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Ancient Sources about Hyperborea

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Abstract

Hyperborea is one of the most interesting and mysterious aspects in the history of the ancient world. In contrast with other mythical lands, there is a vast quantity of sources about it. Some authors, mainly poets, think of Hyperborea's existence as plausible, others, mainly scholars, do not. Many sources contradict to each other, of others we have only fragments or preserved accounts from other authors. This study focuses on ancient Greek and Roman authors who (in)directly talked about Hyperborea, starting with Hesiod and finishing with Claudian. Accounts of the Riphean Mountains are also included.

Keywords: Hyperborea, mythology, Ancient Greece, history of religion.

Neither Homer (born 8th century BC), nor Hesiod (accepted to be active 750-650 BC) specifically mention the Hyperboreans, in spite of what Herodotus (4.32) wrote about them:

> Hesiod however has spoken of Hyperboreans, and so also has Homer in the poem of the *Epigoni*, at least if Homer was really the composer of that Epic.

According to Bridgman (2005: 20), although the Hyperboreans are never mentioned by name in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, hints of isolated pieces of the Hyperborean myth do exist in Homer.[1] The poet must not have felt it essential to highlight the myth, as these pieces would have been self-evident to everyone in his audience. The Pseudo-Hesiodic *Catalogue of Women*, however, does mention the "well-horsed" Hyperboreans.[2] Hesiod (*WD* 508), like Homer (*Il.* 9.5), placed the North Wind, Boreas, in Thrace, perhaps in Mount Haemus, and therefore Hyperborea should have been north of Thrace.

Aristeas of Proconnesus (second half of 7th century BC) wrote a poem *Arimaspea*, which remained for a long time the only detailed report of the further North for the rest of the Greek world. It is probably to be dated 615-595 BC (Dowden, 2019) or early-to-mid 6th century BC (Gagné, 2021: 246). It was widely known in the Archaic and Classical periods, especially among the worshipers of Apollo and became a rich new source about Hyperborea. The surviving

[1] The chronology in this paper mainly follows Timothy Bridgman's groundbreaking *Hyperboreans: Myth and History in Celtic-Hellenic Contacts*.

[2] F 150 MW = F 63 Hirschberger = F 98–99 Most = F 40 Evelyn-White. Bolton believed this reference was an identification of the Scythians with the Hyperboreans. Gagné (2021: 236) thinks, that the cosmographic edifice of the *Catalogue of Women* was to remain a monument of reference for subsequent rewritings of the world. That poem is a Hesiodic text as ambitious and influential as the *Theogony* or the *Works and Days*.

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fragments of *Arimaspea* do not mention the Hyperboreans, and are very small and few in number. However, a number of borrowings from the poem are contained in the works of Pindar, Herodotus, Hellanicus, and possibly Hecataeus of Abdera, Alcman, Pliny, Aelian, Plautus, Ennius, Aeschylus (Bolton, 1962: 39-73). As Homer, Hesiod and Ananius, he does not mention the Riphean Mountains.

- Pytheas of Massalia was the first person to describe on record the Midnight sun phenomena.
- He also introduced the idea of a distant island, Thule – six days' sailing north of Britain.
- Hellanicus of Lesbos alludes that the Hyperboreans were vegetarians.

Alcman (second half of 7th century BC; Fleischer, 2019: 19) is a choral lyric poet from Sparta. It has been suggested that he used Aristeas of Proconnesus as his source, as they were writing at virtually the same time. The fragmentary source material for Alcman does not mention the Hyperboreans. Some fragments mention Scythian horses and remote peoples like the Issedones. He is the first attested author to mention the Riphean Mountains.[3] The association of Night with the Ripheans is a recurrent motif (Budelmann, 2013: 42-46).

