THE EMPYREAN: THE PINNACLE OF THE MEDIEVAL WORLD VIEW
(TWELFTH-FOURTEENTH CENTURIES)

THESIS

Presented to the Graduate Council of the
University of North Texas in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

By

Dane Thor Daniel, B.M.
Denton, Texas
August, 1995
The empyrean, Christian paradise and the outer-most sphere of the geocentric cosmos, stood at the apex of scholastic thought. It was nurtured within the Platonic/Neoplatonic/Augustinian heritage that looked upon the spiritual realm of ideas as primary reality. Arising during the twelfth century, the empyrean became associated with the Neoplatonic view of the emanative source of being. Theologically derived, the scholastics called it the home of God, angels, and the blessed--the spiritual heaven of Genesis 1:1. Acquiring Aristotelian characteristics, the empyrean served a vital role within the geocentric cosmos. It received its consummate synthetic description in the writings of Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) and Dante Alighieri (1265-1321). Nominalism and the rise of modern science helped precipitate the empyrean's eventual dissolution.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The heavenly empyrean was the highest expression of the Medieval Weltanschauung (world view). It served as the outermost sphere of the Aristotelian/Ptolemaic geocentric cosmos while possessing an eminent theological status. Usually considered immobile, the empyrean rested beyond the planetary spheres, the sphere of the fixed stars, and the primum mobile (first mobile sphere and beginning of all motions) that revolved around the earth. While serving a physical need as the world’s container, the empyrean also functioned as Christian paradise. The splendorous and lucid empyrean in its perfection was invoked by medieval scholars as the motive for which the primum mobile moved in longing. God and the blessed persons resided in this realm that theologians equated with heaven. The empyrean, as God’s city, was the true permanent reality as opposed to the physical world that was temporary. Indeed, the empyrean expressed that which was the medieval mind: the Greek heritage combined with Christian mysticism. This paper
explores the importance of the empyrean during the
Scholastic Period (eleventh through fourteenth centuries).  

The period of scholasticism dates from approximately
the 11th to the end of the 14th century. A writer in the
Encyclopædia Britannica says that "Scholasticism in the
widest sense . . . extends from the 9th to the end of the
14th or the beginning of the 15th century--From Erigena to
Occam and his followers." See Encyclopædia Britannica, 1959
ed., s.v. "Scholasticism." The entry's author then divides
Scholasticism into two periods; the second begins in the
beginning of the 13th century and lasts to the Renaissance.
This second period has been called High Scholasticism (1250-
1350) by William A. Wallace, O.P. in "The Philosophical
Setting of Medieval Science," pp. 91-119, in David D.
Lindberg, ed., Science in the Middle Ages (Chicago and

The attributes of scholasticism are noted by both of
the above. In general, the period is one in which renowned
thinkers combined elements of ancient philosophy with
Christian theology. The Scholastic Period is associated
first with the rise of educational institutions which taught
the seven liberal arts and later with the Age of Translation
(Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries). Prior to the mass
production of translations, the West knew few antique works.
Concerning Aristotle, only his ideas in logic were known.
The translations provided part of the impetus for a "revival
of learning in the West." Keeping in mind the fact that
Plato and the Neoplatonists profoundly affected learning
well prior to this time, I note that scholars became
intoxicated with the brilliance and richness of Aristotle,
and Greek thinking in general. Indeed, High Scholasticism
is nearly synonymous with Aristotelianism. Two translators
are especially notable: Gerard of Cremona (ca. 1114-1187)
translated over seventy works from Arabic into Latin
covering Greek and Arabic science, geometry, astronomy,
philosophy, medicine, alchemy and geomancy. William of
Moerbeke (ca. 1215-ca. 1286) translated nearly fifty
treatises from Greek into Latin; twenty were works of
Aristotle. Others translated include: Proclus (410-485),
Ptolemy (second century), Simplicius (sixth century), John
Philoponus (sixth century), Hippocrates (b. ca. 460 B.C.),
Galen (A.D. 129-ca. 200), Heron of Alexandria (fl. A.D.
100), Eutocius (fl. A.D. 500), Archimedes (ca. 287-212
B.C), Ammonius (fl. A.D. 500), and Alexander of Aphrodisias
(fl. A.D 193-217).

For a detailed account of works disseminated in the
West prior to and after the Age of Translation, see Edward
Grant, A Source Book in Medieval Science (Cambridge,
Scholasticism provided Christianity reconciliation with the Platonic/Aristotelian ideas within which medieval cosmology and its theologically derived empyrean bloomed. This point is implicitly validated by the fact that the dissolution of the empyrean coincided approximately with the decline of scholasticism. The study of the empyrean, God's kingdom at the apex of the hierarchy of being, provides profound insight into the nature of the medieval outlook.

The empyrean cannot be understood outside the geocentric/universalistic cosmology. The empyrean's first appearance in the fifth century and its subsequent linguistic infusion into Christianity in the twelfth century occurred when Plato's *Timaeus* dictated the accepted geocentrism. The *Timaeus*, one of the few Greek books known in the Latin West before the twelfth century,  

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2See pages 16-19 below. Early scholars believed that Walafrid Strabo used the term in a Christian context during the ninth century. The twelfth-century attribution to Anselm of Laon is now commonly accepted.

3See David C. Lindberg, *The Beginnings of Western Science: The European Scientific Tradition in Philosophical, Religious, and Institutional Context, 600 B.C. To A.C. 1450* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1992), 197. After noting the large Platonic influence in Cicero, Seneca, Macrobius, Augustine, Martianus Capella, Boethius, and John Scotus Eriugena; Lindberg notes Platonic cosmology as it prevailed into the twelfth century:

Plato's *Timaeus*, source of the most coherent discussion of cosmological and physical problems then available, and also the repository of Plato's own words, became the central text. . . . this does not mean that the Platonism . . . was pure or without rival; certain Stoic ideas managed to elbow their way into the Platonic milieu; toward the end of [the twelfth
described an animistic world in which the heavens surrounded a stationary spherical earth. The planets, sun, moon, and stars, each affixed to its own sphere, maintained uniform circular motions around the earth.

Besides the macrocosmic picture, Plato (427-347 B.C.) ontologically described fundamental matter and ideas. Plato deduced the need for four elements to constitute the body of the world, "[G]od set water and air between fire and earth." Plato's Demiurge, the first creator god of philosophy who differs from an omnipotent and worshipped god, operates upon the four elements "which he did not create" and thus brings them into order or becoming. The objects brought into being are images of the forms. For example, the chair in this world is merely a replication of the idea of a chair that exists in the world of forms. It is an ordered reproduction composed of the four elements. Forms are eternal, subsistent beings in themselves and are thus primary reality. Physical manifestations are temporary and imperfect; they are secondary reality.

[century] Aristotle's physical and metaphysical works began to make their presence felt, and in the thirteenth century Platonic philosophy would retreat before an Aristotelian onslaught.


"ibid. See Cornford's commentary regarding the Forms and the Demiurge on pages 34-37 of his Plato's Cosmology.
Contrasting Platonic idealism with particularism helps to illustrate the forms. The Platonic emphasis is on the spiritual ideas instead of on the particular physical objects; in opposition, those who emphasize the particulars note the uniqueness of each individual object. Thus a realist or idealist will stress the ontic priority, or preexistence, of spiritual ideas. In opposition, the particularist will note that either the ordered object existed before the idea, or that the unique idea of each object exists within and not without the object.

Aristotelians and empiricists, and later the nominalists and "modern scientists," generally represent an epistemology based on the particulars, and they therefore reject Platonism. Perhaps the key difference between the Platonists and particularists is on the point of an idea's permanence. Platonists emphasize the absolute truth and permanence of ideas while particularists note that ideas are unknown without the particulars and are only temporarily

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6Nominalists of the High Middle Ages noted that the object did not gain form until someone defined and named it. William of Ockham's affirmation "that we do not begin with a universal in mind through which we recognize individual examples in external reality; we begin with our experience of individuals and slowly build up our ideas of similarity" would influence later radical nominalists who applied it to physics and cosmology. See Joseph R. Strayer, ed. Dictionary of the Middle Ages (New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1987), s.v. "Ockham, William of," by William J. Courtenay. Courtenay's quote helps explain the difference between realism and nominalism.

7See pages 8-9 below for an Aristotelian illustration of this idea.
represented within the individual objects. Understanding this distinction is essential for an appropriate perspective on medieval thought; this is indeed a difficult task considering the modern tendency to be skeptical toward non-empirical reality. Perhaps it is helpful to realize that the distinction is very similar to that between spiritualism and materialism. I have argued in Chapter III below that the empyrean required Platonic spiritualism. The forms, Christian mysticism, and the universal hierarchy prepared the way for the development of the empyrean within the homocentric cosmos.

Yet it was the Aristotelian articulation of cosmos that created the atmosphere for the empyrean's supreme expression. After the translation into Latin of Aristotle's (384-322 B.C.) previously unknown works in the West (twelfth and thirteenth centuries), scholastics adopted his cosmology. Although medieval scholars infused elements

8ibid. For a discussion on Aristotelian particularism, see pages 8-9 below.

9An explanation of the medieval forms is vital for understanding the development of the non-sensible empyrean. The medieval conception of ideas is difficult to understand because the modern tendency adheres to a particular epistemology that implies radical empiricism and skepticism toward universals. In other words, modern "eyes" must note this important change in perspective when "looking" at the Medieval Weltanschauung.

10See note 1 above.

11For a good summary of Aristotle's input into cosmological thought, see Norriss S. Hetherington, ed., Encyclopedia of Cosmology: Historical, Philosophical, and
of Ptolemy's mathematical expression of geocentrism into the cosmology, Edward Grant notes that:

Aristotelians, not Ptolemaists, shaped the medieval world view that would most nearly approximate to the concept of cosmology as "the theory of the universe as an ordered whole, and of the general laws which govern it" (Oxford English Dictionary).  

The emerging Aristotelian/Ptolemaic Weltbild (world picture) placed the spherical earth in the center of the world, with the planetary, solar, and lunar spheres circulating around the earth and the fixed stars orbiting beyond the planets.  

Historian of science Thomas Kuhn notes that, "Through allegory [Dante's] Divine Comedy made it appear that the medieval universe could have had no other structure than the Aristotelian-Ptolemaic."  

Scholastics would

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Scientific Foundations of Modern Cosmology, s.v. "Medieval Cosmology," by Edward Grant. Grant notes that "the overall cosmology embedded in [the treatises known prior to the translation into Latin of Aristotle’s and Ptolemy’s works] was meager and insubstantial in comparison to what was to come during the late Middle Ages (from approximately 1150-1200 to 1500-1600)."

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13 David Lindberg notes an important fact in studying medieval cosmology, "Aristotle’s quintessence or aether and his radical dichotomy between the celestial and terrestrial regions had not yet made their presence felt" in the twelfth-century. However, the overall picture involving the geocentric view and the circulating spheres had been traditionally accepted. See David C. Lindberg, The Beginnings of Western Science (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1992), 245-46.

popularize within this picture a crystalline sphere beyond the fixed stars; this was the aqueous "waters above" sphere often denoted as the primum mobile. The crystalline sphere came from the Genesis 1:7 reference to "the waters above and the waters below." They added the splendorous empyrean of angels beyond the crystalline sphere.\textsuperscript{15}

The theological authorities accepted Aristotle's writings and cosmological ideas even though he challenged key aspects of Christian thought.\textsuperscript{16} Perhaps most challenging was the Aristotelian stress on the particulars: a prevalent theme in Aristotle's \textit{Metaphysics} is that being consists of individual substances and their accidents. Aristotle does still advocate universals, but he places them within the physical objects. This ontology has epistemological ramifications: it implies that knowing is

\textsuperscript{15}Edward Grant, "Cosmology," in Lindberg, 274-76. Anselm's idea of the heavenly Empyrean became fully established as part of the Weltbild when discussed in Peter Lombard's twelfth-century \textit{Sentences}.

\textsuperscript{16}Aristotle's doctrine of the eternity of the earth deeply challenged Christian doctrine. Aristotle believed that the world had always been and will always remain the same in structure and processes. This concept challenged a central Christian theme, namely, the Augustinian linear view of history--a teleological view with a creation \textit{ex nihilo}. Many philosophers were prompted to combine elements of Aristotelian methodology with theological concepts of eternity. For a detailed explanation of the medieval debate on this between Averroists, Augustinians, and Aquinas, see "Cosmology," in Lindberg, 269. Another challenge to Christian dogma was Aristotle's "doctrine of the unicity of the intellect," which ascribed a single common intelligence to all humanity.
founded on empirical perception of the physical manifestations; in other words, knowledge of the form occurs only after one perceives that object through the senses.\textsuperscript{17} Though hostile to Platonism because it relates to materialism by stressing internal forms and empirical priority, Aristotelianism challenges Platonism most directly by contradicting the Platonic/Christian notion that universals are primary reality.\textsuperscript{18} The thoroughly universalistic paradigm, so tightly associated with Church teachings, motivated fourteenth-century attempts to expurgate the threatening Aristotelianism.\textsuperscript{19}

\textsuperscript{17}Aristotle did believe that scientific knowledge is of "the universal and necessary, not of the contingent and particular." For an explanation of Aristotle's epistemology and its apparent contradiction with his ontology, see Theodore Kermit Scott, "Introduction," to John Buridan, \textit{Sophisms on Meaning and Truth}, trans. and intro. by Scott (Meredith Publishing Company, 1966), 10.

I note that it could therefore be argued, as Scott does, that Aristotle's epistemology is universal-based and his ontology is particular-based. However, my summary implies that because knowledge of the form is derived empirically from the particulars, Aristotle's epistemology is actually better considered particular-based. I think that stressing the particular aspect of Aristotle's epistemology is also meritorious because it illuminates the important fact that Aristotle's system undermines the spiritual world which was so important and primary to Platonism and Christianity. I view this undermining itself as a manifestation of materialism.

\textsuperscript{18}See my comments in paragraph two of note 17 above.

\textsuperscript{19}A series of thirteenth-century theological reactions to Aristotle's controversial writings demonstrate Church efforts to slow the proliferation of "heretical" ideas. The first of these, "The Condemnation of Aristotle's Books on Natural Philosophy in 1210 at Paris," says, "Neither the books of Aristotle on natural philosophy nor their commentaries are to be read at Paris in public or secret,
and this we forbid under penalty of excommunication." See "The Condemnation of Aristotle’s Books on Natural Philosophy in 1210 at Paris," translated by Lynn Thorndike, in University Records and Life in the Middle Ages (New York: Columbia University Press, 1944), pp. 26-27; reprint, in Grant, Source Book, p. 42. Grant notes that the ban only applied to the university arts faculty, leaving theologians free to read the works. However, he notes about the art faculty, " . . . it is a reasonable assumption that the banned works were read in private."

In 1231, Pope Gregory IX issued a papal bull which called for the examination of all books condemned in 1210 and prohibited their use at Paris until a committee "purged the works from all suspicion of errors." "The Command to Expurgate Aristotle’s Books on Natural Philosophy," translated by Lynn Thorndike, University Records, pp. 39-40; reprint, with annotations by Edward Grant, in Source Book, p. 43. Grant notes that this command was "soft" and not enforced. Actually, Aristotle’s natural books were by that time entrenched in the University of Paris’s scientific and philosophical curriculum.

The masters of arts at the University of Paris eventually ignored the unenforced condemnations; this point is proven by their 1255 curriculum listing which includes several of Aristotle’s works. See University Records, pp. 64-65; reprint, with additional notes by Edward Grant, in Source Book, p. 44. A few of Aristotle’s works mentioned are Physics, Metaphysics, De celo et mundo, Meteorology, and De animalibus.

In 1272, however, the masters of arts saw a drastic curtailing of the theological questions they could discuss. The Faculty of Arts at Paris issued a statute decreeing "that no master or bachelor of our faculty should presume to determine or even to dispute any purely theological question, as concerning the Trinity and incarnation and similar matters, since this would be transgressing the limits assigned him, . . . " University Records, pp. 85-86; reprint, Source Book, pp. 44-45. The masters of arts were compelled to swear an oath that they would not treat theological questions.

This statute was followed by "The Condemnation of 1277," issued by the bishop of Paris, Étienne Tempier. See "The Condemnation of 1277: A Selection of Articles Relevant to the History of Medieval Science," in Source Book, pp. 45-50, translated with an introduction and annotations by Edward Grant. Pope John XXI approved the excommunication of any who upheld even one of the 219 propositions banned by Tempier. See Grant’s introduction on p. 46. He notes that some of the propositions were drawn from the works of Thomas Aquinas. The errors noted below, with accompanying
Yet, Aristotelianism proved compatible with Christianity on several points. Aristotle's geocentrism affirmed the central role of humanity in the cosmic drama. Aristotle's dichotomy between two spheres, the sphere of terrestrial laws with its four elements contrasting with the celestial region filled with the quintessence, still


Some of the listed "errors" associated with cosmology are:

34. That the first cause could not make several worlds.
87. That the world is eternal as to all the species contained in it; and that time is eternal, as are motion, matter, agent, and recipient; and because the world is [derived] from the infinite power of God, it is impossible that there be novelty in an effect without novelty in the cause.
92. That celestial bodies are moved by an internal principle, which is soul; and that they are moved by a soul and by an appetitive power (per viruttem appetitivam) [that is, by force of desire] just as an animal; for just as an animal is moved by desire, so also is the sky.
95. That there are three principles in celestial bodies: (1) a subject of eternal motion, (2) a soul of a celestial body, and (3) the prime mover as that which is desired.--The error concerns only the first two.
147. That the absolutely impossible cannot be done by God or another agent.--An error, if impossible is understood according to nature.
150. That on any question, a man ought not to be satisfied with certitude based upon authority.

allowed humans to view the heavens mystically; the heavens were fundamentally different from the earth. His idea of the Unmoved Mover, or first cause, became equivalent to the Christian God.

Aided by such similitude, Thomas Aquinas' (1225-1274) efforts would eventually insure the reconciliation between Aristotle and Christianity. Thomas even succeeded in reconciling Aristotle's particular primacy with Christianity. He noted that the use of Aristotle's principles cannot only make nature's operations intelligible to humans, but also can give insight into the author himself. Interestingly, this empiricism cannot be especially the chapter "Aristotle's Philosophy of Nature."

See also Genesis 1:6 in which a firmament is created dividing the "waters between the waters."

On February 14, 1335, with the growing sentiment favoring the teachings of Thomas Aquinas, the bishop of Paris declared:

... on the basis of certain knowledge held at present, we wholly annul the aforementioned condemnation of articles and judgments of excommunication as they touch, or are said to touch, the teaching of blessed Thomas, mentioned above; and because of this we neither approve nor disapprove of these articles, but leave them for free scholastic discussion.


applied to the nonsensible empyrean that Thomas accepted based on theological authority. Still, Thomas and other empyrean advocates would discuss the empyrean in the contexts of the Aristotelian Weltbild and Aristotelian physics. Like most scholastics, though, his main concerns were theological.

Elements of Christian mysticism fit naturally into the Christian-patristic synthesis that provided the empyrean a home. For example, paradise, the highest ideal and goal of medieval humanity, exemplified that that is primary existence. The medieval view of this worldly existence as a cosmic drama acted out here on earth affirmed such spiritualism. Faith in the invisible, a most admirable and pious attribute to medieval thinkers, affirmed notions of heavenly realms. The empyrean fulfilled the role that the heavenly City of God concept demanded.24

Even the empyrean’s origin and characteristics lie within the synthesis of Christian mysticism and Greek cosmology. Church Fathers derived the empyrean from the biblical creation story and combined it with the geocentric spheres and ether-sky of Greek philosophy. Proceeding from this synthesis, scholastics described the empyrean’s characteristics: its immobility, its splendorous or lucid

24Augustine’s City of God, the end toward which one climbs during the physical existence, naturally stresses the primacy of non-empirical existence. This hierarchy is affirmed in Plato’s Timaeus: things worldly are "lower."
qualities, and its function regarding the necessity of a place for the world. In addition, the empyrean served as the home for angels, God, and the blessed. The nearly unanimous acceptance until modern science of these traditional empyrean themes is largely attributable to Dante Alighieri's (1265-1321) artistic and well-known expression of the empyrean. I look extensively at the empyrean etymology in Chapter II.

