

oreans occur in all six books of the *Colloquium*. The theme of harmony is a central concept of Pythagoras and his school and is also the central theme of the *Colloquium*. Why Bodin extended the theme of harmony beyond its usual Pythagorean interpretations and why Bodin employs horizontal as well as a vertical chain of being, will be the foci of this paper.

The setting of Bodin's dialogue is the home of Paul Coronaeus at Venice; the learned men whom Coronaeus had gathered there resemble those men around Pythagoras "who were encouraged to search into the principles of things, not just to accept a statement without analysis."⁸ Paul Coronaeus was a Renaissance man, "who was very eagerly investigating in every nook and cranny of the city, all the monuments of antiquity and had joined with the most scholarly men in an intimate society, so that his home was considered a shrine of the Muses and virtues. And although he was very slight in stature and too weak to endure stormy seas and distant sojourns, he had an incredible desire to understand the language, inclinations, activities, customs, and virtues of different peoples."⁹ Bodin's description of Coronaeus makes him a kindred spirit of Pythagoras. As friendship was emphasized by the Pythagoreans and the "things of friends are common," so the friendship of the seven scholars in Coronaeus' home is detailed at the beginning of the dialogue:

Although they were exceptionally well trained in the disciplines of the liberal arts, nevertheless each seemed to surpass the others in his unique knowledge. Moreover, while living together in Coronaeus' house, they had easy access to anything new or worthy of note anywhere in the world by means of letters from friends whom they had made a point of acquiring at Rome, Constantinople, Augsburg, Seville, Antwerp, and Paris.

They lived not merely with sophistication of discourse and charming manners, but with such innocence and integrity that no one so much resembled himself as all resembled all. For they were not motivated by wrangling or jealousy but by a desire to learn; consequently they were displaying all their reflections and endeavours in true dignity.¹⁰

These friends in their Venetian "shrine of the Muses and Virtues" held discourse on all subjects in which Renaissance men engaged, but their conversations most often centered on the natural world and the nature of true religion. In describing the aims of Pythagoras and his friends, Professor Meninger aptly states:

Experience of the deity was the ultimate aim of the Pythagorean sect, and therefore it became the fountainhead of a continuing strain of mysticism in Western thought. But because this experience was to be gained through study of nature the sect was also the progenitor of systematic physical sciences. In the Pythagorean scheme, religion and science not only coexisted, but were mutually dependent.¹¹

In like manner Coronaeus' home contained a laboratory for the study of nature. There were instruments "for music or for all sorts of mathematical arts," but most unusual was the *pantotheca*, a cupboard built of olive wood which contained 1296 small compartments which were slanted for easy viewing.¹² This *pantotheca*, as its name implies, housed "the universe, its goods and materials. To begin with he [Coronaeus] had prepared likenesses of sixty fixed stars, then the replicas of planets, comets, and similar phenomena, elements, bodies, stones, metals, fossils, plants, living things of every sort, which he could secure each in its own class."¹³ If a form of plant or animal could not be secured, "each was marked in its box by a drawing or a description or according to its own classification.... Moreover, he had complete plants or the roots displayed separately on rather large charts so that each box contained a particle of plant and animal life and in this arrangement: the last was connected to the first, the middle to the beginning and the end, and all to all in its appropriate class."¹⁴ All the intermediate stages in a genus were represented so that the inner relationships could be immediately ascertained. For example, "... between the earth and stones he had placed clay and chalk, between water and diamonds, crystal, between stones and metals, flint and marcasite, between stones and springs, coral...."¹⁵

