

Women in Early Pythagoreanism

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*Alla nonna Ninni,
che mi ha insegnato
a leggere e scrivere*

Abstract

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The sixth-century-BCE Pythagorean communities included both male and female members. This thesis focuses on the Pythagorean women and aims to explore what reasons lie behind the prominence of women in Pythagoreanism and what roles women played in early Pythagorean societies and thought.

In the first chapter, I analyse the social conditions of women in Southern Italy, where the first Pythagorean communities were founded. In the second chapter, I compare Pythagorean societies with ancient Greek political clubs and religious sects. Compared to mainland Greece, South Italian women enjoyed higher legal and socio-political status. Similarly, religious groups included female initiates, assigning them authoritative roles. Consequently, the fact that the Pythagoreans founded their communities in Croton and further afield, and that in some respects these communities resembled ancient sects helps to explain why they opened their doors to the female gender to begin with.

The third chapter discusses Pythagoras' teachings to and about women. Pythagorean doctrines did not exclusively affect the followers' way of thinking and public activities, but also their private way of living. Thus, they also regulated key aspects of the female everyday life, such as marriage and motherhood. I argue that the Pythagorean women entered the communities as wives, mothers and daughters. Nonetheless, some of them were able to gain authority over their fellow Pythagoreans and engage in intellectual activities, thus overcoming the female traditional domestic roles.

The fourth chapter argues that another contributing factor to the status of the Pythagorean women is the doctrine of metempsychosis. This belief led the Pythagoreans to adopt similar behaviours towards other ensouled beings. Therefore, since men and women were believed to have the same souls, they were treated with the same respect and received the same education.

Finally, the fifth chapter explores how the Pythagorean views on women are taken up and developed in Plato's *Republic*. I argue that, although the Pythagoreans never went as far as to have philosopher-queens and abolish private families, they took the first step towards Plato's 'gender equality' theory.

Overall, that of women in Pythagoreanism is the first documented case of female engagement with ancient philosophy: Pythagorean men and women lived together according to the same lifestyle, were educated on the same doctrines and played equally integral roles in the intellectual community.

Preface and Declaration

This dissertation is the result of my own work and includes nothing which is the outcome of work done in collaboration except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text.

It is not substantially the same as any that I have submitted, or, is being concurrently submitted for a degree or diploma or other qualification at the University of Cambridge or any other University or similar institution except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text. I further state that no substantial part of my dissertation has already been submitted, or, is being concurrently submitted for any such degree, diploma or other qualification at the University of Cambridge or any other University or similar institution except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text

It does not exceed the prescribed word limit for the relevant Degree Committee.

This dissertation is 79,982 words in length. All translations from Greek and Latin sources are my own unless otherwise stated.

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Abbreviations

The abbreviations for classical authors follow H. G. Liddell and R. Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 9th edn. (Oxford, 1968). The following abbreviations also appear:

Blum.	von Blumenthal, A. (1939) (ed.), <i>Ion von Chios: Die Reste seiner Werke</i> . Stuttgart.
Caizzi	Caizzi, F. D. (1966) (ed.), <i>Antisthenes: Fragmenta</i> . Milano.
DK	Diels, H. and Kranz, W. (1951-1952) (eds.), <i>Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker</i> . Berlin.
<i>FGrHist</i>	Jacoby, F. (1995) (ed.), <i>Die Fragmente der Griechischen Historiker</i> . Leiden.
Huffman	Huffman, C. A. (1993) (ed.), <i>Philolaus of Croton: Pythagorean and Presocratic</i> . Cambridge, UK. ——. (2005) (ed.), <i>Archytas of Tarentum: Pythagorean, Philosopher and Mathematician King</i> . Cambridge, UK.
Isnardi Parente	Isnardi Parente, M. (1981) (ed.), <i>Senocrate-Ermodoro: Frammenti</i> . Napoli.
KRS	Kirk, G.S., Raven, J.E. and Schofield, M. (1983), <i>The Presocratic Philosophers</i> , 2 nd edn. Cambridge, UK.
Lasserre	Lasserre, F. (1966) (ed.), <i>Die Fragmente des Eudoxos von Knidos</i> . Berlin.
LS	Burkert, W. (1972), <i>Lore and Science in Ancient Pythagoreanism</i> . Cambridge, MA.
PCG	Kassel, R., and Austin, C. (1983) (eds.), <i>Poetae Comici Graeci</i> . Berlin.
Poralla	Poralla, P. (1966), <i>Prosopographie der Lakedaimonier: Bis auf die Zeit Alexanders des Großen</i> . Roma.
Rose ³	Rose, V. (1886) (ed.), <i>Aristotelis qui Ferebantur Librorum Fragmenta</i> , 3 rd edn. Lipsiae.
Wehrli	Wehrli, F. (1974) (ed.), <i>Die Schule des Aristoteles</i> . Basel.

Introduction

I. *Status questionum* and the present study

The sociological aspects of Pythagoreanism have lately become a matter of academic interest. Several scholars, from Walter Burkert to Leonid Zhmud, have written about the peculiarities of Pythagorean societies and enquired into issues such as what kind of communities the Pythagoreans established, what reasons led to their foundation, how these groups later developed and affected the socio-political environment of fifth-century Greece, what regulated the entrance into the communities and what their internal structure was. Recently, scholars such as Sarah Pomeroy and Catherine Rowett have turned their attention to a more specific and distinctive feature of these organisations: the presence of women as both members of the community and adherents to the doctrines.

This project focuses on Pythagoras' female followers – whom Hermippus names γυναῖκες Πυθαγορικαί, Pythagorean women (Fr. 20 Wehrli, in D.L. 8.41). Specifically, I define as Pythagorean those women who are connected with ancient Pythagoreanism either through family ties or via teacher-pupil relations (Demand 1982b, 132-135), as well as those women who authored – or perhaps were credited with – Pythagorean treatises. The ultimate purpose of my investigation is to explore what reasons lie behind the inclusion of women in ancient Pythagoreanism and what role women played in early Pythagorean societies and thought.¹

(i) Women in ancient philosophy

We may usefully begin by distinguishing two ways to approach the study of women in ancient philosophy. First, we can examine the lives and extant works of women who engaged in philosophical practice – of women philosophers, as it were. Second, we can investigate what ancient philosophers

¹ The history of Pythagoreanism can be divided into three stages: early, late and neo-Pythagoreans. I define as 'early' those Pythagoreans who were active in Southern Italy between the late sixth century and the first half of the fourth century BCE, and whose development was interrupted by anti-Pythagorean uprisings from the mid-fifth century BCE onwards (cf. Ch. 1). This includes first-generation Pythagoreans such as Brontinus of Metapontum and Theano of Croton, who studied under Pythagoras himself in the late sixth/early fifth century (D.L. 8.42), second-generation Pythagoreans from the late fifth to the early fourth century, such as Hippasus of Metapontum and Philolaus of Croton (D.L. 8.84-85), and third-generation Pythagoreans such as Archytas of Tarentum and Xenophilus, who lived in Athens in the mid-fourth century (D.L. 8.46). The late Pythagoreans, such as Diodorus of Aspendus and Androcydes, whom Zhmud names as 'post-Pythagoreans' (2011, 228-230), lived between the late fourth and the first century BCE. Finally, Neopythagoreanism developed between the first century BCE and the third century CE. On this division, see Haskins 2005 and Huffman 2016a.

said about the female gender.² As we shall see, Pythagoreanism is open to both possibilities, for there is evidence of women both as authors of philosophical writings and as subjects of philosophical discussions. In a sense, we can explore Pythagorean doctrines *by* and *about* women.

In the study of women philosophers, we can further distinguish two scholarly attitudes. The first attempt to restore the role of women in the history of philosophy was Gilles Ménage's *Historia Mulierum Philosopharum* in 1690. According to Ménage, a woman is to be called a philosopher when (i) credited with philosophical writings, such as Hypatia of Alexandria (*Suda* 166, s.v. Hypatia), (ii) engaging in philosophical activity, such as Diotima of Mantinea (Pl. *Symp.* 201d-212c), and (iii) related to a male philosopher, such as Pythagoras' wife Theano and daughter Myia. Since the translation of Ménage's book by Beatrice Zedler in 1984, scholars such as Mary Ellen Waithe have started calling attention to the study of women in philosophy. As Ménage's, Waithe's project starts from the assumption that there is historical evidence of women doing philosophy, being actively involved in philosophical schools and debates, interacting with male philosophers and even influencing their thought. Her aim, therefore, is to rediscover the contributions by women philosophers – from Diotima of Mantinea and Aspasia of Miletus all the way to Hannah Arendt and Simone Weil – and highlight how they fit in the history of Western thought (Waithe 1987, ix-xxii). Ethel Kersey, Jane Snyder, Kathleen Wider, Richard Hawley and, more recently, Karen Warren have followed Waithe's lead, focusing specifically on women philosophers in the ancient Greek world.³

However, Waithe's recovery project, and in particular her arguably overly inclusive approach to the study of women in ancient philosophy, was recently challenged by Marguerite Deslauriers. There are two fundamental difficulties with studying ancient women philosophers. First, women are often credited with works about home economics, married life and female virtues, which were not considered strictly philosophical (Deslauriers 2012, 243-245). Second, in antiquity it was customary for men to write under female pseudonyms, especially when aiming to educate their female pupils (Lefkowitz and Fant 2005, 163). Consequently, much of what has been handed down to us as authored by women should in fact be ascribed to their male contemporaries. On

² Contemporary feminist philosophy distinguishes between a woman's sex – that is, the biological and anatomical features characterising human females – and gender – namely, the social interpretation of biological sex and the cultural factors influencing women's status (Mikkola 2017). However, since ordinary language often uses these two terms interchangeably, unless otherwise stated, for the purpose of this work I shall make no distinction between women, female sex and female gender.

³ In *The Woman and the Lyre*, Snyder questions the threefold criteria Ménage employs to identify women philosophers and argues that only those women known for authoring philosophical treatises should be referred to as philosophers. See also Wider 1986, Kersey 1989, Hawely 1994, and Warren 2008.

the latter point, I find myself agreeing with Deslauriers: as explained below, even in the case of Pythagoreanism, there is too little evidence to determine whether men did not in fact author those maxims, letters and treatises credited to Pythagorean women. This thesis, therefore, does not start from the assumption that there were Pythagorean women doing philosophy, but rather that women were somehow included in Pythagorean societies and to a certain extent addressed in the doctrines. What follows is not – or at least not primarily – a work about Pythagorean women philosophers, but about women in Pythagoreanism.

Let us then turn to the second area of research, i.e. what ancient philosophers said about women. According to Eva Cantarella, the topics drawing ancient Greek philosophers' attention to the female gender are threefold: the so-called Reproduction Debate, female virtues, and the role of women in society (Cantarella 1987, 52-62). The Reproduction Debate revolves around the issues of sex determination and differentiation, women's reproductive function and biological makeup, and thus answers questions such as why some animals are born male and others female, whether men differ from women for their being child-begetters rather than bearers, and what mothers can contribute to the reproduction process besides providing the womb. An example of this ancient controversy comes in Aristotle's *Generation of Animals* 4.1-3, and has been recently analysed in Sophia Connell's *Aristotle on Female Animals*.⁴ The debate over what makes a woman virtuous, as well as whether male and female virtues are the same or different, is paradigmatically instantiated in Plato's *Meno* 70a-79e. Finally, the place of women in society, their private and public roles are discussed, for example, in the fifth book of Plato's *Republic* – which is analysed in more detail in Chapter 5.II. The Pythagoreans too inserted themselves into these controversies. For instance, Pythagoras' speech to the Crotonian women discusses female virtues and social status (Iamb. *VP* 54-57 – cf. Ch. 3), and Aristoxenus' collection of Pythagorean sayings includes references to sexual regulations (Iamb. *VP* 211-213 – cf. Ch. 3.V).

We can again distinguish two different approaches to the ancient philosophical theories about women. On the one hand, these theories may seem to be only, or at least primarily, of interest to scholars working on ancient views of sex and gender, and may thus be studied independently of their cultural background and in view of what they contribute to modern feminism. For example, there has been a fruitful feminist reception and criticism of Aristotle's claim that 'men are by nature superior to women' (*Pol.* 1254b13-14).⁵ On the other hand, what

⁴ For the Reproduction Debate among the Presocratics, see Parmenides DK 28 B16-17 and Empedocles DK 31 B65-67.

⁵ On feminism and ancient philosophy, see Lovibond 2000. On feminist interpretations of Plato and Aristotle, see Tuana 1994 and Freeland 1998 respectively.

Greek philosophers said about women can be contextualised in their overall system of beliefs in order to show, first, how philosophical theories apply to the more specific female case and, second, how the ancient theories about women in turn contribute to our understanding of the Greek philosophical panorama. For example, what do Plato's arguments about the role of women in society add to the study of his political thought? How do we learn more about Platonic philosophy in general by looking at his specific claims about women?⁶

My thesis follows the latter approach and explores what the inclusion of women in early Pythagorean societies and the references to women in the doctrines can tell us about Pythagoreanism as a whole.

(ii) Pythagoras the shaman vs. Pythagoras the mathematician

This leads us to the second research field to which my thesis belongs: the study of Pythagoras, his thought, community and disciples. The dominant attitudes and trends in modern Pythagorean scholarship are most clearly instantiated by Walter Burkert and Leonid Zhmud.

Burkert's *Lore and Science in Ancient Pythagoreanism (LS)* was written as a response to Zeller's challenge that from the available later sources very little can be said about Pythagoras and his thought other than him being a shaman-like figure and a religious teacher (Burkert 1972, 2-3). The goal was then to provide a full account of the early Pythagorean tradition and the evidence on which we can rely in order to build a picture of pre-Platonic Pythagoreanism. Specifically, Burkert's study re-evaluates the Peripatetic testimony and the accounts of Pythagoras and the early Pythagoreans handed down to us by Aristotle and his disciples Dicaearchus and Aristoxenus. Whilst the Academics portray Pythagoras as Plato's philosophical predecessor and the originator of Platonic metaphysics, psychology, cosmology, number and music theory, Aristotle primarily depicts him as the founder of a philosophical way of life and attributes the metaphysical and cosmological theories to the fifth-century development of Pythagoreanism, presumably starting with Philolaus of Croton.⁷ Therefore, the last chapters of *LS* analyse different aspects of alleged Pythagorean science, such as astronomy, music and mathematics, showing that the earliest stages of Pythagoreanism are 'still innocent of the scientific view of the world' (Burkert 1972, 364) and that Aristotle is right in ascribing the speculations over numbers, harmonics and cosmology to the later tradition. The resulting portrait is that of Pythagoras as an intellectual authority, a political leader and the founder of a philosophical community and a

⁶ See Okin 1979, which reassesses the role of women in Western political thought, and Connell 2016, which builds Aristotle's theories on female animals into his biology, physics, teleology and logic.

⁷ Burkert 1972, 15-109. See also Philip 1966 and de Vogel 1966. For a discussion of source problems, see below.

philosophical way of living – not merely a shaman, as Zeller argues, but not yet a scientist nor a mathematician.⁸

Pythagoras the mathematician has however survived and has been rehabilitated by recent scholarship – primarily in Zhmud’s *Pythagoras and the Early Pythagoreans*. As opposed to Burkert, Zhmud rejects the interpretation of Pythagoras as an exclusively religious and ethical thinker, and proposes a picture of early Pythagoreanism that combines both ethical/political/religious doctrines and scientific/mathematical enquiries. In the wake of Zhmud’s study, Charles Kahn published a history of the scientific and philosophical achievements of Pythagoras and his successors (Kahn 2002).⁹ By contrast, Carl Huffman follows Burkert in describing the distinctive lifestyle as central to Pythagoreanism more than any number theory (Huffman 1999). According to Huffman, the earliest evidence available portrays Pythagoras as (i) an authority on the afterlife, (ii) a priest, (iii) a wonder-worker and, most importantly, (iv) the founder of a strictly regulated way of life (Huffman 2014c).¹⁰ Overall, how we understand the figure of Pythagoras influences how we picture the communities he founded – whether these be cults, sects, political clubs or philosophical schools – as well as the roles his disciples held therein – in particular, the women. As we shall see, although being greatly indebted to Zhmud’s analysis of early Pythagoreanism, my research and conclusions are closer to Burkert and especially Huffman.

Several questions, then, remain open, several issues are still debated and several problems are yet to be solved. Among these, two are of particular interest to my research: what is peculiar about the Pythagorean societies? And who is to be called a Pythagorean? More specifically, with regard to women: what made these societies so unique as to open their doors to the female gender? And what made the Pythagorean women true Pythagoreans?

(iii) Women in Pythagoreanism

The history of women taking part in and engaging with the Pythagorean tradition is divided into two stages. First, the early Pythagorean women, some of whom are members of Pythagoras’ own family, living in Italy between the sixth and the fourth century BCE and studying under either Pythagoras himself or one of his disciples. Second, the later, neo- and possibly pseudo-

⁸ See also Kirk, Raven, and Schofield 1983, 213-238.

⁹ See also Guthrie 1962, 168. ‘As for the silence of our early sources on Pythagoras as a philosopher and a mathematician, it is enough to say that all the later biographical writers show him as such, and they obviously preserve much early material.’

¹⁰ For further studies on individual Pythagoreans, see Huffman 1993 (Philolaus) and 2005 (Archytas). The most recent collections of essays on the Pythagorean tradition are Cornelli, McKirahan and Macris 2013, and Huffman 2014a.

Pythagorean women, who are dated between the third century BCE and the second century CE and credited with letters and treatises on women's virtues (Haskins 2005). More precisely, these texts are written under female names. Yet whether women in fact authored them is a point of lively academic controversy.

The earliest evidence of female membership in the Pythagorean circles goes back to Dicaearchus, a disciple of Aristotle, who reports that women too were granted entry to these intellectual circles and admitted as audience to Pythagoras' lectures (Fr. 33 Wehrli). According to Aristoxenus, Pythagoras learnt his doctrines from the priestess Themistoclea (Fr. 15 Wehrli), and according to Hermippus, he was occasionally assisted by his mother Pythais in his philosophical activity (Fr. 20 Wehrli). That this was an exceptional case of female participation is suggested by the fact that both Cratinus and Alexis authored comedies entitled Πυθαγορίζουσα, *The Pythagoreanising Woman* (D.L. 8.37 – see Arnott 1996, 578-595), and the historian Philochorus wrote a book about Pythagoras' female disciples (*FGrHist* 328 Fr. 1, *Suda* 441, s.v. Philochoros). Lastly, in the *Catalogue of the Pythagoreans* Iamblichus lists seventeen names of Pythagorean women (VP 267, DK 58 A): Timycha, Philtys, the sisters Ocello and Eccello, Cheilonis, Cratesicleia, Pythagoras' wife Theano and their daughter Myia, Lastheneia, Habroteleia, Echecrateia, Tyrsenis, Peisirrhode, Theadusa, Boeo, Babelyca and Cleaechma. These women are introduced as the 'most illustrious' of Pythagoras' female disciples, thus implying that there might have been more.

The second phase of the history of the γυναῖκες Πυθαγορικαί takes place during the Hellenistic and Post-Hellenistic renaissance of Pythagoreanism. Between the third century BCE and the second century CE, a collection of texts discussing female morality and teaching women how to be virtuous in their everyday domestic life starts circulating under the authorship of Pythagorean women. Specifically, in the anthology of Pythagorean texts of the Hellenistic period by Holger Thesleff we find the treatises *On Piety* by Theano (1965, 193-195), *On Human Nature* by Aresas (48-50), *On the Moderation of Women* by Phintys (151-154), *On the Harmonious Woman* and *On Wisdom* by Perictione (142-146), as well as the letters from Theano to Euboule, Euclides, Eurydice, Callisto, Nicostrate, Rhodope, Timareta and Timonides (195-201), from Melissa to Cleareta (115-116) and from Myia to Phyllis (123-124).

Starting with Ménage, most scholars working on women in the ancient world and women philosophers refer to the Pythagoreans as the first documented case of female engagement with ancient Greek philosophy. However, thus far the scholarship has focused on the above listed letters and treatises, and the question of their authorship and dating. When and by whom these texts were composed, whether by men or by women, in the pre-Classical or the post-Hellenistic period, is debated. A first possibility is to ascribe some of them to the early Pythagorean women

Iamblichus mentions in the *Catalogue* and others to Pythagoreans down the line in the tradition bearing or writing under the same names. Waithe identifies the authors as women and then divides them into three groups: the first generation of Pythagorean women, who are members of Pythagoras' family, such as his daughter Myia and wife Theano, author of *On Piety*; the second generation, which includes Perictione, author of *On the Harmonious Woman*, and Phytis; and finally the late Pythagorean women, such as another Theano, referred to as Theano II, who wrote the epistles, and another Perictione, or Perictione II, who wrote the treatise *On Wisdom* (1987, 11-74).¹¹ Wider and Deslauriers also distinguish between early and late works, but whilst Wider ascribes them to female authors (1986, 26-40), Deslauriers allows for the possibility that some letters might have been written by men (2012, 346). Alternatively, following Thesleff, we may consider all these writings to be Hellenistic and interpret them as later attempts to give voice to illustrious female figures from the past, such as Pythagoras' wife. Claudia Montepaone, Ian Michael Plant and Debra Nails date the letters in the Hellenistic period, but do not question their female authorship (Montepaone 2011, Plant 2004, 68-91, Nails 1989, 291-297). Similarly, Vicki Lynn Harper and Annette Huizenga ascribe these works to Hellenistic Pythagorean women: the former analyses the extent to which they are influenced by Aristotle's moral philosophy (Pomeroy 2013, 117-138), and the latter compares them with the Pastoral Letters (Huizenga 2013).¹²

I follow the latter approach and attribute the letters and treatises to Hellenistic authors. Therefore, for the purpose of this work, I shall leave the late (pseudo-)Pythagorean women and their writings aside and focus on the early Pythagorean women, to whom these texts allude. That being said, regardless of whether they were authored by women or by men, in the fifth century BCE or in the second century CE, the existence of such a collection of writings for women, about women and allegedly even by women constitutes further evidence of female engagement with Pythagoreanism and *vice versa* Pythagorean attentiveness to the role of women. For the authors of these texts – whether they be women or men writing under female

¹¹ This two-author theory originates with the *Suda*, which distinguishes between Theano the wife of Pythagoras (84) and Theano the author of philosophical writings (83). Other authors separating Theano and Perictione from Theano II and Perictione II, primarily in the light of stylistic differences between the texts, are Haskins (2005, 315-319), Vivante (2007, 155-174) and Pomeroy (2013, 41-53), who however identifies them all as Neopythagorean women. For a detailed philological analysis of the texts, as well as further references, see Thesleff 1961.

¹² The philosophical writings of the Pythagorean women are also briefly analysed by Cantarella (1987, 56) and Hawley (1994, 77-79). Moreover, Voula Lambropoulou contrasts them with early Pythagorean ethics (1995, 122-134).

pseudonyms – must have thought that the name of a Pythagorean woman would have conferred genuine authority upon their works.

Thus far, then, the emphasis has been on the Pythagorean women's writings of the Hellenistic period. The early Pythagorean women from Iamblichus' *Catalogue*, to whom the Hellenistic texts refer, have received less attention in the academic discourse, featuring primarily in brief references in the works of scholars of ancient Pythagoreanism. De Vogel analyses Pythagoras' speeches, which include teachings on the husband-wife relationship (1966, 110-152), but then only briefly alludes to the actual presence of women in the communities (238 n. 2). Burkert mentions women being part of Pythagoras' cohort of disciples (1972, 122) and then names Theano as Pythagoras' wife and the most illustrious of the Pythagorean women (114). Zhmud refers to the speeches (e.g. 2012, 46-47) and lists the names of the women from Pythagoras' family (103). Lastly, Huffman alone acknowledges how women 'may have indeed played an *unusually large* role in Pythagoreanism' (Huffman 2014c, emphasis added), analyses the *Catalogue*, cites the speech to the Crotonian women, and gives a brief account of Theano's life.¹³

Overall, we can notice two trends. First, the Pythagorean women have been studied by scholars working on women in philosophy, rather than scholars of Pythagoreanism. Second, those scholars who did study the Pythagorean women focused on the Hellenistic letters and treatises. In contrast, there has been no systematic study of women in early Pythagorean societies. It is worth mentioning two exceptions: Sarah Pomeroy, a pioneer in the study of women in antiquity, and Catherine Rowett. In *Pythagorean Women: Their History and Writings*, Pomeroy distinguishes between the sixth-century women contemporaries of Pythagoras and their intellectual heirs active from the third century BCE onwards, and attributes the above mentioned collection of epistles and treatises to the latter group. Therefore, besides offering a detailed analysis and commentary of the Hellenistic texts, she also contextualises them within the available evidence for early Pythagoreanism. Her study centres on social history – that is, on the 'real lives' of the Pythagorean women and their role in the Pythagorean communities of Magna Graecia. Similarly, Rowett discusses the social status of the early Pythagorean women – from their more traditional role as mistresses of the household to their unconventional function as instructors for Pythagoras' female pupils. Pomeroy and Rowett have thus introduced some of the questions I address herein – namely, who the early Pythagoreans were and how they lived. What is left to explore is what the inclusion of women in the societies teaches us about Pythagorean thought. Why was

¹³ See also Huffman 2016a: 'Women were probably more active in Pythagoreanism than in any other philosophical movement. [...] Pythagoreanism is the philosophical school that gave most prominence to women.'

Pythagoreanism open to women in the first place? If the Pythagorean women were, as Rowett writes, ‘part of an intellectual project’ (2014, 122), what is this project likely to have been?

My research differs from previous scholarship for three reasons: the focus, the sources and the perspective. First, as mentioned above, I follow Thesleff in dating the letters and treatises by (pseudo-) Pythagorean women in the Hellenistic period. Consequently, instead of starting from these late texts, I shall focus on women living in early Pythagorean societies. Second, as specified in the section on methodology and sources below, I look at evidence likely to hark back to ancient Pythagoreanism and to Pythagoras’ teachings to his disciples. My primary sources are the speeches Pythagoras is reputed to have delivered to the people of Croton and the Pythagorean maxims and precepts about women and their place in society. The latter, in particular, have been little scrutinised so far. However, both Burkert and Huffman consider the precepts to be crucial evidence for Pythagoras’ teachings (Burkert 1972, 166, Huffman 2006 and 2008a). Therefore, it is worth examining the maxims addressing women as evidence of what Pythagoras is likely to have taught to his female pupils. Finally, for the purpose of this work I am only secondarily concerned with how the study of women in Pythagoreanism can contribute to contemporary feminist philosophy. I am, rather, primarily concerned with what the inclusion of women in Pythagoreanism has to say about Pythagorean thought more generally – from the way of life to the doctrine of reincarnation. In a sense, I am not only looking at the Pythagorean women as women, but also as Pythagoreans. This will enable me to enquire into those questions about ancient Pythagoreanism that, as mentioned above, are still under debate, such as what the peculiarities of early Pythagorean societies and thought are, who is included in the community and why.

II. Synopsis

The overall purpose of this work is to investigate the reasons why women were included in ancient Pythagoreanism, and the roles they held in the early Pythagorean communities. Once again, I define as ‘early’ the societies and doctrines of the Pythagoreans who were active in Southern Italy between the late sixth century and the first half of the fourth century BCE. In a sense, I aim to investigate the ‘Five Ws’ of the early Pythagorean women: *who* they were, *where* and *when* they lived, *what* their role in the community was, and *why* such role is reputed to be, as Huffman describes it, so unusually large. As mentioned above, this will result in broader considerations as to whether Pythagorean societies were distinctive in any way, and if so what their distinctive contours were, as well as what the identifying mark of a Pythagorean, and thus a Pythagorean woman, is.

I pursue this project with attention to both its historico-sociological aspects and its philosophical roots and implications. In the first part of this thesis, I examine the context in which Pythagorean societies developed, and thus outline the cultural, historical and socio-political milieu of the lives of the early Pythagorean women. In the second part, I analyse the Pythagorean doctrines concerning and addressing the female gender.

I start with the question of whether the role of women in Pythagoreanism was indeed unusual in the first place. Pythagoras never founded cities, but rather communities within pre-existing cities. Therefore, in Chapter 1 I compare the status of the Pythagorean women with the female social conditions in the cities of which the communities were part. Specifically, I examine the status of women in Southern Italy, where the first Pythagorean societies were founded, and Sparta, which was the native city of numerous Pythagorean women. I argue that the first factor shaping the status of women in Pythagoreanism and fostering their inclusion are the female social conditions in Magna Graecia. Even more than mainland Greece, marriage was a central institution in South Italian communities, for it enabled Greek settlers to build and strengthen relationships with the locals. This led South Italian women to acquire better legal and socio-political status, which in turn may have affected the prominence of women in Pythagoreanism. Similarly, the Spartan women were known, praised and feared for their freedom and authority. I argue that this contributed to Pythagoreanism taking roots in Spartan society, especially among the women.

The Pythagorean women, however, seem to have had more than high legal and socio-political status. Chapter 2 zooms in on the organisational structure of early Pythagorean societies and compares it with other ancient Greek forms of intra-city association, such as political clubs and religious sects. The aim is to find what made the Pythagorean communities so unique as to open their doors to the female gender. I argue that, at first glance, another contributing factor to the status of the Pythagorean women is that to some extent Pythagorean societies resembled ancient religious sects, which admitted both male and female members. That being said, Pythagoreanism goes beyond religion. The Pythagoreans formed a *sui generis* community, whose distinctiveness lies in the fact that they did not exclusively affect the adherents' public activities, but also their private lives. Thus, the Pythagorean lifestyle was even extended to the domestic sphere, which was traditionally taken to be the realm of women.

Having shown how the way of life characterises the Pythagorean communities, I explore in more detail what life the Pythagorean women were taught to live. Chapter 3 analyses Pythagoras' teachings to and about women. As mentioned above, my primary sources are Pythagoras' speeches to his followers in Croton, especially the speech to the Crotonian women, and the so-called Pythagorean ἀκούσματα, a collection of ethico-religious precepts and behavioural norms,

some of which are about, or addressed to, women. Once again, what is peculiar about Pythagoras' teachings is that they did not exclusively influence his pupils' way of thinking, but also their way of living, thus regulating every key aspect of their daily lives. Some of these aspects – such as marriage, childbearing and religious rituals – involved women, who were therefore included in Pythagoras' audience. Since the Pythagorean way of life played a key role in shaping the community, being raised according to Pythagoras' precepts and implementing them from the earliest stages in one's family life was the first and a crucial step towards becoming a proper Pythagorean. As a result, this brought about the importance of women. Nevertheless, I argue that family roles enabled some women to gain authority over their fellow Pythagoreans and engage in intellectual activities.

Besides being the founder of a strictly regulated way of life, Pythagoras also lectured his disciples about the afterlife. In Chapter 4, I investigate the connection between the Pythagorean doctrine of the transmigration of souls and the inclusion of women in the communities. The belief in reincarnation strongly affected the Pythagorean way of living, for according to this doctrine, while transmigrating from one body into another, the soul remained the same soul and thus received the same treatment and the same education. Therefore, the belief that women's souls are also subject to transmigration offers a further reason why the Pythagoreans had female disciples and held them in high regard.

Finally, Chapter 5 explores Pythagoras' legacy and, in particular, investigates the impact the Pythagorean approach to gender roles and relations had on Pythagoras' philosophical successors, with particular focus on Plato. Plato was in contact with the second and third generations of Pythagoreans and is thus likely to have witnessed the Pythagorean societies in action. Moreover, he had a distinctive outlook on the female gender and its place in the society, which may have been formulated as a response to the Pythagoreans and the unusually large role women held in their communities. In the fifth book of the *Republic*, Plato abolishes private families and allows women to be rulers of his ideal city together with men. I argue that, although the Pythagoreans never went as far as to have philosopher queens and establish family communism, they took the first step towards Plato's 'gender equality' theory.

In the Conclusions, I will recap the results of this enquiry into the place and role of women in early Pythagoreanism. Women were included in the communities because Pythagoras was the founder of a philosophical way of living embracing every important aspect of his disciples' daily lives, including family life. Thus, women entered the society as mothers, wives and daughters. Yet they were also assigned higher intellectual roles and took part in what Rowett describes as Pythagoras' intellectual project. In the wake of Burkert and Huffman, I shall then

argue that the community of lifestyle of all of Pythagoras' followers, men as well as women, is what ultimately makes the Pythagoreans such a distinctive philosophical group.

III. Methodology and sources

The review of previous scholarship has already highlighted some aspects of my approach to the study of the Pythagorean women. On the broader issue of approaching Pythagoreanism and the Presocratics, scholars have traditionally distinguished two trends: first, we may analyse the fragments in an attempt to reconstruct the internal logic of the arguments; second, we may contextualise them in their time and place of origin.¹⁴ As mentioned in the previous section, my aim is to research the role of women in the Pythagorean communities and doctrines, and thus explore both the sociological and the philosophical aspects of early Pythagoreanism. This leads me to combine the two approaches by both reconstructing the philosophical positions and contextualising them into sixth-century Greece. I shall then follow Burkert's approach to ancient Pythagoreanism and read the Pythagorean doctrines in the light of the historical, social, cultural and religious panorama out of which they were born. Moreover, I shall take into account the context in which the evidence is recorded, and how the specific philosophical agenda of some of our sources may affect our understanding of Pythagorean thought.¹⁵

There is, however, one fundamental difficulty in investigating the status of women in ancient Pythagoreanism by examining both their history and philosophy: the scantiness of available evidence. As Barbara Graziosi notes, 'there is little evidence about either Pythagoras or women in antiquity, let alone a combination of the two' (Graziosi 2013).

The evidence for ancient Pythagoreanism is scarce and problematic, from mostly late sources often of questionable reliability. Specifically, the problems are fourfold. First, Pythagoras did not leave any writings and prevented his disciples from doing so (Aristoxenus Fr. 43, D.L. 8.15, 8.85, Porph. *VP* 57, Iamb. *VP* 199). Similarly, his followers kept silence on at least some of his doctrines (Porph. *VP* 19, Iamb. *VP* 226-227). Most of them wrote nothing and avoided mentioning Pythagoras' name (Iamb. *VP* 88, 150, 198, 255), and those few who published did so under the name of Pythagoras himself instead of their own (Iamb. *VP* 158). Only poverty-stricken Pythagoreans seem to have been allowed to make a profit from teaching (Iamb. *VP* 89). Other disciples who transgressed the vow of silence, such as Hippasus of Metapontum,

¹⁴ On this methodological distinction, see Laks and Louguet 2002.

¹⁵ See also Rowett 1987b.

were banned from the community (Iamb. *VP* 88, 246).¹⁶ Second, the evidence from Pythagoras' contemporaries is limited, often fragmentary, and primarily focuses on his teachings on the afterlife (cf. Ch. 4). The earliest relatively more detailed reports on ancient Pythagoreanism by Aristoxenus and Dicaearchus were written two centuries after the death of Pythagoras, and again survive only in fragments, whereas the most extensive accounts are the *Lives of Pythagoras* by the third-century-CE biographers Diogenes Laertius, Porphyry and Iamblichus. Third, in antiquity there was a tendency to attribute later philosophical, especially Platonic, positions back to Pythagoras. Lastly, the available evidence is often conflicting on significant points.

Pythagoras is mentioned by Heraclitus (DK 22 B40, B129) and Xenophanes (DK 21 B7), who criticise his method of enquiry and eschatological beliefs respectively, as well as Herodotus (2.81, 2.123, 4.95), Ion (Fr. 30 Blum.) and Empedocles (DK 31 B129), who praise him for his intellectual achievements. The only dialogue in which Plato explicitly refers to Pythagoras and the Pythagoreans is the *Republic*, in which he hints at the Pythagorean way of life (600a-b) and harmonics (530c-531a).¹⁷ Aristotle is credited with five, now lost, treatises on the Pythagoreans, including three on Archytas of Tarentum (D.L. 5.25). In his extant works and fragments, he mentions Pythagoras only twice, again focusing on his way of life (Frs. 191, 195 Rose³),¹⁸ and then refers more generally to the Pythagoreans and their number theory. However, he is always

¹⁶ For fragments by individual Pythagoreans, see for example DK 17 (Brotinus), DK 18 (Hippasus), DK 44 (Philolaus – see also Huffman 1993) and DK 47 (Archytas – see also Huffman 2005). According to D.L. 8.85, Philolaus was the first Pythagorean to publish his works. According to D.L. 8.54, Empedocles is also to be included among those pupils of Pythagoras' who made his teachings public.

¹⁷ The latter passage is likely to refer to Archytas' musical and geometrical ratios (*Rep.* 528d – see Huffman 2016b). Although not explicitly connecting them with Pythagoreanism, Plato also refers to individual Pythagoreans, such as Echecrates, Simmias and Cebes in the *Phaedo* (cf. Ch. 5.I). Moreover, he often ascribes his doctrine of the afterlife to certain, and otherwise unnamed, wise men of old, whom some scholars identify as the Pythagoreans (cf. Ch. 2.II).

¹⁸ Pythagoras is also mentioned as contemporary with the young Alcmaeon of Croton in *Met.* 986a29, as a moral teacher in *MM* 1182a11, and as held in great esteem by the people of Southern Italy in *Rh.* 1398b14. However, the first two passages are likely to be interpolations (Huffman 2014c) and the latter is reporting a quotation from Alcidas. Either way, they do not seem to add much to the portrait of Pythagoras the life teacher. Aristotle may have also gone beyond the Pythagorean way of life, mentioning Pythagoras' scientific studies: he was an observer of nature (θέωρον) who dedicated himself to learning (μαθήματα – see Zhmud 2012, 56, 259-269). Both fragments are rejected by Huffman in that the former is more likely to refer to Anaxagoras (*EE* 1216a11) and the latter does not seem to belong to Aristotle in the first place (Huffman 2014b, 281 n. 7). That being said, as Zhmud himself notices, these passages too would not invalidate the picture of Pythagoras as the founder of a way of life, but simply elaborate on his intellectual achievements.

quite cautious in doing so and anyway more likely to allude to the fifth-century development of Pythagoreanism rather than Pythagoras himself.¹⁹

In the fourth century, the tradition splits into two: the Academy and the Peripatos. As previously noted, Plato's successors Speusippus and Xenocrates emphasise the role of numbers in Pythagoreanism so as to identify Pythagoras as the ultimate founder of Platonic metaphysics and Plato as the philosophical heir of Pythagoreanism.²⁰ Heraclides of Pontus and Eudoxus of Cnidus also provide more anecdotal evidence for Pythagoras' doctrine of the soul (Heraclides Fr. 89 Wehrli) and dietary taboos (Heraclides Fr. 40, Eudoxus Fr. 325 Lasserre). On the other hand, Aristotle's pupils Aristoxenus of Tarentum, Dicaearchus of Messana and Clearchus of Soli primarily report on Pythagoras' way of life and political activities. Before joining the Lyceum, Aristoxenus studied in Phlius, which according to Iamblichus hosted a large community of Pythagoreans (VP 267), and in Athens under Xenophilus, who is known as the 'last' of the early Pythagoreans (D.L. 8.46). Moreover, being from Tarentum, he is likely to have interacted with third-generation Pythagoreans such as Archytas, who was among the acquaintances of his father Spintharus (Frs. 1, 19, 20, 30).²¹ There are two difficulties with relying on the reports of the Peripatetics. First, they oppose the ascetic lifestyle of alleged Pythagoreans, such as Diodorus of Aspendus and Androcydes, and thus attempt to rationalise the Pythagorean tradition by explaining its precepts and taboos.²² Second, some of them, particularly Dicaearchus, are critical of Pythagoreanism.²³ The latter, however, still makes the evidence more objective than the Academic account, which often results in the assimilation of Pythagoreanism into Platonism (Burkert 1972, 109).

Further evidence comes in the third century BCE from Timaeus of Tauromenium, who writes about Southern Italy and thus gives a historical account of ancient Pythagoreanism (*FGrHist*

¹⁹ E.g. *Met.* 985b23-986a22: 'The *so-called* Pythagoreans, οἱ καλούμενοι Πυθαγόρειοι, devoted themselves to mathematics.' See Primavesi 2014 (cf. Appendix A).

²⁰ See Burkert 1972, 53-83, and Dillon 2014.

²¹ On the Peripatetic account, see von Fritz 1940, 27-32. On Aristoxenus, see Huffman 2006, 2008a and 2011.

²² E.g. Aristoxenus Frs. 25, 29. According to Phillip, Aristoxenus robs Pythagoreanism of its mysticism (1966, 13). According to Burkert, he mixes Pythagoras' teachings with fourth-century ethics (1972, 106). See also Burkert 1972, 200-205, Zhmud 2011 and 2012, 224-230.

²³ On Dicaearchus picturing Pythagoras as an educator and a public speaker, see Fortenbaugh and Schütrumpf 2011. On his satirical portrait of Pythagoras as a persuader, see Burkert 1972, 139, and Huffman 2014b. According to Fortenbaugh, Dicaearchus and Clearchus are not proper biographers as they only focus on the negative traits of Pythagoreanism – unlike Aristoxenus, who mixes the positive with the negative, thus presenting a more balanced account of Pythagoras' life (2007, 71).

566 Frs. 13-17, 131-132 – see Brown 1958). Like Aristoxenus, Timaeus has substantial information coming from Magna Graecia and thus constitutes a chief source for our knowledge of the early Pythagoreans. Once again, however, he provides us with a literary elaboration of the evidence, which leaves doubts as to what kinds of alterations he introduced in the material. Other important intermediary sources between the fourth-century evidence and the *Lives* are the Peripatetic Hermippus, who ironically refers to Pythagoras' underworld journey (Fr. 20), Neanthes of Cyzicus (*FGrHist* 84 Frs. 26-33), Alexander Polyhistor who quotes passages from the 200 BCE forgery *Pythagorean Memoirs* (*FGrHist* 273 Frs. 94-95), Apollonius of Tyana, who modelled his ascetic lifestyle after the Pythagoreans, and the mathematician Nicomachus of Gerasa.²⁴

Pythagoras' third-century-CE biographers, Diogenes, Porphyry and Iamblichus, excerpt from the above listed sources.²⁵ Diogenes' treatment of Pythagoras follows the pattern of his other biographies: he first accounts for the philosopher's origins, family, education and alleged writings (8.1-8); then, he moves on to outlining his teachings and lifestyle (9-38); and lastly refers to the various reports about Pythagoras' death and community of disciples (39-46). Among the three biographers, Diogenes appears to be the more objective and at times even critical.²⁶ Similarly, Porphyry's *Vita Pythagorae* reports on Pythagoras' origins, education (*VP* 1-17), doctrines, lifestyle (32-52), decline and disciples (53-61), as well as his political activity in Southern Italy (18-31). Pythagoras is here presented as a wondrous divine-like sage. The emphasis is on the ascetic lifestyle allegedly founded by Pythagoras and implemented by Porphyry himself (see *On Abstinence from Animal Food*). The overall portrait is more encomiastic than Diogenes', but not yet as glorifying as Iamblichus'. Iamblichus' *On the Pythagorean Life* is even more eulogistic and less objective. As the title suggests, as opposed to Diogenes and Porphyry, Iamblichus is less concerned with Pythagoras' biography (*VP* 2-11). Rather, he provides a more detailed account of his doctrines and way of life (12-33), which however overemphasises the connection with Platonic philosophy. The *Vita Pythagorica* is meant as the first and introductory chapter of a larger collection of books on Pythagoreanism. Therefore, Iamblichus wrote extensively on the Pythagorean tradition, which not only demonstrates his

²⁴ For a list of references to those passages from the *Lives* directly quoted by Apollonius and Nicomachus, see Burkert 1972, 98-101. For a more detailed discussion of source issues, see Burkert 1972, 97-109, Burkert 1982, 12-14, and Dillon and Hershbell 1991, 6-14.

²⁵ For a detailed discussion of the *Lives*, see Laks 2014, Macris 2014, and O'Meara 2014.

²⁶ E.g. D.L. 8.36-38, in which he quotes from some satirical portraits of the philosopher, such as those by Xenophanes (DK 21 B7), Cratinus the Younger (*PCG* Fr. 376), Mnesimachus (*PCG* Fr. 567) and Aristophon (*PCG* Fr. 362). See Laks 2014.

commitment to the school, but also guarantees that, in spite of his occasional slipping into excessive adulation, he had a thorough knowledge of the doctrines and was well acquainted with the relevant sources.

I discuss the reliability of Pythagoras' speeches and the ἀκούσματα in more detail in Chapter 3. For the time being, suffice it to remark that my primary sources for this work are the accounts of early Pythagorean societies, doctrines and way of life by Diogenes, Porphyry and Iamblichus. Yet I mostly refer to those passages from the *Lives* that are likely to hark back to the above listed earlier and more reliable sources of ancient Pythagoreanism – especially, Aristoxenus, Dicaearchus and Timaeus. We may then turn to the Pythagorean women: why did the Pythagoreans make the choice, a choice that they presumably did not have to make, of revaluating the female social status and including women in their communities?

Chapter 1

Women in Ancient Greece: From Croton to Sparta

The purpose of this thesis is twofold: to investigate why women were included in Pythagorean societies and to explore what role they are reputed to have held therein. This chapter examines the available prosopographical information about the Pythagorean women and then, more generally, surveys the status of women in Greek antiquity. The aim is to determine whether that of women in Pythagoreanism is an unprecedented case of female membership in an ancient Greek community. Does the social climate of sixth-century Greece and Southern Italy explain why the Pythagoreans included women in their societies? Is ‘Why?’ a well-defined question?

I. The ‘most illustrious’ Pythagorean women

We may begin by asking who the early Pythagorean women were, where they lived and when. A good place to start looking for answers is Iamblichus’ *Catalogue of the Pythagoreans*, which provides us with a detailed inventory of Pythagoras’ followers.

Iamblichus closes his *Vita Pythagorica* with a list of 235 names of Pythagoras’ followers, 218 of which are men and 17 women coming from both Southern Italy and mainland Greece. The list is not meant to be exhaustive, for Iamblichus himself writes that Pythagoras had many more followers whose names, however, are unknown to him. The Pythagorean women also exceed those listed in the *Catalogue*, who are introduced as the ‘most illustrious’ of Pythagoras’ female pupils.

Πυθαγορίδες δὲ γυναῖκες αἱ ἐπιφανέσταται· Τιμύχα γυνὴ ἡ Μυλλία τοῦ Κροτωνιάτου, Φιλτὺς θυγάτηρ Θεόφριος τοῦ Κροτωνιάτου, Βυνδάκου ἀδελφῇ, Ὀκκελὼ καὶ Ἐκκελὼ ἀδελφαὶ Ὀκκέλῳ καὶ Ὀκκίλῳ τῶν Λευκανῶν, Χειλωνὶς θυγάτηρ Χείλωνος τοῦ Λακεδαιμονίου, Κρατησίκλεια Λάκαινα γυνὴ Κλεάνορος τοῦ Λακεδαιμονίου, Θεανὼ γυνὴ τοῦ Μεταποντίνου Βροτίνου, Μυῖα γυνὴ Μίλωνος τοῦ Κροτωνιάτου, Λασθένεια Ἀρκάδισσα, Ἀβροτέλεια Ἀβροτέλους θυγάτηρ τοῦ Ταραντίνου, Ἐχεκράτεια Φλιασία, Τυρσηνὶς Συβαρῖτις, Πεισιρρόδη Ταραντινὶς, Θεάδουσα Λάκαινα, Βοιὼ Ἀργεῖα, Βαβελύκα Ἀργεῖα, Κλεαίχμα ἀδελφῇ Αὐτοχαρίδα τοῦ Λάκωνος. Αἱ πᾶσαι ιζ΄.

The most famous Pythagorean women are: Timycha, wife of Myllias of Croton, Philtys, daughter of Theocris of Croton, sister of Byndacus, Occelo and Eccelo, sisters of the Lucanians Ocellus and Occilus, Cheilonis, daughter

of Cheilon the Lacedaemonian, Cratesicleia the Laconian, wife of Cleanor, the Lacedaemonian, Theano, wife of the Metapontian Brotinus, Myia, wife of the Crotonian Milon, Lastheneia from Arcadia, Habroteleia, daughter of Habroteles of Tarentum, Echecrateia of Phlius, Tyrsenis from Sybaris, Peisirrhode from Tarentum, Theadusa the Laconian, Boeo from Argos, Babelyca from Argos, Cleaechma, sister of the Lacedaemonian Autocharidas. In total, they are seventeen.

(Iamb. *VP* 267, DK 58 A)¹

There is consensus among scholars on attributing the *Catalogue* to Aristoxenus.² The reasons for this are threefold. First, Iamblichus is unlikely to be the original compiler. Second, if not by Iamblichus in the early fourth century CE, the *Catalogue* appears to have been assembled in the fourth century BCE. Third, among fourth-century authors, the most promising candidate is Aristoxenus. The argument against attributing the *Catalogue* to Iamblichus is that 145 of the names here listed are not mentioned anywhere else in his *Vita Pythagorica* – which suggests that the *Catalogue* may be an isolated piece of evidence Iamblichus attached at the end of his work. On the other hand, 18 Pythagoreans named earlier in the *Vita*, including women such as Deino (*VP* 132) and Pythagoras' granddaughter Bitale (*VP* 146), do not feature in the list.³ According to Huffman, this may be explained by the fact that Iamblichus' work is not always methodical and coherent (2008c, 298). Alternatively, these 18 Pythagoreans might have been deliberately excluded from the *Catalogue*, for example, because they were not part of the most illustrious disciples. Nonetheless, the silence concerning their names prompts us to think that Iamblichus transferred the list from another source. The second reason for questioning Iamblichus' authorship and, as an alternative, dating the *Catalogue* as early as the fourth century BCE is that most names refer to first- and second-generation Pythagoreans. This alone would not necessarily point at Aristoxenus. As we shall see below, in the fourth century BCE the Pythagorean communities of Southern Italy and mainland Greece ceased to exist, which means that even after Aristoxenus' time there would not have been any Pythagoreans to add to the list. This was the case until the Hellenistic revival of Pythagoreanism. However, most of the authors of the Hellenistic Pythagorean treatises, including women such as Perictione and Phintys, are not

¹ The Greek text of Iamblichus' *On the Pythagorean Way of Life* is cited from Klein 1937.

² See Huffman 2016a, Zhmud 2012, 109-134, Zhmud 2011, 235-243, and Burkert 1972, 105 n. 40.

³ Other names of reputedly illustrious Pythagoreans Iamblichus inexplicably leaves out of the *Catalogue* are, for example, the doctor Democedes, who married one of Pythagoras' granddaughters (Hdt. 3.137), Aristoxenus' father Spintharos, who joined Archytas' circle in Tarentum (Aristoxenus Frs 1, 12, 20a).

included in the *Catalogue* – which again would take later sources like Iamblichus out of the picture. Finally, the argument for ascribing the *Catalogue* specifically to Aristoxenus is again threefold. First, this list includes information to which only a close source well acquainted with the Pythagorean tradition such as Aristoxenus would have had access. Second, as Zhmud notices, the largest group listed are the 45 Pythagorean men and women from Tarentum, the birthplace of Aristoxenus (2012, 112). Third, and most importantly, the cities of origin of some of the Pythagoreans listed in the *Catalogue* coincide with those mentioned in Aristoxenus' fragments: for example, Philolaus, traditionally identified as a Crotonian (D.L. 8.84), is included among the Pythagoreans from Tarentum as in Aristoxenus' Fr. 19. Overall, although the *Catalogue* may have still undergone later reworking, modifications and interpolation, arguably even at the hands of Iamblichus himself, Aristoxenus is likely to be the ultimate source. Another question one may raise is what criterion determines who is to be included in the *Catalogue of the Pythagoreans* and who is out. However, the issue of who counts as Pythagorean is not the starting point for my research, but the outcome. Therefore, for the time being, I shall leave the question of the content of the *Catalogue* aside and turn to the Pythagorean women.⁴

The seventeen Pythagorean women listed by Iamblichus are Timycha, Philtys, Occelo and Eccelo, Cheilonis, Cratesicleia, Theano, Myia, Lastheneia, Habroteleia, Echecrateia, Tyrsenis, Peisirrhode, Theadusa, Boeo, Babelyca and Cleaechma. Of these, eight are from Southern Italy, five from Sparta,⁵ and four from elsewhere in mainland Greece. Some of these women are first- and second-generation Pythagoreans: for example, Myia was a member of Pythagoras' family⁶ and Timycha was alive in the early fourth century during the tyranny of Dionysius the Elder (VP 192-194). This suggests that these seventeen women lived between the sixth and the fourth century BCE, as the other names in the *Catalogue* are reputed to have done. Yet the lack of further evidence hinders us from providing more precise dating. There are other sixth-to-fifth-century women, omitted from the *Catalogue*, but nonetheless connected with Pythagoreanism: Pythagoras' mother Pythais from Samos (Apollonius in Porph. VP 2, Iamb. VP 4-7), who allegedly assisted him during his legendary descent to the underworld (Hermippus Fr. 20, quoted in D.L.

⁴ For the debate over who is to be called a Pythagorean, see Appendix B.

⁵ Although being married to a Crotonian, Timycha is said to come from Sparta in Neanthes Fr. 31a, quoted in Porph. VP 61. See also Poralla 720.

⁶ Myia is identified as the daughter of Pythagoras and Theano in Porph. VP 4 and *Suda* 1363, s.v. Myia. The latter says that she was a Samian, arguably in the light of her father's origins. Moreover, as we shall see below, Myia's husband Milon was alive during the anti-Pythagorean uprising of 509 BCE, which again dates them both in the late sixth/early fifth century.

8.41), Pythagoras' daughters Arignote (Porph. *VP* 4) and Damo (D.L. 8.42), Damo's daughter Bitale, who together with her mother is said to have inherited Pythagoras' writings (Iamb. *VP* 146 – cf. Ch. 1.IV), and Brontinus' wife Deino (*VP* 132 – cf. Ch. 3.VI).⁷ Finally, Pythagoras is reputed to have been educated by the Delphic priestess Themistoclea (Aristoxenus Fr. 15, quoted in D.L. 8.8 and 8.21), whom the *Suda* identifies as Pythagoras' sister (3124, s.v. Pythagoras).⁸

The fact that the author of the *Catalogue* specifically notes that there were Pythagorean women, and that the seventeen names listed are introduced as the best known in a presumably larger group, suggests that Huffman may be right in describing the role of the Pythagorean women as unusual (Huffman 2014c). Before looking into what caused such an out of the ordinary female participation, however, I shall set up the context and investigate the status of women in other ancient Greek societies to find whether that of the Pythagoreans was indeed unusual to begin with.

First, we need to identify the *comparandum*. Specifically, I shall measure the Pythagorean society against two ancient Greek forms of association: the πόλις, city-state, and more restricted political and religious clubs. The Pythagorean communities were founded within the walls of several cities in Southern Italy and mainland Greece. Therefore, in this chapter I investigate whether the organisational structure of such communities was affected by that of the cities of which they were part. More precisely, then, rather than comparing cities to the Pythagorean restricted circles, I explore to what extent the society of Magna Graecia and some cities in mainland Greece were a source of influence for the Pythagoreans. In the next chapter, I shall compare the Pythagorean community with other kinds of intra-city organisations, such as political clubs and religious sects.

The second point to clarify is which cities to take into consideration. Pythagoras was born in the Ionian island of Samos.⁹ In Samos, he made his entrance into the political scene by

⁷ Whilst in the *Catalogue* Brontinus is said to have married Theano, in *VP* 132 Iamblichus explicitly distinguishes Theano from Deino and identifies the latter as Brontinus' wife. This again suggests that Iamblichus is unlikely to have been the original compiler of the *Catalogue*.

⁸ This however may be a misreading of Aristoxenus' fragment. Aristoxenus claims that Pythagoras learnt most of his doctrines from Themistoclea of Delphi (παρὰ Θεμιστοκλείας τῆς ἐν Δελφοῖς), whereas the *Suda* reports that he was taught by his sister, who is here named Theoclea (παρὰ τῆς ἀδελφῆς Θεοκλείας).

⁹ As we read in Pythagoras' biographies, the debate over the philosopher's origins goes back to antiquity. The common opinion locates him in Samos and identifies him as the descendant of the city's founder Ancaeus (e.g. Hermippus in D.L. 8.1, Apollonius in Porph. *VP* 2, Iamb. *VP* 4). By contrast, Aristoxenus presents him as a Tyrrhenian naturalised as Samian (Fr. 11a, quoted in D.L. 8.1) and, similarly, Plutarch as an Etrurian (*Mor.* 727b).

colliding with the local tyrant Polycrates.¹⁰ He then fled to Magna Graecia and established the first Pythagorean society in Croton (Porph. *VP* 18-19, Iamb. *VP* 29). Noteworthy in this regard is that the majority of the Pythagoreans Iamblichus lists in the *Catalogue* come from Southern Italy – namely, 169 out of 218 men and 8 out of 17 women, including four from Croton, two from Tarentum and two from the Lucanian region. Therefore, I shall look into the female status in Ionia and Magna Graecia. The *Catalogue* also prompts us to consider the women of Sparta. Iamblichus lists up to five Laconian-Pythagorean women, nearly one-third of the overall group, and only three men. Although those mentioned in the *Catalogue* are only the best known of Pythagoras' followers, it is nonetheless significant that there are more prominent Spartan-Pythagorean women than there are men. Therefore, it is worth investigating what distinctive features of the Spartan society contributed to the prestige of Pythagoras' female followers. Four women are left out: Echecrateia of Phlius,¹¹ Boeo of Argos, Babelyca of Argos and the Arcadian Lastheneia.¹² However, both Arcadia and Phlius were Spartan allies (Thuc. 4.70.1, 5.64.3-5), which may link us back to the case of the Lacedaemonian women, and the Pythagorean community in Argos was associated with Thrasydamus, a Pythagorean from Tarentum who emigrated to mainland Greece (*VP* 145, 239), which therefore refers us to Southern Italy.

Overall, I shall consider three case studies: the Ionian, the Italian and the Spartan women. Since there is no obvious connection between Pythagoras and Athens,¹³ the social structure of

Finally, Neanthes describes Pythagoras as a Syrian who went to Ionia to be educated by Pherecydes and the Samian Herodamas (Fr. 8, quoted in Porph. *VP* 1-2).

¹⁰ Aristoxenus Fr. 16, quoted in Porph. *VP* 9, 16, D.L. 8.3, Iamb. *VP* 11, 26-27. Aristoxenus writes that Pythagoras was forty when Polycrates came to power (540/535 BCE – see Hdt. 3.39), which would date his birth around 590 BCE and his exile from Samos in 530 BCE (Philip 1966, 195-196). In 'How to Create a Perfect Society: From the Presocratics to Aristotle', Rowett suggests a different chronology and dates Pythagoras' arrival in Croton after, rather than before, Croton's victory over Sybaris in 510 BCE.

¹¹ As Pomeroy suggests (2013, 7), Echecrateia may be related to Echecrates, a Pythagorean from Phlius Iamblichus mentions earlier in the *Catalogue*. According to Diogenes, Echecrates was the pupil of Philolaus and one of the last Pythagoreans (8.46 – see Aristoxenus Fr. 19 and Iamb. *VP* 251). In Plato's *Phaedo*, he is the character to whom Phaedo recounts the story of Socrates' death (57a-59c).

