

Pitagora

Storia di un bambino
diventato immortale



NUOVA SCUOLA PITAGORICA

Title: Pitagora – Storia di un bambino diventato immortale

© 2019 Nuova Scuola Pitagorica – all rights reserved

Editing by Marco Tricoli

Cover by Giuseppe Santoro

Translation by Gabriella Mongiardo

www.nuovascuolapitagorica.org

Pythagoras

The story of a child that became immortal



Nuova Scuola Pitagorica

Foreword

This publication was born with the intention of stimulating awareness of the Pythagorean phenomenon and of opening a debate in society and particularly in the world of school education. It represents a starting point for a series of activities in various fields to schedule over the years.

The contents of this text are the result of studies and analyses conducted within the New Pythagorean School, thanks to the contribution of its members spread around the world.

The New Pythagorean School is an organization open to everyone, without any preclusion and without precepts or preconceived truths to give: a school of free thought. It conducts activities in various cultural sectors, from the artistic to the literary one, giving particular emphasis to ethical philosophy as a universal guide to righteous behavior in order to create a better world.

Pythagoras

The story of a child that became immortal

There once was a beautiful and intelligent child, with long flowing hair that sometimes took on a blond shade and at other times a copper one. Thus, he was called *the long-haired*. His eyes were a sea green and light blue sky color and his body was thin and in shape. He was also very curious and continuously asked questions about everything.

He was born around 2600 years ago in Samos, an important strategic island of eastern Greece. His family was wealthy. His father, Mnesarchus, was a rich merchant originally from Tyros who brought to Samos a load of grain during a serious famine and for gratitude he was given citizenship. Established and valued, Mnesarchus started to specialize in the trade of seals for rings, for which Samos was famous in the whole Mediterranean. There he met Parthenides, an extraordinary woman that soon would become his wife. She was very beautiful, with a sharp intelligence and a profoundly loving personality.

One day Parthenides with her husband, during a business trip, visited Delphi, the city of the most important Greek oracle, that of Apollo Pythia, to get information about Mnesarchus' mercantile activity. The priestess Pythia, without having been asked, told the couple about the birth of a child that would become the greatest teacher and thinker that humanity had ever seen, the most sage among men, destined to be remem-

bered by all generations and in all ages. A guide for a new world who would enchant everyone with his words. A little later, when Parthenides realized she was pregnant, together with her husband they decided to give the newborn a name that would recall that oracle. Thus, the baby that was born was called Pythagoras: *the one announced by Pythia*.

Since a very tender age the child lived in an environment which was in contact with different cultures and therefore filled with stimuli. The island of Samos was a crossroads of commercial routes and every day ships docked and unloaded not only treasures but products from close and faraway countries, and also new knowledge and ideas. Mnesarchus, Pythagoras' father, spoke various languages and often traveled to sell the seals etched in hard or precious stones in great demand from the rich families of the cities on the Mediterranean. Many merchants had great success in Samos, and among these Polycrates, who had a huge fleet, stood out. Soon he would have something to do with this extraordinary child.

In the meantime Pythagoras' family was expanding, brothers and sisters were born and the child, already around age six, demonstrated incredible talents. He was able to quickly understand complicated reasoning and sometimes would ask questions that adults could not answer.

In that period the Greek populations were growing quickly. Inventions, arts and social organization pushed the city-States, the *poleis*, to become ever more evolved. An advanced naval

technology allowed for easy movements and soon many settlers started to migrate to create new *polis* mixing with the people that lived along the west coast of the Mediterranean. Originating from various regions and Greek cities, Achaeans, Spartans, Athenians, Corinthians, Chalcidians and many others, some of which the Samians, reached the coast of Italy and even of France and Spain.

And so the network of trade and of human relations grew and it spread not only customs and habits, but also beliefs and cultures.

Among the various areas of colonization, one in particular had the capacity to create a fusion between the Greek culture and the local one preexisting for thousands of years: Italy, “the nowadays Calabria”. This synergy would leave an indelible imprint on the history of humanity.