Besides history and characteristics, the empyrean's meaning within the Weltanschauung deserves attention. A monistic hierarchy underlines this exploration. Indeed, I have noted in Chapter III that the empyrean can be considered proximate to the source of emanation in the Great Chain of Being. The empyrean possesses a vitality and splendor that only nearness to God can bring. Neoplatonism and Augustinianism are the systems professing the cosmological hierarchy and prevalent idealism in the Middle Ages. Mixed with a profound infusion of Aristotelian components, they exemplify scholasticism; and the qualities of scholasticism are conducive to the propagation of empyrean idealism.

This study notes important empyrean attributes and related ideas, especially as they unfold in High Medieval thought. Its thinkers operated within a conceptual framework that this paper illustrates. Near the end of Chapter Three, I have noted ideas associated with the rise
of "modern science," nominalism, and cosmological revolution that show a fundamental shift in the world order. These ideas hastened the empyrean's dissolution. I present the empyrean's story, a history illustrated within the medieval world view. Scholars have written important histories of the empyrean, yet, this paper moves beyond the limited study of empyrean qualities, inhabitants, and rational functions within the Weltbild. Besides providing a partial empyrean historiography, I have examined the meaning of the mystical heaven for historical studies in Weltanschauungen.
CHAPTER II

HISTORIOGRAPHY

Primary sources and twentieth-century commentaries summarize the most pertinent thought and historical scholarship concerning the empyrean. The historiography here, although a partial cross section, illustrates empyrean characteristics and history while eliminating peripheral thinkers and redundant passages. Although some authors, notably Gregor Marauch, have discussed the development of the empyrean before the use of the term in Christendom,

An exploration of the empyrean’s development before the term’s invention is found in Gregor Maurach, Coelum Empyreum: Versuch Einer Begriffsgeschichte, Band VIII from the series Boethius: Texte und Abhandlungen zur Geschichte der Exakten Wissenschaften (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag GMBH, 1968). Marauch believes the empyrean concept existed before the term was postulated. He identifies the classical ether heaven (Atherhimmel) and Neoplatonic immaterial heavens with the empyrean. In fact, Marauch argues that the medieval theologians who discussed the empyrean made these connections themselves. See pages 5-12 and 80-4. A passage from page 10 and the accompanying footnote 24 on Bartholomäus Anglicus exemplifies his stance:

Ich wage nicht den Schluß zu ziehen, daß hiermit das Empyreum, wenn nicht genannt, so doch gemeint sei. Es mag sein, daß HRABAN das Fixsternreich meint; auffällig ist aber doch die Parallelität zu JOHANNES SCOTUS und die Aussage, daß jenes Feuerreich oberhalb alles Erschaffenen liege, Bestimmungen also, die stets dem Empyreum zugeschrieben werden. Der Name Empyreum fällt nicht, und man hat sich damit zu begnügen, die auffallende Ähnlichkeit mit der Empyreumsvorstellung zu konstatieren.
the account of the historiography here explores the empyrean after the name "empyrean" was in use among Christian thinkers.

I have organized this chapter roughly into the following divisions: before Aquinas, Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) himself, Dante Alighieri (1365-1321), and natural philosophers from the post-Thomas scholastics to the eighteenth century. Because secondary sources have discussed much of the empyrean's history, I have drawn from these to supplement each section.

Discrepancies exist among historians who discuss early empyrean thinkers of the Christian world; nevertheless, the attributes of the empyrean during its early history are apparent. According to Francis S. Benjamin, Jr. and G. J. Toomer, references to the empyrean began as early as the

\[\text{BARTHOLOMAUS ANGLICUS (bei HENAO I, exerc. 2, S. 41 und 56) sagt zwar, HRABEN kenne das Empyreum, doch scheint sich diese Behauptung nicht zu bewahrheiten. Wenn man bedenkt, daß die Theologen des Mittelalters und des beginnenden neuzeitlichen Schrifttums unter Empyreum nicht die enge, spezifische Vorstellung meinen, der wir hier nachgehen, sondern einen obersten Himmel der Seligen überhaupt, dann wird man solchen "Belegen" gegenüber Skepsis walten lassen.}\]

\[26\text{See note 1 above.}\]

\[27\text{Marauch contends that the empyrean had been developed earlier among the Chaldeans and Babylonians, Gnostics, and Neoplatonists. He adds that earlier Christians had dismissed the pagan idea before the empyrean was accepted by Christian fathers such as Bede and Seville. See Marauch, 80-86.}\]
fifth century with Martianus Capella (fl. before 439). Benjamin and Toomer add that the notion of the highest heaven as an empyrean inhabited by angels developed from Christian commentaries on the creation story from Genesis. They note that Walafrid Strabo (d. 849), in the Glossa Ordinaria, drew from Martianus' quote to distinguish

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28 Francis Benjamin, Jr. and G. J. Toomer, ed., trans., intro., and comm., Campanus of Novara and Medieval Planetary Theory: Theorica Planetarum, by Campanus of Novara (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press), 393, footnote 52. They cite Martianus' Latin text from De Nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii libri VIII book 2, line 200, ed. Adolf Dick (Leipzig, 1925), 76:

Philologia...cum...conspiceret...ipsam...quae ambitum coercet ultimum sphaeram miris raptibus incitatam...tanti operis...patrem deumque non <ne>sciens ab ipsa transscendisse cognouerat, empyrio quodam intellectualique mundo gaundentem, iuxta ipsum extimi ambitus murum annixa etc.

An author in the Encyclopaedia Britannica notes that Capella's work, called Satyricon or De Nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii et de septem Artibus liberalibus libri novem, "is an allegory written in a mixture of prose and verse." The first two books contain an allegorical account of the marriage of Mercury to a nymph named Philologia. The other seven books discuss the seven liberal arts. The encyclopedic work was highly regarded during the Middle Ages and its reference to heliocentrism may have influenced Copernicus. Ironically, the work credited to have first mentioned the empyrean may have contributed to its demise; that is, if the empyrean requires a geocentric cosmology. I have addressed this topic in Chapter Four. See Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1959 ed., s.v. "Capella, Martianus Minneus Felix."

29 See New Catholic Encyclopedia, s.v. "Glosses, Biblical," by C. O'C. Sloane:

Although glosses originally consisted of a few words only, they grew in length as glossators enlarged them with their own comments and quotations from the Fathers, thus the tiny gloss evolved into a running commentary of an entire book. The best-known
between the heaven of Genesis 1:1 and the firmament of Genesis 1:7. Strabo also used the empyrean to account for the creation of angels since the biblical creation story did not. Strabo was perhaps the first to consider the "caelum" from Genesis 1:1 as a sphere superior to heaven, and as a realm where the angels were created and abide.

Commentary of this type is the vast Glossa Ordinaria of the 12th and 13th centuries. Its marginal glosses were formerly ascribed to Walafrid Strabo (d. 849), but recent studies demonstrate that both its marginal and interlinear glosses were compiled from Latin translations of Origen and Hesychius, Latin Fathers, and from medieval glossators under the direction of Anselm of Laon (d. 1117). In appearance a page contains a very few words of the Latin Vulgate text at the center surrounded by extensive marginal and interlinear glosses. So great was the influence of the Glossa Ordinaria on Biblical and philosophical studies in the Middle Ages that it was called "the tongue of Scripture" and "the bible of scholasticism." Of the many printed editions, one of the best is that of Leander a St. Martin (6 v. Antwerp, 1634.)


Coelum, non visibile firmamentum, sed empyreum, id est, igneum vel intellectuale, quod non ab ardore, sed a splendore dicitur, quod statim repleturn est angelis.

The biblical texts in reference demonstrate that the firmament obviously refers to the skies above the waters. Therefore, medieval thinkers could derive an empyrean only from the vague "heaven" mentioned in verse one:

Genesis 1:1--In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. Genesis 1:7--And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so.

See Genesis 1:1-7 KJV.
Peter Lombard (twelfth century) followed his lead on both points: he applied the term "empyreum" to the "extramundane" region and accounted for the angels.31

Edward Grant, the preeminent historian of medieval cosmology, contradicts Benjamin and Toomer's account. He says that the Glossa, which contained the empyrean passage, "was falsely ascribed to Walafrid Strabo" during the Middle Ages. Grant maintains that Anselm of Laon (d. 1117), the true author of the Glossa Ordinaria, understood the empyrean as a splendorous realm.32 The heavenly sphere was "fiery or intellectual" because it contained the angels.33 Grant, like Benjamin and Toomer, says that Peter Lombard copied the passage from the Glossa. Similarly to Benjamin and Toomer, who credited Strabo for distinguishing between the heaven of Genesis 1:1 and Genesis 1:7, Grant writes that Lombard identified the empyrean sphere with the invisible heaven created on the first day and thus distinguished it from the heaven created on the second day and made visible on the fourth day. Indeed, Peter believed that


33Grant, Planets, 372. Within this text, Grant provides a translation of the empyrean quote from the Latin text cited in Campanus of Novara—the one falsely ascribed to Strabo and now attributed to Anselm of Laon. See footnote 29 above.
the empyrean heaven was created simultaneously with the angels and all corporeal things.\textsuperscript{34}

Recent accounts of early empyrean writings are nearly identical in language and history to the description of Thomas Aquinas. Aquinas' efforts have obviously provided the foundation of empyrean scholarship. In his Treatise on Separate Substances, he noted that individuals said that God created the angels in "a certain highest, brilliant heaven" that they called the empyrean heaven. He said that these heavens are fiery not from their heat, but from their brilliance. Thomas then credited Strabo and Bede as the men who identified the empyrean with Genesis 1:1, "though this

\textsuperscript{34}ibid. He cites the same Peter Lombard passage as did Benjamin and Toomer. See footnote 30 above.

Grant had earlier shown uncertainty as to whether Anselm or Walafrid had written the Glossa. Also, he had accepted Benjamin and Toomer's, and also Thomas Aquinas' advocation that the author of the Glossa had probably been the first to distinguish between the heaven of the first day and the firmament. Grant shows his doubt in the following passage, "This distinction appears, perhaps for the first time, in the Glossa Ordinaria, probably composed by Anselm of Laon (d. 1117), who incorporated material traceable to Walafrid Strabo (d. 849)." See Edward Grant, "Cosmology," in Science in the Middle Ages, ed. David C. Lindberg (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 275.

interpretation is not touched upon by Augustine and the other more ancient doctors of the Church." 35

Thomas also described the early history of the empyrean in his *Summa Theologiae.* In an exemplary text, Thomas noted that

the only authorities who maintain the existence of an empyrean heaven are Strabo, Bede and Basil. All agree on one point, namely that this is the place of the blessed. 36

He then expounded on the authorities' discussion of the empyrean's angelic and lucid properties. 37

Thomas' works show that, with Strabo, he considered Saint Basil (ca. 330-379) and Venerable Bede (672 or 673-735) important early empyrean thinkers. Thomas Litt, in his summary of Thomas' empyrean writings, notes that Thomas accepted the existence of the empyrean on the theological authority of Bede, Strabo, and Basil despite problems with the doctrine, and despite the weakness of their reasons for invoking the empyrean. 38


36Thomas, *Cosmogony,* 41-43.

37See note 40 below on Basil's "light that is outside this world."

Accounting for Thomas' relation of Basil to the empyrean is difficult. After all, Basil lived during the century before Martianus Capella's famous use of the term empyrean. Edward Grant considers Basil's empyrean role inconsequential.\(^3\) However, Thomas invoked Basil often in his empyrean discussions. Thomas thought that Basil's "heaven" of the first day, as distinguished from the "firmament" of the second day, was the empyrean.\(^4\) After having noted that Augustine (354-430), like Basil, had considered the first day heaven "spiritual" and the second day heaven "corporeal," Thomas launched directly into the following quote, "For Bede and Strabo, the heaven of the first day in the empyrean heaven, while that of the second

\(^3\)Planets, 371, note 6.

\(^4\)In his Hexaëmeron homil. 3. PG 29, 64, Basil distinguished the firmament, which he considered a firm body, from a mathematical body. The mathematical body could possibly be what he considered heaven. This is similar to Augustine, a contemporary of Basil, who said that the heaven of the first day was "an unformed spiritual nature" while that of the second day is the corporeal heaven. Thomas quoted Augustine's De Genesi ad litteram I, 9. PL 34, 252. See St. Thomas Aquinas Cosmogony, 75.
day is the sidereal heaven." Thomas' use of parallelism; first noting Basil and Augustine, then noting Bede and Strabo; proves Thomas' belief that this is an important point linking the empyrean to Basil. I note that Marauch believes that this connection would have been heretical to Augustine.

Thomas made other referrals to Basil regarding the empyrean. He invoked Basil to describe the lucid aspect of the empyrean, and he added that Basil identified the empyrean with the heavenly home of saved Christians. Quoting from Basil's *Hexaëmeron*, a sermon on the biblical creation account, Thomas noted Basil's observation that "the reward for good works is to be placed in the light that is outside this world, where the blessed shall be received in the abode of peace." Thomas later mentioned Basil's advocacy of many heavens. In the *Summa Theologiae*, Thomas asked, "Is there only one heaven, or are there many?" After

41ibid., 75-77.
42Marauch. On page 84, Marauch summarizes his view of empyrean history to the fifth century; unfortunately, he includes no references:


43Thomas, *Cosmogony*, 43. Quote from *In Hexaëmeron*, homil. 2. PG 29, 41.
noting Basil’s positive response to the inquiry, Thomas illustrated the affirmative position by discussing the heavenly distinctions of Basil’s follower Damascene who believed there were three heavens: "the airy heaven, the sidereal heaven, and another one farther out, which he takes to be that in the text where St. Paul is said to have been taken all the way to the third heaven."  

As a flexible thinker regarding heavenly attributes, and as a thoughtful questioner, it is important to note that Thomas did mention that heaven may be "predicated metaphorically." He noted that Augustine understood the three heavens to parallel the "three supernatural visions, viz. corporeal, imaginary, and intellectual." Aquinas’ discussion of Basil and Augustine’s relation to the empyrean highlights a common thread within Thomas’ description of empyrean history: he accepted an argument from authority as proof for the existence of an empyrean.

Thomas’ discussion of Venerable Bede’s empyrean is similar to his thoughts concerning Strabo and Basil. Thomas

"ibid., 89. The inquiry begins on page 87. Damascene’s text is from his De fide orthodoxa II, 6. pg. 94, 880 and 884. The text discussing Paul’s rapture is from II Corinthians 12:2.

45Note also that Thomas followed the lead of Bede, Basil, Damascene, and Augustine in advocating more than one heaven. Thomas gave little credence to St. John Chrysostom who held that there was no difference between the heaven of the first day and that of the second in his In Genesim, homil. 2. PG 53, 30. See William Wallace’s footnotes e and 14 and Thomas’ text in Cosmogony, 74-75."
identified Bede with the following empyrean qualities: the empyrean is filled with light and it was immediately filled with angels after its creation. In addition, Grant notes that Bede "distinguished an immobile heaven created on the first day from the mobile, observable celestial bodies created later;" Grant adds that, in this case, Bede did not use the word empyrean. Whether or not Bede was the first to apply the empyrean to the Genesis 1:1 heaven, the empyrean's immobile function would play a large role in subsequent cosmological scholarship. After all, the world, which was the universe to the medieval mind, needed a container. I have discussed this idea on page 31 below.

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46 Grant, Planets, 372. I have added the quote to which Grant was referring:

*Terra autem erat inanis et uacua et tenebrae super faciem abyssi. Vt quid enim haec de terra praetermisso caelo intulit, nisi quia nihil tale de caelo intellegi uoluit? Ipsum est enim caelum superius quod, ab omni huius mundi uolubilis statu secretum, diuinae gloria presentiae manet semper quietum (nam de nostro caelo, in quo sunt posita luminaria huic seculo necessaria, in sequentibus scriptura uel quomodo uel quando sit factum declarat).


Marauch notes that doubt exists as to whether or not Bede ever spoke specifically on the empyrean. See Marauch, page 84, "Auch hier ist es daher nicht ausgemacht, ob BEDA wirklich an das spezifische Empyreum gedacht hat."
To Marauch, Bede played a key role in the creation of the medieval concept of the empyrean. He agrees with Benjamin and Toomer's assessment that the word empyrean was probably first used by Martianus Capella and then made popular in the ninth-century Glossa. His discrepancy is that he does not ascribe the Glossa to Walafrid. Marauch adds Bede to the picture even while noting that Bede did not use the term empyrean. Marauch says that the medieval idea of an empyrean was born when the Glossa used the word empyrean to denote the fire-heaven that Isidor and Bede associated with the heaven of Genesis 1:1. He adds that the Glossa was "tägliche Brot der Theologen" (daily bread of the theologians).

Other thinkers who flourished between the eighth and eleventh centuries helped the theological and cosmological expression of the empyrean gain momentum. These thinkers

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47 See note 29 above.

48 Marauch, 84. For the fire-heaven, see note 25 above. Marauch’s text says:


49 ibid., 85. His quote is from S. Berger bei Martin Grabman, Die Geschichte der scholast. Methode, Bd. 1 (Freiburg, 1909; jetzt Darmstadt 1956), 197, Anm. 2.
generally presented the empyrean characteristics mentioned by Bede, Capello, Basil, Damascene, and Strabo or Anselm. Litt notes an important passage by Alcuin (735-804) in which Alcuin distinguished between the firmament and the heaven of the first day. Litt also discusses Pseudo Décrétales du Pseudo Isidore (fl. 850) who lent credibility to the empyrean idea. Marauch adds many more names to the early-medieval empyrean story. Most of this early

50 Litt, 257.

ALCUIN (d. vers 850), P. L. 100, col. 519 (Interrogationes et responses et Genesim): "Informis illa materia quam de nihilo fecit Deus, appellata primo caelum et terra, non quia hoc erat, sed quia hoc esse poterat. Nam secunda die caelum istud siderum factum esse legitur." Le mot empyrée n'y est pas, mais il y a ici une distinction entre le ciel créé le premier jour et le ciel sidéral créé le second jour.

51 Ibid.

PSEUDO DÉCRÉTALES DU PSEUDO ISIDORE (vers 850), Anacleti epistola 2 (P. G., t. 2, col. 809, ou P. L., t. 130, col. 74). "In quo tempore Dominus ex caelestis aula ac empyreo domicilio pessimi daemonis jam ferre deignans tyrannidem...in castissimae virginis purissimum uterum ... advenit." (Empyrean domicilium signifie ici le séjour des anges).

52 See Marauch, 5-21. Some names mentioned by Marauch are: Hilarius von Poitiers (315-367), Proklos (ca. 411-485), Boethius (ca. 480-524), Ananija Schirakazi (seventh century), Isadore of Seville (ca. 560-636), Hraban von Fulda or Hrabanus Maurus (784-856), Johannes Scotus Eriugena (ninth century), Remigius von Auxerre (ninth century), Peter Abelard (1079-1142), Pseudo-Hugo, Peter Lombard (twelfth century), and Anselm of Canterbury (1033-1109).