¹² One of the two female students in Plato's Academy was also named Lastheneia (Dicaearchus Fr. 44, quoted in D.L. 3.46), which leads Pomeroy to suggest that the Pythagorean Lastheneia was either the same person as or a relative of the Platonic Lastheneia (2013, 6-7). It may well be, then, that this was the tradition Iamblichus had in mind when including her name in the *Catalogue*.

¹³ Iamblichus' *Catalogue* mentions only one Pythagorean from Athens, Neocritus. Moreover, we know that Aristoxenus studied in Athens under the Pythagorean Xenophilus (cf. Introduction).

the Athenian πόλις is less likely to have influenced that of the Pythagorean communities. Nevertheless, the Athenian women will also be briefly taken into account – at the very least as the standard against which to evaluate the other Greek communities. As mentioned in the Introduction, the main difficulty with researching the social conditions of women in antiquity is the lack of evidence. The majority of literary sources comes from Athens and a fair amount of what has been handed down to us regarding other cities is described through the eyes of Athenian authors (Seltman 1956, 66). As we shall see, however, the Athenian paradigm does not reflect the female status in the Pythagorean communities, nor does it do justice to the variety of social organisations forming the landscape of ancient Greece.

II. Ionian and Italian women

Rossetti argues that, after leaving Samos and before moving to Croton, Pythagoras underwent a change. The difference between his ‘first’ and ‘second’ life is primarily noticeable in his philosophical interests, for it is only after arriving in Southern Italy that Pythagoras began to develop an elaborate ethical programme for his disciples to follow (2013, 63-76). If there is a difference between Pythagoras’ Ionian and Italian life and philosophical activity, and if Pythagoras started acting like a community leader once he arrived in Croton, what does this tell us about the Pythagorean women? Did Pythagoras’ ‘adoptive’ homeland influence the way he treated his female disciples? Did his native homeland have any impact?

Unfortunately, not much is known about the social status and role of women living in the Western coast of Asia Minor and in the island of Samos. As Seltman notices (1956, 86-102), Ionia is associated with strong female personalities, such as Pericles’ mistress Aspasia of Miletus (Plu. *Per.* 24.1-2),¹⁴ the admiral Artemisia of Halicarnassus (Hdt. 7.99) and the Amazons, the legendary founders of Ephesus (Paus. 7.2.7). This may lead us to think that in Ionia women were more authoritative and influential than in other Greek regions. However, the evidence does not go further, leaving doubts as to whether these figures reflect the living conditions of their fellow ordinary Ionian women or if they should be considered exceptional and isolated cases of female authority, and thus whether the role of the Ionian women was as unusually prominent as that of the Pythagoreans. Noteworthy is that, with the exception of Pythais of Samos, there is no record of other Ionian women engaging with Pythagoreanism.

¹⁴ Aspasia was accused of persuading Pericles to embark on both the Samian and the Peloponnesian War. For example, in Ar. *Ach.* 526-534 she is compared to Helen for being the triggering cause of the conflict.

The case of the women from Magna Graecia appears to be different. As noted above, nearly half of the most illustrious Pythagorean women are associated with South Italian communities. Among these, worthy of mention are Theano and Myia. Porphyry refers to Theano as follows:

Γενομένων δὲ τούτων μεγάλη περὶ αὐτοῦ ἠϋξήθη δόξα, καὶ πολλοὺς
μὲν ἔλαβεν ἐξ αὐτῆς τῆς πόλεως ὁμιλητὰς οὐ μόνον ἄνδρας ἀλλὰ καὶ
γυναῖκας, ὧν μιᾷ γε Θεανοῦς.

After this,¹⁵ he acquired great reputation and drew numerous audiences from the city, not only men, but also women, among whom was Theano.

(Dicaearchus Fr. 33 Wehrli, in Porph. *VP* 19)¹⁶

Theano is singled out as arguably the most famous of Pythagoras' female disciples. The available evidence pictures Theano¹⁷ as Pythagoras' wife, daughter¹⁸ and best-known female pupil. The *Suda* distinguishes between two Theanos. The former is Theano of Metapontum or Thurii, daughter of Leophron of Croton (Iamb. *VP* 267), wife of Brontinus¹⁹ and student of Pythagoras (*Suda* 83, s.v. Theano). The latter is Theano of Crete, daughter of Pythonax, wife of Pythagoras and mother of Telauges, Mnemarchus, Myia and Arignote (*Suda* 84, s.v. Theano).²⁰ In the *Lives*, Theano is more frequently mentioned as the wife of Pythagoras – which is how I shall identify her in this thesis. Diogenes introduces Theano as either Pythagoras' wife and Brontinus' daughter or Brontinus' wife and Pythagoras' pupil (8.42), but later refers to her as the mother of Pythagoras' son Telauges (8.43). In line with *Suda* 84, Porphyry identifies Theano as Pythonax's daughter, Pythagoras's wife and the mother of his sons and daughters (*VP* 4 – see below). Finally, although in the *Catalogue* Theano is listed as the wife of Brontinus, elsewhere in Iamblichus' *Vita* she is distinguished from Brontinus' wife Deino (*VP* 132) and referred to as the mother of Pythagoras' son Telauges (*VP* 146) and Pythagoras' widow (*VP* 265).

¹⁵ Pythagoras' speeches to the Crotoniates – cf. Ch. 3.

¹⁶ The Greek text of Porphyry's *Life of Pythagoras* is cited from Nauck 1886.

¹⁷ On the eleven occurrences of the name Theano in Athens, five of which are names of priestesses, see Nagy 1979. On Theano the Trojan priestess, see Hom. *Il.* 6.237-311. On Theano, the priestess who refused to curse Alcibiades after the mutilation of the Hermai, see Plu. *Alc.* 22.5.

¹⁸ The only source identifying Theano as Pythagoras' daughter is Photius *VP* 2.

¹⁹ According to the *Suda*, Brontinus was a native of either Carystus or Croton, whereas in the *Catalogue* he is grouped with the Pythagoreans from Metapontum (Iamb. *VP* 267).

²⁰ Even *Suda* 84 allows for the possibility that Theano might have been a Crotonian, the wife of Brontinus and simply a disciple of Pythagoras'. Nevertheless, Theano is also identified as the wife of Pythagoras in *Suda* 3120, s.v. Pythagoras.

Besides marrying the community's founder, Theano is also reputed to have taught her fellow Pythagorean women, perhaps even by authoring Pythagorean texts. The *Suda* attributes four works to Theano I – *On Pythagoras*, *On Virtue*, *Advice to Women* and *Pythagorean Maxims*, or *Apophthegms* (ἀποφθέγματα) – and three works to Theano II – *Philosophical Memoirs* (ὑπομνήματα), *Pythagorean Maxims* (ἀποφθέγματα) and a poem. Diogenes also attributes written works to Theano, specifically referring to her moral teachings to women (D.L. 8.43, Iamb. *VP* 132).²¹ Whether Theano left any writings despite the Pythagorean vow of silence is discussed below. For the time being, suffice it to consider that she was known as an intellectual authority. The same can be argued about her daughter:

Ἄλλοι δ' ἐκ Θεανοῦς τῆς Πυθώνακτος τὸ γένος Κρήσσης υἱὸν Τηλαύγῃ
Πυθαγόρου ἀναγράφουσι καὶ θυγατέρα Μυῖαν, οἱ δὲ καὶ Ἀριγνώτην·
ᾧ καὶ συγγράμματα Πυθαγόρεια σῶζεσθαι. Τίμαιος δ' ἱστορεῖ τὴν
Πυθαγόρου θυγατέρα καὶ παρθένον οὔσαν ἡγεῖσθαι τῶν παρθένων ἐν
Κρότωνι καὶ γυναῖκα τῶν γυναικῶν· τὴν δ' οἰκίαν Δήμητρος ἱερὸν
ποιῆσαι τοὺς Κροτωνιάτας, τὸν δὲ στενωπὸν καλεῖν μουσεῖον.

Others write that from Theano daughter of Pythonax from Crete Pythagoras had a son Telauges and a daughter Myia, but others add Arignote. From them too Pythagorean writings have survived. Timaeus reports that the daughter of Pythagoras, while still a maiden, was the first of the maidens of Croton, and then a wife among wives; and that the Crotonians turned her house into a temple of Demeter and called the neighbouring street Museum.

(Porph. *VP* 4)

On the evidence of Timaeus' Fr. 131, Porphyry writes that Myia was the best regarded of the Crotonian women to such an extent that after her death her house was devoted to the cult of Demeter.²² According to Rowett, what Porphyry means by describing that Myia as the first among the maidens and later among the wives is that she acted as the instructor and the leader of her fellow Crotoniates (2014, 123). The text is not explicit in this regard. Nonetheless, what

²¹ On Theano's precepts, see Ch. 3.VI. The works by Theano listed in the *Suda* have not survived. In the Hellenistic period, one treatise entitled *On Piety* and eight letters were published under Theano's name (Thesleff 1965, 193-201).

²² Timaeus' account mirrors that by Dicaearchus (Frs. 35a-b, quoted in D.L. 8.40 and Porph. *VP* 57), according to which Pythagoras died in the temple of the Muses at Metapontum. On Pythagoras' fourfold division of the female life into girlhood, maidenhood and motherhood, see D.L. 8.11 (on the evidence of Timaeus Fr. 17) and Iamb. *VP* 56 – cf. Ch. 3.IV.

Porphyry does claim is that, like her mother Theano, Myia was singled out as an illustrious Pythagorean woman. Moreover, like Theano, Pythagoras' children are also said to have left written works, which supports Rowett's description of Myia as an intellectual authority.²³

Once again, then, one may wonder whether those of Theano and Myia are isolated cases of female authority figures. According to Shepherd, South Italian women held a higher social status than their contemporaries in mainland Greece. The reason behind this is that they played a key role in the interaction between the local ethnic groups and the Greek settlers (2012, 215-228). Mixed marriages were a fruitful way for the Greeks to build relations with the Italian population and thus merge with the indigenous culture. This, in turn, was a contributing factor in the establishment of the social system of Magna Graecia and the role of women therein. South Italian communities based their stability on family ties. Hence, the importance of family relations brought about the importance of women.²⁴

A notable case is that of the so-called 'Locrian maidens', the women living in the city of Epizephyrian Locri in the Calabrian peninsula, who are reputed to have enjoyed a unique degree of respect among their fellow citizens.²⁵ Two anecdotes are associated with the high reputation of the Locrian maidens: the city's foundation and the 477 BCE *votum*. According to Polybius, on the evidence of Aristotle, the Italian colony of Locri was founded by the women and slaves from the Greek region of Locris, when the Greek-Locrian men were fighting the First Messenian War alongside the Spartans.²⁶ Among the founders and first settlers of Locri, therefore, the men were slaves and only the women were free. As a result, Polybius writes, the Locrian women were the ones passing on the social status to subsequent generations. Ranking was inherited through

²³ Although no writings by Arignote have survived, the Hellenistic (pseudo-)epigraphic texts collected by Thesleff include a letter by Myia to Phyllis (1965, 123-124). By contrast, according to Diogenes, Telauges wrote nothing like his father (8.43).

²⁴ For further examples of female participation in the foundation of Greek colonies, including the Spartan colony of Tarentum, which hosted a large Pythagorean community, see Izzi 2009, 13-33. Pomeroy argues that another example of the prominence of women in the pre-Classical colonisation period was the case of prophetesses giving blessing to the settlers' trip (1976, 33-35). According to Seltman, intermarriages were also practised in the Greek colonies of Asia Minor in order to come into contact with the Ionian natives, and may have thus affected the status of the Ionian women (1956, 87).

²⁵ See Sourvinou-Inwood 1974 and 1978, Woodbury 1978, Redfield 2003.

²⁶ In the speech to the youths of Croton (Iamb. *VP* 42), Pythagoras refers to the Greek Locrian maidens, sacrificed in the temple of Athena in Ilium to repay for Ajax's rape of Cassandra, which exemplifies the lack of self-restraint (Eur. *Troj.* 7 and *Plb.* 12.5). This also reminds us of the South Italian context of Pythagoreanism. See De Vogel 1966, 84-89.

mothers and wives, and nobility depended upon descent from the female founders of the city (12.5-12).

According to the second anecdote, in 477 BCE the Locrians vowed to prostitute their wives and daughters as an offering to Aphrodite in return for defence and protection against the attacks of Rhegium.²⁷ According to Pindar, the vow was then made purposeless by the intervention of Hieron of Syracuse, who saved the Locrians from the Rhegian danger and the women from prostitution (*Pyth.* 2.18-20). Hence, although in the latter anecdote women seem to have had a more subservient social status, for the second time they played a key role in the history of the Locri.

There are two difficulties with comparing the Locrians with the Pythagoreans, and thus the Locrian maidens with the Pythagorean women. First, the Pythagorean city of Croton is not part of what Redfield names as 'the Locrian culture area' (2003, x), or area of influence, which is located in the Southern part of the Calabrian peninsula and includes cities like Hipponion, Medma and Temesa. For instance, although the cult of Aphrodite spread over the Locrian region, there is no evidence of this goddess being worshipped among the Pythagoreans.²⁸ Second, Locri notably opposed the Crotonian-Pythagorean power in Southern Italy. In the mid-sixth century BCE, Locri defeated Croton in the battle of Sagra and later joined other South Italian cities forming an anti-Pythagorean league (Strab. 6.1.10). After Pythagoras' arrival in Magna Graecia and the foundation of his first community of disciples in Croton, some Italian cities, such as Rhegium, came under the influence of the Pythagoreans (Iamb. *VP* 251), whereas others, such as Locri and Sybaris, became strongly hostile. For instance, the latter was defeated by Croton in 510 BCE (Hdt. 5.44, Iamb. *VP* 133, 177). The victory over Sybaris brought great riches (Timaeus Fr. 44), which in turn increased the Pythagorean power and influence over Croton and further afield. This, however, triggered the antagonism of local aristocracies, whose authority had started decreasing, and gave rise to anti-Pythagorean movements. The Pythagorean dominance in Magna Graecia was eventually interrupted by a series of revolts, the first of which is known as the Cylonian conspiracy of 509 BCE,²⁹ and Pythagoras was forced to flee to

²⁷ According to Woodbury 1978, 290-291, the anecdote is to be interpreted as a reference to sacred prostitution, which was regularly practised in Locri. This is rejected by Sourvinou-Inwood, who argues that the *votum* is presented as an exceptional offering rather than a regular practice (1974, 186-187).

²⁸ Sourvinou-Inwood 1978. In the little evidence of Pythagorean religion available to us, the goddesses mentioned are Hera (Iamb. *VP* 56) and Demeter (Timaeus Fr. 131, quoted in Porph. *VP* 4 – cf. Chs. 2.II, 3.VI). Another goddess worshiped in the Locrian area was Persephone-Kore, whose name is cited in the speech to the women in Croton as the deity with whom young unmarried girls are associated (*VP* 56).

²⁹ Cylon was one of Pythagoras' political opponents, who tried to enter the Pythagorean community in Croton, but was rejected (Arist. Fr. 75, D.L. 2.46, 8.49, Iamb. *VP* 74). This leads Zhmud to assume that the anti-Pythagorean

Metapontum, where he died in the nineties of the fifth century, thirty-nine years after his arrival in Magna Graecia (Iamb. *VP* 265).³⁰ Interestingly, on his way out of Croton, Pythagoras went to Locri in search of asylum, but the citizens refused to host him (Dicaearchus Fr. 34, quoted in Porph. *VP* 56 – see Ch. 2.III). Overall, not only were Locri and Croton outside their respective culture areas, but they also occasionally clashed.

Nevertheless, given the geographical proximity and sporadic interactions, the two cities are likely to have come into contact and to some extent affected each other's societies. The Pythagorean cultural sphere was not at all restricted to a few philo-Pythagorean cities in Magna Graecia. The *Catalogue* lists names of disciples coming from all over Greece and Southern Italy, including some allegedly anti-Pythagorean cities. For instance, there was a Pythagorean community in Sybaris, arguably founded after the city's subjugation (Zhud 2012, 97), as well as a Sybarite community in Croton (Iamb. *VP* 133, 177). Similarly, then, despite the ongoing conflict, Locri is likely to have been influenced by Pythagoreanism. The author of the *Catalogue* lists the names of ten Locrian Pythagoreans, although none of them is female. Moreover, according to both Redfield (2003, 391-392) and Taylor (1928, 17), Plato's *Timaeus* is also to be counted as a Pythagorean from Locri (Pl. *Tim.* 20a). Iamblichus mentions two Pythagoreans named *Timaeus*, one from Croton and the other from Paros, and lists the latter right before the Locrian disciples – which leads Redfield and Taylor to believe that his name might have been miscatalogued. Finally, Diogenes (8.16), Porphyry (*VP* 20-21) and Iamblichus (*VP* 130) take the legislator of Locri *Zaleucus* to be a Pythagorean, thus accrediting Pythagoras with the Locrian law code – which however is dubious, as *Zaleucus* lived in the seventh century BCE (Zhud 2012, 114). Overall, there is room for assuming that Pythagoreanism had an impact on

revolts may have been the result of schisms within the community (2012, 97-109). Iamblichus reports three versions of the Cylonian affairs. First, according to Aristoxenus, Pythagoras went to Metapontum in old age and before the conspiracy (*VP* 248-249). Second, according to Nicomachus, at the time of the revolt Pythagoras was only temporarily absent from Croton, for he had gone to Delos to visit his teacher Pherecydes of Syros, and then left for good after the Cylonian conspiracy (*VP* 251-253). Third, according to Apollonius of Tyana, Cylon's attack took place after the victory over Sybaris and after Pythagoras' departure as a result of the large political power and influence acquired by the Pythagoreans in Croton (*VP* 254-264). See also von Fritz 1940, 11-14.

³⁰ On the anti-Pythagorean revolts, see Aristoxenus Fr. 18, quoted in and Iamb. *VP* 248-264, D.L. 8.39-40 and Porph. *VP* 54. After the Cylonian conspiracy and Pythagoras' death, Croton was briefly ruled by the tyrant Cleinias in 494 BCE (D.H. 20.7). The Pythagoreans then restored their power until mid-fifth century, when they were finally overthrown by a series of uprisings and defected to mainland Greece (Plb. 2.39.1-4). If Aristoxenus is right in calling Xenophilus of Athens the last Pythagorean (Frs. 19-20), early Pythagoreanism ended in the first half of the fourth century. On Pythagorean politics, see von Fritz 1940 and Minar 1944.

Locrian society. If so, in turn, the social organisation of Locri may have had an impact on the Pythagorean. Possibly, this may have gone as far as to influence the condition of the women.

In the light of this scenario, the role of the Pythagorean women from Southern Italy starts becoming more understandable. Once in Croton, Pythagoras did not found a society from scratch. Rather, he built his community within a pre-existing city and an already established social system. As stated at the beginning of this chapter, the first Pythagorean society developed within the walls of Croton. Therefore, instead of overthrowing the *status quo* by proposing alternative customs, Pythagoras incorporated this system into the organisational structure of his community. Consequently, if the Pythagorean societies were affected by the cultural and socio-political context of Magna Graecia out of which they arose, the Pythagorean women too might have benefited from the influence. Those Italian women joining Pythagoras in Croton, as well as the other Pythagorean women from Tarentum, Locri and the neighbouring areas, already held a better-regarded social position in their city of origin. Consequently, such a status may have translated into the ‘unusually large’ role they played in the life of the Pythagorean community.

There are two conclusions one should not draw from this statement. First, this is not meant to imply that the status of women in Southern Italy is the *only* reason for the prominence of women in Pythagoreanism. As we shall see in the following chapters, the distinctive Pythagorean way of life also vastly affected the female status. Second, I am not arguing that Magna Graecia is the sole social context affecting Pythagoras’ political activities. This brings us back to the question with which I opened this section, i.e. whether Pythagoras was influenced by his native or adoptive homeland. The evidence for Ionian women is too scarce to determine whether they also contributed to the way the Pythagorean women were treated or if, in contrast, Pythagoras started developing his social programme only upon his arrival in Croton. As previously mentioned, Rossetti distinguishes Pythagoras’ first life as a philosopher in Samos and second life as a philosopher and a community leader in Croton. Since the Pythagorean communities were first established in Magna Graecia, they are likely to have been primarily influenced by the Italian social system. Yet Pythagoras had already started taking an active part in politics in Samos, where according to Porphyry, he founded the so-called Pythagorean Semicircle (*VP* 9).³¹ Therefore, since we have no further information about both this preliminary form of Pythagorean society and the female status in Ionia, we cannot definitely rule out the possibility that Pythagoras’ Samian roots also had a role in shaping his Italian communities.

³¹ Not much is known about the Semicircle. Porphyry simply writes that the adherents would discuss political and philosophical issues and deliberate about ‘matters of common interest’ (περὶ τῶν κοινῶν – see also *Iamb. VP* 27).

III. Spartan women

Let us now turn to the Pythagorean women from mainland Greece and, more specifically, Sparta. The best known of the Spartan-Pythagorean women is Timycha, who is listed in the *Catalogue* as the wife of the Pythagorean Myllias of Croton. According to Iamb. *VP* 189-194, on the evidence of Neanthes and the third-century historian Hippobotus, when Timycha was ten months pregnant, she was captured with her husband Myllias by the tyrant of Syracuse Dionysius the Elder, who was eager to learn about the Pythagorean secrets. The anecdote is as follows:

‘Ἀλλὰ ἔν γέ με’ ἔφη ‘διδάξαντες μετὰ τῆς ἐπιβαλλούσης προπομπῆς διασφύξεσθε’. Πυθομένου δὲ τοῦ Μυλλίου καὶ τί ποτ’ ἐστίν, ὃ μαθεῖν προθυμεῖται, ‘ἐκεῖνο’ εἶπεν ὁ Διονύσιος· ‘τίς ἡ αἰτία, δι’ ἣν οἱ ἐταῖροί σου ἀποθανεῖν μᾶλλον εὔλαντο ἢ κυάμους πατήσαι;’ Καὶ ὁ Μυλλίας εὐθὺς ‘ἄλλ’ ἐκεῖνοι μὲν’ εἶπεν ‘ὑπέμειναν, ἵνα μὴ κυάμους πατήσωσιν, ἀποθανεῖν, ἐγὼ δὲ αἰροῦμαι, ἵνα τούτου σοι τὴν αἰτίαν μὴ ἐξείπω, κυάμους μᾶλλον πατήσαι’. Καταπλεγέντος δὲ τοῦ Διονυσίου καὶ μεταστῆσαι κελεύσαντος αὐτὸν σὺν βία, βασάνους δὲ ἐπιφέρειν τῇ Τιμύχᾳ προστάττοντος (ἐνόμιζε γὰρ ὅτε γυναῖκά τε οὖσαν καὶ ἔπογκον ἐρήμην τε τοῦ ἀνδρὸς ῥαδίως τοῦτο ἐκλαλήσειν φόβῳ τῶν βασάνων), ἡ γενναία συμβρύξασα ἐπὶ τῆς γλώσσης τοὺς ὀδόντας καὶ ἀποκόψασα αὐτὴν προσέπτυσσε τῷ τυράννῳ, ἐμφαίνουσα ὅτι, εἰ καὶ ὑπὸ τῶν βασάνων τὸ θῆλυ αὐτῆς νικηθὲν συναναγκασθεῖν τῶν ἐχεμυθομένων τι ἀνακαλύψει, τὸ μὴν ὑπηρετῆσον ἐκποδὼν ὑπ’ αὐτῆς περικέκοπται.

‘But you shall go free with the due escort’ Dionysius said ‘once you teach me one thing only.’ After Myllias asked what the thing he wished to learn was, Dionysius said ‘This: why did your companions choose to die rather than trample on beans?’ And Myllias immediately replied: ‘But whilst they submitted to death to avoid trampling on beans, I would rather trample on beans to avoid telling you the reason for this.’ Dionysius was astounded and gave the order to remove him by force and torture Timycha, for he believed that, being a woman, pregnant and without her husband, in fear of torture she would have blabbed more easily. The noble woman gnashed her teeth on her tongue, cut it off and spat it at the tyrant, making it clear that, even if her female nature had been won over, forced by torture to reveal the secrets, what would have served to do so, would have been cut away by her.

(Neanthes *FGrHist* 84 Fr. 31b, in Iamb. *VP* 193-194)

Dionysius is eager to discover the reason behind the Pythagorean ban against beans (cf. Ch. 3.V). After Myllias' refusal to speak, he turns to his pregnant wife. However, in order to prevent herself from transgressing the Pythagorean vow of silence, Timycha bites off her tongue and spits it at the tyrant. As a pregnant woman separated from her husband and in fear of torture,³² Timycha is expected to leak the Pythagorean secrets. Yet, as a Pythagorean, she refrains from doing so. In a sense, then, Timycha's reaction is 'unusual'.

Neanthes' account of Timycha's tongue-biting defiance is mirrored in later noble death narratives, such as those of Zeno in D.L. 9.26-27 and Anaxarchus in D.L. 9.58-59 (see Plu. *Mor.* 505d). Plutarch also alludes to the story of Leaina, an Athenian courtesan, who was tortured to obtain information about the conspiracy against Hippias and Hipparchus, and to whom the city dedicated the statue of a tongue-less lioness (*Mor.* 505e).³³ As for Timycha, Iamblichus mentions this anecdote twice in the *Vita*, as an example of Pythagorean temperance (*VP* 193-194) and courage (*VP* 214). One may then wonder from where Timycha's strength of character stems. I would argue that the answer lies in her being not only a Pythagorean, but also a Spartan woman.

The study of women in Greek antiquity is generally built on a dichotomy: Athens on the one hand and Sparta on the other. In Athens, women had a rather low political and social status. They were often silenced by men³⁴ and locked away inside the house,³⁵ had no independent legal existence, were subordinate to and live under the tutelage of their κύριοι, guardians, could not marry unless betrothed by their fathers to their husbands-to-be,³⁶ and primarily functioned as child-bearers.³⁷ Conversely, Spartan women were educated,³⁸ exercised together with boys,³⁹ shared with men the power and responsibility of running the household and sometimes even managed the

³² On the Pythagorean views of female natures, see Ch. 3.VII.

³³ See also Paus. 1.23 and Ath. *Deipn.* 13.596f.

³⁴ For example, in the Solonian constitution the female influence on men is strongly frowned-upon (Dem. 46.14 and Plu. *Sol.* 21.3), in Pericles' funeral oration in honour of the war dead women are silenced (Thuc. 2.45.2), and in Plato's *Phaedo* Socrates dismisses his wife Xanthippe from his prison in order to converse alone with his disciples (60a).

³⁵ On women's suitability for indoor tasks, see Xen. *Oec.* 7.22.

³⁶ For an example of betrothal, see Dem. 41.4.

³⁷ On women as child-bearers, see Dem. 59.122 and Menand. *Peri.* 1013-1015.

³⁸ On Spartan education, see Pl. *Prot.* 342d and Plu. *Lyc.* 14.2-3.

³⁹ E.g. Xen. *Lac. Pol.* 1.4, Plu. *Lyc.* 14.2.

husband's affairs on their own.⁴⁰ They were praised, feared and sometimes even mocked for their freedom and authority.⁴¹ As Plutarch writes: 'Spartan men were known to be always obedient to their wives and grant them to meddle in public affairs more than they themselves did in private' (*Agis*. 7.3). Like their Athenian counterparts, the women of Sparta were primarily in charge of nurturing the children: as Lycurgus decreed, they had to be strong in order to bear strong offspring (*Xen. Lac. Pol.* 1.3-10, *Plu. Lyc.* 15.3-5). Nevertheless, in *Plu. Lyc.* 27.2-3, mothers who died in childbirth are said to be as honoured as the men fallen at war.⁴² Hence, compared to the Athenian, Spartan women enjoyed higher social, political and legal status.

A likely reason for this is the Spartan warfare and military lifestyle. Spartan men led a communal life in men-only groups, eating, sleeping and exercising together (*Plu. Lyc.* 14.1). They were frequently away from home, engaged in military training and campaigns. This gave women the time and space to establish their authority over the family and within the households.⁴³ In the absence of men, women were responsible for not only bearing, but also raising the next generations of Spartans, introducing them to the Spartan values and βίος, lifestyle. As Plutarch writes, they ruled over men, for they were the ones giving men birth (*Lyc.* 14.4, *Mor.* 225a, 240e). Spartan women were not involved in public affairs, nor did they perform military or political functions, but nonetheless had primary responsibility for the children's upbringing. For example, Plutarch's *Sayings of Spartan Women* collects anecdotes of mothers encouraging their children to be brave, rejoicing in hearing about their sons honourably killed on the battlefield,⁴⁴ moaning for those who had survived or died with wounds on the back as a sign of cowardice, and even going as far as to kill a child who had broken the law and betrayed the Spartan values.⁴⁵ There is also evidence of daughters advising their fathers⁴⁶ and grandmothers instilling the Spartan code of conduct in their grandsons.⁴⁷ These anecdotes show that not only

⁴⁰ On women as landowners, see *Arist. Pol.* 1269b1-70a25. On women managing public affairs, see *Plu. Comp. Lyc. Num.* 3.5.

⁴¹ E.g. *Aristoph. Lys.* 80-84 and 1305-1315, *Eur. Andr.* 595-596, *Pl. Laws* 637c, *Arist. Pol.* 1269b12-1271b19.

⁴² Compare with *Eur. Med.* 214-251, in which death on the battlefield is described as far preferable to childbearing.

⁴³ See also *Arist. Pol.* 1269b12-1270a25.

⁴⁴ E.g. Argileonis, mother of Brasidas, *et al.* in *Plu. Mor.* 240c, 241a-242b.

⁴⁵ E.g. Damatria *et al.* in *Plu. Mor.* 240f-241b, 242a. See also *Xen. Hell.* 6.4.16, *Plu. Ages.* 29.4-5, *Ael. VH* 12.21.

⁴⁶ E.g. Gorgo, daughter of Cleomenes I and wife of Leonidas, in *Hdt.* 5.48-53 and *Plu. Mor.* 240d-e, and her daughter Chilonis in *Plu. Agis* 17-1-18.1.

⁴⁷ E.g. Gyrtias and Acrotatus in *Plu. Mor.* 240f.

were women well educated in Spartan values, but they also passed that moral code on to their kin. With men being far away from home, they were in charge of enforcing social norms and teaching their sons warfare ethics. Consequently, the pre-eminence of the women of Sparta was not due to their public, but their domestic life. They were primarily responsible for family members, but nevertheless benefited the city by influencing how family members embodied community values. They did not act *outside* the household sharing political offices with men. Rather, the absence of men from *inside* the household eventually put them in the lead.⁴⁸

Whether and if so how the Spartan society and way of life influenced the Pythagorean is debated. In *VP* 25, Iamblichus writes that Pythagoras had sojourned in Sparta, become familiar with its legal system and since then always looked up at its society. However, this may be Iamblichus' propagandistic way to promote Pythagorean politics by connecting it with the Spartan constitution. Pythagoras is also said to have travelled to Crete (D.L. 8.3, Porph. *VP* 17). As with Sparta, Crete was renowned for its law code and the social conditions of its women – especially those living in Gortyn, which Plato describes as the Cretan community with the highest reputation (*Laws* 708a). For example, whilst in Athens it was customary for heiresses to merely function as the legal *medium* through whom property went from the father to the male next-of-kin,⁴⁹ in Gortyn women were entitled to inherit themselves. Moreover, they were not given in marriage at the will of their κύριος, but rather were allowed to marry the suitor of their choice, and they were protected by rules and precautionary measures against sexual offences.⁵⁰ Therefore, the *Lives* may connect Pythagoras with these cities for political reasons, in order to bestow upon his social reforms the same authority as the highly reputed Spartan and Cretan constitutions. Along similar lines, for example, Lycurgus was also believed to have travelled to Crete to familiarise himself with its form of government and legislation (Plu. *Lyc.* 4.1).

Regardless of whether or not Pythagoras himself ever visited Sparta, the Pythagoreans later came into contact with the Spartan form of society. First, they encountered a Spartan-like society in Tarentum. Tarentum was Sparta's only colonial holding in Southern Italy.⁵¹ After the Pythagorean power over Croton was overthrown by the Cylonian conspiracy, Tarentum came to host a large community of Pythagoreans, 45 of whom are listed in the *Catalogue*, and in the

⁴⁸ For a more detailed study of the Spartan women, see Cartledge 1981, Blundell 1995, 150-158, Pomeroy 2002. On their physical education, see Neils 2012.

⁴⁹ On heiresses in the Solonian constitution, see Dem. 43.51-54.

⁵⁰ On Gortyn, see, Sealey 1990, 50-81, Lefkowitz and Fant 1992, 33-35, Blundell 1995, 158-159, Davies 2005.

⁵¹ On the foundation of Tarentum, see Arist. *Pol.* 1306b20-31, Strab. 6.3.2-4, Paus. 10.5-8.

fourth century BCE it became the Italian centre of Pythagoreanism under the lead of Archytas.⁵² Furthermore, in the *Catalogue* Iamblichus mentions eight Pythagoreans from Sparta itself, more than half of whom are women. Once again, then, the Spartan women joining the Pythagorean communities would have been already accustomed to living in a well-regarded position and playing a relevant role in society.

As was the case for the Pythagoreans from Southern Italy, the Pythagoreans who exported the doctrines from Croton to Tarentum and then left Magna Graecia to found new communities in mainland Greece adjusted to pre-existing local systems. Therefore, since Spartan women such as Timycha were in a position of authority and played an unusually large role in their community, they would have kept doing so as Pythagoreans.

IV. The 'unusual' Pythagorean women

Finally, one may wonder: if the women of Sparta and Magna Graecia were already enjoying a high social status, did the Pythagorean women from these areas hold a large role simply because they were Spartans and Italians? If so, what about the women coming from elsewhere in mainland Greece? Did the fact that they were Pythagoreans have any impact on their conditions?

I shall analyse two case studies: inheritance and education. As we read in Polybius and in the Gortyn law code, Locrian and Cretan women were included in inheritance practices. The same holds for the Pythagoreans. For example, Pythagoras entrusted his daughter Damo with the custody of his *memoranda* (D.L. 8.42, Iamb. *VP* 146). Moreover, according to Aristoxenus, Pythagoras' disciples followed his example and asked their wives and daughters to preserve their own written memories (Fr. 18, quoted in Porph. *VP* 58).⁵³ In classical Athens and other Greek cities, women were excluded from legacies: property went from the father to the male next-of-kin, and heiresses only entered the picture in absence of male successors and as a mere

⁵² Unlike Sparta, at the time of Archytas in the fourth century BCE, Tarentum was under a democratic regime (Rowett 2014, 129-130). According to Ar. *Pol.* 1303a2-6, the city changed the constitution to a democracy after many Tarentine nobles were killed during the war against the Iapygians in 473 BCE. This means that, when the Pythagoreans first arrived in 509, Tarentum was still under the aristocratic constitution inherited from Sparta. On Tarentine politics, see Huffman 2005, 8-18 – *pace* Minar, according to whom the revolution of 473 was simply a democratic parenthesis in Tarentum's oligarchic history (1942, 88-90).

⁵³ Diogenes quotes the anecdote about Damo inheriting her father's writings from a letter to Hippasus attributed to the Pythagorean Lysis, which Thesleff classifies as a Hellenistic forgery (1965, 111-114). Nevertheless, the fact that Aristoxenus mentions the Pythagoreans' custom of bequeathing their memoirs to their wives and daughters suggests that Pythagoras is also likely to have done so with Damo.

medium through whom heritage would reach future male heirs. Therefore, that of the Pythagoreans is one of the few exceptional cases of female inheritance, in which women are included in legacies despite the presence of male heirs, and daughters are bequeathed valuable property in place of their brothers.

However, the distinctiveness of the Pythagorean case does not depend on whether or not women inherited, but rather on what they inherited. Not only was Pythagoras' daughter entitled to inherit property as the subject of a legal procedure, as in Gortyn and Locri, but she also came into possession of his *memoirs* and notes, a document of presumably primary importance to the society.⁵⁴ Noteworthy in this regard is that, whilst Pythagoras' written legacy was handed down to his daughter, his son Mnemarchus took over the leadership of the society (Iamb. *VP* 265). In turn, Damo handed the writings down to her daughter Bitale, whereas Bitale's husband, Pythagoras' son Telauges (D.L. 8.43), became an important member of the community (*VP* 146). Consequently, as in Sparta, Pythagorean men were the ones holding public offices, but nonetheless women assisted them in their leading roles. Yet, compared to Spartan and Italian women, Pythagoras' female followers also played an active part in the intellectual life of the community.

A further example is female education. The prominence of the Spartan and Italian women stemmed from their domestic role. In Locri, mothers passed the social status on to their children. In Sparta, wives were in charge of their husband's household. Specifically, among their prerogatives, Spartan women were educated, and in turn educated their children, on Spartan values. What distinguished Spartan from Athenian childrearing is that in Sparta female education was (i) public, (ii) centrally organised and (iii) focused on physical training. Women exercised together with men in running, wrestling, discus and javelin throw, and received a basic education in literacy, numeracy and music.⁵⁵ This leads Deslauriers to claim that the Spartans were among the few ancient Greek women granted an education: 'Formal education for girls in anything beyond domestic skills, inside or outside the household, was probably quite unusual before the Hellenistic period and outside of Sparta' (2012, 352).

⁵⁴ Whether or not Pythagoras himself wrote anything is a vexed question. Other allusions to Pythagoras' writings are the treatises mentioned in D.L. 8.6-7, on the evidence of Heraclitus Fr. 129, and the letter to Anaximenes in D.L. 8.33. A possible solution would be assuming that he did not 'publish' anything, or any treatises (συγγράμματα), but still wrote notes and personal *memoranda* (ὑπομνήματα) he then left his daughter (see Pomeroy 2013, 8-9). Alternatively, Rossetti argues that he did write treatises but only before moving to Croton (2013, 63-76). On Pythagoras' written works, see also Huffman 2008b, 34-45, and Zhmud 2012, 159-162, which questions the Pythagorean ban against writing.

⁵⁵ On physical education, see Xen. *Lac. Pol.* 1.4, Eur. *Andr.* 595-301, Plato *Laws* 806a, Plu. *Lyc.* 14.2. An example of female literacy comes in Hdt. 7.239. On Spartan female education, see Cartledge 2001, 79-90, Pomeroy 2002, 3-32. More generally on ancient Greek female literacy, see Wolicki 2015

The same can be argued with regard to the Pythagorean women. As we shall see in Chapter 3, the women of Croton were lectured (i) publicly, (ii) by Pythagoras himself, the community leader, and in accordance with the Pythagorean lifestyle and doctrines (*VP* 50, 54-57). As for (iii) the subjects, women were primarily taught about domestic and private matters, such as marriage and household management. There is no mention of physical training, and the only evidence of female engagement with music theory is a Hellenistic treatise by Ptolemais of Cyrene.⁵⁶ Moreover, Pythagorean men and women were educated separately: the Crotonian women in the temple of Hera (*VP* 56), the children in that of Apollo (*VP* 50), the magistrates in the council chamber (*VP* 45) and the youths in the gymnasium (*VP* 37). Yet there is also some evidence of teachings imparted to both genders. According to Porph. *VP* 20, on the evidence of Nicomachus, upon his arrival in Croton Pythagoras built a large auditorium (ὁμακοεῖόν) in which both women and children were invited to attend lectures together with men. According to Iamblichus, some maxims were addressed to all disciples, regardless of their age and gender (*VP* 34 – cf. Ch. 3.I). Overall, Pythagoras' female pupils were primarily educated to be proper Pythagorean mothers and brides (cf. Ch. 3). For example, Porphyry describes Myia as authoritative, but specifically among virgins and wives.

Nevertheless, we should bear in mind that not all of Pythagoras' teachings were delivered in public. Some doctrines, arguably the core doctrines, were exclusively revealed to the highest-ranked followers and hidden from the outsiders (cf. Ch. 3.I). This prompts us to think that at least some women might have been included in the high-ranked group of disciples and educated on non-domestic matters. For example, Timycha is aware of the Pythagorean secrets, which she refuses to reveal to Dionysius. Pythagoras' mother Pythais assists him during his legendary descent to the underworld by keeping track of the event – which shows that, first, she was able to write and, second, she was involved in her son's intellectual activities. For sure, Diogenes reports this anecdote with an ironic tone (8.41, on the evidence of Hermippus Fr. 20).⁵⁷ Nonetheless, the possibility that Pythagoras might have chosen a woman as his assistant does not seem to bewilder him. Finally, Theano and her daughters are believed to have left written works. Specifically, some of the fragments the later tradition ascribes to Theano allude to core Pythagorean doctrines such as the immortality of the soul (Clem. *Strom.* 4.44.2) and the theory that everything comes from number (Stob. 1.10.13).⁵⁸ Overall, the Pythagorean women took part in the life of the community

⁵⁶ See Barker 2014.

⁵⁷ Laks 2014, 367, 377-380.

⁵⁸ As stated in the Introduction, the Hellenistic Pythagorean texts are beyond the scope of this work. For a detailed study, see Thesleff 1961.

as mothers, daughters and wives of Pythagorean men. Yet this did not rule out the possibility for at least some of them to act as intellectual authorities.

The fundamental difficulty with arguing that some Pythagorean women left written works is that Pythagoras' disciples were forbidden from publishing their doctrines (Aristoxenus Fr. 43, D.L. 8.15, 8.85, Porph. *VP* 57). The solutions to this predicament are threefold. First, what women wrote might not have focused on the Pythagorean secrets. However, this is not the case for Theano, whose works discuss both female virtues and Pythagoras' doctrines. Second, women may not have published philosophical treatises, but rather left notes and *memoirs*, as Pythagoras is reputed to have done. Third, the writings by Pythagorean women mentioned in the *Lives* are the Hellenistic pseudo-Pythagorean texts. Even so, however, the early Pythagorean women must have been influential enough for Hellenistic authors to publish under their names. Once again, then, Timycha, Theano and Myia were considered authorities not only because of their family relations, as was the case with the women of Sparta and Locri, but also in virtue of their intellectual role as teachers and possibly authors of Pythagorean texts.

Pythagorean education and inheritance practices show how the role of women in Pythagoreanism went beyond the authoritative status of their contemporaries from Locri and Sparta. Thus, the Spartan and Italian origins of the most illustrious Pythagorean women do not fully explain their prominence.

IV. Conclusions

Returning to Huffman's claim that the role of women in Pythagoreanism is 'unusually large', we may observe that the social status of the Pythagorean women is unusual compared to Athens, but nonetheless bears some affinity with the Locrian, Spartan and Cretan systems. One may then wonder whether there is any sense in which the role of the Pythagorean women should be considered unique. Although this will be explored in greater depth in the following chapters, I argue that the answer lies in the Pythagorean way of life as a means for creating social cohesion and communal identities. Walter Lacey writes that the main issue the Greek colonial settlements of Magna Graecia had to face is the lack of historical, political and social roots due to their distance from the motherland. This was balanced out in two ways: either the implementation of rigid legal codes – as for example happened in Locri – or the establishment of philosophical societies (1968, 19). If so, the Pythagoreans opted for the latter: Pythagoras' followers developed a distinctive way of living and thinking that functioned as the cohesive link and a powerful communal bond keeping the society together and giving them a strong identity. Consequently, if we were to look for the reason why the Pythagorean society stands out against other South Italian communities, we should turn to the way the Pythagoreans led their lives.

In this chapter, I analysed the socio-political context out of which the Pythagorean circles arise, thus depicting them as restricted associations within the broader organisational structure of the ancient Greek city. It is worth pointing out, however, that the scope of the Pythagorean society goes beyond politics. As we shall see in the next chapter, that of the Pythagoreans was not an exclusively political club, but rather a political, social, religious and intellectual circle – as Detienne writes, ‘une secte religieuse, groupe politique, milieu philosophique’ (1970, 141). The Pythagoreans were not, or at least not only, a community in the political sense. Rather, they formed a fellowship of people living together,⁵⁹ sharing interests, beliefs, traditions, customs and values, having a common identity, culture, ethic, worldview and lifestyle, and presumably even practising common ownership.⁶⁰ Consequently, the Pythagorean women were not only recognised as legal or political subjects, but also integrated in the community by adopting its characteristic way of life, being initiated into the doctrines, abiding by the master’s maxims and rigorously putting his teachings into practice.

Overall, a first reason for the prominence of women in Pythagoreanism is that the Pythagorean societies were founded in cities where women already held high-regarded status. To explore whether such a female participation also had distinctively Pythagorean traits, I shall turn to the more specific way the Pythagorean society was organised, the peculiar lifestyle the Pythagorean women led and the doctrines they were taught.

⁵⁹ In *VP* 100, Iamblichus writes that, although sharing several moments of their everyday life, each Pythagorean had his, or her, own house.

⁶⁰ Such commonality of not only property but also, more generally, way of living and thinking is epitomised by the saying attributed to the Pythagoreans κοινὰ τὰ φίλων, ‘common are the things of friends’ (Timaeus Fr. 13b – cf. Ch. 2.I). On the extent of Pythagorean communism of property, see Chs. 2.I and 5.III.iv.

Chapter 2

Early Pythagorean Societies

The study of women in Sparta and Southern Italy has yet to answer my first question – namely, why women were included in Pythagorean societies not only as political and legal subjects, but also as pupils and intellectuals. This chapter investigates the reason behind the female engagement with Pythagoreanism by analysing in more detail what kind of societies the Pythagoreans founded.

I. Greek *ἐταιρεῖαι* and the Pythagorean twist

Thus far, I have been examining the Pythagorean communities as part of Italian and Greek cities. At the end of the previous chapter, however, an issue was raised as to the extent to which we can refer to these communities as political organisations. In order to explore in more detail the Pythagorean form of society, I shall now compare the communities with other forms of association that were part of ancient Greek cities – namely, political comradeships and religious sects. Once again, the two central scholarly attitudes are instantiated by Zhmud and Burkert.

The similarities and dissimilarities between the Pythagorean circles, on the one hand, and ancient Greek schools, cults and clubs, on the other hand, are discussed at length by Zhmud (2012, 141-147). Zhmud describes the Pythagorean communities as *ἐταιρεῖαι*, socio-political organisations. The reasons behind this are fourfold. First, the available sources on ancient Pythagoreanism often name them as such. For example, in *VP* 254, on the evidence of Apollonius, Iamblichus writes that the Pythagoreans formed ‘a large club’ (*μεγάλη ἐταιρεία*). Moreover, in *VP* 55-57, on the evidence of Neanthes’ Fr. 30, Porphyry refers to Pythagoras’ associates as *ἐταῖροι*.¹ Second, the Pythagorean circles played an active role in Italian politics. According to Zhmud, this distinguishes the Pythagoreans from religious sects, which in contrast were detached from the life of the city. Third, ancient Greek *ἐταιρεῖαι* and Pythagorean communities were similarly dependent on the strong personalities of their founders. Specifically, the Pythagorean societies did not revolve around one scholar teaching his own thought in a specific place. Rather, they spread across Southern Italy and Greece, and developed around different leaders, each arguably professing his own version of the doctrines. For instance, Philolaus’ Crotonian circle and thought differed from those of Archytas in Tarentum. Nonetheless, they were all influenced by the figure of their legendary founder Pythagoras. Finally, as argued below, the Pythagoreans shared interests and

¹ See also Iamb. *VP* 95, 249. Millyas and Timycha’s companion are also called *ἐταῖροι* in Iamb. *VP* 193, on the evidence of Neanthes Fr. 31b (cf. Ch. 1.III).

lifestyle, and organised private gatherings with their fellow community members, as was customary for the ἐταῖροι to do. This in turn separates the Pythagorean society from other philosophical schools in Classical Greece. Whilst the primary goal of an institution such as the Academy was to educate the pupils, the jurisdiction of the Pythagorean communities went beyond pedagogy and philosophical activity: they lived together, shared property and thus developed not only a distinctive thought, but also a unique way of living. Furthermore, the Pythagoreans kept their doctrines secret, whereas Plato's teachings in the Academy, as well as Aristotle's in the Lyceum, were public. Consequently, this leads Zhmud to argue that the Pythagoreans founded ἐταιρεῖαι.

It is worth noting that with regard to the female members the comparison is not as straightforward. The Pythagoreans may well have been the first, but they were not the only philosophical circle to include women: there were two female disciples in Plato's Academy,² as well as women philosophers among Cynics and Epicureans (D.L. 6.96).³ Similarly, as argued below, women often took part in cultic activities: for example, they appear to have been included in Orphism, which in turn may have had an impact on the Pythagorean treatment of the female gender.⁴ By contrast, women were rarely involved in politics – which casts doubt on Zhmud's reading.

² Speusippus Fr. 4 Isnardi Parente, Xenocrates Fr. 3 Isnardi Parente, Apul. *DP* 1.4, D.L. 3.46. Diogenes lists two names: Lastheneia of Mantinea and Axiothea. Interestingly, Lastheneia is also included in Iamblichus' *Catalogue* (cf. Ch. 1.I) and Axiothea comes from Phlius, which hosted a well-known Pythagorean community (Iamb. *VP* 267). These two women are reputed to have entered the Academy after learning about Plato's views on the female gender in the *Republic* (cf. Ch. 5.II). Yet, according to Dicaearchus' Fr. 44, quoted in D.L. 3.46, they were only able to attend Plato's lectures because they successfully disguised themselves as men. They were also disciples of Speusippus (Speusippus Fr. 2 Isnardi Parente, D.L. 4.2), with whom Lastheneia is said to have had a relationship (Speusippus Fr. 7 Isnardi Parente, Ath. *Deipn.* 8.279e, 12.546d). See Reeve 2000, and Dorandi 1989.

³ An antecedent to the Pythagorean women is Cleobulina, the daughter of Cleobulus of Rhodes and presumably mother of Thales (D.L. 1.22, 89), to whom ancient sources attribute a number of riddles. However, Cleobulina was a poet rather than a philosopher. Furthermore, the historicity of this figure is a point of academic controversy (Plant 2004, 29-32).

⁴ E.g. Plu. *Alex.* 2.5, *Caes.* 9.3 – see Dillon 2002, 153-154. Further allusions to Orphic women may come in Pl. *Men.* 81a-b (Sharples 1985, 144-145, Guthrie 1952, 164-171, and 1950, 313 – cf. Ch. 2.II). The connection between Orphism and Pythagoreanism are a point of academic controversy. Both Pythagoras (D.L. 8.8, Iamb. *VP* 146) and his disciples Cecrops and Brontinus (Clem. *Strom.* 1.131.3-5) were believed to have authored works under the name of Orpheus. Moreover, as the Pythagoreans did, the Orphics also seem to have followed a peculiar lifestyle and diet, presumably inspired by their religious and psychological beliefs (e.g. Hdt. 2.81, Aristoph. *Ran.* 1032, Eur. *Hipp.* 952, Pl. *Laws* 782c-d). For an in-depth discussion of the possible links between the two traditions, see Casadesús Bordoy 2013, Bernabé 2013, Betegh 2014b.

An alternative, and yet somewhat comparable, description of Pythagorean societies is found in Burkert's 'Craft Versus Sect: The Problem of Orphics and Pythagoreans.' According to Burkert, the organisation of Pythagorean societies resembles that of a sect in the following characteristics: (i) the alternative lifestyle, (ii) the defined organisational structure, (iii) regular meetings (iv) common practices, beliefs and supposedly even shared property, (v) a charismatic authority, (vi) the exclusion of outsiders, and (vii) stability through time (1982, 3). Some of these features, such as the structural organisation, group meetings and authoritative leader, mirror those of Zhmud's *ἐταιρεία*. Moreover, Zhmud also notices how the Pythagoreans differed from other organisations because they were not restricted to a specific time and location. However, he rejects the claim that the Pythagoreans shared property and kept others in the dark about their doctrines (2012, 148-168). Nevertheless, if we were to understand (iv) as generally referring to the Pythagorean common interests, thought and customs, and (vi) as simply implying restrictions on access to the group, both Burkert and Zhmud would agree in ascribing commonality and exclusivity to the Pythagoreans. Overall, although these two accounts seem more consistent than their authors would allow, there are two fundamental differences. First, by describing the Pythagorean society as a sect Burkert emphasises its religious aspects,⁵ whereas Zhmud focuses on the political. Second, whilst Burkert defines the Pythagorean lifestyle as 'alternative', Zhmud pictures these circles as fully integrated in their city of origin (167-168). As a result, the nature of the Pythagorean society is still debated. If Aristoxenus did refer to these groups as *ἐταιρεία*, then, what did he mean? What kind of community did he have in mind?

In order to analyse the Pythagorean *ἐταιρεία*, I shall refer to George Calhoun's *Athenian Clubs in Politics and Litigation* and Edwin Minar's *Early Pythagorean Politics*. I shall examine whether the features Calhoun identifies as proper to ancient Greek *ἐταιρεία* also characterise the Pythagorean communities,⁶ and compare my considerations to Minar's. The purpose is to investigate whether the Pythagorean *ἐταιρεία* are unique in any way, and if so whether their distinctive features constitute the reason for the inclusion of women.

⁵ Burkert's article is written in response to scholars such as Bryan Wilson (*Religious Sects and Sects and Society*), working on the sociology of religion (1982, 2-3). Therefore, he is explicitly limiting his analysis to the religious elements of Pythagoreanism.

⁶ Calhoun exclusively looks at Athenian political clubs. Although Athens was not among those cities that are likely to have influenced the Pythagorean society, most of the information concerning ancient Greek *ἐταιρεία* available to us come from Athenian authors. Moreover, the scholarship on non-Athenian *ἐταιρεία* (e.g. Cook 1988) suggests that, to some extent, the distinguishing features Calhoun attributes to the Athenian case can be generalised to other Greek *πόλεις*.

The Greek term *ἐταιρεία* denotes a club, association, comradeship or brotherhood, and is thus primarily, but not exclusively, attributed a political meaning. The *ἐταῖροι* are adherents to a political movement, partisans, associates or clubmen (Hom. *Il.* 1.179), as well as non-political companions, friends, followers and pupils (Pl. *Phd.* 89d-e). *Ἐταῖρος*, both in its political and non-political meaning, is synonymous with *φίλος*: for example, in Thuc. 1.126.5 Cylon's attempt to seize power over Athens is supported by his 'friends', whereas in Hdt. 5.71 Cylon's following is called *ἐταιρεία*.

In the pseudo-Platonic *Definitions*, the *ἐταιρεία* is described as 'the friendship arising from people of the same age keeping company with each other' (413c). The distinctive traits of a *ἐταιρεία* are thus twofold: (i) the close relationship between its members and (ii) age equality. The strength of such bond is also attested in Thuc. 3.82.5-6, according to which blood is a weaker tie than party. Age equality is also mentioned in Hdt. 5.71, in which Cylon's associates are described as 'men of like age.' Calhoun adds five further features. (iii) Although these clubs were not restricted to one political party, they were traditionally associated with oligarchic tendencies and anti-democratic movements.⁷ (iv) Besides politics, the *ἐταιρεῖαι* also had social relevance: the members met at private gatherings, banquets and drinking parties during which they discussed public affairs with their fellow *ἐταῖροι*.⁸ Given the intimacy of such meetings, (v) the clubs were small and restricted,⁹ and (vi) the access to the group was regulated by means of initiation rituals and oaths expressing the duties the members had towards each other.¹⁰ (vii) The meetings were secret and concealed from the public, and those who were not granted entry to these restricted circles were kept in the dark about the group's deliberations and actions.¹¹ Lastly, (viii) the members of a *ἐταιρεία* gathered around the charismatic personality of a leader, from whom they occasionally even took the name: for example, Xenophon describes Theramenes'

⁷ According to Calhoun, in the late-sixth century BCE the Athenian aristocracy split into two rough factions: the extreme oligarchs, strongly hostile to the rising democracy and championing the aristocrat Isagoras, and those under the lead of the popular Cleisthenes (Arist. *Ath. Pol.* 20.1-5). Consequently, even those *ἐταιρεῖαι* supporting popular leaders such as Cleisthenes, Themistocles and Pericles had aristocratic traits, for they retained the organisation into clubs proper to the old Athenian oligarchy. For further references, see Calhoun 1913, 17-24.

⁸ E.g. Plato *Theaet.* 173d. On the common meals of Spartan and Carthaginian comradeships, see Arist. *Pol.* 1272b34.

⁹ In Thuc. 8.54.4, Pisander is said to be accompanied by ten companions.

¹⁰ Calhoun cites the oligarchic oath from Arist. *Pol.* 1310a9, which however does not explicitly refer to *ἐταιρεῖαι*, and the dining rituals of the *ἐταιρεία* of the Triballi from Dem. 54.39.

¹¹ E.g. Plato *Rep.* 365d. According to Calhoun, secrecy is due to the fact that these associations often aim to overthrow the existing government (1913, 37).

following as ‘those around Theramenes’ (Hell 1.7.8), and Plutarch names Pisistratus’ supporters Peisistratidae (*Per.* 16.1). Overall, the *ἐταιρεία* is a socio-political organisation whose members share interests and have public influence. Let us now examine whether, and if so to what extent, this portrait applies to the Pythagorean *ἐταιρεία*.

As Porphyry writes, on the evidence of Aristoxenus’ Fr. 16 (*VP* 9) and Dicaearchus’ Fr. 33 (*VP* 18), the first Pythagorean community was founded in Croton around 530 BCE. The members of this *ἐταιρεία* were also tied by strong family-like bonds (Aristoxenus’ Fr. 31). Noteworthy is the case of the friends Damon and Phintias. According to Iamblichus, these two Pythagoreans were living together and sharing their belongings as a perfect example of Pythagorean commonality (see below). After being accused of plotting against the tyrant Dionysius the Elder and sentenced to death, Phintias, the household manager, asked for one more day of freedom in order to settle his friend’s affairs, leaving Damon hostage as a guarantee of his return. To Dionysius’ astonishment, he then came back to die in his friend’s place. The tyrant thus released Phintias in the hope of becoming their friend himself, but the prisoners refused (*VP* 233-236). The anecdote is also recorded by Porphyry, who adds that the Pythagoreans were known for avoiding friendship with non-Pythagoreans.¹²

According to Calhoun, the duties the Athenian *ἐταῖροι* had towards each other primarily pertain to political and judicial activities and involve assisting friends during trials, elections and campaigns (Thuc. 8.54.4). In contrast, Pythagorean friendship seems to have gone beyond this. In Iamb. *VP* 229-230, Pythagoras encourages friendship of all with all, *πάντων πρὸς ἅπαντας*, between mortals and gods through pious worship, among human beings, among citizens through the observance of the law, between husbands and wives, and within the family. Friendship with one’s fellow citizens, therefore, is only one of several manifestations of Pythagorean friendship.¹³ The anecdotes about the Pythagorean Damon pledging himself to die in his friend Phintias’ place, and Lysis spending a whole day outside the temple faithfully waiting for his friend Euryphamus to abide by their agreement (Iamb. *VP* 185) bring us back to the legal sphere. Nevertheless, in *VP* 235 Iamblichus writes that these men ‘were living together

¹² Porphyry’s source is Nicomachus. This would not be the first time Dionysius tried to enter the Pythagorean circles: as mentioned in the previous chapter, he is said to have tortured Timycha and her husband Myllias to discover the Pythagorean secret doctrines (Iamb. *VP* 189-194).

