wanted to synchronize him with Phalaris, the tyrant of Acragas, Lévy

⁴⁰ Zhmud (n. 5), 72.

⁴¹ See p. 14 below.

⁴² See J. Fontenrose, *Delphic Oracle: Its Responses and Operations* (Berkeley, 1978), 162 ff., 294–5.

⁴³ *FGrHist* 264 F 7 = Diod. Sic. 2.47.5.

⁴⁴ See H. Diels, 'Über Epimenides von Kreta', *Sitzungsberichte der Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin* 1 (1891), 387 = repr. in W. Burkert (ed.), *Kleine Schriften zur Geschichte der antiken Philosophie* (Darmstadt, 1969), 35–62, at 42–3; P.M. Fraser, *Ptolemaic Alexandria* (Oxford, 1972), 2.638 n. 527 (with further bibliography). Against Diels's suggestion: K. Ziegler, 'Paradoxographen', *RE* 18/3 (1949), 1142, 1153–4.

⁴⁵ We do not even know whether Theopompus regarded Pythagoras a student of Pherecydes; for the first time this version is attested in Aristotle (fr. 611.32; cf. fr. 191) and Andron of Ephesus (probably, the second part of the fourth century B.C.), who ascribed to Pythagoras the same miraculous prophecies (*FGrHist* 1005 F 3) that Theopompus linked with Pherecydes (*FGrHist* 115 F 70).

⁴⁶ Ἀβαρίς ὁ Σκύθης ἐξ Ὑπερβορέων, ἄπειρος τῆς Ἑλληνικῆς παιδείας ὧν καὶ ἀμύητος (Iamb. *VP* 90); Ἀβαριν τὸν σοφὸν γένος μὲν Ὑπερβόρειον λέγουσιν, Ἕλληνα δὲ τὴν φωνὴν γεγενῆσθαι, καὶ Σκύθην μὲν ἄχρι στολής τε καὶ σχήματος (Himer. *Or.* 23.15); Greg. Naz. *Carm. Mor.* 684.10; Procop. *Soph. Ep.* 58.15; Ps.-Nonnus, *Schol. mythol., or.* 43, *hist.* 7.10; Suda, s.v. Abaris; Phot. *Bibl.* 374a5–20.

⁴⁷ Ἰπὸστράτος μὲν γὰρ κατὰ τὴν γγ' αὐτὸν Ὀλυμπιάδα λέγει παραγενέσθαι, ὁ δὲ Πίνδαρος κατὰ Κροῖσον τὸν Λυδῶν βασιλέα, ἄλλοι δὲ κατὰ τὴν κα' Ὀλυμπιάδα (*FGrHist* 568 F 4).

added to this synchronization Pythagoras, and F. Jacoby supported the idea that Hippostratus knew of Abaris' encounter with Pythagoras and Phalaris.⁴⁸ This combination is, however, untenable, since (1) the story of Pythagoras, Abaris and Phalaris is based on two different legends: (a) on Abaris and Pythagoras, unattested before Apollonius of Tyana, and (b) on Phalaris and Pythagoras, which in the extant literature we encounter first in Lucian (*Phalar.* 1. 10), although it may well go back to a late Hellenistic source;⁴⁹ (2) it contradicts Pythagoras' chronology (*fl. c.530*), as established by Aristoxenus and Dicaearchus by the late fourth century;⁵⁰ and (3) Hippostratus' dating presupposes Abaris' presence in Sicily as little as that of Pindar, one of his main sources, who synchronized the Hyperborean priest with Croesus (reigned c.560–546 B.C.). Why Hippostratus preferred a slightly earlier date, we do not know.⁵¹

In the Aristotelian material preserved by Apollonius the paradoxographer and in the parallel report in Aelian we find two main building blocks of the future account of how Pythagoras met Abaris. 'Once, while sitting in the theatre, he rose (according to Aristotle) and showed to those sitting there that one of his thighs was of gold';⁵² Aelian has the same episode but it occurs in Olympia.⁵³ Thus, at this early stage of the legend Pythagoras reveals his superhuman nature at the public event and without the mediation of Abaris. Aristotle's second report includes no intermediary either: ὑπὸ τῶν Κροτωνιατῶν τὸν Πυθαγόραν Ἀπόλλωνα Ὑπερβόρειον προσαγορεύεσθαι.⁵⁴ Before considering how and when Abaris was woven into the fabric of the narrative of Pythagoras' wonders, we should digress to explain why the latter was linked with the Hyperborean Apollo. It is worth noting that Aelian's notice deals with the Crotonians who *called* Pythagoras the Hyperborean Apollo; in Diogenes Laertius we encounter Pythagoras' *students* who *considered* him to be Apollo having returned from the Hyperboreans.⁵⁵ Nicomachus at Iambl. *VP* 30 relates that Pythagoras' followers 'reckoned him henceforth among the gods, as a beneficent guardian spirit (*daimōn*) and most benevolent to humanity. Some spread a report he was the Pythian Apollo, some that he was Apollo from the Hyperboreans, others that he was Paean, ...'.⁵⁶ The version by Aelian, the only one directly referring to Aristotle, is most likely the closest to the original, based on the local Italian tradition. Unlike Nicomachus' version, it does not imply that the Crotonians *identified* Pythagoras with Apollo and venerated him as a god, for the notion of an incarnated god permanently living on the earth in a human body is unattested and—moreover—unthinkable in the archaic and classical periods. Aristotle's report quoted by

