

THE PYTHAGOREAN PRECEPTS OF ARISTOXENUS: CRUCIAL EVIDENCE FOR PYTHAGOREAN MORAL PHILOSOPHY

I

Aristoxenus of Tarentum (375?–300? B.C.) was one of the most prominent of Aristotle's pupils. He evidently expected to be named Aristotle's successor as head of the Lyceum, since the *Suda* reports that he said some remarkably abusive things about Aristotle, when Theophrastus was named instead.¹ Although the *Suda* tells us that Aristoxenus composed an astounding 453 works, only two of them have come down to us in the manuscript tradition and both are works on music theory. He is arguably the most important music theorist from antiquity and was often identified as 'the musician' (ὁ μουσικός). No list of Aristoxenus' writings survives from antiquity. Accordingly, we are ignorant of the titles of most of Aristoxenus' other works and hence of the scope of his work outside of music theory. The surviving fragments, however, suggest that his second most important area of contribution was the history of philosophy and the biography of philosophers. Momigliano has argued that Aristoxenus is the first undisputed biographer in the Peripatetic tradition,² and F. Leo called him 'the founder of literary biography'.³ We do not know the extent of his biographies, but we do know that he wrote lives of Archytas, Socrates, and Plato. Aristoxenus is the source of some intriguing stories about life in the Greek philosophical schools of the fourth century; for example, he provides the most famous account of Plato's lecture on 'The Good' (*Elem. Harm.* 2). In addition, he wrote a series of at least three works on ancient Pythagoreanism.⁴ He is, after Aristotle, the second most important early source for Pythagoreanism. His work underlies a great deal of what is later reported in Iamblichus' *On the Pythagorean Life* and the lives of Pythagoras by Porphyry and Diogenes Laertius.

The most tantalising of Aristoxenus' works on Pythagoreanism is the *Pythagorean Precepts* (Πυθαγορικά ἀποφάσεις). The title Πυθαγορικά ἀποφάσεις is commonly translated *Pythagorean Sayings*⁵ or *Pythagorean Maxims*,⁶ although a number of scholars have preferred not to translate it.⁷ The word ἀπόφασις has two quite distinct meanings, one derived from ἀπόφημι (in its meaning 'to deny') and the other from ἀποφαίνω ('show forth', 'declare'). In Plato and Aristotle, the word is almost always used to mean negation or denial. Nothing in the content of the fragments of

¹ Fragment 1 in F. Wehrli, *Die Schule des Aristoteles, Vol. II: Aristoxenos* (Basel, 1945). All fragments of Aristoxenus will be cited from Wehrli.

² A. Momigliano, *The Development of Greek Biography* (Cambridge, MA, 1992), 103.

³ F. Leo, *Die griechisch-römische Biographie nach ihrer litterarischen Form* (Leipzig, 1901), 102.

⁴ *On Pythagoras and His Associates*, *On the Pythagorean Life*, and *The Pythagorean Precepts*.

⁵ J. Dillon and J. Hershbell, *Iamblichus: On the Pythagorean Way of Life* (Atlanta, 1991), 6.

⁶ C. Kahn, *Pythagoras and the Pythagoreans* (Indianapolis, 2001), 70; Barker, *OCD*.

⁷ Wehrli (n. 1), 58; W. Burkert, *Lore and Science in Ancient Pythagoreanism*, trans. E. Minar (Cambridge, MA, 1972), 107.

Aristoxenus' work suggests that *Pythagorean Negations* would be an appropriate title, however. It is almost certain, then, that in Aristozenus' title the word is related to ἀποφαίνω and means something like 'assertion', 'utterance', 'saying' or the 'opinion', 'thesis', or 'judgement' affirmed in that utterance. Although Iamblichus never refers to a work of Aristozenus with the title Πυθαγορικά ἀποφάσεις, in Chapter 22 of *On the Pythagorean Way of Life*, he does report that 'another mode of education has been handed down through the Pythagorean ἀποφάσεις, both those which apply to our way of life and those which apply to the preconceptions of men'. Iamblichus' description of the use of ἀποφάσεις in Pythagorean education seems to fit well with what Stobaeus preserves of Aristozenus' work, where the ἀποφάσεις typically take the form of moral commands. This train of thought leads to the conclusion that by ἀποφάσεις Aristozenus did not mean simply assertions or judgements on just any topic but that he means judgements put in the form of commands about how we ought to live our life as opposed to the way people have lived. The translation 'precept' captures the moral content of these judgements and their quasi command form better than 'sayings' or 'maxims', which indicate assertions of ethical import but which put less emphasis on their role as commands.

The only explicit evidence we have for the *Precepts* are seven excerpts preserved by Stobaeus in his anthology, which was composed in the early fifth century A.D. These can be supplemented to some extent by passages from Iamblichus' *On The Pythagorean Life*, which, although not explicitly attributed to Aristozenus, are either identical or very similar to what is preserved in Stobaeus.⁸ The precepts are presented primarily as what the Pythagoreans as a group taught rather than as the teaching of Pythagoras himself or of any other individual Pythagorean. The precepts are introduced as what 'they' (that is, the Pythagoreans) used to 'say', 'think', 'believe', or 'suppose',⁹ although the word Pythagorean never appears anywhere except in the title of the work. The *Precepts* took the form of a series of moral commands about how we ought to live our life, sometimes in explicit opposition to the way people commonly live their lives. These commands, moreover, are backed up with at least some argumentation. The *Precepts* are of particular importance, then, since modern scholarship has emphasised that it is the Pythagorean way of life which is the centre of Pythagoreanism rather than any particular set of mathematical or cosmological

⁸ Iamblichus never indicates that he is quoting from anyone in any of these sections of *On the Pythagorean Life* and never directly mentions the *Pythagorean Precepts* of Aristozenus. The pseudo-Pythagorean work by Ocellus (52–7 = H. Thesleff, *The Pythagorean Texts of the Hellenistic Period* [Abo, 1965], 137–8) also drew on Aristozenus (Fr. 39) without identifying the source. In his collection of the fragments of the *Pythagorean Precepts*, Wehrli accepts only those passages of Iamblichus that are directly parallel to what is found in Stobaeus along with whatever in the context of those passages seems inextricably connected to them (VP 174–5 = Wehrli Fr. 33, VP 205 = Wehrli Fr. 38, VP 209–11 is cited as parallel to Fr. 39 but not quoted).

⁹ ἐδοκίμαζον, ὥοντο, ἐφρόνουν, ἡγούντο, ὑπελάμβανον, ἔλεγον, ἔφασκον [4]. In two of the fragments (Frr. 39 and 40 – 3 verbs total), the third person singular is used, twice in the imperfect and once in the present. In these cases the natural assumption is that the subject is Pythagoras himself, so that it may be that Aristozenus sometimes referred to what 'they' said and sometimes to what 'he' said. It is also possible that Aristozenus always used the third person plural and that the singular has been introduced in the transmission. The lemma to Fr. 39, Ἐκ τῶν Ἀριστοξένου Πυθαγορείου, differs from all the other lemmata in Stobaeus, Ἐκ τῶν Ἀριστοξένου Πυθαγορικῶν ἀποφάσεων. This lemma to Fr. 39 appears to be a corruption of the more normal form, and it could be that this corruption led to the replacement of the third-person plurals in the text of Fr. 39 with third-person singulars. Aristozenus perhaps was understood as the subject.

ideas.¹⁰ The only other early evidence we have for this way of life, however, are the *acusmata*, which, although they probably, at least in part, go back to Pythagoras himself, are largely a set of irrational taboos, including the famous prohibition on eating beans and the injunction against stirring a fire with a knife.¹¹ The *Precepts* would thus appear to be the crucial evidence for a later more rational Pythagorean ethics.