Alcaeus (625/620-580 BC), a poet, writing about the same time as Alcman and Aristeas, mentioned a story in his *Hymn to Apollo* in which the newborn Apollo received a chariot drawn by swans from his father Zeus. Zeus gave Apollo the mission of going to Delphi to speak of "justice and law to the Greeks." Apollo, however, disobeyed his father and went to the land of the Hyperboreans, where he stayed for a year (Him. *Oratio*, 48.10).[4]

Ananius, a 6th century BC Ionian iambic poet, in a fragment[5] equated the Hyperboreans with the Scythians, perhaps following Hesiod's reference (Bolton, 1962: 189). Both Hesiod and Ananius may simply have thought that any people who lived in the north were Hyperborean.

Simonides (556-468 BC), a poet born at Iulis in Ceos, wrote that the Hyperboreans lived for a thousand years (Strabo, 15.1.57).

Hecataeus of Miletus (550-476 BC). Known as the "Father of Geography" his material for the most distant territories was partly drawn from the sources of Argonautic traditions and poems like the *Arimaspea*. For him the Riphean Mountains remain a reference of orientation, a matrice of rivers (*FGrH* 1 F 18a-b, 194). What form the land of the Hyperboreans would have taken there is impossible to ascertain with the evidence at hand, but there can be no doubt that the Hyperboreans were situated at the extremity of that cosmography (Gagné, 2021: 295).

Pindar (518-438 BC) portrays the Hyperboreans as a sacred race not subject to illness or aging, but who lived apart from any toil and battle, undisturbed by acting Nemesis – retribution for the sin of hubris: arrogance before the gods (*Pyth.*, 10.30). Their unique occupation was to sing, play music and dance, crowned in golden laurel wreaths in honor of Apollo.

Sophocles (497/6-406/5 BC), a tragedian, following earlier source material such as Hesiod, put Boreas' home in northern Thrace near the Sarpedon rock, where Cleopatra, Boreas' daughter, was brought up in her father's cave (Sophocles, *Antigone*, 980-987). He may have used

[3] Gagné, 2021: 234. F 89 and 90 (Page, 1962).

[4] In the *Homeric Hymn to (Pythian) Apollo* (216-546), Apollo comes from Olympia seeking a site for his cult and oracle, ending in leading a population from Crete, in the form of a dolphin, *Delphinius*, to found the sanctuary of Delphi (Strauss Clay, 2006: 80-83). He does not come from the Hyperboreans as it is implied in Alcaeus. Cf. West 2003: 9-12 for the differences in the *Hymn of Apollo*. For Hyperboreans in Alcaeus works see Page, 1955: 247-252; Bowra, 1961: 165.

[5] West, 1972: 34-35, F 1-5.

Alcman as a source too, as he mentions the mountains of the north shrouded in night (Sophocles, *Oedipus Coloneus*, 1248).

Aeschylus (525/524-456/455 BC), often described as the father of tragedy, is the earliest of the three great Athenian tragic poets whose works are not entirely lost. He referred to the felicity of the Hyperboreans (*Choephori*, 372-374). Perhaps following Hesiod, Alcman, Simonides, Pindar, and Sophocles, he places Boreas' home in Thrace from where the northern blast comes (*Agamemnon*, 193, 651, 692, 1012, 1152-1153, 1418).[6]

Euripides (484/480-406 BC) came from an old and respected family who lived in Attica near Athens. His family possessed an ancestral priesthood of Apollo Zosterius. In his *Hecuba* (462ff), written about 424, Euripides mentioned the Deliades. These were choruses of young girls sent to the sacred island of Delos to worship Leto, Artemis and Apollo. They came from other Greek cities and especially from Athens. These girls symbolized the nymphs who were reported to have sung near Leto as she was giving birth to Apollo. They may have been drawn from old and privileged families, and sent to complement the choruses of young girls from Delos, and to stop the Delian monopoly on these cults. Since before the time of Euripides, the cults of Leto, Artemis and Apollo had become Panhellenic (*Homeric Hymn to Apollo*, 157; Bridgman, 2005: 33).