Marauch notes that his work was aided by Pater Joanne Baptista Ricciolo, "ein Jesuite und treflicher Astrologus" (a Jesuit and apt astrologer). This quote was cited by Marauch from C. G. Jocher, Allgemeines Gelehrten-Lexicon, hrsg. von Chr. G. Jocher (Leipzig, 1750), 51, (4 Bde.). Ergänzungsbände A-Ro, hrsg. von J. C. Adelung und H. W.
material is peripheral, yet key developments in empyrean thought began to occur in the twelfth century.

Grant notes that the "distinct entity called the *caelum empyreum*" actually emerged during the twelfth century when Anselm of Laon,⁵³ Peter Lombard,⁵⁴ Roland Bandinelli (future Pope Alexander III, 1191), and Hugh of Saint Victor (d. 1145) provided empyrean descriptions that became widely read and accepted.⁵⁵ Bandinelli discussed the angels’ creation in the splendid empyrean and mentioned the realm’s grace. Hugh expressed its superiority and said it

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Rotermund (Leipzig, 1784-1897).

Ricciolo (1598-1671), a professor of philosophy, theology, and astronomy, compiled in 1658 a useful alphabetical digest of important astronomers from 1990 B.C. to 1651 A.D. Prior to the biographic entries, he gives a chronological account of astronomers and important historical developments in astronomy. Important for empyrean studies, one can see the number of spheres that distinguished astronomers ascribed to the universe's structure. P. Joanne Baptista Ricciolo, *Almagestum novum: astronomiam veterem novamque complectens observationibus aliorum, et propriis novisque theorematibus, problematibus, ac tabulis promotam, opus absolutum quorum argumenta sequens pagina docebit* (Bononiae: Typographia haeredis Victorii Benatii, 1651; microfilm reprint, Rochester, N. Y.: Taylorel corporation, no date given).

⁵³I have noted above that recent scholarship has attributed most of the *Glossa Ordinaria* to Anselm of Laon (ca. 1050-1117).

⁵⁴ibid.

⁵⁵Grant, *Planets*, 372. Litt quotes the empyrean passages corresponding to Bandinelli, Hugh, and Lombard. See Litt, 256.
was full of angels.\textsuperscript{56} Grant adds that in the twelfth century writers began to discuss the empyrean’s place and its function of giving place to the other spheres. At this time, the placement and description of the immobile sphere became pertinent and the empyrean usually served its function. Gilbertus Porretanus, or Gilbert de la Poreé (ca. 1076-1154), an early writer who precipitated this discussion, advocated an immobile sphere that gave place to the world.\textsuperscript{57} I must first sketch the historical idea of place.

When scholars translated Greek and Arabic manuscripts into Latin during the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the scholastics gained most of their curriculum. Actually, the scholastics were intoxicated with Aristotle. Yet, due to some problems and contradictions, scholars sought to

\textsuperscript{56}Litt, 256. I include Litt’s exact quotations:

ROLAND BANDINELLI (futur Alexandre III, 1181) écrit des Sentences avant celles de Pierre Lombard (édition Gietl, 1891): "Creata fuit angelica natura in empireo caelo, id est in igneo. Pir enim graece latine dicitur ignis. Inde dicitur caelum empireum id est igneum ... prae nimio splendore" (p. 88; toute une page est consacrée au même sujet).

HUGUES DE SAINT-VICTOR (d. 1145), Summa Sententiarum, tr. 2, art. 1: "Nec appellamus sic caelum firmamentum quod secunda die factum est, sed caelum empyreum, id est splendidum, quod statim repletum est angelis, illam scilicet superiorem partem usque ad quam machina illa elementorum adhuc indistincta porrigebatur.

\textsuperscript{57}Planets, 131-32. Grant cites Gilbertus from his treatise Liber sex principiorum, a commentary on Aristotle’s Categories. (exact citation not provided).
reconcile Aristotelian conceptions with biblical dogma. Both Aristotle and the Bible agreed that the world was finite. Therefore the world required a place; Grant notes, "In Aristotle's physics, the place of a body was defined as the innermost, motionless surface of the containing body in direct contact with the contained body." Many interpretations dealt with the problem of place and sought to decide which sphere served as the world's container. Most scholastics relied on the empyrean for this physical function even while some scholars wondered if the empyrean, as the last sphere with nothing to contain it, could or should have a place.  

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58 Grant, "Cosmology," in Science, 272. Grant continues,

Paradoxically, then, although every body and part of the world had a place, so that the world could be conceived to be in a place by virtue of its parts, the outermost sphere, which contained the world, was not in itself a place. Denial of a place to the last sphere was a consequence forced upon Aristotle in order to avoid an infinite regress of material places; for if the outermost sphere of the world were contained by another sphere, the latter, in turn, would require a containing sphere or surface, and so on, ad infinitum, a process that would inevitably lead to the assumption of an infinite universe.

59 Ibid. For other explanations of this problem, see Planets and also see David C. Lindberg, The Beginnings of Western Science, 245-252. On the question of the empyrean's place, Grant wrote on page 131 of Planets:

[The] immobile empyrean sphere [was invoked] as the true place of the last movable sphere. But does this not merely pose the same question about the empyrean sphere? Is it in a place? Because it is the last sphere and is also immobile, and because place was
Like Grant, Marauch also discusses the twelfth-century trend toward the physical representation of the empyrean and toward the acceptance of the empyrean on grounds other than the authority of the Church teachers. Marauch, drawing from Pierre Duhem's (1861-1916) work on the history of cosmology from Plato to Copernicus, notes that William of Conches (1080-1145) participated in this trend. Marauch adds that William, similarly to others during this time, was influenced by Aristotle. Indeed, the pervasiveness of Aristotle in the cosmology may be the decisive factor that elevated the empyrean to scholastic credence during this period. In this context, Marauch also mentions William of Auvergne (d. 1249) who wrote that physics needed an always associated with things that move or are potentially able to move, Toletus ([Physics, Bk. 4, qu. 7], 1580, 122r, col. 2) did not think it absurd to suppose that the empyrean sphere could exist without a place to contain it. (first two brackets mine)


Sein [Wilhelm's] Werk De philosophia mundi zeichnet sich durch einen ähnlichen Geist aus wie es der war, der die Arbeit THIERRYS beseelte, es wird physikalisch gefragt und ohne die Autorität überliefert der Lehren zu scheuen. . . . Deutlich aber wird bei WILHELM der aristotelische Einfluß. (brackets and underline mine)

See note 1 above.
empyrean and that the empyrean "took on" the role of the immobile sphere.\textsuperscript{62}

Edward Grant's helpful history, "The Immobile Orb: The Empyrean," a chapter in his 1994 work Planets, Stars, & Orbs: The Medieval Cosmos, 1200-1687, discusses the increasing popularity and characteristics of the empyrean at this time:

"(d)uring the thirteenth century, all the great theologians--William of Auvergne, Alexander of Hales, Albertus Magnus, Saint Bonaventure, Duns Scotus, Richard of Middleton, and Thomas Aquinas--had come to accept the empyrean heaven. By then it had become the dwelling place of God and the angels, as well as the abode of the blessed.\textsuperscript{63}

\textsuperscript{62}ibid. Marauch writes:

\begin{quote}
Dies kann man gut erkennen an den äußerungen WILHELMS VON AUVERGNE über das Empyreum; dieser Himmel wird nicht mehr aufgegeben, weil er nicht mehr in die Himmelsphysik paßt, sondern wird beibehalten, jedoch nicht, weil die Autorität der Väter es verlangt, sondern weil die Physik ihm braucht, denn wenn die niederer Himmelssphären sich drehen, also niederer Natur sind, muß es ein Unbewegtes geben. Diese Aufgabe übernimmt das Empyreum; erst nachdem die Existenz des Empyreums derart gefestigt ist, bestimmt WILHELM es näher als den Aufenthaltsort der Engel und der Seligen.
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{63}Planets, 372. Grant cites Litt as a source. I note that Litt, besides his quotations of many of Thomas' empyrean writings, includes the empyrean discussions of Auvergne, Alexander, Albert, and Bonaventure. See page 256:

GUILLAUME D'AUVERGNE (d. 1249) dit dans le De universo, c. 35, que le ciel empyré est le séjour de Dieu et des anges, la partie las plus noble de l'univers, le palais de Dieu; les autres parties de l'univers sont des dépendances et des accessoires. Au c. 37, l'auteur traite du firmament, créé le deuxième jour, qui sépare les eaux d'avec les eaux. Il suppose ainsi manifestement que le ciel empyré du c. 35 est un diel distinct du firmament, supérieur au firmament.
The placement of God and the blessed in the empyrean shows
the increasing scope of the empyrean during this period.
Some discussion actually centered on Mary’s position in the
heavens. Vescovo Di Parigi, the bishop of Paris, officially
condemned scholars in 1244 who placed the Virgin in the
mobile crystalline sphere immediately below the empyrean
from H. Denifle and C. Chatelain, \textit{Chartularium Universitatis
Parisiensis}, I (Paris, 1889), n. 128; per la datazione, cfr.
V. Doucet, \textit{La date des condamnations parisiennes dites de
1241 Faut-il corriger le Chartulaire de l’Université?},
(Louvin, 1947), p. 184 (= \textit{Mélanges Auguste Pelzer}). This
text reads from Vescovini’s note 9:
Quartus <error>: quod animae glorificatae non sunt in
caelo empyreo cum angelis, nec corpora glorificata
erunt ibi, sed in caelo aquo vel cristallino quod
supra firmamentum est, quod et de beata Virgine
praesumitur.}
Campanus of Novara (ca. 1232-1296) wrote what became the standard thirteenth-century view of the empyrean. He was a widely read astronomer who inherited the notion of the empyrean as an immobile sphere. Campanus expressed the common idea which had risen and matured during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The compromise between church authority and rational explanation, exemplary of scholasticism, is clear in Campanus' text:

Saturn's convex surface reaches the concave surface [of the sphere] of the fixed stars, and the convex surface of the sphere of the fixed stars reaches the concave of the ninth sphere.

Whether there is anything, such as another sphere, beyond the convex surface of this [ninth] sphere, we cannot know by the compulsion of rational argument [alone]. However, we are informed by faith, and in agreement with the holy teachers of the church we reverently confess that beyond it is the empyrean heaven in which is the dwelling-place of good spirits, and furthermore that either the ninth sphere itself is the crystal heaven, or the crystal heaven is beyond it and below the empyrean. For this is attested by sacred scripture, which it is not lawful to contradict. If, then, the crystal heaven is a separate entity from the ninth sphere, the convex surface of the ninth sphere will reach the concave of the crystal heaven, and the crystal heaven's convex will reach the concave of the empyrean. The empyrean's convex surface has nothing beyond it. For it is the highest of all bodily things, and the farthest removed from the common center of the spheres, namely, the center of the earth; hence it is the common and most general "place" for all things which have position, in that it contains everything and is itself contained by nothing. Thus, then, it is apparent that the heavenly spheres are 11 in number if the ninth sphere and the crystal heaven are different, or only 10 if they are identical. The body which they all go to make up is called the "fifth essence"--["fifth" because it is] in addition to the four lower
elements. It is also called the "ethereal" region, while that below it is called the "elemental."[65]

Campanus' in depth picture sums up the standard scholastic empyrean features: its acceptance on the ground of authority, its ethereal constitution, its chronological categorization as the 10th or 11th sphere, its distinction from the crystal heaven, its function as a home for good spirits, its role as the immobile container giving place to the world, its status as the highest body, and its basis in scripture. Campanus' mix of previous empyrean discussions described the various combinations a scholastic would use to present views of the empyrean.

Saint Thomas Aquinas, Campanus' contemporary, provided an exhaustive empyrean inquiry during the High Middle Ages. Driven by rational, cosmological, and theological motives; Thomas rigorously analyzed the characteristics and purposes of the empyrean. Using the standard literary format,[66] he

65Campanus, 393.

66The scholastic tradition stressing commentaries and questions follows the lead of Peter Lombard's twelfth-century Sentences and the thirteenth-century Treatise on the Sphere by John of Sacrobosco. Peter Abelard's (1079-1142) emphasis on the use of logic to find merit in different alternatives also contributed to the scholastic format and methodology. Questions were the particular format used most often by Buridan. Helen Lang, Professor of Philosophy at Trinity College, explains this format:

Each question begins with the word whether and is answered completely before proceeding to the next question. Furthermore, the questions not only concern problems in physics but also openly ask if Aristotle's physics is correct.
noted the negative and positive answers for each inquiry. In his *Summa Theologiae* and *Sentences*, Thomas discussed the empyrean's cosmological functions, attributes, and inhabitants.

As in most medieval cosmologies, Thomas' empyrean occupied the outermost sphere. Thomas explained his Weltbild:

[T]o understand this distinction of heavens, reflect that 'heaven' is used in Scripture in three ways. Sometimes it is used properly and in its normal sense. Thus heaven is said to be a particular sublime body, actually or potentially luminous, and by its nature indestructible. So understood, three heavens may be said to exist. The first, completely luminous, is called the 'empyrean heaven'. The second, completely transparent, is called the 'aqueous or crystalline heaven'. The third, partly transparent, partly luminous, is called the 'sidereal heaven'; it is divided into eight spheres, viz. the sphere of the fixed stars and the seven spheres of the planets, which collectively can be referred to as eight heavens.\(^67\)

Clearly Thomas advocated the most common ten-sphere system. Concerning the empyrean's composition, Thomas shied away from attributing any material constitution to the empyrean. Working with the four elements, Thomas did note that Strabo equated the empyrean with fire and that it could be seen because the aqueous sky below it was transparent.\(^68\)


\(^{67}\) *Cosmogony*, 89.

\(^{68}\) *ibid.*, 79. He noted that Strabo had said the empyrean was named the fiery heaven after "the splendor of the sun."
This attempt by scholastics to relate the heavens to the four humors contradicted the authority of Aristotle who believed that the matter above the lunar region was of an ethereal nature. Aristotle called celestial matter the quintessence.\textsuperscript{69} Aware of Aristotle's fifth element, Aquinas attributed it to the empyrean. The "completely luminous" and "indestructible nature" of Aquinas' empyrean may have corresponded to Aristotle's ether.\textsuperscript{70} Grant writes that Aquinas "insisted . . . that [the empyrean] was composed of pure ether."\textsuperscript{71}

Though he seemed to attribute water, air and fire to some heavenly spheres,\textsuperscript{72} Thomas flatly denied any materiality to the empyrean in his "Question 65, Article 3, Was the empyrean heaven co-created with unformed matter?" He based his negative conclusion on four points reached via rigorous logic. First, all observable bodies undergo change. If the empyrean did undergo change, it would be

\textsuperscript{69}See note 13 above.

\textsuperscript{70}See note 13 above.


\textsuperscript{72}Cosmogony, 89. He notes Rabanus Maurus (d. 856) use of fire and air to describe different regions of heaven. Thomas seems to concur that these two elements constitute some heaven: "[B]ecause this region contains two elements, . . .." Aquinas' use of water to describe the crystalline sphere has been noted above.
observable. Because the empyrean is not observable, it does not change. Second, in the hierarchy articulated by Augustine’s *De Trinitate III*, higher bodies rule lower bodies. If the empyrean was a superior body, it would influence bodies "here below," but it does not.73 Also, any body that changes another body must undergo change itself; yet, the empyrean does not change. Third, invoking an argument by his teacher Albert the Great (d. 1280), Thomas noted that the empyrean can be considered a place of contemplation. Following Augustine’s argument from his *De Trinitate IV* that human minds are not in this world when grasping anything eternal, Thomas concluded that no place in the universe "is set aside for contemplation." In other words, the empyrean, as a place for contemplation, cannot be anything material. Fourth, he argued that if a heaven superior to the partly transparent sidereal and the completely transparent crystalline heavens existed, it should be "completely lucid." Yet, if it were a body, the completely lucid empyrean would shine through the transparent heavens and there would never be night. On these four points Thomas reasoned that the "empyrean heaven is not something co-created with unformed matter."74

73 Thomas would later change his position on this matter. See page 38 below.

74 *Cosmogony*, 41. William Wallace’s notes 3 and 4 on page 40 cite Augustine’s texts upon which Thomas quoted. The influence of Albert’s argument on this inquiry is mentioned in note d.
Moreover, when inquiring about whether souls are assigned to some sort of receptacle after death, Thomas concluded that the empyrean is an incorporeal place. This idea conjoins with the fact that souls must first exit from the body to join the _corpus gloriósus._

The empyrean’s immobility also drew attention from Thomas. It was perhaps the need for an immobile sphere that caused him to change his position on whether the empyrean influences other bodies. He came to reason that the superior spiritual things naturally govern inferior bodies because the world order demands it. He said that rest is superior to motion and that uniform motion is superior to nonuniformity of motion. The empyrean thus causes the first movable sphere to move _via_ its perfection.

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75Litt, 259. He quotes from Thomas’ _Supplement_ (qui sont repris des _Sentences_):

_Suppl., 69, 1._ (Utrum animabus post mortem receptacula assignentur: article repris de _IV Sent._, 45, 1, 1, querela 1.) Sed contra: caelum empyreum est locus corporalis...

_Suppl., 69, 7, ad 10_ (repris de _IV Sent._, 45, 1, 3, ad 10). ... propter hoc etiam idem locus, scilicet caelum empyreum, debetur animabis sanctis exutis a corpore, et coniunctis corporibus gloriósis.


In Litt, Litt writes on pages 260-261:

_Dans la Somme, il déclare que la réponse négative est assez probable, mais que l'opinion affirmative est plus probable. L'effet de cette influence du ciel empyrée_
Aristotle's teleological motion, perfection motivates an action rooted in desire. Litt adds that the effect of the empyrean on the first mobile sky is not a transient one or does not involve movement, but is a stable influence that causes the mobile sky's movement via virtue or something in this matter pertaining to dignity.\textsuperscript{77}

The relation of the angels to the empyrean warranted much attention from Thomas. In "Question 61, Article 4, Were the angels created in the empyrean heaven?", Thomas answered in the affirmative. He noted three arguments against his conclusion; the first of these assumed the negative because angels, as bodiless substances, could not be created in any bodily place. Thomas answered:

As I said above, all creatures, physical and spiritual, make up one universe. Thus the spiritual creatures were created to have some relationship to the world of bodies, and indeed to govern it as a whole. Hence it

\textsuperscript{77}Ibid. Litt's text was translated orally for me by Laura Stern, Ph.D., University of North Texas, 1995.
was fitting that they should come into existence in the supreme part of the physical world, as presiding over corporeal nature in general—whether one calls that part the empyrean heaven or by some other name. So Isidore—commenting on the text, *Heaven is the Lord thy God's, and the heaven of heaven*—says that the supreme heaven is the heaven of the angels.  

He also could have countered the negative conclusion with his earlier argument supporting the empyrean's immateriality. In any case, Thomas noted later in "Question 112" that the empyrean and angelic status were congruent because the empyrean was the "superior environment" and angels were a kind of being superior to all material things. Admitting the blessed to the empyrean in "Question 45," Thomas melded the empyrean with the Christian paradise. Though a trend that had already been occurring, Thomas' authority, mixed with the Christian hope of salvation in eternal bliss, placed the empyrean among the highest ideals of Christendom.

Thomas' empyrean thus contained the essential ingredients of the traditional empyrean. Thomas had vitalized the empyrean with rational inquiry, fruitful

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79See page 37 above.

80Litt, 259. He quotes from Thomas' *Summa*, "Question 45":

Elias sublevatus est in caelum aëreum, non autem in caelum empyreum, qui est locus beatorum.
connections to church authority, and his belief in its predominant position in the cosmological hierarchy. After Thomas, Dante became the next great spokesman for the empyrean and the medieval outlook.