⁴⁸ Rohde (n. 19), 328 n. 108 cont.; Lévy (n. 6), 119 n. 4; F. Jacoby, *FGrHist* 568 F 4, comm. 596; F. Jacoby, 'Hippostratus', *RE* 8 (1955), 1922. Boyancé (n. 31) in vain attempted to find this encounter in Heraclides Ponticus. Cf. Gottschalk (n. 20), 123–6.

⁴⁹ For tradition on Phalaris, see V. Hinz, *Nunc Phalaris doctum protulit ecce caput. Antike Phalarislegende und Nachleben der Phalarisbriefe* (Munich, 2001), 68 n. 192, 87–90, 91 n. 275.

⁵⁰ Zhmud (n. 5), 81–3. Hippostratus' predecessor Timaeus of Tauromenium put Pythagoras even later in the fifth century than Aristoxenus: K. von Fritz, 'Pythagoras', *RE* 47 (1963), 179–81.

⁵¹ Note that at *Pyth.* 1.94–6 Pindar contrasts Croesus and Phalaris. Harpocration (second century A.D.), citing Hippostratus and other sources on Abaris (*Lexicon*, p. 3.7), passes over Sicily in silence.

⁵² Apollonius, *Mir.* 6 = fr. 191, trans. Ross.

⁵³ Ael. *VH* 2.26 (Olympia is supplied by Ross); 4.17 = Arist. fr. 191.

⁵⁴ Ael. *VH* 2.26 = Arist. fr. 191.

⁵⁵ ... καὶ αὐτοῦ οἱ μαθηταὶ δόξαν εἶχον περὶ αὐτοῦ ὡς εἶη Ἀπόλλων ἐξ Ὑπερβόρειων ἀφιγμένος (8.11).

⁵⁶ καὶ μετὰ τῶν θεῶν τὸν Πυθαγόραν λοιπὸν κατηρίθουν <...> οἱ μὲν τὸν Πύθειον, οἱ δὲ τὸν ἐξ Ὑπερβόρειων Ἀπόλλωνα, οἱ δὲ τὸν Παιᾶνα <...> φημίζοντες (trans. Dillon-Hershbell). Cf. καὶ ἐν τούτῳ τῶν ἄκουσμάτων ἐστὶ 'τίς εἶ, Πυθαγόρα;' φασὶ γὰρ εἶναι Ἀπόλλωνα Ὑπερβόρειον (*VP* 140). On this *acusma*, see Zhmud (n. 5), 195 n. 102.

Iamblichus a dozen lines further, ascribed to Pythagoras an intermediary status between a deity and a mortal,⁵⁷ i.e. that of a hero, for a hero was regarded as an intermediary between god and men. This statement has a good parallel in the evidence of the sophist Alcidas, quoted by Aristotle: the Italiots rendered heroic honour to Pythagoras, just as the Clazomenians revered Anaxagoras.⁵⁸ Judging by the context, τιμῶσιν implies specifically heroic honour, paid to the famous σοφοί, rather than simply their veneration.⁵⁹ A similar—though more secularized—view is to be found in an anonymous biography of Pythagoras in Diodorus Siculus, which is heavily dependent on Aristoxenus: for his speeches Pythagoras received from the Crotonians honours equal to those given to the gods (ἴσα θεοῖς παρὰ τοῖς Κροτωνιάταις ἐτιμᾶτο).⁶⁰ Such honours may imply, though not necessarily, a heroic cult but hardly an acceptance of divinity. Note that all these sources speak of Crotonians or Italiots, not of the Pythagoreans.

