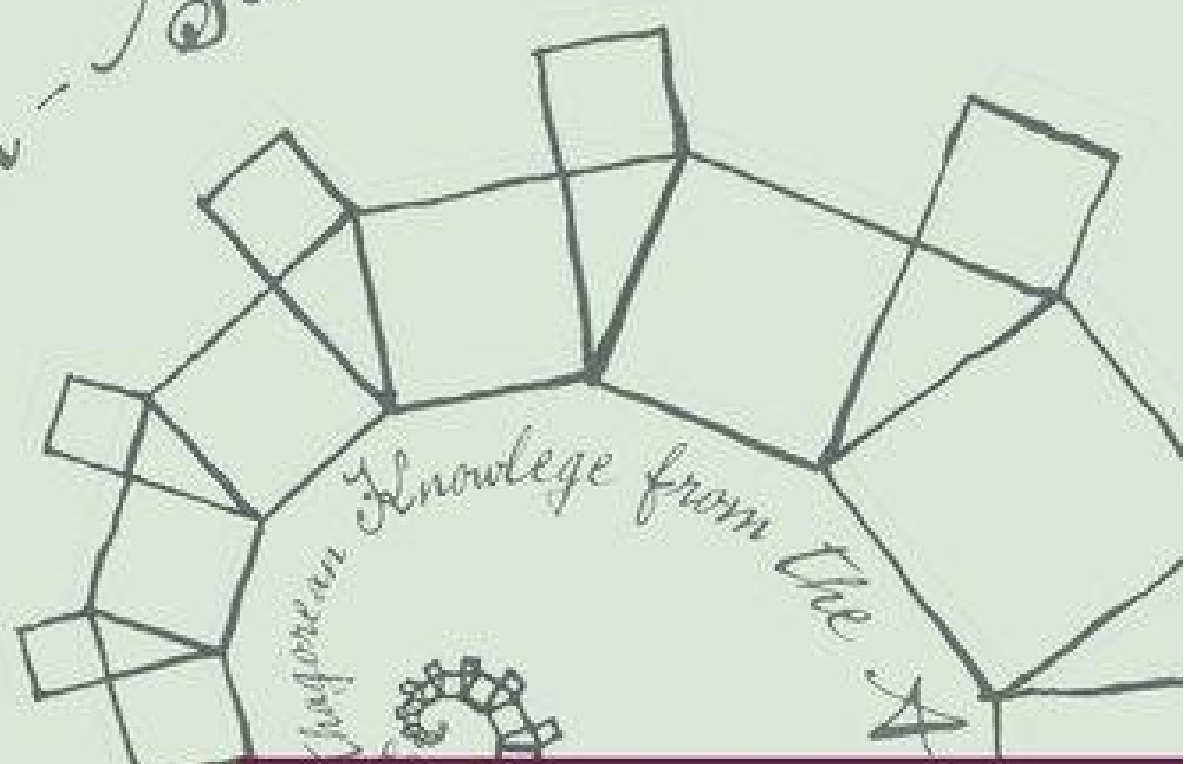


Askesis - Religion - Science



**PYTHAGOREAN KNOWLEDGE
FROM THE ANCIENT TO THE
MODERN WORLD:
ASKESIS, RELIGION, SCIENCE**

*Herausgegeben von
Almut-Barbara Renger und Alessandro Stavru*

HARRASSOWITZ VERLAG

Pythagorean Knowledge from the Ancient to the Modern World:
Askesis, Religion, Science

Episteme in Bewegung

Beiträge zu einer transdisziplinären Wissensgeschichte

Herausgegeben von Gyburg Uhlmann
im Auftrag des Sonderforschungsbereichs 980
„Episteme in Bewegung.
Wissenstransfer von der Alten Welt
bis in die Frühe Neuzeit“

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Almut-Barbara Renger and Alessandro Stavru

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Die Reihe „Episteme in Bewegung“ umfasst wissenschaftliche Forschungen mit einem systematischen oder historischen Schwerpunkt in der europäischen und nicht-europäischen Vormoderne. Sie fördert transdisziplinäre Beiträge, die sich mit Fragen der Genese und Dynamik von Wissensbeständen befassen, und trägt dadurch zur Etablierung vormoderner Wissensforschung als einer eigenständigen Forschungsperspektive bei.

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Preface

Andrew James Johnston and Gyburg Uhlmann

Since its inception in July 2012, the Collaborative Research Centre (CRC) 980 “Episteme in Motion. Transfer of Knowledge from the Ancient World to the Early Modern Period”, based at the Freie Universität Berlin, has been engaging with processes of knowledge change in premodern European and non-European cultures.

