

The Pythagorean Doctrine in the Caucasus

1. In the context of intercultural philosophical studies the research and analysis of transnational philosophical discourses is extremely important. In this regard, one of the newest attempts is to outline the concept of “Caucasian Philosophy”, the methodological foundations and prerequisites of which have been worked out (T. Iremadze). In the light of Caucasian philosophy the Pythagorean concept of philosophy has its own place. This concept largely determined the role, mission and purpose of philosophy in this region.
2. The first remarkable notification about Pythagorean doctrine in the context of Caucasian philosophy is given in the creative philosophical work of the great Armenian thinker and important representative of the Alexandrian school of Neo-platonic philosophy David the Invincible (VI c). In his famous work *Definitions of Philosophy*, David speaks about six famous definitions of philosophy the source of which can be found in the doctrines of Pythagoras and Pythagoreans (together with other famous thinkers of antiquity). The proper analysis of David’s text shows that for him the major sources about the Pythagorean doctrine are the works of Ammonius Hermiae and the notifications about the Pythagorean doctrine by Nicomachus (Nikomachos of Gerasa).
3. The specific influence of Pythagorean doctrine is revealed in the commentaries of the great Georgian medieval philosopher and theologian Joane Petrizi (XII c) which he has made on Proclus’ work – *The Elements of Theology*. For Petrizi, Pythagoras and the Pythagoreans belong to the line of ancient theologians and are referred as a people narrating the supreme truth. It should be noted that Petrizi names Parmenides and Zeno as followers of Pythagoras. Petrizi considers the first principle of cosmos, and in particular, the *one*, as a source of general philosophical concepts and definitions. The *one*, in which everything participates, determines the origin of genera. These genera hold their foundation in the *one* and they get their essence from it. This supposition becomes clearly visible on consideration of the numbers. Petrizi attempts to explain the development of each unit by speculative theory of numbers. The origin of the row of numbers – the *one* – determines all members of this row. The origins of natural and musical harmony are in numbers, which, in turn, are dependent on the *one* as a number. In this context, Petrizi recalls Parmenides’ conversation with Socrates about numbers. It is certain that here he relies on Plato’s dialogue “Parmenides”. In such a manner Petrizi justifies his methodological approach and, in particular, he intends to define the emanation of natural units from the *one* by speculation of numbers depending on Parmenides. The latter considers it important to explain major philosophical problems by speculation of numbers. Here the obvious influence of Pythagorean doctrine is revealed. In particular, Petrizi discusses examples from music and associates them with rich materials of Greek mythology. He needs this in order to explain and define the beings originating from the *one*. The existence of these beings is determined only by the *one*.
4. The doctrine of Pythagoras and the Pythagoreans was known in the Caucasus by means of the old Georgian translations of Ammonius Hermiae’s works. In addition, the works by David the Invincible and Joane Petrizi were the subject of intensive reception and transformation in the Caucasus in the medieval age as well as in early modern period. Therefore, notifications and the views of David and Petrizi about Pythagoras and the Pythagoreans were spread throughout the Caucasus.
5. The doctrine of Pythagoras and the Pythagoreans, in the context of medieval and early Caucasian philosophy became the subject of Christian reception and transformation. In the Caucasus, the old Georgian translations of John Damascus’s works were highly prevalent. The notes preserved in these translations represent the additional sources about the Pythagorean concept of philosophy on the basis of which it is possible to speak about the Caucasian reception and transformation of the Pythagorean doctrine.

Biography:

Tengiz Iremadze is Professor of Philosophy and Social Sciences at Grigol Robakidze University (Tbilisi, Georgia) and the Director of the Institute of Philosophy and Social Sciences. He earned his Doctorate degree at the Ruhr-University of Bochum (2003). His areas of interest include Georgian and European Philosophy, Intercultural Philosophy, the Philosophy of War and Peace, the Sociology of Terror and the Sociology of Media. He is the author of *Philosophy at the Crossroad of Epochs and Cultures. Intercultural and Interdisciplinary Researches* (Tbilisi: Neker Publishing House, 2013, in Georgian), *Walter Benjamin. Life, Work, Actuality* (Tbilisi: Neker Publishing House, 2008, in Georgian), *Friedrich Nietzsche. „Also sprach Zarathustra“: Text and Context* (Tbilisi: Neker Publishing House, 2006, in Georgian), *Konzeptionen des Denkens im Neuplatonismus. Zur Rezeption der Proklischen Philosophie im deutschen und georgischen Mittelalter: Dietrich von Freiberg – Berthold von Moosburg – Joane Petrizi* (Bochumer Studien zur Philosophie, Bd. 40, Amsterdam – Philadelphia: B. R. Grüner Publishing Company, 2004). He has edited more than 40 books and published numerous articles. His works has been translated into 7 languages. He is a member of *The International Society for the Study of Medieval Philosophy*, *Lessing-Akademie*, *International Association of Patristic Studies*, and *Ernst-Meister-Gesellschaft*. He is the founder and current editor of 5 scientific series.