Coronaeus knew his microcosm by heart, and, like Pythagoras, his prodigious memory enabled him to remember all that he had heard; "he had developed the sharpest critical faculty by listening, discussing, and contemplating."¹⁶ Many of the conversations among the seven friends in Coronaeus' home stemmed from inquiries into the nature of things, which were stimulated by study of the *pantotheca*. Study of the natural world was frequently interrupted by discussion of events which seemed to happen outside the natural order such as stories about talking dogs, magic mirrors, men who fly with bird-like swiftness, elephants who walk on ropes, pregnancies which result from copulation with demons, to name only a few. Toralba, the natural philosopher in the dialogue, states that he "tried to investigate nature itself and its hidden

causes,"¹⁷ but he found he had the same experience that voyagers have. "When they are as far as possible from land, they lose the use of the leads because of the depth of the sea."¹⁸ Toralba acknowledges that "as I study the nature of elements, fossils, metals, plants, animate and celestial bodies, and finally delve more deeply into the remarkable power of angels and demons, reason seems to leave me completely."¹⁹ Yet Toralba insists that when natural reason cannot furnish the causes of all things, one must not assume that these causes result from necessity, for this would remove free will from God. He cogently argues that it is very foolish to say that the first cause is the producer and pre-server of all things and yet bind this first cause by necessity while admitting free will for men.

Salomon, who represents the Jewish position in the *Colloquium*, agrees that fate or Kadesh is that in which "the holy of holies is contained, that is God, receiving all things within himself and encompassing all things with free will."²⁰ The Catholic Coronatus asks how the first cause is immutable if the series of progression of lower causes is changed; or contrarily, if the progression of lower causes is immutable, then the world exists from necessity. Toralba points out quickly that the Lawgiver of nature is freed from His own laws by Himself alone.²¹

It is at this point in the dialogue that the chain of being is articulated specifically; the *avner catena* is equated to the *scala Jacobin*. Bodin's *Colloquium* may be unique in placing Jacob's ladder and the golden chain as equivalents in hierarchical ordering. The idea of the chain of being is introduced into the discussion by the skeptic Senamus, who has maintained that the power of nature is necessary. If it is not, he asks: "What then will happen to Plato who, in accordance with the opinion of Homer, represents a golden chain let down by Jupiter from heaven. Must we not grant that the series of natural causes is inviolable and completely unchangeable?"²²

At this point Toralba replies: "In my opinion Homer explains himself sufficiently when he recognized that those lower gods can be drawn upward by the higher, but the Supreme Deity cannot be drawn down by the lower."²³

It is the Jew Salomon who joins the idea of the chain to Jacob's ladder when he says: "I think the Homeric chain is nothing other than the ladder represented in the nocturnal vision of Jacob the Patriarch; God was at the top of the ladder, and angels descended from the top of heaven to the earth and then ascended again to heaven."²⁴

From a Pythagorean investigation into the nature of things, Bodin directs his speakers toward the consideration of necessity or will in the creation of cosmos. Then by introducing the golden chain and Jacob's ladder as equivalents, Bodin places God as first cause of the progressive cycle, unchanging as First Principle yet allowing change in the lower orders as the movement of the angels up and down the ladder implies. In addition, by linking Jacob's ladder and the chain of being Bodin reveals a cosmos created by unchanging God from His will; at the same time God's will, which is free, emanated to the lower orders as indicated by angels descending or ascending the ladder. By combining the metaphors of the golden chain and Jacob's ladder Bodin posited creation and emanation while keeping God unchanged and free.

Toralba and Salomon agree that the secrets of the highest matters and the hidden treasures of nature are concealed in the divine laws. In these divine laws numbers have great significance, both in the abstract realm and in the sensory realm. Salomon indicates that the Hebrews have ten names which are granted to God²⁵ and the contemplation of their numerical equivalents reveals many secrets of sublime things. The number ten, as Toralba relates, is especially important, for in this number the divine and natural laws are mingled. As Toralba explains, "those ten headings of the decalogue correspond to the ten celestial orbs in the proper order of nature. The first head is granted to God Himself as the supreme author of universal nature...."²⁶ In like manner he links each heading of the decalogue to a heavenly orb in a significant relationship. The relational aspects of the fourth commandment are especially interesting. "The fourth heading about the holiness of the Sabbath is related to the orb of Saturn to whom also the seventh day of Saturn is vowed, just as the day of the Hebrews' Sabbath."²⁷ Bodin has Toralba explain all ten headings and their associative qualities with the celestial orbs. To the Pythagoreans the number ten represented the limit of the universe.²⁸ The number four, the key number for Cabalists as well as Pythagoreans, is constantly represented by Bodin as the Holy Tetragrammaton, the number which represents God Himself. He has Salomon say:

It would be much more likely to contrive a quaternality from the same Tetragrammaton than a trinity, as did Basilides the evangelist, whose opinion the Neoplatonists and Lombard himself ... seem to follow, as Abbot Joachim wrote, because in addition to three persons, they substituted a fourth which they call "power." The Pythagoreans seem to have held this opinion. They had been accustomed

to swear to a holy quaternity. Timaus Locrensis indicated that by means of a tetragonal pyramid this quaternity held many thousands of worlds together.²⁹

Bodin even details the story of Apollo's charge to double his cubical altar. He says that Nicholas of Cusa tried to accomplish this, and Oronotus boasted he had attained it and from this proved a quadrature of the circle.³⁰ Bodin, in relating the story about Apollo's command to double his cubical altar, makes reference to the geometer demon who had proposed a task which no one "could attain ... by proof but only by physical reasoning."³¹ As Professor Henlanger states:

This image of God as geometer translates the deity as *anima mundi* from the noncorporeal world of intellect to the extended world of physical objects. We detect here the two dominant concepts of deity in the Pythagorean tradition One postulates the deity as an all pervasive spirit that infuses the universe but is known only indirectly through its effects, a pantheistic *maven* ... which leads to mysticism. The other, in strong contrast, postulates the deity as a workman setting about a concrete task, ordering the world according to mathematic measure, building with the tangible forms of regular solids.³²

The quaternity represented for Bodin as well as for the Pythagoreans the reconciliation of opposites, that is, *consonantia discors*. In a discussion of musical harmonies *consonantia discors* is cogently stated by Coronaeus who, after hearing a hymn sung by young choir boys whom he summoned each evening, remarks that the sweetest harmony occurs when the highest tone is blended with the lowest. He also asks his friends "why is it that harmonies in unison, in which no tone is opposite, are not pleasing to the trained ear."³³ Curtius, who represents the Calvinist position in the dialogue, agrees with Coronaeus but disagrees with the Lutheran Fridericus who has indicated that many believe that harmony is more pleasing when the ratios of numbers correspond. He answers Coronaeus' question by emphasizing the reconciliation of opposites: "Even that keenest sweetness of harmony which we have heard most eagerly just now would not have been so pleasing unless the musician had contrived some dissonant or harsh note for our sensitive ears, since the pleasure is not perceived without a pain that precedes it and produces boredom when continued too long."³⁴ To strengthen his statement Curtius then recites a poem about the contrariety of all things. In this poem Bodin pinpoints his concept of the harmony that per-

vades the natural order, a harmony based on multiplicity within unity, that is, a *consonantia discors*:

Creator of the world three times greatest of all,
Three times best parent of heaven,
Who tempers the changes of the world,
Giving proper weight to all things,
And who measures each thing from His own ladle

In number, ratio, time
Who with eternal chain joins with remarkable wisdom two things

opposite in every way, preparing protection for each,

Who, moderating melody with different sounds and

voices yet most satisfying to sensitive ears,

heals sickness, has mingled cold with heat and moisture

with dryness,

The rough with the smooth, sweetness with pain,

shadows with light, quiet with motion,

tribulation with prosperity

Who directs the fixed courses of the heavenly

stars from east to west,

West to east with contrary revolutions

Who joins hatred with agreement,

A friend to hateful enemies,

This greatest harmony of the universe

though discordant contains our safety.³⁵

The natural philosopher Toralba points out that opposites, which are very apparent in all nature, "when united by the interpolation of certain middle links present a remarkable harmony of the whole which otherwise would perish completely if this whole world were fire and moisture."³⁶