The works of Dante Alighieri (1265-1321) articulated the empyrean's characteristics and its function within the standard cosmology. He added artistic genius to Thomas' brilliant expression of the scholastic cosmology. Also, as Robert DeKosky writes, Dante's cosmology added the element of religious vision to medieval cosmology—a vision that "solidified Aristotle's hold on Western European natural philosophy and insured the entrenchment of a geocentric perspective." 81

Dante certainly expressed confidence in his cosmological views. He noted in his Convivio that diverse opinions have existed concerning the number of the heavens, but "the truth hath at last been found." 82 He then enumerated the heavens:

And the order of their position is this: The first in the enumeration is that wherein is the moon; the second is that wherein is Mercury; the third is that wherein is Venus; the fourth is that wherein is the sun; the fifth is that wherein is Mars, the sixth is that...
wherein is Jupiter; the seventh is that wherein is Saturn; the eighth is that of the fixed stars; the ninth is that which is not perceived by the senses save by that movement which was spoken of above; and it is called by many the crystalline heaven, that is the diaphanous, or all transparent. But beyond all these the Catholics assert the empyrean heaven, which is as much as to say the heaven of flame, or the luminous heaven; and they assert it to be immovable, because it hath in itself with respect to every part that which its matter demandeth.\textsuperscript{83}

Having noted the traditional cosmology and some empyrean characteristics, Dante continued his description. He said that the first mobile sphere, the \textit{primum mobile}, has the swiftest motion because all its parts possess the most "fervid appetite"—a longing to join the most divine and tranquil heaven.\textsuperscript{84} Dante noted other traditional judgments concerning the empyrean: it contains the blessed spirits, and it holds all the world within itself with nothing existing outside itself. In addition, it is the place of the supreme deity, is magnificent, and is not in any place in the physical sense. Agreeing with Thomas that the empyrean was not created with unformed matter, Dante notes that it was formed "in the primal mind, which the Greeks call \textit{protonoe}."\textsuperscript{85}

\textsuperscript{83}ibid., 73.

\textsuperscript{84}ibid., 74. The great distance of the starry heavens, and hence the primum mobile, from the earth necessitated extremely quick movements in order to scale the world's periphery every day. This seems almost incalculable; a great yearning could account for this. Also, as noted above, this fits into the teleological aspect of Aristotle's cosmos. The goal motivates the action.

\textsuperscript{85}ibid., 74.
The empyrean had a place in Dante's belief in the efficacy of astrology. He noted that Aristotle's *Of the Soul* states "that science is exalted in nobility by the nobleness of its subject-matter and by its certainty."\(^{86}\) He reasoned that astrology deals with the most noble part of the universe: the heavens. He added that the heavenly skies are "exalted and ennobled" because of their certainty--their predictability. Convinced of astrology's efficacy, Dante explained that the heavens signify the sciences according to three points of resemblance. First, each heaven moves around its own center without moving it, and science moves around its own subject without demonstrating it. He meant that a science always presupposes its own subject; mechanics, instead of proving motion, assumes that motion exists and is set up to examine it. Second, both science and the heavens possess illuminating power. The heavens illuminate visible things as the sciences illuminate intelligible things. Third, both infuse perfection into things. Dante said all philosophers agree that the heavens infuse the first perfection that causes substantial generation. Either the celestial movers, celestial virtue, or the stars themselves generate movement and natural heat.\(^{87}\) Likewise, "the sciences are the cause in us of the

\(^{86}\)ibid., 120.

\(^{87}\)I think that Dante's first perfection refers to the beauty for which the spheres long--the beauty that causes the first movement. He also seems to say that the first
infusion of the second perfection." The habit of the second perfection allows humans to speculate on the truth that, according to Aristotle, is "the good of the intellect." Having concluded that "science may be called heaven," Dante then attributed the seven heavens, or planetary spheres, to the Trivium and Quadrivium; grammar, dialectic, rhetoric, arithmetic, music, geometry and astrology correspond to the moon, Mercury, Venus, the sun, Mars, Jove, and Saturn respectively. To the eighth starry sphere belongs natural science, or physics, and the first science that is metaphysics. The ninth sphere "answers" to moral science. The "quiet heaven," or empyrean, corresponds to the divine science that is called theology.  

On another point of interest, Attilio Mellone in the Enciclopedia Dantesca pulls together Dante's Commedia and Convivio to distinguish the trinity from the empyrean. The trinity is the magnificence of God elevated above the perfection causes the generation of life or movement within seeds; in other words, energy and life come from the infusion of the first perfection into the uninspired matter—the "heat" of the inspiration spawns life.

88Convivio. The information of the above paragraph is from pages 114-21 corresponding to the Convivio's Second Treatise, Chapter XIV.

89Umberto Bosco, direttore Enciclopedia Dantesca Volume II, Cim-Fo (Roma: Istituto Della Enciclopedia Italiana Fondata da Giovanni Treccani, 1970), s.v. "Empyreo," by Attilio Mellone; 669. This excellent article reproduces many of Dante's writings on the empyrean. In addition, it provides a short listing of medieval empyrean authors and some commentary.
sky and metaphorically surrounding the empyrean. It is the first mind in which the empyrean was created without being localized. Mellone adds that the empyrean is the place of God’s city. God completes the act of predestination when he is in the empyrean and he rules immediately in this realm where natural law has no effect. 

The *Commedia* brought an unrivaled poetic dimension to the description of the empyrean. Cantos XXX through XXXIII of the *Paradiso* narrate Dante’s journey through the empyrean. In Canto XXX of the *Paradiso*, Dante described the empyrean as pure light of an intellectual nature that is

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90 *ibid.* Outside of the empyrean, natural laws are a form of secondary cause by which God rules indirectly. The *Enciclopedia*’s text reads:

**Distinzione dell’E. dal "coelum Trinitatis".** -- L’E. è il luogo del Primo Mobile (*Cv* II, III 9 e 11; *Pd* I 122-123, II 112-114, XXVII 112-113 e XXVII 54) e degli eletti. Invece la Trinità è la *prima Mente* in cui l’E. fu creato senza esserne localizzato, è la *magnificenza* di Dio levata... sopra li cieli (*Cv* II, III 11); non circoscritta, *tutto circunscrire* (*Pd* XIV 28-30); cfr. pure *Pg* XI 2); *cinge* l’E. (*Pd*. XXVII 109-110 e 113-114), metaforicamente, perché non lo costituisce in *loco* (XXII 67). È vero che pure l’E. è *luogo* di Dio (*Cv* II, III 10), sua città e... *altro seggio* (*If* I 126 e 128; cfr. anche *Pg* XI 1 e XV 67-68) e che in esse Dio compie l’atto di predestinare (*If* II 20-21) e regna mentre altrove *impera* (*I* 124 e 127), ma in quanto nell’E. fa sentire la dolcezza del suo regno (*If* I 127-128), vi governa senza cause seconde (*Pd* XXVII 113-114 e XXX 121-123), ama i beati ed è posseduto da essi per mezzo dell’amore beatifico (*Pg* XI 1-3 e XV 52-75).

a love of the true good full of joy. This joy transcends all sweetness. This light will finally reveal God to man.\textsuperscript{92} After ascending into the empyrean, Dante beheld the river of light and watched its transmutation into the mystic celestial rose full of thrones. Beatrice explained the river's beauty to Dante, "The river and the topazes that pass into it and out and the laughter of the flowers are shadowy forecasts of their truth; not that these things are imperfect in themselves, but the defect is in thyself, that thy vision is not yet so exalted."\textsuperscript{93} Dante then experienced wonderment when viewing the rose that exists in the "high triumph of the true kingdom" and is larger than the sun's circumference. He related:

\textquote{Into the yellow of the eternal rose, which expands and rises in ranks and exhales odours of praise to the Sun that makes perpetual spring, Beatrice drew me, as on who is silent and fain would speak, and she said: 'Behold how great is the assembly of the white robes! See our city, how great is its circuit! . . .'}\textsuperscript{94}

In Canto XXXI, Dante saw "the saintly host which Christ, with His own blood, made His bride."\textsuperscript{95} Then he described the angels, immaterial and transparent so as not to obstruct the sight of the divine light, who flew like a


\textsuperscript{93}ibid., 435.

\textsuperscript{94}ibid., 437.

\textsuperscript{95}ibid., 463.
swarm of bees into the flowers.\textsuperscript{26} In Canto XXXII, Saint Bernard of Clairvaux described the saints in the rose. The Saint noted the division between "those who believed in Christ yet to come" where the flower is in full bloom and "those who held their eyes on Christ already come" where empty places await those to come. After Bernard's hierarchical listing of some saints in the empyrean, Dante noted that the children who had died young were in the empyrean. Afterward, Dante saw Mary, the empress of the empyrean about whom Bernard said, "Look now on the face that most resembles Christ, for only its brightness can fit thee to see Christ."

Near the "Empress," Dante observed Adam, St. Peter, John the Evangelist, Moses, Mary's mother Anna, and Lucy. In Canto XXXIII, Dante saw the "end of all desires:"

From that moment my vision was greater than our speech, which fails at such a sight, and memory too fails at such excess. Like him that sees in a dream and after the dream the passion wrought by it remains and the rest returns not to his mind, such am I; for my vision almost wholly fades, and still there drops within my heart the sweetness that was born of it.\textsuperscript{28}

The Paradiso ends, "but now my desire and will, like a wheel that spins with even motion, were revolved by the Love that moves the sun and the other stars."\textsuperscript{29} The link

\textsuperscript{26}ibid.
\textsuperscript{27}ibid., 467.
\textsuperscript{28}ibid., 481.
\textsuperscript{29}ibid., 485.
between Jesus and the hope of Christianity and the empyrean, even when literary and allegorical, thus provides important insight into the medieval empyrean concept and indeed the medieval cosmos as a whole. After the ultimate empyrean expressions of Thomas and Dante, scholars remained tied to a theologically centered empyrean, but they began to focus more on the empyrean's rational and physical problems.

Most scholastics after Dante continued to accept the empyrean, and they usually reiterated empyrean characteristics as discussed by their predecessors. Interestingly though, they infused more Aristotelian notions into empyrean thought. Some natural philosophers began to challenge various elements of supernatural invocations while others began to question the accepted geocentric world and its immobile shell. Yet the empyrean's role and influence continued to dominate the inquiry. The questioning of the empyrean's actual existence would not occur until the seventeenth century—well beyond the Scholastic Period. Thomas Strasbourg (fl. 1345), Jean Buridan (ca. 1300-ca. 1358), and Pierre D'Ailly (1350-1420) provide insight into standard empyrean discussions during the fourteenth century.

Thomas Strasbourg, who identified the empyrean with the tenth orb, stressed that only "probable argument" could demonstrate the empyrean's necessity. He noted that the

\[100\] Planets, 378.

\[101\] ibid., 377.
The empyrean sphere is more noble and lucid than the other celestial bodies and that its light comes from God. He said that the sphere of the fixed stars blocked out the empyrean’s light from human view, but he added that inside the empyrean was "transparent and rarefied" so the blessed could see and enjoy one another.\textsuperscript{102} Drawing upon Aristotle’s attribution of incorruptibility to the planets, Strasbourg extended incorruptibility to the empyrean. He reasoned that the empyrean must be immobile because the blessed themselves are at rest—their perfect status requires it.\textsuperscript{103} Finally, Strasbourg rationalized that the immobile sphere can influence the terrestrial region, that is, the non-celestial region composed of the four elements. To demonstrate, he argued from the Joshua miracle: though stationary, the sun that God held at rest continued to provide light and the heat necessary for the maintenance of life.\textsuperscript{104} Interestingly, this is far from an empirical

\textsuperscript{102}ibid., 373. Grant cites Thomas of Strasbourg, \textit{Thomae ab Argentina, Eremitarum divi Augustini prioris generalis qui floruit anno Christi 1345, Commentaria in IIII libros Sententiarum} (Venice: ex officina Stellae, Iordani Ziletti, 1564; Facsimile, Ridgewood, N.J.: Gregg, 1965.) bk. 2, dist. 2, qu. 2.

\textsuperscript{103}ibid. Grant has summarized Thomas Strasbourg’s empyrean thought on pages 373-74.

\textsuperscript{104}Grant discusses this in \textit{Planets}, 381. He adds in note 47, "Among those who cited the Joshua miracle as evidence that the immobile heavens could influence inferior things were Hervaeus Natalis in the thirteenth century, Nicole Oresme in the fourteenth, and the Coimbra Jesuits in the sixteenth."
analysis; his empyrean discussions remained theologically derived.

Jean Buridan, a pioneering natural philosopher, also assumed the empyrean's existence based on faith, and he stressed its immobile quality. He contradicted those who said that the empyrean must move because, as they argued, Aristotle taught that all natural bodies move. Buridan also contradicted their assertions that an immobile empyrean would always be frustrated because God could potentially move it, and it would therefore never achieve its potential. Buridan dismissed their arguments by noting

105 Jean Buridan was one of the most influential thinkers of the High Scholastic Period (1250-1350). His writings on logic, ethics, and natural philosophy became standard reading material for generations of scholars. Buridan was born in the diocese of Arras and studied at the college of Cardinal Lemoine before joining the college of Navarre as a teacher. Joseph R. Strayer, ed. Dictionary of the Middle Ages (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1987), s.v. "Buridan, Jean," by Edward Grant. Rector of the University of Paris in 1328, Buridan received benefices each of the next two years from Pope John XXII who addressed Buridan as Master of Arts. He was rector again at the University of Paris in 1340 and was a rare career Master in the Faculty of Arts; most of the Faculty of Arts chose to move on to an advanced degree in theology, but Buridan remained a secular cleric. See Peter King, "Part I: Introduction. Buridan's Philosophy of Logic," in Jean Buridan's Logic, The Treatises on Supposition and Consequences, with a philosophical introduction by King (Dordrecht, Boston, Lancaster, Tokyo: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1985), 3-4. King writes in an endnote on p. 327, "The classic biographical work is Edmond Faral [1949], the source of the factual knowledge of Buridan's life described in the succeeding paragraphs."

that the empyrean is the noblest body, and as such has no inclination for movement even though God could move it.\textsuperscript{107}

However, Buridan's writings demonstrate a movement toward an empirical approach to understanding celestial phenomena. His five arguments refuting the contentions for an immobile heaven were rational and make his stance on the inquiry appear ambivalent. In one of these arguments, Buridan dismissed the common notion that the empyrean somehow causes the habitation on earth. Those who argued positively believed that life could inhabit the area north of the equator but not to the south. Celestial motions, which uniformly circle the entire earth--especially noting the sun's east to west movement, cannot account for this; only the immobile heaven could produce this effect. Buridan said that habituality does not depend on the empyrean and suggested instead that God may have ordained for eternal preservation the "earth's overall topography."\textsuperscript{108}

In another instance, Buridan seems to reject the idea that a permanently immobile body is superior to one at rest. In his pioneering imagination about the possibility of the earth's diurnal rotation, he countered the persuasion that "it is more noble and perfect to be at rest than to be in

\textsuperscript{107}ibid. 374-75.

\textsuperscript{108}ibid., 375. Grant explains these arguments taken from Buridan's \textit{De Caelo}, Questions Four and Seven.
motion; therefore the outer sphere ought to be at rest."\textsuperscript{109}

His counter argument states:

I concede this with respect to those things which are moved to the end of arriving at their natural places of rest. But as regards those things which are always in their natural places, and which are not moved for the sake of acquiring for themselves any condition other than movement, so that motion is their final perfection----I say that in such things it is more perfect that they be in motion than at rest; and so it is with the celestial bodies.\textsuperscript{110}

Thus, writings by Buridan, like those of a few of his contemporaries, demonstrate an extension of and transformation in the traditional scholastic advocacy of the empyrean. I have discussed the ramifications of such changes for the empyrean in Chapter III below. Despite Buridan's skeptical pioneerism, subsequent natural philosophers continued to relay traditional empyrean views, though sometimes altered.

Pierre d'Ailly, who flourished near the end of the Scholastic Period, discussed the empyrean within a Weltbild varying from the traditional. His \textit{The Image or Representation of the World (Ymago Mundi)} assigned the immobile attribute to a different sphere. Pierre described his world picture:

The world has a spherical or round figure with a variety of many parts. First, it is composed of four


\textsuperscript{110}ibid., 7.
elements: earth, water, air, and fire. Then [it is composed] of nine heavens [or spheres] (ex nonem celis), namely of the heaven of the Moon (ex celo Lune), Mercury, Venus, the Sun, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, the firmament, and the first mobile. Beyond this certain philosophers assume a tenth immobile heaven, and beyond this there is said to exist a crystalline heaven [or sphere] and then comes the empyrean heaven [or sphere], the outermost of all [spheres], where the abode of God is and the dwelling of the saints. But, speaking naturally, [that is, in terms of natural phenomena alone] these last two do not fall within the scope of philosophers and astronomers.\textsuperscript{111}

Grant notes that Pierre discussed the empyrean’s influence on “inferior things.” Pierre believed that differences in fruit, habitation, and vegetation located on the same latitude could be explained by an immobile empyrean; this is an argument that Buridan refuted.\textsuperscript{112} He reasoned that moving celestial bodies cannot affect some parts of the same latitude different from others--differences have to be attributable to the action of an immobile sphere that can direct its energy to affect various same-latitude regions differently.\textsuperscript{113}

On the point of an immobile sphere, Pierre exemplified the trend among late-scholastic thinkers to base arguments solely on natural philosophy and not on faith or authority. Grant says that Pierre identified the immobile orb with the empyrean without actually calling it the empyrean. Based on


\textsuperscript{112}See page 53 above.

\textsuperscript{113}\textit{Planets}, 381-82.
the above quote from his *Ymago Mundi* in which Pierre placed the empyrean two spheres above the immobile tenth sphere, this connection is questionable. Nevertheless, Pierre’s naturalization of the immobile sphere is important considering the usual association of the empyrean with it; also, because Pierre’s *Weltbild* in *14 Questions on the Sphere of Sacrobosco* varies from that in his *Ymago*, Pierre could have changed his position on the empyrean. Grant summarizes one of Pierre’s opinions from his *14 Questions*:

[Pierre’s] opinion conceives of the empyrean heaven as the place and container of the world. It assumes that a mobile sphere must change place either as a whole or with respect to its parts, from which it follows that the mobile sphere is in a place. The place of that mobile sphere must surround and contain it. Moreover, that surrounding place must also be immobile, a consequence which d’Ailly does not actually establish [but implies].\(^\text{114}\)

Grant further notes that d’Ailly argued for the immobile sphere by invoking "Aristotle’s claim (*De caelo*, book 2, chapter 2) that the heavens possess absolute differences in directions, which he identified as right and left, front and back, and above and below."\(^\text{115}\) Pierre needed to substantiate Aristotle’s claim with some heaven possessing absolute directions and differences of position. But he was not willing to grant these qualities to mobile spheres which "could not exhibit such directions if they turned, because that direction which is now right would become left and the

\(^{114}\)ibid., 377.

\(^{115}\)ibid., 378.
part that is up would become down." Therefore, Pierre gave the empyrean heaven this absolute attribute that, according to Aristotle, existed celestially.