Herodotus (484-425 BC). I cannot describe the importance of The Father of History better than the philologist Renaud Gagné (2021: 300). Prose opened the way to radically new experimentations with the composition of total space, which were brought to unprecedented heights of complexity by Herodotus. Herodotus is a cosmographer, just like Pindar is a cosmographer. But the compositions of worlds championed by each author are of qualitatively different scopes. Herodotus' cosmography contains a number of other worlds, without erasing them. It classifies and orders them. *The Histories* are, without a doubt, one of the most ambitious cosmographic texts of Antiquity. His work is conceived as a rival to the great monuments of epic, an encyclopedia of all knowledge, and a collection of memories. This is a text that appropriates, condenses and reframes all earlier relevant narrative. Herodotus (4.13) remains the main source of information about Aristeas and *Arimaspea*.[7] In 4.32-36 he depicts Hyperborean maidens bearing gifts in ancient times to the temple of Apollo on Delos.

Hippocrates of Kos (460-370 BC). Part of the collection of texts from the 5th century BC, which have commonly been placed under his authorship, is a treatise on *Air, Water and Places*. Paragraph 19.1-2 deals with the geography of the extreme north of the world known to the Greeks, as well as Scythia: Scythia lies under the Great Bear (Arctos) and to the south of the Riphean Mountains from where Boreas blows (see also West 1999). The Hyperboreans were never mentioned by name, but it is clear that the Riphean Mountains came from the Hyperborean myth. According to Gagné (2021: 298), "Hippocrates is particularly firm in his rejection of the

[6] Regarding Aeschylus' *Prometheus Bound* see Dowden 2019 on 35 F 5 *BNJ*: "Thus, the role of Aristean geography has been to supply some part of an extreme and frightening landscape, accessible from where Prometheus is . . . Given that the text of Aristeas must surely have been available to Hekataios and certainly was read by Herodotos, there is nothing unlikely in supposing Pseudo-Aischylos to have had the text too. He has made impressionistic use of it, but enough key details poke through the fabric in the Commentary on the Text above. Of course, several details could have come indirectly from Hekataios, but the author obviously has a knowledge of mythological texts and there is no reason to exclude direct knowledge of Aristeas."

[7] Herodotus clearly does not believe in the existence of the Hyperboreans, but felt compelled to mention them, as they were such a part of Greek myth and literary history (How & Wells, 1936; Fehling, 1994; Bridgman, 2005: 60; Gagné, 2021: 314). Romm (1989) and Priestley (2014: 113-114) think the opposite. In 4.36 Herodotus laughs – it is the only place in the *Histories* where we are made to see him actually laugh at the arguments of his rivals.

extravagant stories written over the edges of the world. No population can live beyond these inhospitable mountains. With such a statement, it is the whole idea of Hyperborea that is denied."

Hellanicus of Lesbos (480-395 BC) was an author of a vast body of work in the last third of the 5th century BC. In a fragment, preserved in Clement of Alexandria of 2nd century, He was reported to have written that the Hyperboreans lived to the north of the Riphean Mountains, learned Justice, did not eat meat, but only wild fruits.[8] He may have used Herodotus as his source, building on *Arimaspea's* matrix. In Hellanicus, the hexametric poetry turns into prose.

Damastes of Sigeum (fl. c. 400 BC), geographer and historian, was probably younger than Herodotus, as he was a pupil of Hellanicus. In a fragment of Damastes' work, preserved in Stephanus of Byzantium (*FGrH* 1 5 F1), he gave his knowledge of where the Hyperboreans were located:

> Hyperboreoi: a people. Protarchos affirms that the Alps received the name of Rhipaian Mountains, and those living beyond the Alpine mountains are all named Hyperboreoi. Antimachos says that they are identical with the Arimaspoi. But Damastes in the essay On Nations writes that the Issedones live beyond the Scythians and the Arimaspoi beyond them, and beyond the Arimaspoi there are the Rhipaian mountains, from which the wind of Boreas blows; and snow never abandons them. Beyond these mountains live the Hyperboreoi, until the other sea. Others report differently. Hellanikos writes Hyperboreioi, with the diphthong (Trans. Costa).