For thousands of years the extreme Southern tip of the peninsula, Calabria, was inhabited by different people with various origins, among which: Ausones, Oenotrians, Lamiatis, Sicani-ans, Opicans, Konis, Morgetis, Taureans and Sicels. The local nature, characterized by immense forests, great mountain ranges, rivers full of water, luscious flat lands, fruiting all year round, jagged coasts and natural harbors, allowed the formation of various tribes and afterward the development of real and proper social organizations.

After various centuries, around 2000 BC, those people united under the guide of a king with extraordinary gifts who knew how to bring them together into an equal, communitarian and free society. His name was Italo and he gave the nowadays Calabria its name, which in those days was called Oenotria, and named it Italy.

When the Greeks arrived on the Ionian coast of Italy, they were faced with people that were very different from the others of the Mediterranean. The women were free, the agriculture was blossoming, the sense of equality was widespread. While in some stretches of the coast, the Greek colonists imposed themselves by force, fighting against and removing the indigenous people, like for example in the case of Sybaris, in others the Greek culture fused with the local one, and that happened particularly in *Croton of Italy*, which is how the colony of Croton was called.

In fact, the Greeks that left their homeland to start a colony, were only young males who were able to row and did not bring women with them. They then married local women, as it happened in Croton. And thus the *Italiotes* were born, children of the Greek colonists and of the italic women, who had great importance in the evolution of the colonies. Those women, in fact, continued to live freely according to their custom and imposed to accept their freedom on their husbands which did not exist in Greece, where the women lived closed off in the *gynoeceium*, the part of the house reserved for them,

taking care only of the children and of the housework. They lived such a distressing life that in Greece their suicide by hanging happened frequently. The freedom of the italic women instead was even formally endorsed, in fact in Locris the *Tablets of Zaleucus*, the first written laws in the West, even before the laws of Solon in Athens, dictated: *The Locrians are not allowed to possess female or male slaves*. From the italic customs, freedom became the first written Greek law.

The ancient colony of Croton, founded around 743 BC, was thus characterized by a society of free men and women who lived in harmony. There was no slavery and the sense of *justice*, meaning equal parts for everyone, was a fundamental rule. Soon activities and initiatives spread in different fields. Studies blossomed, particularly in medicine thanks to the school of Alcmaeon and Democedes, who started the basis for medical science. At the same time, the great care of the body brought the birth of the most important school of athletics of antiquity, which excelled in all the sports competitions obtaining the greatest number of victories in the Panhellenic gatherings and particularly in the Olympics. The name of Croton, of its athletes and of its doctors, started to spread in every city and kingdom.

In that environment of well-being the cities on the shores of the Ionian became destinations of important trades attracting not just merchants but also scholars and artists. Mnesarchus often traveled to those cities which grew very quickly like Ta-

ranto, Sybaris, Croton, Locris, and Syracuse, to sell his coveted seals.

One day his little son Pythagoras, about ten years old, asked his dad if he could come with him on one of his extraordinary travels, of which he had heard incredible tales. Partenides was worried, but Mnesarchus convinced her to let Pythagoras leave with him. Thus, the ship left for Italy with aboard the curious and emotional young boy.

Around the beginning of May they left the island of Corfu and after crossing the open sea they finally saw land at the horizon. The white coast of Leuca in the modern day Apulia welcomed the ship. First Taranto, then one by one, the other cities became destinations for his father's commerce.

Once they arrived in Croton, the young Pythagoras was deeply shocked by the lifestyle and by the customs of its inhabitants. The women, very beautiful, walked freely, there were no slaves, in contrast to the Greek world, patriarchal and male chauvinistic, where the woman was considered an inferior being and had no rights, but only duties.

In Croton, instead, you could breathe an exciting atmosphere and people appeared happy and in splendid shape. Pythagoras saw young athletes training and the blossoming commerce during the fair of the Panegyric of Hera, but one thing in particular touched him: *a small ox made of bread*. A woman at the market gave him the bread shaped as that animal, explain-

ing that it was made to thank the ox who had pulled the plow before the grain harvest.

In fact, the *ox of bread* was an ancient custom of the Itali and the symbol of Italy itself. It was made with the first harvested grain, around the beginning of July, and it was taken to the *Syssitium*, the communal banquet established by king Italo, during which the wheat collected was divided into equal parts.