In trying to understand the nature of the *Pythagorean Precepts*, it is important to remember Aristoxenus' own connection to Pythagoreanism. We know that he was born in Tarentum around 375 B.C. It seems very likely that he spent the first twenty years of his life in Tarentum, where the leading political and intellectual figure was the Pythagorean Archytas, whose biography Aristoxenus later wrote.¹² After he came to the Greek mainland, the *Suda* tells us that Aristoxenus was the student of another Pythagorean, Xenophilus, at Athens, before becoming the pupil of Aristotle (Fr. 20a). It may thus be that Aristoxenus was exposed to Pythagorean moral teaching for the first 25 to 35 years of his life. Certainty is of course impossible, given our meagre evidence, but it would be natural to suppose that the *Pythagorean Precepts* represents Pythagorean moral teaching as Aristoxenus encountered it during his studies with the Pythagoreans around the middle of the fourth century (365–340? B.C.).

The standard view of the *Pythagorean Precepts* is quite different. According to most scholars, the *Precepts* are largely the invention of Aristoxenus, and they draw heavily on Platonic and Aristotelian ethics. Wehrli, the editor of the fragments of Aristoxenus, concluded in 1945 that 'the hallmark of the *Ἀποφάσεις* is to lay claim to Academic-Peripatetic material on behalf of the Pythagoreans. ...Aristoxenus consciously constructed his old-Pythagorean ethical theory to the detriment of Platonic and Aristotelian authority'.¹³ Rivaud had already come to a similar conclusion a few years earlier: 'Aristoxenus, with the help of texts from the *Republic*, has reconstructed a Pythagorean politics that no Pythagorean author ever expressly formulated'.¹⁴ Burkert cites both Wehrli and Rivaud with approval. According to Burkert, in some passages of the *Precepts* 'it is obvious that fourth-century ethics, and not ancient Pythagorean tradition is being set forth.' He suggests that Aristoxenus wanted to modernise and rationalise the old Pythagorean *acusmata*.¹⁵

There has been essentially no challenge to this traditional view in more recent works on Pythagoreanism. Kahn adopts the traditional view without further argument.¹⁶ Zhmud does use the *Precepts* to a limited extent as evidence for Pythagorean ethics, but he also cites Wehrli and Burkert with approval and accepts the traditional view that the *Precepts* are heavily contaminated with Platonic and

¹⁰ See Burkert (n. 7); C.A. Huffman, 'The Pythagorean tradition', in A.A. Long (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Early Greek Philosophy* (Cambridge, 1999), 66–87 and C.A. Huffman 'Pythagoras', in E.N. Zalta (ed.), *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2005 Edition), URL = <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2005/entries/pythagoras/>.

¹¹ Burkert (n. 7), 166–92.

¹² Aristoxenus' father Spintharus was probably a younger contemporary of Archytas and is cited as a source for information about Archytas by Aristoxenus (Fr. 30). On Aristoxenus' *Life of Archytas*, see C.A. Huffman, *Archytas of Tarentum: Pythagorean, Philosopher and Mathematician King* (Cambridge, 2005).

¹³ Wehrli (n. 1), 59.

¹⁴ A. Rivaud, 'Platon et la 'politique pythagoricienne'', in *Mélanges Gustave Glotz*, vol. 2 (Paris, 1932), 784.

¹⁵ Burkert (n. 7), 107–8.

¹⁶ Kahn (n. 6), 70.

Aristotelian ethics, with the result that it is difficult to determine the Pythagorean core.¹⁷ It is worth noting that the standard view is not based on very detailed study of the *Pythagorean Precepts*. Wehrli devotes only five pages in total to commentary on the *Precepts*,¹⁸ only three pages of Rivaud's article deal with their contents,¹⁹ and Burkert, relying mostly on Wehrli and Rivaud, spends only a paragraph on the *Precepts* and provides no detailed analysis.²⁰ The traditional view is based on the following assumptions: (1) There are similarities in content between the *Pythagorean Precepts* and passages in Plato and Aristotle; (2) These similarities involve such distinctive doctrines that they cannot have arisen by chance or be due to a shared or independently developed moral outlook; (3) Accordingly, we must assume either (a) that Plato and Aristotle have drawn on these Pythagorean ideas, so that we must attribute much less originality to Plato and Aristotle in these areas than is normally assumed or (b) that the *Pythagorean Precepts* were in fact written after Plato and Aristotle had developed the ideas in question and are an attempt to claim these ideas for the Pythagoreans.

The first assumption seems well founded. There are similarities in content. It is with the second assumption that problems arise. My analysis of the *Precepts* shows that their similarity to material in Plato and Aristotle is the result not of borrowing by one party or the other, but rather of a shared interest in defending certain conservative strands in Greek traditional morality, a morality which is hardly limited to Plato and the *Pythagorean Precepts* and which can be found in Sophocles, Thucydides, and Xenophon as well. There are no distinctively Platonic or Aristotelian doctrines to be found in the *Pythagorean Precepts*. The *Precepts* are in many cases hard to distinguish from a general conservative Greek morality. It is not implausible that Plato was influenced by some of these conceptions in the guise in which he found them in Pythagoreanism, but Plato or Aristotle did not borrow such distinctive conceptions and emphases as are found in the *Precepts*. In the rest of this paper, I will discuss the most prominent examples presented by Burkert, Rivaud and Wehrli of supposed borrowings from Plato and Aristotle by the *Pythagorean Precepts* and show that they are not in fact borrowings of distinctive Platonic and Aristotelian doctrines and in some cases are, in fact, in conflict with Platonic and Aristotelian views. The upshot of my discussion is that the standard view, according to which the *Pythagorean Precepts* were forged by Aristoxenus for the glory of the Pythagoreans, must be rejected and, Aristoxenus' treatise should be accepted as what it purports to be, his account of the Pythagorean ethics he was taught by Xenophilus and others around 360–350 B.C.

II

I will begin with three supposed borrowings from Plato by Aristoxenus, which, although not in fact the most important evidence for the standard view, reveal the true nature of the similarities between Plato and the *Pythagorean Precepts* in a particularly clear fashion. Consider Fragment 34 (= Stobaeus, *Eclogae* 4.25.45):

¹⁷ L. Zhmud, *Wissenschaft, Philosophie und Religion im frühen Pythagoreismus* (Berlin, 1997), 79, n. 14; 283.

¹⁸ Wehrli (n. 1), 58–62.

¹⁹ Rivaud (n. 14), 784–7.

²⁰ Burkert (n. 7), 107–8.