Certainly Pythagoras was known and revered as a wonder-worker with superhuman qualities not only as a σοφός or powerful speaker. Several fourth-century sources point to his semi-divine status and/or link him with Apollo. According to the Socratic Aristippus of Cyrene, Pythagoras derives his name from his speaking truth no less than the Delphic god (Diog. Laert. 8.21 = IV A 150 SSR). Eudoxus of Cnidus and Xenocrates relate a legend that his mother was impregnated by Apollo,⁶¹ whereas Aristoxenus, in a typically for him rationalist manner, says that Pythagoras received his ethical doctrines from a priestess Themistoclea at Delphi (fr. 15). Pythagoras' special connections with the Delphic god reflect the fact that the cult of Apollo was especially prominent in two most important centres of Pythagoreanism, Croton and Metapontum. Croton minted coins with a tripod c.550–530, before Pythagoras emigrated to the city;⁶² this points specifically to Delphi. For the oligarchic Pythagorean *hetairiai*, which struggled for power first in Croton and afterwards in the whole of southern Italy, it was of vital importance to be under the special patronage of Apollo. The matter certainly did not confine itself to politics. Martin Nilsson rightly related Pythagoras to that direction in Greek religion, 'which strove to attain the favor of the gods through the exact observance of religious commandments and rules', and saw in the Pythagorean rules the same legalistic spirit as in the instructions of the Delphic oracle.⁶³ The god of

⁵⁷ Aristotle relates ... that the following division was preserved by the Pythagoreans ... that there are three kinds of rational living creatures—gods, men, and beings like Pythagoras' (*VP* 31 = fr. 192, trans. Ross). Cf. 'Pythagoras used to tell people that he was born of more than mortal seed' (Ael. *VH* 4.17 = Arist. fr. 191, trans. Ross).

⁵⁸ Πάριος γοῦν Ἀρχιλόχον καίπερ βλάσφημον ὄντα τετιμῆκασι, καὶ Χίοι Ὀμηρον οὐκ ὄντα πολίτην, καὶ Μυτιληναῖοι Σαπφῶ καίπερ γυναικα οὔσαν <...>, καὶ Ἴταλιῶτα Πυθαγόραν, καὶ Λαμψακηνοὶ Ἀναξαγόραν ξένον ὄντα ἔθαψαν καὶ τιμῶσι ἔτι καὶ νῦν (Arist. *Rh.* 1398b10–20 = 14 A 5 DK). On the heroic cult of poets, see D. Clay, *Archilochos Heros: The Cult of Poets in the Greek Polis* (Cambridge, MA, 2004).

⁵⁹ See D. Clay, 'The hero cult of Greek philosophers', *Oxford Encyclopedia of Greece and Rome* (Oxford, 2010), 427. According to Sotion, Parmenides build a *herōon* to his teacher, the Pythagorean Ameinias, after his death (Diog. Laert. 9.21 = 28 A 1 DK). This information goes back probably to Timaeus; see Zhmud (n. 5), 71 n. 42. Plato and Aristotle also received a heroic cult.

⁶⁰ Diod. Sic. 10.9.9. Cf. 10.3.3 ... ὡσπερὶ πρὸς τινοσ θεοῦ παρουσίαν ἅπαντας συντρέχειν ἐπὶ τὴν ἀκρόασιν. For Aristoxenus as a source of Diodorus' biography, see Zhmud (n. 5), 72 n. 47.

⁶¹ Iamb. *VP* 7 (from Apollonius) = Eudox. fr. 324 Lasserre = Xenocr. fr. 224 Isnardi Parente. It is possible that Eudoxus and Xenocrates modelled this legend on the similar story Speusippus told about Plato's Apollonian origin (fr. 1 Tarán). See A.E. Riginos, *Platonica. The Anecdotes Concerning the Life and Writings of Plato* (Leiden, 1976), 9–15; L. Tarán, *Speusippus of Athens* (Leiden, 1981), 236 n. 26. Cf. Burkert (n. 6), 146.

⁶² Burkert (n. 6), 113; C.M. Kraay, *Archaic and Classical Greek Coins* (London, 1976), 164.

⁶³ M.P. Nilsson, *Geschichte der griechischen Religion* (Munich, 1955²), 1.669.

patriarchic law and moral order would certainly commend Pythagoras' activity as a moral teacher, struggling against τρυφή, prescribing in his speeches for different social groups—elders, youths, women, children—the standard of behaviour appropriate to them.⁶⁴

Pythagoras' closeness to Apollo shows then another possibility of how he was linked with the Hyperboreans. A myth of the Hyperboreans, which was current in regions with a developed cult of Apollo, firstly in Delphi and on Delos, was older and more popular than the legend of Abaris.⁶⁵ It is quite natural, therefore, that Pythagoras could have been linked with Hyperborean Apollo much earlier than he met Abaris. The point, however, is that in our sources the deity Apollo the Hyperborean never figures independently from Pythagoras, and his cult is nowhere attested. In other words, the epiclesis Ἀπόλλων Ὑπερβόρει(υ)ος or Ἀπόλλων ἐξ Ὑπερβορέων or Ἀπόλλων ἐν Ὑπερβορείς occurs in Greek literature only in those several passages where it applies to Pythagoras; all of them go back, directly or indirectly, to Aristotle's book *On the Pythagoreans* (fr. 191).⁶⁶ Thus, we are dealing not with the likening of Pythagoras to a specific type of god worshipped by the Greeks, as, for example, Apollo Iatros or Apollo Lykeios, but with a kind of honourable nickname (cf. Apollonius Cronus, Diodorus Cronus and Menecrates Zeus, all of the fourth century B.C.) that pointed to Pythagoras' resemblance with Apollo, who returned from the Hyperboreans, and through him with the Hyperboreans themselves.