When Mnesarchus was finished with his business affairs, the ship left for other *polis* and then returned to Samos. In those days you could only sail from May to September, always during the day and close to the coast. The only crossing in the open sea was the one from the island of Corfu to Leuca, around 110 kilometers.

Pythagoras kept the memory of Croton deep within his heart and after returning to his homeland he started studying with great effort. Every day that passed the young boy became more curious and thirsty for new knowledge.

To guarantee high levels of study, his parents entrusted Pythagoras' education to the best teachers of their time. Among them was the poet and musician Ermodame of Samos, and then Pherecydes of Syros, mythographer, cosmographer and naturalist, who saw in that young boy huge talent. He taught him to play the lyre, recite Homer and other poems, scan the stars, and took him on a few trips. But, with the passing of time, Pherecydes realized that Pythagoras, almost eighteen

now, needed to expand his horizons. So he talked to his parents explaining that the young boy was asking questions that needed teachers who were more prepared. Thus they let their son leave for Miletus, in the nearby Ionia region, today on the coast of Turkey, to attend the school of Thales.

In Miletus, Pythagoras found a very stimulating environment. The old teacher had organized a famous school attended by young students with great talent. There he was introduced to astronomy and geometry. First the old teacher Thales and then the students Anaximander and Anaximenes helped Pythagoras in his training and at the end Thales recommended he travel to Egypt.

When he returned to Samos, Pythagoras found a novelty. Polycrates, a rich merchant, had established tyranny on the island. Immediately, the tyrant understood the importance of that young fellow citizen, multilingual and prepared, and tried to involve him in his circle. Soon he realized that Pythagoras' character could not stand tyranny. Thus he decided to help him out in order to then obtain his favor in return.

In that period Polycrates was making alliances and stable relationships with Egypt. Seeing how much Pythagoras wanted to visit that country, he wrote a letter to the pharaoh Amasis so that he would welcome the young Samian who had a lot of desire to experience the world.

In a matter of a few weeks Pythagoras left for Egypt, where he stayed for about twenty years. He was introduced to the custom of the temples until he himself became a priest. He perfected arithmetic, astronomy and cosmology. He learned the Egyptian hieroglyphs and analyzed deeply their religious beliefs about life, death and the sacred worship. Those long years in Egypt thus allowed Pythagoras to become a man of great culture.

Pythagoras, already famous, arrived in Babylon, capital of the Persian empire, at the court of the enlightened king Cyrus the Great. There they immediately understood the greatness of Pythagoras and he was allowed to move freely so he could compare himself to the wise Persians.

Persia had recently become one of the biggest empires in the world. Thousands of students attended there and all fields of human knowledge were cultivated. The closeness of the Middle with the Far East favored a vivacious exchange of ideas that impressed Pythagoras.

In the middle of the sixth century BC, called by historians for its importance the *axial century*, meaning the axis of history, rumors arrived from the Far East of new doctrines that were rapidly spreading. Siddhārtha, the Buddha, gave birth to Buddhism. Jain Mahavira to Jainism. Further to the East, Lao Tzu was founding the Taoist doctrine and Confucius was spreading Confucianism in China.

In the Middle East instead, where Pythagoras was staying, as well as Hebraism, another religious thought was developing, the one of Zoroaster, Zoroastrianism, with the doctrine of the two Gods of Good and Evil in eternal conflict with each other. While from Thrace, orphism began to penetrate Greek culture.

Pythagoras had already tried for many years to decipher with mathematical logic the sense of life, the reasons of human behavior and the great mystery of death, that he thought he could solve with the metempsychosis, the transmigration of the souls from one body to another. The Asian doctrines were for many reasons in line with a few of his thoughts, but he felt something was missing. The closeness then with Zarathustra and the Zoroastrians was for him without a doubt a novelty, but it didn't appease him because it predicted the impossibility to definitely win evil. And the relationships with the Chaldeans and the Magis were interesting to him, but not convincing. The same happened with his visit to Epimenides of Crete. He was still searching for the truth, for a doctrine with universal value for all times and all peoples.