Ἐκ τῶν Ἀριστοξένου Πυθαγορικῶν ἀποφάσεων· μετὰ τὸ θεῖον καὶ δαιμόνιον πλείστον ποιείσθαι λόγον γονέων τε καὶ νόμων, μὴ πλαστῶς, ἀλλὰ πεπιστευμένως ἑαυτὸν πρὸς ταῦτα παρασκευάζοντα. τὸ μένειν <ἐν> τοῖς πατρίοις ἔθεσί τε καὶ νόμοις ἐδοκίμαζον, εἰ καὶ μικρῶ χείρω τῶν ἑτέρων εἴη.

4 μικρῶ] codd. μακρῶ Wehrli

From the *Pythagorean Precepts* of Aristoxenus: After what belongs to the gods and the divine [they thought it was necessary] to pay most attention to parents and laws, not in a counterfeit way but conforming oneself to these things out of conviction. They approved abiding by the customs and laws of their fathers, even if they should be somewhat worse than those of others are.

The first supposed borrowing from Plato occurs when we are told that the Pythagoreans thought it was necessary, 'after what belongs to the gods and the divine, to pay most attention to parents and laws'. Wehrli duly cites several passages from Plato's *Laws* (717A–B, 884A–885A, 930E), which agree that we should honour the gods first and then our parents.²¹ Surely, however, that we should honour the gods, our parents and the laws must be one of the most widely held beliefs in fourth-century Greece, and there is absolutely no reason to suppose that Aristoxenus or the Pythagoreans derived it from these passages of the *Laws*. Indeed, Wehrli himself cites Xenophon's *Memorabilia*, where fearing the gods and honouring one's parents are identified as the two foremost examples of unwritten laws, which are observed in every country (4.19–20).

Second, the same Fragment 34 goes on to assert that people should abide 'by the customs and laws of their fathers, even if they should be somewhat worse than those of others are'. Wehrli²² and Rivaud²³ cite a number of passages in Plato where innovation in legislation is criticised and where extreme conservatism in maintaining traditional beliefs is praised. Thus at *Laws* 634E it is suggested that none of the young be able to criticise the laws and that older men must not criticise the laws before the young but only before someone of their own age or a magistrate. The Egyptians are praised for their conservatism regarding what postures may be portrayed in art (*Leg.* 656D). Again, however, Plato and the *Pythagorean Precepts* are hardly unique in their suspicion of legislative innovation. One need only think of the Spartan King, Archidamus' comment in Book 1 of Thucydides that 'we [Spartans] are not so highly educated as to look down upon our laws and customs' (1.84). Cleon's speech in the Mytilenean debate as presented by Thucydides is a closer parallel to what we find in the *Pythagorean Precepts* than anything in Plato. According to Cleon 'a city will be stronger if it employs worse laws that are fixed than good laws that have no authority' (Thuc. 3.37.3). No one would want to assert, presumably, that the Pythagoreans derived their ethics from Cleon or that Cleon had been making secret visits to the local Pythagorean brotherhood. Plato, Cleon, Archidamus and the *Pythagorean Precepts* all share to varying degrees a widespread conservative notion that fixity of laws can in some cases be more important than correctness.²⁴ There is once again no reason to suppose that Aristoxenus or the Pythagoreans derived this section of the *Precepts* from Plato.

²¹ Wehrli (n. 1), 59.

²² Wehrli (n. 1), 59–60.

²³ Rivaud (n. 14), 785.

²⁴ For further examples see K.J. Dover, *Greek Popular Morality in the Time of Plato and Aristotle* (Oxford, 1974), 308.

The third supposed borrowing appears in Fragment 35 (= Stobaeus, *Eclogae* 4.1.49):

Ἐκ τῶν Ἀριστοξένου Πυθαγορικῶν ἀποφάσεων· καθόλου δὲ ὦντο δεῖν ὑπολαμβάνειν μηδὲν εἶναι μείζον κακὸν ἀναρχίας, οὐ γὰρ πεφυκέναι τὸν ἄνθρωπον διασώζεσθαι μηδενὸς ἐπιστατοῦντος. ...

From the *Pythagorean Precepts* of Aristoxenus: In general they thought it necessary to suppose that there is no greater evil than anarchy, for it is not natural for human beings to survive, if there is no one overseeing them. ... (For the rest of the fragment see below.)

Very much in agreement with what we have seen of Fragment 34, Fragment 35 asserts that ‘there is no greater evil than anarchy’. Rivaud argues that Plato too regarded anarchy as the greatest evil.²⁵ He does not cite a specific passage, but he may have had in mind *Laws* 942D, where Plato asserts that ἀναρχία should be removed from the lives of all people. This passage is not, in fact, parallel to the assertion in the *Pythagorean Precepts*, since Plato makes clear that this assertion is not made about human life as a whole but is rather limited to life in the military (στρατειῶν δὲ ἕνεκα – 942A). Once again, a much closer parallel to Fragment 35 is to be found in a non-philosophic author, Sophocles. In the *Antigone*, Creon, using language that is almost identical to Fragment 35, asserts, in the face of Antigone’s disobedience to his edict forbidding the burial of her brother Polyneices, that ἀναρχίας δὲ μείζον οὐκ ἔστιν κακόν (‘There is no greater evil than anarchy.’ – line 672). Surely we are not to suppose that Sophocles was a secret member of a Pythagorean society from which he derived the words ascribed to Creon. Nor should we suppose that Aristoxenus decided to construct a Pythagorean ethics by reading Sophocles. The idea that anarchy was the greatest or a very great evil in human life was shared by a large number of Greeks, and particularly by those of a conservative temperament, such as would have clapped loudly after Creon’s speech in the *Antigone*. The precepts that 1) anarchy is the greatest of evils, 2) we should honour the gods first and then our parents and the laws and 3) that it is better to follow ancestral laws, even if they are somewhat worse than others, were widespread in the fifth and fourth century. Plato and the Pythagoreans could both adapt them for their own purposes, and we need not suppose that either derived these ideas from the other.

III

Rivaud has argued that the political doctrine of the *Pythagorean Precepts*, at bottom ‘agrees entirely’ with Plato’s political doctrine in the *Republic*. In particular he argues that ‘Platonic communism is presented and justified in Book V of the *Republic* in just the same way as in the *Precepts*’ and that ‘the plan of education in the *Republic* conforms in its general outline to that traced in the *Precepts*’. Rivaud concludes that, if we regard the *Pythagorean Precepts* as representing pre-Platonic Pythagoreanism, we must conclude that Plato’s account of such matters in the *Republic* has little originality.²⁶ I confess to being totally puzzled as to how Rivaud could argue that either Plato’s account of the community of children and wives or his rules governing the education of the guardians is essentially identical to what we find in the *Pythagorean Precepts*. I am equally puzzled as to how Burkert could cite Rivaud with

²⁵ Rivaud (n. 14), 786.