What was the nature of this similarity? All early biographers of Pythagoras, including Aristotle and Aristoxenus, agree that he went to Delos for the burial there of Pherecydes of Syros.⁶⁷ Two late biographers, Diogenes Laertius and Iamblichus, report that on Delos he worshipped at the altar of Apollo Genetor, upon which only gifts of cereals were offered.⁶⁸ This fact, also mentioned by Cicero,⁶⁹ derives from the earlier biographical tradition. While there was only one such altar on Delos, the Hyperboreans themselves completely abstained from any animal food and lived only on wild fruits and nuts, which is quite typical for the characters of the geographical utopias. This was reported first by Herodotus' contemporary Hellenicus of Lesbos,⁷⁰ though in itself it is an ancient legend, linked with the corn gifts that were confined to the agrarian festivals and sent by the Hyperboreans to Delos.⁷¹ Therefore, specifically bloodless sacrifices and an abstinence from animal food were the main features that allowed Pythagoras to be linked with the Hyperboreans and their patron Apollo. To be sure, the tradition surrounding Pythagoras' vegetarianism is contradictory. A section

⁶⁴ On Pythagoras' struggle against luxury and indulgence, see R. Bernhard, *Luxuskritik und Aufwandsbeschränkungen in der griechischen Welt* (Stuttgart, 2003), 52–62; Zhmud (n. 5), 352 and n. 19. Speeches: p. 11 above.

⁶⁵ The Hyperboreans are mentioned in the Ps.-Hesiodic *Catalogue of Women* (fr. 150, 21 M.-W.) and in Alcman, fr. 90 Page. For analysis of the sources, see Curtius (n. 28).

⁶⁶ Ael. *VH* 2.26; Diog. Laert. 8.11; Porph. *VP* 28; Iambl. *VP* 30, 135, 140.

⁶⁷ Arist. fr. 611.32, Andron (*FGrHist* 1005 F 4), Aristoxenus (fr. 14), Dicaearchus (fr. 34), Neanthes (*FGrHist* 84 F 29), Duris (*FGrHist* 76 F 22).

⁶⁸ Diog. Laert. 8.13, cf. 22; Iambl. *VP* 25 (from Apollonius), 35. On bloodless sacrifices, see also Plut. *Numa* 8.15; Clem. Al. *Strom.* 7.32.

⁶⁹ 'It is told of Pythagoras that he, having discovered something new in geometry, sacrificed a bull to the Muses, but I do not believe it, his having refused to sacrifice even to Apollo of Delos' (Cic. *Nat. D.* 3.88).

⁷⁰ τοὺς δὲ Ὑπερβόρους Ἑλλάδικος ὑπὲρ τὰ Ῥιπαῖα ὄρη οἰκεῖν ἰστορεῖ· διδάσκεισθαι δὲ αὐτοὺς δικαιοσύνην μὴ κρεοφαγοῦντας, ἀλλ' ἀκροδρῦοις χρωμένους (*FGrHist* 4 F 187c).

⁷¹ See Curtius (n. 28), 2831–2.

of the early sources claims that he abstained only from certain organs (for example, the uterus and the heart) or certain kinds of meat (for example, from non-sacrificial animals).⁷² There is no evidence that any specific Pythagorean was a vegetarian, though we can hardly doubt that such Pythagoreans did exist. The most radical version of Pythagoras' vegetarianism is attested by Archytas' student Eudoxus, who also claimed that Apollo was Pythagoras' father: 'Pythagoras was distinguished by such purity and so avoided killings and killers that he not only abstained from animal foods, but even kept his distance from cooks and hunters' (fr. 325). It is his purity, ἀγνεία, that made him so resemble the Hyperboreans (cf. Porph. *De abst.* 2.19.3) and their patron Apollo.