¹³ The chapter of Iamblichus’ *Vita Pythagorica* concerning friendship is divided into two sections. The former (229-232) is repeated *verbatim* from *VP* 69-70 (‘Friendship of all with all...’) and 101-102 (‘They advised to remove competition and contentiousness from true friendship...’), where it is attributed to Aristoxenus. The latter (233-240) reports examples of Pythagorean friends and is quoted from Aristoxenus’ Fr. 31.

and had all things in common (ἐκονώνουν ἅπαντων)'. What makes Damon and Phintias friends is not, or not only, the mutual assistance in court and loyalty to one another, but fundamentally their leading side by side a common βίος, way-of-life.

This leads us to Timaeus' well-known account of Pythagorean friendship: κοινὰ τὰ φίλων, common are the things of friends.

Εἴπε τε πρῶτος, ὥς φησι Τίμαιος, κοινὰ τὰ φίλων εἶναι καὶ φιλίαν
ισότητα. Καὶ αὐτοῦ οἱ μαθηταὶ κατετίθεντο τὰς οὐσίας εἰς ἓν ποιούμενοι.
According to Timaeus, he was the first to say that friends have things in
common and that friendship is equality. And his disciples laid down their
belongings combining them into one.

(*FGrHist* 566 Fr. 13b, in D.L. 8.10)¹⁴

There are two problems with the claim that Pythagorean friends held everything in common. First, only Timaeus and thus the *Lives* connect this motto with Pythagoreanism. Other authors, such as Euripides, Plato and Aristotle, cite it as an un-authored proverb.¹⁵ Second, it does not necessarily imply that the Pythagoreans practised common ownership and shared belongings. Rather, it may suggest that they had shared interests, beliefs and customs. Even if we were to read the maxim as referring to property, it may simply mean, as Zhmud suggests (2012, 149-150), that the Pythagoreans had private possessions, but were eager to share what they owned with their fellow community members, which is what Pythagoras encouraged the women of Croton to do (Iamb. *VP* 55 – cf. Ch. 3.IV). The evidence points at both options. On the one hand, Iamblichus writes that those who were initiated into the Pythagorean communities were required to put property in common, which would have then been returned, had they failed the entrance test (*VP* 72-73). However, he later adds that only the highest-ranked disciples would share their belongings, thus suggesting that there was a group of pupils admitted to the circle, but allowed to keep their property (*VP* 80-81). On the other hand, Iamblichus also writes about poor Pythagoreans who were allowed to publicise the Pythagorean doctrines in order to make profit (*VP* 89), and about Cleinias and Thestor, who raised money to help their friends Proros and Thymaridas (*VP* 239). This again suggests that they had property, but were willing to share

¹⁴ The Greek text from Diogenes' *Life of Pythagoras* is cited from Long 1964. Timaeus' fragment is also quoted in Porph. *VP* 33, Iamb. *VP* 92, 162.

¹⁵ See Eur. *Or.* 735, *Phoen.* 243, Pl. *Lys.* 207c, *Phdr* 279c, *Rep.* 424a, 449c, *Laws* 739c, Arist. *EN* 1159b31, 1168b7, *EE* 1237b33, 1238a16, *Pol.* 1263a30. Diogenes himself attributes this saying to the Pythagoreans (8.10, 10.11), as well as Bion (4.53) and the Cynics (6.37, 72). However, Cornelli argues that the references in Plato are implicitly connected to Pythagoreanism and the Pythagorean notion of friendship (2013, 65-67).

it. Furthermore, it is worth pointing out that both Timaeus and Iamblichus had their own reasons for attributing common ownership to the Pythagoreans: the former strongly reproaches Crotonian luxury (Frs. 9, 44, 50), whereas the latter portrays Pythagoras as Plato's philosophical predecessor and might thus read Pythagorean politics in the light of Platonic communism.¹⁶ Nonetheless, even if Timaeus were simply reporting a proverbial saying, the fact that he connects it with the Pythagoreans suggests that they did practise some kind of commonality. And even if they did not hold property in common, they might have shared a way of life – which would then function as the intimate bond of the *ἐταιρεία*.

Let us move on to age equality. There is no evidence that the Pythagorean *ἐταιρεῖαι* consisted of equally aged members. Nevertheless, the followers seem to have been organised into age subgroups. According to Diogenes, Pythagoras divided the human life into four ages: 'twenty years a boy, twenty years a youth, twenty years a young man and twenty years an old man' (D.L. 8.10). Moreover, once in Croton, he is said to have separated boys, youths and elders, and delivered different lectures to each group (Iamb. *VP* 37-53). As for the Pythagorean women, according to Timaeus, Pythagoras divided his female disciples into three groups – namely, girls, brides and mothers (Fr. 131, quoted in D.L. 8.11).¹⁷ Such divisions indicate that, although not all Pythagoreans were the same age, the community was still sensitive to age differences and organised into age groups – some kind of *ἐταιρεῖαι* within the *ἐταιρεία*. Interestingly, among Pythagoras' teachings on friendship, there is a precept urging the disciples to interact with people of the same age (*VP* 69).

This brings us to the question of the size and internal organisation of the Pythagorean *ἐταιρεῖαι* (Minar 1942, 26-35). Whilst Calhoun describes the *ἐταιρεία* as a restricted club, Pythagoras' followers were numerous. The earliest evidence for this is Fr. 43 by Aristoxenus, quoted in D.L. 8.15, according to which six hundred pupils attended Philolaus' lectures. As for Pythagoras' own disciples, the number ranges from three hundred (D.L. 8.3) to two thousand (Nicomachus in Porph. *VP* 20).¹⁸ Thus, at least with respect to their large size, Pythagorean societies differed

¹⁶ E.g. Iamb. *VP* 131, 167, according to which Plato appropriated Pythagoras' political thought. See Garnsey 2005, 78, Philip 1966, 140-141, and Minar 1944, 41 (cf. Ch. 5).

¹⁷ A similar division is attested in the speech to the Crotonian women, reported by Iamblichus presumably on the evidence of Timaeus (*VP* 56 – cf. Ch. 3.VI). However, here the groups are four and include grandmothers. On the Pythagorean life divisions, see also Ch. 3.V. On these groupings resembling a club-like society, see Burkert 1972, 115, and Morrison 1956, 145-146.

¹⁸ According to Iamblichus *VP* 29-30, two thousand was the number of prospective disciples attending Pythagoras public lectures in Croton, whereas the actual followers added up to six hundred (cf. Ch. 3.I).

from Athenian *ἐταιρεῖαι*. However, Calhoun also alludes to the possibilities of there being larger political associations including several smaller clubs. For example, in Plu. *Cim.* 17 Cimon is said to have a hundred comrades, whom Calhoun takes to be organised into various subgroups (1913, 29-30, 34-35). The evidence of how such internal groupings of associates were organised is scanty. Nevertheless, it suggests that, despite their initial size, some ancient Greek *ἐταιρεῖαι* might have been broken down smaller-sized circles.

The same holds true for the Pythagoreans. Besides age, social roles, levels of indoctrination and occupations may have constituted criteria for further groupings. For example, in *VP* 80-82, Iamblichus refers to two ways of dividing higher and lower degrees of wisdom. First, that between Pythagoreans, the genuine followers (*γνήσιοι*), and Pythagorists, the admirers, or wannabe followers (*ζηλωτοί*). Second, that between *μαθηματικοί* and *ἀκουσματικοί*, learners and hearers.¹⁹ Of these, the former engage with Pythagoras' *μαθήματα*, mathematical sciences or, more generally, central doctrines. In contrast, the latter abide by Pythagoras' precepts (*ἀκούσματα* – cf. Ch. 3.I) without demonstrating or explaining them (*ἀναπόδεικτα καὶ ἄνευ λόγου*). Moreover, the former consider themselves proper disciples of Pythagoras and accuse the latter of following Hippasus of Metapontum.²⁰ At the end of the chapter, Iamblichus also distinguishes between esoteric and exoteric, i.e. those disciples who were *εἴσω*, inside the restricted circle, and those who were *ἔξω*, out (*VP* 89). Since Pythagoras is reputed to have delivered his teachings from behind a curtain, the esoteric were allowed to see him, whereas the exoteric could only hear

¹⁹ See also Porph. *VP* 37, Iamb. *VP* 29-30, in which the *mathematici* are called φιλοσοφοῦντες, pursuers of wisdom.

²⁰ This passage is paralleled in Iamb. *Comm. Math.* 76.19-78.8, in which however the *acousmatici* are described as the true disciples and the *mathematici* as Hippasus' followers. Regardless of whether one group was more genuine, and if so which, connecting the *mathematici* to Hippasus seems likely as he devoted himself to the study of mathematics (Iamb. *VP* 88). According to Iamblichus, after divulging his doctrines, Hippasus was exiled from the Pythagorean community (*VP* 246), which is consistent with picturing him as the leader of non-genuine Pythagoreans. In the light of Iamblichus' *De Communi Mathematica Scientia*, Horky argues that only the *acousmatici* were Pythagoras' true followers, whereas the *mathematici* were the ones who transgressed the master's vow of silence by publicising and explaining his maxims. Moreover, he connects the *acousmatici* to aristocratic and elitist tendencies and the *mathematici* to democracy because of their attempt to make Pythagoreanism public (2013, 3-35, 85-124 – on the Pythagorean political leanings, see below).

him.²¹ Finally, other divisions include the πολιτικοί, in charge of leading the community,²² the οἰκονομικοί, responsible for household management, and the νομοθετικοί, or legislators (VP 89, 108). This could either refer to functions within the community – i.e. those disciples in charge of the day-to-day running of the Pythagorean society – or outside – i.e. those disciples who were both members of a Pythagorean circle and leaders of the city hosting this circle. For instance, in VP 129 Iamblichus notices how some Pythagoreans were excellent politicians, which suggests that some of Pythagoras' followers also held public offices outside the community – as his speech to the Crotonian magistrates seem to imply (VP 45-50). However, when listing the various groups of disciples in VP 72-74, he describes the πολιτικοί, οἰκονομικοί and νομοθετικοί as those who were appointed as guardians and managers of the other members' belongings. The Pythagorean πολιτικοί are not Crotonian politicians, but managers of the community. Therefore, what Iamblichus describes are internal task divisions.

We are left with a threefold division: by age, grade of membership and occupation. The existence of these groupings is a point of controversy. Burkert makes it a matter of historical development: the first-generation Pythagoreans primarily abided by the ἀκούσματα, whereas the late-fifth-early-fourth-century Pythagoreans, such as Archytas, diversified their interests and specifically dedicated themselves to mathematics (1972, 192-208).²³ Zhmud, on the other hand, rejects these internal divisions as a later fabrication (2012, 169-192). However, although the *acousmatici-mathematici* divide is only mentioned by later sources, Timaeus and Aristoxenus report on the existence of other kinds of internal groupings, such as the above-mentioned age divisions. Furthermore, as we shall see below, Timaeus describes the long examination period

²¹ Whether or not these groups coincide is debatable. One option is to take Pythagorists, *acousmatici* and exoteric as the first stage of indoctrination, i.e. the unquestioned abiding by Pythagoras' life regulations, and Pythagoreans, esoteric and *mathematici* as the higher-level disciples who investigate the deeper meaning of the maxims and enquire about their meaning in the master's presence. For example, according to D.L. 8.10 and Iamb. VP 72, the disciples were allowed to see Pythagoras behind the curtain only after passing the entrance test and being initiated into the community (see below). This suggests that, as opposed to the disciples ἐντὸς σιδόνης, the esoteric, those ἐκτὸς σιδόνης, the exoteric, were not proper disciples, but only prospective ones. Moreover, since the latter group exclusively hears Pythagoras without seeing him, it may overlap with the *acousmatici*, or hearers. Alternatively, we may think that the Pythagorists are those who aspire to enter the community, and that once admitted – i.e. after becoming Pythagoreans – they are divided into hearers and learners. On the internal divisions of the Pythagorean communities and the different levels of indoctrination, see Ch. 3.I.

²² Pace VP 150, in which the πολιτικοί are associated with the *acousmatici* and contrasted with the θεωρητικοί φιλόσοφοι, which may coincide with the *mathematici* (VP 29-30).

²³ See also Burnet 1948, 96-124, Cornelli 2013, 77-83, according to whom the distinction of *acousmatici* and *mathematici* was the result of a schism between Pythagoras' disciples after his death.

Pythagoras' disciples had to undergo to enter the community. This suggests that Pythagorean societies may have been divided into a hierarchical ordering of disciples at various levels of indoctrination. Overall, returning to the question of the size and internal organisation of the *ἐταιρεῖαι*, I would argue that, despite the large following of disciples, Pythagorean societies are likely to have been divided into smaller circles, which were as restricted as a *ἐταιρεία*.

The Pythagorean political leanings are also debated. As was the case for most Athenian *ἐταιρεῖαι*, Pythagoras himself may have had aristocratic sympathies. For example, he left Samos during the tyranny of Polycrates and reached the oligarchic Croton, where he started to collaborate with the local council of elders.²⁴ Moreover, Aristoxenus (Fr. 18) reports on the democratic uprising against the Pythagoreans in Croton.²⁵ According to Oldfather (1938, 538-539), the following Pythagorean claim also points to anti-democratic leanings: 'It is unreasonable to pay attention to any of everybody's opinion, and especially that of the many, for correct understanding and judgement belong to few' (Aristoxenus in Iamb. *VP* 200). By contrast, Burnet describes the Pythagoreans as philo-democratic for two reasons (1948, 89-91). First, in Porph. *VP* 9, Pythagoras' circle is said to discuss matters of common interest, *περὶ τῶν κοινῶν*. Second, Aristoxenus describes Pythagoras' political opponent Cylon as an aristocratic who was 'first among the citizens in family, reputation and wealth' (Fr. 18, quoted in Iamb. *VP* 248). A possible reply to Burnet is that aristocrats may also discuss matters of common interest. Yet, as opposed to the democrats, they consider political affairs to be a prerogative of a restricted privileged class. As for Cylon, the reason for his hostility is that he was a member of the old Crotonian aristocracy whose power had been usurped by the Pythagorean elite (Zhud 2012, 102). Another debated passage is the following:

Εἴτ' ἐπανῆλθεν εἰς Σάμον, καὶ εὐρὼν τὴν πατρίδα τυραννουμένην ὑπὸ
Πολυκράτους, ἀπῆρεν εἰς Κρότωνα τῆς Ἰταλίας· κάκεῖ νόμους θεῖς τοῖς
Ἰταλιώταις ἐδοξάσθη σὺν τοῖς μαθηταῖς, οἱ πρὸς τοὺς τριακοσίους
ὄντες ὀκονόμουν ἄριστα τὰ πολιτικά, ὥστε σχεδὸν ἀριστοκρατίαν
εἶναι τὴν πολιτείαν.

²⁴ See Aristoxenus Fr. 16 and Dicaearchus Fr. 33, quoted in Porph. *VP* 9 and 18 respectively.

²⁵ According to Rowett, there is no reason to classify these movements as either aristocratic or democratic (2014, 127-130). Zhud, on the other hand, takes them to be a sign of the rising Crotonian democracy (2012, 107). The reason for this is that, after the Cylonian affair Croton was briefly ruled by the popular tyrant Clinias (Minar 1942, 71-73). Although this did not immediately put an end to the Pythagorean influence, it shows that democracy had started gaining power over Magna Graecia. On the Pythagorean aristocratic leanings, see also von Fritz 1940, 94-102.

Then, he (Pythagoras) went back to Samos and, having found his fatherland under the tyranny of Polycrates, left for Croton in Italy. There, he laid down laws for the Italians and was held in great estimation together with his disciples, who were about three hundred and managed political affairs in such an excellent way that the constitution was almost an aristocracy.

(D.L. 8.3)

Diogenes describes the Crotonian constitution as aristocratic. There are three possible readings. First, this claim may simply imply that the Pythagoreans were philo-aristocratic. Second, since Croton is described as *σχεδόν*, roughly speaking, aristocratic, Diogenes may be suggesting that the power was not in fact held by an elite class. Finally, and most likely, Diogenes' description of Croton as an aristocracy may simply mean that in virtue of the Pythagorean influence on the Crotonian political affairs the city was ruled by 'the best'.

A third way to think about Pythagorean politics has recently been suggested by Rowett (2014, 119-120). According to Rowett, Pythagoreanism goes beyond party divisions and cannot be limited to aristocratism or democratism. Specifically, it should not be connected with aristocratic ideals in the light of the numerous Pythagorean maxims against private property (e.g. D.L. 8.23). I agree with Rowett in arguing that the revolution enacted by the Pythagoreans was primarily cultural, rather than political. Nevertheless, I consider Pythagoras' attempt to establish a restricted intellectual circle closer to an aristocratic and elitist programme. The criterion for access would be neither property nor birth, but rather the acceptance of a specific set of beliefs and a distinctive way of life. Yet such a way of life would still have distinguished the Pythagorean elite from the non-Pythagorean masses and would have marked the followers as somewhat privileged and higher-ranked than the common people.²⁶ Overall, regardless of their political leanings, the circle's exclusivity render the Pythagoreans quasi-aristocratic (*σχεδόν ἀριστοκρατία*).

This leads us to another feature of Greek *ἐταιρεία*: the associates' meetings. In Fr. 18, Aristoxenus writes at the time of Cylon's revolt the Pythagoreans 'were sitting in council (*συνεδρευόντων*) in Milo's house in Croton deliberating about public affairs' (Iamb. *VP* 249).²⁷ This suggests that the Pythagoreans were used to gathering during private and intimate reunions. Iamblichus also mentions common meals (*VP* 98). Although there is no further evidence for

²⁶ For example, in *Rep.* 600a-b Plato claims that in virtue of their way of life the Pythagoreans distinguished themselves from others (cf. Ch. 2.III).

²⁷ On the connection between *ἐταιρεία* and *συνέδριον*, the meeting place, see Calhoun 1913, 6.

this practice, the idea of Pythagoreans dining together fits in with the life of commonality described by Timaeus (see Fr. 13b above).

This in turn brings us to the sixth and seventh distinctive traits of a *ἐταιρεία*: initiation and secrecy. According to D.L. 8.10, on the evidence of Timaeus, and Iamb. *VP* 69-74, Pythagoras' prospective pupils underwent long and demanding examinations before being admitted into the circle. First, they were observed in their daily life to make sure that they had the proper character traits to access the circle. Second, they were supervised for three years to test their attitude for learning. Third, they were allegedly asked to spend five years in silence, for the mastery of the tongue was the ultimate and most difficult form of self-control to achieve (see also Iamb. *VP* 94). Lastly, there is limited evidence attesting the existence of an oath the Pythagoreans had to swear upon entering the society (Iamb. *VP* 144, 150, 162).

The Pythagorean restraint in speech is also mentioned by Isocrates, according to whom 'those who profess to be Pythagoras' disciples are more admired when silent' (*Bus.* 29).²⁸ The reason behind the need for silence is that the Pythagoreans were required to keep some of their doctrines secret from the public. As previously mentioned, Aristoxenus writes that Pythagoras left no written works and prevented his followers from doing so (Fr. 43).²⁹ The penalty for those who had broken such a vow was the expulsion from the community. According to Iamblichus, the disciples would also raise a tomb in honour of the expelled members as if they had died.³⁰ Overall, although there is too little evidence to determine why secrecy was required of Athenian *ἐταῖροι* and how this rule was enacted, I would argue that the Pythagorean *ἐταιρεῖται* managed to maintain the exclusivity characterising their Athenian counterparts, arguably even in a stricter way.³¹

Finally, as for the leader, these communities revolved around the legendary figure of their founder, Pythagoras. Calhoun states that political organisations were often named after their

²⁸ See also Iamb. *VP* 163: 'The Pythagoreans were prone to silence and ready to listen, and the one who was able to listen was praised by them.'

²⁹ According to Burkert, what the Pythagoreans kept secret were the religious teachings (1972, 178). By contrast, since Zhmud questions the association of the Pythagorean community with a religious sect, he also rejects the evidence for Pythagorean silence and secrecy, and argues that Pythagoras simply taught his disciples to be restrained in speech (2012, 150-165). The Pythagorean vow of silence, however, would offer a likely explanation for the paucity of information available on early Pythagorean thought.

³⁰ See Iamb. *VP* 72, 75, 246 with reference to Hippasus. On Empedocles' expulsion from the Pythagorean society, see D.L. 8.54, on the evidence of Timaeus.

³¹ For examples of Athenian *ἐταιρεῖται* that failed to conceal their activities from the outsiders, see Calhoun 1913, 37-38.

leader. This was also the case for Pythagoras' followers. For example, Dicaearchus writes that Pythagoras' disciples 'were called Pythagoreans' (Fr. 34). The same applies to his female pupils, who were called γυναῖκες Πυθαγορικάι, Pythagorean women (D.L. 8.41). Overall, according to Calhoun, the *ἐταιρεία* is a socio-political organisation whose members share interests and have public influence. This also applies to Pythagorean societies. The associates were (i) united by an intimate bond in virtue of their common beliefs and lifestyle, (ii) concerned with age differences, and (iii) elitist. (iv) They met during private gatherings, (v) were organised into small subgroups and (vi) ritually initiated into the brotherhood through an eight-year apprenticeship. Finally, (vii) they kept their doctrines secret and (viii) acted under the authority of the community's founder.

Thus far, my description parallels Minar's. Yet I distance my account from his as follows: although Minar acknowledges that politics was only one of the areas in which the Pythagoreans were involved (1942, 22, 28), his study of Pythagorean societies mostly centres on this aspect, leaving the others aside. I argue that what makes the Pythagorean communities such unique organisations is that they were not exclusively political. The analysis of the Pythagorean form of society has shown that although the Pythagoreans influenced Italian politics, they never ruled over Croton.³² Although the close relationship between Pythagoras' followers may remind us of the bond between political associates, Pythagorean friendship went beyond politics. Although the Pythagoreans might have had aristocratic sympathies, the community was not limited to a political party. Moreover, even if the Pythagoreans had been divided into restricted circles, the πολιτικοί would have been only one of their several rankings. Lastly, and most importantly for the purpose of this work, whilst *ἐταιρεῖαι* traditionally were men-only clubs, the Pythagorean circles included women.³³ This suggests that these *ἐταιρεῖαι* were not, or better *not only*, political. Rather, as argued below, they influenced politics as well as ethics, religion, education and even domesticity (cf. Ch. 2.III). Consequently, in the particular case of the Pythagoreans, the Greek term *ἐταιρεία* does not indicate a party of people sharing a political agenda and political leanings, but rather, more generally, a fellowship of people sharing a distinctive lifestyle and set of beliefs.

³² See Zhmud 2012, 106. One of the few cases in which Pythagoras may have intervened in Crotonian politics is when he refused to return the refugees after the war against Sybaris (Iamb. *VP* 133, 177).

³³ Although fictitious and satirical, two examples of female-only *ἐταιρεῖαι* come from Aristophanes' *Lysistrata* and *Thesmophoriazusae*. These groups share most of the characteristics of Athenian political clubs, such as commonality (*Eccl.* 590-592, 1167-1182), initiation rituals (*Lys.* 191-239), secrecy (*Eccl.* 35-109) and authoritative leadership (*Lys.* 137-139, *Eccl.* 246).

Minar notices that in the majority of sources on Pythagoreanism the word ἑταῖρος is used in the political sense of ‘associate’,³⁴ and that even those cases in which the Pythagoreans are referred to as φίλοι are to be interpreted as the application of a political category to Pythagoras’ followers (1942, 19-23). However, given the above-mentioned importance of friendship among the Pythagoreans, restricting this notion to a political sense and capturing it in a political image seems impoverishing. Ultimately, the anecdote about Pythagoras’ being the discoverer and lawmaker of friendship (Iamb. VP 70, 230) shows how fundamental this notion must have been to his followers.³⁵ More likely, then, the word ἑταῖρος is to be attributed the wider meaning of ‘friend’. In the case of the Pythagoreans, we should not narrow φιλία down to ἑταιρεία, but rather broaden ἑταιρεία into φιλία.

We may now return to our initial question: to what extent can we call the Pythagoreans a ἑταιρεία? Since Pythagorean societies have similar structural characteristics to those Calhoun attributes to Athenian clubs, I agree with Zhmud in describing them as ἑταιρεῖαι. Nevertheless, in response to Zhmud, and in the light of the above-analysed differences between these two forms of society, I distinguish between two kinds of ἑταιρεῖαι: a ἑταιρεία *stricto sensu*, which is exclusively political, and a ἑταιρεία *lato sensu*, whose agenda may well include, but nonetheless goes beyond politics. Athenian clubs belong to the former category, Pythagorean communities to the latter.

This enables us to explain another striking difference between Athenian and Pythagorean ἑταιρεῖαι: the inclusion of women. As shown in the next chapter, the Pythagorean communities did not only affect the adherents’ public activities, but also their private lives. Therefore, their scope was even extended to domesticity, which was traditionally taken to be the realm of women. Family ties, marriage, childcare and household management were included in this all-encompassing βίος. Hence, women were included in the society. From the available evidence of Pythagoras’ teachings to his female disciples, we learn that women were primarily – although not exclusively – instructed on wedding rituals, private cults and child raising. For instance, in the speeches to the women of Croton we read about the wickedness of adultery, the inviolability of the husband-wife relationship, sexual regulations, women’s piety, when and with whom to procreate and even how to dress (cf. Ch. 3). Consequently, women did not enter the ἑταιρεία because the latter was a political club (*stricto sensu*) and they had public offices, but rather

³⁴ E.g. Aristoxenus Fr. 18, Porph. VP 55-57, Iamb. VP 254.

³⁵ Xenophanes’ derisory anecdote about Pythagoras refusing to strike a friend reincarnated into a dog also emphasises the Pythagorean outright care for friendship (Fr. 7, quoted in D.L. 8.36 – see Ch. 4.II).

because the latter regulated all aspects of the members' lives (*lato sensu*) – from the public to the private sphere.

II. Greek θιάσοι and Pythagorean sects

As noted above, Burkert gives another description of the Pythagorean form of society, by focusing on its religious elements and characterising it as a sect. Similarly, Guthrie pictures the Pythagorean communities as religious societies for Apollo and the Muses (1987, 30). I shall then examine ancient Greek religious associations in order to determine, first, in what respects the agenda and organisational structure of the Pythagorean communities resemble those of other Greek sects and, second, whether this offers further reasons why women were included. For the purpose of this work, I shall primarily refer to Burkert's studies of religious organisations in *Ancient Mystery Cults* and *Greek Religion*.

Ancient Greek θιάσοι, religious guilds, had both cultic and social purposes. First, they developed around the cult of a deity or hero.³⁶ Second, they were associations of worshippers (θιασῶται) sharing not only a set of beliefs, but also a way of life. The comparison between Greek θιάσοι and Pythagorean societies should thus take into consideration both the religious elements and the social organisation.

I shall start with the religious agenda. There is no evidence of a distinctively Pythagorean cult.³⁷ Nonetheless, we know that the Pythagoreans worshipped traditional gods and goddesses. Among the deities to whom ancient Greek θιάσοι were dedicated was the divine mother-daughter pair Demeter and Kore, protectresses of female and agricultural fertility. The same goddesses seem to have been worshipped by the Pythagoreans. For example, according on D.L. 8.15, after Philolaus' death, his house was turned into a temple of Demeter. The same anecdote is reported by Timaeus with regard to Pythagoras' daughter Myia (Fr. 131, quoted in Porph. *VP* 4). Moreover, in the speech to the Crotonian women, Pythagoras names mothers after Demeter and unmarried girls after her daughter Kore (Iamb. *VP* 56 – cf. Ch. 3.VI). Pythagoreanism is also connected with the cult of Apollo and the Muses. For example, Pythagoras is reputed to have learnt his doctrines from the Delphic priestess Themistoclea (Aristoxenus Fr. 15, quoted

³⁶ On the θιάσος of Dionysus, see Dem. 18.260 and Eur. *Ba.* 75.

³⁷ See Zhmud 2012, 144-145 and 218, according to which the Pythagoreans neither introduced new deities, as the devotees of Astarte did by Hellenising the Sumerian goddess Ishtar (Budin 2004), nor reinterpreted traditional myths, as with Orphism.

in D.L. 8.8)³⁸ and his very name may be an allusion to the Pythian oracle (D.L. 8.21). Furthermore, from the *Lives* we learn that he urged the Crotoniates to build a temple to the Muses (Iamb. VP 45, 50) and later died in the *μουσεῖον* of Metapontum (Dicaearchus Frs. 35a-b, quoted in D.L. 8.40).

Among Pythagoras' teachings, numerous precepts refer to the religious sphere. For instance, the Pythagoreans were forbidden from washing their hands in lustral vessels,³⁹ sacrificing white cocks and entering temples barefoot, whereas they were encouraged to honour the gods by begetting children, pour libations from the cup's handle and worship gods and heroes in silence wearing white clothes.⁴⁰ Pythagoras was also believed to be an authority on the afterlife. The members of cults such as the Eleusinian and Bacchic rituals were promised a good life after death and thus underwent demanding purification rituals in order to be granted a better rebirth, whilst the non-initiates would be punished in the Underworld. For instance, the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* states the following: 'Happy among men living on earth is he who has seen these (rituals), but those who are not initiate into the sacred cults and do not partake in them, never has a share of suchlike things, once they are dead in nether darkness and gloom' (HH 2.480-482).⁴¹ Similarly, the Pythagoreans believed in the possibility of an after-death life for the soul. Yet, as argued in Chapter 4, the extent to which this doctrine dealt with *post mortem* judgments, punishments and rewards is debated.

Besides having a religious agenda, Pythagorean societies also share some of the organisational structures and social elements characterising a *θίασος*: secrecy, life regulations and initiation. Both Pythagoreans and *θιασῶται* tend to keep their doctrines secret from the outsiders. For instance, in the *Ecclesiastusae* the worshippers of Demeter are urged not to speak about their cultic activities (442-444). Similarly, upon entering the community the Pythagoreans were strictly required to make a vow of silence (cf. Ch. 2.I). The members of these groups also had similar obligations towards each other: for example, they followed well-regulated burial procedures in case of an associate's death.⁴² More generally, as Burkert notices, and as I shall argue in the next section, Pythagoreans and *θιασῶται* developed an alternative way of life in

³⁸ According to Huffman, the attribution of Pythagoras' doctrines to a priestess confers upon them a religious-like authority (2014, 288).

³⁹ See Hom. *Il.* 6.265-268.

⁴⁰ D.L. 8.33, Porph. VP 42, Iamb. VP 83-85. For a more detailed analysis on the religious elements of Pythagoreanism, see Gemelli Marciano 2014.

⁴¹ On the Eleusinian doctrine of the afterlife, see Rohde 1966, 217-235. On the Bacchic version of this belief, see Burkert 1985, 293-295.

⁴² On the Pythagorean funeral rituals, see Hdt. 2.81. On the *θίασοι*, see Tod 1906.

accordance with their doctrines and beliefs (1982, 3). We have seen that his was not the case for ancient Greek *ἐταίρειαι*, which were overall more conservative and integrated into the city-state.⁴³ Therefore, whilst secrecy equally characterises *ἐταίρειαι*, *θίασοι* and Pythagorean societies, the peculiar way of living distinctively links the Pythagoreans with ancient Greek religious groups.

The third feature sects and Pythagoreanism have in common is initiation. As with the *ἐταίρειαι*, the *θίασοι* were restricted groups and communities, the access to which was regulated through rigorous initiation rituals. The attested ceremonies involve taking purificatory baths, wearing white robes, sacrificing animals – most commonly, piglets⁴⁴ – and cakes, drinking barley extract and joining the fellow cult members in a communal feast.⁴⁵ According to Burkert, the introduction into the cult was conceived as an irreversible change from the former into the new life (1985, 301-304). The initiates would become an integral part of the sect together with their fellow cult members and in opposition to the outsiders. Moreover, the difficult *iter* they were required to undergo to access the cult generated solidarity and kinship among the initiates who would start treating each other as family members.⁴⁶ The same holds true for Pythagoreanism. As described in the previous section, the access to Pythagoras' comradeship followed an eight-year long examination, during which the prospective pupils were taught to keep silent on Pythagoras' teachings. That such a change of life was thought of as irreversible is suggested by the anecdotes about Pythagoreans erecting burial memorials for those members who had failed the entrance test (Iamb. *VP* 72). Finally, the feeling of kinship among the members admitted into the circle is exemplified by the life of commonality they were required to lead, acting in accordance with the same life regulations and to some extent even sharing personal belongings.

Between these entrance rituals there were also significant differences. First, although different cults had different regulations, initiation often involved sacrifices. Traditional offerings included piglets, genital-shaped cakes and barley juice. As argued in Chapter 3, the Pythagoreans also had strict rules about what, how and when to sacrifice. However, at least to some extent, they were forbidden from killing animals (cf. Chs. 3.V, 3.VI, 4.V).⁴⁷ Similarly, as Burkert argues, the Pythagoreans did not drink wine (D.L. 8.19), which played a key role in Bacchic cults (1985,

⁴³ See also Zhmud 2012, 141-168.

⁴⁴ E.g. Ar. *Peace* 374-375, *Frogs* 336.

⁴⁵ On the initiation ritual, see Bremmer 2014, 2-16, and Burkert 1985, 279.

⁴⁶ On the family-like bonds between *θιασῶται*, see also Burkert 1987, 44-45.

⁴⁷ According to Porph. *VP* 45, the Pythagoreans were specifically forbidden from eating pigs – *pace* Aristoxenus Fr. 29a, D.L. 8.20 and Porph. *VP* 36, in which piglets are among those animals the Pythagoreans could kill. On the other hand, barley is listed among the food Pythagoras allowed his disciples to eat (Porph. *VP* 23, 34-36)

301).⁴⁸ Second, whilst some cults celebrated male and female sexuality, as we shall see in the next chapter, Pythagoras often urged his disciples towards sexual restraint (e.g. D.L. 8.43). Lastly, and most importantly, whilst the admission into the θιάσοι was regulated with purification rituals, prospective Pythagoreans were selected based on their moral character, intellectual abilities and aptitude for learning (Iamb. *VP* 69-72).

It is worth noting that another similarity between Pythagorean societies and religious groups is the presence of female members. Ancient Greek religion did not exclude women. Rather, it was the only sphere granting them an outdoor life, public roles, autonomy and even authority. Mothers, wives and daughters took part in all aspects of Greek religion, such as civic cults, family rituals, mysteries and arguably sacrifices (cf. Ch. 3.VI), both as simple worshippers and as priestesses. As priestesses, they primarily served goddesses,⁴⁹ but also had important roles in the cults of male deities: for example, the temple of Apollo at Delphi was administered by a prophetess (Dillon 2016, Holderman 1985). As devotees, they participated in religious festivals, such as the Thesmophoria.⁵⁰ Moreover, purification rituals marked all stages of a woman's domestic life, such as marriage, sexual intercourse, childbirth and funerary rites.⁵¹ Lastly, besides publicly accepted rituals, women also took part in marginal mystery cults. Some of these mysteries, such as the female-only Bacchic cults, are described by Zeitlin as 'rituals of inversion' (1982, 130) during which women were freed from their male guardians, thus temporarily reversing their traditional role and secluded status.⁵²

⁴⁸ For other examples of wine-less libations, see Henrichs 1983.

⁴⁹ See Ar. *Lys.* 700 on the cult of Hecate, and Paus. 5.16.2-4 on the cult of Hera. For other examples of priestesses, see Plato *Laws* 909e-910a and Dem. 59.116.

⁵⁰ The Thesmophoria was a three-day women-only festival in honour of Demeter celebrating female fertility and agricultural prosperity (Hdt. 2.171, Ar. *Thesm.* 80, 90-92, 184-185, 298). Interestingly, in the *Thesmophoriazusaie*, Aristophanes stages a female ἐκκλησία, congregation (*Thesm.* 372-373), which shares some of the previously analysed characteristics of an exclusive club. For example, in *Thesm.* 293-294, slaves are said to be excluded from the festival, and in *Thesm.* 352-361, the worshippers are urged to keep their activities secret. On this festivity, see also Goff 2004, 125-138, Dillon 2002, 109-138, and Burkert 1985, 242-246.

⁵¹ For example, prenuptial offerings are described in Paus. 3.13.9, 10.38.12, birthing rituals in Ar. *Frogs* 1080, Eur. *Hipp.* 166-168, and funerals in Eur. *Alc.* 98-104, Dem. 43.63, Plu. *Sol.* 21.4-5. For domestic sacrifices, see Ar. *Lys.* 387-396.

⁵² According to Zeitlin, other private cults, such as the Eleusinian mysteries, were more in line with public affairs as they celebrated agricultural prosperity (1982, 138-153). On women in Greek religion, see also Dillon 2015 and 2002, Stehle 2012, Morgan 2007, and Goff 2004.

Women were also included in Orphic communities. An example of female participation in Orphism are the Gold Leaves, a collection of inscribed tablets found in the burial grounds of Orphic initiates and aimed at guiding the dead into the Underworld. Among these tablets, some mention female names, others are written in female first person, and others again were found in the graves of women.⁵³ Thus, Orphic communities are another case of gender inclusivity in ancient Greek religious sects.⁵⁴

The Pythagorean women were also in charge of cultic activities. Some of Pythagoras' religious teachings were specifically addressed to the women, who were taught how to sacrifice, what offerings to present to the gods, and when to enter the temples (cf. Chs. 3.III-VI). As we shall see, in the speech to the women of Croton Pythagoras describes the female gender as τῆς εὐσεβείας οικειότατον, the most fitted for piety, and then divides the female life into four stages associating each with a goddess: girls with Kore, brides with the Nymphs, mothers with Demeter and grandmothers with Maia (Iamb. VP 56 – cf. Ch. 3.VI). Unlike Bacchic cult, then, the Pythagoreans do not overturn the female social status. Nonetheless, the inclusion of women and attention to female piety would bring the Pythagorean society closer to a religious, rather than political, group.

Overall, Pythagorean communities were also, to some extent, religious in nature. Therefore, since religion was the sphere in which ancient Greek women were most fully integrated, the fact that θίασοι and Pythagorean societies had similar organisational structures, suggests a further explanation for the inclusion of women in Pythagoreanism. That being said, with the exception of Philo of Alexandria in *Every Good Man is Free* 2.1, our sources never characterise the Pythagoreans as a θίασος. Once again, then, despite bearing resemblances to ancient sects, Pythagorean societies had a degree of distinctiveness and thus should not be restricted to religious guilds.

Finally, in a bid to analyse the connections between the Pythagoreans, women and religion, another source to consider is Plato's *Meno* 81a-d. While debating with Meno how knowledge can be acquired, Socrates outlines the theory of recollection, according to which seeking and learning are ways to remember knowledge the soul has previously acquired (81d). This doctrine

⁵³ E.g. Graf and Johnston 2013, 7, 15, 33, 41-47. On the Gold Leaves, see Zuntz 1971, 277-393, Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2008, Edmonds 2011. On the debate of whether, these tablets are in fact Orphic, see Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2011.

⁵⁴ On the inclusion of women in Orphism, see Edmonds 2004, 65-69, Herrero 2008, 1616-1617. On the evidence of Pl. *Men.* 81a, which is discussed below, Jiménez argues that Orphic women were not only initiates, but also officiants (2008, 782).

is based on two religious premises: (i) the soul is immortal⁵⁵ and (ii) at death leaves its former body to reincarnate and be reborn into a new body without ever perishing (81b). This leads to two epistemological consequences: (i) by living many lives, the soul has come to know many things (81c), and (ii) since all nature is akin (συγγενής), by remembering each one of the things learnt, the soul is then able to discover everything else (81d). The authorities who, according to Socrates, attempted to give an account (λόγος) of these doctrines are certain ‘priests and priestess’ (ἱερεῖς τε καὶ ἱέρειαι), together with Pindar and other divinely inspired poets (81a-b).

Who these wise men and women are is a point of controversy. Plato gives only two hints: first, they are separate from the poets and, second, they are religious authorities. Specifically, ἱερεύς and ἱέρεια can refer to different kinds of religious authorities, such as priests and priestesses, sacrificers, diviners and prophetesses.⁵⁶ Thus far, scholars have suggested three possible identities: the Orphics, the Pythagoreans and Empedocles.⁵⁷ Therefore, should the passage refer to the Pythagoreans, it would provide further evidence of religious elements in Pythagoreanism. Moreover, it would suggest that not only were the Pythagorean women taught about domestic religious practices, but some of them also held roles of religious authority.

There are four features of Pythagorean thought leading us to identify the priests and priestesses from the *Meno* with Pythagorean men and women: transmigration, memory, immortality of souls and kinship.⁵⁸ As I argue in Chapter 4, both the doctrine of the afterlife and the link between reincarnation and memory are central to ancient Pythagoreanism. Moreover, Porphyry writes the following:

Ἄ μὲν οὖν ἔλεγε τοῖς συνοῦσιν οὐδὲ εἷς ἔχει φράσαι βεβαίως· καὶ γὰρ οὐχ ἡ τυχοῦσα ἦν παρ’ αὐτοῖς σιωπή. Μάλιστα μέντοι γνώριμα παρὰ πᾶσιν ἐγένετο πρῶτον μὲν ὡς ἀθάνατον εἶναι φησὶ τὴν ψυχὴν, εἴτα μεταβάλλουσιν εἰς ἄλλα γένη ζώων, πρὸς δὲ τούτοις ὅτι κατὰ

⁵⁵ In the *Meno*, the doctrine of the immortality of souls is treated as religious in that it is ascribed to priests and priestesses. However, in the *Phaedo*, it is discussed as part of a metaphysical investigation on life and death (72e-78a).

⁵⁶ E.g. the seer in Hom. *Il.* 1.62, the priest of Hephaestus in *Il.* 5.10, the priest of Zeus in *Il.* 16.604, that of Apollo in *Od.* 9.198, and the prophetess of Dodona in Pl. *Phdr.* 244a-b.

⁵⁷ See Ionescu 2007, 49-64, in which Socrates may be hinting at the doctrine of reincarnation developed by Empedocles, a Pythagorean sympathiser, for earlier in the dialogue he had already referred to his physical theories (76c-77b).

⁵⁸ Weiss argues that the *Meno* was written after Plato’s trip to Southern Italy and alleged encounter with the Pythagorean community of Tarentum (2001, 63-67).

περιόδους τινὰς τὰ γενόμενά ποτε πάλιν γίνεται, νέον δ' οὐδὲν ἀπλῶς ἔστι, καὶ ὅτι πάντα τὰ γινόμενα ἔμψυχα ὁμογενῇ δεῖ νομίζειν.

Thus, what he (Pythagoras) said to his companions one cannot say with certainty, for their silence was no ordinary silence. However, these teachings are especially well known to all. He said that, first, the soul is immortal and, second, it transmigrates into other kinds of animals. He also said that these happenings periodically happen over again, nothing is completely new, and one should believe that all living things that are born are of one kind.

(Dicaearchus Fr. 33 Wehrli, in Porph. *VP* 19)

Transmigration is one of the few doctrines the Pythagoreans did not – or could not – keep secret. According to Dicaearchus, they believed that souls did not perish, but rather periodically transmigrated into different bodies, thus making all ensouled beings akin. This reminds us of the doctrine Socrates learns from the unnamed priests and priestesses.

However, I would argue, in the *Meno* Plato does not seem to have Pythagoreanism in mind. Nowhere else in the dialogues does Plato identify the Pythagoreans as priests and priestesses. In *Gorgias* 493a5, he attributes the doctrine of the afterlife to certain wise Italians and Sicilians, arguably referring to the Pythagoreans.⁵⁹ By contrast, in the *Meno* he specifically calls these authorities priests rather than, more generally, sages. As argued in Chapter 5, the Pythagoreans Plato met in Sicily primarily influenced him as a political club and an intellectual circle, rather than a religious group. Thus, whilst he explicitly describes the Pythagoreans as mathematicians (530c-d) and as a community (600a-b), he never refers to them as religious authorities. Consequently, the priests and priestesses from the *Meno* may not be Pythagoreans after all.⁶⁰ As an alternative, modern scholarship tends to identify these authorities as Orphics.⁶¹

⁵⁹ Other passages in which Plato mentions these unnamed authorities on the afterlife are *Phd.* 70c3 and 108c7, *Ep.* VII 335a3, *Rep.* 364e5 and *Laws* 959b4-5. On the connections between the *Gorgias* and Pythagoreanism, see Dodds 1959, 338-339.

⁶⁰ According to Bluck, another issue with attributing Plato's theory of reincarnation from the *Meno* to Pythagoreanism is that transmigration was arguably less important for the fifth-century Pythagoreans with whom Plato was in contact (1961, 274-276). This, however, does not explain why in other dialogues, such as the *Phaedo*, Plato refers to metempsychosis in connection with Pythagoreanism (see Sedley 1994 – cf. 5.I).

⁶¹ See Guthrie 1950, 313, and 1952, 164-171. However, in his *History of Greek Philosophy*, Guthrie adds that, although the doctrine of metempsychosis originated with the Orphics, it was also endorsed by the Pythagoreans, who in turn influenced Plato (1962, 209). Other scholars connecting the *Meno* with Orphism are Sharples 1985, 144-145, Casadesús Bordoy 2008b, Edmonds 2013. Another possible solution is to argue that Plato is being deliberately vague

Overall, whilst there might have been female officiants among the Orphics, there is no evidence of Pythagorean priestesses. This leads us back to the argument that Pythagorean societies should not be restricted to cultic communities. As with politics, religion was only one of the various subjects on which Pythagoras lectured his disciples. Specifically, it was one of the areas of which women were primarily responsible. Therefore, the Pythagoreans, and in particular the Pythagorean women, seem to have had more in common with ancient Greek θίασοι than what Zhmud would allow (2012, 141-147 – cf. Ch. 2.I). Nevertheless, on the whole, Pythagorean communities went beyond an exclusively religious sect.

III. On the Pythagorean way of life

Although the Pythagorean societies resembled political and religious communities, their influence exceeded politics and religion. They were not-exclusively-political, or *lato sensu*, ἐταιρεῖαι as well as not-exclusively-religious sects. If so, what were the distinctive contours of this form of society? What kind of impact did they have on sixth-century Greece? Finally, why were women included?

On the evidence of Aristoxenus, Iamblichus explains the anti-Pythagorean uprising as follows:

Ἡγεμόνες δὲ ἐγένοντο τῆς διαφορᾶς οἱ ταῖς συγγενείαις καὶ ταῖς οἰκειότησιν ἐγγύτατα καθεστηκότες τῶν Πυθαγορείων. Αἴτιον δ' ἦν, ὅτι τὰ μὲν πολλὰ αὐτοὺς ἐλύπει τῶν πραττομένων, ὥσπερ καὶ τοὺς τυχόντας, ἐφ' ὅσον ἰδιασμὸν εἶχε παρὰ τοὺς ἄλλους

The leaders of the dissention were those who were closest to the Pythagoreans in kinship and intimacy. The reason was that much of what the Pythagoreans did offended them, as well as any chance person, insofar as it was peculiar compared to others.

(Iamb. VP 255, on the evidence of Apollonius)

According to Apollonius, Pythagoras' opponents were well acquainted with the Pythagorean customs and doctrines, but nonetheless considered their behaviour particular and uncommon. The same peculiarity is mentioned by Dicaearchus:

Πυθομένους δὲ τοὺς Λοκροὺς τῶν γερόντων τινὰς ἐπὶ τὰ τῆς χώρας ὅρια ἀποστεῖλαι. Τούτους δὲ πρὸς αὐτὸν ἀπαντήσαντας εἰπεῖν ἡμεῖς, ὧ

and that this ancient wisdom about the afterlife is therefore to be left unlabelled and more generally to be understood as Orphico-Pythagorean (Bluck 1961, 274-276, Scott 2006, 92-97). On the presence of both male and female Orphic officiants, see above.

Πυθαγόρα, σοφὸν μὲν ἄνδρα σε καὶ δεινὸν ἀκούομεν· ἀλλ' ἐπεὶ τοῖς ἰδίῳ νόμοις οὐθὲν ἔχομεν ἐγκαλεῖν, αὐτοὶ μὲν ἐπὶ τῶν ὑπαρχόντων πειρασόμεθα μένειν· σὺ δ' ἐτέρωθί που βάδιζε λαβὼν παρ' ἡμῶν εἴ του κεκρημένος τῶν ἀναγκαίων τυγχάνεις.'

Having heard (that Pythagoras was coming), the Locrians dispatched some old men to the frontiers of their region. Having met with him, they said, 'We hear that you are a wise and wondrous man, Pythagoras, but since we have no reason to reprehend our own laws, we shall try to keep them as they are. Go somewhere else taking from us any of the necessities you need.'

(Dicaearchus Fr. 34 Wehrli, in Porph. VP 56)

As mentioned in the previous chapter, after the anti-Pythagorean uprisings of the late sixth century, Pythagoras fled from Croton, reaching first Locri and then Metapontum, where he died in 495 BCE. According to Porphyry's *Vita*, the Locrians refused to welcome Pythagoras in their city, for they did not want their constitution to change. Once again, this suggests that Pythagoras and his disciples followed a distinctive and peculiar code of behaviour, which had already affected and shaped Crotonian lifestyle, and whose influence the Locrians attempted to reject.

Finally, in *Republic* X Plato characterises Pythagoreanism as follows:

Ἀλλὰ δὴ εἰ μὴ δημοσίᾳ, ἰδίᾳ τισὶν ἡγεμῶν παιδείας αὐτὸς ζῶν λέγεται Ὅμηρος γενέσθαι, οἳ ἐκεῖνον ἡγάπων ἐπὶ συνουσίᾳ καὶ τοῖς ὑστέροις ὁδὸν τινα παρέδοσαν βίου Ὀμηρικὴν, ὥσπερ Πυθαγόρας αὐτὸς τε διαφερόντως ἐπὶ τούτῳ ἡγαπήθη, καὶ οἱ ὕστεροι ἔτι καὶ νῦν Πυθαγόρειον τρόπον ἐπονομάζοντες τοῦ βίου διαφανεῖς πῃ δοκοῦσιν εἶναι ἐν τοῖς ἄλλοις;

If not in public, then, is Homer himself, while he lived, said to have been a guide in private education for some who enjoyed his company and handed down to posterity some kind of Homeric way of life, as Pythagoras himself was especially honoured for this and even to this day his followers seem to be somehow distinguished for the others denominating their way of life Pythagorean?

(Pl. *Rep.* 600a-b)⁶²

⁶² The Greek text from Plato's *Republic* is cited from Burnet 1902.

According to Plato, Pythagoras' legacy to his followers, contemporaries and successors primarily lies in the lifestyle. The βίος is what identifies someone as a Pythagorean and distinguishes him, or her, from the non-Pythagoreans. In *VP* 96-100, presumably on the evidence of Aristoxenus (Dillon and Hershbell 1991, 121), Iamblichus describes the average Pythagorean day, including the morning walks and exercises, the afternoon intellectual exchanges, the common meals and evening libations, and the prohibition from wearing wool (see also *Hdt.* 2.81). These norms should not be thought of as arbitrary taboos. Rather, as I argue in the following chapters, the Pythagoreans attempted to link their way of living with and at times derive it from the doctrines. Overall, the Pythagorean life regulations, specifically those pertaining to the women, are discussed in more detailed in Chapter 3. For the time being, suffice it to notice that the peculiarity of Pythagorean form of society does not lie in their political and religious activities, but rather in the distinctive way the members conducted themselves in accordance with Pythagoras' teachings.

As previously argued, this in turn offers a reason for the inclusion of women: the Pythagorean βίος regulated various aspects of the disciples' daily lives, from politics to religion and from public to private life. Thus, such an all-embracing way of living affected men in their public roles as well as women with their domestic and religious tasks. As we shall see, being admitted into the community and adopting the Pythagorean lifestyle would then open the door to the possibility of engaging with the Pythagorean doctrines.

Finally, this enables us to elaborate on the relation between Pythagorean societies and the cities of which they were part. In the previous chapter, I argued that, having being founded within the broader organisational structure of Greek and Italian cities, the Pythagorean communities presumably had to adjust to already-established political systems. However, this chapter has shown that, in some respects, they developed in opposition to such cities. To a certain extent, this form for society was unusual in character. The Pythagoreans created an in-group identified by its distinctive way of living and set of beliefs, by which both male and female members abided. In contrast, the rest of the citizens were treated as outsiders. On the one hand, then, the Pythagoreans conformed to local customs and traditions. On the other hand, they developed innovative doctrines and lifestyle. As I will argue in the next chapter, the same balance between tradition and innovation characterises Pythagoras' teachings to women.

IV. Conclusions

This chapter has analysed what kind of communities the Pythagoreans founded. As Burkert and Zhmud argue, these societies show affinities with cultic communities, sects and political clubs.

Yet they cannot be entirely reduced to any of these organisations. It is also worth noting that, since the Pythagorean communities in Southern Italy and mainland Greece were numerous, we do not even know whether they were all involved in similar activities and organised in the same way. Overall, what the Pythagoreans founded is a *sui generis* community.⁶³ In particular, among the activities to which the Pythagorean devoted themselves, religion is likely to have integrated women into the life of the community. This has led me to argue that, besides the social condition of women in Southern Italy (Ch. 1), another contributing factor to the status of women in Pythagoreanism was the resemblance between the Pythagorean society and ancient sects. Yet, as we shall see in Chapter 3, religion was not the only way for women to contribute to the society. The Pythagoreans developed an all-embracing code of behaviour regulating their daily lives from politics and religion to education and family life. Hence, they also addressed women.

Finally, we have noticed that, thus far, gender roles in Pythagoreanism seem more traditional than the very presence of women among Pythagoras' pupils would lead us to think. Although both men and women took part in the society, each group had its own place and function (cf. Ch. 3). Namely, men were in charge of leading the community, whereas women were primarily taught about marriage and entrusted with the management of the household, private cults and family affairs. The interplay between tradition and innovation in Pythagoreanism is explored in more detailed in the next chapter. For the time being, suffice it to remark that, on the one hand, Pythagoras never overthrew the existing social, political, cultural and religious institutions, but, on the other hand, he managed to reform the society by developing what Burkert describes as an alternative lifestyle. For instance, the Locrians refused him hospitality fearing that he would alter their laws and customs. The treatment of the female gender would be another example of such a trade-off: on the one hand, women were still in charge of cultic, domestic and family life; on the other hand, they were educated and included in the intellectual life of the community. What distinguishes Pythagoras' teachings to his female pupils is not the function they were assigned, which in some cases remains traditional, but the fact that they adhered to the same doctrines as men and participated in a similar way of life.

⁶³ See also Minar 1942, 22, Cornelli 2013, 62, Laks and Most 2016, 4.

Chapter 3

Four Pythagorean Precepts

At the end of the previous chapter, I argued that what made Pythagoras' social project unusual was the development of a distinctive way of life by which all members, men as well as women, were required to abide. I shall now turn to the more specific question of what kind of life the Pythagorean women were taught to lead: what was the place for women in Pythagorean societies? What role did they hold?

To decode the Pythagorean way of life, I shall examine two key sources: Pythagoras' speeches to the people of Croton and the Pythagorean ἀκούσματα, precepts. In the previous chapter, I emphasised how Pythagoreanism merged traditional practices with innovative moral, religious and cultural values. Therefore, in analysing these sources, I shall also consider how Pythagoras' teachings to his female disciples compare with contemporary Greek views, customs and beliefs about women.

I. Different strokes for different folks

Before stepping into the study of the Pythagorean precepts and lifestyle, it is worth distinguishing the teaching techniques Pythagoras is reputed to have used. As argued in the previous chapter, Pythagoras' career as a community leader began at his arrival in Croton. This is attested by Dicaearchus, Porphyry and Iamblichus, who recount the lectures Pythagoras gave to the Crotoniates, as well as Diogenes, who claims that thanks to Pythagoras' teachings Croton was turned into an aristocracy.¹ Even before Dicaearchus, Antisthenes refers to Pythagoras' educational activity. In a bid to explain the adjective πολύτροπος, multifaceted, as Odysseus' ability to interact with men in many ways (τοῖς ἀνθρώποις πολλοῖς τρόποις συνεῖναι), he states the following:

Οὕτω καὶ Πυθαγόρας λέγεται πρὸς παῖδας ἀξιώθεις ποιήσασθαι λόγους
διαθεῖναι πρὸς αὐτοὺς λόγους παιδικούς, καὶ πρὸς γυναῖκας γυναιξὶν
ἀρμοδίους, καὶ πρὸς ἄρχοντας ἀρχοντικούς, καὶ πρὸς ἐφήβους ἐφηβικούς·
τὸν γὰρ ἐκάστοις πρόσφορον τρόπον τῆς σοφίας ἐξευρίσκειν σοφίας
ἐστίν· ἀμαθίας δὲ εἶναι τὸ πρὸς τοὺς ἀνομοίως ἔχοντας τῷ τοῦ λόγου
χρῆσθαι μονοτρόπῳ.

¹ On Iamblichus' speeches, reported in *VP* 37-57, see below. Dicaearchus' account is discussed in Chs. 1.II, 2.I and 3.II.i (Fr. 33, quoted in Porph. *VP* 18-19). On Dicaearchus' description of Croton as an aristocracy (8.3), see Ch. 2.I.

It is also said that it was in this way that Pythagoras, having been deemed worthy to lecture to the children, composed childish speeches for them, speeches appropriate for women for the women, magisterial speeches for the magistrates and ephebic speeches for the ephebes. For finding a method of learning that is fitting to each audience is a sign of wisdom, whereas using the same kind of speech with different audiences is a sign of ignorance.

(Antisthenes Fr. 51 Caizzi, Schol. in *Od.* 1.1)

According to Anthistenes, Pythagoras was able to adapt his mode of discourse in accordance with the audience he was addressing: youthful speeches to the youths, womanish to women, leader-like to the rulers, and finally childlike speeches to children. According to Iamblichus, after arriving in Croton Pythagoras delivered four different lectures, on different topics and even in four different places depending on the age and gender of the addressees: to the Crotonian women in the temple of Hera (VP 56), to their children in the temple of Apollo (VP 50), to the magistrates in the council chamber (VP 45), and to the youths in the gymnasium (VP 37). Finally, the previously analysed evidence of internal divisions within the Pythagorean community and different levels of membership also suggests that the Pythagoreans were not all educated on the same topics nor did they explore such topics at the same degree of depth and complexity (cf. Ch. 2.1). Introducing the different groups of disciples, Iamblichus writes the following:

Μετὰ δὴ τοῦτο λέγωμεν ὅπως τοὺς ἐγκριθέντας ὑφ' ἐαυτοῦ διήρηκε χωρὶς κατὰ τὴν ἀξίαν ἐκάστους. Οὔτε γὰρ τῶν αὐτῶν μετέχειν ἐπ' ἴσης πάντας ἦν ἄξιον, μὴ τῆς ὁμοίας ὄντας φύσεως, οὔτε ἄξιον ἦν τοὺς μὲν πάντων τῶν τιμιωτάτων ἀκροαμάτων μετέχειν, τοὺς δὲ μηδενὸς ἢ μηδόλως μετέχειν· καὶ γὰρ τοῦτο ἦν ἀκοινώνητον καὶ ἄνισον. Τῷ μέντοι μεταδοῦναι τῶν ἐπιβαλλόντων λόγων ἐκάστοις τὴν προσήκουσαν μοῖραν τήν τε ὠφέλειαν ἀπένεμεν ἅπασι κατὰ τὸ δυνατόν καὶ τὸν τῆς δικαιοσύνης λόγον ἐφύλαττεν, ὅτι μάλιστα τὴν ἀξίαν ἐκάστοις ἀποδιδούς ἀκρόασιν.

