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Editor Nicholas Campion

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Editorial

This double volume of Culture and Cosmos features papers from the conference in St. Petersburg from 21-23 June 2019, on 'The Harmony of the World', celebrating the 400th anniversary of the publication of Johannes Kepler's *Harmonice Mundi*, translated into English as *The Harmony of the World*. The conference was sponsored by the Harmony Institute and the Sophia Centre at the University of Wales Trinity Saint David and Karine Dilanian, graduate in the University's MA in Cultural Astronomy and Astrology, through her Institute for the Study of Astronomy in History, Philosophy and Culture.¹ The conference was held at the Museum of the History of Religions in St. Petersburg, a city chosen because it houses the Kepler archive, visited by conference delegates, who were given access to Kepler's manuscripts.

Kepler's aim was to create a complete working model of the universe, based in Pythagorean and Platonic concepts of geometry and soul, refined by Copernican heliocentrism and Tycho Brahe's recent astronomical observations. In the process, he articulated what later came to be called his third law of planetary motion:

¹ The Harmony of the World, http://sophia-project.net/sp_sponsored/harmony-of-world-2019/index.php

But it is absolutely certain and exact that the *proportion between the periodic times of any two planets is precisely the sesquialternate proportion* of their mean distances.²



Group photo at the Museum of the History of Religions in St. Petersburg

Such insights have established Kepler as one of the presiding geniuses of modern astronomy. However, for Kepler the universe was what we might now call a single operating system, in which the geometrical harmonies which are evident in the movement of the planets are responsible for the shape of all movements in the universe, including natural movements, as evident in the weather. The essential interconnectedness of all things extends to the general motions of human society and therefore has implications for

² Kepler, Johannes, *The Harmony of the World*, trans. E.J. Aiton, A.M. Duncan, J.V. Field (American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia, 1997), p. 411 (book V, chap. 3).

politics and the management of the state. Kepler's three laws of planetary motion demonstrated that planetary orbits around the Sun are ellipses rather than circular, overturning the classical model of cycles and epicycles. Yet his work was also one of the last great formulations of the classical concept, articulated notably in Plato's *Timaeus* and *Republic*, in which the purpose of the study of astronomy is to learn more about the divine plan which underpins the universe. It was also the last great formulation of the proposition articulated by Plato and developed in detail by Claudius Ptolemy in his *Tetrabiblos*, along with his *Almagest* and *Harmonics*, that the purpose of studying astronomy is inseparable from the understanding of human society and culture. Kepler's third law is an explanation for the orbits of the planets, but it is also code for the movement of humanity,



Visiting the Kepler Archive

The volume opens with a history of Kepler's archives from Irina Tunkina, and how they came to be held in St. Petersburg. This followed by papers from Valerie Shrimplin on Francesco Borromini and the cultural context of *Harmonice Mundi*, A.V. Kuzmin on Kepler, Galileo, Robert Fludd, Giordano Bruno and Nicolaus Copernicus 'happy Earths' and the infinity of the cosmos, Giora Hon on Kepler's theories of Harmony and the role of *Spielraum*, Karine Dilanian on Kepler's astrological research and horoscope collection, Aviva Rothman on Kepler and the politics of Harmony, Nicholas

Campion on Harmony, politics and utopia in the cosmology of Jean Bodin and Johannes Kepler, and Günther Oestmann on Resonances and Repercussions of Kepler's *Harmony of the World*

Lastly, this is a companion volume to the double issue of *Culture and Cosmos* on Kepler's Astrology, edited by Dorian Greenbaum, and the collection of Kepler's horoscopes compiled by Karine Dilanian.³

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³ Culture and Cosmos, 'Kepler's Astrology', *Culture and Cosmos*, Vol. 14 no 1 and 2, Spring/Summer and Autumn/Winter 2010, <http://www.cultureandcosmos.org/issues/vol14.php>; The Kepler Project, *Astrological Manuscripts of Johannes Kepler* (Moscow: Institute for the Study of Cosmology and Astronomy in History, Philosophy and Culture, 2017). <http://www.cultureandcosmos.org/issues/vol14.php>