Thus, after having met people, cultures and having acquired knowledge from everywhere, he decided to return to Samos. At his return he found the warmth of his family and of his affections that reminded him of his childhood, when as a child he would walk on trails asking the teachers questions upon questions and most importantly questions to himself. But the happiness of the return didn't last very long. In fact, the tyrant

Polycrates, with his authoritarian and opportunistic character, was not compatible with the immensity of Pythagoras' thought, who intended to organize a study center on the island, a hemicycle in which scholars could participate in spreading his knowledge and in giving answers to his unresolved questions.

Polycrates tried again to get the famous Pythagoras involved, but he felt oppressed and controlled by the uncomfortable tyrant.

Pythagoras loved freedom, justice and often, to find calm and serenity, he would seek refuge in the caves still existent today between the granite rocks of the Kerkis mountain, in the north of the island. He couldn't go on in that way anymore. In Samos he wouldn't have ever been able to put in place his great universal project, that of creating a School to where all the knowledge would flow and to give the world a new vision for a pacified and serene life.

After having reflected and talked a while with his family and his most intimate friends, he decided to leave. This time for a destination that would be his true home, a place to start his School and a new society. In his mind, the love from his childhood which had really impressed him during his first trip with his father and that he always had in his heart resurfaced: Croton of Italy.

The city of Croton had now become a point of reference for all the Greek colonies and it was famous for its healthy weather. But what attracted Pythagoras the most was in reality *the italic side of Croton*.

Now he finally understood: those values that for thousands of years were among the people of Italy corresponded to the ethical and behavioral model that he himself had elaborated and that he intended to transmit to the world through his School. He understood that in Croton the inhabitants had an elevated lifestyle thanks to the influence of the italic mothers, who had brought with them the italic values that corresponded to his model.

In 532 BC Pythagoras, around age fifty, on a splendid sunny day landed for the second time in Croton, accompanied by his faithful helper and friend Zalmoxis. As soon as he arrived, he didn't waste time and immediately put into practice his strategy. His fame and reputation was already widespread in the Mediterranean. His talents and life experiences made him appear as one of the greatest sages of the world. Thus, the Crotonians welcomed with joy the arrival of the teacher during a tragic moment for the city, the worst since its foundation. In fact, the painful and unexpected defeat against Locris close to the Sagra river had blocked the expansionism toward South and had resulted in thousands of victims among the young Crotonians.

In Croton Pythagoras first talked to the women and then the young. Afterwards, welcomed by the Thousands' Council, he enchanted the entire political audience of the city with his words explaining with depth and care his project.

For the first time in the history of humanity the word *philosopher, lover of knowledge* was heard during his speech. He explained that the love for wisdom was not an ensemble of abstract and theoretical knowledge, but it was the art of *knowing how to live*. And in Croton, maybe without even realizing it, the inhabitants lived better than elsewhere thanks to the italic customs of freedom and friendship.

To put in practice his ideas Pythagoras needed a School: a community of life and knowledge that from Croton would influence the whole italic area and then Sicily, Lucania, Apulia, Campania and then reach Greece and then from there would spread around the world. The Thousands' Council accepted his proposal and so the phenomenal pythagoric project was born.

In a few months the philosopher attracted and selected many people who demonstrated ability and deep understanding of his mission. Even the women, that in the Greek world were caged in the gynaecium without participating in the political and cultural life, united and created an association for him. Thus, together with the whole Crotonian medical school, new and disruptive ideas, ethical and social paradigms, empirical and rational studies were forged: the scientific method was

born which would make Croton the true cradle and undisputed capital of rationalism.

After the first year spent establishing at best the organization, in 530 BC there were already around six hundred followers adhering to the Pythagorean School. It was like this that many of them, including two thousand italics, decided to live together creating the Pythagorean community near the temple of Hera Lacinia.