After this (the initiation rituals), then, I shall speak about how he (Pythagoras) divided those he had selected into separate groups, each according to worth. For it was not appropriate that they would all equally partake in the same things, since they were not of a similar nature, nor was it appropriate that some would partake in all the most valued lectures, whereas others in no lectures at all, for this too was antisocial and unequal. Indeed, by giving to each group of followers the

proper share of the adequate teachings, he helped everyone as much as possible and observed the rule of justice, by delivering to each pupil the appropriate lecture to the maximum degree.

(Iamb. *VP* 80)

For the time being, I shall leave aside the references to the disciples' nature (φύσις) and to the 'rule of justice' according to which each pupil is to be educated in relation to his or her skills, which, as argued in Chapter 5.I, bring Iamblichus' claim close to Plato's *Republic*.² Nevertheless, in the light of Antisthenes' fragment, Iamblichus appears to be right in writing that Pythagoras diversified his way of teaching to accommodate his diverse audience. Furthermore, this passage is no longer referring to the Crotonian speeches, but rather, more generally, to how Pythagoras taught his pupils. This suggests that all of Pythagoras' disciples – not only the Crotoniates – received a fitting education. One may then wonder whether, besides the audience, the setting and the tone, the form in which Pythagoras delivered his teachings also varied: did Pythagoras exclusively educate his pupils via speeches? How did his teaching method adapt to the audience, depending on whether he was addressing the less-educated majority who had yet to be exposed to his teachings, or the well-educated few who were already familiar with his doctrines?

In the *Lives*, we come across two different techniques: the public lectures, such as the Crotonian speeches, and the so-called ἀκούσματα, a collection of short sayings, precepts and maxims. The characteristics these teaching methods share are threefold. First, they are imparted to the pupils orally. Second, their content originates in traditional Greek customs and beliefs, but within the Pythagorean context acquires a new moral, religious and cultural strength and meaning.³ Third, they regulate the pupils' daily life. The ἀκούσματα, however, differ from the speeches as follows: first, they are short and concise; second, they are authoritative, give commands by which to abide, prohibitions to obey and definitions to accept;⁴ and third, their meaning is obscure. The ἀκούσματα

² On Iamblichus' way of reading Pythagoreanism in the light of Plato, see Brisson 2002. On men and women's natures according to the Pythagoreans, see Ch. 3.VII.

³ On Zeus and Hera as images of the respect children owe to their parents, see Iamb. *VP* 39. On Odysseus as the paradigm of marital fidelity, see *VP* 57 (cf. Ch. 3.IV). According to De Vogel, the reference to myth indicates the importance the Pythagoreans attached to tradition (1966, 139).

⁴ Iamblichus classifies the ἀκούσματα into three groups: those stating what something is, those indicating what is the most of a certain quality, and those showing what is to be done (Iamb. *VP* 82-86 – see below Ch. 3.II.ii). On this classification, see Guthrie 1962, 183. For further examples of precepts, see D.L. 8.34-35, and Porph. *VP* 41-42.

are also referred to as σύμβολα, passwords only understood by the Pythagoreans.⁵ By contrast, the speeches are more detailed, understandable and easier to follow.

As we read in the *Lives*, upon his arrival in Magna Graecia Pythagoras started giving speeches to the locals. In Porphyry, the magistrates appoint him to lecture the people of Croton (VP 18). In Iamblichus, the boys gather around him as soon as he enters the gymnasium (VP 37) and then urge their fathers to do the same (VP 45). Consequently, the addressees of the speeches are not Pythagoreans, or at least not yet, but rather prospective students. The goal of these lectures is, first, to educate the South Italian audience and, second, to make Pythagoreanism known and attract wannabe disciples.⁶ According to Rowett, the fact that Pythagoras starts addressing the youths suggests that his purpose is to form those who have yet to be formed (2014, 115-116). On the other hand, in Iamb. VP 82, the ἀκούσματα are introduced as the most basic teaching method for Pythagoras' actual pupils: Iamblichus describes them as the philosophy of the *acousmatici*, whom he had earlier defined as Pythagorean admirers, as opposed to the *mathematici*, or genuine pupils (VP 80-81 – cf. Ch. 2.I). Therefore, the ἀκούσματα are the initial stage of membership to Pythagoreanism. They are cryptic sayings whose meaning is only grasped by those who have joined the community. Yet, within the community, the ἀκούσματα are taught to all members regardless of their rankings.

Overall, each technique has a twofold purpose. From a doctrinal point of view, the speeches and the ἀκούσματα aim to make the Pythagorean lifestyle and thought known. However, whilst the speeches simply introduce prospective pupils to the doctrines, the ἀκούσματα instruct current students with more demanding and bewildering precepts. From a social point of view, both methods aim to shape the Pythagorean community. However, whilst the speeches' goal is to attract more followers and engage potential disciples, the precepts mark those who are allowed to listen to them, thus separating the followers from the outsiders, to whom the maxims are unknown, and if known incomprehensible.

This suggests that the content of precepts and speeches will also be different. Since the speeches address prospective Pythagoreans with the aim of persuading them to join the community, they include instructions on how to lead their lives that can be easily put into practice and manifestly improve their behaviour. The Crotonian speeches give sound advice, which is beneficial to the addressees' everyday life regardless of whether or not they will later

⁵ E.g. Aristoxenus Fr. 43, D.L. 8.15, Iamb. VP 105, 227, 238. According to Burkert, the identification of the ἀκούσματα as σύμβολα does not mean they were not to be taken literally, but rather that they were passwords separating the Pythagoreans from the non-Pythagoreans (1972, 176).

⁶ On the speeches as an example of Pythagorean propaganda, see also Rostagni 1955-1956, 38.

decide to become Pythagoreans. For example, children are taught to be benevolent towards each other (φιλανθρωπία, Iamb. VP 40). Should they then enter the Pythagorean society, this would enable them to live by Pythagoras' teachings about friendship and cherish the bond between their fellow community members. Yet, should they opt out, they would nonetheless behave virtuously towards other Crotonians. Similarly, they are lectured on temperance (VP 41). As argued in the previous chapter, self-restraint, especially in speech, was one of the character traits wannabe Pythagoreans had to show in order to enter the community (cf. Ch. 2.1). Therefore, the speeches teach how to be virtuous in one's daily life and at the same time lay the groundwork for future and deeper engagement with Pythagoreanism. By contrast, the ἀκούσματα are puzzling sayings, which include dietary rules such as the complete abstinence from beans and teachings about the afterlife.⁷ Consequently, in analysing the speeches and the ἀκούσματα, it is worth considering how each topic is revealed to disciples at different levels. I shall do so with Pythagoras' teachings about women.

Overall, this is how we should picture the structure of the Pythagorean ἐταιρεία. There are different ways to engage with the doctrines and different levels of membership. First, the prospective followers, those who have just been exposed to Pythagoreanism and have yet to put the Pythagorean maxims into practice, and to whom Pythagoras gives introductory lectures (LEVEL 1). Then, the actual followers, who differ from the outsiders as they live according to the Pythagorean βίος, and to whom Pythagoras delivers the precepts (LEVEL 2). We may go further and argue that the actual disciples are themselves divided into further subgroups in accordance with their level of engagement with and commitment to the doctrines. If so, although all Pythagoreans live a Pythagorean way of life, some of them will simply listen to, memorise and implement the precepts (LEVEL 2), whereas others will investigate their meaning and reason-why in depth (LEVEL 3). This distinction may remind us of the above mentioned *acousmatici-mathematici* divide. However, since these internal groupings are a point of controversy in the scholarship, for the purpose of this work I shall more generally refer to a first-level audience, i.e. the potential disciples, and then the actual pupils, arguably divided into second- and third-level Pythagoreans.⁸

⁷ See also Rowett 2014, 116-117.

⁸ Burkert distinguishes 'a lower and a higher degree of Pythagorean wisdom' and connects the former with the ἀκουσματικοί and the latter with the μαθηματικοί, the 'truly philosophising members' of the community (1972, 192). In *LS*, the ἀκούσματα, which I have been presenting as the second level of engagement with the Pythagorean doctrines, are taken to constitute the introductory stage of membership. Yet the two accounts do not disagree. I have described the audience of the ἀκούσματα as second-level disciples in that they are no longer prospective, but rather actual Pythagoreans. Nevertheless, being exposed to the symbols is the first stage of a potentially longer and deeper

This may become clearer by looking at the initiation process. As previously argued, according to Iamb. *VP* 71-74, the disciples were put through eight years of training, including three years of attentive supervision and five years of devoted silence, which is described as the most difficult form of self-mastery to be achieved. Only once the training had come to an end, were they officially granted entry to the community and admitted to the master's presence. This suggests that among those who audited Pythagoras' lectures (LEVEL 1) only some undertook the training (LEVEL 2), and among those who did undertake the training only some succeeded in entering the community, whereas the others were cast out. Yet this is not meant to imply that the second level of membership is only temporary and may result either in the expulsion from the society or in a higher degree of engagement. More likely, after passing the admission tests, some would remain second-level disciples and simply keep abiding by Pythagoras' maxims and living by his teachings, whereas others explored the doctrines further (LEVEL 3). For example, in *VP* 88 Iamblichus writes that some of Pythagoras' disciples were simply told how to act 'without knowing the cause (αἰτία)', whereas others – 'those who were capable of hard-working and learning' – engaged with the reasons behind such precepts.

This social and pedagogical structure also included women. That female pupils participated in both the first and second levels of engagement with Pythagoreanism is suggested by Pythagoras' public speech to the women of Croton (LEVEL 1) and his ἀκούσματα concerning marriage and motherhood analysed below (LEVEL 2). Of these, some are about women and addressed to Pythagorean men, whereas others lecture the Pythagorean women themselves. Moreover, some women managed to go beyond this level and reach what I have defined as the third degree of membership. The evidence for this is twofold: the authorship of the maxim urging women not to enter the temple after committing adultery, and the anecdote about the Pythagorean woman Timycha. Pythagoras encourages women to make sacrifices after sleeping with their husbands, and forbids them from doing so after committing adultery (*VP* 55 – cf. Ch. 3.VI). Nevertheless, in *VP* 132 the same precept is ascribed to a Pythagorean woman named Deino, and in D.L. 8.43 it is included among the teachings of Theano to her female pupils. This suggests that not only were women the subjects and addressees of Pythagoras' teachings, but occasionally they even

involvement in the doctrines. As a result, when exclusively considering those who have already joined the Pythagorean ἐταιρεία – i.e. within the community – the ἀκούσματα constitute the introductory and lower degree of wisdom. However, when considering Pythagoras' audience as a whole, including those who have yet to decide whether to join the community, we come across an even lower and more introductory level of education, which is the level of the Pythagoreans-to-be. The *acousmatici* may well be the least 'philosophising' members of the community, as Burkert describes them, but are still more 'philosophising' than the non-members are.

lectured themselves.⁹ Furthermore, both Porphyry and Iamblichus report the anecdote of Timycha biting off her own tongue to avoid revealing his secret teachings to the tyrant Dionysius. Specifically, what Dionysius is eager to learn is not the content of the Pythagorean ban against beans, which both second- and third-level disciples could have told him, but rather the αἰτία, the reason behind such a precept, which only third-level disciples understood. Fictitious as it may sound, this anecdote presupposes that Timycha was familiar with these doctrines, which in turn suggests that it was not extraordinary for women to do so. Overall, despite the scantiness of the available evidence, there is room for arguing that, besides living according to Pythagoras' teachings, at least some of his female disciples actively engaged with the doctrines.

II. Source problems

Our primary source for both the speeches and the ἀκούσματα is Iamblichus. As previously mentioned, among the three third-century biographies of Pythagoras, Iamblichus' *On the Pythagorean Way of Life* is considered the most biased and encomiastic, and the least reliable. Iamblichus depicts Pythagoras as an exemplary sage bringing wisdom to humankind (VP 8) and Plato's philosophical predecessor. This casts doubt on the extent to which we can make use of this source as valuable evidence for ancient Pythagoreanism. Although acknowledging the reliability issue, I nonetheless resort to the *Vita Pythagorica* for two reasons. First, Iamblichus often quotes from earlier authorities, such as Aristotle, Aristoxenus, Dicaearchus, Timaeus of Tauromenium, Apollonius of Tyana and Nicomachus of Gerasa. Second, his *Vita Pythagorica* is the most detailed and elaborate account of Pythagoreanism available to us. Consequently, it is worth exploring what information Iamblichus can give us about Pythagoras' teachings to women.

(i) The Crotonian speeches

The Crotonian speeches mark the beginning of Pythagoras' career as an educator and a community leader. According to Dicaearchus, soon after he arrived in Croton Pythagoras was invited to lecture the citizens by the council of elders.

Ἐπεὶ δὲ τῆς Ἰταλίας ἐπέβη καὶ ἐν Κρότωνι ἐγένετο, φησὶν ὁ Δικαίαρχος,
ὥς ἀνδρὸς ἀφικομένου πολυπλάνου τε καὶ περιττοῦ καὶ κατὰ τὴν ἰδίαν
φύσιν ὑπὸ τῆς τύχης εὖ κεχορηγημένου, τὴν τε γὰρ ιδέαν εἶναι
ἐλευθέριον καὶ μέγαν χάριν τε πλείστην καὶ κόσμον ἐπὶ τε τῆς φωνῆς καὶ

⁹ On Theano as a μαθηματική, see Deakin 2012. The only evidence of Theano engaging in mathematics are the later, and possibly pseudo, Pythagorean texts in Thesleff 1965, 193-201. We can however refer to her as a μαθηματική in the sense of a third-level pupil.

τοῦ ἡθους καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν ἄλλων ἀπάντων ἔχειν, οὕτως διαθεῖναι τὴν Κροτωνιατῶν πόλιν ὥστ' ἐπεὶ τὸ τῶν γερόντων ἀρχεῖον ἐψυχαγώγησεν πολλὰ καὶ καλὰ διαλεχθεῖς, τοῖς νέοις πάλιν ἡβητικὰς ἐποίησατο παραινέσεις ὑπὸ τῶν ἀρχόντων κελευσθεῖς· μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα τοῖς παισὶν ἐκ τῶν διδασκαλείων ἀθροοῖς συνελθοῦσιν· εἴτα ταῖς γυναιξὶ καὶ γυναικῶν σύλλογος αὐτῷ κατεσκευάσθη. Γενομένων δὲ τούτων μεγάλη περὶ αὐτοῦ ἠϋξήθη δόξα, καὶ πολλοὺς μὲν ἔλαβεν ἐξ αὐτῆς τῆς πόλεως ὁμιλητὰς οὐ μόνον ἄνδρας ἀλλὰ καὶ γυναῖκας, ὧν μίᾳ γε Θεανοῦς.

When he came to Italy and stopped at Croton, Dicaearchus says, he arrived as a great traveller, well provided by his own nature and prosperously guided by fortune. He made on the Crotoniates the impression of a free, great man, graceful and elegant in speech, gesture and everything else, so that he inspired the council of elders by discussing many fine things with them. They appointed him to give youthful speeches to the youths, and then to the boys who came from school to hear him; and then to the women – *even* a meeting of women was arranged for him.¹⁰ Through this, his great reputation grew further, he drew great audiences from the city, not only men, but also women, among whom was Theano.

(Dicaearchus Fr. 33 Wehrli, in Porph. *VP* 18-19)

Dicaearchus mentions speeches to the youths, the boys and the women. Moreover, he writes that Pythagoras conversed about ‘many fine things’ with the council of elders, who then asked him to educate the rest of the Crotoniates. Similarly, the speeches reported by Iamblichus are four: to the youths (*VP* 37-44), the boys (51-53), the women (54-57) and the magistrates themselves (45-50). Therefore, despite few inconsistencies – e.g. in Dicaearchus’ fragment the magistrates send the youths to Pythagoras,¹¹ whereas in the *Vita* they gather around him after hearing about his teachings from their sons – Iamblichus reports in full the orations to which Dicaearchus and Porphyry allude. Later in the same fragment, Dicaearchus writes that with the exception of the doctrine of reincarnation Pythagoras’ teachings to his students are unknown.¹² This would also question the authenticity of Iamblichus’ account. However, Iamblichus makes no mention of metempsychosis, which suggests that the teachings to which Dicaearchus refers

¹⁰ Rowett notices how the καὶ in emphatic position suggests that, as opposed to the lectures to boys and youths, addressing women was unconventional (2014, 114.115).

¹¹ See also Is. *Bus.* 29.

¹² The second part of Dicaearchus’ account is quoted in Ch. 2.II.

in the second part of the fragment are not the speeches, which were in fact public and open to non-Pythagoreans, but rather the doctrines Pythagoras exclusively taught to the actual disciples. Overall, what Pythagoras said to the Crotoniates might have been generally known.

Besides Dicaearchus and Porphyry, Pythagoras' speeches are also mentioned in the Homeric scholion by Antisthenes quoted above, according to which Pythagoras lectured his pupils expressing the same thought in various ways. Moreover, in *VP* 217-219 Iamblichus refers to another speech by Pythagoras to Phalaris of Acragas, and in *Metamorphoses* XV Ovid reports Pythagoras' fictitious speech to Numa. Overall, that Pythagoras gave speeches can be stated with a fair amount of certainty.

What is debated is the content of the Crotonian speeches. De Vogel and Rostagni take Iamblichus to quote word-by-word from earlier sources (Rostagni 1955-1956, 35-56, De Vogel 1966, 140-147). By contrast, Burkert considers the speeches a later production (Burkert 1972, p 115 n. 38), and Rowett describes them as implausible (2014, 116). Nevertheless, they both allow for the possibility that Iamblichus had evidence attesting Pythagoras' public lectures, and that consequently, although the content of these lectures may not have been reported *verbatim*, some sections are still reliable.

On the art of reporting speeches, Thucydides makes the following remark:

Καὶ ὅσα μὲν λόγῳ εἶπον ἕκαστοι ἢ μέλλοντες πολεμήσειν ἢ ἐν αὐτῷ ἤδη ὄντες, χαλεπὸν τὴν ἀκρίβειαν αὐτὴν τῶν λεχθέντων διαμνημονεῦσαι ἦν ἐμοὶ τε ὦν αὐτὸς ἤκουσα καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοθεν ποθεν ἐμοὶ ἀπαγγέλλουσιν· ὥς δ' ἂν ἐδόκουν ἐμοὶ ἕκαστοι περὶ τῶν αἰεὶ παρόντων τὰ δέοντα μάλιστ' εἰπεῖν, ἐχομένῳ ὅτι ἐγγύτατα τῆς ξυμπάσης γνώμης τῶν ἀληθῶς λεχθέντων, οὕτως εἴρηται.

As for the speeches each person either about to go to war or already in it made, it is hard for me to remember exactly the words I have either heard myself or received from someplace else. Yet as it seemed to me that each speaker would mostly say what was appropriate in every occasion, by keeping it as close as possible to the general sense of what had been truly said, thus I shall speak.

(Thuc. 1.22.1)¹³

Thucydides contrasts the difficulty of recalling the exact manner in which speeches were delivered (1.22.1) with the relative ease of remembering actual events (1.22.2). Nonetheless,

¹³ Greek cited from Jones and Powel 1942.

although not being recorded *verbatim*, the speeches he reports are not fiction, but rather likely reconstructions based on the character of the speakers and the events narrated.¹⁴ The same may be argued regarding Iamblichus: the fact that the content of the Crotonian speeches might not match in every respect Pythagoras' words does not mean that it cannot be close to his teaching in any respect.

Scholars suggest three sources for Iamblichus' speeches: Aristoxenus, Timaeus and Apollonius. Some of the precepts listed in the speeches mirror other passages of the *Vita Pythagorica* Iamblichus explicitly quotes from Aristoxenus. For example, the speeches discuss piety and temperance as Aristoxenus does in Frs. 33 and 38, quoted in Iamb. *VP* 175 and 205 respectively. Moreover, the divisions into age groups is also mentioned in Aristoxenus' Fr. 35. Timaeus also reports Pythagoras' fourfold classification of women's life stages (Frs. 17, 131). Finally, Iamblichus attributes some of the instructions from the speeches to Apollonius, such as the prohibition of separating parents and children in *VP* 49 and 262, and the invitation to build a temple for the Muses in *VP* 45, 50 and 264.¹⁵ As shown below, the content of the speeches also occasionally parallels that of the ἀκούσματα. Thus, even though the speeches are more likely to be a literary reconstruction at the hands of Iamblichus, we can still gain valuable information by comparing and contrasting them with other Pythagorean precepts, which may have served as their bone structure. Speeches and ἀκούσματα reinforce and complement each other. Hence, it is worth examining what they say about women, to what extent the content of the ἀκούσματα is symbolic, more obscure and esoteric, what explanation the speeches add, and how the same topic is addressed at different levels of membership.

(ii) The ἀκούσματα

This leads us to the question of the reliability of the ἀκούσματα. After listening to Pythagoras' speeches and entering the community, the disciples were introduced to the ἀκούσματα. Into the category of Pythagorean ἀκούσματα, or σύμβολα,¹⁶ things heard or symbols, falls a collection of orally transmitted maxims, short instructions, dietary taboos, moral and religious precepts and

¹⁴ See Rokeah 1962, Glucker 1964, Swan 1993, Garrity 1998.

¹⁵ For further connections between Iamblichus and Apollonius, see Burkert 1972, 100 n. 12.

¹⁶ See Iamb. *VP* 82 and 105 respectively. As Zhmud notices, whilst the term σύμβολα is attested as early as Aristoxenus (Fr. 43, quoted in D.L. 8.15-17), the first occurrence of ἀκούσματα comes later in the tradition in Iamb. *VP* 82 (2012, 196). This passage from the *Vita*, however, is likely to have been extracted from Aristotle, which dates the term ἀκούσματα at least back in the fourth century together with σύμβολα.

cryptic sayings by means of which Pythagoras is reputed to have codified his teachings and regulated his disciples' way of life.

We can distinguish two scholarly attitudes towards the ἀκούσματα: some scholars take the precepts as an invaluable source for our understanding of the Pythagorean βίος and reconstruction of ancient Pythagoreanism, whereas others consider them a later fabrication. According to Burkert, the ἀκούσματα are the rule of the early Pythagorean communities, some sort of set code of practice and discipline for the ἐταῖροι, and thus the core of Pythagoras' legacy to his followers (1972, 166-192). KRS depicts them as a way to initiate the disciples to Pythagoreanism and convey the catechism of doctrines (1983, 229-230). Finally, Huffman considers these moral commands to be the earliest evidence of Pythagorean way of life available to us (2008a, 105-106). By contrast, Zhmud reads the σύμβολα as some sort of superstitious ritualism and a re-interpretation of Pythagorean material by the hands of later authors (2012, 192-205).

The first to author an *Explanation of Pythagorean Symbols* in the fourth century BCE is Anaximander the Younger (*Suda* 1987, s.v. Anaximandros), whose collection provides the foundations for Aristotle's lost works on the Pythagoreans (e.g. Fr. 195 Rose³, quoted in D.L. 8.34-35, and Fr. 196, quoted in Porph. VP 41). Further evidence comes from Androcydes (Iamb. VP 145), whose treatise *On the Pythagorean Symbols* starts circulating in the first century BCE, and Alexander Polyhistor, who quotes excerpts of the 200 BCE pseudo-Pythagorean text *Pythagorean Memoirs* (D.L. 8.24-33).

Diogenes lists various dietary restrictions, such as the prohibition from eating food dropped on the ground and the avoidance of beans, fish and white cocks as sacrificial offerings. Moreover, he reports behavioural norms preventing the disciples from, for example, dividing bread instead of eating from the same loaf as their friends (8.34-35). According to Porphyry, Pythagoras also symbolically forbade his followers from passing over a balance – which Porphyry interprets as neglecting justice and equality – stirring fire with a knife, i.e. provoking an angry man, turning back when travelling, i.e. having regrets in life, walking on the highway, i.e. giving credit to the common opinion, and wearing rings portraying the gods, i.e. publicly conversing about religion (VP 42-45).

Iamblichus provides a more elaborate list of ἀκούσματα (VP 82-86). He divides the sayings into three categories depending on the question they answer: those explaining what something is (τί ἔστι), those showing what has a certain quality at the highest degree (τί μάλιστα), and those teaching what is to be done (τί πρακτέον). For example, in the first group we find the

identification of the sun and the moon with the abode of the blessed.¹⁷ The second group includes the description of sacrifice as the fairest act, number as the wisest thing of all, followed by the art of giving names, medicine as the wisest of human activities, harmony as the most beautiful thing, intelligence as the most powerful, and happiness as the best.¹⁸ As for the third group, Pythagoras is known for educating his pupils on what to sacrifice, urging them to beget children, but never with courtesans, avoid public baths and enter temples barefoot, eat only those animals that are suitable for sacrificial rituals, pour libations from the handles of the cup, and never turn their back on the gods in a temple.¹⁹

Lastly, among the sayings cited by Aristotle and Aristoxenus, but omitted from the *Lives*, we find the explanation of natural phenomena such as earthquakes, rainbows and echoes, as well as further vetoes on, for example, eating anemones. Overall, the Peripatetics give a rationalised account of the symbols, rejecting the claim that the Pythagoreans were vegetarians and arguing that they exclusively abstained from certain parts of certain animals, such as the womb and the heart of oxen and rams (Aristoxenus Frs. 25, 26, 29).

There are several difficulties with resorting to the ἀκούσματα as an authentic source of evidence for the Pythagorean way of life and thought. First, ancient sources do not always agree on either the content or the form of the precepts: for instance, the Peripatetics explain the rationale behind the maxim, whereas Iamblichus seems more interested in listing the symbols rather than revealing their meaning. Yet, to some extent, their accounts overlap. Iamblichus grants that some instructions may have been followed by the relevant reason-why: for example, the Pythagoreans should beget children *because* they will worship the gods in their parents' stead (VP 83 – cf. Ch. 3.IV). Although he is more inclined to think that most reasons were added at a later stage by people outside the Pythagorean communities, he nevertheless allows for the possibility that some precepts might have been explained by Pythagoras himself. On the other hand, Aristotle occasionally quotes unexplained sayings.²⁰ Moreover, Aristotle is likely to be the source for Iamblichus' tripartition of the ἀκούσματα, which echoes the systematisation of Pythagoreanism attempted by the Peripatetics (Burkert 1972, 170).

¹⁷ For similar σύμβολα, see Porph. VP 41.

¹⁸ As Iamblichus himself points out, this class of sayings echoes in both form and content the gnomic maxims of Seven Sages in D.L. 1.35-36 and 1.77.

¹⁹ For further precepts belonging to this third category, see D.L. 8.18-19.

²⁰ For example, on the identification of things with numbers, see Arist. *Met.* 985b29-30 and 1078b22-23.

The second objection is that the maxims were supposed to be secret and exclusively addressed to a restricted circle of disciples. As argued above, after mentioning the speeches Dicaearchus refers to other Pythagorean doctrines that were unknown to the non-Pythagoreans (Fr. 33, quoted in Ch. 2.II). Yet he also admits that some of those teachings were familiar to all, *παρὰ πᾶσιν*. Moreover, some of these precepts may also have been alluded to in the public lectures. This suggests that secrecy still allowed occasional leakage. However, this was not the case for the maxims' inner meaning. The fact that our sources disagree on their explanations and interpret them in different ways suggests that the key to decode their hidden sense was not publicly available. For example, although knowing that the Pythagorean refused to trample on beans, the tyrant Dionysius could not understand the reason-why.²¹

Another point of controversy is whether the ἀκούσματα were acted upon literally. According to Burkert, the fact that these maxims are referred to as σύμβολα simply indicates that they were passwords aimed at distinguishing those disciples who knew and understood them from the outsiders (1982, 176-178). Thus, these precepts were not symbolic, but directly action guiding. Zhmud, on the other hand, considers the ἀκούσματα bewildering, implausible and incompatible with the Pythagorean otherwise conservative society (2012, 175, 202-205). A third way to interpret the ἀκούσματα has recently been suggested by Johan Thom, according to whom the precepts did regulate the Pythagorean way of life, but nonetheless allowed for interpretations and exceptions (2013, 94-98). This would solve Zhmud's issue of fitting such a lifestyle with traditional Greek customs: Pythagoras may have adapted his most unconventional precepts to make them fit in with society. Overall, I agree with Burkert in picturing the ἀκούσματα and the lifestyle they describe as creating an identity for the Pythagorean community and selecting those who are to be part of such a group. Yet some of these precepts may well mean more than meets the eye (or ear). For example, the maxim 'Do not stir fire with a knife!' (D.L. 8.17) presumably had a deeper significance to Pythagoras' disciples, a meaning that went beyond the fire-stirring knife. Other precepts, even quite puzzling ones such as the prohibition of beans, may have been acted upon literally. Nevertheless, we know that even these rules allowed for exceptions: for instance, as Burkert himself notices, only some animals or some parts of certain animals were not to be eaten or sacrificed (1972, 180-185 – cf. Chs. 3.V, 3.VI, 4.V).

Overall, what the ἀκούσματα ultimately meant and the extent to which they were put into practice is debated and most likely unanswerable. The interpretations of the four ἀκούσματα about women I propose below are therefore intended as possible readings of the precepts in the

²¹ Iamb. *VP* 189-194 (cf. Ch. 1.III). On the different readings of the Pythagorean maxim forbidding the consumption of beans, see Ch. 3.V.

light of the prominence of women in Pythagoreanism. I shall discuss four themes: marriage, the husband-wife relationship, parenthood and piety.

III. Do not chase your wife away

Once in Croton, Pythagoras taught the magistrates how to govern the city with piety and justice (Iamb. *VP* 45-50). Further, he instructed them on the subject of family life and the importance of marital relationships. In the *Vita*, Iamblichus writes the following:

Ἔτι δὲ τὴν γυναῖκα νομίζειν ἀπὸ τῆς ἐστίας εἰληφότα μετὰ σπονδῶν
καθάπερ ἰκέτιν ἐναντίον τῶν θεῶν εἰσῆχθαι πρὸς αὐτόν.

Moreover, they (the magistrates) were to think of their wives as suppliants, taken with libations from the hearth in the presence of the gods, and lead them into their house.

(Iamb. *VP* 48)

The magistrates are urged to regard their wives as suppliants. Specifically, women are compared to the suppliants of Hestia, the goddess of the hearth (ἐστία) and protectress of the household. The advice, however, is still relatively general and does not specify how the magistrates should act upon it. The prescription behind the image of a suppliant wife is suggested in the Aristotelian treatise *Oeconomica*.²²

Πρῶτον μὲν οὖν νόμοι πρὸς γυναῖκα καὶ τὸ μὴ ἀδικεῖν· οὕτως γὰρ ἂν
οὐδ' αὐτὸς ἀδικοῖτο. Τοῦθ' ὑφηγεῖται δὲ ὁ καὶ ὁ κοινὸς νόμος· καθάπερ
οἱ Πυθαγόρειοι λέγουσιν, ὥσπερ ἰκέτιν καὶ ἀφ' ἐστίας ἡγμένην ὡς
ἥκιστα δεῖν δοκεῖν ἀδικεῖν.

First, then, are the rules about how to treat the wife and not do her wrong, for in this way a man would not be wronged himself. The following precept, which is also a common law, is laid down: as the Pythagoreans say, one should least of all think to wrong her as if she were a suppliant and had been led from the hearth.

(Arist. *Oec.* 1344a10-12)²³

²² For the authorship of this treatise, see Pomeroy 1994, 68.

²³ Greek cited from van Groningen and Wartelle 1968.

According to this passage, husbands should think of their wives as suppliants and thus refrain from mistreating them to avoid being mistreated themselves.²⁴ Thinking of women as suppliants means treating them as suppliants. Consequently, since suppliants should not be wronged, neither should wives.

Later in Iamblichus' *Vita Pythagorica*, the same image recurs in the form of an ἄκουσμα:

Γυναῖκα οὐ δεῖ διώκειν τὴν αὐτοῦ, ἰκέτις γάρ· διὸ καὶ ἄφ' ἐστίας
ἀγόμεθα, καὶ λῆψις διὰ δεξιᾶς.

(a) You should not drive your own wife away, (b) for she is a suppliant

(c) and this is why we lead her from the hearth, holding the right hand.

(Iamb. *VP* 84)

This precept is listed in Chapter 18 of the *Vita*, which Burkert takes to be quoted from Aristotle (1972, 170). The maxim can be divided into three segments: first, (a) the injunction forbidding men from chasing their wives away; second, (b) the comparison between women and suppliants; third, (c) further explanation of the way to treat wives as suppliants. Despite it being an ἄκουσμα, the maxim includes some kind of argument: women should not be banished, for we think of them as suppliants, on which account (διὸ) we accompany them out of the hearth. It may be the case, then, that the original ἄκουσμα was more obscure than the one quoted above, and that either the Pythagoreans themselves or Aristotle, who is likely to be Iamblichus' source for this passage, unpacked its meaning by explaining this Pythagorean practice.

The instruction to equate women with suppliants is one of those Pythagorean precepts both handed down to us in the form of a saying and included in the Crotonian speeches. As previously argued, the magistrates are not, or at least not yet, part of Pythagoras' following. Therefore, Pythagoras is more generally lecturing them on how to behave in their everyday Crotonian life and profession, rather than imparting the more specific set of rules regulating the Pythagorean βίος. In the speech, Pythagoras urges the audience to think of their wives just as if (καθάπερ) they were suppliants. Yet the statement is general enough that, should the addressees decide not to join Pythagoras' disciples, they would still have received sound advice on how to behave with their spouses. On the other hand, the ἄκουσμα gives more precise instructions and reveals something further about Pythagorean practices. Specifically, it seems to refer to some kind of codified ritual during which wives are held by the right hand at the hearth. The reason for this is that the people listening to the ἀκούσματα have already become members of the Pythagorean

²⁴ In Iamb. *VP* 48, the Crotonian magistrates are taught to respect their wives so that they will not commit adultery, which may be the kind of mistreatment to which Aristotle is referring (cf. Ch. 3.IV).

community and, as such, are expected to live by more specific regulations. Thus, family life is in some respects regulated for both the general public and the restricted group of pupils. Yet the latter are required to follow stricter rules.

Overall, this is a maxim about the husband-wife relationship. By associating women with suppliants, the precept endows the conjugal bond with a religious meaning. Husbands should take care of their wives in the same way they would take care of suppliants in need. The two keywords are *ικέτις* and *ἑστία*. The term *ικέτις* is the female equivalent of *ικέτης*, suppliant. In antiquity, this had both socio-political and religious significance. On the one hand, a *ικέτης* is someone who asks for the help and protection of men: for example, in *Il.* 24.158 Priam is a suppliant to Achilles. On the other hand, someone is to be called a suppliant when invoking purification after homicide and more generally aid and safety from the gods: for example, in *Od.* 9.270 Zeus is addressed as the avenger of suppliants. Similarly, then, a *ικέτις* is a woman begging either men²⁵ or gods²⁶ for protection. The Pythagorean women are associated with suppliants in both the religious and the socio-political sense of this term, for they seek for protection at the sacred hearth and address the request to their husbands.

In particular, women are pictured as suppliants of Hestia at the hearth (*ἑστία*). Hestia is the unwed daughter of Cronus, to whom Zeus grants the permission to indwell and never leave the household, and who therefore rarely takes part in the affairs of other Olympic gods and heroes.²⁷ She was worshipped in a circular shrine, the hearth, located at the centre of private houses,²⁸ in which a fire was kept burning and various domestic cults, sacrifices and family rituals took place. For example, new family members, such as brides and newborn children, were introduced into the household at the *ἑστία*, or fireside.²⁹ Moreover, hearths were places for protection and

²⁵ See, for example, the Danaids asking the king of Argos for protection in Aesch. *Supp.* 27.

²⁶ E.g. Iocasta as the suppliant of Apollo in Soph. *OT* 920.

²⁷ E.g. Hes. *Th.* 453-458, *HH* 5.21-32. In Pl. *Phdr.* 247a, Hestia is the only goddess not attending the divine the charioteer-soul witnesses.

²⁸ The image of the household hearth occurs again in Philolaus' cosmology, according to which heavenly bodies circle around a central fire, named *ἑστία*, out of which the whole cosmos develops (Frs. 7 and 17 Huffman, quoted in Stob. 1.21.8 and 1.15.7 respectively). The fire burning on the hearth at the centre of private houses may thus have been a picture with which the Pythagoreans were well acquainted, and which Philolaus locates at the centre of the universe. See Betegh 2014b, 162-163: 'By putting the Hearth at the centre of his astronomical system, Philolaus immediately conveys the image that the cosmos is one large household populated by relatives.'

²⁹ E.g. Ar. *Pl.* 768-769. On domestic sacrifices, see Aesch. *Eum.* 106-109.

supplication.³⁰ As I shall argue below, since the hearth is devoted to Hestia, an unmarried virgin goddess, the act of leading a woman out of Hestia's shrine may represent her journey from maidenhood to married life.

More work needs to be done to understand the dynamic between husband and wife described in the precept. To unpack this, I shall analyse the two rituals to which the maxim refers: supplication and marriage.

- (1) (a) You should not drive your own wife away, (b) for she is a suppliant;
(c) and this is why we lead her from the *marital* hearth by the right hand.

According to the first reading, the hearth is located inside the husband's house. As stated above, family members were introduced into the household at the ἑστία. Therefore, from the moment a newlywed bride reached the hearth, she was welcomed into her marital house and became part of the family. The maxim may then be comparing this ritual with the case of suppliants asking for hospitality. If so, the argument would be the following: (a) wives should not be banished, (b) as they are like suppliants, who should not be chased away from the temple in which they seek for asylum. Since women are *quasi*-suppliants (c) men accompany them from the domestic hearth, where they have been introduced into the household, and welcome them as new members of the family.

Let us focus on the act described in (c). According to this reading, what is portrayed is the ceremony in which the bride officially enters the marital home. The fact that the precept mentions the husband holding his wife by the right hand suggests that this maxim refers to a codified practice. A comparable ritual is the rite of supplication, ἱκετεία. Ancient supplication involved four key steps: the arrival of the *supplicans*, the action of grasping the *supplicandus*' knees, the request, and the response.³¹ For the purpose of this work, I shall focus on the latter. If the *supplicandus* agreed to accommodate the appeal, he would hold out the hands, specifically the right hand, and grasp the suppliant as a sign of assistance and hospitality.³² One of the obligations the *supplicandus* had towards the *supplicans* was to help the guest reach the next

³⁰ E.g. Aesch. Ag. 1587, Lys. 1.27.

³¹ See Naiden 2006, 29-169. On some kind of supplication ritual in the available evidence for ancient Pythagoreanism, see Iamb. VP 133, 177, in which fugitives from Sybaris come to Croton asking Pythagoras for asylum.

³² See, for example, Achilles and Priam in Hom. Il. 24.479 and Odysseus among the Phaeacians in Od. 7.168-169.

destination by giving directions,³³ providing food,³⁴ and occasionally even escorting the suppliant with a procession (πομπή).³⁵ The husband pictured in the precept, then, receives his bride at the hearth, offers her his right hand as a sign of protection – that is, accomplishes his duties as a *supplicandus* – and finally accompanies her to the next destination by ushering her in the house of which she has officially become the mistress. Reece points out that the πομπή can have either a positive or a negative meaning and indicate the act of accompanying or forcing out respectively (1993, 39) – which leads us back to the Pythagorean contrast between gently leading the wife from the hearth and chasing her away. Overall, according to this first interpretation, the maxim urges Pythagoras’ audience and pupils to be as welcoming towards their newlywed brides, as they would be towards a suppliant seeking for asylum.

This reading manages to account for the reference to the ἐστία for two reasons. First, supplication rituals take place at public and domestic hearths. Second, members of the family such as newborn children and newlywed brides are introduced into the household at the hearth. The second ritual to which the precepts refers is a wedding ceremony:

(2) (a) You should not drive your own wife away, (b) for she is a suppliant. This is why we *both* (c) lead her from the *paternal* hearth *and* (c') hold her with the right hand.

The ἐστία mentioned in the second interpretation of the maxim is the hearth inside the father’s house, from which a woman leaves to reach her husband’s home. What the precept portrays is a marriage ritual in which the bride is led from her father’s hearth to that of the groom. According to this interpretation, (a) a woman should be treated well by her husband, (b) for, as a suppliant, as she benefited from her father’s protection in her natal home and, as a suppliant, having left the paternal shelter, she is now seeking for protection in the house of her newlywed groom. More precisely, the maxim refers to two rituals (‘καὶ... καὶ...’) through which the husband guarantees his bride’s welfare: (c) the procession from the father’s house to the groom’s, and (c') the handing-over of the bride to the groom.

Ancient Greek weddings took place over a span of three days: the *πραύλια*, in which the spouses made prenuptial offerings to goddesses such as Hera, Aphrodite and Hestia; the *γάμος*, the wedding ceremony itself, which was followed by a procession and a feast; and the *ἐπαυλία*,

³³ E.g. *Od.* 12.25-27.

³⁴ E.g. *Od.* 3.479-480.

³⁵ For example, in *Od.* 3.368-370, Nestor sends his son Pisistratus to guide Telemachus from Pylos to Sparta.

in which the spouses exchanged wedding gifts.³⁶ Before the γάμος the bride would take a purificatory bath, the λουτρά, and was assisted by her mother in adorning herself for the nuptial celebrations (e.g. Eur. *Phoe.* 344-347). The feast was then hosted by the bride's father (e.g. Eur. *IA* 716-721), and ended with the symbolical departure of the wife from the paternal towards the marital abode. During this procession, the newlyweds were accompanied by kith and kin from the natal to their new home (e.g. Hom. *Il.* 18.490-496). The bride's mother acted as a torchbearer and led the couple towards their marital abode (e.g. Eur. *IA* 732-736, *Hel.* 722-724). Therefore, during the adornment rituals the bride was exclusively chaperoned by maidens and female relatives, whereas after the feast the husband formally took over and escorted the wife into his household. It was also possible for the groom not to attend the procession and wait for the bride at home, and for the bride to be escorted by her mother or a friend of the groom, some kind of 'best-man' (e.g. Eur. *IA* 610).³⁷ Yet this was only the case if either of the spouses were widowed or had been married before. A large number of vase paintings illustrating nuptial processions portrays the groom, with or without his chaperon-friend, leading the wife out of her paternal nest. Interestingly, he does so by holding her wrist with his right hand.³⁸ Should this be the ritual the Pythagoreans have in mind, the ἄκουσμα would then read as follows:

(2.1) (a) You should not drive your own wife away, (b) for she is a suppliant; and this is why we both (c) lead her from the *paternal* hearth and (c') *hold* her with the right hand.

According to this interpretation, both (c) and (c') describe the day of the γάμος. Specifically, (c) refers to the wedding procession in which the bride leaves her natal home and reaches the marital chamber together with her husband, whereas (c') portrays the groom's custom of grasping his wife's wrist with the right hand and leading her in their new household.

There is another way to understand the gesture described in (c'). The Greek term λῆψις means both 'hold' – as in reading 1.1 – and 'receipt' (e.g. Pl. *Rep.* 332b). Similarly, the act of

³⁶ On the προύλια, prenuptial sacrifices and baths, see for example Hdt. 4.34, Eur. *Hipp.* 1425-1426, Xen. *Sym.* 2.3. On the γάμοι, wedding feasts and processions, see Hom. *Il.* 18.490-496, Eur. *Alc.* 918-919, *Med.* 1027. On the ἐπανλία, see Poll. 3.39-40.

³⁷ For vase paintings illustrating 'real life', rather than mythical, weddings, see Oakley and Sinos 1994.

³⁸ See Oakley and Sinos 1994, Figs. 82-87, 90, 91, 94, 107, 106. For vase paintings portraying Southern Italian wedding scenes, see Redfield 2003, Figs. 15-16. On married couples clasping right hands (χεῖρα ἐπὶ καρπῷ or *dextrarum iunctio*) during South Italian wedding ceremonies, see Bartoloni and Pitzalis 2016, 813-817.

δεξιὴν διδόναι, giving the right hand, is a way to either welcome someone³⁹ – as in 1.1 – or give assurance.⁴⁰ Before the wedding ritual even began, the union between husband and wife was formally settled by the ἐγγύη, a contract in which the father pledged his daughter to the groom,⁴¹ and the ἑκδοσις, the official handover of a woman's guardianship from her former protector to the husband-to-be.⁴² This bestowal was sanctioned by the handshake of the contractees and the utterance of a specific formula. The handshake leads us back to the act of δεξιὴν διδόναι, the gesture of giving someone right hand as a way to formalise a contract. The formula refers to the acceptance (λῆψις) of the bride-to-be by the groom: once the father had given his daughter in marriage, it was customary for the husband to answer 'λαμβάνω', 'I do – I take/accept her.'⁴³ The λῆψις in (c') may then recall this ritual. Overall, according to the latter reading, the Pythagorean precept states:

(2.2) (a) You should not drive your own wife away, (b) for she is a suppliant. This is why we both (c) lead her from the *paternal* hearth and (c') *accept* her with the right hand.

In this case, (c) and (c') no longer refer to the same ritual, for (c) indicates the wedding procession, whereas (c') alludes to the prenuptial ἐγγύη and ἑκδοσις. Overall, the second reading of the precept elaborates on the parallel between women and suppliants by focusing on wedding ceremonies, rather than initiation and supplication. Specifically, according to 2.1, a man should guarantee his wife protection – the same protection she used to receive from her father – by accompanying from the paternal into her new home. According to 2.2, he takes responsibility for her welfare with a prenuptial pledge.

It is worth noting that weddings also functioned as some kind of initiation rituals for women. For example, Demosthenes compares marriage, the introduction of a daughter to her new household, with the admission of a son into the phratry during the festival Apaturia: 'For this is living with a woman in wedlock – to have sons to introduce in phratries and demes and

³⁹ E.g. Hom. *Il.* 10.542, *Od.* 1.121.

⁴⁰ E.g. Hom. *Il.* 4.159, Eur. *Med.* 21.

⁴¹ E.g. Dem. 27.5, 44.49, 46.18.

⁴² E.g. Ar. *Birds.* 1635, Pl. *Laws* 924d, Eur. *Med.* 309, *Supp.* 133, Dem. 28.15-16, 57.41. On prenuptial pledges and betrothal ceremonies, see Robertson 1991.

⁴³ E.g. Men. *Dysc.* 841-844, *Peri.* 435, 1013-1014, *Sam.* 726-727, *Mis.* 444-445.

daughters to betroth to husbands as one's own' (59.122).⁴⁴ However, the issue with readings 2.1 and 2.2 is that the available evidence for Greek wedding ceremonies makes no specific reference to domestic hearths. Wedding processions more generally started from the house of the bride's father and ended in the marital chamber, *θάλαμος*, of the groom's house. The connection between women, marriage, hearths and supplication may then be a distinctive feature of Pythagoras' teachings. As previously argued, instead of overturning pre-existing and long-established practices, the Pythagoreans put a new moral and religious spin on traditional customs. In this maxim, then, they vest the traditional wedding ritual with religious strength by associating marriage with the inviolability of suppliants. John Gould takes the Pythagorean portrayal of women as suppliants at the hearth as evidence that wedding rituals were traditionally associated with the rite of *ικετεία* (1973, 97-98). Yet there are only three occurrences of this image – namely, Iamblichus' speeches, the *ἄκουσμα* and the *Oeconomica* – always in reference to Pythagoreanism. Thus, such a way of interpreting marriage and strengthening the inviolability of the conjugal bond by comparing it to supplication seems distinctively Pythagorean. The precept pictures traditional wedding rituals, but from a new Pythagorean perspective.

Finally, it is worth noting that the maxim is 'gendered': it addresses men and concerns women. The following extract from Pythagoras' Crotonian speech also concerns women.

Περὶ δὲ τῆς πρὸς τοὺς ἄνδρας ὁμιλίας κελεῦσαι κατανοεῖν, ὅτι συμβαίνει καὶ τοὺς πατέρας ἐπὶ τῆς θηλείας φύσεως παρακεχωρηκέναι μᾶλλον ἀγαπᾶσθαι τοὺς γεγαμηκότας ἢ τοὺς τεκνώσαντας αὐτάς. Διὸ καλῶς ἔχειν ἢ μὴδὲ ἐναντιοῦσθαι πρὸς τοὺς ἄνδρας, ἢ τότε νομίζειν νικᾶν, ὅταν ἐκείνων ἡττηθῶσι.

Regarding the relationship with their husbands, he urged them to think that even their fathers allow their female offspring to love those they have married more than those who begot them. This is why it is well either not to enter into conflict with their husbands or to consider themselves the winners whenever they are defeated in argument by their men.

(Iamb. VP 55)

In this passage, Pythagoras compares the love a woman has for the man to whom she is married with the love for her father, and specifically urges wives to cherish their husband more than their parents. Once again, this leads to some kind of argument: wives are to prioritise their

⁴⁴ See Orman 1999, 9-10, Ferrari 2013. For a festival similar to the Apaturia and celebrated in Ionia, Pythagoras' native land, see Hdt. 1.147.

husbands, on account of which (διὸ) they should either not enter an argument with them or reckon themselves the winners when losing the argument.

Yet, besides regulating marital relationships, the ἄκουσμα takes a step further. The reference to suppliants enables the Pythagoreans to generalise such family-based moral precepts. Supplication rituals were not directly linked to wedding ceremonies. Therefore, the comparison between wives and suppliants endows the maxim with a more general character and application. For instance, the above-quoted excerpt from the *Oeconomica* urges men to treat their wives according to the ‘common law’ (ὁ κοινὸς νόμος) determining how to treat suppliants. The universally recognised rite of ἱκετεία becomes a paradigm for marital life: the image of a husband holding out his right hand to lead his wife from the hearth urges the Pythagoreans to treat women with the same benevolence with which they would more broadly treat their other comrades.

Overall, from this first precept we can already glean some information about the lives and roles of women in early Pythagorean societies. Thus far, women are mentioned as wives of Pythagorean men. However, by comparing them with suppliants led from the sacred hearth with the right hand, Pythagoras endows the traditional domestic role of women with new religious and cultural traits.

IV. Do not adulterate the family line

Marriage rituals are not the only aspect of the husband-wife relationship Pythagoras regulated. Another piece of advice he presumably gave to the Crotonian magistrates is the following:

Σπουδάζειν δὲ καὶ τοῦτο, ὅπως αὐτοὶ τε μόνας ἐκεῖνας εἰδήσωσιν, αἱ τε γυναῖκες μὴ νοθεύωσι τὸ γένος ὀλιγωρία καὶ κακία τῶν συνοικούντων·
They were also to consider carefully what follows: they should know only their wives, and women should not adulterate the line with scorn and contempt for their spouses.

(Iamb. VP 48)

According to the speech, both husbands and wives are to desist from adultery. The instructions are twofold: men are discouraged from having extramarital affairs and women are forbidden from corrupting the family line. At least regarding women, what seems to bother Pythagoras the most is not adultery *per se*, but rather the generation of illegitimate offspring. In the speech to the women, then, Pythagoras gives similar advice to the wives:

Λέγεται δὲ καὶ τοιοῦτόν τι διελθεῖν, ὅτι περὶ τὴν χώραν τῶν Κροτωνιατῶν ἀνδρὸς μὲν ἀρετὴ πρὸς γυναῖκα διαβεβόηται, Ὀδυσσεώς οὐ δεξαμένου παρὰ τῆς Καλυψοῦς ἀθανασίαν ἐπὶ τῷ τὴν Πηνελόπην

καταλιπεῖν, ὑπολείποιο δὲ ταῖς γυναῖξιν εἰς τοὺς ἄνδρας ἀποδείξασθαι
τὴν καλοκαγαθίαν, ὅπως εἰς ἴσον καταστήσωσι τὴν εὐλογίαν.

He (Pythagoras) is also said to have spoken as follows. A man's virtue towards his wife was manifested in the Crotonian region, when Odysseus did not accept immortality from Calypso on condition that he desert Penelope. It is then up to women to show their nobility⁴⁵ in order to achieve equality with men in terms of good repute.

(Iamb. *VP* 57)

In this passage, women are encouraged to follow Odysseus's example and refrain from ill-treating their husbands: as Odysseus did not desert Penelope to stay in Ogygia with Calypso, the Crotonian wives should not abandon their spouse. Specifically, Odysseus sails back to Penelope despite Calypso's promise to grant him eternal life. As discussed in Ch. 4, the Pythagoreans believed in the possibility of life after death. Therefore, especially from a Pythagorean point of view, eternal life would have appeared as a strong temptation, and renouncing immortality as an even more honourable behaviour.

Noteworthy is how Pythagoras refers to mythology. Pythagoras appropriates and reinterprets traditional Greek culture in order to illustrate his teachings with well-known mythical examples. The Crotonian audience was presumably familiar with Homeric epic and characters. Therefore, when reminded of Odysseus' struggle to return to his wife, they would have easily grasped the meaning and value of Pythagoras' reprimand of adultery.⁴⁶ Yet we may wonder why Pythagoras is presenting Odysseus as the paradigm of marital fidelity, rather than Penelope herself: Odysseus is the returning husband, but Penelope is the faithfully awaiting wife. The reason behind this can be twofold. First, Pythagoras may refer to the case of Odysseus giving up immortality to return to his wife because of the tradition locating Calypso's island Ogygia near Croton, where he is lecturing.⁴⁷ Second, since Pythagoras is teaching women how to behave, he

⁴⁵ According to De Vogel, the reference to the Aristotelian virtue of καλοκαγαθία dates the speeches at least back to the fourth century BCE (1966, 126). The same virtue is also mentioned earlier in the speech to the Crotonian women (Iamb. *VP* 54 – cf. Ch. 3.VI) and in the speech to the boys (*VP* 51).

⁴⁶ Further evidence of Pythagoras' prohibition of adultery comes from Hieronymus of Rhodes (Fr. 20 Wehrli, quoted in D.L. 8.21 – cf. Ch. 4.II), in which Pythagoras claims to have witnessed the souls of adulterers being punished in the underworld.

⁴⁷ A likely reason why Odysseus should be particularly celebrated in Croton is suggested in Strabo 7.3.6 and Plin. *NH* 3.15, according to which the island of Ogygia should be located in Southern Italy. In contrast, Strabo rejects this account and places Ogygia in the Atlantic Ocean, whereas Plutarch locates it near Britain (*Mor.* 941a).

may have chosen to present them with an example in which men also abided by similar precepts safeguarding marital relationships. Using a male paradigm to illustrate a female virtue seems to invert gender stereotypes: women should be as faithful as men are. Interestingly, Pythagoras urges the Crotonian women to show their *καλοκαγαθία*, nobility. This virtue was traditionally associated with men in military contexts (e.g. Hdt. 1.30).⁴⁸ Consequently, women are treated as having the archetypal virtue of men.

Lastly, among the ἀκούσματα Iamblichus quotes from Aristotle we find this instruction:

Χρυσὸν ἐχούσῃ μὴ πλησιάζειν ἐπὶ τεκνοποιίᾳ.

Do not beget children with a woman wearing gold.

(Iamb. VP 48)

Compared to the speeches, the maxim does not forbid male adultery *per se*, but rather the relationship with a particular type of woman and for a particular purpose. The two key expressions are ἡ χρυσὸν ἔχουσα and τεκνοποιία.

On the surface, the precept addresses those having relationships with courtesans. That the epithet ‘gold-wearing’ may denote a courtesan (ἐταῖρα) is suggested by another excerpt from Iamblichus’ *Vita* in which married women are distinguished from prostitutes as they do not adorn themselves with gold (VP 187).⁴⁹ Further evidence for the association of courtesans with gold comes from Dem. 48.55, in which ἐταῖραι are described as wearing golden jewellery and expensive adornments, and from the ἐταῖρα-name Chrysis (‘Goldie’) in Menander’s *Samia*.⁵⁰ Interestingly, although Iamblichus fails to mention this detail, in the *Odyssey* Calypso is also described as wearing a golden belt (5.230-232). Finally, Iamblichus’ writes that after listening to Pythagoras’ lectures, the Crotoniates dismissed their concubines (VP 132, 195) which supports the suggestion that this is the kind of relationship forbidden in the precept. Therefore, Pythagoras seems to have prohibited his followers from begetting children with courtesans.⁵¹

⁴⁸ See also Elshtain 1993, 50.

⁴⁹ Elsewhere in Southern Italy – namely, in Syracuse – women are also discouraged from wearing golden jewellery to avoid being mistaken for harlots (Ath. *Deipn.* 12.521b). For a discussion of the Southern Italian excessive luxury, see Timaues Frs. 9, 44 and 50.

⁵⁰ On the gold-courtesan relation, see Kurke 1997, 116-118.

⁵¹ In Dicaearchus’ Fr. 36, the life as a prostitute is listed among Pythagoras’ past incarnations. Most scholars take the fragment to be satirical (Huffman 2014b – cf. Ch. 4.III). If so, Dicaearchus may be mocking the belief in reincarnation by alluding to Pythagoras’ previous life as a courtesan despite his remarks against prostitution.

The second keyword is τεκνοποιία. In the Crotonian speeches, Pythagoras does not outlaw all instances of female adultery, but rather only those resulting in the generation of illegitimate offspring. In antiquity νοθεία, bastardy, was a rather troublesome legal issue. The ultimate purpose of marriage was to generate legitimate heirs.⁵² By contrast, bastard sons were excluded from both inheritance and civil rights.⁵³ Especially worrisome was the case of a married woman having extramarital affairs and then raising illegitimate children as legitimately born within wedlock, thus polluting the family line. This may be the reason why, in the speech, Pythagoras focuses on women begetting bastard offspring. In the precept, this prohibition is then extended to the men.

Besides this surface reading, another possible interpretation of the ἄκουσμα is as forbidding men from having relationships with non-Pythagorean women and generating non-Pythagorean sons and daughters. Pythagoras forbade his disciples, particularly the women, from indulging in luxury. For example, in the speeches women are advised against wearing expensive clothes, and encouraged to share what they own with their fellow community members.

