



Justice in Aesara of Lucania (4th or 3rd century BC)

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The surviving fragment of Aesara of Lucania's *On Human Nature* limits our understanding of her concept of justice to what she explicitly states and to the inferences we reasonably may draw from it. She begins: "Human nature seems to me to provide a standard of law and justice both for the home and for the city" (Waithe 1987: 20). Justice in the soul requires the parts of the soul (mind, high spirit and desire) to exist in proper proportionality to each other: "...when each one is arranged in accordance with the suitable proportion, this sort of arrangement I assert to be justice." The suitable proportion depends upon the activity that the soul is called upon to perform. From this fragment we learn how to recognize situations in which justice prevails. Justice results in "unanimity and agreement in sentiment" and its absence is "discord and folly." We interpolate these observations to the situations in which Aesara says justice prevails. One must be introspective and "follow [...] the tracks within oneself" understanding human nature and applying that understanding to the circumstances of human life, explicitly, domestic life—the sphere of the Pythagorean woman—and the public life of the city, presumably its marketplace and its government—the sphere of Pythagorean men. Justice is the condition that prevails when humans understand their own nature and strive to act in accordance with it. This account is consistent with those expressed by other philosophers in the Pythagorean tradition writing about women as daughters, wives, mothers, householders (see: *Harmonia* in Phytis of Sparta, *Piety* in Perictione II and Theano II, *woman*).

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