Archytas of Tarentum Encyclopedia Article

Archytas of Tarentum

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Archytas of Tarentum

fl. c. 428-350 B.C.

Greek mathematician and philosopher who applied mathematical theory to the study of music, geometry, and astronomy. Archytas was born in Tarentum, an area of southern Italy that was, at the time, under Greek control. He was a follower of the philosopher Pythagoras, who had theorized that numbers could be used to understand virtually all phenomena. One of Archytas's greatest accomplishments was to duplicate the cube via the construction of a three-dimensional model. He also applied mathematical proportions to his study of pitch and scale in musical harmony. Archytas was also a great statesman, serving as commander in chief in Tarentum for seven years.