Καὶ τὴν δόξαν τὴν διαδεδομένην μὴ καταλύσωσι μηδὲ τοὺς μυθογράφους ἐξελέγξωσιν, οἱ θεωροῦντες τὴν τῶν γυναικῶν δικαιοσύνην ἐκ τοῦ προΐεσθαι μὲν ἁμάρτυρον τὸν ἱματισμὸν καὶ τὸν κόσμον, ὅταν τινὶ ἄλλῳ δέῃ χρῆσθαι, μὴ γίνεσθαι δὲ ἐκ τῆς πίστεως δίκας μηδ' ἀντιλογίας, ἐμυθοποίησαν τρεῖς γυναῖκας ἐνὶ κοινῷ πάσας ὀφθαλμῶ χρωμένας διὰ τὴν εὐχερῇ κοινωνίαν· ὅπερ ἐπὶ τοὺς ἄρρενας μετατεθέν, ὡς ὁ προλαβὼν ἀπέδωκεν εὐκόλως, ἐτοίμως καὶ τῶν ἑαυτοῦ μεταδιδούς, οὐδένα ἂν προσδέξασθαι λεγόμενον, ὡς μὴ οἰκεῖον αὐτῶν τῇ φύσει.

And they should neither ruin the reputation they have acquired nor disprove those mythmakers who saw the justice of women in their lending clothes and adornments without witness, whenever someone else needed to use them, and without lawsuits and quarrels because of this good faith, and thus told of three women all using one eye in common in virtue of their open-handed fellowship. Had such a story been applied to males, that the one who received the eye first was happy

⁵² E.g. Dem. 23.53-54, Plu. *Lyc.* 15.1-10.

⁵³ E.g. Ar. *Birds* 1655-1666, Plu. *Sol.* 22.4, *Per.* 37.2-5. On Greek νοθεία, see Ogden 1996.

to give it back and willing to share his own property, nobody would have believed it. And this because it is not in their nature.⁵⁴

(Iamb. VP 55)

Διὰ δὲ τῶν εἰς τὴν εὐσέβειαν ἐπαίνων πρὸς τὴν εὐτέλειαν τὴν κατὰ τὸν ἱματισμὸν τηλικαύτην παραδέδοται κατασκευάσαι τὴν μεταβολήν, ὥστε τὰ πολυτελῆ τῶν ἱματίων μηδεμίαν ἐνδύεσθαι τολμᾶν, ἀλλὰ θεῖναι πάσας εἰς τὸ τῆς Ἥρας ἱερὸν πολλὰς μυριάδας ἱματίων.

It is reported that by praising piety, he (Pythagoras) brought about such a great change towards sobriety with respect to clothing that no woman dared to wear expensive dresses, but they all placed thousands of clothes in the temple of Hera.

(Iamb. VP 56)

According to the speech, a distinctively female sense of justice is exemplified by the women's habit of lending and borrowing each other's apparel without needing a witness to supervise the exchange. Likewise, the three Graeae lived sharing one eye and, according to certain traditions, one tooth.⁵⁵ This female ability is also praised in Aristophanes' *Ecclesiazusae* 446-451, which provides further evidence for dating the speech at least back to the fourth century BCE:⁵⁶ 'Then he said that women lend each other clothes, gold, silver and drinking cups, by themselves and without witnesses, and that they return everything without fraud.' Moreover, Iamblichus adds that Pythagoras' teachings about property led the Crotonian women to relieve themselves of their most expensive dresses. If so, among the Crotoniates there should have been no gold-wearing women.

In the light of the reference to the women's belongings, Pomeroy argues that the Pythagoreans were wealthy aristocrats (2013, 14). Yet the only conclusion we can draw from Pythagoras' words is that the women owned property. This, in turn, would be in contrast with Pythagorean communism (cf. 2.I). There are three ways around this predicament. First, we may follow Zhmud in arguing that the Pythagoreans did not hold everything in common, but rather had private property, although being willing to share it (2012, 149-150). Second, communism might not concern all members of the society, but only the higher-ranked ones (Iamb. VP 80-81). If so, women would not be included in this group. Third, more likely, the reason may lie

⁵⁴ For a discussion of male and female natures in Pythagoreanism, see Ch. 3.VII below.

⁵⁵ On the Graeae, see Hes. *Th.* 270, Aesch. *PB* 794-795.

⁵⁶ See also Rostagni 1955-1956, 55-56, De Vogel 1966, 134-135, Demand 1982a.

in the kind of audience to whom the speeches are addressed. Pythagoras is not lecturing disciples, but rather prospective disciples. Thus, he does not overturn their way of life, but rather gradually introduce them to the Pythagorean values and beliefs. As previously argued, the Pythagoreans balanced traditional customs with innovative practices: on the one hand, they held property in common; on the other hand, they allowed for exceptions and compromises to make communism acceptable to the Crotoniates.⁵⁷ Regardless of the extent to which the Pythagoreans shared property, communism would have been a sudden change in the Crotonian constitution. Thus, since the women of Croton had property of their own, in the speech Pythagoras teaches them how to manage it. Yet by urging women to get rid of excessive luxuries, he devalues private property. Similarly, by urging them to lend each other clothes, he introduces the practice of sharing belongings – which in turn would enable them to hold property in common with their friends and fellow-Pythagoreans, should they decide to join the society.

Returning to the precept, we may notice that those women wearing gold either would not have attended Pythagoras' lectures or would have decided not to abide by his injunction against expensive adornments. Noteworthy in this regard is that Iamblichus reports the epithet ἡ χρυσὸν ἔχουσα, instead of writing more explicitly ἑταίρα or παλλακίς, courtesan or concubine, as in *VP* 187 and 195. The suggestion seems to be that the female trait men should watch out for and try to avoid, is luxurious golden clothing. Only Pythagoras' women followers were prohibited from wearing gold. By contrast, golden jewellery were occasionally included in female property and dowries (e.g. *Dem.* 45.28). A proper Pythagorean woman would have never dressed in gold. Thus, the maxim urges men to avoid interactions with women who were not taught Pythagorean doctrines or did not put his teachings into practice. Therefore, the target of this prohibition may not be a courtesan after all, but rather a non-Pythagorean woman, a woman who is not assimilating Pythagorean values, and who is here portrayed as a *quasi-ἑταίρα*.

Further support for this reading comes from the second keyword: τεκνοποιία. Since mothers are the ones in charge of raising children, the problem with begetting children with a woman who does not share the Pythagorean lifestyle and beliefs is that she will instil in her sons and daughters a different value system.⁵⁸ The children begotten with a gold-wearing woman are illegitimate in the loose sense of the word: not because they are born outside marriage, but because they are born outside the Pythagorean way of life and values. Again, they are *quasi-illegitimate*, for they do not abide by the Pythagorean rule. As previously argued, the

⁵⁷ See also Clark 1989, 35.

⁵⁸ The problems of being brought up by women and according to the wrong value-system is also mentioned in Plato's *Laws* 694c-695b with regard to Persians mothers.

Pythagoreans lived according to a strictly regulated lifestyle and such a way of life endowed the society with some kind of communal bond and identity. Yet the common lifestyle is precisely what would be missing in the case of children raised by non-Pythagorean women.

For example, another family-centred Pythagorean maxim is the following: ‘You must beget children, for you must leave them to serve the god in your stead’ (Iamb. *VP* 83). The Pythagoreans are to leave children behind to worship the gods in their stead. This can also be read in the light of the importance of having wives with the right value system in place and raising Pythagorean sons and daughters: non-Pythagorean children do not put Pythagoras’ teachings into practice and therefore do not worship the gods appropriately. Overall, as opposed to what its surface meaning suggests, this ἄκουσμα may not address the issues of harlotry and illegitimacy to begin with. Instead of the generation of children outside marriage, it may forbid the generation of children outside the Pythagorean community, way of life, and system of values. In both cases, the purpose is the defence of marital relations. Yet, according to my reading, what is safeguarded is a specific kind of marital relation with a Pythagorean wife who will nurture a Pythagorean family.

There are two final points to remark. First, this is another example of ‘gendered’ ἄκουσμα. As previously mentioned, Pythagoras is reputed to have diversified his teachings in accordance with the different groups of disciples each time being educated. Therefore, some Pythagorean precepts, such as the maxim comparing wives and suppliant, are specifically addressed to men.⁵⁹ In particular, the maxim against begetting children with gold-wearing women is gendered in two ways: first, it teaches men with whom to procreate; second, it discourages women from being luxurious. As with the speeches, then, Pythagoras may have delivered different ἀκούσματα to men and women. Nonetheless, these teachings complement each other. In the case of suppliant wives, Pythagoras regulates the rite of passage into married life from both the male and the female perspective, giving similar advice. In the above quoted precepts, he separately discourages both husbands and wives from committing adultery, and both fathers and mothers from adulterating the line.

The second remark is that by looking at Pythagoras’ teachings about marital and extramarital relationships, we are again able to differentiate speeches and ἀκούσματα. Despite the above mentioned gender differences, the maxim stating with whom to beget children is another example of Pythagorean moral precept delivered to both large audiences during public lectures and restricted circles by means of symbolic sayings. In the speeches, Pythagoras more generally discourages the magistrates and their wives from committing adultery. Once again, should they

⁵⁹ For an example of an ἄκουσμα for women, see the next section.

then decide not to join the society, this would remain sound advice on how to behave with their spouses. The ἄκουσμα, on the other hand, takes a step further and forbids a particular kind of relationship – namely, that with a ‘gold-wearing woman’ with the purpose of begetting children. After the first-level introduction to the Pythagorean rule of conduct, those who enter the community are given stricter and more specific life regulations. In this case, they are lectured on whom to choose as their bride and the mother of their offspring: they are not to beget children with a courtesan or, more generally, a luxurious woman, who would neither be proper a Pythagorean nor find herself on the right track to become one.

Overall, as with the previous maxim, the female daily life is primarily regulated insofar as women are wives and mothers. Nonetheless, once again, family roles appear to gain a new cultural significance.

V. The temperate and lawful begetting of children

Pythagoras also lectured his pupils about reproduction. On the matter of sexual regulations, Aristoxenus records the following precept:

Ἐκ τῶν Ἀριστοξένου Πυθαγορείου· Περὶ δὲ γενέσεως παίδων τάδε ἔλεγε· καθόλου μὲν φυλάττεσθαι τὸ καλούμενον προφερές· οὔτε γὰρ τῶν φυτῶν οὔτε τῶν ζώων εὐκαρπα τὰ προφερῇ γίνεσθαι· ἀλλὰ χρόνον τινὰ προπαρασκευάζεσθαι τῆς καρποφορίας, ἐν ᾧ ἐξισχύσαντα καὶ τετελειωμένα τὰ σώματα παρέχειν τὰ τε σπέρματα καὶ τοὺς καρποὺς δεδύνηται. Πολλὰ δὲ εἶναι ἐν τῷ βίῳ, ἐν οἷς ἡ ὀψιμαθία ἐστὶ βελτίων, οἷον καὶ τὸ τοῦ ἀφροδισιάζειν πρᾶγμα. δέον οὖν ἐστὶ 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 χρηστέον τοῖς ἀφροδισίοις· τοῦτο γὰρ πρὸς τε τὴν τῶν γεννώντων καὶ γεννησομένων εὐεξίαν πολὺ τι συμβάλλεσθαι. Ἔλεγε δὲ μήτε τροφῆς μήτε μέθης πλήρη ταῖς γυναῖξιν εἰς τὸ γεννᾶν ὁμιλεῖν· οὐ γὰρ οἶεται ἐκ φαύλης καὶ ἀσυμφώνου καὶ ταραχώδους κράσεως εὐρυθμα καὶ καλά, ἀλλ’ οὐδὲ ἀγαθὰ τὴν ἀρχὴν γίνεσθαι.

From the works of Aristoxenus the Pythagorean. Regarding the generation of children, he (Pythagoras) spoke as follows. (a) The so-called premature is to be avoided completely, for neither among plants nor among animals does the premature bear good fruit, but fruit-bearing

should be prepared beforehand for some time, during which, once in strength and fully developed, the body is able to provide semen and fruits. There are many matters in life in which late learning is better, such as sexual intercourse. Thus, children should be so busy training that not only do they not look for it, but, if possible, they do not even know of such intercourse until they turn twenty. Even then, they should rarely engage in sex, for this contributes greatly to the welfare of both parents and offspring. He also said that (b) after eating and drinking to excess, one must not beget children with a woman, for he believes the product of a base, disproportionate and disordered union is not well-proportionate and beautiful, but rather not good at all.

(Aristoxenus Fr. 39 Wehrli)⁶⁰

Pythagoras lectured his pupils on (a) the age and (b) the circumstances in which they should engage in sexual intercourse. First, children are discouraged from taking an interest in sex until they are twenty, as only then will they have reached the proper maturity and strength that will enable them to generate good offspring.⁶¹ Even after turning twenty, they are to engage in sexual intercourse on rare occasions to preserve the good state of both the begetters and the begotten. This is illustrated by means of an agricultural analogy, according to which plants also need to grow before being able to bear good fruits. Furthermore, Pythagoras forbids his disciples from procreating after excessive eating and drinking, for this may also lead them to generate bad children.⁶² Introducing Aristoxenus' quotation, Iamblichus recalls Pythagoras' habit of organising his disciples into age groups and dividing human life into four periods lasting twenty years each: childhood, youth, adulthood and old age (VP 201-203 – cf. Ch. 2.I). He writes that the transition from one age onto the following is troublesome and that pupils need guidance right from birth all the way into manhood. The leap from childhood to youth is especially

⁶⁰ The precept is quoted in Stob. 4.37.4 and Iamb. VP 209-213. Another version comes in the pseudo-Pythagorean treatise *De Universi Natura* 44-46 and 52-57 by Ocellus (Thesleff 1965, 137-138). For the purpose of this work, I shall leave Ocellus' account aside and focus on those by Stobaeus and Iamblichus. For an in depth analysis of Ocellus' work, see Gaca 2000, 126-128.

⁶¹ See also Pl. *Laws* 840d. For a deeper analysis of the Pythagorean influence on Platonic sexual regulations, see Huffman 2008a, pp.109-113, Gaca 2000, 122-125.

⁶² See also *Laws* 839a. When quoting this precept, Iamblichus compares those who supervise human reproduction to those who look after the breeding of dogs and birds, which reminds us of Plato's *Republic* V (e.g. 458e-459a – cf. Ch. 5.II).

difficult and thus requires vigilant supervision. Consequently, keeping the pupils away from sexual intercourse until they are twenty and strictly regulating their sexual life once they have reached that age, is a way to supervise the thorny stage in which children become youth.

The list of Pythagorean sexual regulations goes beyond those quoted by Aristoxenus. For example, Iamblichus adds further restrictions, such as the prohibition from having intercourse between family members, inside temples⁶³ and in public places (VP 209-210). These rules provide further evidence of how the Pythagoreans reacted to Greek customs. Athenian girls traditionally married at the age of fourteen, whereas men would wait until they were forty.⁶⁴ In Sparta, the female marriageable age was postponed between eighteen and twenty in order to allow women to develop the strength needed to bear strong children.⁶⁵ Similarly, the Pythagoreans raised the minimum age for intercourse to twenty as a guarantee of good offspring. On the one hand, then, Pythagoras' attempt to set an age requirement for sexual relations is rooted in the Greek, and especially Spartan, tradition. On the other hand, his requirements appear to be unusually strict. Pythagoras is not simply setting the legal age for marriage, but rather the beginning of his disciples' sexual activity. Furthermore, he is not exclusively addressing women, but both young boys and girls. Once again, the Pythagoreans elaborate on existing customs by endowing them with new rigor. Specifically, what ultimately concerns them is neither marriage nor sex as such, but rather eugenics.

According to Iamblichus, the goal behind these regulations is the generation of children who are σώφρωνες and νόμιμοι, temperate and lawful. By contrast, when intemperate and against nature, παρὰ φύσιν, sex will never result in a good offspring (VP 210). Kathy Gaca describes that of the Pythagoreans as a procreationist approach to sexual regulations, which forbids non-reproductive intercourse (2000, 116-125). Yet, when defining sex that is κατὰ φύσιν τε καὶ μετὰ σωφροσύνης, according to nature and temperance, Iamblichus does not simply define it as producing every kind of offspring, but rather as generating children who are σώφρωνες and νόμιμοι.⁶⁶ First, when according to nature, procreation is temperate. Thus, the Pythagorean maxims against engaging in sexual intercourse when full of food and drink are not meant to refrain natural impulses to seek pleasures. Rather, they portray intemperance as an unnatural trait.

⁶³ On the impiety of unlawful intercourse, see Diogenes 8.43 (cf. Ch. 3.VI).

⁶⁴ E.g. Hes. WD 695, Hdt. 6.61, Xen. Oec. 7.5, Dem. 29.43. In Athens, the second stage of life – youth, or ephebate – would start between the ages of thirteen and seventeen (Griffith 2015, 43-44).

⁶⁵ E.g. Xen. Lac. Pol. 1.3-10, Plu. Lyc. 15.3-5. For a similar age limit, see Pl. Rep. 460e, Laws 785b, 833d.

⁶⁶ In Laws 838e-839a, Plato also limits himself to regulating reproductive intercourse.

The naturalism of the argument is supported by means of an agricultural analogy, which again shows how temperate procreation is ultimately *κατὰ φύσιν*.⁶⁷ Second, intercourse and procreation should be lawful. In the maxim about gold-wearing women, Pythagoras does not prohibit intercourse in full, but rather only the procreation of illegitimate children. These have been interpreted as children born out of a non-Pythagorean union (cf. Ch 3.IV). Along similar lines, then, what Pythagoras rejects in this precept is not non-procreative sex, but rather the kind of procreative sex that does not abide by the Pythagorean regulations, thus producing bad offspring. Children are *νόμιμοι*, legitimate, when born in conformity with the Pythagorean rules – that is, when their parents abide by the Pythagorean code of behaviour, are self-controlled and thus engage in intercourse, eat and drink accordingly. Overall, the purpose of such sexual regulations is not reproduction in general, but rather the good kind of reproduction. Iamblichus remarks that the excellence, temperance and lawfulness of the begetters is the only way to guarantee the excellence, temperance and lawfulness of the begotten (VP 211-213). Therefore, when begetting a child, a Pythagorean ought to make sure to do so with the right woman (cf. Ch. 3.IV), at the right age and in the right circumstances.

This third precept stands out from the two maxims analysed above for two reasons. First, as opposed to the maxims forbidding men from mistreating their wives and having children from luxurious women, the instructions Aristoxenus quotes are not gendered, as they more generally address both parents. Second, whilst the other two *ἀκούσματα* are concise and obscure, the latter precept is relatively long and clear. This leads us to wonder whether it belongs to the same group of teachings and addresses the same group of followers – that is, whether it should be classified as an *ἄκουσμα* in the first place.

At the beginning of this chapter, I argued that Pythagoras' audiences are educated in two stages: introductory speeches to large groups of prospective followers and short maxims for initiated disciples. As both the speeches and the *ἀκούσματα*, the above-quoted precept was imparted orally, regulates important aspects of the disciples' daily life, i.e. sexual intercourse and procreation, and is embedded in ancient Greek customs. However, in other respects the precept differs from the *ἀκούσματα*: it is neither short nor difficult to decode, and seems to give advice rather than strict prohibitions. Aristoxenus quotes the precepts in his work entitled *Pythagorean Sayings* (*ἀποφάσεις*). In VP 101, Iamblichus introduces the *ἀποφάσεις*, utterances or declarations, as 'another mode of education (*ἄλλος τρόπος παιδείσεως*)', different from the symbols, which are described as 'the most indispensable' (*ἀναγκαιότατος*) teaching technique

⁶⁷ Although this reference to *φύσις* goes beyond gender, for further discussion of the Pythagorean take on male and female natures, see Ch. 3.VII.

(VP 103). The ἀποφάσεις are not obscure taboos, but rather sayings and declarations advising the disciples on how they should live their lives and presenting them with reasons for this behaviour. On the other hand, the σύμβολα are ἀναγκαῖα for two reasons. First, they are *forceful*, strong and assertive. Second, they are *indispensable*, the basic and fundamental stage of being a Pythagorean – a code of conduct by which all those who enter the community are expected to abide.

There are two ways to make sense of the difference: either we take the ἀποφάσεις to be a later fabrication or we group them together with the speeches. Aristotle and Aristoxenus give a rationalised account of the Pythagorean tradition. The above quoted fragment may then be an example of the Peripatetic attempt to attach a reason-why to the Pythagorean symbols (Burkert 1972, 106-107). Yet the precept may also remind us of the style of the Crotonian speeches. This is not meant to imply that Aristoxenus is here quoting part of a speech, but rather that the ἀποφάσεις are to be distinguished from the ἀκούσματα and included in the first group of teachings. As such, they share the speeches' audience and purpose: they introduce to the Pythagorean sexual regulations those who have not yet been exposed to such a way of life, and build Pythagoras' authority as an educator by showing his advice to be sound.⁶⁸ Noteworthy in this regard is that in order to justify these sexual regulations, the precept makes use of some kind of naturalistic inductive argument: plants and animals behave in the same way as men; animals and plants need time to bear good fruit; similarly, then, men should engage in intercourse later in life.⁶⁹ The reference to agricultural practices and farming techniques suggests that the ἀπόφασις discusses practical concerns, such as reproduction, which are understandable to the majority. Overall, this appears a rationalised account of Pythagorean ethics. Yet the reason-why may have been introduced by the Pythagoreans themselves, rather than the Peripatetics in the fourth century.⁷⁰

Finally, I shall focus on the reference to σωφροσύνη, temperance and self-control. Iamblichus quotes this precept in the chapter of the *Vita Pythagorica* concerning Pythagorean temperance (VP 187-213). Therefore, his reading emphasises the need for restraint in sexual intercourse. Self-mastery was central to ancient Pythagoreanism. The Crotonian magistrates are asked to

⁶⁸ See Morgan 2013, 109-113, in which this form of utterances is described as conferring upon sages the authority of being moral guides.

⁶⁹ With regard to this plant analogy, it is worth noting that in the second century BCE Pythagoras was believed to have authored a book entitled *On the Effects of Plants*, referred to in Cato's *On Agriculture* 157 and Pliny's *Natural History* 24.159 (Centrone 2014, 318).

⁷⁰ For further arguments against dating the ἀποφάσεις in the fourth century, see Huffman 2008a. Laks and Most also include this fragment among those that 'can reasonably linked to the oldest form of Pythagoreanism – if not to Pythagoras himself, then at least to his congregation' (2016, 5, 334-335).

become an example (παράδειγμα) of temperance for both citizens in the πόλις and families in the household (Iamb. VP 48). Self-control is a virtue to be achieved by both family members in private and community members in public. Among the several examples of σωφροσύνη Iamblichus mentions, four stand out as especially dear to the Pythagoreans: (i) a rigid diet, (ii) the mastery of the tongue, (iii) the avoidance of wealth and (iv) emotional restraint, particularly in the case of anger. I shall examine whether in these cases temperance is in fact the main concern or if, as with sexual restraint, Pythagoras' instructions go beyond self-mastery.

I shall start from the Pythagorean eating habits (cf. Ch. 4.V). According to the ἀκούσματα listed the *Lives*, the Pythagoreans avoided fish such as blacktail and red mullet, beans, wine during daytime, white cocks, fish and at least certain types of meat, such as the heart of oxen and rams.⁷¹ According to Eudoxus, Pythagoras even kept his distance from butchers and hunters in order to abide by his *quasi*-vegetarian lifestyle. Along similar lines, according D.L. 8.20, Porph. VP 36 and Iamb. VP 98, he forbade animal sacrifice and urged his disciple to offer barley, cakes and myrrh (cf. Ch. 3.VI).

It is worth noting that the Pythagorean diet might not have been as strict. For example, according to Aristoxenus and Aristotle, Pythagoras only prohibited certain animals, such as oxen and rams,⁷² or certain parts of these animals.⁷³ Moreover, he is reputed to have allowed athletes to eat meat.⁷⁴ The same can be argued with regard to the ban against animal sacrifices:⁷⁵ for example, in D.L. 8.12 the Pythagoreans sacrifice an ox to celebrate a geometrical discovery.⁷⁶ There are four possible explanations for these exceptions. First, the tradition questioning Pythagorean vegetarianism may have its roots in the Peripatetic attempt to rationalise the Pythagorean doctrines. Second, dietary requirements might have become less strict through time. Third, as Iamb. VP 107 and 150 suggest, complete abstinence from meat might have been asked of some disciples only, presumably the highest-ranked (Burkert 1972, 180-181). Lastly, these dietary rules may be an example of the Pythagorean trade-off between tradition and innovation. Meat was a primary component of the Greek diet and animal sacrifices were a widely accepted religious practice. Therefore, in order to forbid his disciples from killing

⁷¹ D.L. 8.18-20, 8.34, Porph. VP 43-45.

⁷² Aristotle Fr. 195, quoted in D.L. 8.34, Aristoxenus Fr. 29a, quoted in D.L. 8.20.

⁷³ Aristotle Fr. 194, quoted in D.L. 8.19. See also Porph. VP 43.

⁷⁴ D.L. 8.12, Porph. VP 15, Iamb. VP 25.

⁷⁵ Iamb. VP 25 The maxim in Iamb. VP 82 'What is most just? To sacrifice' does not specify what offerings are allowed.

⁷⁶ Pace Is. 11.28, D.L. 8.53 and Porph. VP 36, according to which the offering is an ox-shaped cake made of flour.

animals, but at the same time abide by the customs of the cities in which they lived, the Pythagoreans possibly allowed exceptions and relaxed their regulations (KRS 1983, 231).

Overall, the Pythagoreans had to follow some kind of dietary rules. Nevertheless, these regulations were not always implemented fully. Moreover, as opposed to what Iamblichus suggests in *VP* 187-213, the ultimate reason behind these eating habits does not seem to be the pursuit of temperance. Rather, the Pythagorean diet was influenced by the belief in the transmigration of souls: since souls reincarnate into different beings, all living creatures are akin and thus should be treated equally. For example, in D.L. 8.13, Iamb. *VP* 85 and *VP* 168-169, Pythagoras' pupils are only allowed to eat and sacrifice those animals in which human souls do not enter. The interconnection between the belief in reincarnation and the Pythagorean way of life is explored in more detail in the next chapter. For the time being, it is sufficient to notice that, besides following a moral agenda based on temperance, the Pythagoreans seem to have reduced their meat consumption as they believed themselves to be part of a community of ensouled beings, and as such refused to hurt their kin.

Another example is the ban against beans. According to Diogenes, Pythagoras was captured during the anti-Pythagorean uprising in Croton, for he refused to escape through a field of beans (D.L. 8.39-45).⁷⁷ In Porph. *VP* 24 and Iamb. *VP* 61, he is said to have talked an ox out of eating beans. According to Aristotle, this taboo is linked to sexual regulations as beans resemble human genitalia and smell like semen (Fr. 195). According to Clement, they cause infertility (*Strom.* 3.24.1-2). Diogenes, again on the evidence of Aristotle, suggests that beans resemble the jointless gates of Hades (8.34 – see also Plin. *NH* 18.30), which may bring us back to Pythagoras' teachings on the afterlife. Porphyry claims that they are to be avoided as they spring from the earth, which is the ultimate origin of all things (*VP* 44). Iamblichus believes that Pythagoras suffered from favism (*VP* 106). Lastly, Aristoxenus denies that the Pythagoreans followed such a rule to begin with (Fr. 25). Consequently, there are several reasons why the Pythagoreans were to avoid beans, but the pursuit of temperance does not feature among them. Overall, there is a lively debate concerning Pythagorean diet and vegetarianism,⁷⁸ but nonetheless these eating habits appear to go beyond the pursuit of temperance. As Burkert (1972, 183-185) and Guthrie (1962, 183-185) argue, they are the product of a dense web of religious beliefs, social, cultural and even medical influences on Pythagorean thought.

⁷⁷ The same is said about a group of Pythagoreans from Tarentum, among whom are Timycha and Myllias, who are captured on their way to Metapontum while trying to avoid a beanfield (Neanthes Fr. 31b, quoted in Iamb. *VP* 191).

⁷⁸ See Guthrie 1962, 183-191, Burkert 1972, 180-185, Betegh 2014b, 154-159.

I shall now move on to the vow of silence. As previously mentioned, Iamblichus describes the mastery of the tongue as the most difficult form of σωφροσύνη to achieve. Before joining the community, the prospective disciples had to spend five years in silence. Once accepted into the community, they were expected to keep the doctrines secret (cf. Ch. 2.I). Restraint in speech is also required of the Pythagorean women:

Παραγγεῖλαι δὲ καὶ κατὰ πάντα τὸν βίον αὐτάς τε εὐφημεῖν καὶ τοὺς
ἄλλους ὁρᾶν ὅποσα ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν εὐφημήσουσι.

He also exhorted them to say only good things in every aspect of their
life, and to see how the others would speak well of them.

(Iamb. VP 55)

In his speeches, Pythagoras encourages women to speak moderately.⁷⁹ This also reminds us of Timycha, whom the tyrant Dionysius had imprisoned and tortured to force her to reveal the Pythagorean secrets, and who bit off her tongue to avoid transgressing her vow of silence. Yet Timycha's anecdote shows how the ultimate purpose of the mastery of the tongue is not temperance, but rather the protection of the Pythagorean community and its secrets. As was the case for the Pythagorean dietary rules, the sense of community is the ultimate reason behind this form of self-control.

Lastly, we turn to the prohibition of excessive wealth and unrestrained anger. The Pythagorean precepts against luxurious women have already been discussed in the previous chapter. As for emotional restraint, a notable example is that of Archytas refusing to rage at the negligence of his slaves.⁸⁰ At first glance, there is not much more to these maxims than σωφροσύνη. However, they may again lead us back to the purpose of protecting and strengthening the community. Excessive property clashes with the precept urging friends to hold everything in common and sharing their belongings with their fellow Pythagoreans (cf. Ch. 2.I). As Plato argues in his *Republic*, property endangers the community by generating divisions among its members (cf. Ch. 5.II). Along the same lines, excessive anger jeopardises the relationships between the disciples, whereas self-control consolidates the society. Ultimately, if Xenophanes is right in

⁷⁹ A similar precept is listed among Pythagoras' teachings in Stob. 3.34.7.

⁸⁰ Iamb. VP 197, on the evidence of Aristoxenus' Fr. 30. The source Iamblichus mentions is Spintharus, Aristoxenus' father, who knew Archytas. A similar anecdote is reported in D.L. 8.19-20 in relation to Pythagoras. Further evidence of Pythagorean emotional restraint comes in D.L. 8.23 and Porph. VP 35, in which Pythagoras is said to avoid excessive laughter, pleasure and grief.

claiming that Pythagoras would not beat a puppy hosting the soul of a friend (Fr. 7, quoted in D.L. 8.36 – cf. Ch. 4.II), his disciples are likely to have behaved similarly towards their comrades.

Overall, these prohibitions go beyond temperance. They also consolidate the communal bond uniting the Pythagoreans and separating them from the outsiders in the light of the unique way of life they practise. The same applies to sexual regulations: besides being part of the more general ability to master one's own tongue, emotions, eating and drinking habits, they also allow disciples to generate lawful offspring. The Pythagoreans may well have practised a sober way of living. Yet they were also concerned about generating good offspring and reinforcing the society with a suitable kind of newborn followers. Pythagoras advises his pupils on the age at which they are allowed to engage in sexual intercourse, as well as on the circumstances in which this is forbidden, with the aim of teaching them how to bear legitimate offspring. By legitimate, I do not mean conforming to the laws or simply born from legally wed parents, but rather conforming to the Pythagorean lifestyle and doctrines. In a sense, legal marriage may well be necessary for Pythagorean children to be legitimate, but is not sufficient. Therefore, the precept does not only refer to the Pythagoreans' temperate behaviour, moderate lifestyle and sexual restraint, as one may think at first reading, but also to their attempt to guarantee the excellence of the newborn members of the community.

Thus far, we have noticed that Pythagoras' teachings to and about women place emphasis on the husband-wife relationship. Childbearing and motherhood also play a key role, for which reason the Pythagoreans develop strict sexual regulations.⁸¹ Premature intercourse is forbidden because it degrades the family line. Similarly, sex after over-eating and drinking is rejected because of the bad offspring it might generate. The Pythagoreans are subject to the Pythagorean lifestyle from the very moment they are born until the time of their death.⁸² Life is regulated right from its beginning – namely, right from conception. Hence, the importance of children leads to the importance of mothers.

⁸¹ In the light of the importance of mothers, in *VP* 39-40 Pythagoras advises the Crotonian youths to love both parents equally. To illustrate the instruction, he once again makes use of mythology by comparing fathers with Zeus who alone begets Athena and mothers with Hera who was capable of bearing Hephestus without her husband (Hes. *Th.* 924-929).

⁸² On the Pythagorean funeral rituals, see Hdt. 2.81.

VI. Women are most suited for piety

The fourth precept is again, to some extent, unusual. First, it is not included among the Pythagorean ἀκούσματα and ἀποφάσεις collected in the *Lives*. Second, the author may not be Pythagoras to begin with, but rather a Pythagorean woman.

Ἀλλὰ καί φασιν αὐτὴν ἐρωτηθεῖσαν ποσταία γυνὴ ἀπ' ἀνδρὸς καθαρεύει, φάναι, 'ἀπὸ μὲν τοῦ ἰδίου παραχρῆμα, ἀπὸ δὲ τοῦ ἀλλοτρίου οὐδέποτε.' Τῇ δὲ πρὸς τὸν ἴδιον ἄνδρα μελλούσῃ πορεύεσθαι παρήνει ἅμα τοῖς ἐνδύμασι καὶ τὴν αἰσχύνην ἀποτίθεσθαι, ἀνισταμένην τε πάλιν ἅμ' αὐτοῖσι ἀναλαμβάνειν. Ἐρωτηθεῖσα, 'ποῖα;' ἔφη, 'ταῦτα δι' ἃ γυνὴ κέκλημαι.' But then, it is said, having been asked in how many days a woman is purified from intercourse, she claimed: (a) 'If with her husband, straight away, but if with someone else, never.' Moreover, (b) she urged a woman on her way to her husband to set aside her shame along with her clothes and to put them both back on when parting from him. 'Put on what?' she was asked, 'That in virtue of which I am called a woman', she replied.

(D.L. 8.43)

Diogenes quotes this precept in the section of the *Vita* about Pythagoras' disciples and family. He attributes the maxim to Pythagoras' wife Theano as an example of her intellectual activity. Theano's instructions are twofold: (a) women are allowed to make sacrifices to the gods after lying with their husbands, and (b) women should exclusively engage in marital intercourse. The former instruction is also included in Iamblichus' *Vita*. More precisely, Iamblichus quotes this maxim twice, attributing it not to Theano, but first to Pythagoras himself as part of the speech to the women of Croton, and then to the Pythagorean woman Deino.

Ἔτι δὲ τὸ περιβόητον γενόμενον ἀποφθέγξασθαι κατὰ τὴν σύνοδον, ὥς ἀπὸ μὲν τοῦ συνοικοῦντος ἀνδρὸς ὅσιόν ἐστιν αὐθημερὸν προσιέναι τοῖς ἱεροῖς, ἀπὸ δὲ τοῦ μὴ προσήκοντος οὐδέποτε.

At this meeting, he (Pythagoras) also uttered the famous precept that after sleeping with her husband it is holy to enter the temple on that same day, whereas after sleeping with someone other than her husband never.

(Iamb. VP 55)

Ἀπαλλάξαι δὲ λέγεται τοὺς Κροτωνιάτας καὶ τῶν παλλακίδων καὶ καθόλου τῆς πρὸς τὰς ἀνεγγύους γυναῖκας ὁμιλίας. Πρὸς Δεινὴν γὰρ τὴν Βροντίνου γυναῖκα, τῶν Πυθαγορείων ἑνός, οὗσαν σοφὴν τε καὶ

περιττήν τὴν ψυχὴν, ἥς ἐστὶ καὶ τὸ καλὸν καὶ περίβλεπτον ῥῆμα, τὸ τὴν γυναῖκα δεῖν θύειν αὐθημερὸν ἀνισταμένην ἀπὸ τοῦ ἑαυτῆς ἀνδρός, ὃ τινες εἰς Θεανὼ ἀναφέρουσι, πρὸς δὴ ταύτην παρελθούσας τὰς τῶν Κροτωνιατῶν γυναῖκας παρακαλέσαι περὶ τοῦ συμπεῖσαι τὸν Πυθαγόραν διαλεχθῆναι περὶ τῆς πρὸς αὐτάς σωφροσύνης τοῖς ἀνδράσιν αὐτῶν. Ὁ δὲ καὶ συμβῆναι, καὶ τῆς γυναικὸς ἐπαγγειλαμένης καὶ τοῦ Πυθαγόρου διαλεχθέντος καὶ τῶν Κροτωνιατῶν πεισθέντων ἀναιρεθῆναι παντάπασι τὴν τότε ἐπιπολάζουσαν ἀκολασίαν.

He (Pythagoras) is also said to have freed the Crotoniates from both concubines and, in general, intercourse with unmarried women. For the Crotonian women came to Deino, the wife of Brotinus, one of the Pythagoreans, a wise and exceptional soul, whose saying both noble and admired is that a woman should sacrifice on the same day she rises from her husband's bed – which some attribute to Theano. They invited her to persuade Pythagoras to lecture their husbands on the temperance due them. And then this happened, once the woman gave the message, Pythagoras delivered the lecture and the men of Croton were persuaded to abolish altogether the licentiousness then prevalent.

(Iamb. VP 132)

This precept regulates both the husband-wife relationship and the Pythagorean cultic activities. According to the latter passage, the author of the maxim is Deino, a member of Pythagoras' following and the wife of the Pythagorean Brotinus. As Diogenes, Iamblichus also allows for the possibility to ascribe the precept to Theano. Interestingly, in the *Catalogue*, he identifies Theano as Brotinus' wife and fails to include Deino (cf. Chs. 1.I-II). Either way, Iamblichus writes that the precept was first uttered by a woman, who later persuaded Pythagoras to include these teachings in his lectures to the Crotoniates. This in turn may explain why Iamblichus includes the same precept in Pythagoras' speech to the Crotonian women, and similar instructions concerning marital relationships in the speech to the magistrates (cf. Ch. 3.IV).

As previously mentioned, the precept Diogenes quotes is divided into two sections. First, women are taught that after marital intercourse there is no period of prohibition during which they should not fulfil their religious duties. Second, they are more generally urged to only lie with their husbands. On the surface, then, the precept leads us back to Pythagoras' teachings about adultery (cf. Ch. 3.IV). Yet, compared to the maxim against gold-wearing courtesans, Theano's precept primarily focuses on the connection between women, marriage and piety. In

a sense, rather than reproaching extramarital intercourse, this maxim celebrates marital relationships. For example, the purpose behind Deino's precept is the prohibition of adultery, for which reason the Crotonian women ask Pythagoras to give the same lecture to their husbands, and the Crotonian men dismiss their concubines after being instructed to do so. Nonetheless, in her version of the precept Deino simply states that it is not impious for women to sacrifice after marital intercourse. She reprehends adultery by focusing on the piousness of marriage.

As Herodotus writes, sexual intercourse was deemed polluting and unsuitable for temples (2.64). For example, in Aristophanes' *Lysistrata* the women of Athens manage to avoid intercourse with their husbands on the excuse that they would not be able to sacrifice to the gods later that same day (911-912), and in Demosthenes' *Against Neaera* the exclusion from sanctuaries is one of the possible punishments to which adulterous women are liable. By contrast, Pythagoras does not consider all kinds of intercourse to be incompatible with religious rituals, but rather only extramarital intercourse. No pollution comes from sex within marriage: after lying with her husband a woman is straightaway stainless and ready to enter the temples. Once again, then, we come across a distinctively Pythagorean twist to the tradition, for the Pythagoreans distinguish between marital and extramarital intercourse and then exclusively consider the latter to be impure. This shows how the primary focus of the precept is not prohibiting adultery, for intercourse was already considered unsuitable for cultic rituals and banned from temples. Rather, the author of the maxim is elevating marital relationship by exempting it from such a ban.

The main difficulty with classifying this maxim as an ἄκουσμα is that the author might not be Pythagoras, but rather one of the Pythagorean women. The reasons why I include this maxim in the catalogue of Pythagorean ἀκούσματα are threefold: the content, the form and the author. First, the maxim touches upon the same themes as the previously analysed ἀκούσματα, such as the husband-wife relationship, the ban against adultery and the defence of marriage. Second, like other ἀκούσματα, this precept is said to have been imparted orally, regulates key aspects of the pupil's daily life and endows traditional customs with new cultural values. Moreover, it is concise, imperative and obscure. The version of the precept attributed to Pythagoras and included in his speech is clearly expressed and easily understood. By contrast, after urging her audience to 'put off her shame' in the company of her husband, Theano is asked to explain her pithy saying. Thus, I would classify Theano's maxim as an ἄκουσμα in that it requires interpretation.

The third point to clarify is the precept's authorship. As Zhmud argues, the Pythagorean societies differ from other philosophical schools in that they are not restricted to a specific location nor identified with one specific scholar (2012, 142-143 – cf. Ch. 2.I). Although the communities take the name from their founder, Pythagoras was not the only authority imparting

teachings. For instance, Philolaus and Archytas founded their own community of disciples. Thus, other followers, presumably including some women, may have also authored their own ethico-religious precepts. As was customary among the Pythagoreans (Iamb. *VP* 158), these precepts may have then been accredited to Pythagoras' himself, which explains the confusion around their authorship. For example, according to Iamb. *VP* 132, Pythagoras heard the maxim from Deino first, and then reported it himself to the Crotoniates during his public lectures. Interestingly, both Theano and Deino would be female teachers addressing female pupils (Lefkowitz and Fant 2005, 163). Theano tells a woman who is about to meet with her husband (μελλούση) to put off both her shame and her clothes. Deino discusses male and female adultery with the Crotonian women. Similarly, in Porph. *VP* 4, Myia is said to be the first among the Pythagorean maidens and wives – which Rowett takes to imply that in the eyes of her fellow Pythagorean women she was an authority and a teacher (cf. Ch. 1.II). Thus, the Pythagorean women, or at least some of them, may have also imparted teachings in the form of moral sayings.

Overall, according to Theano's precept, avoiding extramarital affairs is the first instruction the Pythagoreans were required to follow before worshipping the gods and sacrificing. In the speech to the Crotonian women, Pythagoras adds further regulations:

Ταῖς δὲ γυναιξὶν ὑπὲρ μὲν τῶν θυσιῶν ἀποφίνασθαι λέγεται πρῶτον μὲν, καθάπερ ἑτέρου μέλλοντος ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν ποιεῖσθαι τὰς εὐχὰς βούλονται· ἂν ἐκεῖνον εἶναι καλὸν καὶ ἀγαθόν, ὥς τῶν θεῶν τοῦτοις προσεχόντων, οὕτως αὐτὰς περὶ πλείστου ποιεῖσθαι τὴν ἐπιείκειαν, ἵν' ἐτοίμους ἔχωσι τοὺς ταῖς εὐχαῖς ὑπακουσομένους· ἔπειτα τοῖς θεοῖς προσφέρειν ἃ μέλλουσι, ταῖς χερσὶν αὐτὰς ποιεῖν καὶ χωρὶς οἰκετῶν πρὸς τοὺς βωμοὺς προσενεγκεῖν, οἷον πόπανα καὶ ψαιστὰ καὶ κηρία καὶ λιβανωτόν, φόνον δὲ καὶ θανάτον τὸ δαιμόνιον μὴ τιμᾶν, μηδ' ὥς οὐδέποτε πάλιν προσιούσας ἐνὶ καιρῷ πολλὰ δαπανᾶν.

First, it is said, he lectured the women about sacrifices. In the same way as, when another man is about to make prayers on their behalf,⁸³ they would want that man to be good and noble, for the gods pay

⁸³ On the possibility of praying the gods by proxy, see Dillon 1997, 176-177, according to which this method was primarily employed by either monarchs sending messengers to receive oracles or sick people asking others to sacrifice at healing sanctuaries on their behalf (e.g. Eur. *Ion* 91, 369). On praying by proxy in Orphism, see Graf and Johnston 2007, 134-136.

attention to these, so the women themselves were to hold excellence⁸⁴ in the highest regard to have the gods ready to hear their prayers. Secondly, what they intended to offer to the gods, they were to make with their own hands and bring to the altars without slaves – for example, cakes, barely bread, honeycombs and incense. However, they should not honour the divine with bloodshed and death, nor to indulge in great expenses on one occasion as if they were never to come back.

(Iamb. *VP* 54)

The lecture opens with a remark on cultic life. As argued in the previous chapter, besides family and domesticity, religion is another important aspect of a woman's daily life. Therefore, Pythagoras educates his female disciples on how to make proper libations and invoke the blessing of the gods. First, they are to be virtuous so that the gods may be favourably disposed towards their prayers, ready to listen and willing to grant them what they wish. As argued earlier in this chapter, one way to show the same virtue as men (*καλοκαγαθία*) is marital fidelity.

Whether women were traditionally denied access to or rather took part in sacrificial rituals is debated: on the one hand, the exclusion from public institutional cults would follow from the more general exclusion from the political life; on the other hand, private cults would be part of women's domestic tasks.⁸⁵ The latter were practised inside the household by individuals and small groups of worshippers and aimed to bring health, safety fertility and prosperity to the family. Therefore, private sacrifices were open to women in that mothers, nurturers and child-bearers were responsible for the wellbeing of the family members (Mikalson 2010, 129-136). Women were in charge of religious rituals because of their reproductive and familial roles (Cole 2004, 117-118). Hence, Pythagoras' plan to entrust women with sacrifices does not strike us as unconventional. The same holds true for the prohibition from making use of slaves during sacrifices. Slaves did not take part in religious rituals, or at least played a marginal role carrying

⁸⁴ According to De Vogel 1966, 130-132, *ἐπιείκεια* is an archaic word for moral excellence (e.g. Hdt. 1.85). This, together with the reference to *καλοκαγαθία*, leads us to date the speech back to the fifth/fourth century BCE.

⁸⁵ For an in-depth analysis of the role of women in sacrifices, focused on the comparison between the 'misogynist' cult of Heracles and the 'female-only' Thesmophoria, see Osborne 1993. According to Osborne, the inclusion of women was contingent on the deity being worshipped: for example, they are excluded from sacrifices to the hero Eunostus in Plu. *Mor.* 300d-301a and included in Ar. *Lys.* 177-179, in which the women enter the Acropolis under the pretence of sacrificing and then seize it. Moreover, according to Burkert 1983, 5, women were in charge of letting out the sacrificial scream at the end of the ritual. See also Nilsson 1940, 96-97, Goff 2004, 42-52, Dillon 2002, 209-292, Dillon 2015.

the sacrificial animal to the altar (Ar. *Thesm.* 293-294 – see Gilhus 2006, 116). Since, as argued above, the Pythagoreans may have not practised animal sacrifice in the first place, they had no need of slaves providing the victim.⁸⁶ Thus far, then, Pythagoras does not seem to depart from traditional Greek customs.

Yet here comes the twist: whilst the inclusion of women and exclusion of slaves is traditional, the votive offerings Iamblichus lists are unusual. In the speech, Pythagoras does not mention animals, but only cakes, barely, honey and incense. Traditionally, sacrificial ceremonies consisted of four phases: (i) the request or supplication followed by preparatory rituals, (ii) the immolation of the victim, often dragged on the altar by slaves, (iii) the slaughter, and (iv) the sacred meal. During the latter, the meat was divided into three portions: the first share was burnt and offered to the gods, the second roasted and consumed by the participants, and the third boiled, equally divided among the worshippers and brought back home (Gilhus 2006, 115-117). Offerings varied depending on the deity being worshipped and the location of the sanctuary, and included farm, or rarely wild, animals, vases, statuettes, stone, wooden and terracotta artefacts, pots, clothing, jewellery and everyday life tools such as combs or small mirrors. The most common sacrificial victims were cattle, fowls, pigs, sheep, cows, goats and, more rarely, dogs and horses. Agricultural offerings, such as fruit, pots of cooked grain, wine, milk, honey, dried figs, olives, bread and cakes, although less likely, were at times used as alternatives to animal victims.⁸⁷ According to the speech, the Pythagoreans did not sacrifice animals and exclusively allowed handmade offerings. Therefore, the objection to killing animals is an unconventional feature of the relatively traditional Pythagorean cultic life.⁸⁸ Similarly, the reprimand against those incurring in large expenses during sacrifices reminds us of the Pythagorean criticism of excessive luxuries discussed earlier in this chapter.

Overall, first, women should not sacrifice after committing adultery. Second, they should be virtuous. Third, they ought to avoid animal offerings. Lastly, they should not incur great expenses. At the end of the speech, Pythagoras again stresses the relation between women and religion as follows:

⁸⁶ On the Pythagorean merciful way of dealing with slaves, see also Iamb. *VP* 197, on the evidence of Aristoxenus Fr. 30, in which Archytas refuses to punish his slaves to avoid acting out of anger (cf. Ch. 3.V).

⁸⁷ On sacrificial practices, see Burkert 1983, 3-7.

⁸⁸ Theophrastus also considers sacrifices a way to either show honour and gratitude or ask the gods for favours. Therefore, since this cannot be done by causing harm, animal killing is to be avoided (Rowett 2007, 57).

Ἔτι δὲ τὸν σοφώτατον τῶν ἀπάντων λεγόμενον καὶ συντάξαντα τὴν φωνὴν τῶν ἀνθρώπων καὶ τὸ σύνολον εὐρετὴν καταστάντα τῶν ὀνομάτων, εἴτε θεὸν εἴτε δαίμονα εἴτε θεῖόν τινα ἄνθρωπον, συνιδόντα διότι τῆς εὐσεβείας οἰκειότατόν ἐστι τὸ γένος τῶν γυναικῶν ἐκάστην τὴν ἡλικίαν αὐτῶν συνώνυμον ποιήσασθαι θεῶ, καὶ καλέσαι τὴν μὲν ἄγαμον κόρην, τὴν δὲ πρὸς ἄνδρα δεδομένην νύμφην, τὴν δὲ τέκνα γεννησαμένην μητέρα, τὴν δὲ παῖδας ἐκ παίδων ἐπιδοῦσαν κατὰ τὴν Δωρικὴν διάλεκτον μαῖαν· ὃ σύμφωνον εἶναι τὸ καὶ τοὺς χρησμούς ἐν Δωδώνῃ καὶ Δελφοῖς δηλοῦσθαι διὰ γυναικός.

Furthermore, he who is said to be wisest of all, who set human speech in order and in general became the discoverer of names – whether this be a god, a daimon or some kind of divine man – after realising that the female gender is most suitable for piety gave each age of their life the same name as a deity, and called unmarried girls Kore, those given in marriage Nymphē, the ones who bore children Meter, and the ones who bore children through their children Maia, according to the Doric dialect. In accordance with this, the oracles of Dodona and Delphi are revealed through a woman.

(Iamb. *VP* 56)

Pythagoras refers to an unnamed divine inventor of names,⁸⁹ known for dividing the female life into four ages and attributing to each age the name of a goddess: unwed maidens are named after Kore, newlyweds after the Nymphs, mothers after Demeter, and grandmothers after Maia.⁹⁰ A similar life division is also mentioned by Diogenes, on the evidence of Timaeus' Fr. 17, in which however only three female age groups are mentioned, for grandmothers are included among the mothers as they generate children through their offspring (8.10-11). Moreover, in Porph. *VP* 4, again on the evidence of Timaeus' Fr. 131, Pythagoras' daughter Myia is said to have excelled first as a maiden and then as a wife.⁹¹ In the speech, this life division is attributed

⁸⁹ On name-giving as the second wisest thing besides number according to the Pythagoreans, see Iamb. *VP* 82.

⁹⁰ The nymphs were traditionally portrayed as maidens of marriageable age (e.g. Hom. *Il.* 6.420, 24.616, *Od.* 6.105). Demeter is the goddess of growth and fertility both as Kore's mother and as the protectress of agriculture (e.g. HH 13). Finally, Maya is the mother of Hermes (e.g. Hes. *Th.* 938) and her name was often used as an honorary title for old women (e.g. Hom. *Od.* 19.489).

⁹¹ Further examples of Pythagorean age division come in D.S. 10.9.5 and Iamb. *VP* 201-203, which quotes from Aristoxenus' Fr. 39 (cf. Ch. 3.V). Other than Timaeus and Aristoxenus, another possible source for these life divisions is Androcydes' *On the Pythagorean Symbols*. According to De Vogel (1966, 168) and Clark (1989, 64),

to a divine namegiver and cited as an etymological argument for Pythagoras' thesis that women are most 'suitable for piety.' Four goddesses distinguish the four different phases of a woman's life as well as her social functions and domestic roles: daughter, wife, mother and grandmother. Further evidence of female piety, the speech continues, is that the Delphic oracle of Apollo and the temple of Zeus in Dodona are administered by women.⁹²

Thus far, then, the Pythagorean women have been associated with three goddesses: Hera, in whose temple Pythagoras lectures the women of Croton (Iamb. *VP* 50, 56), Demeter, to whom Myia dedicates her house (Timaeus Fr. 131, quoted in Porph. *VP* 4 – cf. Ch. 2.II), and finally Hestia (Iamb. *VP* 48 and 84 – cf. Ch. 3.III). This divine triad embodies three key aspects of a Pythagorean woman's life: Hera is the goddess of marriage, Demeter the protectress of motherhood and childbearing, and Hestia the guardian of the household. According to the Crotonian speeches, other deities with whom the Pythagorean women are identified are Kore, the Nymphs and Maia, who again mark other, more specific, aspects of the female life, such as youth, nubility and old age.

Overall, alongside family life, Pythagoras regulates cultic activities. Once again, the female social status appears relatively traditional. Nevertheless, returning to Theano's precept, we may observe that the female familial and religious roles leave room for women to engage in intellectual activities. Theano and Deino were part of the higher-ranked group of Pythagoreans who not only abided by Pythagoras' teachings, but also engaged with the doctrines, investigated Pythagorean thought in more depth and developed it further. This leads us back to the question of whether the female inclusion in Pythagoreanism simply meant being allowed in the community as a silent audience or rather playing an active role in cultural and educational activities. Had

Androcydes was a physician, which would connect his account of the Pythagorean age division with the Hippocratic (e.g. Hp. *Vict.* 1.33, *Carn.* 19). Whilst, in Pythagoreanism there are four ages each lasting twenty years, in the Hippocratic corpus there is both a fourfold and a sevenfold division. According to the latter, the human life is divided into seven periods of seven years each, and so is the growth of the embryo in the womb and puberty. For a more detailed analysis of these different accounts, see De Vogel 1966, 166-174, Harlow and Laurence 2014, 97-114. The Pythagoreans are also connected with the Hippocratics because of their interest in dietetics and vow of silence (Edelstein 1979, 18-62).

⁹² On the relation between women and religion, see Ch. 2.II. Dillon argues that female priests are more likely to worship female deities. The temples of Apollo in Delphi and Zeus in Dodona would be no exceptions as the former was originally dedicated to Gaia, the goddess of the earth and the latter is also dedicated to Zeus' daughter Aphrodite and her mother Dione (2002, 73, 105-106). The reference to Delphi hints at the connection between Apollo and Pythagoras, who is reputed to have studied under the Delphic priestess Themistoclea and may be named after Apollo's prophetess, the Pythia, who predicted his birth (Aristoxenus Fr. 15, quoted in D.L. 8.8, 8.21 and Iamb. *VP* 6).

this maxim been authored by Theano, not only would the Pythagoreans be the first philosophical circle to admit women and educate them – at least according to the available evidence for Greek antiquity – but they would also provide the first documented case of women doing philosophy themselves and educating other disciples. The passages in D.L. 8.43 and Iamb. *VP* 132, however, are not attested anywhere else in the literature on ancient Pythagoreanism. For the time being, therefore, the possibility of ‘Pythagorean women philosophers’ remains a mere, although rather captivating and thought-provoking, speculation.

VII. Are men and women of the same nature?

I opened this chapter with a quotation from Iamblichus’ *Vita Pythagorica* according to which Pythagoras delivered different lectures to different group of disciples on account of their different natures (μη τῆς ὁμοίας ὄντας φύσεως, *VP* 80). Iamblichus argues that only some disciples will receive the highest teachings (τιμιώτατα). However, he does not clarify, first, what he means by φύσις and, second, what parameters make φύσις suitable for such teachings. Are some disciples ranked higher than others on account of their intellectual abilities, as the *mathematici-acousmatici* divide leads us to think, or does gender also affect nature?⁹³

According to Guthrie (1965, 351), before the fifth century BCE φύσις had a twofold meaning: it was first taken to indicate outward appearance, such as the physical constitution of a plant in *Odyssey* 10.302-303, and then, with the development of Presocratic philosophy, the whole of reality (Philolaus Fr. 1 Huffman, quoted in D.L. 8.85). In the fifth century, φύσις starts being associated with the essential character of a thing and the distinguishing traits of individual human beings (Soph. *OT* 674, Eur. *Med.* 103, *El.* 368). Similarly, Empedocles refers to the nature of each man, φύσις ἐκάστῳ (DK 31 B110, quoted in SE *Adv. Math.* 8.286), and Heraclitus proposes to distinguish each thing according to its nature, κατὰ φύσιν διαίρεων ἕκαστον (DK 22 B1, quoted in SE *Adv. Math.* 7.132).⁹⁴ This, therefore, is the cultural milieu of Pythagoras’ teachings. By educating his pupils in accordance with their nature, as Iamblichus writes, Pythagoras is also attentive to the distinctive make-up and the distinctive traits of each group of followers.

The question is whether gender is to be included among these traits. In Iamb. *VP* 34, Pythagoras is said to have taught all disciples to desist from ignorance, social divisions and excesses: ‘This maxim was often delivered by him (Pythagoras) to all audiences everywhere, both large and restricted.’ Some of Pythagoras’ precepts, then, are known to all followers, both

⁹³ For a general overview of the Presocratic notion of φύσις, see Heidel 1910, Naddaf 2005.

⁹⁴ See also Fronterotta 2013, 13-17.

the large groups – namely, those attending the public lectures and listening to the speeches – and the restricted circles of initiates. Along the same lines, some precepts are known to men and women. For example, both Timycha and her husband Myllias are reputed to have been aware of the Pythagorean ban against eating beans and the reason behind it (cf. Ch. 1.III). Moreover, some of the maxims analysed above, such as the ἀπόφασις on the best age for sexual intercourse and childbearing, concern both the male and the female gender. This suggests that, at least to some extent, male and female natures are believed to be suited for the same teachings. Yet other maxims give separate advices: for example, men are urged to treat their wives as suppliants and beget children with women who do not wear gold, while women are encouraged to sacrifice after lying with their husbands. Thus, in other respects, male and female natures are differentiated and receive different teachings.