Returning to Abaris' encounter with Pythagoras, we have to emphasize that this account was made up primarily to prove Pythagoras' divine nature. This is quite visible in all four versions of the story in Iamblichus, at least two of which, *VP* 135–6 and 215–21, are generally agreed to stem from Nicomachus and Apollonius of Tyana respectively. In Nicomachus Pythagoras shows his golden thigh to Abaris, thus proving the latter's intuition that he is Hyperborean Apollo (Porph. *VP* 28 ≈ Iambl. *VP* 135). Apollonius omits the episode with the golden thigh and Hyperborean Apollo as not belonging to the story of Phalaris; still, he makes Abaris regard Pythagoras 'with extreme awe, like a god' (ὅς γε αὐτὸν καὶ ἐθαύμαζεν ὡς ἄν θεὸν ὑπερφυῶς, *VP* 216). The provenance of the two other reports, Iambl. *VP* 90–3 and 140–1, describing their first encounter more elaborately is not that certain. Rohde, in accordance with his two-source theory, related a more detailed *VP* 90–3 (or, rather, 91–2) to Apollonius and a more condensed *VP* 140–1 to Nicomachus.⁷³ Later, in his *Psyche*, Rohde granted that *VP* 91–2 may derive from the *Abaris* of Heraclides Ponticus, although this is uncertain, and noticed further: 'the bringing together of Abaris and Pythagoras is a late invention; it is impossible to say whether it could have occurred or did occur as early as the Aristotelian work *Περὶ τῶν Πυθαγορείων*'.⁷⁴ Corsen, admitting that Aristotle's Pythagoreans did not know of Abaris, hypothesized that *VP* 140, where Pythagoras takes away Abaris' arrow, reflects Hermippus' parody of Heraclides' dialogue.⁷⁵ Lévy argued that *VP* 91–3 derives not from Apollonius but from the third source, an anonymous biographical handbook, and that *VP* 140–1 consists of two layers, one going back to Hermippus and the other to the pre-Aristotelian Pythagoreans; Heraclides' story of the encounter between Abaris and Pythagoras is based on the latter version.⁷⁶ Burkert abandoned both Hermippus and Heraclides but agreed that *VP* 140–1, p. 79.18–23 may go back to Aristotle, for it is in the same context as the Aristotelian material.⁷⁷

If examined closely, *VP* 90–3 and 140–1 reveal an almost identical structure: while collecting gold for the Hyperborean temple, Abaris came to Greece with/on his arrow, prevented a plague in Lacedaemon and recognized Hyperborean Apollo in Pythagoras; in support of this, Pythagoras showed Abaris his golden thigh and made him a student.⁷⁸

⁷² Burkert (n. 6), 180–3; Zhmud (n. 5), 234–7.

⁷³ Rohde (n. 20), 34, 44. Bertermann (n. 31), 75–6 agreed with him, as he usually did (hesitantly about *VP* 140–1).

⁷⁴ Rohde (n. 19), 328 n. 108 cont. 'There is not a scrap of evidence to show that Herakleides did actually made Abaris meet Pythagoras' (ibid.).

⁷⁵ Corsen (n. 20), 38–40.

⁷⁶ Lévy (n. 6), 14–17, 111–12.

⁷⁷ Burkert (n. 6), 103 n. 32, 143 n. 127.

⁷⁸ Rohde (n. 20), 34: 'Beide [i.e. Apollonius and Nicomachus] folgen im Wesentlichen der gleichen Tradition.' The parallels are conveniently collected in V. Rose, *Aristoteles Pseudepigraphus* (Leipzig, 1863), 196.

The only differences here are that in the first version Abaris fled on his arrow which he then voluntarily handed over to Pythagoras, and the latter showed him the golden thigh in private, whereas in the second version the arrow only showed Abaris his way and Pythagoras took it away from him, showing the thigh publicly. Contrary to Lévy, *VP* 90–3 cannot be related to the biographical handbook,⁷⁹ because the episode with Abaris is not presented in any source dependent on it: Clement, Hippolytus, Antonius Diogenes and Diogenes Laertius;⁸⁰ Porphyry, who used this handbook, took Abaris from Nicomachus (*VP* 28). It is true that at *VP* 90–3 Abaris recognizes Hyperborean Apollo in Pythagoras, while Apollonius at *VP* 8 disagreed with the writers directly identifying Pythagoras as Apollo's son, which did not hinder him, however, from stating that 'by the multitude he was naturally confirmed to be a god's child' (10), that the sailors 'saw in the youth's good behaviour something greater than human nature' (15), and again that Abaris regarded Pythagoras as a god (215). Thus, there seem to be no serious contradictions between Apollonius' part of Iamblichus' compilation and the story at *VP* 90–3; Rohde's attribution can be taken as the point of departure.

