

How to Live Differently within a Community: On the ‘Hetairic’ Origins of the Pythagorean Way of Life and Its Peculiar Character (*Idiasmos*)

In a detailed account of the anti-Pythagorean uprisings in Southern Italy (*On the Pythagorean way of life*, 254-264) Iamblichus goes beyond the purely political causes of the events by putting great emphasis on the annoyance felt by the Crotoniates because of the peculiar character (*idiasmos*) of the Pythagorean way of life. Their singular *bios* distinguished the members of the Pythagorean political club (*hetaireia*) and set them apart from their fellow citizens, who in turn felt this radical difference as a threat to themselves and to the polis.

In my paper I would like to focus on the following issues:

1. The historical accuracy and antiquity of this late testimony, which, through Apollonius (the direct source of Iamblichus), can plausibly go back, roughly, to the historian Timaeus of Tauromenium (4th – 3rd cent. BC).
2. The extent to which the difference in terms of way of life, customs and practices (*ethē, nomima, epitēdeumata*) was also at the core of other, earlier, *hetaireiai* in Antiquity.
3. The ways in which, within the Pythagorean communities, the aristocratic (and specifically ‘hetairic’) value of *philia* is invested with philosophical meaning, linked to new economical practices (i.e. communality) and played against the traditional values attached to family ties and blood relation (*syggeneia*).
4. The content of the Pythagorean way of life practiced by the groups described by Timaeus, its points of contact with the customs of other groups (religious or political), and the elements that make it distinctive, unique and also deviant from the values transmitted in the common *paideia* provided by the polis.
5. The pivotal role that seems to have been played by the ancient Pythagoreans in creating a new social and cultural structure which opened the way to the philosophical schools of later generations, a structure derived from an older, political one: the *hetaireia*. The common point ensuring the transition from the one to the other is the importance accorded to the way of life, its cultivation and collective practice within a group and its perpetuation through education.

Biography:

Researcher at the CNRS, Paris. Specialization: Pythagoreanism, from the Presocratics to Neoplatonists; philosophy and religion. Doctorate on Iamblichus’ *Pythagorean Way of Life* (2004). Publications: commentary on Porphyry’s *Life of Pythagoras* (Athens 2001; updated English translation with new introduction forthcoming); *Under the Shadow of Pythagoras: Contributions to an ‘Archaeology’ of the Pythagorean Tradition* (Paris 2014). Currently working on a Pythagorean prosopography.