The Harmonics of Stoic Virtue
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Happiness and Virtue

“Happiness is living *harmoniously* with nature”
- Ordered world, in which everything fits together according to a divine and rational plan
The Language of Music

*Symphonia* as a *logos*

Chrysippus: “concordance”

Long’s Project: musical harmony = ethical harmony?
Establishing the analogy

Need an ethics utilizing a structure of sounds:
  - Utterances (lekta) serve as the starting point for Stoic logic
### The analogy (1st formulation)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Music</th>
<th>Ethics</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Concordance of high and low notes/sounds</td>
<td>Verbalized thoughts/impulses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Well tempered constituents</td>
<td>Harmonious mental disposition</td>
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[Musical harmony] “functions as a model for a mind that has its own correctly organized constituents, so that it is thoroughly in tune with itself and with external nature” (Long)
Why use the analogy?

*Orthos Logos!*
- Translated, often ineffectively, as “right reason”

How to read “right reason”
- Utilitarian: ignores divine order
- Kantian: makes *a priori* ethical judgements
- Chrysippus: “living in accordance with experience of natural happenings” (Stoic ethics are grounded in empirical experience)
A quick note on music theory:

Pythagorean:

- Breaks down tonal sequences into ratios
- Ex) Octave (2:1) Fifth (3:2), etc
- “ratio” “proportion” “measure”

Tetracords: The basic unit of Greek musical theory; the intervals that compose a perfect fourth. 4 tetrachords and their subsequent intervals

Tension = Tone
- Chrysippus: virtuous man (eutonia) / vicious man (atonia)

Tempered Scale: All notes are in concordance with one another. So what is the “scale” of human virtue?
All the numbers of virtue

Seneca and Marcus Aurelius make note of the “numbers” of virtue:
- The virtuous man must possess and act in accordance with all of the numbers, but what are these numbers?

The Four cardinal virtues: Prudence, courage, moderation, and justice. Why not say the four virtues?
- Subordinate virtues

ex) under the domain of prudence: good-sense, good-calculation, quick wittedness, etc.
The analogy revisited:

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<td>4 tetrachords</td>
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Virtuous (harmonious) action requires the perfection of *all* virtues
- ex) Acting in the domain of “courage” we still utilize subordinate virtues from the domain of prudence

Musical harmony: Chord
Ethical harmony: Virtue (*Orthos Logos*)

If but a single tone is altered, irreverent of the surrounding pitches, harmony will be lost
And so, we are left like the toiling musician, who must activate all the correct tones of virtue, in concordance with each other and the external world, in order to act harmoniously, and therefore virtuously. In this we achieve Zeno’s happiness: “to live harmoniously”