This harmony of nature which is based on multiplicity is precisely the same *consonantia discors* which one discovers among the seven savants gathered at the home of Coronaeus. Each of the seven had a different religious or philosophical position - whether Catholic, Jew, Mohammedan, Lutheran, Calvinist, skeptic, or natural philosopher - yet, as Bodin states, they lived together "with such innocence and integrity that no one so much resembled himself as all resembled all."³⁷ Here on the human level is an example of *consonantia discors*. Early in the dialogue Bodin posits the "all in all" theme by describing

the intimate gathering of the seven who differed in their interests as well as in their views on most subjects, especially the question of religion. Just as in nature, their opposite positions were very apparent, yet there was a middle link which provided the remarkable harmony among the seven, namely, the belief in God. As the dialogue unfolds Bodin never allows one position to triumph. Rather, the various opinions are carefully articulated, and one sees, after much searching, that each participant in the dialogue at some time agrees with one or the other, so that as the reader takes an overview he recognizes that all do resemble all. For example, Curtius the Calvinist disagrees strongly with Catholic Coronaeus about statues or the "worship of idols," as he says, yet they agree on the Messiahship of Jesus. While Coronaeus and Salomon the Jew never agree on the interpretation of Messiah, they do agree on rites and symbols, and so on throughout the dialogue.

In the *Colloquium Heptaplatonema* Bodin has used the harmony of nature, that is *concordia discors*, as an exemplar for harmony among men, and with this precept he extended the Pythagorean concept of harmony as he applied it as a construct for religious toleration. Men who live in harmony, with nature as the model, must of necessity be tolerant of each other.

Bodin chose Pythagorean cosmology as the philosophic orientation of his *Colloquium* because the manifold representations of harmony and the constant reiteration of a harmonious cosmos by the Pythagoreans provided Bodin the analogue from which he developed his theory of religious toleration. At the end of the dialogue the participants did not change their religious opinions, and they held no more conversations about religion. No more were needed. Each man in the dialogue probably saw his own position as related to another, although Bodin never stated this explicitly. He did say, however, that "henceforth, they nourished their piety in remarkable harmony and their integrity of life in common pursuits and intimacy."³⁸ A blending of opposites was surely apparent in Coronaeus' home just as in a Pythagorean cosmos.

Finally, one must consider the type of ordering which Bodin demonstrates in the *Colloquium*. As stated above, Bodin uses Homer's golden chain and also Jacob's ladder as a paradigm for his discussions of creation and an emanation. In addition to this vertical or hierarchical ordering Bodin also reveals a horizontal ordering. Since he is never explicit on this point, the horizontal ordering is more difficult to ascertain; it is perhaps one of the secrets of the sublime which the title of the dialogue indicates.³⁹ Yet horizontal order-

ing is as essential to Bodin's theme of harmony and a basis for religious toleration as is the vertical ordering which he made explicit.⁴⁰

With two systems of ordering Bodin has also followed Pythagoras. "The Timaeus scheme of creation, in order to account for variety, devolves actually into a hierarchy of categories of existence. This hierarchy provides for variety on a vertical scale.... But what is equally important, though less often recognized, there is also in the Timaeus scheme express provision for variety on a horizontal scale. At each level of creation, within each link of the chain, there also is diversity. This articulation of the scheme is necessary to account for differences within each category for the different kinds of stones and of plants and of animals and of angels."⁴¹