Indeed, as apparent in Buridan and d’Ailly, Aristotle’s authority came to more and more replace Church authority during the late-scholasticism. The increase in Greek influence upset the balance of the Christian/patristic world view exemplary of scholasticism; and this perhaps created the new post-scholastic era born at the end of the fourteenth century. Though beyond the scope detailed in this paper, I believe it is important to sketch the empyrean’s status following the end of scholasticism—especially in anticipation of the discussion of environmental factors conducive to the empyrean’s dissolution near the end of Chapter III.117

After the Scholastic Period, discussions about Weltbild and the empyrean revealed a growing demarcation between theology and science that began with the Condemnation of 1277.118 Actually, as Marauch points out, the empyrean

116 Ibid.

117 In addition to late-empyrean discussions touched upon in the Marauch and Riccioli texts mentioned above, C. G. Jöcher’s encyclopedia Allgemeines Gelehrten-Lexicon provides a look into some of the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth-century thinkers mentioned below. See Chr. G. Jöcher, ed., Allgemeines Gelehrten-Lexicon 4 vol. (Liepzig, 1750-51); suppl. volume ed. J. C. Adelung and K. W. Rotermund (Liepzig, 1784-1897).

118 See note 19 above.
would play a diminishing role among astronomers after the fourteenth century. This occurred in large part because astronomers such as Nicholaus Copernicus (1473-1543), Tycho Brahe (1546-1601), and Johann Kepler (1571-1630) could address the existence or nonexistence of the empyrean as a physical object rather than as the essential part of the Weltanschauungen that it had been; this trend certainly related to the overall separation of science from theology. Still, many natural philosophers continued to hold to medieval cosmology and its empyrean within a modified scholastic expression; and even throughout the seventeenth century Catholics considered the denial of the

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119Marauch, 91. Marauch says something similar:

In dieser Literatur [that of the empyrean advocates] sitzt das Empyreum also fest; doch seit dem 14. Jahrhundert wird eine Literatur erkennbar, die in zunehmendem Maße von weltanschaulicher Gebundenheit frei wird, wenn sie über astronomische Gegenstände handelt. In ihr, repräsentiert etwa durch REGIOMONTANUS, PURBACHIUS, PEUCERUS, MAUROLYCUS, COPERNICUS, TYCHO, BAROCCIUS, MAESTLINUS, CLAVIUS und andere, nicht zu vergessen KEPLER, spielt das Empyreum kaum mehr eine Rolle.

120See Marauch, 90. Adding to Wilhelm Von Paris (gest. 1248) and Lyranus (gest. 1340), Marauch mentions important fourteenth-century scholars that he believes contributed to the identification of the empyrean with paradise instead of merely a Neoplatonic firesky: Alphonsus Tostatus (gest. 1454), Picus Mirancolanus (gest. 1494), Catharinus (gest. 1553), Ascanius Martinengus (gest. 1597), "dann Molina, Suarez, Tanner und die Aristotelesexegetenschule von Coimbra."
empyrean a blasphemy.\textsuperscript{121} I have sketched below some of these later empyrean thinkers who range somewhere in the spectrum between an entirely mystical approach to the empyrean and an entirely rational explanation of the outermost sphere.

Fifteenth century thinkers, such as Alphonsus Tostatus (fl. 1454), Picus Mirandolanus (fl. 1494),\textsuperscript{122} and William Caxton (fl. 1480) continued to address the empyrean in its theological and geocentric capacity. They associated the empyrean with the paradise discussed throughout the Bible. Caxton exemplified these thinkers. He noted that the "empyreum," which is "the colour of purple," is "more clere than is the Sonne," (sic) more beautiful than the other heavens, and full of angels.\textsuperscript{123} Besides the unique purple quality, the other qualities he described are usual empyrean attributes. Caxton's seeming use of Aristotelian and Dantian motives in his maps also demonstrates a traditional approach to the empyrean. His maps of the world contain a

\textsuperscript{121}\textit{Planets}, 382-83. Grant notes that by the seventeenth century scholars "could appeal for acceptance of the empyrean heaven to the authority of the Church Fathers, the traditional acceptance of the scholastics, and the common acceptance of the Church." He adds that Jacques du Bois and George de Rhodes insisted that denial of the empyrean is incompatible with being a believing Catholic.

\textsuperscript{122}For a discussion of Picus and Alphonsus, see Marauch, 90.

\textsuperscript{123}W. Caxton, \textit{Mirrour of the World} (Original copy held by the Museum Britannicum: 1480; this copy: B.M. Ref. No. I.B.n 55040, order no. 50b.), twelfth page from the end.
series of spheres: outside a circular inferno in the center, Caxton posited a sphere for each of the four elements in their respective positions of earth, water, air, and fire. Above the planetary spheres the empyrean retained its usual position as the last sphere.\textsuperscript{124}

Similar empyrean testimonials continued to flourish among such sixteenth-century writers as Catharinus (fl. 1553) and Ascanius Martinengus (fl. 1597). Also at this time an interesting artistic approach to the empyrean came from de Claude de Kërlec who discussed the heavenly realm while revamping some of Thomas Aquinas' motifs. Writing poetically about such subjects as the order of seraphims, the trinity, and the mythological Olympus and Phoenix; Kërlec mentioned in his expositions that Bede and Strabo connected the empyrean with Genesis 1:1. In addition, he reiterated the traditional pronouncements that the empyrean is fiery and contains blessed angels.\textsuperscript{125} The Portugese Jesuit Suarez, who Marauch considers a sixteenth-century thinker,\textsuperscript{126} also accepted the empyrean in its more

\textsuperscript{124}ibid., sixth and eighth pages from the end.

\textsuperscript{125}de Claude de Kërlec Seigneur de Meriadec, \textit{Le Grande Ciel Empyree}, (Paris: Felix le Mangnier, 1586; 26 pp. microfilmed for personal use by the University of Virginia Library).

\textsuperscript{126}Donahue notes that he flourished around 1620. He probably wrote important works in the late-sixteenth and early-seventeenth centuries. See William H. Donahue, \textit{The Dissolution of the Celestial Spheres, 1595-1650} (New York: Arno Press, 1981), ca. 225.
theological or mystic aspects. He believed that the empyrean surmounted fluid heavens but that the proof of its existence in nature was dubious. Yet, he emphasized that the soundness of the empyrean was evidenced in such Church authority as Thomas Aquinas.\textsuperscript{127} Suarez thought that the empyrean could not be known rationally, and he rejected the use of astronomical knowledge to supplement theologically authority.

Such deep-rooted faith involving the empyrean was carried into the seventeenth century with Otto von Guericke and Jacques du Bois. Guericke, though one of the most distinguished physicists of the seventeenth century, held on to the medieval optimism associated with the empyrean's equation with paradise.\textsuperscript{128} His thought reflected the growing demarcation between science and faith even while affirming the role of both. Though the "Theologisch-astronomischen Zwiegespräch" (theological-astronomical dialogue) of Guericke and du Bois gained momentum at this time, a more common seventeenth-century avenue for empyrean discussions referred back to Buridan and fourteenth-century efforts to deny the influence of the empyrean on the terrestrial region. Grant writes that Bartholemew Amicus (fl. early 17th), George de Rhodes (fl. late seventeenth century), Jacques du Bois (fl. late seventeenth century)--

\textsuperscript{127}Donahue, 227.

\textsuperscript{128}Marauch, 91-2.
who has been seen also in relation to theological discussions, Pedro Hurtado de Mendoza (fl. early 17th century), the Coimbra Jesuits, and Christopher Clavius accepted direct empyrean influence on terrestrial events. However, Grant notes that these writers embodied a declining faction: "late sixteenth- and seventeenth-century scholastics [who denied] causal efficacy--Raphael Aversa, Mastrius and Bellutus, and Illuminatus Oddus [represented] a shift of opinion toward a denial of terrestrial influence to the immobile empyrean heaven."  

Contrasting writers such as de Kärlec and Suarez who stressed the empyrean esoterically, and contrasting those mentioned above who stressed the possibility of empyrean terrestrial influences, a seventeenth-century view appeared that tended to stress a naturalistic description of the empyrean's function and characteristics. Exemplary of this movement was M. F. Wendelin. Though his empyrean possessed a supernatural function, Wendelin thought it corporeal and "a part of the natural order of the universe." He unorthodoxically used the empyrean as the final sphere bounding the universe at a time when most said that the primum mobile served that function.  

\[39\] Indeed, the

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129 Planets, 384.

130 Donahue, 228. Donahue notes about Wendelin's work:

The dedicatory letter is dated 1628, by which time the fluid planetary heavens were widely accepted, the final sphere was often seen as anomalous, and the nature of
"scientific" or "natural" emphasis in his empyrean writings exemplified a modern effort to maintain a rational function for the empyrean. Marauch mentions that this modern influx is the beginning of the endphase of the empyrean.¹³¹

Donahue provides more insight into seventeenth-century empyrean discussions. Noting that "[i]n the traditional system, the prime mover and empyrean at the circumference provided a visible and plausible link between creation (finite) and Creator (transcendent). . . .",¹³² he explains that the empyrean actually saw a resurgence during the seventeenth century. Many "natural philosophers before 1625 or 1630" mentioned the empyrean in deference to Church authority.¹³³ Even some protestants maintained the empyrean within the Weltbild. Though most Calvinists considered the empyrean a "papist invention,"¹³⁴ Aslachus

the final boundary, if any, was called into question. Thus, while the theories of the other traditional empyreologians are firmly rooted in the past, Wendelin's theory is partly a reaction to a contemporary cosmological problem.

¹³¹Marauch discusses Suarez and mentions the endphase on page 91: "und dies ist der anfang der Endphase."

¹³²Donahue, 221-22.

¹³³ibid., 224-25. Donahue mentions this in connection with Clavius, Henisch, Deckermann, Lauretius Politianus, and the somewhat ambivalent positions of Campanella and Giannini.

¹³⁴ibid., 223. M. F. Wendelin and Caspar Bartholinus rigorously denied the empyrean's efficacy and Bartholinus associated it with scholasticism and "idle monks."
(1597), Henisch (1609), and Stampelius (1609) accepted it.\textsuperscript{135}

Donahue says that some seventeenth-century scholars prior to 1630 materialized the previously spiritual empyrean.\textsuperscript{136} They were part of an overall new movement in astronomy which broke from those who followed tradition for tradition's sake. These people considered the heaven in much greater detail than their predecessors, and at the same time they still attempted to retain the traditional form of the Weltbild. They made the celestial spheres fluid and invoked the empyrean as a final bound to the universe.\textsuperscript{137} The Spanish Jesuits Pedro Hurtado de Mendoza (1617) and Antonio Rubio considered the empyrean material without accounting for its properties. In 1620, Michael Zanardus said the empyrean was made of a "sextessence" that differed from the four elements and the quintessence. Adam Tanner (1626) and the rare Lutheran empyreologist Aslachus (1597) also insisted on the empyrean's physical solidity.\textsuperscript{138}

Donahue adds that some of the pre-1630 naturalists, with the addition of a few names, considered the empyrean as

\textsuperscript{135}ibid., footnote 1 on 222.

\textsuperscript{136}ibid., 226.

\textsuperscript{137}ibid., 228-30. Donahue notes on page 230 that among these writers, Mendoza (1617) abolished the peripatetic hierarchy of motions.

\textsuperscript{138}ibid. Donahue explains the Jesuits, Tanner, Zanardus, and Aslachus in the context of the materialization of the empyrean.
a source of action. These people discarded the distinction between mind and matter. Fludd (1617), d'Espagnet (1623), Samuel Purchas (1614), and Libavius (1610) all stressed the empyrean's function as related to the source of creation.\textsuperscript{339} Donahue writes:

\begin{quote}
D'Espagnet calls it the "font and origin of created light" and describes its function as "accepting spiritual endowments from the superior [world] and passing them on to the next lower heaven, the middle one".\textsuperscript{40}
\end{quote}

Purchas would actually explain the world's finitude with spirit: "God's presence at the circumference demands a finite world."\textsuperscript{141}

After 1630, it was not these naturalists' ideas which became popular; instead, Donahue notes:

\begin{quote}
[T]he empyrean came to be accepted as a part of physical cosmology as a result of the materialization of the heavens. New developments, such as alterations in theories of planetary and stellar motion and abolition of the celestial spheres and of the traditional cosmic order, are shown to have resulted in the prominent place given the empyrean by Mendoza and M. F. Wendelin. The latter, in particular, saw the full possibilities of the empyrean as a bulwark of the finite universe.
\end{quote}

Donahue then provides a lengthy discussion of the writers who followed this vein that stressed the empyrean's physical

\textsuperscript{339}ibid. 231-32. Donahue adds to this list Lagalla (1612), Goodman (1616), and Duret (1600). He notes on pages 234-45 that D'Abra de Raconis (1617) represents those who advocate empyrean influence upon the celestial and elementary realms while displaying no naturalistic tendencies.

\textsuperscript{40}ibid., 231.

\textsuperscript{141}ibid.
cosmological factors instead of its "source of creation" functions advocated by the naturalists. He includes among others: the Italian Christopher Borro of the Coimbra Jesuits (1631), Jugo Sempilius (1635), Juan Eusebio de Nieremberg (1635), and J. B. Morin (1661). \(^{142}\)

Other scholars continued eclectically to combine various factors in their empyrean accounts. The Dutch physician Anton Deusing, for example, combined the traditional spherical empyrean with the concept of "infinite imaginary space" to create his empyrean. \(^{143}\) A Dutch astronomer, Philip Lansberg, exemplified those who held a "moderate naturalist" theory of the empyrean. \(^{144}\) Lansberg was actually one of the few Copernicans who held to an empyrean; he could do so because Copernicanism, like the Aristotelian cosmos, is finite. Thus, Donahue insightfully deduces that the undermining of the idea of a finite world would be more destructive to the empyrean than would

\(^{142}\)ibid., 238-241. Donahue writes that Borro, whose empyrean is inert matter, "provides a home for souls of the elect and for the angels who are not moving the stars, and at the same time forms a final boundary for the world." Sempilius and de Nieremberg relate the empyrean with the "triple heaven." Franciscus de Oviedo (1640), another Spanish Jesuit, similarly to the above, gave the empyrean a material composition. Similar trends in thought occurred in Italy and France with Federico Cesi (1630), and J. B Morin (1661). However, "[Morin's] only objection to the idea that the empyrean is the source of the world's motion is that the empyrean's influence radiates directly inwards and could not exert a tangential force."

\(^{143}\)ibid., 242.

\(^{144}\)ibid., 243.
Copernicanism. Lansberg, believing that the empyrean does not define the fixed stars, said that God himself causes the motion of the planetary and stellar spheres. The empyrean "still occupies a special place in the world" and defines its shape. Johann Amos Comenius (1633) saw the empyrean as the "spirit of life" which hovered above the waters and contained the "visible world." Both Lansberg and Comenius had several followers who forwarded their empyrean ideas.

Indeed, the growing trend toward salvaging a finite world provided the basis for most empyrean discussions. Among this basis, as among all bases at this time, the growing dichotomy between theology and science is evident. Cesi and Scheiner (1630), who wrote together, Inchofer (1633), Bettinus (1642), and John Gregory (1646) argued for finitude on the basis of the Bible. A few followers of the Keplerian version of Copernicanism represent those who maintained a physically functioning empyrean. Among these, Hainlin (1653) and Phocyllides Holwarda (1651) argued for the empyrean largely on peripatetic grounds regarding spatial position—the need for a place would retain a role

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\(^{145}\)ibid., 243-44.

\(^{146}\)ibid., 245-46. Following Comenius were Hartlib, Dury, Petty, and Webster.

\(^{147}\)ibid., 246-48.
in physics for only a little time longer.\textsuperscript{148} All of these writings occurred in an atmosphere in which the empyrean continued to have an ever-decreasing place in discussions about the cosmos. The probable reason for this, implied by Donahue, is that Copernicanism stopped implying the universe’s finitude.\textsuperscript{149} This anti-finite position began in the 1630s and steadily gained momentum afterwards.

Although almost all scholarship by the eighteenth century no longer considered the empyrean a component of the Weltbild, the idea lived among a few scholastic holdovers. Grant notes one figure who held onto the empyrean conception:

Well into the eighteenth century, Juan Hidalgo, a Spanish Augustinian Hermit, who wrote a \textit{cursus philosophicus} "according to the thought of Blessed Aegidius Romanus," vigorously repeated his master’s thirteenth-century defense of empyrean physical influence.\textsuperscript{150}

After Hidalgo, the empyrean disappeared entirely from cosmological treatises and entered the realm of fiction and poetic metaphor.

Empyrean characteristics and its invocations have been identified historically above. The excessive medieval efforts to describe the empyrean’s traits and functions thus demonstrate that the empyrean represents a vital aspect of

\textsuperscript{148}ibid., 246-250.

\textsuperscript{149}ibid., 252.

\textsuperscript{150}Planets, 388.
the philosophical paradigm of scholasticism. The insights of Grant, Marauch, and Donahue have provided especially helpful clues in the shaping of empyrean. They have "set the stage" for an interesting viewing of the empyrean within such paradigmatic elements as Neoplatonic emanationism (the idea that all being emanates from God), the City of God, and various other patristic/Christian synthetic developments. I have provided a description of this outlook that places the empyrean at the summit of the Weltanshauung's hierarchy.
CHAPTER III

THE EMPYREAN AS THE PINNACLE OF THE MEDIEVAL WORLD VIEW

At the height of the scholastic synthesis between Christian mysticism and its Greek heritage rested the empyrean. The empyrean developed within Platonic/Augustinian spiritualism as an important universal. Indeed, its identification with the Christian paradise illustrated the prominence it held as the medieval telos (goal). The empyrean's lack of a corporeal appearance was of little or no concern to scholars who operated within the Platonic/Augustinian view which "asserted that any individual object existing in this world was only an appearance, an approximation to the real exemplar . . . which existed in a world beyond the senses. . . ."\textsuperscript{151} The empyrean idea, nurtured in this prevalent mysticism, matured during the High Scholastic Period (1250-1350)\textsuperscript{152} within the Christian reconciliation with Aristotle as exemplified in the writings of Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) and Dante Alighieri (1265-1321). Its ever-increasing function within descriptions of the geocentric Weltbild highlighted the rationalism exemplary of scholasticism. An important aspect


\textsuperscript{152}See note 1 above.
of the empyrean's history, however, was the Platonic continuity throughout scholasticism, even after the infusion of Aristotelianism during the second half of the Scholastic Period.

This history explores the empyrean within the synthetic and evolutionary framework of medieval thought and concludes that the empyrean stood at the pinnacle of several components of the medieval Weltanschauung. The empyrean drew life from idealism and held majestic status within the hierarchy of the Great Chain of Being associated with Neoplatonist emanationism. It was identified with the first cause, prompting celestial movement with its perfection for which the primum mobile moved; in other words, the first mobile sphere moved because it longed for the perfect empyrean. The empyrean was associated with the very beginning of Christian creation as related in the most important text of the Middle Ages: the Bible. Upon the empyrean's initial formulation during the twelfth century, Christian scholars believed that the higher beings, namely, the angels, inhabited the region. Later, the blessed, and then God himself were said to dwell in the empyrean. Throughout the empyrean's history, Christians regularly used exalted adjectives to describe its aspects: lucidity, grace, blessedness, purity, and love. In addition to its status as the apex of the hierarchy of being, the empyrean assumed eminent components that it inherited from patristic physics
and metaphysics: it was identified with the superior incorruptible matter of the celestial region; it protected the bounded world; and, as the height of the geocentric cosmos, it affirmed humanity's role at the center of the universe. The empyrean was supremely associated with these attributes that characterized the medieval outlook.

