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ARIST. RHET. 2.23.1398B AND THE CULT OF PYTHAGORAS

SUMMARY: In the present article I would like to focus on three things: the usefulness of Alcidamas's fragment (cited in Arist. *Rhet.* 2.23.1398b) for the procedure of establishing when the cult of poets/intellectuals began, the suitability of the terminology in scholarly papers which refer to the problem, and the validity of the information about Pythagoras.

In conclusion it is proposed that there are no existing testimonies supporting the (weak) hypothesis that the phrase καὶ Ἰταλιῶται Πυθαγόραν featuring in manuscripts of *Rhetoric* is authentic. Few late testimonies are either too vague or they indicate only Croton and Metapontum, and *not* Greeks from the Italian peninsula in general. Such a perspective is not typical (to say the least) and at most reveals that the mention of respecting Pythagoras by those Greeks is not to be trusted fully. In the form as we know it, the phrase does not harmonize neither with the times of Alcidamas nor with the passage quoted by Aristotle.

KEYWORDS: pythagoreanism, Pythagoras, cult of intellectuals, heroic cult, cult of the Muses, Alcidamas, mouseion, memory

The mention of Alcidamas by Aristotle in Book II of his *Rhetoric* (1398b) is considered the earliest record of the cult of poets or intellectuals¹ that was flourishing in the 4th century.² This testimony, however,

¹ E.g. Clay 2004: 6; Graziosi 2002: 152.

² All the dates provided in the article, unless indicated otherwise, refer to the centuries BC.

is neither easy to interpret nor unambiguous. And the same can be said of the “cult of outstanding individuals”. The terms of reference that are commonly used or proposed in monographs or studies do not contribute to the precision of scholarly description; after all, both “cult” and “intellectual” are not only archaisms but also vague words in themselves. Still, as they encapsulate the essence of the problem, the use of both terms has a justification.

Indeed, there are more interpretive doubts in the aforementioned fragment about Alcidamas. Yet, in my article I would like to focus merely on three things: the usefulness of Alcidamas’s fragment for the procedure of establishing when the cult of poets/intellectuals began, the suitability of the terminology in scholarly papers which refer to the problem, and the validity of the information about Pythagoras. The **second reconsideration** is required both for the sake of the text analysis and because of the very status and influence of the philosopher himself. As it is often pointed out, the cult emerged quite early, and the proof for such a supposition can be found in the fragment of *Rhetoric*.³ Moreover, the mention of Pythagoras in numerous scholarly studies and the results of the text analyses have significantly contributed to our understanding of other phenomena in ancient Greek culture, e. g. the development of Plato’s Academy.⁴

Before I move on to an analysis of the fragment from Aristotle’s *Rhetoric*, I would like to explain that my article has been prompted by the ideas of two scholars: Graham Zanker (1995), who examined representations of the intellectual in antiquity, and Diskin Clay (2004), who dealt with the cult of poets. Zanker’s work is dedicated primarily to iconographic material, and the book’s main merit lies in its attempt to create a diachronic picture that gives other scholars a panoramic view of changes in the ways intellectuals were perceived in the period under consideration. Clay’s book draws on a significantly larger number of historical sources but offers a limited chronology and a different perspective. Despite its unquestionable assets (the amount of material it collects and innovative analytical tools it applies), his analysis features a few controversial elements. The category of “poets”, as Clay uses it,

³ See Boyancé 1936.

⁴ See e.g. Boyancé 1966; Huffman 2013.

is vague; his inclusion of other testimonies (not relevant to his examination) is usually left without any explanation. For example, the American researcher elaborates on relatively unknown figures (Antigonos of Knidos), or philosophers (Arideiktes of Rhodes or Pythagoras), whom he treats as poets. Besides, he analyses posthumous cults of individuals who had nothing to do with poetry at all. What links them sometimes is the cult of the Muses that would appear in these cases in funeral contexts. One of the best known examples of that phenomenon was the heroon described in the so-called Will of Epicteta.