²⁶ Rivaud (n. 14), 786–7.

approval and assert that the political doctrines of the *Pythagorean Precepts* 'are surprisingly similar to those of Plato's *Republic*'.²⁷ Rivaud's manner of presentation makes it difficult to evaluate his argument, since he summarises what he takes to be the position of the *Pythagorean Precepts* on education and marriage/sex but provides not a single reference to indicate the specific text of the *Pythagorean Precepts* on which he is relying for his summary.²⁸ He also never makes precisely clear what he thinks should be included in the text of the *Pythagorean Precepts* and why. He only refers to one of the extracts from Stobaeus and appears to simply assume, on the basis of Rohde's work, that all the material in Iamblichus *VP* 200–13, 174–6, 180–3 can be taken without further argument as directly representing what was in the *Pythagorean Precepts*.²⁹ Surely we must start from the extracts in Stobaeus, which are the only texts explicitly labelled as from Aristoxenus' *Pythagorean Precepts*, and then add only the material from Iamblichus which shows strong similarity and continuity with what is found in Stobaeus.³⁰ In evaluating Rivaud's case, I have relied primarily on Fragments 35 and 39, which are the texts in Stobaeus which correspond to his summaries.³¹

Rivaud appears to base his case for the connection to Platonic communism on Fragment 39 (= Stobaeus, *Eclogae* 4.37.4):

Ἐκ τῶν Ἀριστοξένου Πυθαγορείου περὶ δὲ γενέσεως παίδων τάδε ἔλεγε, καθόλου μὲν <δεῖν> φυλάττεσθαι τὸ καλούμενον προφερές, οὔτε γὰρ τῶν φυτῶν οὔτε τῶν ζώων εἰκαρπα τα προφέρη γίνεσθαι, ἀλλὰ χρόνον τιὰ προπαρασκευάζεσθαι τῆς καρποφορίας, ἐν ᾧ ἐξισχύσαντα καὶ τετελειωμένα τὰ σώματα παρέχειν τά τε σπέρματα καὶ τοὺς καρποὺς δεδύνηται. πολλὰ δὲ εἶναι ἐν τῷ <βίῳ>, ἐν οἷς ἡ ὀψιμαθία ἐστὶ βελτίων, οἷον καὶ τὸ τοῦ ἀφροδισιάζειν πρᾶγμα. δεῖν οὖν εἶ παῖδας οὕτως ἄγεσθαι διὰ τῶν ἀσκημάτων ἀσχόλους, ὥστε μὴ μόνον μὴ ζητεῖν, ἀλλ' εἰ δυνατόν μηδὲ εἰδέναι τὴν τοιαύτην συνουσίαν ἐντὸς τῶν εἴκοσι ἐτῶν. ὅταν δὲ καὶ εἰς τοῦτο ἀφίκηται, σπανίοις εἶναι χρηστότεον τοῖς ἀφροδισίοις. τοῦτο γὰρ πρὸς τε τὴν τῶν γεννώντων καὶ γεννησομένων εὐεξίαν πολὺ τι συμβάλλεσθαι. ἔλεγε δὲ καὶ μήτε τροφῆς μήτε μέθης πλήρη ταῖς γυναιξὶν εἰς τὸ γεννᾶν ὀμλεῖν, οὐ γὰρ οἶεται ἐκ φαύλης καὶ ἀσυμφώνου καὶ ταραχώδους κράσεως εὐρυθμα καὶ καλά, ἀλλ' οὐδὲ ἀγαθὰ τὴν ἀρχὴν γίνεσθαι.

1 γενέσεως] codd. γεννήσεως Iamb. 2 <δεῖν>] cf. Iamb. *VP* 209 5 <βίῳ>] Koenius 6 δεῖν οὖν ἔτι] Wehrli δέον οὖν ἔστι] codd. 7 εἰδέναι] Koenius εἶναι S 11 οἶεται] Diels οἱ ταῖς S 12 γίνεσθαι] Wytttenbach γίνεταί S γίνεταί Tr.

From the writings of Aristoxenus the Pythagorean: Concerning generation of children he said the following. In general, what is called 'precocious' should be avoided, for neither in the case of

²⁷ Burkert (n. 7), 107.

²⁸ Rivaud (n. 14), last paragraph on p. 785 and the first paragraph on p. 786.

²⁹ Rivaud (n. 14), 780, n. 1.

³⁰ Wehrli (n. 1), 58 follows such an approach.

³¹ In a number of places his summaries correspond to nothing either in Stobaeus or in Iamblichus, and I am very puzzled as to how he arrived at them, e.g. the description of the four age groups as (1) up to 20, (2) 20–30, (3) 30–50 and (4) 50+; the description of the 20–30 year olds as devoted to a practical initiation into affairs; the assertions that marriage is permitted between 20 and 40 for women and 20 and 50 for men; that couples are joined by the legislator in light of the moral and physical qualities of the partners; that after the age limit the partners gain their sexual liberty but that any unions must not produce children. In a number of these cases, as well as in his interpretation of the comparison between dog rearing and human procreation (*VP* 212–13), and in his interpretation of Pythagorean approval of abortion in cases of incest and rape (*VP* 210), Rivaud illegitimately imports the machinery of Plato's ideal state into his interpretation of the *Precepts*.

plants nor of animals does what is precocious bear good fruit, but some time is necessary to make preparations before bearing fruit, in which time the bodies, having first gained full strength and having been completed, become able to provide the seed and the fruits. There are many things in life which are better learned late, as is the case also with the business of sex. It is necessary, then, that they be kept so busy with training while still children, that not only do they not seek it but, if possible, that they not even know of such intercourse until they are twenty. Even when a child reaches this age, he should rarely engage in sex. For this contributes considerably to the good health both of those that are begetting and of those who are going to be begotten. He said also that one should not associate with women for reproduction when full of food and drink. For he does not think that well proportioned and beautiful things arise from intercourse that is base, discordant and disordered, but things that are not at all good.

Four basic theses concerning procreation and sex are assigned to the Pythagoreans, in this fragment: (1) the precocious should be avoided in all things, (2) we should not even learn about sex until relatively late in life, that is, age twenty, (3) even after the age of twenty we should only engage in sex rarely and (4) the manner in which intercourse is carried out influences the nature of the offspring so that, if we want beautiful and well-proportioned offspring, intercourse should also be orderly and harmonious. Thus we should not try to generate offspring when we are in the disordered states associated with drunkenness or overeating. In sections 212–13 of Iamblichus' *On the Pythagorean Way of Life* (the parallel passage to Fragment 39, which is derived from Stobaeus), the point is made that while dog lovers and bird lovers pay very close attention to the breeding of those animals, 'Human beings...pay no attention to their own offspring and beget them both without plan and by chance.' They urged those begetting children 'to devote much forethought to their future offspring'. Finally, in section 210, the Pythagoreans are said to have praised common Greek customs prohibiting incest or having sex in a public place. Immediately after this, they are said to believe it 'necessary to abort both what was generated contrary to nature and also what came into being by violence'. In the context, this clearly means that the Pythagoreans approved of abortion in the cases of incest and rape.

It is undoubtedly the case that Plato would agree, at least in spirit, with these basic points. He argues that we should not engage in sex too early or too often (*Leg.* 840D–841B) and explicitly says that the parents should not be drunk but fully sober when trying to procreate children, since their state during intercourse will influence the way the embryo develops and the form and character of the child that is born (*Leg.* 755B).³² Plato too makes the comparison to the breeding of dogs and birds (*Resp.* 458E). Plato and the *Pythagorean Precepts* agree then in having a conservative attitude towards sex and in placing an extremely high value on an orderly process of procreation, in the belief that this has an impact on the nature of the offspring. Such an attitude is again not limited to Plato and the Pythagoreans. Plutarch tells us that at Sparta Lycurgus began his concern for education by overseeing marriages and births (*Lyc.* 14.1). Xenophon emphasises the Spartan belief that in order for the best children to be produced the parents had to be in the best possible state, so that they instituted physical training for both young men and young women. They insisted that marriages only occur when parents were in their prime, and limited the access of husbands to wives, so that intercourse between husband and wife would be vigorous, when it did occur, and thus produce vigorous offspring (*Lac.* 1.4–6). The Spartan state

³² This is no irrational taboo, such as we find in the ἀκούσματα. Modern medicine, too, urges mothers, at least, to avoid alcohol.

also examined all newborn children and exposed those that they deemed not healthy enough to raise (Plutarch, *Lyc.* 14.1–2).

