

Nanopublication — Pythagorean Number Theory as Geometric Transliteration

by Arnaud Quercy · Pythagoras - Research on tensions #41 · 2022



ARTISTIC METHODOLOGY FIRST PERSON EMBODIED

PRACTICE IDEAMORPHIC TRANSLITERATION HIGH

Pythagorean Number Theory as Geometric Transliteration

I translate Pythagoras [1]'s belief that all things are made of numbers into three-dimensional sculptural form: the monad (one) as dot representing the origin of all things, the dyad (two) as line representing matter, the triad (three) as triangle - the "ideal number" with beginning, middle, and end, revered as Apollo's symbol - and the tetrad (four) as pyramid representing the four seasons and four elements.

CONTEXT

This sculpture embodies Pythagorean cosmology through direct geometric transliteration. Pythagoras believed that all things were made of numbers, with each number carrying specific metaphysical meaning: the number one (the monad) represented the origin of all things, manifested as the dot or sphere in this work. The number two (the dyad) represented matter itself, appearing as linear elements extending into space. The number three was an "ideal number" because it had a beginning, middle, and end - the smallest number of points defining a plane triangle, which the Pythagoreans revered as a symbol of the god Apollo. The number four signified the four seasons and the four elements, represented through the pyramid form.

The sculpture's circular disc establishes a bounded cosmos within which these fundamental geometric forms interact and nest. Each form serves dual function: contributing to the sculptural composition while carrying precise philosophical meaning from the Pythagorean system. The dot becomes sphere, the line extends matter into space, the triangle honors Apollo as ideal form, the pyramid grounds the elements and seasons.

This work also engages the concept of the "music of the spheres" - the metaphysical principle that mathematical relationships express qualities or "tones" of energy manifesting in numbers, visual angles, shapes and sounds, all connected within a pattern of proportion. Pythagoras first identified that the pitch of a musical note is in inverse proportion to the length of the string producing it, and that intervals between harmonious sound frequencies form simple numerical ratios. This sculpture transliterates that same principle into spatial geometry: harmonic mathematical relationships rendered visible.

The work exemplifies ideamorphism's core operation - ideas can be transliterated across modalities while preserving structural invariants. Here, Pythagorean number theory moves from philosophical abstraction to three-dimensional geometric form, the mathematical relationships intact.

REFERENCES

- [1] Arnaud Quercy (2022). Pythagoras - Research on tensions #41 — Catalog raisonné. <https://arnaudquercy.art/en/catalogue-raisonne/AQC0335.html>
<https://arnaudquercy.art/fr/catalogue-raisonne/AQC0335.html>
- [2] Created 2022, Certificate 20221231-0005, Arnaud Quercy Creations / AQC0335
- [3] Pythagoras's cosmological framework documented in the artwork's accompanying text, emphasizing number as the foundation of all things and geometric forms as their manifestation
- [4] Part of "Research on Tensions" series, exploring systematic transliteration across conceptual and perceptual domains

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