Nicomachus' account of Abaris, copied by Porphyry (*VP* 27–8) and Iamblichus (*VP* 135–6), was a part of his longer narrative about the 'divine and marvellous deeds' of Pythagoras, which Iamblichus interpreted as proof of his piety (137). This explains why Abaris' meeting with Pythagoras is put in the context of the various wonder-stories borrowed by Nicomachus from Aristotle's *On the Pythagoreans* and from a different source going back ultimately to the same book.⁸¹ As different from Apollonius' version at *VP* 90–3, devoid of further wonders, Iamblichus, *VP* 140–1 clearly belongs to the same marvellous context, interrupted only by *VP* 137–9; *VP* 142–3 again derives from Aristotle (fr. 191). This renders very plausible Rohde's suggestion that this version is by Nicomachus, notwithstanding the difference in the episode with the arrow that flies in his account (Porph. *VP* 28 ≈ Iambl. *VP* 135–6; its handing over to Pythagoras is omitted here), but shows the way at *VP* 140–1. It is possible that these two slightly different details figured already in Nicomachus' account, for he used to tell Pythagoras' wonders in twofold form,⁸² though Iamblichus also could have edited this episode.

If we discard for a moment Apollonius' story of the contact between two wonder-workers and Phalaris (Iambl. *VP* 215–21), there are then three versions of how Abaris met Pythagoras: one by Apollonius (Iambl. *VP* 90–93) and two by Nicomachus (Porph. *VP* 27–8 ≈ Iambl. *VP* 135–6 and *VP* 140–1). All three accounts are so similar that there can be no doubt: the original version was borrowed by Apollonius and Nicomachus from the same unknown source. Since this source uses Apollonius the paradoxographer,⁸³ it was written between the second century B.C. and the second half of the first century A.D., when Apollonius of Tyana lived. It cannot be identified with any Hellenistic biography of Pythagoras familiar to us,⁸⁴ for neither they nor their readers of the Imperial era knew Abaris as a student of Pythagoras. The same is true with regard to the anonymous biographical handbooks, although one of them included a biography of Pythagoras, in which Abaris figured as his *teacher*:

⁷⁹ 'Handbuch A' in the classification of Howald (n. 6.) and Jäger (n. 6).

⁸⁰ See p. 2 above.

⁸¹ Rohde (n. 20), 44.

⁸² Rohde (n. 20), 44–5; Burkert (n. 6), 100 n. 15.

⁸³ Cf. Iambl. *VP* 92 and 141 on Abaris preventing the pest in Lacedaemon and Apollonius, *Mir.* 4.

⁸⁴ Including those by Anonymus Diodori (Diod. Sic. 10.3–11) and Anonymus Photii (Phot. *Bibl.* 438b–441b) = Thesleff (n. 37), 229–34, 237–43.

ἤκουσε πρῶτος Φερεκίδου τοῦ Συρίου <...>, εἶτα Ἀβάριδος τοῦ Ὑπερβορέου καὶ Ζάρητος τοῦ μάγου. This biography, preserved in an abridged form in the *Suda* (from Hesychius) and in a Platonic scholium (*Resp.* 600b), is very similar to that used by Diogenes Laertius,⁸⁵ but it is difficult to decide whether Abaris entered it before Diogenes (who for some reason omitted him) or after him. Taking into account that Zaratas was first linked with Pythagoras in *On Pythagorean Symbols* by Alexander Polyhistor (mid first century B.C.) and found his way into all late biographies of Pythagoras,⁸⁶ Abaris the teacher must have appeared later than him. Anyway, he is obviously not the same popular figure as Abaris the student. One can only speculate which of the two is the older, but it seems more plausible that Abaris the teacher was made up before Abaris the student became well known.

Now, comparing two independent but adjoining episodes of Pythagoras' legend, namely the episodes of the golden thigh and of Hyperborean Apollo as transmitted by the authors dependent on Aristotle,⁸⁷ with the story told by Apollonius and Nicomachus, we see that its unknown author, skilfully mingling these episodes together, subjected them to a newly introduced hero, Abaris. Pythagoras demonstrates his golden thigh to Abaris in order to confirm he was right, having first recognized in him Hyperborean Apollo, and therefore deserves the honour of being a Pythagorean. In Nicomachus, as we noticed above, the legend of Abaris was built into the narration of Pythagoras' wonders and was thus surrounded with legendary material taken from Aristotle; in Apollonius the context is quite different. What the original setting was is uncertain; the setting in Nicomachus seems to be more appropriate for this story, yet this cannot affect the fact that Abaris was inserted into Pythagoras' legend in its very late stage, so whatever detail of their meeting goes back to the original writings of Aristotle and Heraclides Ponticus, the very figure of Abaris becoming a student of divine Pythagoras is a creation of the Imperial era. If at *VP* 140–1 Abaris travels with Apollo's arrow and at *VP* 90–3 and 135–6 flies on it, it is precisely this aspect that can be traced back, respectively, to the early legend of Abaris and to Heraclides, who transformed the arrow into a flying machine (fr. 24B). Heraclides, however, treated Pythagoras as a philosopher, not a god,⁸⁸ and his fragments show no trace that he knew of the wonder stories collected by Aristotle—Pythagoras' golden thigh, the bilocation, Hyperborean Apollo and others. There is even less ground for seeing in a successful invention of a late biographer an archaic Pythagorean myth.