In that period a young pupil named Theano, daughter of the Pythagorean Brontinus, fell deeply in love with Pythagoras, who at the age of about fifty still had undisputed charm and beauty. He intended to remain celibate and dedicate himself fully to the School, but the eyes and the words of Theano lit in him the awareness of having found his life partner with whom to carry on the harmonic values which he intended to spread. Thus, in spite of the gossip caused by the age difference with the young twenty year old, they decided to get married, proving how love overcomes every obstacle. They had five children together. Damo, their first daughter was born, followed by their son Telauges and then by their other two daughters Myia and Arignote, finally from the smaller Mnemarco.

The ethical intentions of the School, that is to teach the righteous behavior that leads to living in harmony, convinced Pythagoras to adopt a selection process for admission. Only he who had a free spirit and willingness to learn in order to elevate himself, not to show off, could take part in the activities

and research. To identify themselves, the Pythagoreans coined the term *esoteric*, *the intimates who know the secret doctrines*. They also adopted a symbol of identification, the pentagonal star with five points, *Igeia*, that represents health, the harmonic perfection. Afterwards this star was used in many cases for distorted reasons and completely contrary to the original Pythagorean values, becoming a symbol of conflict and violence.

Pythagoras soon dedicated himself to his principal work, that of influencing the political administration of the city of Croton, and then of all the other cities where the Pythagorean communities were rapidly spreading.

Other than the term *philosopher* and *esoteric*, Pythagoras introduced other words that are today at the basis of worldly culture: among these *cosmos*, meaning the stars and not, like in the beginning, meaning the order of the armies deployed in battle, and *mathematics*, meaning the *learning or knowledge*, that didn't just refer only to numbers, like instead it meant later on. This last word, maybe more than any other, identifies Pythagoras as a mathematician of numbers and not as a philosopher and politician, the main characteristics that best define him.

With numbers you could, moreover, demonstrate mathematically the correctness of the ethical and behavioral systems and Pythagoras explained to his students that the lifestyle that

creates peace with oneself and with the world has unchangeable rules just like numbers.

He taught that the five ethical principles of the righteous human behavior, what we now call the *pythagoras' pentologue*, were: *Freedom* (Eleutheria) of all humans, without which criminality and decay prevail; *Friendship* (Filia) or love of everyone with everyone, from God to animals included, trying to make friends even the enemies; the *Community* (Koinonia) of life and goods to eliminate all conflicts and competition; the *Dignity of the Woman* (Ginaxia), dignity greater than that of man, because she always divides in equal parts between sons and daughters; the *Vegetarian Diet* (Fitofagia) meaning the refusal to kill animals, that is at the basis of peace: *if you don't dare kill an animal, you will never kill a man*.

Consequently, harmony, friendship and love are the hinges of the human being. The vegetarian diet, and thus the refusal to kill animals, brings non-violence among men. The woman has more dignity than the man in the administration of the sacred worship because she is the custodian of the *justness* that is of divine origin. Freedom is the essential condition for a civilization because it develops a richness of values. Thus it was so that the Pythagoreanism fused with the italic principles that for thousands of years characterized the life of the italic people and of Croton in particular.

The followers of the Teacher (*Didaskalos*) Pythagoras, considered real and true disciples (*Mathetes*), grew. Some had al-

ready reached high levels of comprehension and knowledge, others started to approach the teachings of the School. Prominent personalities started to excel and the results of the research multiplied in various fields, from the mathematical to the legal, passing from cosmology to medicine and then reaching the first musical theories.

One day Pythagoras managed to demonstrate a knowledge that was spread for centuries in practical life, that is, the sum of the square surface of the shorter sides, the catetis, of every rectangle triangle is always equal to the square surface built on the longer side, the hypotenuse. To celebrate the formulation of the *Theorem*, Pythagoras offered an *ox of bread* to the Gods, whilst in another occasion he refused to kill an ox that someone gave him to offer as a sacrifice. Once again he used geometry to signify that even ethics had precise and unchangeable rules that, if observed, brought an end to all killings.

The Pythagoreans were many and the female ones influenced the *polis* by beginning to take part in an increasingly firm and present manner in politics and in the administration of the cities. Thanks to this incredible flowering of studies and discoveries, legislatures spread, as did the birth of courthouses and of public assemblies, artists, doctors and the first real and proper scientists. In a short time there was a cultural propagation from Croton that embraced the whole ionic coast, influencing then directly the motherland so much that the Greeks defined

Italy as Great Greece or Magna Graecia (Megale Hellas). *Magna Graecia* was only named like that for the height of the philosophy and the irreproachable lifestyle of the Pythagoreans, not for the richness and splendor of the colonies, as it is usually thought. In simple words, Magna Graecia had a mother, Italy, and a father, Pythagoras, and a capital, Croton.