It seems that the rejection of the too narrow term “poets” in favour of the much broader, and popularized by Paul Zanker, category of “intellectuals” would be a better solution.⁵ Even if the use of the latter, which dates back to the late 19th century, appears risky, it is, in all probability, the only possible one. As we know, there is no Greek word equivalent whose meaning would cover poets, prose writers, philosophers, historians, rhetoricians and, as Todd M. Compton⁶ calls them, “verbal artists”. The use of the term appears obvious for two more reasons – Greek intellectuals were versatile and did not limit their interests to one field of intellectual reflection only (the fact that thwarts all our efforts to pigeonhole them); what is more, these days ancient terms of reference are either dead (e.g. sophist, logopoios, rhetor), or they have assumed different connotations (e.g. grammarician, astrologist).

One can easily find a number of scholarly studies whose authors (more or less deliberately and more or less successfully) resort to the term “intellectuals”.⁷ It needs to be noted, however, that the category of “intellectuals” does not fully embrace the phenomenon of the cult of (exceptional) individuals, even in spite of its overt reference to (broadly understood) intellectual skills and education – the Will of Epicteta or

⁵ Concluding his book, Diskin Clay (2004: 94), only once and in brackets, recognizes a possibility of using the term.

⁶ The simple term “poet” is often used in such a context – e.g. by Todd M. Compton (2006) – with the proviso that it means more than the contemporary definition does. This approach, however, is not without flaws. Compton’s explanation that in antiquity the term “poet” used to cover a whole spectrum of meanings is only partly true and stems from the fact that he assumed a synchronic perspective for diachronic and supra-regional examination.

⁷ See e.g. Vatai 1984; Zanker 1995; Haake, 2008; Geiger 2014.

the cult of Hellenistic rulers are cases in point here. On the one hand, in the 4th century there existed a widespread cult of exceptional individuals; on the other hand, the historical sources from the 4th and the 3rd century testify to the emergence of posthumous heroisation of ordinary individuals. Somewhere in the mid-ground between these two extremes there was a gap for the cult of individuals who were notable for the attributes of their intellects; the cult which would assume manifold manifestations.

Being far from attempting to describe the phenomenon or to classify it, I would like to emphasize the fact that identifying the heroised intellectuals as a distinct group seems a sensible thing to do as they played an important role in public and private socio-religious rituals; an analogical procedure concerning other groups of “heroes” has yielded interesting results.⁸ When compared with other groups, the category “intellectuals” comes across as being exceptional because of its supra-regional character and the outstanding persistence of certain cults. Finally, the use and usefulness of the term do not change the fact that it is poets who constitute the most characteristic and the largest group within the phenomenon under examination.

By the same token, the use of the term “cult” needs to be adjusted to the specificity of the examined period, which, inevitably, is detrimental to the religious aspect of the whole research. As Clay shows, the peculiarity of the phenomenon is clarified by Aristotle in yet another fragment of the *Rhetoric* (1.5.1361a. 34-36) (Clay 2004: 6-7). The philosopher explicates the meaning of τιμή and, simultaneously, hints at various forms the reverence for outstanding individuals can assume. This term, very imprecise as it seems to us, is most commonly applied to describe the genuine cult of heroised intellectuals.⁹ As Aristotle shows, the idea of the cult of intellectuals can encompass certain simple forms of recognition – from gifts, prohedria and statues to traditional religious gestures (grave sacrifices and festivals). What Aristotle omits

⁸ Among other distinct groups of heroes there were athletes (Bohringer 1979; Fontenrose 1968), enemies (Visser 1982), and heroines (Larson 1995) See also Wypustek 2013.

⁹ On the use of τιμή, see Kimmel-Clauzet 2013: 192-198.

but what should be added is the phenomenon of collecting souvenirs of notable individuals, which started to develop in the 4th century.¹⁰

The multifaceted phenomenon that Aristotle describes can be better understood if we relate it to the category of remembrance of outstanding individuals and their achievements. The term appears in some of the sources, as *mnemeion* or *mneme*, in the fragments describing objects, places or actions connected with commemoration of a poet, a philosopher or an orator. And while not all of the gestures towards intellectuals require religious setting (or, at least, this is not obvious in available sources¹¹), each gesture of this kind stems from the desire to pay tribute to and to “upgrade” the achievements of the given individual, which, in turn, means recalling the category of remembrance. Of course, a commendation given to a *polis* or a group of individuals that dedicate their efforts to such a honorification is of equal importance.

