

# Cambridge Elements

Elements on Women in the History of Philosophy  
edited by  
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## PYTHAGOREAN WOMEN

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## Pythagorean Women

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**Abstract:** The Pythagorean women are a group of female philosophers who were followers of Pythagoras and are credited with authoring a series of letters and treatises. In both stages of the history of Pythagoreanism – namely, the 5th-century Pythagorean societies and the Hellenistic Pythagorean writings – the Pythagorean woman is viewed as an intellectual, a thinker, a teacher, and a philosopher. The purpose of this Element is to answer the question: what kind of philosopher is the Pythagorean woman? The traditional picture of the Pythagorean female sage is that of an expert of the household. The author argues that the available evidence is more complex and conveys the idea of the Pythagorean woman as both an expert on the female sphere and a well-rounded thinker philosophising about the principles of the cosmos, human society, the immortality of the soul, numbers, and harmonics.

**Keywords:** Pythagorean women, Pythagoreanism, Pythagorean pseudepigrapha, Theano, Perictione

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