Croton, once it became the capital of the Italic ethics and of Magna Graecia, started to be managed politically by the Pythagorean community and by Pythagoras himself. The dream of the Teacher was being fully fulfilled. The spiritual and cultural elevation was reaching incredibly high levels. By the hundreds, women and men from all over the world came into contact with the Pythagorean School and harmony started to be the common goal for all. Kingdoms, sovereigns and even tyrants were forced to reckon with the ideals and values of Pythagoras.

That exalting atmosphere was hiding though grave conflicts. In fact, in the School the women gave offerings of flatbread made with flour and honey on the altars of the Gods, surrounded by the Pythagorean cloths made of white linen. That ceremony was an open condemnation to the official religious worship, that required instead blood sacrifices to obtain the protection of the Gods: in the temples, oxen and other animals were killed and offered in sacrifice. The powerful priestly Crotonian caste would have happily got rid of the Pythagoreans who discredited them in front of the people. And even the

rich families saw with an evil eye the Pythagoreans who preached and practiced community of life and of goods, contrasting with the logic of competition. Also, all the political class was put aside by the Pythagoreans, who adopted an ethical model that eliminated politics at its roots: for the Pythagoreans, people, families and *poleis*, had to live according to their model that could not be questioned because of universal value.

The Pythagorean community counted by now thousands of people in all the Mediterranean and many cities big and small were managed directly by Pythagoreans. Among these, though, was not the close town of Sybaris, located one hundred kilometers north of Croton, that instead was characterized by lust, lack of freedom and widespread slavery. Thus, when in 510 BC many aristocratic citizens found refuge in Croton following a revolt in Sybaris, the relationship between the two cities was irreversibly damaged. Pythagoras was against both the war and the return of the aristocrats asked by Sybaris and insisted that they were protected since they were begging for help. But some Pythagoreans agreed to war and the Crotonian army, headed by the multi winner Olympic hero Milone, husband of Myia, daughter of Pythagoras, clashed against the mercenary army of Sybaris scaring it away.

The defeat of the sybarites was complete, and the great city was destroyed, torn to the ground, completely flooded and

submerged by mud. The echo of the news went around the world and all of Greece cried that loss. Sybaris, in fact, was a very rich and famous commercial center, a crossroads of routes between Etruria, Greece and the Middle East.

Croton thus reached its maximum potential, and for some time lived a period of great glory. But from that moment on the relationship between Pythagoras and the Crotonian citizens was ruined. With the excuse of the division of the wealthy sybarite properties, to which the Pythagoreans were against, there was a conspiracy headed by Cylon, who hated Pythagoras because many years prior he did not admit him to the School because he judged him as greedy and opportunistic. After that conspiracy, a sudden and violent revolt followed: many Pythagoreans were ambushed and killed. Others, including Pythagoras himself, were able to hastily runaway.

The crisis was by now irreversible. The Pythagorean communities spread in the various cities and regions suffered a grave decline. Pythagoras tried to seek refuge first South, in Caulonia and Locris, which rejected him for fear of Croton. Then at last he found shelter North, in Metapontum. There he settled down near a temple and tried to repair the rift. But the advanced age and the discouragement due to the sad events destroyed his strength. Thus after having left precious instructions to his disciples and in particular to Theano and his daughters, he died. His existence, spent giving everyone the

rules for a life worth living, had anyhow left a deep impression.

After Pythagoras' death the ethical and philosophical values endured in the surviving Pythagoreans who were hiding in the hills and in isolated places, and who spontaneously gave teachings and medical care to the people in the nearby cities.