Damastes may very well have used a copy of Aristeas' Arimaspea, as the interval marking off Herodotus' writings from those of Damastes is comparatively short. It remains unclear how quickly Herodotus' writings were diffused in the Greek world. Bolton (1962: 40) thinks that Damastes might have obtained this information from texts written by Hecataeus of Miletus to which Herodotus had access. As modern scholars do not have access to an extant copy of the *Arimaspea*, and only indeed to minimal fragments of the works of Hecataeus of Miletus, the above only qualifies as guesswork (Bridgman, 2005: 46).

Dionysius of Miletus (5th century BC), ethnographer and historian, possibly reproduced similar templates as Damastes (Gagné, 2021: 297). According to Bolton (1962: 111-3), Dionysius reports that a range of lofty mountains, called the Riphean Mountains, ran in an east-west direction far to the north above the Tanais River and the Black Sea areas. Bridgman (2005: 33) does not agree (cf. Almagor, 2014), saying that Bolton bases his assertions on Pliny (6.19) and Mela (1.116ff), that do not confirm his hypothesis.

Protarchus, a sophist writing about 392 BC, says that he called the Alps the Riphean Mountains and that he called those peoples living to the north of the Alps Hyperboreans. According to the fragment preserved in Stephanus of Byzantium (op. cit.), Antimachus, writing about 405 BC, disagreed with his colleague Protarchus, but said they were Arimaspi. Protarchus and Antimachus had obviously identified the Alps with the Riphean Mountains.

Heraclides Ponticus (390-310 BC), a philosopher and astronomer, writing during the late 4th century BC, reported the Hyperboreans lived above the Alps, perhaps following the same tradition as Protarchus and Antimachus. He described the Gauls who sacked Rome as raiders coming from Hyperborea (Plutarch *Camillus*, 22.1). He wrote that Abaris came riding to converse with Pythagoras in the presence of Phalaris (F 51 Wehrli). This conversation is quite unhistorical, as Phalaris ruled Acragas in 570-554 BC, long before Pythagoras arrived in Italy. It is significant,

[8] Cl. Alex. *Stromata*, 1.15.72.2: "Hellanikos narrates that the Hyperboreans live on the far side of the Rhipaian Mountains. They are educated in justice by refraining from eating meat, but consuming fruit from trees instead. They take those who reach sixty years of age outside the city gates and do away with them" (Trans. Pownall).

however, as the Hyperborean legend was being transposed from the eastern theater of Greek colonization to the western one.

Lycurgus (390-324 BC), the orator, a contemporary of Heraclides, in his speech *Against Menesaechmus* tells that as a result of a famine among the Hyperboreans, Abaris came and served Apollo. When he had obtained mantic power from him, he went around Greece prophesying, having as an attribute the god's arrow (F 85 Conomis).

Aristotle (384-322 BC) agreed with Aeschylus, accepting that the great rivers of Scythia had their sources in the Riphean Mountains (*Meteorologica*, 1.13.350b). He also made reference to Hyperborea in his *History of Animals* (6.35.1), which he wrote about 345/343 BC. According to a myth, a she-wolf can only give birth during a period of twelve days in the year, because of the twelve days it took Leto to be transported to Delos from Hyperborea, in the form of a wolf, when she was pregnant and fleeing from Hera's wrath. Aristotle dryly notes that this so-called fact has never been observed, just reported.

Pytheas of Massalia (born 350, flourished 320-306 BC) was a geographer, explorer and astronomer from the Greek colony of Massalia (modern-day Marseille, France). In about 325 BC he sailed from Massalia to the southwestern, northwestern and northern coasts of Europe, most probably to find new sources of metals and amber, and to cement direct links with older sources. He was the first known scientific visitor to see and describe the Arctic and the polar ice. The theoretical existence of some Northern phenomena that he described, such as a frigid zone, and temperate zones where the nights are very short in summer and the sun does not set at the summer solstice, was already known. But he is the first person to describe it on record. He also introduced the idea of a distant island, Thule, described as an island six days' sailing north of Britain, near the frozen sea (Strabo, 1.4.2). His work *On the Ocean* has not come down to us. What we do have is evidence of how different authors considered his information and how credible he was. Dicaearchus (fl. 326-296 BC), who had been Aristotle's pupil, seems to have started the reviling of Pytheas' work and information, while the issuing of his findings and indeed his book would have been extremely recent. It was revived during the 2nd century BC as a subject of open scorn, expressed by Polybius and continued by Strabo. Other authors such as Timaeus, Eratosthenes, Hipparchus, Pliny and Mela took Pytheas seriously and used his information in their own works. This included a mention of the Hyperboreans by Pytheas, but his use of the name seems to be limited only to the directional sense north and does not constitute a reference to the traditional myth (Pliny, 6.39.11). If Pliny's report is accurate, he also located the Hyperboreans and the Riphean Mountains in Scythia, as Herodotus (4.13) had done before him (Bridgman, 2005: 99).[9]