The vagueness of all possible terms of reference as well as the discrepancy between contemporary theories and ancient vocabulary partly account for our difficulty with an adequate assessment and analysis of the phenomenon. They also constitute a significant obstacle to establishing the beginnings of the cult of poets/intellectuals. I would like to emphasize the fact that some scholars researching the field tend to estimate that the phenomenon began in the late 6th or early 5th century. Certain studies, however, e. g. Pierre Boyancé’s (on the cult of Pythagoras), Natasha Bershadsky’s (2011 - on the cult of Hesiod) or Diskin Clay’s (on the cult of Archilochus) seem to lose their validity because they lack, among other things, a thorough examination of the social and cultural background against which such cults could have emerged. The sources they all draw upon cannot be considered in a vacuum or separated from the historical context in which they originated and which they reflected. The emergence of the heroic cult of poets/intellectuals must have been related to certain social and cultural needs, which it could be a good idea to elaborate on. Admittedly, the phenomenon

¹⁰ See Hermippos FGrH 1026 F84 – Mojsik (forthcoming); on collecting in antiquity see Gahtan, Pegazzano 2014.

¹¹ There is nothing sacred about an act of collecting things; however, an act of placing them later in a shrine as votive offerings does make them sacred. See Hermippos FGrH 1026 F84.

should not be taken for granted as obvious and easy to comprehend – the poets earned the status of “classics” later. Therefore, the growth and popularity of the cult ought to be explained in a broad context of changes in Greek culture from the 5th to the 4th century.

Zanker’s analyses of the iconographic representations of intellectuals are interesting examples of drawing dissimilar conclusions from sources that are analogical to ones used by the scholars mentioned above. Let us consider how he interprets the function of the fifth-century statute of Anacreon. Zanker correctly asserts that the representation of the poet, who once was a guest at the court of Peisistratids, could not have been an expression of honorification of him *as* a poet, but, given the context in which he was represented, must have been meant to show him as an ideal citizen (Zanker 1995: 30-31). The famous epigraph of Aeschylus, which emphasizes his exceptional role as a citizen but says nothing of his poetic achievements, is yet another manifestation of this tendency.¹² The problem of honouring Sophocles with the title of *Dexion* is perhaps the most telling example of examination that ignores the cultural context. By referring to this well-known case,¹³ Clay does not mention the fact that the cult does not commemorate Sophocles as a poet. As we know from the sources, the act of honouring Sophocles was connected with sacral rituals he performed and with his role as a citizen of the *polis*, not as a tragedian.

Summing up the aforementioned remarks, there is sufficient evidence for the claim that honorific gestures concerning the “poets” in the 5th century did not necessarily refer to their poetic skills. There is no source available that would unequivocally suggest a different explanation. Besides, this confirms all that we know about the status of the poet, or, more generally, the intellectual in Archaic and Classical Greece.¹⁴ The attitude to them changed gradually, and its effects were observable in the late 5th and the early 4th century; in addition,

¹² I put aside the question of the epigraph’s authenticity and the date of its composition as irrelevant (for this see Sommerstein 2010) because, in my opinion, the text in its known form still expresses the ideas that are typical of the 5th century.

¹³ See Connolly 1998.

¹⁴ See e.g. Slings 1989; Ford 2009.

the changing attitudes paralleled other cultural phenomena that were emerging at the time.

The earliest available testimony that possibly hints at the existence of such a cult comes from the 4th century and concerns Gorgias's student, Alcidas.¹⁵ Its significance can be seen, for example, in Clay's work, where the fragment under consideration was a crucial part of the whole argument and a proof of the validity of dating cults of poets to earlier times, particularly the cult of Archilochus (Clay 2004: 6-7, 93-95). That is why this evidence should come under closer scrutiny. The quotation from Alcidas's work that is of particular importance for our analysis can be found in Aristotle's *Rhetoric* (2.23.1398b. 10-19):¹⁶