The question, then, is not whether Plato and the *Pythagorean Precepts* share some general attitudes which promote orderly sex and procreation, the question is whether those ideas are developed in ‘just the same way’, to use Rivaud’s language, in Plato and in the *Pythagorean Precepts* or are ‘surprisingly similar’ to use Burkert’s. Are the similarities such that we can only suppose one to be dependent on the other? It is when we turn to the distinctive features of Plato’s account of the generation of children and the relations between the sexes that Rivaud’s and Burkert’s striking similarities and exact correspondence are hardest to understand. As Rivaud emphasises, Plato give us all sorts of signs in *Republic* 5 that he regards the views which he is presenting about the role of women in his state and about the generation of children as radical innovations. What are those innovations? First and foremost, women and children should be held in common (449C) and no parent should know his or her own offspring nor any child its parent (457D). Second, women have the same capabilities as men and should therefore receive the same education and engage in the same pursuits, in accordance with their particular natures (451E, 455D). Third, the guardians should arrange things so that the best of the male and the best of the female guardians have the most children and with each other (459D). Fourth, the guardians should develop noble fictions in order to bring this about (460A, 459C–D). Fifth, children who are born to the inferior will not be raised (460C). Sixth, men and women beyond their prime may engage in sexual intercourse but should use birth control, abortion or exposure to ensure that no children are produced from such unions (461B–C). Seventh, the community of wives and children is justified by an appeal to the importance of unity in the state: that state in which the greatest number of people use ‘mine’ and ‘not mine’ in the same way will be the most unified and best (462C).

This is a long list of very original and controversial doctrines. If we found these doctrines in the *Pythagorean Precepts*, we would indeed have to suppose either that Plato had stolen them from the Pythagoreans or that the *Pythagorean Precepts* had been written by someone who had read the *Republic*. There is no need to start down this path of thought, however, since not a single one of these doctrines appears in the *Pythagorean Precepts*. In particular, I return in puzzlement to Rivaud’s assertion that ‘Platonic communism is presented and justified in Book V of the *Republic* in just the same way as in the *Precepts*’.³³ There is absolutely no mention of the community of wives and children in the *Pythagorean Precepts* nor of the argument that such community is necessary to produce the maximum unity in the state. Nor is there any statement that women have the same abilities and should receive the same training as men. Indeed, when the *Pythagorean Precepts* says that ‘one should not associate with women for reproduction when full of food and drink’ the point of view is clearly that of a male rather than of Platonic guardians, who are both male and female.³⁴ The *Pythagorean Precepts* also say nothing about distinguishing the

³³ Rivaud (n. 14), 787.

³⁴ In Fragment 39 of the *Precepts*, women are never discussed separately from men. In the related passage in Iamblichus (*VP* 209) one passage lists girls (παρθένους) alongside boys and says that they should like the boys engage in bodily exercise and receive appropriate nourishment so that they will produce strong offspring. This in no way implies Plato’s doctrine that women have all the same abilities as men and should receive the same training throughout life.

best men and the best women and only raising their offspring.³⁵ It is important to recognise, moreover, that there is nothing in the *Precepts* to suggest that its comments on child rearing have anything to do with the state. There is no reference to guardians, philosopher kings, or any officials of the state who would enforce the rules and construct noble lies to support them. The *Pythagorean Precepts* read very much like rules not for rulers of states, ideal or otherwise, but for individuals, who choose to follow the Pythagorean way of life, and their families. Plato and the Pythagoreans share the idea that some sort of attention and order ought to be employed in child rearing, but Plato's ideas, original and radical in these respects, are not found in the *Pythagorean Precepts*.

Rivaud's claim that the general outlines of Platonic education in the *Republic* are the same as the program of education in the *Pythagorean Precepts* fares no better. Fragment 35 of the *Precepts* begins by discussing the proper relation between ruler and ruled before dividing human life into four periods, to each of which are assigned appropriate activities:

(continuing from the text of page 11 above) *περὶ δὲ ἀρχόντων καὶ ἀρχομένων οὕτως ἐφρόνουν, τοὺς μὲν γὰρ ἀρχοντας ἐφασκον οὐ μόνον ἐπιστήμονας ἀλλὰ καὶ φιλανθρώπους δεῖν εἶναι, καὶ τοὺς ἀρχομένους οὐ μόνον πειθηρίους, ἀλλὰ καὶ φιλόαρχοντας. ἐπιμελητέον δὲ πάσης ἡλικίας ἡγούντο, καὶ τοὺς μὲν παῖδας ἐν γράμμασι καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις μαθήμασιν ἀσκεῖσθαι, τοὺς δὲ νεανίσκους τοῖς τῆς πόλεως ἔθεσιν τε καὶ νόμοις γυμνάζεσθαι, τοὺς δὲ ἄνδρας ταῖς πράξεσιν τε καὶ δημοσίαις λειτουργίαις προσέχειν. τοὺς δὲ πρεσβύτας ἐνθυμήσεαι καὶ κριτηρίους καὶ συμβουλίαις δεῖν ἐναναστρέφεσθαι μετὰ πάσης ἐπιστήμης ὑπελάμβανον, ὅπως μὴτε οἱ παῖδες νηπιάζοιεν, μὴτε οἱ νεανίσκοι παιδαριεύοντο, μὴτε οἱ ἄνδρες νεανιεύοντο μὴτε οἱ γέροντες παραφρονοῖεν. δεῖν δὲ ἐφασκον εὐθὺς ἐκ παίδων καὶ τὴν τροφήν τεταγμένως προσφέρεσθαι, διδάσκοντες ὥς ἡ μὲν τάξις καὶ συμμετρία καλὰ καὶ σύμφορα, ἡ δ' ἀταξία καὶ ἀσυμμετρία αἰσχρά τε καὶ ἀσύμφορα.*

Concerning rulers and ruled they thought as follows: they asserted that rulers must not only be knowledgeable but also humane, and that the ruled must not only be obedient but also love the rulers. They thought that it was necessary to show concern for every age group, and they supposed that children should practice letters and the other subjects, that young men should be trained in the customs and laws of the city, that men should apply themselves to actions and service on behalf of the public, and that old men should be engaged in reflection, serve as judges and give council with all of their knowledge. As a result neither would children act like infants, nor young men act like children, nor men act like young men, nor old men become senile. They said that it was necessary that, right from childhood, upbringing should be carried out in an orderly way, teaching that order and due proportion are fine and advantageous, but disorder and lack of due proportion are shameful and harmful.