Hecataeus of Abdera (360-290 BC), a Greek historian, in around 300 BC wrote *On the Hyperboreans* of which a few fragments have come down to us. It contained a detailed description of the mythical nation and the island where they lived, and also of its religious ideas. Under Hyperboreans, however, he understood a people which actually existed for him. He reported very accurately about the culture of the island Celts of Southern Britain, but he did not call them "Celts".

[9] Bridgman (2005: 95) assumes by referring to a passage in Pliny 6.39.10 (parallel circuit through the land of the Hyperboreans and Britannia) that Pytheas mentioned Hyperboreans in his work. But that is highly debatable. On Pytheas' work and life see Hergt (1893), Wikén (1939), Mette (1952), Stichtenoth (1959), Hawkes (1977), Whitaker (1981), Wenskus (1985), Roseman (1994), and McPhail (2014). For reactions of different authors to Pytheas' voyage and information, as well as how they used it in their own writings see Mette, 1952: 10-11, 29-33; Roseman, 1994: 24-145.

His work is a fictional travel novel in which Hecataeus wanted to teach his readers, but in this travel there are descriptions of the culture of a real people in a mythological guise (Joorde, 2016).[10]

Megasthenes (350-290 BC), a diplomat and historian, served on several embassies from 302 to 291 BC. He was sent by Seleucus I to the court of the Indian King Chandragupta, the founder of the Maurya Empire in northern India Megasthenes transposed the Hyperboreans to the zone above the districts of the Indus and the Ganges and wrote that they lived for a thousand years, as Simonides and Pindar had done before him (*FGrH*, 3C 715 F27; see Connor, 1985: 463).

Callimachus (310-240 BC), a poet, scholar and librarian who was active in Alexandria, used Hesiod and perhaps Hecataeus of Abdera as sources for some of his mythological stories, specifically stated that Boreas lived in Mount Haemus in Thrace (*Hymn to Delos*, 65). He does mention (*Aetia*, Fr. 186) the Riphean Mountains, as Alcman, Alcaeus and Aristeas had before him and the Hyperborean offerings wrapped in cornstalks and holy sheaves of corn ears (*Delos*, 283, *Aetia*, Fr. 186). He referred to the tombs of the Hyperborean maidens on Delos, as Herodotus did, but used a slightly different tradition. Callimachus may have made use of Hecataeus of Abdera's description of the land of the Hyperboreans when writing his *Hymn to Delos*.

Simmias, writing in the early years of the 3rd century BC, in a fragment of his work *Apollo,* situated the rich land of the far-off Hyperboreans, where the princely Perseus once feasted, near the land of the Massagetae, to the east of the Caspian Sea on the Great Steppe. For him there were also islands in the land of the Hyperboreans.

Eratosthenes (276-195/4 BC), a pupil of Callimachus, was a man of learning and the head of the Alexandrian library: a mathematician, geographer, poet, astronomer, and music theorist. Strabo (1.3.22) reports that controversy about the existence of the Hyperboreans still raged in the time of Eratosthenes, as the latter criticized Herodotus (4.36) for his statement there are no Hyperboreans because there are no Hypernotians. He adds that although the Hyperboreans occur in myth and legend, those who expound the poetic should know that by "Hyperboreans" were meant the most northerly peoples.