καὶ ὡς Ἀλκιδάμας, ὅτι πάντες τοὺς σοφοὺς τιμῶσιν· “Πάριοι γοῦν Ἀρχίλοχον καίπερ βλάσφημον ὄντα τετιμήκασιν, καὶ Χῖοι Ὅμηρον οὐκ ὄντα πολίτην,¹⁷ καὶ Μυτιληναῖοι Σαπφῶ καίπερ γυναῖκα οὔσαν, καὶ Λακεδαιμόνιοι Χίλωνα καὶ τῶν γερόντων ἐποίησαν ἥκιστα φιλόλογοι ὄντες, καὶ Ἰταλιῶται Πυθαγόραν, καὶ Λαμψακηνοὶ Ἀναξαγόραν ξένον ὄντα ἔθαψαν καὶ τιμῶσι ἔτι καὶ νῦν, ὅτι¹⁸ Ἀθηναῖοι τοῖς Σόλωνος νόμοις χρησάμενοι εὐδαιμόνησαν καὶ Λακεδαιμόνιοι τοῖς Λυκούργου, καὶ Θήβησιν ἅμα οἱ προστάται φιλόσοφοι ἐγένοντο καὶ εὐδαιμόνησεν ἡ πόλις”.

And [another example is] as Alcidas [argued], that all honor the wise; at least, Parians honored Archilochus despite the nasty things he said [about them]; and Chians Homer, though he was not a citizen; and Mytilenaeans Sappho, although a woman; and Lacedaimonians, though least fond of literature, made Chilon a member of their council of elders, and the Italiotes honored Pythagoras and the Lampsacenes buried Anaxagoras, though a foreigner, and even now still honor him. And Athenians were prosperous while using the laws of Solon, and Lacedaimonians when [using] those of Lycurgus; and at Thebes, at the

¹⁵ Diskin Clay consistently dates Alcidas's evidence to the late 5th century, which is rather improbable. On other relevant pieces of evidence concerning the problem see: Mojsik (forthcoming).

¹⁶ Alcidas fr. 10-11 Avezzu = fr. 3-4 Muir.

¹⁷ Surprisingly, in this version Homer is not a citizen of Chios, and this is the most often quoted place of his origin.

¹⁸ I am drawing on R. Kassel's edition (1976); some of the manuscripts feature καὶ, Iohanes Diaconus – καὶ ὅτι, Vahlen proposes a lacuna.

time the leaders became philosophers, the city prospered [trans. G. A. Kennedy].

The majority of scholars are of the opinion that the fragment Aristotle quotes, or at least the part of it until Anaxagoras is mentioned, comes from Alcidas's work entitled *Mouseion*, which features a famous argument between Homer and Hesiod.¹⁹ It appears that even if the work focused on both legendary figures, it could have included more or less elaborated profiles of other poets and philosophers. A part of the information – irrespective of the fact whether it was authored by Alcidas, or whether Alcidas drew upon some earlier sources – was undoubtedly fictitious.

While moving on to the analysis of the fragment, it has to be remarked that we do not know where the quotation from Alcidas's work ends and Aristotle's text begins. The further part, i.e. one relating to Solon and lawgivers, is treated differently, i.e. as a separate fragment, by editors of Alcidas.²⁰ Rudolf Kassel is inclined to the opinion that the fragment on lawgivers is Aristotle's addendum and *not* a part of Alcidas's text, which – as a matter of fact – is clearly indicated in his edition of Aristotle's work. So we are unable to verify the accuracy of the quote as well as the terms Aristotle uses. Despite the fact that it is highly probable that the quote was borrowed from *Mouseion*, nothing is known of the context in which Alcidas mentioned forms of honorification and respect towards other poets and philosophers.²¹ It is usually assumed that this could have been an element of an introduction to the dispute between Homer and Hesiod and to a discussion on *sophia*.

However, when it comes to the examination of the cult of poets/intellectuals the key interpretive problem is the ambiguity of the verb τιμάω (πάντες τοὺς σοφοὺς τιμῶσιν; τετιμήκασι; Ἀναξαγόραν ξένον ὄντα ἔθαψαν καὶ τιμῶσι) used in the fragment. Obviously, the word names an activity of honouring somebody in a way, but this way of

¹⁹ See Richardson 1981.

²⁰ Fr. 11 Avezzu = fr. 4 Muir.