When the use of the term "empyrean" appeared among Christian writers beginning in the twelfth century, Platonism and Neoplatonism dominated the outlook of the Christian mystics. The early scholastic authors based their learning on the theological authority, enhanced by patristic elements, that had persevered for centuries. When the use of the term "empyrean" appeared among Christian writers beginning in the twelfth century, Platonism and Neoplatonism dominated the outlook of the Christian mystics. The early scholastic authors based their learning on the theological authority, enhanced by patristic elements, that had persevered for centuries. Even the scholastic literary genres were grounded in authority. The commentary, the question, and the summa developed beginning with Peter Abelard's (ca. 1079-ca. 1142) Sic et non.154

153 For the definition of the Scholastic Period, see note 1 above. Note that philosophy was considered a servant of theology (ancilla theologiae). For another good description of scholasticism—one that stresses its relation to the scholastic method, see Joseph R. Strayer, ed., Dictionary of the Middle Ages (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1983), "Scholasticism, Scholastic Method," by Jorge J. E. Gracia, 55-58.

154 Strayer, "Scholasticism and the Scholastic Method," 57. Gracia notes, "For the commentary the key element was the textual analysis carried out by masters in the university." These masters would discuss an authoritative text with exposition. The scholastic question "posed a problem in the form of a question" that could be answered negatively or positively. The authorities who favored the issue were contrasted with those against. The master would then add a carefully worked-out answer and also address any raised objections. "Summae" developed out of the need for systematic expositions to be used by beginners, who often required a general introduction to the subject matter. They
These genres followed the procedure of the scholastic method. Jorge Gracia explains that two basic characteristics of the scholastic method were:

- a textual orientation and a concern with detail; only through careful textual analysis and the introduction of subtle distinctions could apparent conflicts be brought into harmony. An important tool of the procedure was Aristotelian logic. Discussions were supposed to adhere to the syllogistic rules worked out by Aristotle and his followers and passed on to the medievals by Boethius (ca. 480-524/26) and others.\footnote{ibid., 56. I remind that before Gerard of Cremona’s (ca. 1114-1187) translations, regarding Aristotle, the West knew only his works on logic. See note 1 above.}

Hugh of St. Victor (d. 1141) added a structure to the scholastic method that became utilized in university learning. He noted two conditions necessary for the acquisition of knowledge: the lectio and the meditatio. "[T]he lectio became the reading of an authoritative text in the classroom, while the meditatio, . . . involved exposition and explications."\footnote{ibid.} In empyrean studies, the authoritative background, affirmed by and passed on in the scholastic genres, demands a lengthy discussion. In fact, were usually large compilations of established opinion of a particular subject, such as theology, philosophy, logic, or morals. The summae were generally organized according to accepted structures. For example, theological summae usually followed the structure of the Creed." Often times, the genres of the commentaries, questions, and summae were mixed. For example, "[i]n the commentary, questions were raised on particular texts, while in the summa they were raised on a particular topic." See also note 66 above.
the empyrean would grow out of the early Platonic-Neoplatonic-Augustinian context.

Augustine (354-430), Boethius, and other Christian thinkers influenced by the patristic heritage, illustrate the paradigm inherited by the early scholastics. Certainly, early efforts by the Roman Catholic Church to reconcile Christian faith with their Classical heritage are significant and common. Jerome (c. 340-420), the translator of the Vulgate, taught that "classical writings can be used by Christians, though with caution and in a role subordinate to Scripture." Ambrose, of whom Augustine was a disciple, "utilized pagan Platonic material in a constructive way." Augustine, and to a lesser extent Boethius, were the chief sources of Platonic continuity within the Latin tradition.

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157 Jerome is most famous for translating the version of the Bible "that became standard in the West for more than a thousand years"--the Vulgate. See William R. Cook and Ronald B. Herzman, The Medieval World View: An Introduction (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), 79-80.

158 Ibid., 80.

159 Stephen Gersh, Middle Platonism and Neoplatonism: The Latin Tradition vol. II (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1986), 782. Gersh notes on pages 781-82 that Ambrose read the doxographers, Philo Iudaeus, and the Neoplatonists. He was also familiar with Latin writers who transmitted aspects of the Platonic tradition: Cicero, Seneca, Gellius, and Apuleius. Though important, Ambrose only touched on philosophical aspects from these writers.

160 Raymond Klibansky, The Continuity of the Platonic Tradition During the Middle Ages, with a new preface and four supplementary chapters together with Plato's Parmenides in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, preface by Klibansky
The Platonic heritage, expressed through the early Church Fathers and manifested in the medieval Weltanschauung, generally did not come from Plato's works themselves. Rather, Marcus Tullius Cicero's (106-43 B.C.) Academica and Orator supplied them with Plato's theory of forms "while the same author's version of the Timaeus provided a summary of Plato's doctrine of the sensible world."\(^{161}\) Augustine would derive aspects of Platonism from Victorinus' translation of Plotinus (205-270 A.D.), the founder of the Neoplatonists, and Porphyry (A.D. 233-ca. 304).\(^{162}\) The factors related to Platonic idealism, the monistic hierarchy of being, and the teleological motive associated with love and the first cause describe the setting.

For a mystical and spiritual subject to hold such an esteemed position within the cosmos of a particular period, as did the empyrean during scholasticism, it follows that idealism must dominate the conceptual atmosphere of the period. Undeniably, the prevalent mysticism of the Middle Ages nurtured such forms as the empyrean. Not only did the idea not require empirical proof, but it depicted an

\(^{161}\)Gersh, 782.

\(^{162}\)Klibansky, 22.
attitude that considered non-physical being superior and actually "more real" than the physical. After all, the true life began after the paltry physical journey; as Augustine said:

Glorious beyond compare is the heavenly city. There, victory is truth, dignity is holiness, peace is happiness, life is eternity. . . . As regards earthly happiness and physical evils, [only] the wicked wish to enjoy or refuse to endure [them]. . . .

Augustine's writings, which foremost influenced medieval conceptions, make evident the fact that Platonic idealism flourished in its synthesis with Christianity. The Platonic influence is explicitly visible in chapter twenty of Book VII of the Confessions; Augustine wrote, "By reading these books of the Platonists I had been prompted to look for truth as something incorporeal, and I caught sight of your invisible nature, as it is known through your creatures." Assuredly, Augustine's reading of Plotinus'

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164 The fact alone that Aquinas evokes Augustine's writings in relation to the empyrean makes his impact important for this study. See pages 23-24 above for Aquinas' note that Augustine's heaven of the first day was a spiritual heaven different from the corporeal heaven of the second day.

Enneads shaped much of his "realist" thought.\textsuperscript{166} The fact that Plotinus' ideas could be made harmonious with the Christian conceptual framework is exhibited in The Fourth Ennead; Plotinus wrote in the section named "The Immortality of the Soul:"

[B]ody itself could not exist in any form if soul-power did not: body passes; dissolution is in its very nature; all would disappear in a twinkling if all were body. It is no help to erect some one mode of body into soul; made of the same Matter as the rest, this soul-body would fall under the same fate; of course it could never really exist; the universe of things would halt at the material, failing something to bring Matter to shape. . . . That the Soul is of the family of the diviner nature, the eternal, is clear from our demonstration that it is not material: besides it has neither shape or colour nor is it tangible.\textsuperscript{167}

Obviously, the Platonic notion of the immortality of ideas/spirits was compatible with Christian dogma. In addition, Augustine found compatible with Christianity Plotinus' belief that the spiritual was "real" and that the material was non-existent in and of itself. As Meyrick H. Carré notes, Augustine believed "the region of reality is the world of Ideas, necessary, immutable, intelligible."\textsuperscript{168}

\textsuperscript{166} Indeed, considering the term "realism," one must remember that the spiritual was more "real" in medieval thinking than that known empirically. Recent thinking takes the opposite approach. This demonstrates a major paradigm shift in western thought; what "realism" means has changed.


Augustine's adaptation of the forms is particularly evident in the seventh book of his *Confessions* and in the eighth and tenth books of the *City of God*. In the *City of God*, Augustine wrote:

The Platonic philosophers, then, so deservedly considered superior to all the others in reputation and achievement, well understood that no body could be God and, therefore, in order to find Him, they rose beyond all material things. . . . They argued that whatever exists is either matter or life; that life is superior to matter; that the appearance of a body is sensible, whereas the form of life is intelligible. Hence, they preferred intelligible form to sensible appearance.

Indeed, Augustine saw a demarcation between types of reason, a division that corresponded to the differences between matter and life. Lower reason is called *scientia*; this is the practical study of things that are temporal and changing. *Sapientia* (wisdom) is higher reason that possesses the motive of contemplation; it examines the intelligible ideas. Augustine's idealism was also commonplace in his epistemology. Unlike Aristotle, he would not admit that the physical world acts upon the mind. Rather, Augustine thought the perception of the world depended on "the activity of intellectual apprehension."

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169 Klibansky, 23.

170 *City of God*, Book VIII, Chapter 6, pages 152-53.

171 Carré, 18.

172 Ibid., 14-15, 17. Carré explains:

Sensation is thus related, as we should say, to biological function. Normally this level of mind acts without consciousness. It informs and directs the
Hierarchic thought, combined with his view that fundamentally knowledge is one, is manifested in Augustine's advocacy of the emanationist theory--the idea that being emits from God. Again borrowing from Plotinus, Augustine used Neoplatonic emanation ideas in his construct of a rational definition of evil that fit into his systematic world view. The emanation theory, in its Christianized form, would become essential for the advocacy of certain empyrean components.

The Platonic-Neoplatonist-Augustinian background "sets the stage" for the later empyrean expressions. To precipitate the empyrean discussion, it is important to describe the emanation concepts of Plotinus and Augustine.

The description of evil central to Augustinianism relied on the monistic emanative concept.
The emanation theory was originally provided by Plotinus in contrast to Plato's mind-body dichotomy.\textsuperscript{175} Plotinus noted that all being emanates from God. The degree of existence is determined by distance from the eternal one-vibrant existence when close and nothingness when too distant. His monism comes from applying this to all nature. A continuous nature flows from the first cause.

\textsuperscript{175}Plotinus gave "new angles" on some aspects of Plato's thought. First of all, Plotinus "watered down" Plato's dichotomy between mind and matter, and secondly, Plotinus was clearer than Plato in defining evil.

Plato and Plotinus both advocated a dualistic universe-one in which the intellect was primary and the realm of the senses was relegated to a secondary role. But Plato's view toward matter seems more harsh than did Plotinus'. Plato's view even resembled the radial Manichaean Dualism. After all, permanent mind-body separation is considered desirable as Socrates expresses right before his death in \textit{Phaedo}, "And the ones sufficiently purified in philosophy live entirely without bodies for all future time." Plato, \textit{Phaedo}, translated with notes by David Gallop (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975). Plato explained conversely through Socrates in "The Myth of Er" in \textit{The Republic} that the "wicked" are forced to serve punishment in Hades before choosing a new body "mostly governed by the habits of their former life."


While Plotinus certainly believed in reaching the superior intellectual realm with philosophy and did view the sensible realm as inferior, he approached the relationship between mind and body differently (as will be demonstrated). On defining evil--Plato had, as seen above, called some people "wicked." In \textit{Gorgias} he further seemed to imply a being to evil by equating evil with "injustice," "depravity of soul," "disease," and "ugliness." (p. 43) Plato, \textit{Gorgias}, translated with an introduction by W. C. Helmbold (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Educational Publishing, Nineteenth Printing, 1977). His problematic descriptions of evil are open to various interpretations because, unlike Plotinus' evil, his is not treated with any special specificity. As noted on page 11 above, to Plotinus, matter was still fundamentally good.
being" are created which possess no boundaries in between. Hence there is a higher intellectual universe of the forms that rules the lower material universe, yet the two are not separated; they touch one another. Humans can possess the Platonic forms via intellect; they can reach the eternal realities with reason because they possess that whole potentially, even while they are corporeal.

Plotinus' descriptive stance on evil was metaphysically consistent with the emanation theory. As darkness is only lack of light, so evil is lack of goodness. Evil contains no being; it is defined as separation from the eternal one to such a remoteness as to not exist. Evil is merely a privation.¹⁷⁶

Augustine accepted the emanationist monism along with its implicit evil as a privation. Augustine's early bout with the dualism of Manichaeism, a "heretical" sect to which he belonged for nine years before his conversion, helps illustrate the monistic concept. Augustine related in chapter 10 of Book V of his Confessions,

When I tried to think of my God, I could think of him only as a bodily substance, because I could not conceive of the existence of anything else. This was the principal and almost the only cause of the error from which I could not escape.

¹⁷⁶In addition to Enneads, 1.8, "The Nature and Source of Evil," pages 76-89; see a good summary of Plotinus' emanationist and "evil as a privation" thought as related to Augustine in Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1959 ed., s.v. "Augustine, Saint (Aurelius Augustinus)," by Thomas Alexander Lacey.
For the same reason I believed that evil, too, was some similar kind of substance, a shapeless, hideous mass, which might be solid, in which case the Manichees called it earth, or fine and rarefied like air. This they imagine as a kind of evil mind filtering through the substance they call earth. And because such little piety as I had compelled me to believe that God, who is good, could not have created an evil nature, I imagined that there were two antagonistic masses, both of which were infinite, yet the evil in a lesser and the good in a greater degree.177

Before his conversion, Augustine felt uncomfortable; he was in limbo. He left the Manichees because of their disagreement with "scientific" facts.178 He believed the "philosophers" possessed higher intellectual gifts from God and were preferable to the Manichees, yet he did not trust the philosophers because they ignored salvation through

Augustine added:

All my other sacrilegious beliefs were the outcome of this first fatal mistake. For when I tried to fall back upon the Catholic faith, my mind recoiled because the Catholic faith was not what I supposed it to be. My theories forced me to admit that you were finite in one point only, in so far as the mass of evil was able to oppose you. . . .

Augustine stated further that his limited conception of mind as "a rarefied body somehow diffused in space" caused him, in his ignorance, to be able to perceive Jesus only as an extension of God's "transplendent body." He disbelieved, therefore, in the incarnation because he could not conceive of him having been "defiled" by the "combination" with Mary's flesh; in other words, in this empiricism from the Manichaean dualism, the virgin birth was irrational.

178 Also, the harsh asceticism for the elect surely was difficult for this man "of the flesh" who had taken a concubine who gave birth to his child. For this information, see the biography by Jacques Chabannes, St. Augustine, trans. Julie Kernan (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1962), 51, 82-85.
Christ. After quitting the Manichees, he continued as a catechumen in the Catholic Church.

At last, Augustine discussed in Book VII of Confessions how he was brought out of his confusion with a Christian understanding of the Platonist books. He borrowed from Plotinus' emanation theory, making a few changes to avoid Pantheism. To Augustine, God cannot be one with his creation as in Plotinus' monism, but Augustine does see that God is immanent in all—that God is actively controlling his creation. God is love, and since everything is ordained and created by God, all that exists is fundamentally love. All nature is good, therefore evil is only a lack of being what one ought to be; evil is reduced to a defect.\(^{179}\)

Actually, Augustinianism and Platonism were interwoven to the point that they held few differences. Raymond Klibansky maintains that "the mystery of the Incarnation [remained] the sole essential point of difference between the creed of the Gospels and the tenets of Platonism."\(^{180}\)

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\(^{179}\)Confessions. See especially chapters 12 and 13 on pages 148-49. This satisfied Augustine's complaint that God cannot create evil because he cannot create that which he is not. Evil actions are merely ignorance and separation from divine will and not in themselves evil in substance. Likewise in illustration, darkness is nothing but the non-presence of light. The spiritual monism also made rationally possible to him a divine plan possessing a "Virgin Mary" and a relation of Jesus to his father that is more than "transplendent."

\(^{180}\)Klibansky, 23. Klibansky helps to explain the synthesis between Christianity and Platonism, as well as the centrality of Augustine in this fusion:
The importance of Augustine and his patristic heritage is
difficult to exaggerate: Augustine's thought was the
pinnacle of the early medieval outlook.

Boethius was another Platonic thinker who heavily
influenced medieval thought.\footnote{Klibansky, 22. Boethius had hoped to render "into
Latin the whole Plato together with the whole Aristotle, in
order to show the essential concord between the two Greek
masters." Circumstances prevented his intent; he "was put
to death on a charge of treason in the year 525." See Carré, 32.} His principle influences
were Augustine, Plotinus' student Porphyry, and the
Neoplatonist Proclus (410-485 A.D.).\footnote{Gersh, 706. Boethius also frequently alluded to
Plato's \textit{Gorgias}, \textit{Meno}, \textit{Republic}, and \textit{Timaeus}.} Similarly to
Augustine, Boethius' writings are important in empyrean
history because he greatly enriched the Platonic/Christian
synthesis that was passed on to the scholastic authors. His
legacy would be felt in the scholastic literary genres and
its curriculum.\footnote{For an account of the scholastic literary genres, see
pages 72-73 and notes 66 and 154 above.} His rigorous demonstrations, "use of
technical philosophic terms for the solution of theological

\footnote{[T]he most comprehensive and authoritative exposition
of Plato's teaching and its place in Christian thought
[was] given by Augustine. [In Augustine's writings],
Plato and Platonists appear as the philosophers who
came nearest to Christianity . . . It was Augustine . .
who admitted that the 'Platonic' doctrine of a
universe 'formed by God' was not incompatible with
Christian dogma, a fact which proved of much
consequence in the later development of cosmological
thought.}
issues,184 and distinction between faith and reason would contribute greatly to the scholastic method. His prototype "helped to make the commentary a standard form for teaching and writing."185 The christian-enhanced Platonism associated with emanationism and the idea of a first cause is evident in his Consolation of Philosophy:

But it cannot be denied that there is some such thing extant which is as it were the fountain of all goodness. . . . For the nature of things began not from that which is defective and not complete, but, proceeding from entire and absolute, falleth into that which is extreme and enfeebled.186

The fountain is analogous to love, the Good, or God.

Boethius' works demonstrate a definite link to the conception of a Chain of Being that he absorbed from Plato's Republic, Plato's Timaeus, and Plotinus' Enneads. Plato, in the seventh book of the Republic, noted that the idea of the Good is the apex of the hierarchy of discernable things. These things not only gain their quality of being knowable from the idea of the Good, but they also "derive from it their very existence by participating in various degrees in its nature. Thus, the supreme idea provides the logical

184Note also that philosophical thinkers of the eleventh and twelfth centuries owed the little knowledge of Aristotle they had to Boethius' translations. See the commentary accompanying Boethius' works in Philosophy in the Middle Ages: The Christian, Islamic, and Jewish Traditions 2d ed., ed. by Arthur Hyman and James J. Walsh (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1973), 114.

185Ibid.

186Boethius, The Consolation of Philosophy, in Philosophy in the Middle Ages, 120.
basis of a world of sensibilia conceived as graded with respect to perfection." Plotinus added that nothing can be banned from existence—everything participates in the nature of the Good. Plotinus illustrated the gradation of existing things that Boethius utilized in his Christian synthesis with Platonism:

In sum: the loveliness that is in the sense-realm is an index of the nobleness of the Intellectual sphere, displaying its power and its goodness alike: and all things are for ever linked; the one order Intellectual in its being, the other of sense; one self-existent, the other eternally taking its being by participation in that first, and to the full of its power reproducing the Intellectual nature.

Boethius made use of other Platonic factors that were consistent with Christian teaching. Noteworthy, he endorsed "the doctrine that God is equivalent to form, [and he also


188 Enneads IV, 8, 6, 415-16.

189 Boethius brings out this monistic aspect of Neoplatonism in Consolation, 123:

"Those things, then, which, when they differ, are not good and when they are one, become good, are they not made good by obtaining unity?" "So methink," quoth I. "But dost thou grant that all that is good is good by partaking goodness?" "It is so." "Thou must grant then likewise that unity and goodness are the same. For those things have the same substance, which naturally have not diverse effects." "I cannot deny it," quoth I. "Knowest thou then," quoth she, "that everything that is doth so long remain and subsist as it is one, and perisheth and is dissolved so soon as it ceaseth to be one?" . . . And in like manner it will be manifest to him that will descend to other particulars, that everything continueth so long as it is one, and perisheth when it loseth unity."
endorsed] the realist interpretation of the ontological status of universals.\textsuperscript{190} Thus, monistic and idealist elements became further entrenched into the medieval Weltanschauung through the efforts of Boethius, a major contributor to the scholastic method and its curriculum. After Boethius, Augustinian realism dominated philosophy into the Scholastic Period (eleventh-fourteenth centuries).