Apollodorus of Athens (180- after 120 BC) gave a version of the Hyperborean myth that agreed with one strand of Pindar's work. As Pindar had done, Apollodorus (2.5.11) connected the Hyperborean myth with the adventures and labors of Heracles, and wrote that the Hyperboreans lived in the Atlas mountain range in northern Africa.

Posidonius of Apamea (135-51 BC) was a stoic philosopher born in Syria, educated in Athens and became known as a learned man. He channeled a longstanding trope, following the tradition starting with Protarchus and Antimachus by placing the Hyperboreans in the Alps of northern Italy, where he knew perfectly well Celts lived (*FHG*, 2.290 F XC; *FGrH,* No. 87 F 103J).

Strabo (64/63 BC – 24 AD) perfectly captured the dismissal of Hyperborea from the economies of knowledge that sustained major strands of history in the Hellenistic and Roman periods (Hunter, 2016: 255-258; Patterson, 2017). He thought (7.3.1, 1.3.22) that it was "because of man's ignorance" and the *muthopoiountes*, those who make myths, that people believed the Riphean Mountains and the Hyperboreans really existed to the north of the Scythian lands. He clearly did not believe in the Hyperboreans, but felt compelled to mention them, just as Herodotus before him, as they were such a part of Greek myth and literary history.

Pomponius Mela was the earliest Roman geographer, who wrote the short geographical essay *de Chorographia* sometime during the reigns of Gaius and Claudius (37-41). He took material from previous authors, especially Herodotus. For him the Hyperboreans lived

[10] For the Hyperboreans in the works of Hecataeus of Abdera see *FGrH* 3A 264 T6, F7 (1), (4-5), (7a), (8-12), (14), (20), Kommentar 3A 264 30-35, 52-60; Diels and Kranz, 1966: 240-241 1-6, 241-245 F1; Murray, 1970: 145, 148, 159, 165; Meister, 1990: 137-142; Lendle, 1992: 269.

beyond the Sea of Azov on the Asian coast under the North Pole, beyond the North Wind and the Riphean Mountains (1.116-2.1, 3.5.36). He continued consciously, or because he was simply reporting older traditions, to mix the real world of expanding geographical knowledge to the east and the Greek mythical parallel world, some features of which had become Roman by the time he was writing.

Pliny (23/24-79) wrote that Hyperborea had six months of daylight and a single day of the sun in retirement. He was perhaps using Pindar and Hecataeus of Abdera as sources, presenting the land of the Hyperboreans as a mythical golden-age utopia which had a region with a delightful climate, not effected by any harmful blast, a remote otherworldly paradise located at the edge of the world. He insisted that we are not "at liberty to entertain any doubts as to the existence of this race" (4.26).[11]

Ptolemy (100-170), a Roman mathematician, astronomer, astrologer, geographer, and music theorist, did not contest the existence of the Hyperboreans or the Riphean Mountains. Following the ideas put forward by Aristeas in Herodotus (4.13), he placed the Riphean Mountains in the middle of the Russian Steppe (3.5.5). He also mentioned a sacred isle and a Hyperborean Ocean to the north of it. This may be an isolated reference to Hecataeus of Abdera's island in the extreme north of the world.

Pausanias (110-180) was a traveler and a geographer, who gave information about the gift route of the Hyperboreans (1.31). Just as in Aristeas (Hdt. 4.13), the Hyperboreans were pictured as living to the north of the Black Sea, but no other information is given about them. He does report that young girls in Delos used to cut a lock of their hair and offer it up on the tombs of the Hyperborean maidens while they were still virgins (1.43.4). This matches Herodotus' information, but Pausanias called the Hyperborean maidens Hecaerge and Opis, instead of Arge and Opis. We learn also that a woman of the district of Delphi named Boio wrote a Delphian hymn which said Olen and the Hyperboreans founded the oracle of Apollo at Delphi (10.5.7).

Maximus of Tyre (fl. late 2nd century), a rhetorician and philosopher, told with relish (38.3) how Aristeas' soul could leave his body, fly into the air, and traverse sea and land until he came to the Hyperboreans.