How then should we explain the presence of Abaris in the catalogue of the Pythagoreans, compiled by Aristoxenus?⁸⁹ To be sure, several figures in the catalogue, such as Zaleucus and Charondas, lived long before Pythagoras and thus could not be the Pythagoreans. In this instance, however, Aristoxenus recorded a venerable, though unreliable Pythagorean tradition of the fifth century aimed at conferring retrospectively on Pythagoras the reputation of a lawgiver by making Zaleucus and Charondas his

⁸⁵ A. Delatte, *La Vie de Pythagore de Diogène Laërce* (Brussels, 1922), 13–15; Burkert (n. 6), 101–2.

⁸⁶ *FGrHist* 273 F 94. Zhmud (n. 5), 88–9, 90 n. 124.

⁸⁷ The golden thigh: Apollonius, *Mir.* 6; Ael. *VH* 2.26, 4.17; Plut. *Numa* 8; Lucian, *Vit. auct.* 6, *Gallus* 18, *Dial. mort.* 20.3, *Alex.* 40; Diog. Laert. 8.11; Hyperborean Apollo: Ael. *VH* 2.26; Lucian, *Dial. mort.* 20.3; Diog. Laert. 8.11; cf. Iambl. *VP* 30.

⁸⁸ Rehm (n. 31), 432 tried to harmonize these discrepancies, unsuccessfully, as Burkert (n. 6), 103 n. 32 shows.

⁸⁹ Λάκωνες Αὐτοχαρίδας, Κλεάνωρ, Εὐρυκράτης Ὑπερβόρειος Ἀβαρίς Ῥηγίνοι Ἀριστείδης, Δημοσθένης, Ἀριστοκράτης and others (Aristox. *ap.* Iambl. *VP* 267 = 58 A DK). See n. 7 above.

followers.⁹⁰ Greek tradition on Abaris, as analysed above, speaks against the possibility that he was part of the Aristoxenian catalogue. And although I maintained earlier that the catalogue bears no clear traces of later editing, I must admit that Abaris is after all a special case and that he was inserted into the catalogue by somebody after Aristoxenus. Most probably this was Iamblichus, who appended the catalogue to his Pythagorean treatise, for he did more than anybody else successfully to integrate Abaris into the Pythagorean community and make the Pythagoreans believe in everything that was told about him (*VP* 138).

ARISTEAS

Aristeas of Proconnesus, being more of a historical figure than Abaris, is a less complex case. To be sure, in the modern scholarship his dating, as well as the circumstances of his journeys, both in his lifetime and posthumously, have been the subject of widely divergent opinions.⁹¹ James Bolton, an author of a very learned monograph on Aristeas, thought him to be a traveller of the seventh century who reached Altai and, possibly, ended his life in China, and also a poet, whose description of the Hyperboreans inspired Pythagoras to convert to vegetarianism.⁹² Askold Ivanchik regards Aristeas as an early Pythagorean, who at the turn of the sixth and fifth centuries emigrated to Magna Graecia and at some point was confused with the Metapontine hero Aristaeus, a son of Apollo.⁹³ In the ancient texts the range of opinions is not so wide. Herodotus, our main source for evidence on Aristeas, points out that he did not reach the Hyperboreans (4.13), but as early as Theopompus seemed to claim that he came to Metapontum returning from the Hyperboreans.⁹⁴ Thus, the bringing together of Aristeas and Pythagoras on the basis of their closeness to the Hyperboreans and to Apollo, by whom the Proconnesian was inspired, would appear quite natural. The following circumstances, however, deserve attention. None of Pythagoras' biographies links him with Aristeas: in Diogenes Laertius and in Porphyry he does not figure at all, while Iamblichus notes just once that the Pythagoreans trust all the stories about Aristeas and Abaris (*VP* 138), which may be true if under 'Pythagoreans' we understand Iamblichus himself. Generally in Greek literature Aristeas is surprisingly seldom mentioned together with Pythagoras, and every time as part of the narrow or wide list of the miracle-workers, as for example in Apollonius the Paradoxographer (*Mir.* 1–6) and similar texts.⁹⁵ On their personal encounter or on Aristeas' alleged Pythagoreanism our sources have nothing to say.

⁹⁰ Cf. Aristox. fr. 17, 43; Zhmud (n. 5), 114.

⁹¹ For different datings of *Arimaspea*, see M. Winiarczyk, *Die hellenistischen Utopien* (Berlin, 2011), 56 n. 69. The most realistic date, 620–580 B.C., is suggested by Dowden (n. 4), *Biographical Essay*.