In the light of Theano's claim that her sense of shame is the character trait in virtue of which she is called a woman (D.L. 8.43 – cf. Ch. 3.VI), Rowett speculates that according to the Pythagoreans there was no difference between the male and the female gender (2014, 123). Once taken off her clothes and shame, a woman is the same as her husband. Yet there are two possible pieces of counterevidence: Timycha's hint at the female inability to keep silent (Neanthes Fr. 31b – cf. Ch. 1.III), and Pythagoras' claim that men are naturally uninclined towards sharing property (VP 55 – cf. Ch. 3.IV). When tortured by Dionysius, Timycha bites off her tongue, for she fears that, being a woman, she might reveal the secret behind the Pythagorean ban against beans. If so, the female nature would differ from the male at least to the extent that women are liable to disobey the Pythagorean vow of silence.⁹⁵ On the other hand, women may more easily implement the Pythagorean theory of communism. When addressing Crotonian women and describing the female ability to lend each other clothes, Pythagoras adds that this is unfamiliar to the men's nature, μὴ οἰκεῖον αὐτῶν τῇ φύσει. Once again, men and women are said to have different natures. Specifically, women are well disposed to hold property in common, for they already share what they own without needing to be supervised by witnesses and regulations.

There are two points to remark. First, both Timycha and Pythagoras are addressing people outside the Pythagorean communities: Timycha is responding to Dionysius, and Pythagoras is lecturing his prospective disciples on Croton. Second, Pythagoras' teachings appear to minimise gender differences: Pythagorean women are as able to keep secrets as men are, and Pythagorean men hold things common as women do. At least in the eyes of a non-Pythagorean such as Dionysius, by refraining from revealing the secret behind the rule against beans Timycha manages

⁹⁵ On women being too 'talkative' to be Pythagoreans, see Ménage 1984, 45-47.

to overcome her female nature. This suggests either that the Pythagoreans made no difference between male and female nature to begin with and considered women as capable of keeping silent as men, or that Pythagoras' teachings enabled the disciples to surpass gender differences.

Overall, silence and common property might have been traditionally considered characteristic of one gender as opposed to the other. Yet, by following Pythagoras' precepts, men and women will equally develop both abilities. Similarly, in the speech to the Crotonian women, *καλοκαγαθία* is a virtue traditionally connected with the male gender, which nonetheless Pythagoras teaches both men and women. Interestingly, as I shall argue in the next chapter, the Pythagoreans believed that male and female souls are the same. It may be the case then that male and female genders are differentiated insofar as the Pythagoreans address the 'non-initiates' and deliver daily life advice. The deeper we go in Pythagorean thought, the more male and female natures are equalised.

Whether the Pythagoreans take men and women to have the same nature, as well as what Plato may respond to this is discussed further in Chapters 4 and 5. For the time being, suffice it to remark that in some respects Pythagorean men and women are treated and educated differently. Nonetheless, the fact that Pythagoras opens the doors of his community to both male and female disciples, and that some Pythagorean women go as far as to become authorities and teachers, suggests that in other respects men and women are considered equally intellectually capable.

VII. Conclusions

Pythagoras' teachings to and about women regulate key aspects of the female everyday life: marriage, childbearing, cultic activities and female virtues, such as temperance, marital fidelity and piety. There are two features of the Pythagorean treatment of the female gender worth highlighting: the interplay between tradition and innovation, and the importance of family life.

Once again, the evidence emphasises the *quasi*-traditional function women held in Pythagorean societies: women are responsible for the family, entrusted with the management of the household and private cults, and thus primarily associated with domestic and religious roles. Nonetheless, they are educated and introduced to the Pythagorean *βίος*. Some of them even go as far as to become intellectual authorities and educate their own female disciples. Porphyry (VP 18), on the evidence of Dicaearchus' Fr. 33, and Iamblichus (VP 45) report on how the Crotonian magistrates approved of Pythagoras' teachings and encouraged their wives and children to attend his lectures. The precepts were thus conservative enough to be accepted by the elders and yet innovative enough to be considered worth spreading in Croton.

As previously argued, that of the Pythagoreans is not an abrupt revolution – neither political nor cultural. Pythagoras' teachings do not appear as a radical upturning of traditional values.

Rather, they fit in with the established customs and social system.⁹⁶ The same can be argued with regard to the precepts concerning women. Women are not involved in politics nor do they carry out other public activities. Rather, in accordance with traditional Greek customs, they take care of the family life and religious rituals. Consequently, at first glance the way of life of the Pythagorean women does not strike us as alternative, as Burkert would describe it (1982, 3). Yet, there are three fundamental differences making the Pythagorean βίος unusual. First, the ἀκούσματα are often stricter than common practices. For example, both men and women are forbidden from adulterating the line. Second, some precepts clash with tradition, such as the ban against animal sacrifices and the maxim urging women to enter the temples after marital intercourse. Third, the meaning behind Pythagoras' teachings goes beyond traditional customs. For example, the regulations on sexual intercourse aim at breeding suitable community members, rather than merely promoting self-restraint. Overall, although Pythagoras never repudiates and seldom attacks tradition, he does reinterpret it showing what aspects his disciples should embrace and what aspects, by contrast, are to be rejected.

This leads us to the second aspect – namely, the importance of marriage and motherhood. The inviolability of the husband-wife relationship is a recurring theme in both the Crotonian speeches and the ἀκούσματα: men are forbidden from mistreating their wives and women are taught how to interact with their husbands. Further evidence for the centrality of marriage and family ties is the fact that our sources often mention women as mothers, daughters, sisters and especially wives of Pythagorean men. For example, in the *Catalogue*, men are grouped by city of origin, whereas women are identified by their family relations.⁹⁷ Family may have been the reason why they entered the community in the first place. According to Hawley, a significant pattern in the history of women philosophers is their being married or related to male philosophers – as the Cynic Hipparchia and her brother Metrocles (1994, 84). This holds true in the case of the Pythagorean women: Theano, Timycha, Myia and Damo engage with Pythagorean thought and participate in the Pythagorean way of life together with their husbands and fathers.⁹⁸ As argued in Chapter 2.I, the Pythagoreans attached great value to friendship.

⁹⁶ See also Demand 1982a, 178, Rowett 2014, 118-119.

⁹⁷ On family as a defining institution for women, see Pomeroy 1995, 114-116.

⁹⁸ In D.L. 8.42 and Porph. *VP* 18-19, on the evidence of Dicaearchus' Fr. 33, Theano is described as both Pythagoras' wife and pupil. That being said, we also know of other Pythagorean women whose family members may not have joined the Pythagorean community, such as Philtys, whose father Theophris and brother Byndacus are not mentioned in the *Catalogue*, or Cheilonis and her father Cheilon. Even Theano's father Pythonax (Porph.

However, by looking at the examples of Pythagorean friendship, we notice that this relationship only connects men, such as Phintias and Damon (Aristoxenus Fr. 31). In *VP* 229, Iamblichus writes that an equally strong bond also ties husbands, wives, and more generally families together: ‘Friendship of all with all [...] of a husband with a wife, children, brothers or relatives.’ Consequently, marriage was a friendship-like relationship uniting men and women. Furthermore, since the Pythagoreans were discouraged from having non-Pythagorean friends (Porph. *VP* 59 and Iamb. *VP* 233), they also avoided having non-Pythagorean brides.

In the light of Plato’s *Rep.* 600a-b, I have argued that the βίος plays a central role in defining the Pythagorean community and determining who is to be included.⁹⁹ If so, all members of the society were to abide by the Pythagorean doctrines and maxims. As Pomeroy writes, being a Pythagorean was a full-time job (2013, 11). Thus, the Pythagoreans regulated every key aspect of their way of living, starting with childbirth (cf. Ch. 3.V). Being brought up according to Pythagoras’ teachings and implementing them from the earliest stages in one’s family life would then be the first and a crucial step towards becoming a proper Pythagorean. This, in turn, leads to the importance of women. Overall, the role women held when first entering the community was that of wives and daughters living the Pythagorean way of life together with their husbands and fathers, and mothers raising their children in accordance with Pythagoras’ teachings. Nevertheless, as shown by the anecdote of Theano educating her own disciples, these family roles enabled some women to gain authority over their fellow Pythagoreans and actively engage in intellectual activities.

VP 4) is not listed by Iamblichus. However, her alleged husband Brontinus is not mentioned either, which leads us back to the question of what Iamblichus’ criterion of inclusion might have been.

⁹⁹ See also Cornelli 2013, 55-61 – cf. Ch. 2.III.

Chapter 4

The Lives of Pythagoras

I previously mentioned that, according to Huffman, the teachings we can safely attribute to Pythagoras are twofold: first, Pythagoras founded a strictly regulated way of living (Ch. 3); second, he was an authority on the afterlife.¹ In this chapter, I analyse the evidence for Pythagoras' teachings about life before birth and after death – namely, the doctrine of metempsychosis, or the transmigration of souls – and discuss how they are connected to the Pythagorean βίος. I shall then turn back to the Pythagorean women and explore whether, and if so how, the belief in the transmigration of souls is related to the prominence of women in early Pythagoreanism. The purpose is to investigate whether metempsychosis provides further grounds for what the status of the Pythagorean women was and why.

I. Questions and context

Metempsychosis is described by Dicaearchus as the best known of Pythagoras' teachings (Fr. 33).² According to Dicaearchus, the following Pythagorean doctrine was known to all: (i) souls are immortal, (ii) at death they transmigrate into another body, (iii) this happens periodically, and (iv) makes all ensouled beings kindred. The first question to ask, then, is what version of the doctrine of transmigration Pythagoras is likely to have taught, and what the parameters of such a supposedly central doctrine of early Pythagoreanism are.

Specifically, the issue at stake is the following. Pythagoras was known for lecturing his disciples about the fate of the soul before birth and after death. Furthermore, he was allegedly able to recall the previous lives of his own soul. According to Heraclides Ponticus (Fr. 89), he was once Aethalides son of Hermes, the Trojan hero Euphorbus and the angler Pyrrhus. According to the Peripatetics Dicaearchus (Fr. 36) and Clearchus (Fr. 10), he even lived as a woman, a prostitute named Alco. Pythagoras' past lives as a fisherman and a prostitute are not the lives we

¹ Huffman 2014c. On Pythagoras' teachings on the afterlife, see also Burkert 1972, 120: 'That Pythagoras taught the doctrine of metempsychosis is generally regarded, and rightly, as the one most certain fact in the history of early Pythagoreanism.' Barnes 1982, 103: 'The doctrine of metempsychosis, or the transmigration of souls, is on any account characteristic of Pythagoreanism; on Dicaearchus' account, to which I assent, it is the chief constituent of that small body of theory which we are justified in ascribing to Pythagoras.' And Zhmud 2012, 221: 'The name of Pythagoras is so closely associated with metempsychosis that many regard this doctrine as almost the most important component of Pythagoreanism.'

² See also Cornelli 2013, 86-87. The source for Dicaearchus' fragment is Porph. *VP* 19. For the full text, see Ch. 2.II.

would expect a sage of his calibre to have lived. What, if any, can these incarnations tell us about Pythagoras' himself? Why did Pythagoras claim, or why was he believed, to have previously been a courtesan? Should then Alco be considered a form of punishment for how Pyrrhus, Euphorbus and those who came before them led their lives? And if, by contrast, the life of Pythagoras is to be conceived as a reward, what did Alco do to deserve to reincarnate in the body of a sage?³ Finally, what did Pythagoras gain from his past lives and what were the benefits of remembering them? Is such ability to recall his previous existences what endowed him with the name and authority of a sage?

In Chapter 2, I argued that among the affinities between Pythagorean societies and cults such as the Eleusinian and Dionysian mysteries was the belief in the afterlife and reincarnation. Specifically, the initiates were promised purification from their bodily existence and a better life after death. Thus, should the Pythagoreans share these beliefs, the first possible answer to the question of why Pythagoras lived the lives he did would be that by transmigrating his soul paid the penalty for some kind of past crime and was finally allowed to reincarnate into the body of a sage. In the first section of the chapter, I therefore consider more in general whether Pythagorean metempsychosis is to be thought of as a doctrine of salvation leading souls to expiate their earthly and bodily wrongdoings in the next life. KRS identifies three key features for the Pythagorean belief in reincarnation: the divine judgement waiting for souls after death, the punishments to be suffered by the wicked and the better fate awarded to the good (1983, 238). In contrast, Zhmud questions such a picture of Pythagorean transmigration as either a punishment administered in return for the wrongs committed or a step towards bliss. According to Zhmud, the Pythagoreans believe that souls naturally transmigrate into various bodies without repaying for their past deeds (2012, 232-233).

There is, however, an underlying issue with claiming that Pythagorean metempsychosis is not retributive in nature: if not as a punishment, how should Pythagoras' past life as a warrior and an angler be understood? Is this a merely random sequence? What are the moral implications of believing that behaviour in this life does not matter after death? In the second section, I compare and contrast the Pythagorean with Empedocles' theory of transmigration to show that there is, in fact, something the Pythagoreans may earn from reincarnation. In the light of Shaul Tor's interpretation of Empedocles' theory of transmigration as a way to gain knowledge and experience of the world (2017, 318-339), I argue that Pythagorean metempsychosis too has epistemological – rather than or besides ethical – significance. For by transmigrating into various bodies, and most importantly by remembering past lives, the Pythagoreans may well not attain

³ See also Zhmud 2012, 232.

purification, but they do gain knowledge and learn how to live. The study of metempsychosis will thus result in broader considerations as to how, according to the Pythagoreans, we can attain philosophical wisdom.

The Orphics,⁴ Pherecydes of Syros,⁵ Pindar⁶ and the Pythagoreans⁷ developed distinctive accounts of metempsychosis.⁸ From the fifth century onwards, Empedocles⁹ and Plato¹⁰ endowed this belief with a proper philosophical garb. Different authors constructed different narratives of the transmigration of souls, had different views of the hereafter and different purposes in mind. Yet we can identify some common features. First, souls are believed to inhabit each body for a

⁴ On relation between Pythagoreanism and Orphism, see Ch. 2.II. For an interpretation of Orphic metempsychosis as a religion of salvation, see Bernabé 2011. Bernabé's reading has recently been challenged in Edmonds 2013, 246-295.

⁵ In Cic. *Tusc.* 1.16.38 and *Suda* 214, s.v. Pherecydes son of Babys of Syros, Pherecydes is said to have been the first to introduce metempsychosis in ancient Greece and the one teaching this doctrine to Pythagoras – *pace* Dicaearchus' Fr. 33, quoted in Porph. *VP* 19, according to which such a record is to be attributed to Pythagoras himself (cf. Ch. 2.II). On Pherecydes' acquaintance with Pythagoras, see Ion Fr. 30, Aristoxenus Fr. 14, Cic. *Div.* 1.50.112, D.S. 10.3.4, D.L. 1.116-120. In D.L. 8.2 and Porph. *VP* 1-2 (on the evidence of Neanthes Fr. 8), Pythagoras is said to have studied under Pherecydes. In D.L. 8.40 (on the evidence of Dicaearchus Fr. 35b), Porph. *VP* 15 and 55-56 (on the evidence of Dicaearchus Frs. 34-35a), as well as Iamb. *VP* 184 and 252 (on the evidence of Aristoxenus Fr. 18), he is reported to have buried his teacher at Delos.

⁶ *Ol.* 2.53-83 and Pl. *Men.* 81b. See von Fritz 1957, Bluck 1958a, McGibbon 1964b.

⁷ For a discussion of the evidence of a transmigration doctrine in Philolaus, see Huffman 2009.

⁸ An analysis of metempsychosis in the non-Greek, namely oriental, wisdom lies beyond the scope of this work. On the circumstances in which the doctrine of metempsychosis was developed in ancient Greece, as well as the extent to which this belief is influenced by the Near East see West 1971, 60-62, and Burkert 1985, 229-301. The Eastern origins of metempsychosis are also mentioned in Hdt. 2.81 and 123, in which metempsychosis is first ascribed to the Egyptians (see full text below). It is worth pointing out, however, that it was customary for the Greeks to trace the origins of their traditions back to Egypt, which would then lay doubt on this Herodotean attribution (Maddalena 1954, 326).

⁹ For Empedocles' connection with Pythagoreanism, see D.L. 8.54-56 (on the evidence of Timaeus Fr. 14, Neanthes Fr. 26, Hermippus and Alcidas), in which he is described as one of Pythagoras' pupils, banned from the community together with Philolaus for publishing Pythagoras' secret teachings. According to Eus. *PE* 10.14.15, he was the disciple of Pythagoras' son and successor Telauges, and according to a spurious letter by Telauges to Philolaus (D.L. 8.55), he studied with the Pythagorean Hippasus, who was also exiled for breaking the vow of silence (Iamb. *Comm. Math.* 25), and Brontinus, which may link Empedocles to Orphism.

¹⁰ For the Platonic theory of the afterlife, see *Gorg.* 493c, 523a-527e, *Crat.* 400b-c, *Meno* 80e-81c, *Phaed.* 62b, 67c-e, 69c-72a, 81b-83b, 95c, 113a-114c, *Phdr.* 245c-250d, *Rep.* 614e-621d, *Tim.* 42b-c, 90b-92c. Interestingly, according to D.L. 8.84-85, the Pythagorean Philolaus is one of the sources behind Plato's *Timaeus* and possibly the theory of metempsychosis featuring in this dialogue. On Plato's theory of reincarnation, see Ehnmark 1957. On the relationship between Plato and Pythagoreanism, see Ch. 5.I.

limited period of time, at the end of which they reincarnate into another body in an ongoing, but not necessarily endless, series of reincarnations. The length of the process may vary: three lives in Pindar (*Ol.* 2.68), 207 years spent in Hades before reincarnating according to some versions of Pythagoreanism (D.L. 8.14), 3000 years in Herodotus (*Hdt.* 2.123), from 3000 to 10000 in Plato's *Phaedrus* (248e-249a), and 30000 seasons in Empedocles (DK 31 B115).¹¹ The ultimate goal may be reincarnating into the best kind of life or, as in Empedocles, being released from the transmigration cycle (B146 and B147). Either way, earthly death is pictured as a temporary stage leading into a new birth and a new life.

Second, in order to be able to transmigrate, souls should be separate and separable from the body each time hosting them. The body-soul divide does not always result in the devaluing of the former, as suggested by the notion of body as tomb (σῶμα – σήμα) in Plato's *Cratylus* 400c.¹² Nonetheless, the soul is believed to be capable of breaking away from its body and entering another.¹³ Noteworthy in this regard is that men, and apparently women, are not the only beings involved in the cycle of rebirths. Souls may transmigrate into both human and non-human bodies, reincarnating into animals¹⁴ and, according to Empedocles, at least some species of plants (B117, B127).

This brings us to the third feature: the kinship of ensouled beings. For sure, the Pythagoreans might have been the only ones mentioning and possibly even acting upon the belief that family-like bonds unite all ensouled beings, as Dicaearchus writes.¹⁵ Moreover, even in the case of

¹¹ On the chronology of Empedocles' cycle, see Primavesi 2001, Rashed 2001, Sedley 2007, 67-70, Primavesi 2016.

¹² On the body-soul divide, see also Empedocles' Fr. 126 (Stob. 1.49.60), Pl. *Gorg.* 493a, *Phaed.* 62b. The sole Pythagorean evidence for this comes in Philolaus' Fr. 14 (Clem. *Strom.* 3.17.433), whose authenticity, however, is questioned in Burkert 1972, 248 n. 47, Huffman 1993, 402, Zhmud 2012, 230.

¹³ See also *Od.* 11.219-222.

¹⁴ On Hecuba's soul being destined to reincarnate in a dog, see Eur. *Hec.* 1257-1266.

¹⁵ See also Iamb. *VP* 108: 'There is an inborn fellowship among living beings, closely united to us as if by brotherhood because of the community of life, elements and composition.' The kinship of ensouled beings is also referred to in Pl. *Men* 81c and attributed to unnamed priests and priestesses (cf. Ch. 2.II). A similar claim comes in Plato's *Gorgias* 507e-508a, in which Socrates alludes to a cosmic κοινωμία, communion or fellowship. This belief is ascribed to certain unnamed σοφοί, whom Dodds (1959, 338-339) identifies with the Pythagoreans for three reasons. First, earlier in the dialogue (493a1-6) Socrates had already attributed the myth of the afterlife to Italian and Sicilian sages, presumably meaning either the Pythagoreans or Empedocles. Second, the κοινωμία is said to unite the whole cosmos. This Greek word κόσμος is here used in the technical sense of world-order, which is traditionally ascribed to the Pythagoreans (Philolaus Fr. 1, Arist. *Met.* 986a and D.L. 8.48 – for an alternative

Pythagoreanism we do not know to what extent the notion of a worldwide kinship of beings was linked to transmigration. Nevertheless, the belief that human and animal souls are equally subject to reincarnation suggests that they are somehow connected and knitted together in this process (Bertholet 1909, 10).

II. Retributive vs. non-retributive

We may now turn to Pythagorean metempsychosis. The evidence attesting, or at least alluding to, the Pythagorean doctrine of transmigration is fourfold and comes from Pythagoras' contemporaries and earliest successors: Xenophanes (DK 21 B7), Herodotus (2.123, 4.95), Ion of Chios (Fr. 30 Blum.), and Empedocles (DK 31 B129). Further hints at this Pythagorean doctrine can be detected in Aristotle's *De Anima* (407b12-30, 414a22-24).

Xenophanes is the first and probably most often cited source picturing Pythagoras as the herald of transmigration. Here we see Pythagoras – or better, an unnamed sage Diogenes Laertius identifies as Pythagoras – reprehending a man for beating a puppy in whose barking he recognises the soul of a departed friend.

Καί ποτέ μιν στυφελιζομένου σκύλακος παριόντα

φασὶν γ' ἐποικτῖραι καὶ τόδε φάσθαι ἔπος:

‘παῦσαι μὴδὲ ράπιζ’, ἐπεὶ ἢ φίλου ἀνέρος ἐστὶ

ψυχή, τὴν ἔγνω φθεγξαμένης αἴων.’

And once, they say, standing near a puppy being beaten,

He took pity and spoke this word:

‘Stop, do not beat him; for indeed it is the soul of a friend, a man,

Which I recognised when I heard it howling.’

(DK 21 B7, in D.L. 8.36)

Xenophanes' fragment is more likely to be satirical (D.L. 9.18). As the first words (‘And once...’) suggest, it was part of a longer list of derisory anecdotes about Pythagoras' life. For example, Xenophanes could be mocking Pythagoras for his eschatological beliefs – i.e. for equating animals with human lives – or for his community of followers – i.e. for being friend with someone who lowered himself into a canine life and whose voice sounded like a wailing dog. For a satire to work, however, there need to be elements of truth to satirise. Therefore,

attribution of κόσμος to Heraclitus see Kirk 1962, 311). Third, the link between this cosmic order and geometrical proportion reminds us of the Pythagorean Archytas of Tarentum (Fr. 2 Huffman, quoted in Porph. *Ptolem. Harm.* 1.5).

Xenophanes' derisory words may nonetheless unveil distinctive traits of Pythagorean metempsychosis in virtue of which the anecdote provokes laughter.

Xenophanes hints at two features: first, reincarnation concerns not only humans, but also animals, or at least some of them; second, the belief in metempsychosis regulates the Pythagoreans' way of acting towards other beings.¹⁶ Based on Xenophanes' satire alone, animal reincarnation might be a mere comic exaggeration of Pythagorean metempsychosis, rather than a distinctive characteristic of the belief. Yet, as we shall see below, Herodotus also reports on land, air and water creatures taking part in Pythagorean transmigration, thus confirming Xenophanes' claim (2.123). In the above-mentioned Fr. 33 by Dicaearchus, Pythagoras is said to teach that souls change εἰς ἄλλα γένη ζῶων, into other kinds of animals. Finally, Aristotle even goes as far as arguing that, according to the Pythagoreans, it is possible for any given soul to clothe itself in any kind of body (DA 404b20-27).¹⁷

As to how the belief in metempsychosis shaped the Pythagorean way of life, the fragment is open to two possible readings. On the one hand, Pythagoras may be concerned for the well-being of the puppy insofar as it is a reincarnated man (ἄνθρωπος). The Pythagoreans would then adopt the same, or at least a similar, kind of conduct towards all living beings participating in transmigration alongside humans. On the other hand, however, Pythagoras recognises the puppy as his friend or comrade (φίλος). This has led Rowett to argue that the Pythagoreans look after animals insofar as they might be reincarnated friends and family, rather than simply any human being (2007, 46-51). Either way, the belief in transmigration sketched out by Xenophanes affects the way Pythagoras and his interlocutor behave and treat the puppy. However, given the satirical tone, the fragment does not yet allow us to determine to what extent metempsychosis shaped the Pythagorean lifestyle.

There are two ways for metempsychosis to affect lifestyle. First, you may believe that your current life is the outcome of your past deeds, and that consequently the way one lives *influences* transmigration – whether this be a form of punishment for past faults or reward for past merits.

¹⁶ See also Long 1948b, 17, Barnes 1982, 104, KRS 1983, 220. By contrast, according to Maddalena 1954, 333-338 and 347-348, Xenophanes' sarcasm prevents us from drawing any conclusions as to the parameters of Pythagorean metempsychosis, as well as whether the Pythagoreans believed in reincarnation in the first place.

¹⁷ See also Arist. DA 414a22-24. According to Maddalena 1954, 338-343, Aristotle may not be referring to reincarnation, but rather to the Pythagorean theory identifying the soul as dust particles moving in the air through bodies (DA 404a17-18). Yet the expression ἐνδύεσθαι, clothing itself, is often used in connection with the doctrine of metempsychosis (e.g. εἰσδύεσθαι in Hdt. 2.123, quoted below, and ἐνδύεσθαι in D.L. 8.77 with reference to Empedocles – see Burkert 1972, 121 n. 6).

If so, Pythagoras' friend would have then misbehaved enough to end up in an animal body. Moreover, by adopting the proper behaviour – i.e. ceasing to mistreat the dog – Pythagoras' interlocutor would be granted a better rebirth. Second, you may think that the belief in souls reincarnating into different bodies should shape your behaviour towards other living beings, and therefore, that the way one lives *is influenced* by transmigration. For example, one should not hurt a dog hosting the soul of a departed friend. I shall refer to the former as the *retributive* interpretation of metempsychosis, according to which the current life is a recompense for past deeds and will in turn determine the form and status of the next life. In contrast, the latter view allows for both a retributive and a *non-retributive* reading, according to which the life you shall live is not dependent on the life you are living. Nevertheless, knowing what kinds of life you may live – and in some cases even remembering what kinds of life you did actually live – still has an impact on the way you lead your current life and interact with other ensouled beings. In other words, regardless of whether animal reincarnation is to be thought of as a punishment, ensouled animals and humans are to be treated equally.

The notion of retribution after death was not unheard-of in ancient Greece: for instance, we come across such a belief in Homer and Aeschylus.¹⁸ Further advocates of retributive eschatology are Pindar¹⁹ and, as discussed below, Empedocles and Plato. Finally, at least according to Alberto Bernabé, the Orphics might have also taken a similar stand on this doctrine.²⁰ All these sources may have influenced, or may have been influenced by, Pythagoreanism. Yet Herodotus paints a rather different picture of Pythagorean metempsychosis. In the second book of the *Histories*, he refers to this belief as follows:

Πρῶτοι δὲ καὶ τόνδε τὸν λόγον Αἰγύπτιοι εἰσὶ οἱ εἰπόντες, ὥς ἀνθρώπου
 ψυχὴ ἀθάνατος ἐστὶ, τοῦ σώματος δὲ καταφθίνοντος ἐς ἄλλο ζῷον αἰεὶ
 γινόμενον ἐσδύεται, ἐπεὰν δὲ πάντα περιέλθῃ τὰ χερσαῖα καὶ τὰ θαλάσσια
 καὶ τὰ πετεινά, αὐτὶς ἐς ἀνθρώπου σῶμα γινόμενον ἐσδύνει· τὴν περιήλυσιν
 δὲ αὐτῇ γίνεσθαι ἐν τρισχιλίοισι ἔτεσι. Τοῦτ' αὖ τῷ λόγῳ εἰσὶ οἱ Ἑλλήνων
 ἐχρήσαντο, οἳ μὲν πρότερον οἳ δὲ ὕστερον, ὥς ἰδίῳ ἑωυτῶν ἐόντι· τῶν ἐγὼ
 εἰδὼς τὰ οὐνόματα οὐ γράφω.

¹⁸ For examples of individual souls being punished and tormented in the Underworld, see Sisyphus in Hom. *Il.* 6.152 and *Od.* 11.593, and Tantalus in *Od.* 11.568-592. For an Aeschylean picture of the Underworld, see *Supp.* 230-231 and *Eum.* 269-275.

¹⁹ *Ol.* 2.53-83. The connection between Pindar and Pythagorean metempsychosis is analysed in KRS 1983, 235-238.

²⁰ Bernabé 2011. For an alternative reading of Orphic metempsychosis, see Edmonds 2013, 246-295.

Moreover, the Egyptians were the first to teach this doctrine, that the human soul is immortal, and, when the body dies, it always clothes itself in another living being coming to birth. Once it has gone through all creatures of land, sea, and air, reborn once more, it clothes itself in a human body and completes the cycle in three thousand years. Some among the Greeks, early and late, have used this doctrine as if it were their own. Although I know their names, I do not write them down.

(Hdt. 2.123)²¹

According to Herodotus, the Egyptians believed souls to be immortal and pass from land creatures to marine and winged animals in a 3000-years-long series of reincarnations. This doctrine reached Greece and was later adopted by certain thinkers whose names, however, he refuses to mention. Nevertheless, the fact that earlier in Book 2.81 Herodotus had already associated the Egyptian wisdom with the Pythagoreans²² suggests that this is the tradition he has in mind.²³ Moreover, since there is no surviving evidence for an Egyptian theory of metempsychosis, this extract from the *Histories* may provide an account of Pythagorean transmigration projected onto Egypt.²⁴

²¹ The Greek text of Herodotus' *Histories* is cited from Godley 1920.

²² According to Herodotus, although the custom of not wearing woollen clothing is commonly and mistakenly attributed to the Orphic and Bacchic cults, it is actually an Egyptian and Pythagorean habit: 'However, wool is neither brought into temples nor buried along with them; for it is not pious. These agree with the so-called Orphic and Bacchic rituals, which are in fact Egyptian and Pythagorean; for it is also impious for those partaking in these rites to be buried in woollen clothing.' The text was transmitted in two versions. The longer version states that these dressing customs 'agree with the so-called Orphic and Bacchic, but in reality are Egyptian and Pythagorean' ('...ὁμολογέει δὲ ταῦτα τοῖσι Ὀρφικοῖσι καλεομένοισι καὶ Βακχικοῖσι, ἐοῦσι δὲ Αἰγυπτίοισι καὶ Πυθαγορείοισι'). The shorter reads: 'these customs agree with those that are called Orphic and Pythagorean' ('...ὁμολογέουσι δὲ ταῦτα τοῖσι Ὀρφικοῖσι καλεομένοισι καὶ Πυθαγορείοισι'). For a detailed discussion of the transmission issue and further literature, see Linforth 1942, 38-50, Burkert 1972, 127-128, Zhmud 2012, 224. I follow Burkert in interpreting this passage as part of a longer digression on those customs the Greeks share with the Egyptians and thus endorsing the longer version. Interestingly, in 2.37 the Egyptians are also said to avoid eating beans, as the Pythagoreans were believed to do.

²³ Pace Maddalena 1954, 346-347), according to whom Herodotus cannot refer to Pythagoras, for he does explicitly name him later in 4.95 (see below). Burnet suggests that the reference may be to Empedocles, who unlike Pythagoras was still alive at the time, thus explaining Herodotus' silence (1948, 88 n. 5). On the connection between this passage and Pythagoreanism, see Long 1948b, 21-23, Burkert 1972, 126 n 38, Zhmud 2012, 223 n. 75.

²⁴ See Long 1948b, 5, Burkert, 1972, 126. On Pythagoras borrowing doctrines from other thinkers and making them his own, see also Heraclitus Fr. 129 (D.L. 8.6).

More precisely, the version here described is an un-moralised doctrine of metempsychosis, according to which reincarnation is neither a form of punishment nor reward, but rather a mechanical process each soul undertakes.²⁵ In other words, this appears as a non-retributive reading. Herodotus' passage shows no trace of chastisement and castigation of souls, but rather a moral-free string of deaths and rebirths. Souls go from footed, marine and winged animals to humans, and this is no prize nor penalty, but simply the designated reincarnation sequence. Such a mechanical process is even said to take place ἀεί, always. The retributive versions of metempsychosis described in Empedocles' Fr. 115 (Plut. *De exilio* 670c, Hipp. *Ref.* 7.29.14-23) and Plato's *Phaedrus* 248e4-249a6 conceive of the sequence of transmigrations as leading towards an eventual release of the soul from the body following an earthly life of atonement.²⁶ If so, the conception of this sequence as a perpetual cycle described by Herodotus would on the contrary suggest that souls do not reincarnate to make amends.

The anecdote about Pythagoras refusing to strike a puppy hosting the soul of a friend raises questions as to how metempsychosis shaped the Pythagorean way of living and, specifically, what implications the non-retributive version of this doctrine might have had for the Pythagorean community and lifestyle. According to Xenophanes, Pythagoras refuses to strike the puppy after recognising the soul that used to inhabit his friend or more generally a human being. As mentioned above, such a view allows for both the retributive and the non-retributive reading. The fact that Pythagoras does not mistreat the puppy does not tell us anything about whether his friend misbehaved in a previous life so as to be downgraded to a dog, or if conversely animal lives are just part of a mechanical and judgement-free reincarnation process. That being said, this is arguably more in line with the non-retributive account: if the transmigration of souls from one body into another is not presented as the outcome of past faults and merits, the Pythagoreans are more likely led to treat all ensouled beings (friends, relatives or otherwise) in a similar way, regardless of their bodies. More importantly, they will behave towards all ensouled beings with the same respect: what seems puzzling about Pythagoras' behaviour is not simply his treating animals and humans in a similar way, but his treating both humans and animals well.

²⁵ Casadesús Bordoy 2008a, Zhmud 2012, 232-233.

²⁶ In Empedocles' Fr. 115, the δαίμονες are exiled into mortal life after committing a crime and for 30000 seasons. Unlike Plato's *Phaedrus*, this alone does not imply that each reincarnation should be a prize or punishment for the previous life. Nonetheless, the exile itself is said to be a form of compensation at the end of which the daimon returns among the blessed.

The same aptitude may also be exemplified in the (later and anecdotal) evidence of Pythagoras educating wild beasts. For instance, he is said to have taught a bear not to harm other animals (D.L. 8.13, 22-23, Porph. *VP* 23, Iamb. *VP* 60, 99, 186) and an ox not to eat beans (Porph. *VP* 24, Iamb. *VP* 61), just as he was known for doing with his pupils.²⁷ This is another example of Pythagoras departing from the customary way of behaving and granting animals the same good treatment he would grant to his disciples. Once again, the suggestion is that, first, humans and animals were all believed to share educable souls and, second, animals were not attributed a lower ethical and intellectual status.²⁸ Interestingly, according to these anecdotes, similar souls should also abide by similar regulations, follow a similar diet and adopt a similar behaviour. Overall, the Pythagoreans would not hit an animal as they would not hit a friend, and they would educate an animal as they would educate a friend. The body the soul each time inhabits does not seem to concern them. Although neither of these anecdotes necessarily implies the absence of an after-death judgement, they complement the non-retributive interpretation of Pythagorean metempsychosis proposed in Hdt. 2.123.

Thus far, then, we have come across an account of Pythagorean transmigration with no mention of recompense (Herodotus), but rather more emphasis on the practical and ethical orientation of the belief (Xenophanes): metempsychosis affects human behaviour and teaches the Pythagoreans how to live their daily lives, but not in the form of after-death compensation. As mentioned above, scholars such as Zhmud and Casadesús have already argued for the non-retributive character of Pythagorean metempsychosis. However, it is worth noting that other sources suggest alternate ideas of afterlife. For example, in the fourth book of the *Histories*, Herodotus links Pythagoras to the figure of Zalmoxis:

Ὡς δὲ ἐγὼ πυνθάνομαι τῶν τὸν Ἑλλήσποντον καὶ Πόντον οἰκεόντων
Ἑλλήνων, τὸν Σάλμοξιν τοῦτον ἐόντα ἄνθρωπον δουλεῦσαι ἐν Σάμῳ,
δουλεῦσαι δὲ Πυθαγόρῃ τῷ Μνησάρχῳ· ἐνθεῦτεν δὲ αὐτὸν γενόμενον
ἐλεύθερον χρήματα κτήσασθαι συχνά, κτησάμενον δὲ ἀπελθεῖν ἐς τὴν

²⁷ On the ban against beans, see Ch. 2.V.

²⁸ Another interesting question – although, possibly unanswerable given the lack of documentary evidence – is what to think of the body the soul occupies and whether different incarnations impose on the soul different ethical and cognitive abilities (Rowett 2007, 50). That is, whether Pythagoras educates bears and oxen thinking them capable of the same ethical and cognitive achievements of which humans are capable, or if he allows for animals to be morally and intellectually limited, but still considers worth introducing them (or better, their souls) to the Pythagorean way of life – and successfully so, as the anecdote of the bear no longer attacking animals after being lectured by Pythagoras would suggest.

έωυτοῦ. Ἄτε δὲ κακοβίων τε ἐόντων τῶν Θρηίκων καὶ ὑπαφρονεστέρων, τὸν Σάλμοξιν τοῦτον ἐπιστάμενον δίαίταν τε Ἰάδα καὶ ἥθεα βαθύτερα ἢ κατὰ Θρηίκας, οἷα Ἑλλησί τε ὁμιλήσαντα καὶ Ἑλλήνων οὐ τῷ ἀσθενεστάτῳ σοφιστῇ Πυθαγόρῃ, κατασκευάσασθαι ἀνδρεῶνα, ἐς τὸν πανδοκεύοντα τῶν ἀστῶν τοὺς πρώτους καὶ εὐωχέοντα ἀναδιδάσκειν ὥς οὔτε αὐτὸς οὔτε οἱ συμπόται αὐτοῦ οὔτε οἱ ἐκ τούτων αἰεὶ γινόμενοι ἀποθανέονται, ἀλλ' ἥξουσι ἐς χῶρον τοῦτον ἵνα αἰεὶ περιέοντες ἔξουσι τὰ πάντα ἀγαθὰ.

As I understand from the Greeks who live beside the Hellespont and Pontus, this Zalmoxis was a man who was once a slave in Samos, he was the slave of Pythagoras son of Mnesarchus. Then, once he was freed, he gained great wealth, and having gained great wealth, he returned to his own country. Insofar as the Thracians were poor and primitive people, this Zalmoxis knew the Ionian way of life and more advanced customs than the Thracians', as he consorted with Greeks, and with the greatest teacher among the Greeks, Pythagoras. He arranged a banquet, where he entertained and fed the leaders of his countrymen, and taught them that neither he nor his guests nor any of their descendants would ever die, but they would go to a place, where living forever, they would have all good things.

(Hdt. 4.95)

The Thracian Zalmoxis (Pl. *Charm.* 156d1-158c4) is said to have been Pythagoras' slave and to have learnt from him a more advanced way of life, which he in turn taught his people. Among those teachings Zalmoxis handed down to the Thracians, thus bettering their way of living (Porph. *VP* 14), Herodotus specifically mentions the afterlife – which arguably was part of those doctrines he inherited from his acquaintance with Pythagoras.²⁹ Therefore, although Herodotus himself casts doubt on this anecdote (4.96), and although he makes no explicit mention of reincarnation, the passage may nonetheless hint at the Pythagorean belief in a life *post mortem*. Yet here Herodotus alludes to the rewards waiting for the soul beyond death. This does not seem as morally neutral as the transmigration sequence from Hdt. 2.123, for what Zalmoxis is said to foretell is a *good* afterlife. On the one hand, the good life is promised to all, Zalmoxis, his audience and their descendants, presumably regardless of their deeds. On the other hand, however, Zalmoxis is specifically addressing the foremost among the Thracians

²⁹ This passage refers to the Ionian phase of Pythagoras' life, thus suggesting that he devised his doctrine of reincarnation even before moving to Croton and founding a community of disciples.

(τῶν ἀστῶν τοὺς πρώτους), thus suggesting that the good life is only promised as compensation for the worthy and most powerful, whose excellence is reflected in their social and political status. If so, the hierarchy in the afterlife would somehow echo hierarchies in this life.³⁰

A similar issue comes from Ion's fragment:

Ὡς ὁ μὲν ἠγορέη τε κεκασμένος ἡδὲ καὶ αἰδοῖ
καὶ φθίμενος ψυχῇ τερπνὸν ἔχει βίοντον,
εἶπερ Πυθαγόρης ἐτύμως ὁ σοφὸς περὶ πάντων
ἀνθρώπων γνώμας ἦδεε κᾶξέμαθεν.
For being endowed with manly worth and shame,
Once he (Pherecydes) died, his soul has a happy life,
If the wise Pythagoras truly knew
And learnt about every human mind.

(Fr. 30 Blum, in D.L. 1.120)

Ion writes that, in accordance with what Pythagoras taught regarding the fate of the soul after death, Pherecydes' soul went on living a merry life. The importance of this fragment is threefold. First, it remarks Pythagoras' authority on the subject of the afterlife.³¹ Second, it draws a link between Pherecydes and this eschatological belief by contemplating what destiny may have been allotted to him. Third, it lays emphasis on the soul living happily after death. Like Herodotus' Book 4 and unlike Herodotus' Book 2, this reminds us of the compensatory reading of metempsychosis, according to which the life following death is the proportionate response to the life preceding it – whether this be vengeance for past wrongdoings or recompense for a good conduct, as in Pherecydes' case. Ion describes Pherecydes' happy after-life as the outcome of his worthy life. This does not imply the highly moralised version of transmigration according to which souls are born into the world to expiate past faults and undergo punishments in order to regain their once lost bliss. Moreover, as Zhmud suggests, Ion seems more concerned with emphasising Pythagoras' intellectual achievements and superlative wisdom,

³⁰ According to Edmonds, the afterlife may either be conceived as a continuation of the activities of the previous life or as a compensation for past faults (2015, 556-557). Zalmoxis' associates are promised 'all good things' after death: they will continue their feast, thus doing in the Underworld what they did in life. Another example of *post mortem* continuation of the hierarchies of life is Minos, who judges lawsuits before and after death (Hom. *Od.* 567-571). Moreover, in the *Phaedo* 67e-68b, death is preferable to Socrates has he will continue his search for the truth without bodily impediments.

³¹ On Ion's claim that Pythagoras 'examined the minds of all men', see Ch. 4.III below.

rather than providing a detailed account of his eschatology (2012, 38-39). Nonetheless, the reference to Pherecydes' excellent qualities does allude to the possibility of a *post mortem* reward.

A further (although later) piece of counterevidence is Hieronymus of Rhodes (Fr. 42, quoted in D.L. 8.21),³² according to whom Pythagoras witnessed souls being punished in the Underworld, such as that of Hesiod gibbering bound to a brazen pillar and Homer hanging from a tree and tormented by snakes because of what he claimed to know about the gods.³³ In response to Casadesús and Zhmud, we should therefore notice that our sources hint at different versions of Pythagorean metempsychosis, among which some were retributive and some were not. This in turn implies that different early Pythagoreans might have taken the doctrine of reincarnation in different directions, understanding, interpreting and passing it on in different ways.³⁴ These divergent, and sometimes conflicting, views of the afterlife may well coexist, for each has its own purpose, emphasises specific aspects of Pythagorean eschatology and promotes specific ideas – whether this be the continuation of hierarchies of life as in the Zalmoxis' anecdote, the celebration of Pherecydes' wisdom, or a critique of Homer and Hesiod's representation of the gods. Consequently, what characterises the Pythagorean doctrine of metempsychosis is that, *besides* envisioning the soul's punishments and rewards after death, the Pythagoreans also developed the distinctively non-retributive system portrayed in Hdt. 2.123, and *besides* wondering what life comes next, they also deliberated about how to live in the here and now.

III. *Vitae Pythagorae*

I shall now turn back to the issue with which I opened this study of Pythagorean metempsychosis – namely, the journey of Pythagoras' own soul. As mentioned in the previous section, not only did Pythagoras teach his disciples about the afterlife, but he also recalled his own past

³² On Hieronymus, see Fortenbaugh and White 2004.

³³ See also Aristophon Fr. 362 *PGC*, D.L. 8.38, Iamb. *VP* 178. For the criticism of Homeric and Hesiodic religion, see also Xenophanes' Frs. 11-12, quoted in *SE Adv. Math.* 1.289 and 9.193 respectively. Further allusions to a Pythagorean compensatory picture of the afterlife come in Arist. *Post. An.* 94b32-34 ('If things are as the Pythagoreans say, the aim of the thunder is to threaten those in Tartarus and make them afraid'), Iamb. *VP* 85 ('It is good to suffer, but pleasures are bad in every way; for those coming from punishment must be punished') and *VP* 179 ('...the judgement rests in Hades'). It is worth noting, moreover, that this is post-Platonic evidence and may thus be influenced by Plato's retributive version of transmigration (cf. Ch. 4.IV below).

³⁴ On the existence of different Pythagorean theories of the soul, rather than a unified and firmly defined doctrine, see Barnes 1982, 186-193, Burkert 1972, 135, and Guthrie 1962, 315-319. By contrast, Huffman argues that all Pythagoreans had a consistent conception of soul, which is identified as the ability to feel pleasure and pain and shared by animals and humans, for which reason we are to treat ensouled beings well and equally (2009, 21-43).

incarnations. In D.L. 8.4-5, on the evidence of Heraclides Ponticus' Fr. 89, and in Porph. *VP* 45, five lives are listed: first came Aethalides, son of Hermes, to whom the god granted the ability to remember through life and death everything he had experienced; second Euphorbus, a Trojan hero dear to Apollo and killed by Menelaus;³⁵ third Hermotimus;³⁶ fourth the Delian fisherman Pyrrhus; and finally, Pythagoras. The earliest evidence for Pythagoras' previous lives, however, comes from the Peripatetics Dicaearchus (Fr. 36) and Clearchus (Fr. 10), whose account is reported in Aulus Gellius' *Attic Nights*.

Pythagoram vero ipsum sicuti celebre est Euphorbum primo fuisse dictitasse, ita haec remotiora sunt his, quae Clearchus et Dicaearchus memoriae tradiderunt, fuisse eum postea Pyrandrum, deinde Aethaliden deinde feminam pulcra facie meretricem cui nomen fuerat Alco.

Regarding Pythagoras himself, as he famously declared that he was first born as Euphorbus, so what Clearchus and Dicaearchus recorded is less familiar – that afterwards he was Pyrrhus Pyranthius, then Aethalides, and finally a beautiful courtesan named Alco.³⁷

(A.G. NA 4.11.14)³⁸

Dicaearchus and Clearchus add a sixth name to the list: after being an angler and before reincarnating into Pythagoras, his soul resided in the body of a courtesan named Alco. The question, then, is why Pythagoras is attributed these five lives instead of others and, most importantly, why he lived as an angler and a prostitute.

Thus far, the solutions are threefold. The compensatory reading of reincarnation suggests that Pyrrhus and Alco should be understood as punishments inflicted on Euphorbus and that by doing such penance Euphorbus' soul was able to be reborn as Pythagoras.³⁹ Although this is a possible interpretation of the fragment, there is not much direct evidence to support it. For example, according to my reading, Herodotus' account of Pythagorean transmigration conflicts

³⁵ E.g. Hom. *Il.* 16.9-59, 16.806-815, 16.849-850, 17.51-60.

³⁶ According to Diogenes, Hermotimus was once able to recognise the shield of Euphorbus, i.e. his previous incarnation, as his own. See also Porph. *VP* 26-27, Iamb. *VP* 63. On Hermotimus, see Betegh 2012.

³⁷ As one may notice, only do Dicaearchus and Clearchus add Alco and omit Hermotimus, but the order in which the names are listed also differs from Diogenes' version.

³⁸ Latin cited from Rolfe 1927.

³⁹ For example, Plato explicitly pictures women and animals as a step-down in the eschatological hierarchy (e.g. *Phdr.* 245c-250c5, *Rep.* 614e-621d, *Tim.* 41d-42d, 90b-92c).

with the idea of a sequence of lives leading from an initial fall to a final release through a string of punishments and rewards (cf. Ch. 4.II). For sure, the anecdote about Zalmoxis promising a good afterlife to the Thracian leaders, the punishments witnessed by Pythagoras during his Underworld journey and Ion's claim about the happy life of Pherecydes' soul allude to *post mortem* judgements, penalties and rewards. Nevertheless, they do not explicitly connect such compensation with reincarnation. Although these views of the afterlife are not judgement-free, the fact that souls may be punished in the Underworld does not entail that they will expiate their guilt by reincarnating into other, possibly lower, bodies. Similarly, souls may be rewarded in Hades, as Zalmoxis promises, and then be reborn into any kind of body, rather than higher-ranked being. This in turn solves the issue of the moral implications, or lack thereof, of non-compensatory transmigration. The fact that this life does not affect the next does not imply that your behaviour does not matter, for you may still undergo punishment in the Underworld before reincarnating.

This leads us to the second solution: the non-retributive reading. As mentioned above, within the Pythagorean tradition there are alternate ideas of afterlife. According to the proposed reading of Hdt. 1.123, Pythagorean reincarnation does not involve compensation. It is thus worth wondering how would a non-retributive view of metempsychosis explain the list of Pythagoras' past lives. According to Zhmud, the claim that, after being the son of a god and a Trojan hero and right before entering into the body of the philosopher, Pythagoras' soul was a fisherman and a prostitute provides further evidence that Pythagorean transmigration did not have a retributive nature: Alco and Pyrrhus are not Euphorbus' punishments, nor is Pythagoras their reward.⁴⁰ The series of lives may thus be explained either as a mechanical process, in which the sequence is set, as in Hdt. 1.123.2-3, or as random. Once again, this is a possible interpretation. However, the sequence described by Herodotus includes land, water and air creatures. Similarly, Pythagoras' friend from Xenophanes' Fr. 7 reincarnates into a dog. In contrast, Pythagoras' only lists human lives.⁴¹ If Pythagorean metempsychosis allows the possibility of

⁴⁰ 'Previous incarnations of Pythagoras do not form themselves into a progressive series' (Zhmud 2012, 232).

⁴¹ In Heraclides' account, as quoted by D.L. 8.4, Aethalides is granted the gift of remembering all his lives, as a human, an animal or a plant. There are, however, two issues with this statement. First, this would be the only attribution of plant reincarnation to Pythagoreanism. Whilst animal reincarnation is attested by Xenophanes, Herodotus and Dicaearchus, plants are excluded from the list of ensouled beings by Philolaus (Fr. 13, quoted in Iamb. *Theol. Arith.* 25.17). By contrast, Empedocles allows for the possibility of reincarnating into plants (Fr. 117, quoted in D.L. 8.77). Second, even if Pythagoras' did transmigrate into animals and plants, as opposed to Empedocles, his non-human lives have not been recorded – which again leads us to wonder why. It is worth noting that the only surviving evidence of Pythagoras' soul incarnating into a specific animal, namely a peacock, is Enn. *Ann.* 15. As

animal reincarnation, why does Pythagoras focus on his human lives? Is there more to this list than a mechanical or even random process?

A third answer to the puzzle comes from Casadesús (2013, 164-170). According to Casadesús, both the fact that Pythagoras only lists human lives and the specific lives attributed to him are a sign of his superiority and exceptionality. Namely, Pythagoras' past incarnations connect him and his teachings about souls and afterlife with the divine: Aethalides is the son of Hermes and Euphorbus is devoted to Apollo.⁴² Even the reference to Pyrrhus, an angler coming from the island of Delos, would link Pythagoras to Apollo's birthplace and major cult centre. The problem with the latter interpretation, however, is that Pythagoras' is attributed the lives of a *fisherman* from Delos and a prostitute – which do not come across as worthy of a divine-like sage.

As Casadesús argues, a possible reason behind the reference to Alco is Dicaearchus' critical attitude towards Pythagoreanism.⁴³ The name of Alco in connection to Pythagoras is only mentioned once by Dicaearchus and Clearchus. The tone of this fragment, however, sounds sarcastic and the incongruity between the prostitute and the sage seems intended. As was the case with Xenophanes, Dicaearchus and Clearchus may be mocking Pythagoras' doctrine of reincarnation, as well as the unusual role granted to women in his community and his maxims against adultery and prostitution (cf. Ch. 3.IV). Moreover, Pyrrhus the angler may hint at the unusually strict dietary rules by which his followers abided. For instance, Eudoxus reports that because of his extreme vegetarianism Pythagoras never even approached butchers and hunters, which suggests that he might have given anglers a similar treatment (Porph. *VP* 7), and Porphyry writes that he once did approach a group of fishermen, but only in order to encourage them to return the catch of the day into the sea (Porph. *VP* 25). The association of the sage Pythagoras with an angler and especially a prostitute may thus a 4th-century-BCE addition to the list of past lives and a joke.

Casadesús notices, however, this is more likely explained in the light of the fact that the peacock symbolises immortality and the island of Samos, i.e. Pythagoras' birthplace (2013, 168 n. 58 – see also Skutsch 1959). As noted in the next section, Empedocles also attributes to Pythagoras human lives (Fr. 129, quoted in D.L. 8.54 *et al.*).

⁴² Burkert wonders about the association of Pythagoras with such a lesser-known Homeric hero as Euphorbus (1972, 139). The reference, however, is explained in the light of the connection between Euphorbus and Apollo (Hom. *Il.* 16.849). This, in turn, would link Pythagoras with the Apollonian prophetic power of knowing past, present and future (*Il.* 1.70), which is in line with Diogenes' claim that Aethalides, Euphorbus' past life, was able to retain knowledge though life and death.

⁴³ See also Huffman 2014b, 274-295, according to which the reference to a prostitute and her beautiful figure is to be understood in the light of Pythagoras' ability to charm and beguile his audience.

However, as was the case with Xenophanes' Fr. 7, the mockery may unveil a kernel of truth. Even if these incarnations were satirically introduced at a later stage of the tradition, they may nevertheless satirise distinctive features of Pythagorean transmigration. Claiming that Pythagoras lived the life of a prostitute may well be an exaggeration. Yet this does not rule out the possibility that Pythagoras might have believed himself to have previously lived as a woman. Dicaearchus' critical tone does not provide an answer to the question of, first, why Pythagoras is exclusively attributed human lives and, second, why these lives account for various, not necessarily god-worthy, social positions. Once again, then, it is worth investigating whether there may be something more to this list than a mockery.

Overall, as previously argued, our sources for ancient Pythagoreanism hint at both judgement-free and compensatory views of the afterlife. Thus, Pythagoras' past lives have been interpreted as punishments and rewards, a mechanical sequence of lives, an allusion to the divine nature of his soul and a joke. Several questions, however, remain open: why is there no record of Pythagoras claiming to have been incarnated into other species? If not a prostitute, could he have lived as a woman? Finally, if not a good afterlife – or apart from a good afterlife – is there anything else a Pythagorean may gain from transmigrating into both higher and lower bodies and living various human lives?

IV. Pythagoras the memorious

I shall now propose a new reading of the journey of Pythagoras' soul based on Empedocles' account of Pythagorean metempsychosis. In Fr. 129, Empedocles praises a wise man Porphyry and Iamblichus identify as Pythagoras, for gaining a wondrously vast knowledge such as you would only be able to achieve in ten⁴⁴ or twenty human lives.

Ἦν δέ τις ἐν κείνοισιν ἀνὴρ περιώσια εἰδώς,
ὃς δὴ μήκιστον πραπίδων ἐκτήσατο πλοῦτον,
παντοίων τε μάλιστα σοφῶν τ' ἐπιήρανος ἔργων·
ὁππότε γὰρ πάσῃσιν ὀρέζαιτο πραπίδεςσιν,
ῥεῖ' ὃ γε τῶν ὄντων πάντων λεύσσεσκεν ἕκαστον
καί τε δέκ' ἀνθρώπων καί τ' εἴκοσιν αἰώνεσσιν.

And among them there was a man of extraordinary knowledge,
Who acquired the greatest wealth of wit,
Mastering every kind of especially wise deeds.

⁴⁴ On the Pythagorean association of the number 10 with perfection, see Arist. *Met.* 986a9-13.

For whenever he reached out with all his wits,
He easily beheld each of all things that are
For ten or even twenty human ages.

(DK 31 B129)⁴⁵

The breadth of Pythagoras' knowledge had already been noted in Heraclitus' Frs. 40 and 129 (D.L. 8.6). Yet, where Heraclitus ironically mentions his much-learning (πολυμαθίη), Empedocles describes Pythagoras as mastering all kinds of wisdom, acquiring the utmost understanding and stretching his mind across ten or twenty lifetimes.

The meaning of the fragment is twofold. On the one hand, in the *Lives* the praise is taken to refer to Pythagoras' intellectual abilities: Empedocles may be suggesting that Pythagoras knew what takes most men ten or twenty generations to learn or that he acquired knowledge of the past (or future) ten or twenty generations.⁴⁶ On the other hand, the reference to the several lifetimes Pythagoras beheld may also be read as a hint at the doctrine of metempsychosis: Pythagoras' mind overcame the change of generations and was able to remember its ten or twenty past lives.⁴⁷ Empedocles would then go further than a mere eulogy of a sage and allude to the many lives lived by Pythagoras' soul. Noteworthy is that he specifically refers to Pythagoras' ten or twenty *human* lives. Overall, as the first interpretation suggests, the fragment primarily portrays Pythagoras as an outstanding thinker and should not be limited to a statement concerning his teachings on the afterlife. Nevertheless, although primarily focusing on Pythagoras' wisdom and far-reaching intelligence, and although not explicitly mentioning metempsychosis, Empedocles may still be hinting at this doctrine in order to explain what put Pythagoras at the top of the class of wise men.⁴⁸ Pythagoras' memory of past incarnations is the

⁴⁵ The fragment is quoted in D.L. 8.54, on the evidence of Timaeus Fr. 14, Porph. *VP* 30 and Iamb. *VP* 67. According to Diogenes, although Timaeus connects the fragments with Pythagoras, another possible addressee of Empedocles' praise is Parmenides. Arguing for the identification with Pythagoras is Long 1948b, 17-21.

⁴⁶ On the knowledge of past, present and future as a sign of wisdom, see for example Hom. *Il.* 1.70.

⁴⁷ For the translation of αἰών as 'life', see Hom. *Il.* 5.685, 16.453, 19.27, *Od.* 5.160, Hdt. 1.32.

⁴⁸ The connection with transmigration has been suggested by Long (1948b, 21), Cornford (1952, 56), Guthrie (1962, 160-161, and 1965, 251), Rohde (1966, 406 n. 96, 598), O'Brien (1969, 335 n. 1) and Burkert (1972, 213). In contrast, Maddalena (1956, 343-346), Wright (1981, 256-258) and Zhmud (2012, 39-41) argue that Empedocles is only praising Pythagoras as a wise man, rather than an authority on the subject of the afterlife. However, even Zhmud allows for the possibility that Empedocles explained Pythagoras' outstanding knowledge and understanding in the light of his ability to remember his past lives.

mark of his admirable wisdom.⁴⁹ Similarly, Empedocles presents himself as a sage in virtue of his ability to remember his previous lives as a boy, a girl, a bush, a bird and a fish (Fr. 117, quoted in D.L. 8.77). Thus, according to the latter interpretation, instead of or alongside after-death punishments and rewards, what you obtain from reincarnating into various bodies and remembering your previous lives is experience, knowledge and therefore wisdom. The focus is on the *epistemological* gain of reincarnation.