²¹ Aristotle himself does not help here either: his quotation from Alcidas is included in the part dedicated to syllogisms and models of argument, and in this particular excerpt he provides examples of inductive reasoning.

expressing respect may assume various forms: from simple, individual or group, gestures to formal, group or public, initiatives. Aristotle himself makes a similar point in the aforementioned fragment from Book I of *Rhetoric* (1.5.1361a. 34-36):

μέρη δὲ τιμῆς θυσίαι, μνημαὶ ἐν μέτροις καὶ ἄνευ μέτρων, γέρα, τεμένη, προεδρίαι, τάφοι, εἰκόνες, τροφαὶ δημόσιαι – *The components of honor are sacrifices [made to the benefactor after death], memorial inscriptions in verse or prose, receipt of special awards, grants of land, front seats at festivals, burial at the public expense, statues, free food in the state dining room* [trans. G. A. Kennedy].

In the above source as well as in Alcidamas's fragment, forms of honouring connected with posthumous sacral gestures (θυσίαι; τεμένη; τάφοι) are interwoven with ones reserved for the living and connected with the act of strengthening the social prestige of an individual (προεδρίαι; τροφαὶ δημόσιαι). This, undoubtedly, demonstrates that as early as in the second half of the 4th century Greeks perceived this set of gestures as a continuum and did not distinguish clearly between forms of honouring. The complexity or multifaceted nature of the problem can be seen also when we take into consideration statues (or other iconic representations), which may commemorate both the dead and the living, and which do not necessarily express any cults at all. To illustrate the case in point, we can again refer to the statue of Anacreon on the Acropolis of Athens (Paus. 1.25.1). In the context of the cult of poets, the statue may, theoretically, be taken as the proof of the early emergence of the phenomenon of that kind. However, as Zanker showed, the significance of the statue cannot be considered outside the context of the democratic Athens in the mid-5th century, irrespective of the exact location of the sculpture, or without taking into account the poet's reputation (in Athens) as one who associated himself with tyrants (Zanker 1995: 22-31).

Bearing in mind the aforementioned interpretive restrictions, it seems that the information included in Alcidamas's fragment should be treated with caution. It is not clear whether the honours towards Archilochus, Sappho and Homer that Alcidamas recalls are connected, let us say, with the cult at a grave, or whether they refer to something

much simpler, e.g. erecting a statue of the given poet within the area of *polis*, or including his works in *mousikoi agones*.²² I would like to point to the fact that the existing text does not provide any detailed information on how the three poets were honoured. Such a piece of information accompanies the mention of granting Chilon honorary membership of the Gerousia, and the reference to Anaxagoras's grave in Lampsakos. As for Chilon, rather than heroised, he was *respected* for his wisdom. When it comes to Anaxagoras and Lampsakos, where the philosopher appeared shortly before his death, there is no sufficient proof of the claim that from the very beginning the cult at his grave was connected with the attributes of his intellect.²³

Generally speaking, the heroic cult at a grave is (also from the historical point of view) an ultimate form of honouring the poet/intellectual, and that is why the phenomena described in Alcidamas's fragment cannot be subsumed under one, narrow, and arbitrarily selected category. What is more, any analysis of the issue should not overlook the regional diversity prevailing at the time in the region as well as changes in the chronological perspective. What can be called the "cult", for want of a better term, of intellectuals should, perhaps, be perceived as a dynamic and multifaceted phenomenon that tended to assume different forms in different social and cultural contexts.

Moreover, as I have already indicated, the most important aspect of this phenomenon is not the very act of making the poet/intellectual a hero or revering his grave, but **memory**; and this category, as one of the crucial aspects of Greek social life, should play a key role in the analysis of the cult of intellectuals. Such a perspective makes it possible to consider numerous cultural phenomena together, re-consider seemingly marginal gestures, and re-direct our attention from outstanding poets/intellectuals to communities and individuals responsible for deciding who and how should be honoured.

Bearing in mind the aforementioned reservations concerning the interpretation of Alcidamas's fragment, let me now focus on the

²² On statues of Homer – see Zanker 1995: *passim*; on the presence of Archilochus's works on contests (the presence of Homer being more than obvious) – see Heracl. 22 B 42 and Pl. *Ion* 531a.