The Pythagorean theories were by now too widespread and rooted to completely disappear. Thanks to the successors of Pythagoras, and in particular to the women, the Pythagorean phenomenon continued in time. Not by chance, around fifty years after the revolt against the Pythagoreans, in 440 BC Pericles in person imposed from Athens the reopening of the Pythagorean School of Croton, and the sworn agreements were deposited in the temple of Apollo in Delphi. This attests that the Pythagorean doctrine was felt as something insurmountable even by the very civilized Athens of the Parthenon so much that you could say: *the italic ethics had colonized Greece from where the settlers had left to colonize Italy!*

So for a few decades the so called Pythagoreans of the second generation, like Philolaus, Eurito, Timeo, Empedocles, Archytas and many others, resumed the thread interrupted half a century earlier, welcoming thinkers and philosophers from all over. Among these a young man arrived in Croton, Plato, son of a famous Athenian philosopher, Perictione, friend of Socrates. Her son Plato frequented Magna Graecia and the School of Croton for seven years, where in the meantime several Py-

thagoreans had written down the oral doctrine of the Teacher. Afterwards he bought those books at a high price, went back to Greece and in his famous Dialogues he saved those teachings that wanted to change the world. He loved those Pythagorean books so much that he kept them underneath the pillow of his bed.

Plato then accepted twice the invitation of the tyrants of Syracuse, first Dionysius the Old and then Dionysius the Young, who just wanted him at their court for the prestige of his fame, just like Polycrates tried to do with Pythagoras. Plato instead really wanted to change the life of the Syracuseans and give freedom back to the people. He thus put himself against the two tyrants and risked his life twice, like he wrote in his *Seventh Letter*. At the end of it, Plato concluded with the famous dilemma: *the problems of the world can be resolved only if the rulers become philosophers or the philosophers become rulers.*

But by then the times and the social and political context were changing. A new power, patriarchal and authoritarian, was knocking at the doors of the world and was claiming space with an intrusive military force. Rome by now was indisputable, but the Pythagorean influence remained for a long time in its cultured circles and in the ruling class. In fact, the Roman emperor Augustus (63 BC - 14 AD) established that the whole territory of the peninsula, from Calabria to the Alps, was called Italy: *tota Italia*. This proves that the consideration of the Ital-

ic-Pythagorean culture was in Rome so high that it wanted to impose that name on its main territory.

Nevertheless, from the Roman Empire onwards, humanity followed a path opposite to the teachings given in the axial century by the greatest teacher of the West, and kept going in a competitive, male chauvinistic and violent direction: it went in an anti-pythagorean direction.

Despite everything, the immortal ideas of Pythagoras survived transplanted in many ideologies and religions: thinkers, prophets, philosophers and scientists still today are inspired by that model. To live in harmony with your own self and in society: it is the disarming actuality of the Pythagorean thought that now, just like then, casts a valid foundation for a future of peace. This demonstrates that that child born in Samos, who lived around the world, who founded in Croton the most important school of thought in all of humanity, is today more alive than ever.

From Pythagoras' times twenty five centuries have passed and recently five Calabrians, one woman and four men, have decided to reopen that School calling it the *New Pythagorean School* and signing in Croton the constitutive document at dusk on November 30, 2015, near the surviving Column of the Hera Lacinia Temple.

The five friends, that already hundreds of people from all over the world have joined, are convinced that now from Calabria, mother of Italy and of Magna Graecia, starts a new beneficial cycle for the entire humanity. The Teacher Pythagoras calls us today, with evidence of all the disasters that have occurred during many centuries, to abide to those ethical rules that can make the Earth into a common and peaceful home for all living beings.

New Pythagorean School

To find out about the activities, participate in events and projects, join the New Pythagorean School, visit the website

www.newpythagoreanschool.org

We can now imagine Pythagoras who, considering the succession of wars, injustices and genocides from his times to ours, shakes his head saying: *It has been proven! I told you so!*

This story is mainly based on cues taken from the three lives of Pythagoras that have reached us: Iamblicus, *The Pythagorean Life*; Porphyrius *Life of Pythagoras*; Diogenes Laertius, *The Lives of the Philosophers*.

Dozens of lives of Pythagoras were written in antiquity and have been lost. Apart from the narrative freedom, most of the elements regarding Pythagoras and reported in this work are taken from those three lives.