The ‘epistemological ramifications’ of Empedocles’ own theory of metempsychosis, as well as his way of portraying Pythagoras as an ‘epistemological hero’, have been recently studied in Tor’s *Mortal and Divine in Early Greek Epistemology* (2017, 318-339). According to Tor, in Empedocles the traditional link between wisdom and old age (e.g. Hom. *Il.* 21.440) reaches a new eschatological level – no longer ‘the more you live, the wiser you become’, but ‘the more *lives* you live (and remember), the wiser you are’. In his poem, Empedocles introduces himself as a daimon wandering on earth and transmigrating into various bodies (Fr. 115). Moreover, he is able to recount his past vegetal, animal and lastly human lives and he is therefore aware of what it is to live as a bush, a fish or a woman (Fr. 117). Empedocles has lived long, and so he remembers. From all his previous incarnations, he has gained knowledge and understanding, thus carrying a vast and multifaceted experiential baggage from each life into the next one. Consequently, he is to be called a sage. The same may hold true for Pythagoras. Empedocles’ connection with Pythagoreanism suggests that their transmigration doctrines may have shared similar traits, such as the epistemological orientation.⁵⁰ The soul of Pythagoras too underwent several different lives. From these, he collected memories and, as a result, surpassing wisdom.

Empedocles describes Pythagoras as epistemologically superior, for he is able to recount several lifetimes. This alone does not entail that the Pythagoreans themselves conceived of metempsychosis as the way to acquire knowledge and epistemic authority. Yet our sources offer two further hints. In the last two lines of Ion’s fragment, Pythagoras is said to be an authority on the afterlife, for he knew and examined all human minds (Fr. 30). As with Empedocles’ fragment, Pythagoras is described as an intellectual authority inasmuch as he knew about human affairs. In Fr. 129, Pythagoras beholds ten or twenty human lifetimes. Similarly, Ion may allude to the epistemological gain of experiencing other human γνώμαι. Further evidence comes from the *Lives*. The later tradition reports on the importance the Pythagoreans attached to memory: for

⁴⁹ See also Porph. *VP* 26. On Pythagoras’ acquiring a large group of devotees because of his teachings on the afterlife, see Porph. *VP* 18-19, on the evidence of Dicaearchus’ Fr. 33.

⁵⁰ As discussed in more detail in the next section, however, Empedocles’ theory of reincarnation is, at least to some extent, retributive (cf. Ch. 4.IV).

instance, according to Iamblichus, every morning they would try to recall what had happened the day before, for through memory they would acquire knowledge and eventually become wise.⁵¹ Training to remember the events that occurred before one fell asleep may thus be the first step towards recalling the life one had before dying and being reborn. Noteworthy in this regard is that what the Pythagoreans specifically attempt to remember are past experiences. Overall, like Empedocles, Pythagoras' disciples and successors would have also thought of a man capable of remembering not only past deeds, but also past lives as an outstanding sage.

Both Pythagoras and Empedocles are presented as sages in virtue of their ability to recall previous experiences. Once again, we have two possible interpretations: first, they may remember because they are wise; second, they may be wise because they remember. According to the former view, only sages are capable of recalling their past lives. According to the latter, memory is what makes you earn the title of sage in the first place. For example, Empedocles becomes wise through reincarnating and retaining memories. By contrast, Pythagoras' past incarnation Aethalides is granted extraordinary knowledge and memory by the gods. He does not gain wisdom by collecting experiences, nor does he train to improve his memory. Rather, he is gifted with such an ability. Memory is the result, not the cause, of his exceptional status. However, this does not imply that the Pythagoreans considered memory a prerogative of few sages only. As mentioned above, Pythagoras' disciples were taught how to remember their past deeds (Iamb. *VP* 164-166, 256), which suggests that they could train to obtain knowledge, thus emulating Pythagoras' wisdom. Therefore, Pythagoras' journey towards being Empedocles' epistemological and philosophical hero has two steps: first, the divine help enabling Aethalides and his future reincarnations to remember all of their past experiences; second, after a range of human lives, Pythagoras' acquisition of wisdom and the authority to lecture others on the fate of the soul after death.

By reminiscing about their past lives, Pythagoras and Empedocles gain a comprehensive view of the world based on a wider experiential basis – hence, their elevated status and the authority to function as guides for their followers and pupils. Yet there is a difference between their approaches: whilst Pythagoras exclusively remembers being a human, Empedocles, in addition to being a boy and a girl, was once a bush, a bird and a fish. By including animals and plants among his past lives, Empedocles experiences more than Pythagoras, which would then make him wiser.⁵² More likely, however, the difference between Pythagoras and Empedocles'

⁵¹ Iamb. *VP* 164-166 and 256. See also D.S. 10.5.1, Cic. *Sen.* 38. In Porph. *VP* 40, this exercise was done at night before going to sleep rather than in the morning.

⁵² As stated above, another possible interpretation of this difference is to see Pythagoras as superior in that his soul does not lower itself to an animal or vegetal body (Casadesús Bordoy 2011, 215-219). This reading, however,

past lives reveals different purposes in their transmigration doctrines and different scopes of investigation.

Empedocles' inclusion of all sorts of lives, as well as the emphasis on the greater wisdom and understanding gained from such a variety of experiences, indicates that he is concerned with knowing all constituents and aspects of the cosmos. In his poem, transmitted under the title *On Nature* (D.L. 8.77), Empedocles attempts to account for the origin, development and workings of all natural phenomena and all living beings. Therefore, as Tor argues, he benefits from experiencing earthly lives from various, and not exclusively human, angles. The purpose of transmigration, therefore, is to go through a wide range of lifeforms and inhabit several different beings, from plants to animals, from men to women. The scope of the enquiry is the entire physical system of the cosmos.

Pythagoras' past lives, on the other hand, allow him to acquire an in-depth understanding of the realm of human affairs.⁵³ This is then reflected in his teachings, which primarily focus on human lives and behaviours. Noteworthy in this regard is that among Pythagoras' past incarnations a wide variety of social roles is mentioned, from the warrior to the fisherman and the prostitute. Pythagoras has known and lived many human lives, and as a result, he is now able to speak from various points of view, lecturing men, women and more generally all the different social strata composing his community.⁵⁴ This appears as a rather optimistic epistemological view, according to which all human types, not only the intellectual élite, contribute to Pythagoras' knowledge.⁵⁵ The purpose is to explore how humans lead, and should lead, their lives. The enquiry is ethical, rather than physical and cosmological.

Where Empedocles aims at gaining a comprehensive knowledge of the world, Pythagoras appears to focus on the human dimension. Where Empedocles' transmigration brings him through different *lifeforms*, Pythagoras experiences different *lifestyles*. Empedocles' soul also lived in animals and plants because of his cosmological concerns. Pythagoras was a warrior, an angler and a courtesan because of his ethical concerns and the practical and human orientation of his teachings. To be more precise, the contrast is not as sharp. Diogenes records two titles for Empedocles' works, *Peri Physeos* (*On Nature*) and *Katharmoi* (*Purifications*, D.L. 8.77).

presupposes the existence of a hierarchy of lives and therefore a retributive conception of transmigration, which I do not take to reflect the Pythagorean doctrine.

⁵³ See Arist. *Met.* 986a31, in which those Pythagoreans who devised the Table of Opposites are said to apply it to the world of men, τὰ ἀνθρώπινα.

⁵⁴ For references to poor Pythagoreans, see Iamb. *VP* 89 and 239.

⁵⁵ Compare this with Plato's epistemological hierarchy from *Phdr.* 248c-249c.

Whether these are to be understood as two poems, either unrelated or thematically linked, two titles of the same poem, two parts of one single poem or two aspects of the same work is debated.⁵⁶ Either way, Empedocles writes about *both* ethics *and* cosmology. He explores the human dimension by living as a boy and a girl, and the cosmos by being a bush, a bird and a fish.

From these reincarnation sequences, we learn that both Empedocles and Pythagoras are authorities. Yet, whilst the former has come to know the whole cosmos, the latter knows about how to live. Tor writes that in Empedocles' metempsychosis 'there is an element of epistemic self-promotion.' Similarly, according to Casadesús, Pythagoras made use of the doctrine of reincarnation to increase his prestige by highlighting the divine nature of his soul. My reading is that Pythagoras' previous lives build his authority not as the son of a god, but rather as a community leader and educator. This stands even if one were to reject the supposedly satirical addition of Pyrrhus the angler and Alco the prostitute to the list of past lives. Pythagoras' goal is to understand, regulate and order the human behaviour. Thus, he is an epistemological hero in the eyes of his followers because what he learns from his previous human lives – whatever these may be – and in turn teaches his pupils is how they should live.

Overall, the evidence for Pythagorean reincarnation highlights various aspects. From Xenophanes, we learn that the belief in reincarnation somehow influenced the Pythagorean way of life. Herodotus suggests that the doctrine the Pythagoreans developed was non-retributive. Finally, in Empedocles, the gain appears to be epistemological, for what Pythagoras earns from reincarnating and remembering his incarnations is an increased status of knowledge.⁵⁷ This offers further reasons why the Pythagoreans may take 'lower' lives, such as that of an angler and a woman, into higher consideration: not only may these lives not be lower in the first place, but they may also bring knowledge to the reincarnating soul.

⁵⁶ For the two-poems hypothesis, see Laks and Most 2016, vol. 5, 317-319. For the one-poem hypothesis, see Rowett 1987a, 24-50, Trépanier 2003, 1-57.

⁵⁷ The list of passages more generally portraying Pythagoras as the authority on the afterlife may well go further. For example, according to Iamb *VP* 43, on the evidence of Timaeus' Fr. 131, after Pythagoras' death his house was converted into a temple of Demeter, which may connect him with the Eleusinian version of the doctrine of metempsychosis (Rohde 1966, 217-235). Moreover, in D.L. 8.31, Porph. *VP* 41 and Iamb. *VP* 82, he lectures his followers about the abode of the blessed before birth and after death. This may hint at the possibility of an afterlife redemption – arguably echoed by Plato, according to whom after their earthly death worthy souls return to the star in which they used to dwell before being incarnated (*Tim.* 41d-42d).

V. Women and metempsychosis

Thus far, I have analysed two traits of Pythagorean transmigration: retribution, or rather the lack thereof, and the epistemological value. Finally, I shall consider how these traits are related to the case of the Pythagorean women.

As mentioned in Chapter 3.V, another way in which the belief in the transmigration of souls may have affected the Pythagorean βίος are the dietary rules. Pythagoras' followers were forbidden from eating and sacrificing those animals capable of hosting a soul (D.L. 8.13, Iamb. VP 85, 168-169).⁵⁸ Therefore, these rules allow us to make a list of at least some of the beings believed to partake in metempsychosis. For example, pigs and goats,⁵⁹ oviparous animals, anemones and cocks,⁶⁰ lambs,⁶¹ oxen and rams,⁶² bears and dogs seem to be subject to transmigration, whereas fishes are at times excluded.⁶³ Plants are included by Empedocles, who remembers reincarnating not only into a man, a bird and a fish, but also into a bush (Fr. 117), but excluded by Herodotus, who only lists earthly, marine and winged animals (2.123), and Pindar, who only speaks of men and heroes (Pl. *Meno* 81b). Although the *Lives* are not explicit in this regard, there are two passages suggesting that plants may have also been part of the Pythagorean transmigration doctrine. First, in D.L. 8.4 Aethalides asks Hermes for the gift of remembering

⁵⁸ It is worth noting, however, that there is no earlier evidence for this. The first to infer the ban against eating and killing animals from his belief in transmigration is Empedocles, who even compares animal sacrifice to the act of a son slaughtering his father, thus clearly equating the killing of animals with the killing of one's own kin (Frs. 136-137, quoted in SE *Adv. Math.* 9.129). Eating meat is also described as a 'ghastly deed' in Fr. 139 (Porph. *Abs.* 2.31, trans. Rowett 2007, 53). The connection between metempsychosis and vegetarianism in relation to Pythagoreanism is introduced in Ov. *Met.* 15.456-462 and SE *Adv. Math.* 9.127, and then made explicit in the *Lives*. Furthermore, in the case of Porphyry, the emphasis on Pythagorean vegetarianism is also influenced by his own philosophical agenda (see Dombrovski 1984, Rowett 2007, 224-238).

⁵⁹ Porph. VP 42-45 – *pace* Arist. Fr. 195, D.L. 8.34-35, Iamb. VP 84.

⁶⁰ D.L. 8.33. Noteworthy is that in Arist. Fr. 195, quoted in D.L. 8.34-35 and Iamb. VP 84, sacrificing cocks is not forbidden because of metempsychosis, but because they are believed to be sacred to the moon. However, since in Iamb. VP 82 Pythagoras describes the latter as the abode of the blessed, there may still be connection between this ban and his teachings on the afterlife. By contrast, in D.L. 8.20, cocks are included among the permitted offerings, together with newborn animals such as goats and piglets, and as opposed to lambs.

⁶¹ *Pace* Iamb. VP 150, in which whilst Pythagoras is said to prefer non-animal offerings, some Pythagoreans are allowed to sacrifice cocks and even lambs, but never oxen.

⁶² A.G. NA 4.11.6-11, D.L. 8.19-20, on the evidence of Aristotle Fr. 194 and Aristoxenus Fr. 29a. See also the anecdote about Pythagoras educating an ox mentioned in Porph. VP 24 and Iamb. VP 61.

⁶³ Arist. Fr. 194, D.L. 8.19-20 – *pace* Porph. VP 25, 42-45.

all his past lives, both in case his soul inhabited animals and in case it dwelt in plants. Second, the Pythagorean ban against eating beans may indicate that at least some plants were deemed suitable for hosting human souls.⁶⁴ However, the Pythagorean Philolaus seems to have excluded plants from the list of ensouled beings (Fr. 13).⁶⁵ Finally, as the anecdote about Pythagoras' soul reincarnating into the body of a courtesan suggests, Pythagorean metempsychosis also included women. Similarly, Empedocles lists that of a maiden among his past lives (Fr. 117).

The epistemological ramifications and non-retributive character of metempsychosis affect how we picture the role of women in this doctrine. As previously mentioned, both traits offers reasons for valuing the life of a woman. In the light of the epistemological reading, both Empedocles' and Pythagoras' previous lives as women bring forth knowledge.⁶⁶ However, in Empedocles' Fr. 117 the maiden life adds further data and experiences to the philosopher's accumulated knowledge. On the other hand, Pythagoras' past life as the courtesan Alco contributes to shaping the way of life he in turn teaches his disciples.

The same holds true for the non-retributive character of at least some versions of Pythagorean metempsychosis. I have previously argued that the belief in metempsychosis urged Pythagoras' disciples to adopt the same, or at least a similar, kind of conduct towards other ensouled beings, regardless of their bodies. According to Xenophanes, the belief that his friend's soul now inhabits a puppy influences how Pythagoras treats the animal. According to Timaeus, Pythagoras goes as far as to lecture bears and oxen. Diogenes and Iamblichus even claim that this doctrine is the reason behind the Pythagorean rules of abstinence from certain food. Since while reincarnating in animals and humans, the soul remains the same soul, it is entitled to a somewhat similar treatment and education. The belief that female souls are also subject to

⁶⁴ The same ban is then attested in Empedocles (Fr. 141, quoted in A.G. 4.11.9), who additionally forbids his audience from eating laurel leaves (B140, quoted in Plu. *Mor.* 646d) presumably because they could host human souls (B127, quoted in Ael. *NH* 12.7). However, the reasons our sources give for the Pythagorean ban against beans are numerous – from the beans' resembling human genitalia to their reminding of the gates of Hades, from their smelling like semen to Pythagoras' suffering from favism, from their causing infertility to the Pythagorean anti-democratic leanings. Yet they do not include metempsychosis (cf. Ch. 3.V).

⁶⁵ See also Huffman 1993, 307-332.

⁶⁶ Another interesting example, although not linked to metempsychosis, is that of Tiresias who was transformed into a woman by Hera and lived as such for seven years. According to some versions of the myth, once he regained his male body, he claimed that women enjoyed intercourse more than men did. Consequently, he was blinded by Hera, but received the gift of divination by Zeus (Apollod. 3.6.7). Tiresias' life as a woman is here considered a punishment, but nonetheless contributes to his knowledge.

transmigration may thus contribute to the inclusion of women among Pythagoras' disciples and their high-regarded status.

A comparison with Plato may be of help. Plato too mentions the possibility of reincarnation into a woman's body. Yet he depicts this as a form of punishment, a downgrade and a step-down in the eschatological hierarchy (*Tim.* 42b).⁶⁷ In the *Timaeus*, Plato accounts for the composition and fate of individual souls. Specifically, in 41e-42d he lists the three laws regulating the souls' destiny: (i) that the first birth should be the same for all, (ii) that more specifically souls should be born as the most pious among living beings, namely a human, and finally (iii) that since the human nature is twofold, the superior sex it to be named 'man'. Together with embodiment, however, come countless sensitive disturbances, such as desire, pleasure, pain, fear and anger, which throw the soul off course (43a-44d), and which the soul needs to learn how to master so as to go back to be in concord with the cosmos (90d). Should men manage to overcome such a turmoil, they shall live justly and be granted a merry life in the after-death. Should they fail to do so, they shall be reborn as an inferior being. First, they will reincarnate into a woman, then – if they are not yet capable of living well – into other lesser animals (90b-92c). By so doing they will climb their way up and down this biological ladder until finally returning to their first and best living stage. Plato is describing the creation of the four kinds of beings inhabiting the cosmos (39e-40a): celestial and traditional deities (40a-42d), winged, marine and finally footed animals. The primary aim of such a myth, then, is to present the audience with a biological theory explaining the genesis of and the relation between human and animal species. Hence, the passage accounts for different kinds of beings, from birds to fishes and from men to women. Yet Plato seems to go further, for not only does he develop a taxonomy of animals, but he also establishes an axiological hierarchy among them. The body a soul inhabits is the indication of its ethical status, for the life one is appointed is the result of the existence previously led, and similarly the current life will determine the body in which the soul is going to dwell next. This appears as a retributive reading of metempsychosis in which women and animals are pictured as a step-down.⁶⁸ As opposed to Plato, in the available evidence for Pythagorean

⁶⁷ In *Rep.* 620a-c, Plato also tells of both a girl, Atalanta, reincarnating into a male athlete, and a man, Epeius, choosing to become a craftswoman.

⁶⁸ The *Timaeus* is introduced as the continuation of the discussion Socrates had in the *Republic*, where men and women are said to have the same nature (*Tim.* 18c – cf. Ch. 5.II). According to Harry and Polansky 2016, this is not incompatible with Plato's retributive account of metempsychosis, in which men and women have the same soul, although the female body is treated as lower-ranked.

metempsychosis animals and women are not pictured as lower-ranked, for which reason Pythagoras refuses to beat the puppy and lectures oxen and bears.

Overall, as Pythagoras is known for treating well wild beasts and even almost initiating them into his doctrines just as he would have done with his own pupils in virtue of the fact that they all share the same souls, the Pythagoreans also cherish and educate women. One may then raise a last question: is the fact that women are included in the Pythagorean cycle of reincarnations the cause or the consequence of their being included in the community? The doctrine of metempsychosis may appear as the reason behind female inclusion in the society: since female souls are believed to take part in reincarnation and may even transmigrate in the body of such a remarkable man as Pythagoras, they should participate in the life of the community together with men. Yet it may also be the other way round: since women are part of the Pythagorean community, they are also explicitly mentioned in the doctrine of transmigration.

A similar issue is discussed in *Dumb Beasts and Dead Philosophers* (2007, 43-62). According to Rowett, rather than basing their moral code on metempsychosis, the Pythagoreans developed their psychological beliefs in the light of their ethical doctrines.⁶⁹ For example, as previously noticed, Xenophanes' fragment suggests that Pythagoras does not refuse to strike the puppy because it has a soul, but because it has the soul of one of his friends. Pythagoras projects onto the puppy the moral status of his friend and thus forbids his interlocutor from beating him. Yet even according to Rowett's argument, the influence on Pythagoras' behaviour is twofold: first, the moral code dictating that he should not mistreat a friend, and second, the psychological belief that the puppy hosts his friend's soul. The same may be argued with regard to the Pythagorean women: both the family-based ethics described in Chapter 3 and the belief that men and women partake in transmigrations may be contributing factors shaping their status in the community.

V. Conclusions

This chapter had a twofold purpose: first, investigating the traits of Pythagorean metempsychosis in order to explain the anecdote about Pythagoras' past life as a courtesan; second, exploring the relation between Pythagoras' teachings on the afterlife to the status of the Pythagorean women.

My proposed reading is that the list of Pythagoras' past lives as a warrior, an angler and a woman may well be morally neutral, as Zhmud argues. Yet it is not valueless, for Pythagoras has learnt from being Euphorbus, Pyrrhus and Alco, thus becoming a man of extraordinary

⁶⁹ The same argument applies to Empedocles and Plato's *Timaeus*. For example, in Frs. 136-137 Empedocles reproaches animal sacrifice by comparing it to a father slaughtering his own son.

knowledge, as Empedocles' describes him. Specifically, in comparison with Empedocles, Pythagoras' previous lives increase his authority as the founder of a way of life and a community of men as well as women.

There are two remarks worth making. First, according to this interpretation, toning down the role of retribution does not mean ruling out the possibility of gaining something from reincarnation. Simply, the gain will be epistemological: by reincarnating and remembering, Pythagoras might have not made amends, but he did become wiser, learn how to live and inform his community accordingly. As mentioned at the beginning of the chapter, this has broader implications regarding how one becomes sapient and attains philosophical wisdom: more memories of more different lives make us wiser. What turns Pythagoras into a sage is, first, having had previous lives and, second, being able to remember them. Wisdom resulting from several and diverse memories is the key trait to admire.

Second, this epistemological reading stands even if one were to question the non-retributive character of Pythagorean metempsychosis, as Hdt. 4.95 and Ion's Fr. 30 prompt us to do. Even if we suspended our judgment on how and why Pythagoras received the lives he did, and even if these were in fact to be considered rewards or punishments, Pythagoras could nonetheless have learnt from his past incarnations. For example, in Empedocles these two aspects coexist. In Fr. 115, the daimon's exile into mortal life is described as a punishment for its crimes. Yet, as Tor argues, as a side effect of an otherwise torturous punishment, the soul remembers and learns from those many past lives. The gain is twofold: purification *and* wisdom – not only 'the more lives you live, the more you can atone for', but also 'the more lives you live, the wiser you can be'.⁷⁰ Overall, as opposed to Empedocles, in Pythagoreanism the life of a woman is not

⁷⁰ The link between epistemology, retribution and reincarnation is also found in Plato. Unlike Pythagoras and Empedocles, in the Myth of Er (*Rep.* 620a-621a) souls forget their past lives before reincarnating into a new body. Interestingly, however, the life previously lived is said to influence the soul's (good or bad) choice of which life to live next. For example, mindful of his hatred for womankind, Orpheus selects the life of a swan so as not to be conceived by a woman, Ajax and Agamemnon choose to reincarnate into a lion and an eagle respectively, for they remember the sufferings their previous human lives have caused them, and finally Odysseus' soul transmigrates into the body of an ordinary citizen in order to keep away from ambition, whose consequences it has previously experienced. Similarly, in *Meno* 81a-86c and *Phaedo* 72e-77c Plato connects the immortality of the soul with the theory of how knowledge is acquired. As mentioned in Chapter 2.II, this myth is attributed to certain priests and priestesses some scholars identify with the Pythagoreans (*Meno* 81a). The connection between Pythagoreanism and Plato's *Meno* is however questioned by Burkert. Although in this dialogue the recollection of the soul's existence before birth is presented as the ultimate source of wisdom, what is recollected are not subjective, particular and individual experiences, as in Pythagoreanism, Empedocles and Plato's *Republic*, but rather universal truths that are 'beyond the empirical' (1972, 214-215).

explicitly described as a step-down.⁷¹ Moreover, even if it had been pictured as such, it might still have contributed to Pythagoras' knowledge and influenced his treatment of women. We do not know how Pythagoras comported himself in his previous lives and whether as a result of living them well he was able to be reborn as a higher human being. Nevertheless, he did turn out a man of extraordinary knowledge and far-reaching intelligence, and gain the authority to teach his disciples, men as well as women, how to behave, thus forming a community of kindred souls.

This leads us back to the issue of the Pythagorean women. In the previous chapter, we examined how the Pythagorean way of life, and specifically the precepts concerning family life, shaped the role women held in the community and urged Pythagoras' female disciples to engage with Pythagorean thought together with the male. This chapter has shown that Pythagorean men and women were also believed to be akin in virtue of their having a soul and taking part in transmigration.

⁷¹ We do not know much further about Empedocles' treatment of the female gender. The only allusion to him having female disciples is Fr. 112 (D.L. 8.62). On Empedocles' sexual theory, see Frs. 65 (Arist. *GA* 723a23-26) and 67 (Galen *in Epid.* 6.48).

Chapter 5

Plato and the Pythagorean Women

The purpose of this last chapter is to look at Pythagoras' legacy. Specifically, I investigate the impact the Pythagorean views on women had on Plato's philosophy, with particular focus on Book 5 of the *Republic*. There is something distinctive about the role women held in early Pythagorean societies and the place they are assigned in Plato's ideal city, for in both cases women appear to be treated more equally to men. I shall then explore whether, and if so to what extent, the Pythagorean communities and the Pythagorean women are to be included among the forerunners of Plato's *Republic*.

I. A Pythagorean dialogue

The scholarship on Plato's relation to Pythagoreanism is copious and often conflicting.¹ I shall focus on the more specific relation between Plato's views on the female gender in *Republic V* and the prominence of women in Pythagoreanism. I shall first discuss more generally the connections between Plato and the Pythagorean tradition to show whether and, if so, in what respects the former may have been influenced by the latter. Second, I shall outline Plato's proposals on equality of male and female status and family communism in *Rep.* 450c-471c. Finally, I shall explore to what extent Plato's social, political and philosophical agenda in the *Republic* shows affinities with the Pythagorean. The issue at stake is the following: although the theory of communal property and the inclusion of women in Plato's ideal state may remind us of Pythagoreanism, the resulting Platonic and Pythagorean societies turn out to be different. One of the primary differences lies in the very role held by women, for neither did Pythagoras' female pupils take part in political affairs nor were Pythagorean families ever held in common.²

We may begin by distinguishing two scholarly attitudes towards the relationship between Plato and Pythagoreanism. On the one hand, Jowett identifies the Pythagorean communities as Plato's political ancestors, and then specifies that what Plato takes over from Pythagoreanism is the aim of establishing a communal way of living and thinking for all members of the society

¹ See *Bus.* 11.29, in which Isocrates may be referring to the Academics as 'those who fashion themselves as Pythagoras' pupils' (Livingstone 2001, 48-55, Horky 2013, 90-94). Moreover, in *Met.* 987a29-31 Aristotle links Plato's metaphysics with fifth-century Pythagorean number theories: 'After the Pythagorean doctrines came the philosophy of Plato, which in many respects follows the former, but still has certain peculiar traits distinguishing it from Italian thought.' For further literature on the connection between Plato and the Pythagoreans, see Huffman 2013.

² On further differences between the Pythagorean and Platonic παιδεία, see Huffman 2016b.

(1894, vol. 2, 121). Hare takes Jowett's claim further and argues that the Pythagorean influence on Plato's philosophy is threefold. Specifically, Plato inherits the Pythagorean interest in mathematics, the doctrine of the soul and, as Jowett argues, the notion of a 'tightly-organised community of like-minded thinkers' (Barnes, Hare and Taylor 1999, 117-119).³ On the other hand, some Pythagorean scholars question such a connection. According to Minar, Pythagoras' biographers aim to derive Platonic philosophy from Pythagoreanism and thus often forcedly read the latter in the light of the former (Minar 1944).⁴ For example, in Iamb. *VP* 131, Plato is believed to have appropriated Pythagoras' political thought. Moreover, as Burkert (1972, 93) and Zhmud (2012, 415) argue, Plato never explicitly acknowledges his debt to Pythagoreanism: he seldom mentions his Pythagorean predecessors and apparently never with regard to their society.

There are two possible replies to the latter objection. First, the only two passages in which Plato does explicitly refer to the Pythagoreans are in the *Republic*. In Book 7 he simply mentions their number theory, harmonics and geometry (530c-d). Nevertheless, in *Rep.* X 600a-b, he alludes to the Pythagorean way of life, which may suggest that he is thinking about Pythagoras' followers in a socio-political context – as a community (cf. Ch. 2.III).⁵ Second, another way for Plato to acknowledge his philosophical debt to Pythagoreanism is by referring to individual characters connected with the Pythagorean tradition. This was argued by Sedley with regard to Simmias and Cebes in the *Phaedo*: by choosing two interlocutors who studied under Philolaus

³ See also Zeller 1876, 20-35, according to which the meeting with Pythagorean societies in Sicily shaped Plato's project of founding an intellectual gathering of people sharing philosophical interests and views and leading a life of commonality; Morrison 1958, 199, in which the unity of politics and philosophy in the *Republic* is said to echo Pythagorean ideas; Barker 1959, 62-63, according to which Plato's political philosophy is influenced by the practical bent of the Socratic and the Pythagorean thought; and Taylor 1966, 6, according to which Plato left for Sicily as he was entertaining the idea of founding a community and was looking for inspiration, which he later found among the Pythagoreans of Tarentum. Finally, Rowett describes the *Republic* as 'the earliest evidence for Pythagorean politics' available to us (2014, 115).

⁴ See also Garnsey 2005. According to Brisson 2002, modern scholarship also has the tendency to portray Pythagoras as 'le maître et l'inspirateur privilégié' of Plato's philosophy.

⁵ Before mentioning the Pythagorean way of life, Plato also refers to the legislator Charondas, whom Diogenes (8.16), Porphyry (*VP* 20-21) and Iamblichus (*VP* 130) take to be a Pythagorean, and which may thus provide a further link between Pythagoreanism and the *Republic*. However, there are two problems worth highlighting. First, as was the case with Zaleucus, Charondas is dated in the seventh century BCE and is thus unlikely to have studied with Pythagoras (Zhmud 2012, 114 – cf. Ch. 1.II). Rather, the connection between these two figures would have bestowed upon Pythagoras' social reforms the same authority of Charondas' legislation. Second, in the *Republic* Plato refers to Charondas as a politician and Pythagoras as the founder of a way of life, thus parting Pythagoreanism and politics (Huffman 2013, 239).

(61d-e), Plato hints that the topics under debate are Pythagorean issues, such as life after death and the immortality of the soul (Sedley 1994).⁶ We may then agree that in some respects Plato was affected by and reacted to Pythagoreanism. Yet we should investigate what kind of influence he received and in what way he responded.

A possible answer to the question of how Pythagoreanism affected Plato's thought has been again suggested by Sedley and, more recently, Huffman. In the above-mentioned paper on the *Phaedo*, Sedley argues that the interlocutors in Plato's middle and late dialogues may either represent philosophical traditions to which Plato is indebted or views against whom he is arguing (1994, 6). For example, in the *Phaedo* Plato casts the characters of Simmias and Cebes as an allusion to the Pythagorean background of the dialogue. Nevertheless, he also highlights their doubts about the immortality of souls, thus showing that what this Pythagorean doctrine ultimately needs is to be integrated into the Platonic theoretical framework. Through his arguments about the Forms and recollection, Plato takes on Pythagorean psychology and attempts to overcome some of the challenges it poses (2004, 10-13). Along similar lines, Huffman's argument is twofold. First, he acknowledges the Pythagorean influence on Plato, but describes it as minimal: 'the Pythagorean influence is limited to a few narrowly defined aspects of Plato's philosophy rather than being pervasive' (2013, 238).⁷ Second, he again notices that this influence goes two ways, for in some respects Plato found himself in agreement with the Pythagoreans, and in other respects he argued against them. For example, the politico-philosophical curriculum devised in *Rep.* VII seems to be in direct contrast with, instead of inherited from, Archytas' model of education (Huffman 2016b).

⁶ Another Pythagorean interlocutor may be Timaeus, whom Iamblichus lists as a Pythagorean from Locri (*VP* 267 – see also *Tim.* 20a). On the identification of Timaeus as a Pythagorean, see Ch. 1.II. Since the *Timaeus* is introduced as the continuation of the discussion in the *Republic* picturing the ideal city 'at work' (*Tim.* 17a-19b), this may then strengthen the link between Plato and Pythagorean politics.

⁷ Other possible sources for Plato's *Republic* are listed in Dawson 1991 and include the Spartan city-state, some barbarian tribes (e.g. *Hdt.* 2.35, 4.104, 116, 172, 180) and Aristophanes' *Ecclesiazusae*. For example, see *Eccl.* 590-610 and 667-675 on common property, *Eccl.* 613-650 on sharing wives and children, and *Eccl.* 715-716 on common meals. There are two possible explanations for the affinity between Aristophanes and Plato. First, Aristophanes may be satirising the theory of communism proposed by philosophers such as the Pythagoreans and perhaps Socrates himself. For example, Socrates may have Aristophanes in mind when fearing that his political proposals will become a laughing stock (452a-c). Second, both works may rely on a common source and reflect the cultural context of their time, in which the social conditions of women had become a matter of intellectual discussion (e.g. *Eur. Med.* 214-266). On the connection between Plato's *Rep.* V and Aristophanes' *Ecclesiazusae*, see Adam 1962, 345-355, and Ussher 1973, xvi-xx.

Overall, there are three points worth remarking. First, Hare identifies three areas of influence: mathematics, psychology and politics. Huffman and Sedley focus on the first two aspects – number theory and the doctrine of the soul. Therefore, I shall explore the Pythagorean roots of Plato's political philosophy. Second, we have seen that in Plato's dialogues engaging with Pythagoreanism also means pointing at the inconsistencies within their doctrines and attempting to solve them with a new theoretical framework. Third, Plato occasionally engages with the Pythagorean tradition by mentioning individual Pythagorean philosophers and casting them as Socrates' interlocutors. With regard to politics, the philosopher who may have functioned as a point of contact between Pythagoras and Plato, and to whom Plato may be reacting and responding in the *Republic* is Archytas of Tarentum.

The *Seventh Epistle* refers to Plato's acquaintance with the philosopher and statesman Archytas (338c-339e – see also D.L. 8.79-81). The letter describes Plato's involvement with the Sicilian political scene as the educator of the tyrant of Syracuse Dionysus the Elder and his successor Dionysus the Younger. Specifically, during his stay in Sicily Plato was allegedly hosted by Archytas' circle in Tarentum. In *Ep.* 7.350a, Archytas is even characterised as Plato's φίλος, friend and comrade. If so, Plato may have witnessed a Pythagorean society in action, which in turn may have influenced his socio-political thought.⁸

The authorship of the *Seventh Epistle*, however, is a point of heated academic controversy. Most recently, its authenticity has been called into question by Burnyeat and Frede.⁹ I am resorting to the letter as evidence that Plato journeyed to Sicily and was in contact with Archytas and the Pythagorean community of Tarentum. Therefore, for the purpose of this work, it is enough to argue that the author of the letter was familiar with the narrated events, and that consequently the text is likely to have a kernel of historical truth. As Diogenes notices (3.37), Plato wrote very little about his own life – besides his attending Socrates' trial (*Apol.* 34a, 38b) and being absent at the time of Socrates' death (*Phd.* 59b). Therefore, some scholars have treated the letter as an invaluable source of information about Plato's life and political career (e.g. Ledger 1989, 148-150). Denyer has recently argued that the *Seventh Epistle* may have been written by one of Plato's close disciples who was presumably well acquainted with

⁸ According to Lloyd, in the *Seventh Letter* Archytas is portrayed as philosophically inferior to stress Plato's independence from Pythagoreanism and discharging him from the accusation of plagiarism (1990, 169-173). Lloyd's argument, however, is compatible with the idea that the letter was written as a defensive move to deny existing Pythagorean influence.

⁹ Burnyeat and Frede 2015. The authenticity and authorship of the *Seventh Epistle* are beyond the scope of this chapter. For further discussion and literature, see Irwin 1992, 78-79, Rowe and Schofield 2000, 299-302, Kahn 2015.

his life and thought (2016, 283-292). If so, authenticity issues aside, this document would remain historically valuable.¹⁰

Archytas is not the only Pythagorean with whom Plato is reputed to have been in contact, and the Tarentine community is not the only Pythagorean society Plato may have visited. In D.L. 3.6, Plato is said to have travelled to Croton and met with Philolaus, whose disciples Echebrates, Simmias and Cebes feature in the *Phaedo* (61d-e and 88c-d).¹¹ Moreover, according to the *Seventh Epistle*, Plato visited Syracuse. There is not much evidence for a Pythagorean community in Syracuse. The *Catalogue* lists the names of three Syracusan Pythagoreans, including the illustrious friends Phintias and Damon (cf. Ch. 2.II). When reporting the anecdote about Phintias, Damon and their quarrel with the tyrant Dionysius the Elder, Aristoxenus writes that these Pythagoreans ‘were living together and sharing property’ (Fr. 31, quoted in Iamb. *VP* 235), which suggests that Syracuse hosted at least a small Pythagorean society. Moreover, Dionysius himself was notably interested in Pythagoreanism. For example, he imprisoned Timycha and Myllias to interrogate them about the Pythagorean doctrines (cf. Ch. 1.III). Similarly, his son Dionysius the Younger, with whom Plato collided during his time in Sicily, is said to have been in friendly relations with Archytas’ Tarentine circle (*Ep.* 7.338c). Overall, besides Archytas and his community in Tarentum, Plato may have come across Pythagoreans in Croton and Syracuse. Thus, the Pythagorean societies with which he came into contact during his trip to Southern Italy may have contributed to the socio-political setting of the *Republic*.¹²

II. Philosopher queens and common wives

In the second book of the *Republic*, Socrates starts planning in speech, λόγῳ, the foundation of an ideal state (369c) to be named Kallipolis (527c). At the beginning of Book 5, he is interrupted by his interlocutors urging him to throw light on some of the statements he had made earlier about the organisation of his model-city (449a-450c). Specifically, the three proposals that provoke shocked reactions from his interlocutors, the so-called ‘three waves’ (453c-d), are: (i) the inclusion of women among the guardians of the city (450c-457a), (ii) the abolition of private family and communism of spouses and children (457a-471c), and (iii) the possibility of having philosopher rulers (471c-480a). As we shall see, this alleged detour, or

¹⁰ See also Guthrie 1975, 8, Huffman 2005, 38-39.

¹¹ On Echebrates, see also D.L. 8.46, on the evidence of Aristoxenus Fr. 19, Iamb. *VP* 251, and the *Catalogue*. On Simmias and Cebes, see Pl. *Cri.* 45b and *Phdr.* 242b. In Vit. 1.1.16 and D.L. 8.46, Philolaus is said to have lived in Tarentum, as well as Croton, and in Cic. *Orat.* 3.34.139 he is identified as Archytas’ teacher.

¹² See also Guthrie 1962, 333, Schofield 2000.

political digression, will turn out to be a crucial step in the establishment of what Vegetti defines as Plato's *regno filosofico*, his kingdom of philosophy (1998-2007, vol. IV, 335-364).

(i) The guiding principles

Sex equality and family communism are introduced in Books 2 to 4. According to Taylor (2012, 83), the principles on which the Platonic society is founded are twofold: the Principle of Specialisation of Function and the Principle of Eradication of Division. The former takes its cue from what Reeve names as Plato's Unique Aptitude Doctrine (1988, 172-177):

Πρῶτον μὲν ἡμῶν φύεται ἕκαστος οὐ πᾶν ὁμοίως ἐκάστῳ, ἀλλὰ
διαφέρων τὴν φύσιν, ἄλλος ἐπ' ἄλλου ἔργου πρᾶξιν.

First, each one of us is by nature not quite like another, but being different
in nature, each is suited for the accomplishment of a different activity.

(370a)

According to Plato, each person has a natural aptitude for a unique craft. Thus, the Principle of Specialisation of Function establishes that each citizen should devote his or herself to the task for which he or she is fitted by nature:

Καὶ τοὺς ἄλλους πολίτας, πρὸς ὃ τις πέφυκεν, πρὸς τοῦτο ἓνα πρὸς ἓν
ἕκαστον ἔργον δεῖ κομίζειν, ὅπως ἂν ἐν τῷ αὐτοῦ ἐπιτηδεύων ἕκαστος
μὴ πολλοὶ ἀλλ' εἷς γίγνηται, καὶ οὕτω δὴ σύμπασα ἡ πόλις μία φύηται
ἀλλὰ μὴ πολλαί.

Each of the other citizens too must be brought up to that one activity
for which one is naturally suited – one man per job – so that each
pursuing his own, which is one, may not become many but one, and
thus the whole city is naturally one instead of many.

(423c-d)

As we shall see, in accordance with this 'one man, one job' principle (370b), women too ought to perform exclusively the tasks for which they are naturally fitted. This implies that some women, if gifted with a suitable nature and after being educated appropriately, may even be rulers. Moreover, guardians should not devote themselves to tasks other than ruling, such as parenthood. This in turn leads us to the Principle of Eradication of Division and the abolition of private families.

Δεῖν καὶ τὰς οἰκίσεις καὶ τὴν ἄλλην οὐσίαν τοιαύτην αὐτοῖς
παρεσκευάσθαι, ἥτις μήτε τοῦς φύλακας ὥς ἀρίστους εἶναι παύσει

αὐτούς, κακουργεῖν τε μὴ ἐπαρεῖ περὶ τοὺς ἄλλους πολίτας. [...] Πρῶτον μὲν οὐσίαν κεκτημένον μηδεμίαν μηδένα ἰδίαν, ὧν μὴ πᾶσα ἀνάγκη·

It is necessary to provide them with houses and whatever other resource of this kind will neither prevent them from being the best possible guardians, nor induce them to do harm to the other citizens. [...] First, nobody is to acquire any personal property that is not absolutely necessary.

(416c-d)

Whatever may threaten social cohesion and further divisions within the community is to be eliminated. Specifically, Plato lists private property and families among those threats to the unity of the state we ought to eradicate. As a result, the guardians of the city ought to hold everything in common, live and dine together, and even share wives and raise children as a group.

According to Plato, a city comes into being because people are not self-sufficient and thus find themselves in need of one another (369b-c). The primitive city provides its citizens with the most basic needs, such as food, houses and clothes, and thus only consists of farmers, builders, weavers and shoemakers. It is a city of utmost necessity, ἀναγκαιοτάτη πόλις (369d), or a city of pigs, ὕων πόλις, as Glaucon describes it (372d). In accordance with the specialisation principle, the citizens accomplish different jobs and work together towards the sustainment of the community. However, by expanding and developing further desires, this first minimal form of organisation grows into a luxurious city, τρυφῶσα πόλις (372e). To such an unhealthy city, Plato will counterpoise Kallipolis, which functions as the paradigm of the just city, and whose citizens are divided into workers, soldiers and rulers.

The role of the city of pigs in the overall argument of the *Republic* is a point of controversy. Some scholars consider this the ultimate perfect city, for as opposed to Kallipolis, it runs without the need of a constitution (Morrison 2007). By contrast, others take the city of pigs to be imperfect, for it is based on self-interest (Bloom 1968, 344-348, Cross and Woosley 1964, 75-93), it develops from a reductive view of human nature (Reeve 1988, 170-178), it depends on luck to strike a balance between individual needs (McKeen 2004) and, as Plato himself admits, it is not free from injustice (371e – see Annas 1981, 73-79). It is unlikely that Plato intended the city of pigs to be perfect, but nonetheless merely mentioned it in Book 2 without referring back to this supposedly ideal city later in the dialogue (Dawson 1991, 77-81). Yet this does not mean that we should interpret the first city as a ‘false start’ (Morrison 2007, 250). The function of the city of pigs is to provide the context to introduce the Principle of Specialisation. In the first city, jobs are assigned depending on natural abilities.

This in turn may prompt us to think that in this primitive city women start taking up the same roles as men. However, to find an explicit statement in this regard, we should turn to the fifth book.

(ii) The first two waves

In *Rep.* V, Socrates shifts from the more general task division outlined in 423c-d to the more specific discussion of the tasks of women. The first move is an argument by analogy: just as we train both male and female sheepdogs to guard the flocks, both men and women should be educated in the same way to become guardians (451d-e).¹³ Since the image of old and young women exercising together with men strikes his interlocutors as ridiculous (γελοϊότατον, 452a-b),¹⁴ Socrates is asked to expand on his proposal. The second, more elaborate, argument runs as follows:

Τὴν ἄλλην φύσιν ὅτι οὐ τῶν αὐτῶν δεῖ ἐπιτηδευμάτων τυγχάνειν πάνν
ἀνδρείως τε καὶ ἐριστικῶς κατὰ τὸ ὄνομα διώκομεν, ἐπεσκεψάμεθα δὲ
οὐδ' ὀπιοῦν τί εἶδος τὸ τῆς ἐτέρας τε καὶ τῆς αὐτῆς φύσεως καὶ πρὸς
τί τεῖνον ὠριζόμεθα τότε, ὅτε τὰ ἐπιτηδεύματα ἄλλη φύσει ἄλλα, τῇ δὲ
αὐτῇ τὰ αὐτὰ ἀπεδίδομεν. [...] Οὐκοῦν, ἦν δ' ἐγώ, καὶ τὸ τῶν ἀνδρῶν
καὶ τὸ τῶν γυναικῶν γένος, ἐὰν μὲν πρὸς τέχνην τινὰ ἢ ἄλλο
ἐπιτήδευμα διαφέρον φαίνεται, τοῦτο δὴ φήσομεν ἑκατέρῳ δεῖν
ἀποδιδόναι· ἐὰν δ' αὐτῷ τούτῳ φαίνεται διαφέρειν, τῷ τὸ μὲν θῆλυ
τίκτειν, τὸ δὲ ἄρρεν ὀχεύειν, οὐδέν τί πω φήσομεν μᾶλλον
ἀποδεδεῖχθαι ὥς πρὸς ὃ ἡμεῖς λέγομεν διαφέρει γυνὴ ἀνδρός, ἀλλ' ἔτι
οἰησόμεθα δεῖν τὰ αὐτὰ ἐπιτηδεύειν τοὺς τε φύλακας ἡμῖν καὶ τὰς
γυναῖκας αὐτῶν.

That different natures must not chance upon the same pursuits we are following up word by word very vigorously and eristically, but we did not consider at all what kind of difference and sameness in nature we were distinguishing, and for what purpose, when we assigned different pursuits to a different nature, but the same pursuit to the same nature. [...] Does not the same go for the two sexes, male and female? If they appear different with regard to some art or other practice, we shall say that that job must be assigned to each singly. However, if they appear to be different in this alone, that the female bears, whereas the male

¹³ The dog analogy is criticised in Arist. *Pol.* 1264b4-6.

¹⁴ On similar training practices in Sparta, see Thuc. 1.6.5-6.

inseminates, then we shall say that it has not yet been proved that a woman is different from a man with respect to what we are talking about, but we shall still think that our guardians and their women should perform the same task.

(454b-e)

Women are to be assigned those tasks for which they are innately suited, or fitted by nature (453b). Natural differences should then only come into play to the extent that they make a citizen suited for a certain task instead of another (453e). In other words, in assigning different citizens different jobs, we should consider those natural traits that determine the agent's skills and abilities, thus conditioning his or her role in the society (454b). For example, despite their different looks, both bald and longhaired citizens can be cobblers (454c-d). The primary biological differences between men and women are twofold. First, women are child-bearers, whereas men are begetters (454e). Second, males are physically stronger and females weaker (451d-e, 455e, 456a).¹⁵ Yet neither of these differences appears to have any impact on male and female social status and education, nor do they affect their occupations (451e-452a, 454e-455d). The male and female biological constitution is not socially relevant. What should be considered is their aptitude for learning – namely, whether they apprehend easily or with difficulty and whether they need extensive or brief instruction, long or quick practice (455b-c). As a result, since the offices of rulers, defenders and producers are to be assigned to those who are suited by nature, and since sex differences do not seem to be relevant, Plato's city should open its doors to female as well as male rulers, male as well as female defenders, and male as well as female producers. Equally skilled men and women should then be nurtured equally, receive the same upbringing, exercise together and adopt the same lifestyle (452a-e, 456b-d). Therefore, if naturally fitted and adequately trained, the best women may become rulers of the city alongside the best men (456b-457a, 460b).

After detailing the eugenic programme the guardians will implement to guarantee the excellence of the ruling class (458a-462e), secretly matching the best women with the best

¹⁵ As we shall see in the next paragraph, whilst the issue of child-bearing is dealt with in detail, physical strength and weakness, as well as the extent to which they might affect the female social status, are only briefly mentioned. By introducing familial communism, the roles of women as bearers and men as begetters are set aside. In contrast, the only suggestion Socrates makes to solve the lack of strength issue is that women will practice physical exercise and take common part in war as men do, as long as they are assigned a lighter share of these tasks because of their weakness (457a). This distinguishes Plato's treatment of the female gender from Aristotle's, according to which the primary difference between male and female bodies is that women are weaker than men (e.g. *GA* 726b30-727a1, *HA* 538a22-24, 608a25-b1).

men (459d-e) and then raising their offspring together (460c-d), Socrates moves on to the second proposal. He thus turns from the more general maxim against private property outlined in 422e-423a to the more specific exclusion of private families. The argument for family communism runs as follows:

Ἔχομεν οὖν τι μείζον κακὸν πόλει ἢ ἐκεῖνο ὃ ἂν αὐτὴν διασπᾷ καὶ ποιῇ πολλὰς ἀντὶ μιᾶς; ἢ μείζον ἀγαθὸν τοῦ ὃ ἂν συνδῇ τε καὶ ποιῇ μίαν; [...] Τοῦ μεγίστου ἄρα ἀγαθοῦ τῇ πόλει αἰτία ἡμῖν πέφανται ἡ κοινωμία τοῖς ἐπικούροις τῶν τε παίδων καὶ τῶν γυναικῶν. Καὶ μὲν δὴ καὶ τοῖς πρόσθεν γε ὁμολογοῦμεν· ἔφαμεν γάρ που οὔτε οἰκίας τούτοις ἰδίας δεῖν εἶναι οὔτε γῆν οὔτε τι κτῆμα, ἀλλὰ παρὰ τῶν ἄλλων τροφὴν λαμβάνοντας, μισθὸν τῆς φυλακῆς, κοινῇ πάντας ἀναλίσκειν, εἰ μέλλοιεν ὄντως φύλακες εἶναι.

Do we have any greater evil for a city than that which tears it apart and makes it many instead of one? Or any greater good than that which binds the state together and makes it one? [...] Thus, the community of wives and children among the guardians appears as the cause of the greatest good for the city. And now we are also agreeing with what we said earlier. For I think we said that there must be no private houses for them, nor land, nor any property, but, receiving their livelihood from the others as a recompense for guarding, they should all consume it in common, if they really are to be our guardians.

(462a-464c)

The greatest evil for the city is what tears it apart, whereas the greatest good binds it together (462a-b). Therefore, the guardians ought to foster the city's welfare – that is, unity – and eradicate evil – that is, social divisions. As guarantors of the city's unity, they ought to promote concord and stability in the community as a whole as well as among themselves as a group. Socrates argues that in order to be genuine (ἀληθινοί), the guardians should call the same thing 'mine' (464c-d). Since property triggers conflict and discord, it would compromise the guardians' job and by so doing endanger the whole community. Consequently, the guardians should relieve themselves of private belongings (464b-c). This also extends to private families: the communism of kin will free the guardians from further dissensions that would risk harming the city (463c-e). Yet Socrates takes a step further:

Νεώτερος πρεσβύτερον, ἂν μὴ ἄρχοντες προστάττωσιν, οὔτε ἄλλο βιάζεσθαι ἐπιχειρήσει ποτὲ οὔτε τύπτειν, ὥς τὸ εἰκός. Οἶμαι δ'

οὐδὲ ἄλλως ἀτιμάσει· ἱκανὸν γὰρ τὸ φύλακε κωλύοντε, δέος τε καὶ αἰδώς, αἰδώς μὲν ὡς γονέων μὴ ἄπτεσθαι εἴργουσα, δέος δὲ τὸ τῷ πάσχοντι τοὺς ἄλλους βοηθεῖν, τοὺς μὲν ὡς υἱεῖς, τοὺς δὲ ὡς ἀδελφούς, τοὺς δὲ ὡς πατέρας.

Unless the rulers order him to do so, a younger man will never try to beat or commit any sort of violence against an elder, as is reasonable, nor will he disrespect him in any other way, I believe. For two barriers are enough to stop him: fear and shame. The shame preventing him from hitting parents, and the fear that others will come to the aid of the victim, some as sons, others as brothers, others again as fathers.

(465a-b)

Because of family communism, people will start interacting with their fellow citizens in a family-like manner. First, they will call each other brothers and sisters (463c). Second, they will treat each other with the same respect and care shown towards family members (463c-e). Not knowing who their children, parents and spouses are, but rather having families in common and sharing personal relations, the guardians will behave towards their fellow rulers and auxiliaries as they would do with their own kin. Noteworthy is that, according to the second part of the argument, instead of separating itself from private families, citizenship gains the same strength as family and blood ties.

How we are to interpret the connection between the two proposals is debated. Having faced the first wave, and shown that in the ideal city men and women should have the same jobs and education, Socrates states the following:

Φήσεις γε, ἦν δ' ἐγώ, οὐ μέγα αὐτὸ εἶναι, ὅταν τὸ μετὰ τοῦτο ἴδῃς. Λέγε δὴ, ἴδω, ἔφη. Τούτῳ, ἦν δ' ἐγώ, ἔπεται νόμος καὶ τοῖς ἔμπροσθεν τοῖς ἄλλοις, ὡς ἐγῶμαι, ὅδε. Τίς; Τὰς γυναῖκας ταύτας τῶν ἀνδρῶν τούτων πάντων πάσας εἶναι κοινάς, ἰδίᾳ δὲ μηδενὶ μηδεμίαν συνοικεῖν· καὶ τοὺς παῖδας αὖ κοινούς, καὶ μήτε γονέα ἔκγονον εἰδέναι τὸν αὐτοῦ μήτε παῖδα γονέα.

‘Whenever you see what comes next, you will say that this is not a big wave,’ I said. ‘Tell me, let me see,’ he said. ‘I believe this law follows the latter and the others that came earlier,’ I said. ‘What law?’ ‘That all these women should be shared by all these men, none should live with any man in private, and the children too should be held in common, parents should not know their offspring, nor children their parents.

(457c)

Socrates gives us two hints. First, the second part of the project is more troublesome than the first. Second, family communism follows (ἔπεται) from previous proposals. This in turn implies that, as mentioned above, family communism is a particular application of the principle of common property – you share wives and children in the same way as you share belongings – and that it is a consequence of sex equality. According to the specialisation principle, men and women with the same innate abilities are assigned the same social roles, education and way of life, and should exclusively devote themselves to the job for which they are naturally suited. Thus, in the case of the guardians, family communism is introduced as a way to allow male and female rulers and auxiliaries to perform their task at best. For example, in 460d, Plato writes that this will make procreation a great relief for the wives of the guardians (πολλὴν ῥαστώνην τῆς παιδοποιίας ταῖς τῶν φυλάκων γυναῖξιν).

Childrearing remains key to the development and survival of the community, for which reason Plato devises an elaborate eugenic programme to ensure that the best men and women will breed the best offspring. Yet the establishment of strict marital and sexual regulations provides further evidence of how family life is no longer a female-only prerogative, but rather is shared among all members of the guardian class. By making childrearing not a private, but a state matter, Plato thus reinforces his gender equality proposal (Jacobs 1978, 29-30). Therefore, what makes Plato's project radical is recognising that women can have the same abilities as men. Only then, does he propose to abolish private families and households.¹⁶

However, towards the end of Book 5, Socrates states the following:

Συγχωρεῖς ἄρα, ἦν δ' ἐγώ, τὴν τῶν γυναικῶν κοινωνίαν τοῖς ἀνδράσιν, ἣν διεληλύθαμεν, παιδείας τε περί καὶ παίδων καὶ φυλακῆς τῶν ἄλλων πολιτῶν, κατὰ τε πόλιν μενούσας εἰς πόλεμόν τε ἰούσας καὶ συμφυλάττειν δεῖν καὶ συνθηρεῦειν ὥσπερ κύνας, καὶ πάντα πάντα κατὰ τὸ δυνατόν κοινωνεῖν, καὶ ταῦτα πραττούσας τά τε βέλτιστα πράξειν καὶ οὐ παρὰ φύσιν τὴν τοῦ θήλεος πρὸς τὸ ἄρρεν, ἢ πεφύκατον πρὸς ἀλλήλῳ κοινωνεῖν.

Then, I said, you agree with the community of the wives with their husbands regarding the education of children and the protection of the other citizens, as we have discussed. Both when staying in the city and when going to war, they should guard and hunt together like dogs, and

¹⁶ On Plato as a proto-feminist, see Okin 1979, Lesser 1979, Vlastos 1994. On misogyny in the *Republic*, see Pomeroy 1974, Annas 1976, Saxonhouse 1976, McKeen 2006. For different readings on Plato's views of women, as well as further literature, see Bluestone 1987, Tuana 1994, Buchan 1999, Brown 2011, Blair 2012.

they should share everything in every way as much as possible. Having done so, they will do what is best instead of acting contrary to the nature of the female in relation to the male, which the two sexes were born to share with each other.

(466d)

According to the latter passage, Socrates' ultimate goal seems to be the pursuit of unity. Socrates has been arguing for the community of men and women (τὴν τῶν γυναικῶν κοινωνίαν τοῖς ἀνδράσιν) with regard to both the education of children (παιδεία παίδων) and the guardianship of the state (φυλακή τῶν ἄλλων πολιτῶν). The former refers to eradication of private families, wifehood and motherhood. The latter alludes to the possibility of having both male and female guardians. In a sense, the overall aim of Book 5 is to show how the citizens of Kallipolis can leave a life of commonality. This is achieved via both the community of families and the community of jobs, education and lifestyle.

The reason why Socrates embarks on the discussion of the female status in the ideal city to begin with (449c) is that Adimantus asks him to explain the theory of communism of wives and children he has alluded to in *Rep.* IV 423e.¹⁷ If so, showing that men and women can have the same social role would be the first step towards the abolition of traditional families. Rather than introducing common families to allow women to be guardians, Socrates would introduce philosopher queens to clear the way for communism. This leads Okin to claim that the first proposal – i.e. women's suitability for guardianship – follows from, instead of leading to, the second – i.e. family communism (1977, 345-369). For this reason, Okin argues, when Plato reinstates private families in the *Laws*, women go back to their domestic roles and to being relegated into the household.¹⁸

The fundamental difficulty with Okin's argument is that, whilst commonality is only required of the guardians, the specialisation principle applies to all social groups.¹⁹ Therefore, men and women from the working class can have the same jobs, even though private families are not abolished and children are not raised in common. A third way to read Book 5 was

¹⁷ This passage is quoted in Ch. 5.III.iv below. On the Principle of Eradication of Divisions, see *Rep.* 416c-d above.