²³ See DL 2.3.14-15; Ael. *VH* 8.19 – indeed, the cult assumed such a character later.

information related to Pythagoras, which I deliberately omitted in the first part of my article. The analysis of this fragment seems to be paramount importance as the information it conveys is often repeated in translations and scholarly papers, even despite the fact that its authenticity is doubtful. And conclusions drawn on its basis, hinting at an early date of the cult of the philosopher, are rather controversial.²⁴

In his article published in 1861, Charles Thurot pointed out that the phrase καὶ Ἰταλιῶται Πυθαγόραν may be not authentic (Thurot 1861: 47). He remarked that the lack of a verb and any additional information (as it is with other people referred to) is more than noticeable. Thurot's analysis was taken up and developed by Rudolf Kassel during his editorial work on Aristotle's *Rhetoric* – he finally decided that the fragment was not part of the quotation from Alcidamas's work but was added later (Kassel 1971: 139-140). According to Kassel, in all probability the phrase was initially a note on the manuscript margin (*Randnotiz*), which, at a certain stage of the book's dissemination, was incorporated into the main text. As he also observed, there is no information whatsoever about an obstacle that could have prevented Pythagoras from obtaining the honour, but somehow he did not (as the previous phrases with participles γυναῖκα οὔσαν, οὐκ ὄντα πολίτην, καίπερ βλάσφημον ὄντα would make us expect). Of course, the existence of a lacuna in this particular fragment could be assumed, but for Kassel such an assumption would be artificial and detrimental to any further examination of the text.

Kassel draws our attention to the fact that from the moment Chilon is mentioned in the text the whole structure of the passage changes, namely there appears an additional explanation concerning ways of honouring – Chilon becomes a member of the Gerousia, and Anaxagoras is granted a public funeral. The information about the obstacles, i.e. that Spartans are not φιλόλογοι, and Anaxagoras is a stranger in Lampsakos, is sustained. However, as for the mention of Pythagoras, there is nothing about obstacles or ways of honouring.

Moreover, the change in the structure of the fragment from the mention of Chilon is connected with the change of the predicate, from τιμῶσιν to ἐποίησαν, which strengthens the impression of the phrase

²⁴ See e.g. Boyancé 1936, Clay 2004.

καὶ Ἰταλιῶται Πυθαγόραν being haphazardly inserted in this part of the sentence. As Thurot indicated, the lack of a verb is obvious, and ἐποίησαν is not possible.

So if Kassel's judgment is correct, the problem with the interpretation of the fragment that is crucial for the examination of the cult of poets/intellectuals cannot be limited to the aforementioned reservations concerning the way of quoting, its scope, terminology and lack of the original context for Alcidas's fragment, but should take into consideration the fact that the handwritten corpus of traditional texts is "contaminated" by later addenda. Of course, there is a little chance that there is a lacuna in the text, which would account for the impression that it was taken out of the original context. That is why syntax and structural analyses of Alcidas's fragment should be supplemented by additional clarifications.

First of all, the information about honouring Pythagoras differs from other examples of this kind in other respects, too. All the cases illustrate the act of honouring an individual by political communities: Paros, Chios, Lesbos, Sparta and Lampsakos. In the case of Pythagoras, it is a more "vague" group: Ἰταλιῶται, i.e. Greeks in Italy.²⁵ This, in turn, would suggest that the alleged cult developed simultaneously in numerous *poleis* – a virtual impossibility at the time and in the given form. Equally mistaken would be an assumption that the fragment refers to a cult at a grave, as Boyancé asserted, because such a cult would have to be located on a particular site (Boyancé 1936: 233-247). It cannot be ruled out that the use of Ἰταλιῶται is a simplification, and that it names a kind of respect (good remembrance) manifested by Italian Greeks towards Pythagoras. Still, it is rather problematic to reconcile this information with other testimonies to the cult and the grave in Metapontum/Croton, or to build up on its basis a theory about the 5th-century origin of the cult of the philosopher.

To be able to properly assess the hypothesis of the early origin of the phenomenon, we need to briefly review well-known testimonies to the cult of Pythagoras, or testimonies that are interpreted as confirming the hypothesis. As I have already mentioned, this is important also in the context of relations between representations of Pythagoras, a model

²⁵ See Hdt 4.15; Th. 6.44.

of Pythagorean society, and the emerging Academy as well as the cult of Plato in the 4th century.