Children are supposed to practice reading and writing (*γράμματα*) as well as other subjects (*τοῖς ἄλλοις μαθήμασιν*, perhaps gymnastics, music and drawing, compare *Pol.* 1337b24). Young men are to be trained in the laws and customs of the city. Men are to give their attention to actions and services on behalf of the public (*δημοσίαις λειτουργίαις*). Finally, old men, on the basis of all their knowledge, should be engaged in reflection and serve as judges and councillors. There is an undoubted

³⁵ At *VP* 212–13 the care of those who love dogs and birds is contrasted with the negligence of human procreation. The dog lovers are said to take care that puppies are born from the right parents at the right time. This obviously means that they breed selectively. It is not explicitly said that there should be selective breeding among humans, and there is certainly no reason to import Plato's elaborate state-run system to distinguish the better from the worse men and women. What is entailed by the *Pythagorean Precepts* is nothing more than that we should be careful in choosing our spouse and not choose at random.

similarity between the *Republic* and Fragment 35 of the *Pythagorean Precepts* in that both divide human life into distinct periods with distinct tasks, and both clearly think that it is an orderly education and way of life that is fine and advantageous and that a disorderly life and education leads to ruin. These points of view are again not limited to the *Republic* and the *Pythagorean Precepts*, however. The idea that human life is divided up into distinct periods with distinct activities can be found already in the sixth century with Solon, who divides human life into ten seven-year periods (Fr. 27). The Spartans structured their life and education according to a very rigorous set of age groups (Plutarch, *Lyc.* 14–18; Xenophon, *Lac.* 2.1–4.7; *Hell.* 5.32). In his *Cyropaideia*, Xenophon constructs his own set of four age groups for the Persians (1.4–15). Athenian education, as described by Protagoras in Plato's dialogue of the same name, teaches and corrects the young starting from earliest childhood (325C) and is divided into three phases. The first occurs at home under the guidance of the nurse and parents. The second begins when the child is sent off to teachers of letters, harp-playing and physical training. After this schooling, in the third phase, the city 'requires that they learn the laws and live according to them' (326C), just as the *Pythagorean Precepts* requires that 'young men should be trained in the customs and laws of the city'. Thus, the mere use of age groups and praise for order in upbringing is not enough to establish a compelling connection between the *Precepts* and the *Republic*. These traits are common to a number of texts and educational practices from the fourth century and earlier.

Is there any more specific similarity between the *Republic* and the *Precepts*, which could lead us to accept Rivaud's view that the plan of education in the two works is so similar that, if we accept the *Pythagorean Precepts* as antedating Plato, Plato's originality is seriously in doubt? To this question we must surely answer no. What are the notable features of the age groups which Plato distinguishes in the *Republic*? Wehrli correctly refers to *Republic* 536A–541B as the central text. Plato has earlier identified the years up to age twenty as devoted to the study of music and gymnastic and specifically marks the last two or three years of this period as devoted to strenuous physical training, which makes the young unfit for intellectual occupations (537B). The next ten years are to be devoted to the study of mathematics at the highest level, these are the five propaedeutic studies outlined in the immediately preceding section of the *Republic*: calculation, geometry, stereometry, astronomy and harmonics (537C–D). For the next five years the future guardians engage in the highest of studies, dialectic (539E). Then from age thirty-five to age fifty the guardians are to return to the cave and hold command in war and other offices in the state, so that they will have practical experience (539E–540A). After age fifty they will devote their life to the study of philosophy while also taking their turn in ruling the state (540B). None of the distinctive features of this Platonic system of education is found in the *Pythagorean Precepts*. There is no mention of ten years devoted to mathematics from the ages of twenty to thirty. Indeed there is no mention at all of Plato's carefully defined five propaedeutic studies nor of his account of why and how they should be studied. Nor is there any distinction made between the sensible and intelligible world, between the cave and the real world outside the cave, the distinction which is the foundation of Plato's whole educational program. Similarly there is no mention of the highest of all Platonic studies, dialectic. There is no more similarity between the *Pythagorean Precepts* and Plato on the age groups and the education appropriate to each of them than between Plato and the Spartan system of education.

IV

Finally, Burkert has argued that the Pythagorean account of luck presented in Fragment 41 of the *Pythagorean Precepts* is not Pythagorean at all and is in fact derived from Aristotle's ethics.³⁶ He provides two arguments for this assertion. First, he maintains that Aristotle says that 'none of the "ancients" had dealt in detail with the nature of *τύχη*', and he takes this to indicate that Aristotle knew of no Pythagorean account of luck. Second, he argues that what Aristoxenus presents as the Pythagorean account of luck in the *Pythagorean Precepts* is 'precisely what the *Eudemean Ethics* expounds as *τύχη*'.³⁷ Burkert's first point is presumably made in the light of Aristotle's typical practice of canvassing the views of his predecessors on any topic which he is exploring. If Aristotle, in developing his own account of luck, reports that none of his predecessors had dealt with the topic in any detail, it is unlikely that any such account existed before Aristotle, since Aristotle had good access to the work of his predecessors and had actively sought for earlier accounts of the concept of luck. Therefore, it is unlikely that there was a Pythagorean account of luck prior to Aristotle.

It is not, in fact, clear that Aristotle is saying what Burkert says he is. It is important to note, first, that Aristotle's remark about the lack of treatment of the subject of luck by his predecessors comes not from his discussion of luck in the *Eudemean Ethics*, the discussion to which Burkert compares the Pythagorean account of luck, but rather from the *Physics*. In *Physics* 2.4, Aristotle is considering whether and in what sense luck is a cause. Towards the beginning of that discussion, he says that, if there really were such a thing as luck, one might wonder why 'none of the philosophers of old determined its nature at all' (*οὐδεὶς τῶν ἀρχαίων σοφῶν...περὶ τύχης οὐδὲν διώρισεν*). Unfortunately, to quote the passage as I have just done, while showing the basis for Burkert's point, is quite misleading. When the passage is quoted in full, Burkert's point loses much of its force. To the assertion that 'none of the philosophers of old determined its nature at all' Aristotle adds the important qualifying phrase 'when speaking of the causes concerning generation and destruction' (196a10). This qualification makes it clear that Aristotle is thinking here of the early Greek cosmologists, whom he typically calls the *physiologoi*. This conclusion is confirmed when he goes on to argue a few lines later that these early philosophers did not identify luck with the causes they recognised, since he gives as examples of those causes Empedocles' Love and Strife, Anaxagoras' Mind and Heraclitus' Fire (196a17–19). Aristotle's assertion in the *Physics*, then, is that none of the early Greek cosmologists of the sixth and fifth centuries provided a discussion of luck, when they discussed the causes of coming to be and passing away. Aristotle could perfectly well make such an assertion, while at the same time knowing that Pythagoreans of a later time, that is, the fourth century, did discuss luck in an ethical context.³⁸ Moreover, in ethics, as

³⁶ Burkert (n. 7), 108.

³⁷ Wehrli (n. 1), 62 compares Fragment 41 not to the *Eudemean Ethics* but to a passage in the *Magna Moralia* (1206b30–1207b19). This passage is similar to the passage Burkert cites from the *Eudemean Ethics*, and the differences do not affect my argument.