¹⁸ On women in Plato's *Laws*, see below Ch. 5.II.iii.

¹⁹ See 433c-d, in which the specialisation principle is said to apply to all, and 454d, in which Socrates refers to female doctors and carpenters. By contrast, in 417a Socrates distinguishes guardians from farmers in that only the latter own private property. For an alternative reading of Platonic communism as applying to the entire city, see Rowett 2016. For a more detailed discussion of the scope of Plato's proposals, see the introduction to Chapter 5.III below.

suggested by Sedley, according to whom these shocking proposals are not to be conceived as three separate waves, but rather as a three-waved tsunami (2005, 205-214). Instead of being one the cause of the other, specialisation and unity are both integral parts of the wider project of making Kallipolis attainable. The purpose is to show that the model-city is possible and desirable (δυνατός and ὠφέλιμος, 457c). The outcome is that such a city will have philosopher kings, philosopher queens and common families.

Overall, this debate shows that Plato's arguments in *Rep.* V develop from a radical commitment to his guiding principles. It may be a radical commitment to the specialisation principle, which leads Plato to merge male and female tasks and eliminate every factor that stands in the way of such a project, including private families. Alternatively, as Okin argues, Plato may be primarily dedicated to the pursuit of unity, which leads him to abolish private families, thus freeing women from their role as nurturers and allowing them to pursue a political career. We shall see how Plato's commitment to the theoretical grounds of his social project differs from the case of the Pythagoreans.

(iii) Women in the second best city

Before turning to the Pythagorean women, I shall briefly examine the female status in the *Laws*, Plato's second-best city.

In the *Laws*, Plato relaxes the rigidity of the communistic principles of Kallipolis and plans to found a whole new city to be named Magnesia (848d). In *Laws* V 739a-740c, he describes as the best possible society a city in which friends have everything in common. Specifically, he adds, the citizens of this πρώτη πολιτεία will share wives, children and property.²⁰ Only the gods and their descendants, however, seem able to dwell in such a way, for which reason Plato moves on to the δευτέρα πολιτεία, the second-best city (739d, 875c-d). The primary difference between Magnesia and Kallipolis, therefore, lies in the absence of family communism from the former. Plato stresses that the aim of the second-best city is still to have men and women share their lives (770c-d, 785c, 805a-b, 806a-e, 807c-d). However, such a commonality will only be partially implemented. The same applies to the female social role. In the *Laws*, Plato allows women to participate in public life, if they agree to it and do not object (793c). However,

²⁰ Even in the *Timaeus*, the *Republic* is referred to as the discussion in which Socrates established the equality of men and women and familial communism (18c).

he primarily assigns them domestic tasks.²¹ Once again, the reforms of the *Republic* are not rejected, but rather discussed on a different practical level.²²

The female status in the *Laws* is a point of controversy. Morrow argues that women are educated, but denied political roles (1993, 157-158). According to Stalley (1983, 103-106), Saunders (1995, 591-609) and Samaras (2010, 172-196), although Plato's reforms of the female social conditions are minimal, he does grant them public offices. In contrast, Cohen considers the *Laws* revolutionary by Greek standards as women enjoy a far better position than fourth-century Athenian women (1987, 27-40).²³ For example, Plato argues that men and women can have the same virtues (770c-d) and thus should receive a similar physical, musical and cultural education until the age of six (781b-c, 789d, 793d-795d, 804d-806d, 808d-812e) and the same honours at death (802a). Women undergo a similar military training to men (813e-814b), are subject to the same criminal law (784b-e, 882c, 929e-930b), practise horse-riding (804c-805b, 834d), and are required to exercise (829b, 833c-834d) particularly during pregnancy (789b-790c), but they are sometimes excluded from races, combats and civic processions (764e, 833c-d, 834a-d, 947b-d). Moreover, Plato encourages women to participate in public meals, although this may feel incompatible with their domestic and private lifestyle (762b-e, 780a-783c, 804d-806c). After fulfilling their duties as child-bearers, women may even be allowed to perform public roles as priestesses (759a-760a, 800a), nurses (794a-795d) and supervisors of marriages (784a-b, 783d-785b, 930a-932e), female education (764c-e, 794a) and female-only common meals (640a-e, 806e). Hence, in the *Laws* women are no longer left at home, but rather are progressively introduced into the political realm.

A thorough analysis of the status of women in the *Laws* is beyond the scope of this work. For the purpose of this chapter, suffice it to notice the following. Once again, Plato finds himself rethinking the female social status. However, as opposed to the extreme positions Plato takes in the *Republic*, in the *Laws* the private-public division is preserved, however loosened. In both dialogues, Plato re-evaluates the place, role and status of women in the society. Yet in the *Laws* he does not go as far as to establish full communism of lifestyle, roles and families for men and women.

²¹ For the rules on marriage, household management and child raising, see 712b-d, 721-722d, 771d-794c, 925a-937a.

²² On the relationship between the *Republic* and the *Laws*, see Laks 1990, Morrow 1993, Schofield 1999.

²³ See also Lodge 1947, 287-308 (specifically on female education), Bobonich 2002, 384-408. Canto describes the *Laws* as feminist in that, unlike the *Republic*, women are made the primary object of political regulation (1994, 49-66).

III. Pythagorean women in the *Republic*

As we go back to the Pythagorean women, the first question to answer is what our basis of comparison should be, and whether I am comparing the Pythagorean community with Plato's ideal city as a whole or exclusively with the guardians.

As mentioned above, Plato organises the society into different classes, each performing a different function: the workers providing for the city's economic needs (369d-373d) and the guardian class, divided into warriors defending the state (373e-374d) and rulers in government (374d-e).²⁴ Communism of property and family applies to the guardians: whilst private belongings do not interfere with the tasks of an average worker, but rather seem to be part of the job description,²⁵ they do impair the functions of auxiliaries and rulers (417a-b). Specifically, property prevents the guardians from best performing the office of protecting the city's unity, for it generates divisions within the guardian class itself (416a-d). Hence, it is abolished. Similarly, then, since producers are entitled to own private property, as opposed to the guardians, they are unlikely to share wives and children. Consequently, when comparing the Pythagorean women with Plato's common wives, we are exclusively looking at the guardian class, some kind of elite group, rather than the whole city. In 374d-e, he even describes that of the guardian as the most important job, μέγιστον τὸ τῶν φυλάκων ἔργον, thus justifying his relative lack of interest in the lifestyle of the mere workers.

By contrast, however, in 433c-d Socrates claims that the specialisation principle applies to the entire society, rulers and ruled, soldiers, artisans and guardians, children and women, slaves and freemen. He opens to the possibility of having male and female rulers, male and female soldiers (452a-c, 453a, 457a, 466e-471c), as well as male and female doctors, athletes and musicians (454c-456a). Since women guardians are more likely to come as a shock to his contemporaries, then, he focuses on their tasks and education, neglecting those of the producers. Whilst extensively discussing the status of the philosopher queens, he says very little concerning the status of women in the working class. Nonetheless, he does allow women to practice medicine and carpentry.²⁶ Overall, Plato's first move to argue for women's role in the

²⁴ The latter distinction is drawn starting from *Rep.* 414b-c, in which Plato devises two myths to illustrate the city's differentiated class structure: the Autochthony Myth – according to which earth is mother to all citizens – and the Myth of Metals – in which different citizens are said to have different metals within their souls so as to explain their different roles in society.

²⁵ For example, in 434a, 441a and 583a, the producers are described as χρηματισταί, earners or money-makers.

²⁶ See Reeve 1988, 186-191, according to which the specialisation principle is the only innovation in the producers' way of life, although the extent to which this is implemented remains vague.

society concerns the whole city. Consequently, I shall start discussing women in Pythagoreanism by taking the entire Kallipolis as the *comparandum*.

(i) The guiding principles

As mentioned above, the principles of Plato's just city are twofold: the Principle of Specialisation of Function and the Principle of Eradication of Division. First, each citizen – whether male or female – should be exclusively assigned the social function for which he or she is fitted by nature. Second, whatever puts the society at risk and endangers its unity should be banished. This allows Socrates to entrust naturally suited women with the leadership of the city and establish a community of wives and children.

In the available sources on early Pythagoreanism, there is no explicit reference to either of these principles. Some hints may be found in Iamblichus. According to *VP* 80, the Pythagoreans were divided into groups to ensure that they would all receive the fitting portion of appropriate teachings, ἐπιβαλλόντων λόγων προσήκουσα μοῖρα (cf. Ch. 3.I). They were believed to have different natures, and thus took part and specialised in different activities. Iamblichus even refers to this as the rule of justice, ὁ τῆς δικαιοσύνης λόγος. As for the second principle, Iamblichus takes the injunction against divisions and social conflict to be one of the core themes of not only Plato's, but also Pythagoras' teachings. In *VP* 34, he lists the banishment of sedition from the city and of discord from families among the maxims Pythagoras delivered to all disciples and all kinds of audience. Furthermore, as argued in Chapter 2, the Pythagoreans are reputed to have anticipated Plato in instituting common property as a means to create unity among the followers and extirpate strife from the society (e.g. Iamb. *VP* 81). Overall, according to Iamblichus, the Pythagorean society was informed by some kind of prototype of the Principle of Specialisation. Along similar lines, the Pythagorean pursuit of unity and commonality may be modelled after some sort of Principle of Eradication of Division *ante litteram*.

Yet we should consider the following issues. First, should the specialisation principle regulate the structure of Pythagorean societies, the Pythagorean women would also be entrusted with the tasks for which their nature is reputed to be fitted. However, according to the Pythagorean precepts analysed in Chapter 3, these tasks primarily include marriage, child raising and household managing. Therefore, whilst Plato does not count the biological differences between men and women among the parameters influencing their respective social role, the function of women in Pythagoreanism seems to stem from their being child-bearers. Similarly, both Plato and the Pythagoreans aim to bring unity into the community. What changes, however, is the extent to which such purpose is accomplished, for the Pythagoreans did not go so far as to establish family communism. We should therefore look for a reason for such discrepancies.

The second, and most important, problem is that, as previously mentioned, Iamblichus is a late source often reading Pythagoreanism in the light of Plato (Garnsey 2005). Consequently, the lack of earlier evidence for a Pythagorean version of Plato's principles suggests that, although similar motives and concerns may well guide the Pythagorean and Plato's social project, the Pythagoreans appear to be overall less concerned with its theoretical grounds.

(ii) Pythagorean philosopher queens

In *Rep.* V, except when dealing with sexual regulations (457e-461c), Plato does not treat women *qua* wives, child-bearers and mothers, but rather as citizens like any other regardless of their sex. Thus, he even grants them the opportunity to be rulers of the ideal city.

Pythagorean societies also granted entry to both male and female members. However, as argued in Chapter 3, the Pythagorean women were primarily taught about marital relationships. Neither the ἀκούσματα nor the speeches mention the possibility of having women at the head of the community. Thus, rather than leading the society, the Pythagorean women were in charge of home and family life. For example, Pythagoras is reputed to have divided the female life into four stages depending on the role women held within the family – whether they were unmarried daughters, wives, mothers or grandmothers.²⁷ As opposed to Plato in the *Republic*, then, the Pythagoreans appear to address women *qua* brides and child-bearers rather than average members of the community.

We know of women who were highly ranked in the society – higher than other women and arguably even higher than some men. For example, Damo and Bitale were the custodians of Pythagoras' writings (D.L. 8.42, Iamb. *VP* 146), Theano is described as the most illustrious of his female disciples (D.L. 8.42-43, Porph. *VP* 19), and Myia was an authority to her fellow Pythagorean women (Porph. *VP* 4). Moreover, Timycha was captured by Dionysius, for she was instructed in the Pythagorean secrets (Iamb. *VP* 189-194). Nevertheless, none of these women is reputed to have taken on public roles. Pythagoras had a male-only line of succession: he bequeathed his community to Aristaeus, his son Mnemarchus, Boulagoras, Gartydas of Croton and Aresas of Lucania (Iamb. *VP* 265-266). Interestingly, Aristaeus is said to have married Pythagoras' widow Theano, as if she had been the one bestowing on him the authority to be the head of the community, but nonetheless not authoritative enough to inherit the headship herself.

Overall, the specialisation principle leads Plato to treat men and women equally, minimizing sex differences and valuing individual natural abilities. The fact that women were included in Pythagorean societies and at least in some respects educated on the same topics as

²⁷ Timaeus Frs. 17 and 131, D.L. 8.11, Porph. *VP* 4, Iamb. *VP* 55 (cf. Ch.3.VI).

men means that the Pythagorean women were treated more equally to men than in other Greek communities. Yet this does not lead to the full equality of status Plato portrays in the *Republic*. Consequently, thus far there seems to be no trace of Pythagorean philosopher queens setting the stage for Plato.

One may then wonder whether there were ever any Pythagorean philosopher kings to begin with. Socrates states that naturally different citizens should perform different tasks, whereas those endowed with the same natural skills should also have the same job. Specifically, he argues that both genders should receive the same training, which would then allow equally suited men and women to lead the city. The Pythagorean women are also granted a similar education to the men, and even though such a training does not make them rulers, it may still make them part of the highest ranked social group. We know of Pythagoreans such as Archytas both leading an intellectual circle and holding public offices (D.L. 8.79).²⁸ Yet others are heads of intellectual communities, perhaps influencing the socio-political scene of their time, but nonetheless never occupying a political position themselves. For example, Pythagoras himself never ruled over Croton. Nonetheless, he educated the Crotonian leaders (Iamb. *VP* 45-50) and advised them during the war against Sybaris (*VP* 133, 177). In Plato's Kallipolis, men and women are authorities whose public role stems from their philosophical education (521e-541c), and who, besides being philosophers, also act as rulers. By contrast, the highest ranked men of the Pythagorean societies were not assigned political, but rather intellectual roles. Therefore, nothing would rule out the possibility for at least some women, such as Theano and Myia, to be included in this group. Overall, in Pythagoreanism, there are neither philosopher kings nor queens, but there may still be both male and female intellectual authorities.

(iii) Pythagorean education

Socrates argues that in order to carry out the same political function male and female guardians should live, be educated, eat and train together. Commonality is only required of the guardians – namely those who guarantee the unity of the city-state, and for whose function social divisions are detrimental. This does not rule out the possibility of female producers receiving a similar upbringing to their male counterparts. Nevertheless, full communism of life, training, property and family exclusively characterises the guardians.

Once again, the case of the Pythagoreans appears to be different. The ἀκούσματα show that the Pythagorean way of living was regulated down to the smallest detail – from clothing

²⁸ See Horky 2013, 85-124, according to which the Pythagorean political engagement develops at a later stage of the history of the Pythagorean communities.

and eating habits to cultic practices and sexual regulations. Moreover, Pythagoras' speeches to the men, women, elderly and children of Croton suggest that *every* Pythagorean lived according to Pythagoras' precepts from childhood to old age. Yet they did not always live according to the *same* precepts. From Iamblichus, we learn that, whilst some teachings were addressed to all disciples without distinctions (VP 34), others were age- and gender-specific. For example, children are urged to honour the elders, the magistrates should worship the Muses *qua* guarantors of civic concord, and women are taught about family life. Moreover, as argued in Chapter 3, some precepts are gendered, such as the maxim on treating wives as suppliants and the injunction against courtesans, whereas others apply to men and women, such as the prohibition of adultery and the maxim about temperance and procreation. As a result, first, as with Plato, the whole of one's life is regulated in detail from early upbringing to dining practices and family relations. Second, as opposed to Plato, all social strata partake in this way of living, rather than the higher classes only. Third, to a certain extent, the lifestyle does vary among different community members. However, and again in contrast with Plato, the differentiation is not primarily based on social roles, but rather on age and gender.

Plato divides the society into different classes and attributes to each class a distinctive way of life. For example, private property is denied to the guardians, but granted to the producers. Within each class, all member will then abide by the same lifestyle regardless of age and gender. For example, familial communism is applied to both male and female guardians as well as their children. By contrast, the Pythagoreans value age and gender differences above social roles. For example, the speech to the Crotonian women does not distinguish between different female roles. Yet it does separate girls from elder women and women from men.

It is worth noting that there is evidence of groups of Pythagoreans living differently from each other and not only because of their differences in age and gender. Iamblichus lists several subgroups within the Pythagorean community: the ἀκουσματικοί and μαθηματικοί, hearers and learners, the πολιτικοί, politicians, the οικονομικοί, managers, the νομοθετικοί, legislators, and the θεωρητικοί and φυσικοί, theoreticians and physicists. In VP 72-74 and 80-89, Iamblichus writes that only the higher ranked pupils held property in common. This division supports the assumption that the Pythagoreans were not all equally educated on the same subjects in the same way and required to put the same life norms into practice. However, it also suggests that the differentiation may have been based on social roles. If so, there could also have been different levels in the women's education depending on their rank. For example, the women of Croton, being at the first stage of involvement with Pythagoreanism, are allowed to have private property (VP 55). Yet there is too little evidence to determine whether higher ranked women, such as Theano and Myia, held property in common with their fellow Pythagoreans.

Overall, Pythagorean education may well have been grounded on status, but, as opposed to Plato, it was also grounded on gender. Furthermore, it is worth emphasising how Pythagoras' teachings address the whole community and all its social strata rather than the higher classes exclusively. The Pythagoreans may well have distinguished different rankings within the community, educated them separately and to some extent differently. However, whilst Plato focuses on the guardians and neglects the producers, Pythagoras lectures all followers. Therefore, the Pythagoreans had a broader social focus than Plato did: not only did they open the communal life to women, but they also did not exclusively restrict it to the higher classes.

(iv) Pythagorean families

We may now turn to the second wave: family communism. In Book 4, in order to strengthen his case against private property, Socrates states the following:

Καὶ ἄλλα γε ὅσα νῦν ἡμεῖς παραλείπομεν, τήν τε τῶν γυναικῶν κτῆσιν καὶ γάμων καὶ παιδοποιίας, ὅτι δεῖ ταῦτα κατὰ τὴν παροιμίαν πάντα ὅτι μάλιστα κοινὰ τὰ φίλων ποιῆσθαι.

And there are other matters, which for now we shall leave aside, such as getting a wife, marriage and having children, because they (the guardians) should do all these things according to the saying that as much as possible friends have things in common.

(423e-424a)

Socrates quotes the maxim κοινὰ τὰ φίλων, common are the things of friends (cf. Ch. 2.I). According to Cornelli, this clearly echoes Pythagorean ideas (2013, pp. 65-67). If so, when citing this maxim, Plato would be alluding to the Pythagoreans as the precursors of his theory of justice and communism. However, Plato does not attribute the maxim to the Pythagoreans. Rather, he cites it as an un-authored proverb.²⁹ As argued in Chapter 2, the only authors who explicitly connect the motto κοινὰ τὰ φίλων to Pythagoreanism are Diogenes, Porphyry and Iamblichus, on the evidence of Timaeus of Tauromenium (Fr. 13b). Thus, rather than a distinctively Pythagorean precept, this is more likely to be an older proverb, which Plato quotes in relation to the Principle of Eradication of Division, and which Timaeus later uses to describe Pythagorean societies. Consequently, at least explicitly, Plato is not hinting at the Pythagoreans as his predecessors. Moreover, had κοινὰ τὰ φίλων been a Pythagorean motto, it would not necessarily imply that Pythagoras' disciples practised common ownership and shared belongings. For example, it may mean that they had property, but were eager to

²⁹ See also Eur. *Or.* 375, *Phoen.* 243.

share it with their fellow community members (cf. Ch. 2.I). Overall, even with regard to common property, the Pythagoreans may not have gone as far as Plato's guardians.

The same holds true for private families. Plato's arguments for family communism are twofold. First, having established that, if appropriately skilled, both men and women can be guardians and that as guardians they should share lifestyle and education, Socrates feels the need to get rid of all aspects that might pose a threat to such a unity, starting with family roles. Second, family relations should be shared so that guardians will start treating each other as part of the same family.

The first step is to argue that private property and private families are to be eliminated insofar as they bring divisions into the guardians' life, thus jeopardising the unity of the entire city. This was not the case for the Pythagoreans. As Zhmud notices, marriage was a powerful bond to legally strengthen the relations between community members (2012, 147). For instance, according to some traditions, Brontinus gave his daughter Theano in marriage to Pythagoras (D.L. 8.42), and later to Pythagoras' successor Aristaeus (Iamb. *VP* 265-266). According to the *Catalogue*, Milon married Pythagoras' daughter Myia (Iamb. *VP* 267). In turn, the Pythagorean physician Democedes is said to have married Milon's daughter (Hdt. 3.137).

In antiquity, families and households were rarely seen as a source of and place for intellectual companionship. Men would rather entertain themselves with well-educated courtesans.³⁰ If so, the Pythagorean wives, mothers and daughters were the exception to the rule, for they acted as valuable intellectual companions to their husbands, fathers and sons. The domestic role of women was not as threatening to their social status as in Plato. Rather, some women managed to become intellectual authorities without renouncing their place within the family. Not only marriage, but also parenthood was a channel of intellectual activity. For example, Theano is often mentioned in relation to her sons Telauges and Mnemarchus and daughters Damo, Myia and Arignota. Similarly, when questioned about Pythagoras' teachings, Timycha is said to be pregnant and thus portrayed as both a worthy wife and a worthy mother. This brings us back to what I argued at the end of Chapter 3 with regard to the importance of marital and family relationships for the reinforcement and survival of the whole community. The household and the family are the sphere in which Pythagoreanism first flourishes, for women raise their children in the light of Pythagoras' precepts and doctrines.³¹

The second step of Plato's argument is to picture the ruling class as one large family. This, on the other hand, may remind us of the Pythagorean doctrine of worldwide kinship

³⁰ See Aspasia in Ar. *Ach.* 526-534, Plu. *Per.* 24.1-25.1, and Rhodopis in Hdt. 2.134-135.

³¹ In the speech to the magistrates, the separation of parents and children is considered the greatest crime (Iamb. *VP* 49).

among living beings. In the previous chapter, we have seen that the belief in souls transmigrating from one body into the next either animal or human body leads the Pythagoreans to think that all ensouled beings are united by family-like relations and should treat each other as members of the same kin (Dicaearchus Fr. 33, quoted in Porph. *VP* 19 – see also Ch. 2.II). The guardians of Kallipolis do not ill-treat each other for two reasons: first, they refuse to harm their own parents and children; second, they fear being punished by the extended family of the victim. Along similar lines, Pythagoras urges his comrade not to strike the puppy who used to be their friends.³² For sure, Plato does not support his argument by referring to metempsychosis. Furthermore, in the *Republic* family relations only unite the guardians rather than the whole cosmos. Nonetheless, family ties are still conceived as a privileged emotional bond, which in turn forms the basis for a more extended equal treatment.

Overall, whilst in the *Republic*, the community of children is implemented to guarantee civic order, stability and concord, the Pythagoreans attempt to reach the same goals by strengthening and safeguarding, instead of banishing, private family relationships. This suggests that although both the Pythagoreans and Plato aim at eradicating social divisions, the kinds of division they fear are different. In Plato, conflict and discord are a result of both people meddling in each other's jobs and private property. Thus, he introduces the specialisation principle and envisions a city in which 'the majority says mine and not mine of the same thing in the same way' (462c). In Pythagoreanism, the society is threatened by those who do not live according to Pythagoras' doctrines. Thus, the ultimate goal is a community of people sharing a way of thinking and living. For example, in Porph. *VP* 59 and Iamb. *VP* 233 the Pythagoreans are said to avoid friendship with non-Pythagoreans, and in Porph. *VP* 24 and Iamb. *VP* 61 Pythagoras goes as far as to lecture animals on how to live. In the *Republic*, what divides the citizens are different belongings and family relations. In Pythagoreanism, divisions stem from different lifestyles and beliefs.

IV. Conclusions

The aim of this chapter was to compare the available information about women in Pythagoreanism with Plato's discussion of the female gender, its nature and social role in the *Republic*. First, Plato allows women to be guardians of the ideal city. By contrast, the Pythagorean women may well be intellectual authorities, but do not become community leaders. Second, Plato exclusively focuses on the lifestyle and education of the guardians. The Pythagoreans, on the other hand,

³² Similarly, in Frs. 136-137 Empedocles compares killing animals to slaughtering one's own son, thus using family relation to strengthen his ban against animal sacrifice.

regulate the way of life of all members of the community. Third, Plato abolishes private families. By contrast, women first enter the Pythagorean communities as wives, mothers and daughters of Pythagorean men.

In Chapter 3, I argued that in the same way as they avoided non-Pythagorean comrades, Pythagoras' followers had Pythagorean wives to raise their Pythagorean children. The key role women play in their children's growth is also remarked in *Laws* 694c-695b.³³ According to Plato, Persians mothers imparted a 'womanish' education to their children and by so doing contributed their degeneration. One may then assume, as Bloom (1991, 379-389) does, that Plato's views of women in the *Republic* are prompted by similar concerns: 'The character of the women in a society has a great deal to do with the character of the men, for when the men are young the women have a great deal to do with their rearing, and when they are older they must please women.' Since the children of Kallipolis should grow in a society whose members live by the same set of principles and raise their sons and daughters accordingly, women are granted the same education as men. Yet there is one fundamental difficulty with this claim: in the *Republic* childrearing is not a female-only responsibility. Upbringing is not the special role of mothers, but rather is shared between both parents and, more broadly, all members of the ruling class. Therefore, this does not explain why women in particular partake in the affairs of the city. More likely, as previously shown, the reason why Plato allows the women of Kallipolis to be rulers and abolishes private families lies in his radical commitment to the principles of justice. I argued that Plato's political agenda in the *Republic* develops from a well-defined theoretical background: the specialisation principle and the theory of communism. This in turn explains his views of the female gender. First, if naturally suited, women can be guardians instead of merely mothers. Second, as with property, family relations are to be with the aim of preserving the overall unity of the society. Once again, the fifth book of the *Republic* is a theoretical development of these principles. The Pythagorean views of women, on the other hand, are implemented on a more practical level.

We may now go back to the initial discussion of the relation between Plato and Pythagoreanism. According to Huffman and Sedley, Pythagoreanism affected Plato's philosophy in two ways. On the one hand, Plato adopts some Pythagorean doctrines and beliefs. On the other hand, he criticises and outplays them. The same holds true with regard to his views about women in *Republic* V. As argued above, Plato's visit to his ἐταῖρος Archytas in Tarentum may offer the historical context for the *Republic*. Therefore, the Pythagoreans are among those likely sources leading Plato to devise his model-city and argue for its practicability. However, their societies do not fully overlap. Plato may have witnessed how the Pythagoreans treated women

³³ Women also contribute to the corruption of regimes in *Rep.* VIII 549c-d. On women transmitting culture to children, see Hdt 4.78, 6.138.

more equally to men than in Athens. Yet he then took their example further by building its theoretical framework.

Plato's first step is to argue that, beyond their reproductive roles, men and women can have the same nature. At the end of Chapter 3, I investigated whether the Pythagoreans believe the male and the female nature to be same. On the one hand, the female nature is said to be more suitable for sharing property and less suitable for keeping secrets. On the other hand, the fact that Pythagoras' male and female disciples receive a similar education suggests that they are attributed the same natural aptitudes and intellectual abilities. Similarly, according to the doctrine of metempsychosis, the same soul may transmigrate from a male into a female body.³⁴ As argued in Chapter 4, Plato also devises his own theory of reincarnation, according to which souls can transmigrate from male into female bodies and *vice versa*.³⁵ Moreover, in *Republic V* he explicitly argues that men and women can have the same natural abilities and are therefore suited for the same social tasks. Hence, Plato develops the Pythagorean views on male and female natures into a non-gendered philosophical anthropology.

The second step is to argue for family communism. We have seen that Plato starts from the proverb κοινὰ τὰ φίλων, which Timaeus later connects with Pythagoreanism, and brings it to its (extreme) logical conclusions: not only property, but also families should be held in common. Once again, he approves of Pythagorean communitarianism, but implements it radically. Overall, by introducing the principle of specialisation and devising the theory of communism, Plato offers philosophical arguments for assigning equal social roles to men and women. The Pythagoreans may have then introduced the way of thinking about gender roles and relations, which Plato later elaborated in *Republic V*. Plato, on the other hand, used Pythagoreanism as springboard for his own theories. Thus, although minimal, the Pythagoreans did play a role in the development of Plato's political thought: they are the first step for Plato to conceive of women's potentiality for an enhanced role in the society.

At the beginning of this chapter, I stated that my purpose was to focus on women. In conclusion, I shall consider more broadly the community in which these women are included. According to my analysis, the primary differences between the Platonic and the Pythagorean society, which in turn explain their approaches to the female gender, are twofold: the feasibility of Plato's ideal city and the Pythagorean political engagement.

First, Kallipolis is never meant to be a real city, but rather a blueprint – a paradigm not fully, but only approximately realisable (471c-473b). This imaginary model-city with philosopher

³⁴ In the *Timaeus*, Plato also argues that souls pass from male into female bodies and *vice versa* (cf. Ch. 4.V). According to Harry and Polansky 2016, this is consistent with the *Republic* because the primary difference between men and women is said to be the body – e.g. their reproductive functions.

³⁵ See also the Myth of Er in *Rep.* X 620a-621a.

kings and queens, common property and common families is built in speech, pictured as more desirable than other existing societies, but nonetheless difficult to bring about in every detail. As mentioned in Chapter 3, the feasibility of the Pythagorean way of life is also debated. Burkert takes the behavioural norms literally (1972, 176-178), Zhmud considers them impracticable (2012, 202-205), and Thom argues that Pythagoras' precepts did regulate the life of the community, but nonetheless left room for exceptions. The reasons behind this are threefold: first, some practices may have been limited to a restricted group of disciples; second, they may have allowed exceptions to avoid clashing with traditional customs; and third, they might have become less strict with time. That being said, when first devised, these norms were meant to be put into practice. Therefore, what Plato envisions is an ideal model, whereas the Pythagoreans gave structure to real communities. In a sense, the status of women in Pythagoreanism bears affinities with the status of women in the *Laws*, in which Plato's gender equality proposal is implemented moderately, rather than radically as in the *Republic*.

The second problem with comparing the Pythagorean communities with Kallipolis – as well as Magnesia – is that these are different kinds of societies. As previously mentioned, the fifth book of the *Republic* turns out to be a key step towards the establishment of Plato's philosophical kingdom, a city founded and ruled by philosophers. What Plato envisions is a *state* in which all citizens do the job for which they are suited, are educated accordingly and live in concord, and in which the best citizens train to become philosophers and rulers. In contrast, nowhere do we come across a Pythagorean *state*. Although we know of individual Pythagoreans, such as Archytas, who devoted themselves to politics, the Pythagoreans were primarily intellectual, rather than political, authorities. They did not found cities, but communities within the pre-existing cities.

Consequently, the Pythagoreans were neither eager nor possibly able to overthrow the *status quo* as Plato did by introducing female guardians or the communism of wives and children. Rather, they made use of this *status quo* to enhance their social and philosophical agenda. This is why, instead of abolishing them, they relied on marriage and family life to promote the Pythagorean customs, values and beliefs. Furthermore, this is why the Pythagorean way of life touched all social strata of the community rather than the guardians exclusively. Being born within an already-established political system, the Pythagoreans presumably felt the need to create a strong collective identity by means of a way of living that would embrace all followers and all important aspects of their everyday life. As a result, in Plato, we read of a city-state ruled by philosophers, but in which not all citizens undertake the same politico-philosophical education. By contrast, the Pythagoreans formed a society populated by 'philosophers' in which all members partook in the same way of living and thinking – or, as Hare defines it, 'a tightly-organised community of like-minded thinkers.'

Conclusions

The purpose of this thesis has been to investigate what reasons prompted the Pythagoreans to welcome women in their communities, what roles women played in ancient Pythagorean societies, and how the female gender was addressed and portrayed in Pythagoras' teachings. We have learnt that the available evidence points in two directions. On the one hand, women held traditional domestic roles and were educated on how to interact with their husbands and fathers, what to sacrifice to the gods and when to procreate. On the other hand, some Pythagorean women were regarded as intellectual authorities. For example, Theano had her own female pupils to educate and is believed to have left written works, and Timycha allegedly protected the Pythagorean secrets from the threats of the tyrant Dionysius. Thus far, scholars have either dismissed the issue of women in Pythagoreanism or hinted at the 'unusually large' role women are reputed to have played in Pythagorean societies without, however, going into detail about what kind of roles they held and why (Huffman 2016a). As previously mentioned, the exceptions are Pomeroy and Rowett, who highlight how women were prominent in ancient Pythagoreanism (Pomeroy 2013, 11-14), and suggest that this hints at a radically unconventional approach to gender differences (Rowett 2014, 122-123). I have argued that the Pythagorean 'revolution' had a much longer arc: it was the result of the combination of traditional elements, religious beliefs and cultural practices with novel ideas about women's souls and intellectual abilities.

In the *Catalogue of the Pythagoreans*, Iamblichus mentions seventeen women, nearly half of whom come from Magna Graecia and one-third from Sparta. From the speeches Pythagoras delivered to the Crotoniates, we have learnt that women were taught at length about religious rituals. This led me to identify two contributing factors to the prominence of women in Pythagoreanism: the female social conditions in Magna Graecia, as opposed to mainland Greece (Chapter 1), and the female inclusion in ancient Greek sects and cults (Chapter 2). In the pre-Classical colonial period, marriage was seen as a way to strengthen the relationships between locals and settlers. Thus, South Italian women played a crucial role in the establishment of their cities. Similarly, religious groups included female initiates and occasionally assigned them authoritative roles such as that of priestess and prophetess. Therefore, the fact that the Pythagoreans founded their communities in Croton and further afield, and that in some respects, such as their exclusivity and secrecy, these communities resembled the organisational structure of ancient sects helps us to explain why they opened their doors to the female gender to begin with.

In Chapter 3, I analysed Pythagoras' teachings to and about women with regard to motherhood, marriage and piety. Pythagoras' speech to the Crotonian women and, most importantly, his

ἀκούσματα concerning the female gender have not yet received sufficient academic attention. I have argued that, at first reading, each of these precepts addresses women's roles in the domestic realm. Yet they also hint at their larger contributions to the life of the community both *qua* members of Pythagorean families and *qua* teachers of Pythagorean pupils, as the maxims attributed to Theano and Deino lead us to think. Furthermore, I have argued, the fact that Pythagoras' teachings about self-mastery, common property and friendship address both men and women suggests that Pythagoreanism ultimately minimised gender differences. Pythagorean men and women lived according to similar regulations, were required to develop the same virtues and considered equally intellectually capable.

Further evidence for the more egalitarian way the Pythagoreans treated men and women comes from the doctrine of the transmigration of souls, discussed in Chapter 4. To the Pythagoreans, the belief in reincarnation was action-guiding: it directed and influenced their way of behaving towards other ensouled beings. For example, Xenophanes mocks Pythagoras for refusing to mistreat a dog on the account of its having a soul and, most importantly, being the reincarnation of one of his associates. Therefore, the same belief may have affected the way the Pythagoreans behaved towards women, who were educated and treated with the same respect as their φίλοι.

Finally, in Chapter 5 we have seen that this egalitarian project is taken up and developed in Plato's *Republic*. The Pythagoreans welcomed women in their societies and trained some of them to become intellectual authorities. Yet, at least according to the available evidence, they did not go as far as to argue that men and women have the same nature and gender differences have no impact on the role they can play in society, that women can be city rulers and community leaders, and that in the same way as property is shared among community members, private families should be abolished. I have argued that in founding Kallipolis Plato reacts to the Pythagorean views on the female gender, and develops this project further by building its theoretical framework. Overall, the Pythagoreans take the first step towards Plato's 'gender equality' theory.

The distinctiveness of the Pythagorean approach to women in society thus lies in the balance between traditional customs and innovative roles. The Pythagorean women were first taught about marriage, family and domestic life. Yet the more they engaged with Pythagoreanism the more gender roles were equalised. Pythagorean men and women were believed to have the same souls. Therefore, they learned and lived by the same doctrines. Some women simply listened to the ἀκούσματα and implemented them in their everyday life, others theorised over numbers, harmonics and reincarnation, and others again educated their own following of disciples. All of them, nonetheless, actively participated in the developing Pythagorean tradition.

Appendix A

The Table of Opposites

Sabina Lovibond argues that another key source for our understanding of the Pythagorean outlook on the female gender and its reception is the so-called Pythagorean Table of Opposites from Aristotle's *Metaphysics* A 986a22-b4 (1994, 88-101).

Ἴτεροι δὲ τῶν αὐτῶν τούτων τὰς ἀρχὰς δέκα λέγουσιν εἶναι τὰς κατὰ
συστοιχίαν λεγομένας, πέρας καὶ ἄπειρον, περιττὸν καὶ ἄρτιον, ἓν καὶ
πλῆθος, δεξιὸν καὶ ἀριστερόν, ἄρρεν καὶ θῆλυ, ἡρεμοῦν καὶ
κινούμενον, εὐθὺ καὶ καμπύλον, φῶς καὶ σκότος, ἀγαθὸν καὶ κακόν,
τετράγωνον καὶ ἑτερόμηκες.

Other members of the same group say that the principles are ten, the ones called 'in columns' – (1) limit and unlimited, (2) odd and even, (3) one and plurality, (4) right and left, (5) male and female,¹ (6) resting and moving, (7) straight and curved, (8) light and darkness, (9) good and bad, (10) square and oblong.

(Arist. *Met.* 986a22-26)²

In the first book of the *Metaphysics*, Aristotle reviews the history of first causes and principles. In the specific case of the Pythagoreans, the primary constituents of all things are identified with numbers (985b24-986a21).³ Yet Aristotle adds that *other* adherents of Pythagoreanism proposed ten couples of principles, which they then systematically arranged into two parallel, co-ordinate, but counterpoised columns (συστοιχία).

The Table triggers several questions: what is the function of these ten pairs of opposites and how do they relate to each other? Is the Table based on a theory properly speaking, or is it more likely to be a systematisation of earlier Greek beliefs? Who are these ἑτεροι among the Pythagoreans? Most importantly for the purpose of this work, is there a systematic value distinction between the respective elements of the two columns? If so, why would the alleged Pythagorean author of the Table place the female on the 'bad' side, ranged together with the

¹ It should be noted that the male-female opposition is the fifth couple of the list, which may remind us of the Pythagorean identification of marriage as the number 5 mentioned in *Met.* 1078b23.

² Greek cited from Ross 1924.

³ On the possible interpretations of the claim that all is number, see Zhmud 1989 and Schofield 2012.

unlimited, the crooked and darkness? How, if at all, does the Table fit with the evidence of the prominence of women in Pythagoreanism?

When Aristotle writes about Pythagoreanism, he seldom mentions Pythagoras himself, but rather more broadly refers to οἱ Πυθαγόρειοι, the Pythagoreans as a group: he does not distinguish between first and later generations of Pythagoreans, nor does he cite individual authors. Aristotle himself admits this to be the case by vaguely ascribing the Table of Opposites to certain and otherwise unspecified ἄλλοι, some other adherents of the Pythagorean tradition. Even more puzzling is that these ἄλλοι are members of the group to whom Aristotle ascribes the theory that numbers are the principles of all things, and to whom he refers as οἱ καλούμενοι Πυθαγόρειοι, the so-called Pythagoreans (*Met.* 985b23).⁴ This may be interpreted as a way to question the identification of these philosophers with the Pythagoreans ('those who are mistakenly called Pythagoreans'),⁵ as a judgment-free report of an opinion ('those whom I call, or who call themselves Pythagoreans'),⁶ or as a way to voice doubts over this label ('those who may or may not be Pythagoreans').⁷ I do not read καλούμενος as implying a disagreement, nor do I consider it neutral and omissible. Rather, the adjective seems to reveal cautiousness and reservations in ascribing this theory to the Pythagoreans. Overall, who the authors of the Table are is still being disputed.

Opposites are a recurring theme in early Greek philosophical, as well as pre-philosophical, thought, especially when accompanied by meaningful symbolic, religious and ethical associations. Different couples of opposites were often connected to one another – e.g. male with right and hot, female with left and cold.⁸ Moreover, within each pair one principle was also conceived as

⁴ Who the members of this first group are is debated, although scholars tend to identify them as fifth-century-BCE Pythagoreans (Huffman 1993, 28-94, Schofield 2012). The chronological coordinates Aristotle gives us are unhelpful, for on the one hand he describes the so-called Pythagorean as contemporary to the fifth-century atomist philosophers Leucippus and Democritus, but on the other hand he also adds to this group those who came πρὸ τούτων, even before them (*Met.* 985b23). Moreover, he also links this theory with the fifth-century physician Alcmaeon of Croton (986a27).

⁵ See Zhmud 2012, 17.

⁶ See McKirahan 2013, 55 n. 5

⁷ See Huffman 1992, 31, Primavesi 2014, 229.

⁸ For example, in Fr. 17 Parmenides writes 'boys on the right, girls on the left' (*Gal. in Epid.* 4.48), thus endorsing the tradition according to which males are conceived on the right side of a woman's womb and females on the left. In Empedocles' Frs. 65 (Arist. *GA* 723a23-26) and 67 (*Galen in Epid.* 6.48), male and female are connected with the

good and pure, whereas the other as of lower value and impure. Consequently, in the wake of Anaximander, Heraclitus, Parmenides, Empedocles, Alcmaeon and the Hippocratics, some Pythagoreans may have also developed their own theory of opposites.⁹ Yet what the distinctive traits of such a doctrine were is again difficult to determine.

As Cornford notices (1939, p. 7), at first reading the Table does not appear as a value-free list of opposites, but rather as enumerating good and bad principles. For example, in the *Nicomachean Ethics* Aristotle explicitly writes that the Pythagoreans list unity and limit in the ‘column of the goods’ (1096b5-28, 1106b29).¹⁰ Moreover, the good–bad opposition, i.e. the ninth couple, also suggests that the Table should be understood as value-laden. There are two issues with this interpretation. First, the ‘Pythagorean’ opposition between good and bad is exclusively mentioned by Aristotle. Second, since good and bad are the second to last couple of opposites, they are unlikely to determine how we should interpret the entire Table. Therefore, treating one column as worthier than the other, as listing goods as opposed to bad principles, is only one of the possible readings of the Pythagorean Table of Opposites.¹¹

An alternative interpretation would be arguing that, although certain opposites, such as unity, straight and light, are ranked higher than their counterparts, and although we may detect some kind of hierarchy between the pairs of ἀρχαί themselves, the allegedly lower-ranked principles should not be considered bad and faulty. For example, the male–female opposition was identified as the ἀρχή, the principle and starting-point, of generation (Arist. *GA* 716a4-13). In *On the Generation of Animals*, Aristotle emphasises the importance of συμμετρία, symmetry, between male and female (767a15-29). Although these two principles generally differ from each other because of the different roles they play in the generation progress,¹² they are to cooperate in a due proportion to bring forth an embryo. Thus, male and female are not polar and irreconcilable, but rather complementary: they come together to enhance each other and generate a further ensemble.

opposition between hot and cold, which however is omitted from the ‘Pythagorean’ Table. For a detailed study of oppositions in Greek thought, see Lloyd 1966. On the right–left and hot–cold oppositions, see Lloyd 1962, 1964 and 1972.

⁹ On the limiters–unlimiteds and odd–even oppositions, see Philolaus Frs. 1 (D.L. 8.85), 2 (Stob. 1.21.7a), 5 (Stob. 1.21.7c).

¹⁰ See also *Phys.* 201b25, *Met.* 1004b27, 1093b11-27, *EN* 1106b29, in which Aristotle refers to a worse and a better column, a list of goods and a list of evils.

¹¹ See also Philip 1966, p. 49, Casertano 2013, 350-351.

¹² In *GA* 716a14-15, the male is defined as what generates in another, and differently the female as what generates within itself. Further accounts of sexual differentiation come in *GA* 765b36-766a24, 768a26-28. On Aristotle’s biology, see Deslauriers 2009, Connell 2016.

That this is how, more generally, we may interpret the Table is suggested by the fact that Aristotle specifically mentions ten ἀρχαί, neither twenty nor two. In the Table, we count twenty principles coupled in ten pairs and then organised into two columns. Therefore, Aristotle could have referred to either twenty ἀρχαί or two primary opposites, which later develop into further particular oppositions. In contrast, he chooses to write τὰς ἀρχὰς δέκα and specifically mentions ten *pairs* of opposites, as if we could not think of one element of the couple separately from its counterpart.¹³ On its own, the limit and the male are not principles, and neither are the unlimited and the female. What functions as the ἀρχή is the couple as a whole.

Overall, the reasons why I have only briefly discussed the Table of Opposites are twofold. First, we have too little information to determine to which Pythagoreans, if any, Aristotle is referring. Second, we cannot know for certain how the opposites from the Table are to be related. The fact that Aristotle ascribes the Table to *other* Pythagoreans suggests that this is unlikely to be an essential component of Pythagoras' teachings. Nevertheless, some Pythagoreans might have still developed a theory of opposites and included the male–female pair. Consequently, Aristotle may well reveal how some exponents of the Pythagorean tradition conceptualised gender differences. Yet the relation between these opposites might have functioned differently from what the Table, and in particular the good–bad pair, prompts us to think. That of men and women in Pythagoreanism may be a case of gender complementarity, rather than polarity.

¹³ Besides Aristotle's formulation of this theory of opposites, the Pythagorean identification of the number 10 with perfection, which Aristotle mentions earlier in *Met. A* (986a9-13), provides a further reason why the Pythagoreans themselves may have thought of ten ἀρχαί.

Appendix B

Who is to be called Pythagorean?

The enquiry into the role of women in Pythagoreanism also functioned as a case study leading us to investigate broader questions still under debate in Pythagorean scholarship. One such issue is the question of what kind of communities the Pythagoreans founded. I have argued that one of the elements singling out Pythagorean societies from other *ἐταιρεῖαι* and *θίασοι* was their way of living, *βίος*. As opposed to cultic communities and political clubs, the Pythagorean agenda went beyond politics, religion and more broadly public activities, for besides acting like Pythagoreans in public, Pythagoras' disciples also followed his precepts in their daily private lives. Lloyd has recently argued that the character of Pythagoras 'eludes modern labels': he was partly, but not only, a religious authority, as Burkert portrays him; he was partly, but not only, interested in number theory, as Guthrie and Zhmud argue; he was a community leader, as Huffman states, but was never a politician (Lloyd 2014, 24-45). The same can be argued with regard to the community: the Pythagoreans founded a *sui generis* form of society, which in some respects echoes the organisational structure of ancient Greek sects, political clubs and philosophical schools, but nonetheless is a *unicum* in the ancient Greek socio-political and philosophical panorama. To put it in Lloyd's words, Pythagoras, his group of followers, especially the women, and the kind of society they founded eludes modern classifications.

The second, more troublesome, question is what identifies a Pythagorean, and thus a Pythagorean woman, as such. The first solution to the issue of what makes Pythagoras' followers genuine Pythagoreans is to classify them by using a doctrinal criterion. The most promising criteria are twofold: the theory that numbers are the principles of all things and the belief in the transmigration of souls.¹⁴

In *Met.* 985b23, Aristotle refers to the Pythagoreans as those who 'engaged with mathematics, were the first to lead this study and, after developing it, believed that its principles are the principle of all beings.' A Pythagorean would thus be someone who believes that *all things are numbers*.¹⁵ There are three fundamental problems with identifying this number theory as the ultimate mark of a genuine Pythagorean philosopher. First, Aristotle does not in fact refer to the Pythagoreans, but more vaguely to *οἱ καλούμενοι Πυθαγόρειοι*, the so-called Pythagoreans. Which group of Pythagoreans he has in mind and why they are described as *καλούμενοι* is a

¹⁴ On this debate, see also Purtil 1989, 337-343.

¹⁵ On such a number doctrine as the key theory of mainstream Pythagoreanism, see Schofield 2012, 142.

point of controversy.¹⁶ Nevertheless, Aristotle's somewhat cautious statement concerning the *so-called* Pythagorean number theory does not allow us to draw conclusions as to whether this doctrine would have been endorsed by *all* Pythagoreans. Second, Aristotle dates the καλούμενοι Pythagoreans in the fifth century BCE around the time of Leucippus and Democritus (985b22). Rather than Pythagoras and his contemporaries, he is thus more likely to have in mind the second and third generations of Pythagoreans, such as Philolaus of Croton and Archytas of Tarentum, who did devote themselves to the study of mathematics and developed some kind of number doctrines (Huffman 2005 and 1993). Yet even the number theories devised by Philolaus and Archytas do not perfectly match that described by Aristotle. For instance, although granting that everything is known through numbers (Fr. 7, quoted in Stob. 1.21.7b), Philolaus argues that the whole cosmos, including numbers, are born out of two further principles he names as limiters and unlimiters (Fr. 1, quoted in D.L. 8.85). Therefore, they may not have been included in the group of the so-called Pythagoreans either. Noteworthy is also that, in the *Phaedo* and the *Seventh Letter* respectively, Plato never explicitly refers to Philolaus and Archytas as Pythagoreans.¹⁷ Finally, the earliest evidence for Pythagoras and his first generation of disciples does not connect him with mathematics. Rather, as argued in Chapters 3 and 4, Pythagoras was famed for regulating his followers' lifestyle and teaching about the afterlife. Hence, not all Pythagoreans seem to have distinctively believed that everything was born out of and understood through numbers.

An alternative doctrinal criterion is the doctrine of the *transmigration of souls*.¹⁸ Yet whether reincarnation was something in which every Pythagorean worthy of the name would have believed is again debated. For example, there is no direct evidence of such a doctrine in the extant fragments by Philolaus (Huffman 2009, 28-29 n. 21). According to Huffman, the reasons for attributing the belief in reincarnation to Philolaus are twofold. First, in *Phaedo* 61c-62c, he is said to have forbidden suicide because, by taking his own life, one might interfere with the lifetime that has been allotted to him. This in turn may imply that suicide might interfere with the allotted sequence of deaths and rebirths. Yet Cebes does not seem to remember his teacher's doctrines about the soul and the afterlife, which casts doubt on Philolaus' believing in metempsychosis. Second, Huffman claims that being a Pythagorean, Philolaus would have led a Pythagorean way of life and followed a Pythagorean diet, whose regulations were for the

¹⁶ For a detailed analysis of the debate and further literature, see Primavesi 2014 (cf. Appendix A)

¹⁷ See also Zhmud 2012, 119-134.

¹⁸ On reincarnation as the chief constituent of early Pythagoreanism, see also Cornelli 2013, 86-87, and Barnes 1982, 103.

most part grounded on the doctrine of transmigration. However, the picture of the soul as the harmony of the elements constituting the body mentioned by Simmias in *Phd.* 86b-c clashes with the belief in the soul outliving the body, which also questions the extent to which Philolaus would have believed in reincarnation. Once again, then, not all philosophers our sources classify as Pythagoreans seem to have lectured their disciples about transmigration.

A more general problem with using a doctrinal criterion to catalogue the Pythagoreans, as Zhmud argues (2012, 119-134), is that this approach involves a *petitio principii* – namely, deciding *a priori* what the core Pythagorean doctrines are, and identifying as Pythagoreans those who endorse them.

Thus, Zhmud moves on to a new criterion: someone is to be called a Pythagorean when bearing with other Pythagoreans some kind of Wittgensteinian *family resemblance*. Zhmud argues that the Pythagoreans cannot be grouped according to one single and essential common feature, but may still be connected through overlapping similarities. Those whom the tradition identifies as Pythagoreans share with each other certain characteristics, such as an interest in mathematics, natural philosophy and medicine and the inclusion in a *ἐταιρεία*. The specific combination of these features may vary, but nonetheless determines who is to be considered a Pythagorean and who is not. Other traits Zhmud fails to mention, but I would include, are the belief in the transmigration of souls and the peculiar way of living. Specifically, Zhmud rejects the latter due to the scantiness of the evidence.¹⁹ Yet, even though the precise traits of the Pythagorean way of living are debated, that Pythagoras founded a distinctive lifestyle is attested as early as Plato's *Republic*. Furthermore, as mentioned in Chapter 3, modern scholarship has reevaluated the *ἀκούσματα* as key evidence for understanding what regulations the *βίος* may have included (Huffman 2008a, 104-119). Therefore, the lifestyle too is to be counted among the *indices* of family resemblance.

However, as Huffman notices, the family resemblance criterion is also question begging, as it requires us to decide who counts as Pythagorean in order to detect what relates these figures to one another and which similarities they bear (Huffman 2008c, 284-302). For example, Zhmud includes medicine as Democedes and Alcmeon were both physicians and Pythagoreans. Yet Alcmeon may be in contact with, but nonetheless independent of Pythagoreanism.²⁰ He is grouped with the Pythagoreans in D.L. 8.83, Iamb. *VP* 104, as well as in the *Catalogue*. Yet in *Met.* 986a27 Aristotle explicitly distinguishes his theory of opposites from that of Pythagoras' followers.

¹⁹ See also Zhmud 2011, 231.

²⁰ On Alcmeon as a 'para-Pythagorean', see also Zhmud 2012, 109.

Huffman then suggests a *threefold criterion* to define Pythagoreanism. Someone is to be called a Pythagorean if (1) he or she is named as such in the reliable fifth/fourth-century evidence, such as Archytas in Aristoxenus' Fr. 18, Philolaus in Fr. 19 and the friends Damon and Phintias in Fr. 31. Moreover, (2) they should endorse the theory identifying the principles of all things with limiters, unlimited and numbers, as again in Philolaus. Finally, (3a) they should have studied under Pythagoreans or (3b) lived according to the Pythagorean way of life, such as Myllias and Timycha. Once again, there are several issues with Huffman's classification. First, what counts as (1) a reliable fifth/fourth-century source is still under heated debate. Second, Philolaus aside, (2) the limiters-unlimiteds theory does not seem to be central to ancient Pythagoreanism. Finally, (3a) having a Pythagorean teacher does not seem to be enough to classify someone as a Pythagorean. For example, it would lead us to include among the Pythagoreans Philolaus' disciples Simmias and Cebes, as well as philosophers like Parmenides and Empedocles, who are reputed to have studied under Pythagoreans, but nonetheless later grew out of their Pythagorean roots and developed their own philosophical theories.²¹

Consequently, only (3b) the βίος seems to be safe. A Pythagorean would then be someone living according to a particular *way of life* as described in the ἀκούσματα. For example, the mathematician Archytas is reputed to have behaved towards his slaves with Pythagorean moderation, for he once refused to punish them so as not to act out of anger (Fr. 30, quoted in Iamb. VP 197). The ban against suicide in Plato's *Phaedo* 61c-62c shows that Philolaus also developed and followed certain life regulations (Huffman 2016c). Another interesting case is that of the Pythagorean Milon. In the *Catalogue of the Pythagoreans*, among the 29 Pythagorean from Croton, Iamblichus lists the name of the athlete Milon. Although Milon was famed for being a wrestler (Ebert *Gr. Sieg.* 61, Paus. 6.14.5-8), he was a high-ranked member of the Pythagorean community: he was part of a restricted circle of Pythagoreans who held private meetings at his house,²² and joined Pythagoras' family by marrying his daughter Myia (Iamb. VP 267). Interestingly, Pythagoras is reputed to set given specific regulations and dietary rules

²¹ In D.L. 9.21-23, Parmenides is said to have had studied under Ameinias, son of the Pythagorean Diochaites. Diogenes distinguishes ancient philosophical traditions by means of a geographical criterion: Pythagoras' 'successors' are those who lived in the vicinity of Pythagorean communities in Magna Graecia. This leads him to classify South-Italian philosophers such as Xenophanes, Parmenides, Leucippus, Democritus, Zeno and Epicurus as members of the Italian school started off by Pythagoras (1.12-15). However, in D.L. 9.18-20, Xenophanes is not linked to Pythagoreanism. Moreover, in D.L. 8.91 both Parmenides and Xenophanes are distinguished from the Pythagorean school and included among the so-called scattered (σποράδην) Italian philosophers. On Parmenides' connection with Pythagoreanism, see also Burnett 1948 and Coxon 1986. For Empedocles, see Ch. 4.IV.

²² See Aristoxenus Fr. 18, Neanthes *FGrHist* 84 Fr. 30, D.L. 8.49, Porph. VP 55, Iamb. VP 104, 249.

for athletes, by allowing them to eat meat despite the more general ban against killing animals by which his other pupils were required to abide (D.L. 8.12, Porph. *VP* 15, Iamb. *VP* 25). Consequently, being an athlete, Milon too may have followed such code of conduct and abided by Pythagoras' eating norms. Similarly, dietetics may explain the connection between Pythagoreanism and doctors such as Democedes.

The lifestyle criterion might face two challenges. First, some regulations ascribed to Pythagoras, such as the ban against unrestrained anger, are not distinctively Pythagorean, but rather mirror traditional Greek values (Cornelli 2013, 58). It is worth noting, however, that other norms, such as the ban against sacrificing some species or parts of animals and against eating beans, strike us as unconventional and are exclusively connected to Pythagoreanism. Moreover, both traditional and unconventional norms are endorsed and at times derived from Pythagorean doctrines, such as the belief in reincarnation, and thus acquire a new cultural garb. This leads us to the second issue: Empedocles too seems to have followed a vegetarian diet, which would again group him with the Pythagoreans. Nonetheless, since Empedocles is reputed to have studied either under Pythagoras' son Telauges or with Hippasus and Brontinus, his strict vegetarianism might be seen as a developed form of the Pythagorean dietary habits.

Overall, the Pythagoreans had a wide variety of interests, from ethics and religion to mathematics, cosmology and medicine. Some of them developed an ethical agenda, others a number theory, others again both. What they seem to share, and what distinguishes them from the non-Pythagoreans, is that all they followed a distinctive way of life in accordance with Pythagoras' teachings and doctrines.²³

My argument is that the inclusion of women in Pythagoreanism provides further support for the lifestyle criterion. This thesis has shown that Pythagoras welcomed women among his followers. Therefore, the answer to the question of what makes Pythagoras' followers true Pythagoreans should also take into consideration the case of the Pythagorean women. As I have argued, some women engaged with Pythagorean doctrines. For example, Theano is reputed to have written about numbers as the principles of all things and about the soul (cf. Ch. 1.IV), which would satisfy both the mathematical and the psychological doctrinal criteria. Yet other women, such as Timycha, are primarily known for living by Pythagoras' regulations, such as the avoidance of beans. Theano too values the βίος, for according to Diogenes she delivered moral precepts and regulated her pupils' behaviour. Therefore, once again, what these women seem to have in common is the way of life.

²³ See also Cornelli 2013, 55-62.

We began by stating that the purpose of this investigation was to focus on the Pythagorean women. This, nonetheless, enabled us to expand on our understanding of Pythagorean thought more generally. I hope to have shown that in the emergence of Pythagoreanism both men and women were included in the communities and lived a Pythagorean way of life, and that such a distinctive lifestyle was then a springboard, for both men and women, towards further engagement with Pythagorean thought.

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