Indeed, also in this case the Pythagorean tradition is as entangled as the Gordian knot. Allegedly, a certain testimony concerning the cult of Pythagoras comes from Marcus Junianus Justinus's epitome of the *Philippic History of Pompeius Trogus* (20.4):

Pythagoras autem cum annos XX Crotone egisset, Metapontum emigravit ibique decessit; cuius tanta admiratio fuit, ut ex domo eius templum facerent eumque pro deo colerent.

Pythagoras, after living twenty years at Crotona, removed to Metapontum, where he died; and such was the admiration of the people for his character, that they made a temple of his house, and worshipped him as a god [trans. J. S. Watson].

The above testimony signals the presence of the philosopher's cult in Metapontum in the 1st century. The only problem here would be the exact identification of the grave site. Croton, a possible location of the house dedicated to gods, is equally often mentioned in sources.²⁶ Even if we recall the testimony of Cicero, who visited Metapontum and saw the site of the philosopher's death, any final adjudication seems impossible.²⁷ In this particular case translation heavily depends on interpretation as the phrase *sedes et locus* may refer both to a grave or a site.²⁸ Undoubtedly, in the 1st century the site in Metapontum, where Pythagoras either died, or had a house, or a grave, was commonly identified. This, however, can hardly be reconciled with another early tradition, dating back to Dicaearchus of Messana, suggesting that Pythagoras

²⁶ See Tim. FGrH 566 F 133 [Porph. VP 4]; DL 8.15 = Favorinus frg. 73 Barigazzi.

²⁷ Cic. *de finibus* 5.2.4: *Ego autem tibi, Piso, assentior usu hoc venire, ut acrius aliquanto et attentius de claris viris locorum admonitu cogitemus. Scis enim me quodam tempore Metapontum venisse tecum neque ad hospitem ante devertisse, quam Pythagorae ipsum illum locum, ubi vitam ediderat, sedemque viderim. Hoc autem tempore, etsi multa in omni parte Athenarum sunt in ipsis locis indicia summorum virorum, tamen ego illa moveor exhedra.*

²⁸ See e.g. Vallet 1974. In this passage Cicero wanted to indicate sites that evoke remembrance of a given person – hence the reference to Pythagoras.

died in Metapontum in a shrine of the Muses after 40 days of fasting.²⁹ The only problem is that shrines to the Muses, mentioned in the biographies of Porphyry and Iamblichus and connected rather with a visit to Croton, do not seem an original element of biographical tradition and, apparently, were added later.³⁰

So we are not sure neither where Pythagoras died (Croton?, Metapontum?) nor how he died. Although the analogical uncertainty pertains to the philosopher's grave, one, in fact, was identified in Metapontum during the times of Cicero. There are speculations that the philosopher's house was turned into a shrine (to Demeter), but there is some disagreement about the exact location of the building. In all probability, the above-mentioned tradition is a blend of different versions of events with fictitious elements.

It could, theoretically, be argued, as Valerius Maximus (8.15) does, that the consecrated house was the site remembering Pythagoras,³¹ but such a general sentence has only a symbolic value and should be treated as a late literary interpretation.

In conclusion, it can be argued that conclusive evidence of the cult of Pythagoras in Metapontum or Croton cannot be provided. Even if there are some 4th-century testimonies concerning the philosopher (especially Dicaearchus and Timaeus), none of them imply the existence of Pythagoras's grave or the cult of him. This, however, does not mean that Greek towns in the Italian peninsula did not cultivate the remembrance of the Pythagoreans and the founder of the society. Yet, this remembrance did not refer to all *poleis* because the Pythagoreans were not present in each of them. Secondly, at the time the remembrance had not assumed the form of a heroic cult (yet). Thirdly, bearing in mind the

²⁹ Dicaearch. fr. 41 Mirhady = DL VIII 40: φησὶ δὲ Δικαίάρχος τὸν Πυθαγόραν ἀποθανεῖν καταφυγόντα εἰς τὸ ἐν Μεταποντίῳ ἱερὸν τῶν Μουσῶν, τετταράκοντα ἡμέρας ἀσιτήσαντα; cf. Porph. *VP* 57.