⁹² Bolton (n. 4), ch. VII: Aristeas Pythagoricus. Cf. W. Burkert, 'Aristeas of Proconnesus by J.D.P. Bolton', *Gnomon* 35 (1963), 235–40; West (n. 4).

⁹³ Ivanchik (n. 4).

⁹⁴ Ath. 605c = *FGrHist* 115 F 248; see Jacoby's note to this fragment.

⁹⁵ E.g. Clem. Al. *Strom.* 1.21.133 = Her. Pont. fr. 55: προγνώσει δὲ καὶ Πυθαγόρας ὁ μέγας προσανείχεν αἰεὶ Ἄβαρις τε ὁ Ὑπερβόρειος καὶ Ἀριστέας ὁ Προκοννήσιος Ἐπιμενίδης τε ὁ Κρής, ὅστις εἰς Σπάρτην ἀφίκετο, καὶ Ζωροάστρης ὁ Μῆδος Ἐμπεδοκλῆς τε ὁ Ἀκραγαντίνος καὶ Φορμίων ὁ Λάκων, ναὶ μὴν Πολύρατος ὁ Θάσιος Ἐμπεδοτῆμος τε ὁ Συρακούσιος ἐπὶ τε τούτοις Σωκράτης ὁ Ἀθηναῖος μάλιστα. For further lists, see Burkert (n. 6), 147 n. 146.

Aristeas and Pythagoras did have common miraculous traits. Both, for example, possessed the gift of bilocation, and some scholars suggested that this ability was transferred from the first to the second. Nevertheless, this was not enough to give rise to the version involving their personal contacts. Herodotus' story of the second posthumous coming of Aristeas to Metapontum (4.15) implies a special status of Apollo in the city, yet I do not see anything specifically Pythagorean in the story itself. Aristeas' journeys in the flesh, even in the shape of a raven, do not resemble the posthumous transmigrations of Pythagoras' soul into the bodies of various people.⁹⁶ At the time when the altar to Apollo and the statue to Aristeas were erected, the Pythagoreans must have played a leading role in Metapontum, and it is quite probable that they were involved in this process too. But to assume that the altar ordered by Aristeas was dedicated to the Hyperborean Apollo under which the Pythagoreans understood Pythagoras himself⁹⁷ is to go far beyond our evidence. We have to conclude that Aristeas, being a figure in some respect akin to Pythagoras, did not come directly into contact with him.⁹⁸ What then should we do with Aristeas' appearance in the catalogue of the Pythagoreans? The simplest answer is that a person figuring in the catalogue is Aristeas of Metapontum, otherwise regrettably unknown. Bolton's idea that in fact we are dealing here with Aristeas of Proconnesus appears quite attractive, but on second thought it has to be rejected. A person who moved to another city could sometimes give its name as a place of his origin, as for example Herodotus of Thurii, although normally he referred to his native city. But to change Proconnesus to Metapontum as a result of a short posthumous visit proved to be unachievable even for Aristeas: in all ancient texts he figures as Aristeas of Proconnesus, and not as Aristeas of Metapontum.⁹⁹

All our characters—the Hyperboreans, Zalmoxis, Abaris and Aristeas—figure in the same Scythian *logos* of Herodotus, which describes the space inhabited by many fascinating and exotic figures. The northern region, either real or imaginative, to which they belonged originally, was alien to Pythagoras, the Samian émigré to Magna Graecia. It is only gradually that he was brought in connection with the divine and semi-divine representatives of the North. At first the Hellespontine and Pontic Greeks made Zalmoxis Pythagoras' slave and student, in which capacity he remained until the end of antiquity, more and more yielding to the civilizing influence of his teacher. Then it was the turn of the Hyperboreans: they became linked with Pythagoras owing to his purity and through the mediation of Apollo. Contrary to the common opinion, Heraclides Ponticus turns out not to be responsible for bringing together Pythagoras and Abaris—this happened much later, most probably in the first century A.D. As for Aristeas, this poet and traveller inspired by Apollo was born too early and reappeared too late after his death to have come in contact with Pythagoras.¹⁰⁰

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⁹⁶ Bremmer (n. 4 [*Early Greek Concept of the Soul*]), 38.

⁹⁷ Burkert (n. 6), 149.

⁹⁸ In Plutarch Aristeas was seen on his way to Croton instead of Cyzicus (cf. Hdt. 4.14), but this is rather a *lapsus memoriae* than a deviant version.

⁹⁹ For the evidence, see Dowden (n. 4). Neither the editors of Iamblichus nor Diels have identified these two persons.

¹⁰⁰ I would like to thank Tobin Auber for improving my English.