The horizontal ordering of the *Colloquium* is grounded in the relationship of the seven speakers. No opinion of any participant is posited as higher than or better than another. Since no position is allowed to triumph, the ordering is not vertical in this case but horizontal. The horizontal ordering may be viewed as a seesaw in balance. In the *Colloquium* it is the Catholic Coronaeus who maintains the balance. He is essential to the horizontal ordering or balance. The balance is delicate and Coronaeus is the key, since he is more like each of the others than any other one is like to another. In certain respects he shares views which are harmonious with the non-Christians, the Christians, and even the pagans. It is also important to point out that the dialogue has its setting in the home of the Catholic Coronaeus. The atmosphere in this shrine of the Muses allowed the harmonious blending of opposites where no voice reigned supreme. The *pantotheca* also provides a horizontal system or chain of interrelationships as well as a vertical ladder. The objects in the *pantotheca* can be viewed and studied horizontally as well as vertically. This dual system of ordering is made explicit by Bodin when he states that Coronaeus walks back and forth in front of the *pantotheca*. His vision would naturally follow an horizontal and vertical direction. Two types of ordering which Bodin used in his *Colloquium*, vertical and horizontal, also represent a contrast of opposites, when viewed as necessary constructs for a conception of order. Vertical and horizontal ordering also have an epistemological basis. Knowledge is gained from higher and lower but also from the relationship of equals in various classes.

In conclusion, to develop the theme of harmony and to extend this theme to religious toleration, Bodin used a vertical as well as horizontal ordering.

The vertical ordering represented by the *pantotheca*, the microcosm of the world of nature, demonstrates the multiplicity in the chain of being, while the horizontal ordering, represented by the seven men in the dialogue, demonstrates the unity of a common pattern inherent in the statement, "no one resembled himself so much as all resembled all."⁴²

In Bodin's *Colloquium* the vertical and horizontal orders intersect in the home of Coronatus which is indeed a microcosm. The scholars study the common and its attendant hierarchy, and the *pantotheca* with its 1296 little cupboards is their laboratory. As they discuss the nature of the cosmos, and ultimately the nature of God and true religion, the reader understands that as men they are part of the hierarchical system of the cosmos. Yet to each link in the chain of being, multiple in variety, and to each ether, multiple in beliefs, they relate horizontally because their common pattern is God. Bodin has used the Pythagorean "all in all" theme in a most original manner to present his plea for harmony and religious toleration at a time when sixteenth century Europe was bloodied by religious strife similar to that in our world today.

NOTES

¹S. K. Heninger, *Touchee of Sweet Harmony, Pythagorean Cosmology and Renaissance Poetics*, (San Marino, 1974), p. 16.

²The only complete edition in Latin is Jean Bodin, *Colloquium heptaplatoniarum de verum sublimium arectum abdicia*, ed. Ludovicus Noack (Schwerin: 1857). Noted editions are *Das Heptaplatoniarum des Jean Bodin, Zur Geschichte der Kultur und Literatur im abendländischen der Reformation*, ed. E. Gerner (Berlin: 1841) and *Le colloque de Jean Bodin des secrets cachés des choses sublimes*, ed. Roger Duval (Paris: 1914). For the complete text in English see Jean Bodin, *Colloquium of the Seven About Sacraments of the Sublime*, translation with introduction, annotations, and critical readings by Marion Leathers Daniels Kurtz (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975); all citations to the *Colloquium* found in this paper are from this work which will be hereafter referred to as Kurtz, *Colloquium of the Seven*. See also the early Seventeenth Century translation, *Le Colloque* ed. François Rigolot (Geneve, 1969; Librairie Droz).

On Pythagoras see Ernst Buehl, *Pythagoras* (Stuttgart: 1962) and Karl Kerényi, *Pythagoras und Orpheus* (Zürich: 1950). By far the most important book to date on Pythagoras and Pythagoreanism is S. K. Heninger, Jr., *Touchee of Sweet Harmony, Pythagorean Cosmology and Renaissance Poetics* (San Marino: 1974); an excellent bibliography is also included. Of general interest to the topic are Don Cameron Allen, *Mystical Heart* (Baltimore: 1970) and *The Harmonious Vision* (Baltimore, 1968); Frances Yates, *The Rosicrucian Enlightenment* (London: 1972).