³⁰ See Mojsik 2011, 50-65. According to Boyancé's hypothesis, after the philosopher's death the cult of the Muses was linked with the heroic cult (Boyancé 1936: 233-247). See also Provenza 2013.

³¹ Val. Max. 8.15: *enixo Crotoniatae studio ab eo petierunt ut senatum ipsorum, qui mille hominum numero constabat, consiliis suis uti pateretur, opulentissimaque ciuitas ~ tam frequentem uenerati post mortem domum Cereris sacrarium fecerunt, quoadque illa urbs uiguit, et dea in hominis memoria et homo in deae religione cultus est.*

circumstances surrounding the fall of the Pythagorean school, political activities (rather than philosophical views) of the disciples would be a key element for sustaining social remembrance of the group. Their philosophical views might have become important later, e.g. in the 4th century, when they became confronted with ideas propagated by the already developed prestigious school of Plato.

All the above remarks lead to the conclusion that there are no existing testimonies supporting the (weak) hypothesis that the phrase καὶ Ἰταλιῶται Πυθαγόραν featuring in manuscripts of *Rhetoric* is authentic. Few late testimonies are either too vague or they indicate only Croton and Metapontum, and *not* Greeks from the Italian peninsula in general. Such a perspective is not typical (to say the least) and at most reveals that the mention of respecting Pythagoras by those Greeks is not to be trusted fully. In the form as we know it, the phrase does not harmonize neither with the period of Alcidas nor with the passage quoted by Aristotle.

Finally, even though it is difficult to prove the existence of the cult of Pythagoras in the Italian peninsula before the 1st century, it is possible to speculate that a “cult” of such a kind existed in the 4th century on Samos. This can be implied, for example, from Duris of Samos’s remark about a raising of the philosopher’s statue by his son, Arimnestos.³² In an analogical context we can locate B. Freyer-Schauenburg’s analysis of the 4th-century relief (showing a man and female figures, probably the Muses) that suggests the possibility of the existence of the heroon of Pythagoras on Samos (Freyer-Schauenburg 1992).

On the basis of the above deliberations I want to draw a set of conclusions:

- for numerous reasons Alcidas’s testimony cannot be treated as an unequivocal proof of the existence of the cult of poets/intellectuals in the 5th century;
- the words καὶ Ἰταλιῶται Πυθαγόραν from the existing manuscripts are not part of the original *Rhetoric* but an addendum;
- that is why the passage under consideration cannot be used as a primary argument for the early dating of the cult of Pythagoras.

³² Duris FGrHist 76 F 22-23 – see Zhmud 2006: 63.

Consequently, late testimonies to forms of commemorating the philosopher need to be regarded in an utterly different context as simply indicating a cult or ways of honouring during the Hellenistic era.

Admittedly, the lack of unequivocal testimonies originating from the 5th century does not mean that the cult of intellectuals must have emerged in the 4th century. In fact, this lack points to the insufficiency of arguments for accepting such a thesis. As it seems, the development of the phenomenon could not be homogenous in the whole Greek world because of the political fragmentation and cultural differences, which were inevitable. It is therefore possible that not only did the cultivation of the dead because of their intellectual abilities emerge around the 5th century, but that in some regions of the Greek world it started earlier.³³ It might have assumed such forms that defy all our attempts to classify or universalize the phenomenon.

The development of the cult could also have been stimulated by the biographical tradition that was just emerging in the 4th century.³⁴ Early stages of this tradition can be found in the surviving fragments of Alcidas's works, particularly in his *Mouseion*. In fact, other aspects of the phenomenon analysed here can also be examined in relation to the daughters of Mnemosyne: e.g. it is not accidental that the goddesses appear in the context of the cult at a grave of poets (Archilocheion on Paros) or ordinary citizens (the heroon of Epicteta's family on Thasos).³⁵

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³³ See Wilson 2007 and the tomb of Aeschylus in Gela.

³⁴ See Hägg 2012. It can be added that biographical tradition could have accounted for, to a certain extent, for the elimination of differences between regions as well as for the universalization of the phenomenon.

³⁵ See Mojsik 2013.

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