³⁸ Burkert (n. 7), 108, n. 59 implies that it is not quite correct to say that in the *Physics* passage there is no reference to earlier accounts of luck, since after asserting that none of the *physiologoi* had given an account of luck, Aristotle goes on to refer to an unidentified 'some' who do have an account of luck and say that it is a genuine cause of things but has something divine about it that makes it inscrutable to human understanding (196b5). This may indicate that Aristotle is thinking primarily of views of luck shared by Greeks in general rather than treatments of luck by

opposed to his practice in physics, Aristotle makes very few specific references to predecessors, so his failure to mention the Pythagoreans in ethical contexts is not surprising.³⁹

Burkert's more substantive point is that the account of luck in the *Pythagorean Precepts* is 'precisely what the *Eudemian Ethics* expounds as *τύχη*'. This point fares no better. As Mills first noted in 1982, there are significant differences between Aristotle's account and the account in the *Pythagorean Precepts*.⁴⁰ Here is the account of luck in the *Pythagorean Precepts*:

Fragment 41 (= Stobaeus, *Eclogae* 1.6.18) 'Εκ τῶν Ἀριστοξένου Πυθαγορικῶν ἀποφάσεων· περὶ δὲ τύχης τὰδ' ἔφασκον, εἶναι μὲν τι καὶ δαιμόνιον μέρος αὐτῆς, γενέσθαι γὰρ ἐπίπνοιάν τινα παρὰ τοῦ δαιμονίου τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἐνίοις ἐπὶ τὸ βέλτιον ἢ ἐπὶ τὸ χεῖρον, καὶ εἶναι φανερώς κατ' αὐτὸ τοῦτο τοὺς μὲν εὐτυχεῖς τοὺς δὲ ἀτυχεῖς. καταφανέστατον δὲ εἶναι τοῦτο <τῷ> τοὺς μὲν ἀπροβουλεύτως καὶ εἰκῇ τι πράττοντας πολλάκις κατατυγχάνειν, τοὺς δὲ προβουλευομένους καὶ προνοομένους ὁρθῶς τι πράττειν ἀποτυγχάνειν. εἶναι δὲ καὶ ἕτερον τύχης εἶδος, καθ' ὃ οἱ μὲν εὐφρεῖς καὶ εὐστοχοί, οἱ δὲ ἀφρεῖς τε καὶ ἐναντίαν ἔχοντες φύσιν βλάστοιεν, ὧν οἱ μὲν εὐθυβολοῖεν ἐφ' ὃ τι ἂν ἐπιβάλλωνται, οἱ δὲ ἀποπίπτουεν τοῦ σκοποῦ, μηδέποτε τῆς διανοίας αὐτῶν εὐστόχως φερομένης, ἀλλὰ αἰεὶ παρασσομένης. ταύτην δὲ τὴν ἀτυχίαν σύμφυτον εἶναι καὶ οὐκ ἐπέισακτον.

2 μὲν τι] Usener μέντοι FP 5 <τῷ>] Usener 8 βλάστοιεν] Wytttenbach βλάπτουεν codd. εὐθυβολοῖεν] Jacobs εὐθύβουλοι εἰεν F εὐθύβουλοι εἶναι P 9 ἐπιβάλλωνται] Wachsmuth ἐπιβάλλωνται FP 10 αἰεὶ παρασσομένης] Wachsmuth καὶ παρασσομένης FP διαπαρασσομένης Meineke

From the *Pythagorean Precepts* of Aristoxenus: Concerning luck they said the following: A part of it is divine, for some inspiration arises from the divine for some people, either for the better or for the worse, and it is clearly in accordance with precisely this that some are lucky and some are unlucky. This is most clearly seen when those who do something with no prior planning and at random are often successful, while those who do something after planning in advance and taking correct precautions fail. But there is also another kind of luck, in accordance with which some people are born gifted and with the ability to hit the mark, but others are born dull and with the opposite nature. Of these the ones hit whatever mark they aim at, but the others miss their target, since their thought is never borne towards the target but is always confused. This bad luck is inborn and not imposed from outside.

Here the Pythagoreans make a distinction between two types of luck. The first sort of luck is assigned a divine origin. This kind of luck can be seen most clearly where people have success or failure contrary to what we would expect based on their behaviour. It is seen either when someone who has done no prior planning and who acts at random none the less succeeds or, conversely, when someone who has planned in advance and who has taken all the correct precautions still fails. In such cases the

philosophers, but it is quite possible that he is also including the views of some philosophers. We simply do not know whether Aristotle knew of earlier philosophic accounts of luck in the context of ethics, but nothing said in the *Physics* or *Eudemian Ethics* allows us to conclude that the fourth-century Pythagoreans had not discussed luck. As I will show below, Aristotle's comments in the *Eudemian Ethics* in fact suggest, although they do not prove, that the Pythagorean account of luck did form part of the background in which Aristotle developed his own account of luck.

³⁹ In his account of luck in the *Eudemian Ethics*, Aristotle makes no reference to any specific predecessors, although he frequently refers to common views about luck that are held by an unidentified 'they' (1247a9, οἷονται; 1247a24, φασίν; 1247b7, τιθέασιν).

⁴⁰ M.J. Mills, 'TYXH in Aristoxenus, Fr. 41, and *Eudemian Ethics* Θ.2', *AJP* 103.2 (1982), 204–8.

Pythagoreans concluded that there must have been some inspiration arising from the gods (γενέσθαι...ἐπίπνοιάν τινα παρὰ τοῦ δαιμονίου), which led to the better or worse result, in defiance of the efforts of the individuals involved. This sort of luck is imposed from outside the individual (ἐπέσασκτον) by the divine. The second sort of luck is not initially named, but, in the last line of the fragment, it is described as arising from our nature (σύμφυτον) in contrast to the first sort of luck, which was contrary to our nature and imposed from outside (ἐπέσασκτον). The second sort of luck leads some people to be born with genius and the ability to hit the mark, while others are born dull and unable to hit the mark. This sort of luck is similar to a genetic endowment, which allows some people to see clearly how to achieve their ends, while others remain muddled as to what to do.

Aristotle's account of luck in *Eudemian Ethics* 8.2 has been the source of considerable controversy,⁴¹ but those controversies do not keep us from seeing the radical differences between Aristotle's account and the account in the *Pythagorean Precepts*. Superficially Aristotle's account is similar in so far as it recognises one sort of good fortune that is associated with the divine and another sort that is not (EE 1248b4), and it is to this similarity that Burkert is presumably referring. As soon as we examine the details of the two accounts, however, it becomes clear that what the Pythagoreans meant by divine luck is quite different, indeed the opposite of what Aristotle meant. As we have seen above, the crucial characteristic of divine luck for the Pythagoreans is that it is imposed from outside. The gods conceive a purpose for an individual and inspire them to accomplish that purpose despite the fact that the individual has not done the appropriate prior planning. Aristotle, on the other hand, says that, in the case of divine good fortune, the fortunate person is fortunate because of his impulse (1248b4–5), that is, he is lucky not despite his actions but because of them. Aristotle ascribes such irrational impulses that produce good results to the favour of the divine (1248b4). Aristotle's divine luck is in accord with the natural impulse of the individual and is thus more similar to the second sort of Pythagorean luck, which is described as inborn.⁴²