See also Stillman Drake, "Renaissance Science and Music," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 31 (1970), 483-503; Arthur C. Keller, "1515, the artists, and the ideas of progress in the Renaissance," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 11 (1950), 23-40; Pierre Heuvel, "Jean Bodin à la recherche des secrets de la nature," in *Umanesimo e rinascimento* (1960), 221-34; Walter J. Ong, "System, Space, and Intellect in Renaissance Symbolism," *Bibliothèque d'humanisme et renaissance* 18 (1956), 222-39; Ernst Benz, "Der Tolereiz-Deismus in der Religionswissenschaft (Über den Heptaplatonismus des Jean Bodin)," *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift* 12 (1934), 540-71; Marion Daniels Kurtz, "Harmony and the Heptaplatonism of Jean Bodin," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 12 (1974), 31-40.

³In the *Colloquium* ten citations from the *Metaphysics* occur. See Kurtz, *Colloquium of the Seven*, pp. 28, 29, 30, 32, 34, 62, 75, 110, 146.

⁴References to *De Caelo* occur twice. See Kurtz, *Colloquium of the Seven*, pp. 37, 120.

⁵See, *Colloquium of the Seven*, pp. 46, 80, 112, 118, 120, 164, 244, 279, for references to the *Timaeus* and p. 373 for reference to *Timaeus* Locrensis.

⁶In a lengthy discussion of religious practices Salomon the Jew states that "pylarch was wrong when he wrote that Numa had ordered that those who were about to worship should sit down, because this was not practiced by the Latins and was foreign to Pythagorean decrees with which Numa is said to have been imbued." (Kurtz, *Colloquium of the Seven*, p. 210). See also pp. 184, 313.

⁷Heraclides, called Ponticus, was an Academic philosopher and writer (397-310 B.C.). He was left in charge of the school during Plato's third Sicilian journey. Important for his molecular theory and his astronomical discoveries, he even hypothesized that the sun is in the center of the universe and the earth revolves around it.

⁸See Heninger, *Touchee of Sweet Harmony*, p. 23.

⁹See Kurtz, *Colloquium of the Seven*, p. 3.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, p. 4.

¹¹Heninger, *Toucheas of Sweet Harmony*, p. 22.

¹²Kurtz, *Colloquium of the Seven*, pp. 4-5.

¹³*Ibid.*, p. 4.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 4-5.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, p. 5.

¹⁶*Ibid.*

¹⁷*Ibid.*, p. 26.

¹⁸*Ibid.*

¹⁹*Ibid.*

²⁰*Ibid.*, p. 29.

²¹*Ibid.*, pp. 30-31.

²²*Ibid.*, p. 32.

²³*Ibid.*

²⁴*Ibid.*

²⁵*Ibid.*, p. 35.

²⁶*Ibid.*, p. 39.

²⁷*Ibid.*

²⁸See Heninger, *Toucheas of Sweet Harmony*, pp. 71-145.

²⁹Kurtz, *Colloquium of the Seven*, pp. 372-73.

³⁰*Ibid.*, p. 179, note 370.

³¹*Ibid.*, p. 179.

³²Heninger, *Toucheas of Sweet Harmony*, p. 309.

³³Kurtz, *Colloquium of the Seven*, p. 146.

³⁴*Ibid.*, p. 147.

³⁵*Ibid.*

³⁶*Ibid.*, p. 146.

³⁷*Ibid.*, p. 4.

³⁸*Ibid.*, p. 471.

³⁹The Latin title is *Colloquium Heptaplomeres de verum sublimitum arcanis ablati-
tis*.

⁴⁰The *pentaplex* in Origenes' home contained all the elements of the world arranged in a vertical pattern. However, in addition to the study of the contents viewed from top to bottom one could comprehend the relationship of the different genera by moving the eyes in a horizontal fashion.

⁴¹Heninger, *Toucheas of Sweet Harmony*, p. 328

⁴²Kurtz, *Colloquium of the Seven*, p. 4