The project aims at a fundamentally new approach to the historiography of knowledge in premodern cultures. Modern scholars have frequently described premodern knowledge as static and stable, bound by tradition and highly dependent on authority, and this is a view that was often held within premodern cultures themselves.

More often than not, modern approaches to the history of premodern knowledge have been informed by historiographical notions such as ‘rupture’ or ‘revolution’, as well as by concepts of periodization explicitly or implicitly linked to a master narrative of progress.

Frequently, only a limited capacity for epistemic change and, what is more, only a limited ability to reflect on shifts in knowledge were attributed to premodern cultures, just as they were denied most forms of historical consciousness, and especially so with respect to knowledge change. In contrast, the CRC 980 seeks to demonstrate that premodern processes of knowledge change were characterised by constant flux, as well as by constant self-reflexion. These epistemic shifts and reflexions were subject to their very own dynamics, and played out in patterns that were much more complex than traditional accounts of knowledge change would have us believe.

In order to describe and conceptualise these processes of epistemic change, the CRC 980 has developed a notion of ‘episteme’ which encompasses ‘knowledge’ as well as ‘scholarship’ and ‘science’, defining knowledge as the ‘knowledge of something’, and thus as knowledge which stakes a claim to validity. Such claims to validity are not necessarily expressed in terms of explicit reflexion, however – rather, they constitute themselves, and are reflected, in particular practices, institutions and modes of representation, as well as in specific aesthetic and performative strategies.

In addition to this, the CRC 980 deploys a specially adapted notion of ‘transfer’ centred on the re-contextualisation of knowledge. Here, transfer is not understood as a mere movement from A to B, but rather in terms of intricately entang-

led processes of exchange that stay in motion through iteration even if, at first glance, they appear to remain in a state of stasis. In fact, actions ostensibly geared towards the transmission, fixation, canonisation and codification of a certain level of knowledge prove particularly conducive to constant epistemic change.

In collaboration with the publishing house Harrassowitz the CRC has initiated the series "Episteme in Motion. Contributions to a Transdisciplinary History of Knowledge" with a view to showcase the project's research results and to render them accessible to a wider scholarly audience. The volumes published in this series represent the full scope of collaborating academic disciplines, ranging from ancient oriental studies to medieval studies, and from Korean studies to Arabistics. While some of the volumes are the product of interdisciplinary cooperation, other monographs and discipline-specific edited collections document the findings of individual sub-projects.

What all volumes in the series have in common is the fact that they conceive of the history of premodern knowledge as a research area capable of providing insights that are of fundamental interest to scholars of modernity as well.

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The Pythagorean Doctrine in the Caucasus

Tengiz Iremadze – Grigol Robakidze University Tbilisi / New Georgian University Poti

“Pythagoras was a great philosopher”
Sulkhan-Saba Orbeliani, *Georgian Dictionary*

1 Introduction

In the context of intercultural philosophy the research and analysis of transnational philosophical discourses is extremely important. In this regard, it is of great value to outline the contours of “Caucasian Philosophy,” the methodological foundations and prerequisites of which I have already presented in my recent work, *Philosophy at the Crossroad of Epochs and Cultures. Intercultural and Interdisciplinary Researches*.¹ This work is an attempt to revitalize old and new philosophical concepts in the light of intercultural and interdisciplinary studies. This, in turn, leads to an understanding of intercultural philosophy that connects systematic and historical aspects in a specific form. Here I speak of “Caucasian philosophy” and, above all, refer to those thinkers of this region who initiated the productive philosophical relationship between Georgia and Armenia. The foundation for the study of a hitherto unexplored field of history of philosophy has been laid in this approach, and in addition in my work I indicate the major directions of future philosophical discourses between the leading representatives of these two nations of ancient cultural traditions.²

In the context of Caucasian philosophy, the Pythagorean doctrine of philosophy and philosophizing is of great significance. In the Caucasus the role, mission, and purpose of philosophizing was largely determined by the Pythagorean concept of philosophy.³

1 See Iremadze 2013. For the importance of Caucasian philosophy, see also Tavadze 2013; Zakaradze 2012, 417–430.

2 Udo Reinhold Jeck in his most important works *Platonica Orientalia* (2004) and *Erläuterungen zur georgischen Philosophie* (2010) speaks of the need for a new definition of the place and role of Western philosophy in the context of global philosophical thought. He specifically underlines the importance of reconsidering the Western European understanding of philosophy. Eurocentrism is deeply rooted and widespread in the history of philosophy, which brings to the fore the dominant European cultures, and essentially hampers research on less known philosophical traditions (including many traditions of European philosophy but especially non-European philosophy). See Jeck 2012, 9–10.

3 Friedrich Nietzsche in his Early Notebooks (written in 1872/1873) had connected the terms “mystics,” “philosophy,” and “religion” to Pythagoras. In his view, the great Greek thinker