Carré remarks:

For the few isolated groups of scholars who were touched by slender threads with the fragments of Greek thought, Realism was philosophy. They learnt it too from the greatest Christian philosopher, St. Augustine.\textsuperscript{191}

The Platonic/Neoplatonic aspects that I have elaborated upon above became significant in empyrean history. I have noted

\textsuperscript{190}Gersh, 565.

\textsuperscript{191}Carré, 36. Carré adds on page 40:

And in the centuries which succeeded the work of Boethius the theory of knowledge proposed by St. Augustine prevailed. In the eighth century Alcuin of York recommended him above all philosophers. And in the following century a great system of neoplatonic thought was propounded by John Scotus Erigena. For him the universal is the essential reality from which the particular is derived; and it is the more real in proportion to its universality. The logical hierarchy of concepts is the scheme of reality, and the most comprehensive abstraction is the fullest Being. The eternal Forms of Ideas are in God and are expressions of the divine will. But genera and species are not true Forms. In spite of his Platonic sympathies it is doubtful whether Erigena can be termed a Realist. For the proper objects of dialectic for him are not the eternal Forms but general and species, which are found in material things. Yet these secondary forms proceed ultimately from the true Forms.
this significance when discussing the scholastic writings of Saint Bonaventure, Aquinas, and Dante below.

Although the origins of scholasticism are apparent in the literary precedence of Boethius,\textsuperscript{192} and also in the continuing commentary on Neoplatonic/Augustinian universal thought in the writings of Alcuin of York (eighth century) and John Scotus Erigena (ninth century),\textsuperscript{193} the author of this thesis considers the eleventh century as the beginning of the Scholastic Period.\textsuperscript{194} The eleventh century saw a vigorous revival of interest in universal/realist contemplation that spawned an array of philosophical inquiries during the next few centuries. Perhaps the nominalist challenge to realism by Roscelin of Complègne (1050-ca. 1125), St. Anselm of Canterbury (1033-1109), and then later Peter Abelard (1079-1142) vitalized the outpouring.\textsuperscript{195} Certainly, the growing prevalence of educational institutions with their seven liberal arts\textsuperscript{196} and the subsequent Age of Translation (twelfth and thirteenth centuries) accompanied the explosion in scholarship. Incorporating all these factors, the

\textsuperscript{192}See page 84 above.
\textsuperscript{193}ibid.
\textsuperscript{194}See note 1 above.
\textsuperscript{195}ibid., 40.
\textsuperscript{196}See note 1 above.
scholastic method\textsuperscript{197} become the central avenue for the empyrean expression that emerged during the twelfth century.

First mentioned as early as the fifth century by Martianus Cappella (fl. before 439),\textsuperscript{198} the term "empyrean" was evoked in the early twelfth century by the author of the Glossa Ordinaria, probably Anselm of Laon (d. 1117),\textsuperscript{199} to describe the "highest," "angel inhabited" heaven of Genesis 1:1.\textsuperscript{200} The Glossa, which contained an account of the creation of the angels in the empyrean, greatly influenced successive scholastic thought. As the "Bible of scholasticism," the Glossa promoted the empyrean to popular status.\textsuperscript{201} Peter Lombard (1100-1160) repeated verbatim the Glossa's passage in his widely studied Sentences and thereby cemented the empyrean into the medieval outlook.\textsuperscript{202}

The pinnacle of the medieval world view begins at Genesis 1:1. The scholastics thought that the empyrean was that blessed heaven mentioned at the very beginning of God's perfect Word, that is, the Bible. The empyrean was the first creation co-created with the highest beings--the

\textsuperscript{197}See note 154 and pages 72-73 above.

\textsuperscript{198}See note 28 and page 18 above.

\textsuperscript{199}See note 29 above.

\textsuperscript{200}ibid. See also pages 18-20 above.

\textsuperscript{201}See note 29 above.

\textsuperscript{202}See note 31 above.
angels, and "all corporeal things."\textsuperscript{203} Although associated with and dependent on the Platonic environment,\textsuperscript{204} the empyrean was first and foremost a result of theologically-derived Christian dogma.

Indeed, the empyrean would often become invoked by the scholastics to account for paradise and to explain biblical passages. The scholastics combined earlier Christian Fathers' descriptions about the "heaven of the first day" with the empyrean. They linked Saint Basil (c. 330-379) and Venerable Bede's (672 or 673-735) "invisible heaven" of Genesis 1:1 to the empyrean.\textsuperscript{205} The Glossa's account espoused the first explicit connection between the invisible heaven of the first day and the empyrean. In addition, it identified the region with the creation of the angels; after all, to satisfy scholastic curiosity, the angel's place of origin had to be accounted for since the biblical story did not do so.\textsuperscript{206} The Glossa's author also noted the "fiery or intellectual" quality of the empyrean that was associated with its angelic inhabitance.\textsuperscript{207} Following the Glossa's author, later scholastics merged other aspects of Basil's and Bede's invisible heaven with the empyrean sphere. The

\textsuperscript{203}See note 34 and pages 20-21 above.

\textsuperscript{204}See pages 75-87 above.

\textsuperscript{205}See pages 21-28 above.

\textsuperscript{206}See note 31 and page 20 above.

\textsuperscript{207}See note 33 and page 20 above.
resulting characteristics of the empyrean were: the blessed lived there, it contained the greatest lucidity, it was the third heaven where Saint Paul went, and it was the immobile sphere that contained the world. Certainly, the first three of these exalted qualities reflected Christian themes; the added immobile quality would become important in association with peripatetic physics.

The scholastics became enchanted with Aristotle beginning in the twelfth century, and the empyrean would serve some of the essential functions involving peripatetic cosmology. Empyrean writers Roland Bandinelli (future Pope Alexander III, 1191), who stressed the realm's grace, and Hugues de Saint Victor (d. 1145), who noted the heavenly sphere's superiority, were two of the first writers to note that the empyrean gave place to the other celestial spheres. Although Aristotle's cosmos possessed no outer shell, Christian cosmologists, to satisfy Aristotelian physics, assigned the empyrean the special role as the container of the world. William of Conches (1080-1145) exemplified a growing trend among the scholastics to present

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208See note 44 above.
209See note 46 above.
210On Bandinelli and Hugh, see note 56 above.
211See pages 30-31 above for an account of the idea of place.
212See notes 58-60 above.
the empyrean on the basis of physical necessity instead of
only on the basis of Church authority. The emphasis on
the empyrean's physical role helped promote the empyrean's
increasing credence among the scholastic community. Within
the peripatetic environment that stressed rationalism and
scientific empiricism, the Aristotelian scholastics could
more easily justify the existence of their beloved empyrean.

While acquiring Aristotelian components, the empyrean
continued to develop a preeminent capacity within
Christianity. The greatest thirteenth-century theologians
discussed it as not only the dwelling place of the angels
and blessed, but as the home of God and the Virgin. Certainly God's residence can be appreciated as the summit
of the hierarchy of homes! The bishop of Paris, Vescovo Di
Parigi, even "officially condemned scholars in 1244 who
placed the Virgin in the mobile crystalline sphere
immediately below the empyrean instead of in the
empyrean." The thirteenth-century consensus among scholars was
that the spiritual empyrean served important theological
functions while facilitating Aristotelian physical

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213 See note 60 above.

214 See notes 62 and 63 above. Some of there were
William of Auvergne, Alexander of Hales, Albertus Magnus,
Saint Bonaventure, Duns Scotus, Richard of Middleton, and
Thomas Aquinas.

215 See note 64 and page 34 above.
functions. The astronomer Campanus of Novara (ca. 1232-1296) said that the empyrean was "attested by sacred scripture," that it was "the highest of all bodily things," and that "it contains everything and is itself contained by nothing." Note that Campanus considered the empyrean bodily. To Campanus, in Aristotelian fashion, the empyrean and the entire celestial region were composed of the "fifth essence." The superior celestial region contained matter that differed fundamentally from the four elements of the terrestrial region. Campanus represented a scholastic trend toward the physical representation of the empyrean. Unlike the other scholastics, he ignored its spiritual aspects except to say that it functioned as a home for good spirits. The Platonic/Augustinian spiritual emphasis on empyrean qualities would bloom among his contemporaries.

A Neoplatonic accent is particularly evident in the influential writings of Saint Bonaventure, the conservative theologian and rival of Thomas Aquinas during the 1260s in Paris. He expressed many of the empyrean's exalted characteristics and exemplified the Platonic continuity that pervades empyrean history. Indeed, Bonaventure's use of the scale of luminosity symbolized the scale of being.

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216 See pages 34-36 above.
217 ibid.
218 See note 63 above.
Bonaventure linked the emanation analogue directly to the empyrean:

God is light in the most literal sense (propriissime), and those things which draw nearest to Him share most in the nature of light. All the bodies which make up the universe are more and less noble according to whether they participate more or less in the nature of light. Light is the substantial form of all bodies. In proportion to their greater or lesser participation in light, bodies enjoy a truer and more elevated 'being' among existing things. Hence, the noblest of bodies, the Empyrean, is luminous to the highest degree, while the least noble, Earth, is most opaque. Bodies that lie between these extremes participate in light either more or less in proportion to their greater or lesser nobility. Of all things possessing body, light is the noblest form.\(^{219}\)

Emphasizing lucidity, perhaps none illustrated the empyrean's status better than Bonaventure. He criticized Aristotle for attacking "eternal reason and Ideas, as well as their defender, Plato,"\(^{220}\) and he brought in the Neoplatonist conception of first cause. Again moved by the concept of light, Bonaventure explained that the passage 

"[a]nd God saw the light that it was good"\(^{221}\) was:

chosen because of the first vision of understanding given through nature. "God saw the light," that is, he made the light to be seen. . . . [T]he light radiates as the truth of things, of words, and of manners, concerning which there are nine partial instructions and three principal rays. . . . He made [the light] be seen through wisdom's contemplation by illuminating the soul in itself, in reflection, and in understanding.

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\(^{220}\)Bonaventure, *Conferences on the Hexaemeron*, in *Philosophy in the Middle Ages*, 458.

\(^{221}\)Genesis 1:4.
And this last illumination in understanding is distinguished by six conditions which that light impresses in the mind; for it is the first simple cause. . . (my emphasis)  

Bonaventure believed that "in that light there is the characteristic of being the exemplar of everything." Thus, Bonaventure's exemplarism, (exemplarism is the Christian equivalent of Plato's theory of ideas), associated all being with light. Because he considered the empyrean the most luminous body, it follows that he had placed the empyrean proximate to the first cause. I note, however, that he directly considers God the "Causal Exemplar of Everything." Nevertheless, Bonaventure and his contemporary pious theologians immersed in the Platonic tradition--Bernard of Clairvaux (d. ca. 1130), Hugh of St. Victor, and John Duns Scotus (d. 1308), vigorously defended Platonism against an Aristotelian onslaught that threatened realist notions.

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222 Bonaventure, Hexaemeron, 458.
223 ibid.
224 ibid., 459.
225 I note that Duns Scotus was influenced by Plotinus's theory of emanation, especially through the Arab Avicenna, who thought that "God could create only one being immediately, viz. the highest Intelligence. This creature in turn produces subordinate Intelligences." All creation on earth as well as in heaven "is the work of these created Intelligences." Scotus conceded much to Avicenna but changed this to say that "whatever God can do through the medium of the secondary cause He has created He can do directly or immediately if He so willed." See John Duns Scotus, Duns Scotus: Philosophical Writings, trans, ed., comm., Allan Wolter, foreword by Marilyn McCord Adams.
The empyrean was a Christian theme. First and foremost a spiritual idea, it was Platonic—especially in its association with emanationism and its immediacy to the first cause. Also, the empyrean came to serve physical functions within the Aristotelian cosmology. These elements set the stage for the consummate synthesis of patristic and Christian thought that composed the medieval Weltanschauung. The greatest expression of this synthesis, with the empyrean at the pinnacle, occurred in the writings of Aquinas and Dante.

Perhaps the philosophy of Thomas Aquinas best illustrated the conceptual framework of scholasticism. Like Bonaventure, Aquinas exemplified the Platonic continuity that thrived during the Scholastic Period. In addition, Aquinas has been commonly credited as the man who "Christianized" Aristotle.\(^\text{226}\)

Thomas invoked both Platonic and Aristotelian motifs in his explanation of celestial movement. First, Aristotle had proved in the last part of his *Physics* "the existence of a

\(^\text{226}\)See Carré, 66-67. Carré notes that Thomas "was compelled to criticize the Neoplatonism of Bonaventura (sic) on the one hand, the Arabian conception of Aristotle on the other." On Thomas' contribution, he writes, "the immense labour by which the mass of new [Aristotelian] material was examined and incorporated into Christian thought was accomplished by Thomas of Aquino (sic)."
First Unmoved Mover. Motion of the first celestial sphere must be prompted by something immobile; otherwise there would be an infinite outward regression of mobile spheres; this, of course, was an impossibility in the accepted Aristotelian/Ptolemaic finite Weltbild. Platonically, Thomas invoked the idea of intelligences, whom he called angels, to account for the influences on bodies that cause motion. His explanation of this physical

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228 See note 58 above.

229 For a description of this world picture, see page 7 above.

230 Actually, this can be considered a Platonic aspect also maintained by Aristotle. David C. Lindberg notes that:

Plato has described an animated cosmos, permeated by rationality, replete with purpose and design. Nor is deity absent. There is the Demiurge, of course, but in addition Plato assigned divinity to the world soul and considered the planets and the fixed stars to be a host of celestial gods. However, unlike the gods of traditional Greek religion, Plato's deities never interrupt the course of nature. Quite the contrary, it is the very steadfastness of the gods which, in Plato's view, guarantees the regularity of nature; the sun, moon, and other planets must move with some combination of uniform circular motions precisely because such motion is most perfect and rational, and consequently such motion is the only kind conceivable for a divine being. . . . [T]he function of divinity for Plato was to undergird and account for the order and rationality of the cosmos.

notion contained a mixture of Aristotelian and Platonic elements:

[J]ust as highest angels who assist before the throne of God, while, as Denis notes, not being themselves messengers, do influence the intermediate and lowest angels, who are messengers, so also the empyrean heaven, while itself not subject to movement, does have some influence on bodies which are. Thus there is reason for maintaining that its influence upon the first heaven undergoing movement is not passing and associated with movement, but fixed and stable, e.g. it is a power to contain or to cause or something of comparable dignity.  

Thomas would usually explain that the "perfection" of the empyrean motivated the first sphere's movement. Thomas thus associated the empyrean with grand aspects of Platonism and Aristotelianism. Actually, to Aquinas, Aristotelian

The ordering and spiritual contribution of Plato to all subsequent cosmological thought is intense and permeating. Lindberg later notes on page 62 an idea that I think shows that Aquinas' idea of angels as movers has precedents in both Plato and Aristotle: "[E]ach of the celestial spheres has its own Unmoved Mover, the object of its affection and the final cause of its motion."

St. Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologica, Volume 10: Cosmogony (Ia 65-74), trans, intro, notes, appendices, and gloss. by William A. Wallace (Dover, Mass.: 1967, Dominican House of Philosophy, 1967), 44. I quote Wallace's footnote 18:

De celestia hierarchia 13. PG 3, 301. In the Middle Ages Deonysius or Denis was thought to be the man converted by St. Paul on the Areopagus (cf Acts 17, 33) and was slow identified with the first bishop of Paris. He is called 'Pseudo-Dionysius' now because he is in fact an unknown author of a corpus of theological writings synthesizing Christian teaching with Neoplatonic thought. Since he draws on Proclus (411-85) and is quoted by Severus, Patriarch of Antioch (c. 513), he wrote about A.D. 500 and was probably a native of Syria.

See note 76 above.
physics helped one understand the Chain of Being—an idea associated with Platonism. William Wallace explains:

Small wonder . . . that for [Aquinas] Aristotelian physics held the greatest of promise. It allowed one to reassert the autonomy of reasoning based on sense experience, it explained the magnificent hierarchy of beings from the pure potentiality of primary matter through all the higher degrees of actuality, and it even provided access to the Pure Actuality, God himself, Ipsum Esse Subsistens, who had revealed the details of his inner being to all who accepted on faith his divine revelation.\(^{233}\)

Other elements of the Aristotelian cosmos are explicitly evident in Thomas' writings; he regularly discussed the empyrean's ethereal quality (he also argued that it was not created with unformed matter),\(^{234}\) its place as the tenth sphere in the cosmos, and of course its immobility.\(^{235}\) In addition, Thomas argued the empyrean's superior status on the basis of rest:

[In the final attainment of glory all movement of bodies will cease. This must have been the condition of the empyrean heaven from the start.\(^{236}\)]

The glorification of rest is an aspect of Aristotelian physics. All of the elements fall to their natural

\(^{233}\)Wallace, "Philosophical Setting," 102.

\(^{234}\)Cosmogony, 41. Also, because angels, who are not bodily substances, were created in the empyrean, the empyrean cannot be bodily. See page 40 above.

\(^{235}\)See pages 36–41 above.

\(^{236}\)Cosmogony, 45.
positions, and they desire rest in that natural position. (Rocks fall toward earth, etc.)

Elements of medieval Platonic continuity are also manifest in Aquinas. First of all, Aquinas did not always accept Moses Maimonides' (1135-1204) universal hylomorphism, "according to which all substances, even spiritual substances such as angels, are composed of matter and form." Thomas, holding sometimes to the Platonic belief that forms existed independent of corporeal bodies, said that certain forms did not require inhabitance in substances. Thus, often, Thomas is called a moderate realist. This is apparent in his discussion about the First Principle, which is the first act and pure act:

Those forms which are closest to the First Principle are forms inherently subsisting without matter, for form does not require matter throughout the genus, as was said. Forms of this kind are intelligences, and so it is not required that the essences or quiddities of these substances be other than form itself.

Also, Thomas' Platonism is evident when he equates the third heaven, that Paul was "taken up to," with the intellectual heaven. He then identified this intellectual realm with the

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237 See pages 30-32 above.

238 Cosmogony, 218. This is from Wallace's explanation in "Appendix 8." Actually, I note that the fact that Thomas is famous for his use of hylomorphism. The notion is Aristotelian in that the form is contained within the matter.

239 Thomas Aquinas, On Being and Substance, trans. J. Bobik, in Philosophy in the Middle Ages, 512.
Although the Arabic Neoplatonists Avicenna (980-1037) and Averroes (1126-1198) presented Aristotle's Weltbild and its intelligences to Aquinas, another less renowned Arabic Neoplatonist, Alpetragius, also called al-Bitruji, passed on important astronomical theories to Thomas. William Wallace explains:

According to Alpetragius, all movements of the heavens participate in the diurnal movement of the ninth celestial sphere; the movement of the eighth sphere, on the other hand, accounts for the slow transformations that take place in the sublunary region through generation and corruption. Both St. Albert and St. Thomas modified this explanation to have the sublunary region influenced by all of the intermediate spheres in the proper movements.

Adding to the patristic elements of Thomas' empyrean, were the theological concepts that completed the synthesis. The empyrean was the supreme heaven that contained the angels. God resided in the blissful, perfect region. The brilliant realm was paradise, the eminent hope of Christians!