Dionysius Periegeta (*Orbis Descriptio* 315) thought the Riphean Mountains were the source of the Borysthenes River. Pseudo-Plutarch (*De Fluviis* 5.3), at the end of 2nd, or at the beginning of the 3rd century, qualified the Caucasus as the bed of Boreas, thereby identifying them with the Riphean Mountains and the mythical edge of the world. He has taken the opportunity to insert the Pythagorean doctrine of the immortality of the soul in a Plato-like dialogue in the mouth of Socrates. He then used the attributes of the utopian aspect of the Hyperborean myth to illustrate a mythical utopian existence in life after death.

In the 3rd century Priscian (307, 570-575), again essentially following Herodotus, wrote that the Riphean Mountains were located to the north of the Black Sea, but taking Pindar into account, he thought the Hyperboreans in previous times had been neighbors of the Ethiopians. Avienus (4th century), also following Aristeas in Herodotus, located the Riphean Mountains to the north of the Borysthenes (*Descriptio* 451). Marcian (4th century) entered the Sea of Azov and the Sarmatic Ocean and located the Hyperboreans to the east of the Vistula (*Periplus* 2.39). Eustathius (12th century), also using Herodotus and Damastes of Sigeum as sources, wrote that the Riphean Mountains were actually Scythian (*Commentary on Dionysius Periegeta* 663). The Caucasus Mountains were thought of as going as far as India, on one hand, and the Urals on

[11] For bibliography concerning the Hyperboreans in the works of Pliny see Beagon, 1992: 79-79, 239.

the other. They were northerly and reported to hold the cave of the North Wind, transplanted from its original location of Mount Haemus in Thrace (Bridgman, 2005: 68).

Iamblichus (245-325) was a neoplatonic philosopher of Arabic origin who studied under Porphyry in Rome or Sicily. In his *The Life of Pythagoras* (*Vita Pythagorae*) he drew heavily on the works of Porphyry, Heraclides Ponticus and Hermippus. He mentioned Abaris, but calls him a Scythian who came from the land of the Hyperboreans. As in the text of Pseudo-Plato, the Hyperborean myth has become a part of Pythagorean beliefs, used to illustrate their philosophy.

Himerius (315-386), a Greek sophist and rhetorician, in his 358 oration (*Oratio* 48) to Hermogenes, proconsul of Greece, had relatively recently revived the theme of Apollo's cyclical travels between Delphi and Hyperborea. His long paraphrase of Alcaeus' *Hymn to Apollo* served as the template for his celebration of the Roman official's arrival in Greece (Gagné, 2021: 396; Penella, 2007: 210).

Claudian (370-404) was a very learned Latin poet, making full use of the Hyperborean nexus in his creative reappropriations of the archive (Webb, 2018: 44-46; Gagné, 2021: 394). In *Against Rufinus* (2.5.220-227, 239-245) Claudian shows the army of Stilicho refusing to disband. As the army expresses its loyalty to the general, it gamely asserts its resolve to go to the ends of the world for him even "as far as Thule lying ice-bound beneath the Hyperborean star." In his 396 AD *Panegyric on the third consulship of the Emperor Honorius* (7.51-58), Claudian describes the young emperor being regaled with tales of his father's exploits at the end of the world and in Thule, "where no ship can sail". He "broke the Hyperborean waves with his courageous oars."[12]

For thirteen centuries – from 8th century BC until 5th century – many ancient people perceived Hyperborea as completely real and having significant impact on their lives. By the end of Antiquity, the former reverence for Hyperborea was replaced by skepticism and irony. In the Middle Ages, the subject of Hyperborea was almost completely marginalized in both public consciousness and scientific thought. One of the last mentions of Hyperborea is in the Byzantine encyclopedia *Suda* from 10th century. It looks like Christianity has generated new interests, patterns, ideals and doctrines.

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[12] For Claudian see Christiansen 2009; Gualandri 2013; Bureau 2014; Kelly 2016; Wheeler 2016; Coombe 2018.

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