At 1247a24 Aristotle discusses and explicitly rejects the Pythagorean sort of divine luck.⁴³ He raises the question of whether a person is lucky because god loves him. He explicitly says that on this view, luck is something from outside. We have seen that the Pythagoreans emphasised precisely that divine luck was not inborn but imposed from outside. Aristotle criticises this view for making god love someone who has planned badly and not taken the correct precautions, to use the language of the *Pythagorean Precepts*. Aristotle objects that 'it is absurd that god or the divine should love a person of this sort and not the best and most prudent person' (1247a29). For Aristotle the person who succeeds or fails contrary to their impulse or their choice is precisely not the person whom the divine has aided, for the divine should reward good choices and not bad ones. This sort of luck is, in fact, Aristotle's second sort of luck, which he explicitly contrasts to divine luck and describes as 'contrary to...impulse' (1248b5–6). It appears then that the Pythagoreans' two sorts of luck and Aristotle's two sorts of good fortune, while bearing similar names, are in many ways opposite in content. What the Pythagoreans call divine luck, which is imposed from outside, is Aristotle's

⁴¹ See, e.g., A. Kenny, *Aristotle on the Perfect Life* (Oxford, 1992); K. Johnson, 'Luck and good fortune in the *Eudemian Ethics*', *Ancient Philosophy* 17 (1997), 85–102; and S.A. White, 'Natural virtue and perfect virtue in Aristotle', in J. Cleary (ed.), *Proceedings of the Boston Area Colloquium in Ancient Philosophy* 8 (New York, 1992), 135–68.

⁴² Mills (n. 40), 207.

⁴³ Mills (n. 40), 206.

second sort of good fortune, the sort of good fortune which he describes as contrary to our impulse. What the Pythagoreans call inborn luck is what Aristotle means by divine good fortune, good fortune that is in accordance with our impulse.

It appears that the superficial similarity between Fragment 41 and the *Eudemian Ethics* in proposing a distinction between divine luck and another sort of luck is just that, a superficial similarity. Both do share the idea that one sort of luck is divine, but this is not very remarkable. Given the extensive intervention of the gods in human life in Greek literature and religion, it would be surprising if any ancient Greek account of luck did not at least consider the possibility that luck was connected to the gods. In fact, it can be demonstrated that the terminology and concepts used to discuss luck in the two accounts show almost no overlap.⁴⁴ The account of luck in the *Pythagorean Precepts* is precisely *not* what the *Eudemian Ethics* propounds as *τύχη*. There is in short no reason to suppose that Fragment 41 of the *Pythagorean Precepts* is in any way derived from Aristotle's account of luck in the *Eudemian Ethics*.

On the other hand, if we examine Aristotle's discussion of good fortune in *Eudemian Ethics* 8.2, there is at least a suggestion that he was familiar with the Pythagorean account of luck on which Aristoxenus drew, when he wrote the *Pythagorean Precepts*. The first view of good fortune that Aristotle discusses is ascribed to an undefined 'they' who think (*οἴονται*) that some are lucky by nature (*φύσει*). According to this view 'nature makes some people such [that is, lucky or unlucky], and they differ right from birth; just as some people are blue-eyed and some black-eyed...so some are lucky and some are unlucky' (1247a9–12). This sounds very much like the second type of luck in the *Pythagorean Precepts*, which is described as 'tied to our nature' or 'inborn' (*σύμφυτον*) and according to which some people grow up with natural talent (*εὐφυεῖς*) and others without natural talent (*ἀφυεῖς*). The next view of good fortune presented by Aristotle, on the other hand, is very close to the first type of luck defined by the Pythagoreans, their divine luck. Once again Aristotle ascribes this view to a vague 'they': '...is it the case that [someone is lucky] by being loved, as they say, by god, and success is something from outside' (1247a23–4). As we have seen, Aristotle rejects this view, but his description of it as 'from outside' matches the Pythagorean view very well. Since Aristotle uses the vague 'they' to introduce both of these accounts of luck, he may well be presenting them as views that are part of the common discourse about luck, which is shared by people in general as well as by various philosophers; he may think that these are just common views which are not distinctive enough to be assigned to any particular thinker. On the other hand, since the two types of luck he discusses are precisely the two types that the Pythagoreans

⁴⁴ This can be seen most clearly in Aristotle's consistent emphasis on the contrast between what results from luck and what results from intelligence (*φρόνησις*). He frequently describes the lucky person as one who succeeds although *ἄλογος* and *ἄφρων*. He uses the former term seven times in Chapter 2 and the latter term four times. In his concluding paragraph, where he defines the two sorts of luck, he is emphatic that both types are *ἄλογοι*. Fragment 41 does not highlight the contrast between luck and reason and neither *ἄλογος* nor *ἄφρων*, terms that Aristotle used eleven times, appear even once. Again, the concept of impulse is crucial to Aristotle's account, the noun and related verb appear seven times in Chapter 2; they never appear in the *Pythagorean Precepts*. On the other hand, the *Pythagorean Precepts* seem to regard the lucky person in their second sense not as irrational but as succeeding because his thought is not confused and is directed towards the goal. (Mills [n. 40], 208 argues that 'the fragment is too brief to be certain whether Aristoxenus is reporting such an "intellectualist" account of *τύχη*'.) When discussing the second sort of luck, Fragment 41 uses the terms *εὖστοχοι* and *εὐστόχως* of those who are good at hitting the mark, *σκοπός*. This language is completely absent from Aristotle's discussion of luck in Chapter 2.

identify, it is not impossible that the Pythagorean discussion is at least one source on which he is drawing. The appearance of these two types of luck in Aristotle's account is no reason to suspect that Aristoxenus is deriving his account of Pythagorean views on luck from Aristotle. After all, Aristotle presents these views explicitly as views held by others and views of which he is critical. What motivation would Aristoxenus have for assigning these views to the Pythagoreans, other than that they were in fact Pythagorean views? The most reasonable explanation of the evidence is that Aristotle is reporting views on luck held by his contemporaries and predecessors and that it is accordingly no surprise that Aristoxenus' account of the view of luck held by fourth-century Pythagoreans should show similarities to what Aristotle reports about his predecessors.

My conclusion, then, is that the *Pythagorean Precepts* of Aristoxenus show none of the distinctive features of Platonic or Aristotelian ethics and that there is accordingly no reason to suppose that they were composed by Aristoxenus on the basis of Platonic and Aristotelian texts. They do share with Plato an admiration for strict order and structure in a number of aspects of human life, but this sort of admiration can be found in a number of other fifth- and fourth-century authors. The *Pythagorean Precepts* make most sense if they are understood to be precisely what they purport to be, a summary of Pythagorean ethics as taught in the fourth century. Although they appear to contain no groundbreaking advances in Greek ethics, the *Pythagorean Precepts* are crucial to our understanding of the Pythagorean way of life as it existed in the fourth century. They merit further study, now that the cloud over their authenticity has been removed.⁴⁵ Such study may also allow us to see more clearly what was innovation and what was not in important aspects of Aristotelian and Platonic ethics.⁴⁶

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⁴⁵ See C.A. Huffman, 'Aristoxenus' *Pythagorean Precepts*: a rational Pythagorean ethics', in M. Sassi (ed.), *La costruzione del discorso filosofico nell'età dei Presocratici* (Pisa, 2006), 103–21.

⁴⁶ I would like to thank Myles Burnyeat, the reader for *CQ*, whose comments helped me to improve this article in a number of ways.