Certainly, Thomas synthesized theology with both Platonic and Aristotelian components. Because he was widely admired and studied in the Latin world, his empyrean notions became common. Scholars, theologians, and those taught by

See page 25 above.

Cosmogony, 216. This is in Wallace's "Appendix 8." Wallace does not provide a date, and I could not locate it. I think that a transliteration problem with the name has occurred.

See pages 37-42 above.
the theologians could look with awe at the paradise above them that affirmed their world view in its mystical and Aristotelian dimensions. After Thomas, another scholastic thinker would bring the empyrean even richer description and acclaim.

The other great scholastic thinker was Dante. His empyrean, like Thomas', served several functions as the pinnacle of the medieval hierarchy. Most importantly, as the Enciclopedia Dantesca notes of Dante's empyrean, it is the place of God's city. God completes the act of predestination when he is in the empyrean and he rules immediately in this realm where natural law is of no effect.

Other Platonic and Aristotelian influences synthesized with Christian dogma permeate Dante's empyrean. In his Convivio, Dante described the traditional geocentric Weltbild that the immobile empyrean contained. The primum mobile has the swiftest motion; it moves because of its fervid longing to join the divine and tranquil empyrean heaven. Dante then associated the highest heaven with

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244 See note 90 above.

245 See note 84 and pages 43-44 above.
"the divine science that is called theology." His *Paradiso* presented the ultimate poetic expression of the empyrean in Cantos XXX through XXXIII. The empyrean contains a pure light of a Platonic intellectual nature. Joy abounds in the immaterial and transparent heaven. At the ultimate point of the cosmos, the saints, Mary, and Christ are presented.

Platonism is particularly pervasive in Dante's empyrean presentation. Dante utilized and related to the empyrean the idea of the origin of causes which has been highlighted above in association with Bonaventure and Aquinas. This first cause concept, with which the empyrean rests in proximity, emphasizes the origin of causes—-or the pinnacle of the hierarchy from which being emanates. Whereas in metaphysics, the emanating being was tied into especially God and the origin of the intellect, in celestial physics, such being was often related to the origin of the sphere's motions. The empyrean relates to both as is evident in the empyrean advocacy of Dante and other scholastic authors.

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246 See note 88 and pages 45-46 above.
247 See pages 47-50 above.
248 See pages 93-99 above.
249 The Platonic teleological motive of love spurns creation and motion.
To reiterate, the monistic emanationism holds that all creation is fundamentally good. It follows that the root or first cause of this Chain of Being is therefore the highest Good. Obviously, the empyrean, in its proximity to the highest Good, was the heightened object in this philosophical framework.

The Chain of Being was perhaps best illustrated in the Divine Comedy. The Neoplatonic/Augustinian monism that viewed evil as a privation was an important link in this Chain. The Paradiso's monism clearly illustrates the hierarchic aspect of Dante's cosmology. At the apex rests the most lucid empyrean. At the bottom is the frozen lake with its frozen devil. At one end is the climax of all feeling, vitality, love, and, emanatively speaking, being. At the other end is the utter lack of these qualities—the climatrical portrayal of this is in Canto XXXIV where Cocytus is locked "eternally in ice." The devil is reduced to almost entire inaction; Satan's only movement is his twisting wings spreading a cold wind through hell. Ice and cold are numbing, they create a non-feeling that is the exact opposite of punishment by painful sensation. The implication is that not possessing the quality of feeling is the greater punishment than experiencing pain, one is

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These emanationist concepts involving good and the "evil as a privation" concept have been explored on pages 80-84 above.
deprived of a fundamental aspect of being; one is far removed from God.²⁵¹

²⁵¹ See Dante Alighieri, The Divine Comedy Vol. I: Inferno, trans., intro., notes, and comm. by Mark Musa (U.S.A.: Indiana University Press, 1971; reprint, New York: Penguin Group, 1984), 379-81. As the Pilgrim and his guide travel lower and lower into the inferno, punishments are seen as a progression away from being and towards privation. Privation concepts are immediately noticeable in Canto I through the use of the light-dark allegory. Dante the Pilgrim awakens in a "dark wood." The "she-wolf" has continued to force him "back to where the sun is mute." (line 60) Again, the term "shades" is introduced representing the state of a soul far away from the light of God. Also exemplary of privation, Dante does not fault himself for an intrinsic moral weakness, but rather notes the extrinsic surroundings of the wilderness (sin) and the beasts that prevent him from reaching the source of light. Note also that Virgil asks an emanationist question in lines 77-78, "Why not climb up this blissful mountain here, the beginning and the source of all man's joy?"

Although presenting many punishments that are impressive in their physical descriptions, the emphasis of punishment in the Inferno revolves around what the various souls lack. The Pilgrim hears cries in the starless hell of "souls who lost the good of intellect." (Canto III, line 18) The souls even lack the inner ability to move themselves across the river, but "they are eager; it is Divine Justice that spurs them on." (Canto III, lines 124-25) Those in Limbo demonstrate the goodness and light of human reason, but they lack hope.

The privation argument may seem at times problematic because certain punishments are very substantive for apparently very real evils. However, in reiteration, the privation is the cause of the shortcoming, not vice-versa. For example, in Canto VI the gluttonous are suffering an endless beating of hail while mucking in putrid slush. This exemplifies the characteristic life of one lacking temperance. One is not a "pig" because of intrinsic "pig-like" qualities, but because one is not doing what one ought to be doing. The implication is that enough light/goodness from God will remedy any shortcoming. Once again, all that is good by nature, the difficulty comes when too distant from Divinity.

The Epicureans naturally receive a harsh sentence from Dante; the denial of the spiritual nature of life is extremely blasphemous to one adhering to his Christian-Neoplatonist heritage. The examples continue ad nauseam. I note that the traitors of Canto XXXII are frozen, a worse
Dante summed up a combination of Aristotelian, Platonic, and Christian motifs that related to the empyrean in his *Epistola 10* (1318).\textsuperscript{252} First of all, Dante specifically linked the idea of a first cause to ethics, and in scholastic fashion he evoked authority as a basis of knowledge:

And so, just as we had to go back to a first cause in the case of being, so now we must do so in the case of essence and of virtue. Whence it is evident that every essence and every virtue proceeds from a primal one; and that the lower intelligences have their effect as if they were from a radiating body, and, after the fashion of mirrors, reflect the rays of the higher to the one below them. Which matter appears to be discussed clearly enough by Dionysius in his work *On the Celestial Hierarchy*. And therefore it is stated in the book *On Causes* that 'every intelligence is full of forms.' Reason, then, as we have seen, demonstrates that the divine light, that is to say the divine goodness, wisdom, and virtue, shines in every part.\textsuperscript{253}


\textsuperscript{253}Ibid., 206.
Dante cited biblical references from Jeremiah, Psalms, and Ecclesiasticus that reconciled the first cause to Christian dogma. Afterwards, Dante discussed the "pagan" Lucan, who had indicated paradise "by a circumlocution;" and Dante explicitly linked the empyrean with the first cause while noting his belief that Lucan was discussing the empyrean:

[Lucan] says that he was in that heaven which receives the glory of God, or his light, in most bountiful measure. As to which it must be understood that that heaven is the highest heaven, which contains all the bodies of the universe, and is contained by none, within which all bodies move . . . and which receives virtue from no corporeal substance. And it is called the Empyrean, which is as much as to say, the heaven glowing with fire or heat; not that there is material fire or heat therein, but spiritual, which is holy love, or charity. . . . And since every causative force is in the nature of a ray emanating from the first cause, which is God, it is manifest that that heaven which is in the highest degree causative receives most of the divine light. . . . [The empyrean] . . . which is subject to no movement, in itself and in every part whatsoever of itself has whatever it is capable of having in perfect measure, so that it has no need of motion for its perfection. And since every perfection is a ray of the Primal One, inasmuch as He is perfection in the highest degree, it is manifest that the first heaven receives more than any other of the light of the Primal One, which is God. . . . Hence it is clear that when the author says 'in that heaven which receives more of the light of God', he intends by a circumlocution to indicate Paradise, or the heaven of the Empyrean.²⁵⁵

The "perfect" paradise called the empyrean was the pinnacle of the medieval world view. Its proximity to God, along with its other exalted characteristics, made the empyrean so grand that while one is there "'the intellect plunges itself

²⁵⁴ibid., 206.
²⁵⁵ibid., 207-08.
to such depth' in its very longing, which is for God, 'that the memory cannot follow'." The memory fails after one returns from the empyrean, which was a very real heightened ideal, because one has "transcended the range of human faculty." As paradise, the empyrean was the fulfillment of God's purposes for men.

After Dante, during the remainder of the fourteenth century, empyrean discussions remained at a "fevered pitch," Most of the late scholastics focused on the empyrean's role, influence, and glorified attributes. Thomas Strasbourg (fl. 1345), for example, emphasized the empyrean's role as paradise. He argued for the empyrean's immobile status on the basis that the blessed, who are at rest, reside there, therefore the empyrean must be at rest. And noting that the sun supplied heat and energy for the terrestrial region even when God made it stand still in the sky, he concluded that the empyrean, though immobile, still influenced the terrestrial region. Apparently, Strasbourg, reflecting Platonic and Aristotelian themes, was in favor of the idea that the first cause could motivate action despite a lack of its own motion.

\[256\] ibid., 208.
\[257\] See pages 50-52 above.

The mix between faith and Aristotelian notions also is apparent in Jean Buridan's writings. He attempted to hold to the mystical reality even while dismissing its traditional invocations in physics in favor of empirical approaches. In fact, the continuing development of
Pierre D'ailly (1350-1420) was another late scholastic who emphasized the empyrean's influence on "inferior things." Yet, Pierre does not discuss the empyrean's blessed qualities associated with "bliss" and "lucidity." Instead, Pierre exemplified the trend among late scholastic thinkers to turn to natural philosophy instead of faith or authority for the basis of their arguments. Such a trend would ultimately undermine important aspects of the synthesis that nurtured the empyrean idea, namely, the paramount importance of Church authority, and the primary reality of the Platonic forms.

Yet, Pierre's emphasis on natural explanation was an anomaly in empyrean history. Many scholars of the next few centuries continued to emphasize the empyrean's identification with paradise. In fact, even into the seventeenth century, Church leaders considered the denial of the empyrean incompatible with being a believing Catholic.

Aristotelianism into the Medieval Weltanschauung and its transformation of science into a study of the particulars is evident in Buridan's writings. But, Buridan thought that Aristotle can be disbelieved on certain points because he lacked faith and "sought only to derive arguments from sensation and experience." See Edward Grant, Planets, Stars, & Orbs: The Medieval Cosmos, 1200-1687 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 374. The quote is from De Caelo, bk. 2, qu. 6.

See pages 54-55 above.

See note 120 above.

See note 121 above.
Despite the acceptance and glorification of the empyrean, the heavenly sphere would dissolve in relation to the overall conceptual changes that signified the end of the medieval outlook. In the realm of astronomy, the empyrean's role began diminishing as early as the end of the fourteenth century. The separation of science from theology certainly played an enormous role in the empyrean's dissolution. Actually, the empyrean would ultimately serve as the last defense of the medieval world view, a fact that demonstrates the importance of the empyrean to scholastics as well as the inter-dependence the empyrean shared with the general Weltanschauung.

The medieval outlook, in its supreme synthesis, was in ways an irony. For example, the empyrean was a "spiritual" element that the scholastics attempted to place within a "physical schemata." The attempt to materialize non-empirical ideas actually undermined the ideas instead of giving them their intended justification. Also, such empirical emphases, particularly in the dichotomy of hylomorphism, perhaps caused the cosmos to lose its

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262 See note 119 above.

263 See Marauch, 94. Marauch also mentions that the ideas of the indefinitely large universe and the Copernican system were part of the "scientific movement" that generally led to the decline of the empyrean.

264 See note 15 below.

265 See pages 100-01 above.
unity—a move away from its emanationist oneness (monism). Certainly, the empyrean would continue to lose much of its historic Platonic backing within the increasing trend toward the acceptance of the particulars.

It follows, then, that the empyrean, reinforced in its monistic emanationist qualities, might have ironically taken on the qualities, intended to help justify it, that ultimately undermined it. That is, the peripatetic aspect that required the empyrean idea to be empirically rationalized was a key factor contributing to its eventual dissolution.

The growing pervasiveness of nominalism266 played a part in the undermining of Platonic idealism and exemplarism. William of Ockham (d. ca. 1349) forwarded the nominalist ideas upon which the Paris terminists, including

266 For a discussion of nominalism related to cosmology’s theological confrontations and reconciliations, see Heiko A. Oberman, The Dawn of the Reformation: Essays in Late Medieval and Early Reformation Thought (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1986), especially pp. 179-203. Oberman argues that the fourteenth-century nominalism freed the Weltbild (which he mistakenly calls the experienced world—accepted celestial spheres and an empyrean were not experienced yet considered real) from the "fangs of a Weltanschauung, the postulated world." (p. 194) In effect, Oberman considers nominalism a component of the scientific revolution. Certainly nominalism was an important incubator for modern empiricism. I note that Oberman emphasizes the nominalist influence on God’s absolute power which allowed open speculations, and also the nominalist demarcation between God’s realm and "man’s" realm which left philosophers and natural philosophers free to speculate independent of theological influences.
Jean Buridan (ca. 1300-ca. 1358), built.\textsuperscript{267} Ockham emphasized the ontic priority of particulars. The reliance on metaphysics and causes had no place in Ockham's philosophy. This contradicted realism—if truths could be known based only on the study of particulars, what happens to non-sensual objects known by faith, such as the empyrean and angels? The earthly life gains primary existence over the spiritual; hence, faith and the City of God are implicitly rejected. Aquinas had at least allowed for common natures.\textsuperscript{268} But Ockham went a step further and

\\textsuperscript{267}Buridan was considered the leader of the Paris group, which included Albert of Saxony (ca. 1316-1390) and Nicole Oresme. These three are referred to as the "Paris terminists" because their ideas on logic are a radical form of William of Ockham's nominalism. To be sure, Ockham's influence permeates their writings; they attempted to create a theory of logic and semantics based on particulars and the denial of universals. See Peter King, "Part I: Introduction, Buridan's Philosophy of Logic," in Jean Buridan's Logic, The Treatises on Supposition and Consequences, with a philosophical introduction by King (Dordrecht, Boston, Lancaster, Tokyo: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1985), 8. This work contains a comprehensive biographical sketch of Buridan.

\\textsuperscript{268}Saint Thomas reconciled realism to his radical empiricism with the idea of common natures. He held that "although substances are numerically distinct, several of them may possess a Common Nature." (See Wallace, Science in the Middle Ages, 9.) This moderate realism adopted by Aquinas and John Duns Scotus (ca. 1266-1308) did not allow for the independent existence of the Common Nature, yet this nature still could be mentally abstracted from the particulars. An excellent interpretation of moderate realism as the middle ground between realism and nominalism is in Helen S. Lang, Aristotle's Physics and Its Medieval Varieties (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992). In Islamic science, Averroes (1126-1198), who was studied avidly by Aquinas and the Scholastics, held a similar moderate position. Aquinas also argued his cause with pious reason:
rejected even moderate realism. The implications for
cosmology were enormous. The acceptance of something's
being came to be based on its sensual attributes and not on
authority or faith.\textsuperscript{269} The growing acceptance of
nominalism among many in the scholarly community prompted
call for a recognition of the ontic priority of
these particulars, the nominalist is thus proposing a
"new way" for philosophers to proceed. They are no
longer to begin by speculating on the implications of
the forms of ordinary language and to end by deciding
what sorts of things science might be about. Rather
they are to begin by recognizing the obvious existence
of a world of individuals and the fact that science is
about those individuals and their attributes.

See Theodore Kermit Scott, "Introduction," to John Buridan,
Sophisms on Meaning and Truth, trans., intro., Scott (New

\textsuperscript{270}See Nicholas of Autrecourt (ca. 1300-after 1350), The
Universal Treatise, translated by L. Kennedy, R. Arnold, and
A. Millward with an introduction by L. Kennedy (Milwaukee,
Wisconsin: Marquette University Press, 1971). Nicholas
presents a scholarly response to nominalism--a polite and
small response. This 1340 composition intends to call
University of Paris professors to the study of Christianity.
empyrean was protected in that Ockham's ideas did not challenge the Aristotelianism or the nature of fourteenth-century scholarship. Nominalism did not directly contradict the accepted Weltbild and its affirmation of humanity as the center of the world.

The empyrean also suffered from the transition involving the reason for the acquiring of knowledge. The scholastics were not generally motivated to present what is right in actuality, but what is feasible; the emphasis was on predictability. The attitude of proponents of geocentrism when faced with the challenge of heliocentrism was, "Why discard that which offers such accurate predictability?"

Heliocentrism itself, with its rejection of the Aristotelian/Ptolemaic model with which the empyrean was intricately tied, certainly related to the empyrean's demise. Edward Grant notes:

When account is taken of those who ignored the subject and those who opposed any empyrean influences, we may conclude that the number of scholastic theologians who believed that the empyrean heaven influenced celestial and/or terrestrial physical operations was relatively small by the middle of the seventeenth century.

and ethics. (Intro., p. 2) He represents the anti-empiricism stance opposing Buridan and the terminists. Nicholas' radical-real list books are later burned for containing anti-Aristotelian ideas advocating the existence of atoms and vacuums.

Interestingly, however, some Copernicans defended it the empyrean. See pages 66-67 above.
Copernican cosmology may have played a significant role in producing this result.\textsuperscript{272}

Grant notes that the Newtonian Scientific Revolution may also have contributed to the empyrean's dissolution. Certainly, Newtonian physics played a part in abolishing the peripatetic hierarchy of motions.\textsuperscript{273}

More formidable to the empyrean's acceptance was the idea of an unbounded universe. The case of Giordano Bruno (1548-1600) illustrates this. Bruno, former Dominican friar and controversial figure,\textsuperscript{274} threatened the standard cosmology. His infinite universe and infinity of worlds placed him directly opposite the closed scholastic universe. Like Copernicus' geocentrism, but more dramatically, Bruno's infinity of worlds displaced humanity from the center of the cosmic drama. Christians held dearly the notion of demarcation between humanity and nature; the immortal human spirit was unlike other creatures. And Christians saw human purpose as a divine pilgrimage leading to God--nature acted merely as a helper in the divine plan.\textsuperscript{275} In Bruno's

\textsuperscript{272}\textit{Planets}, 388.

\textsuperscript{273}Donahue explains this concept on page 230. I remind that the empyrean played a significant role in this hierarchy of motions by motivating the primum mobile.

\textsuperscript{274}Lecturer, former Dominican, and former Calvinist, the outspoken Bruno was imprisoned in Rome for seven years before his death at the stake. See \textit{Encyclop\'edia Britannica}, 1959 ed., s.v. "Bruno, Giordano," 288-89.

\textsuperscript{275}A good discussion of "man as center of the cosmic drama" is in Ian G. Barbour, \textit{Issues in Science and Religion} (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1966),
cosmos, nature no longer served humanity; instead, humanity
became minute in an everlasting universe.\textsuperscript{276}

Also affecting the empyrean, Bruno undermined the
important Aristotelian principle of motion by removing the
term "natural position":

Like the celestial spheres, the four sublunar spheres
concerning to the four elements exist only in the
imagination of 'vulgar philosophers'. According to
Aristotle, the localization of the elements and the
tendency of each of them to return to its proper place
had to take account of the vertical motion of tangible
objects. . . . Of these principles there is based a
physics which is easily shown to be incompatible with
factual experience. . . Earth, water and fire no longer
have their own sphere or natural place. All the
elements intermingle; they are everywhere and are
nowhere at rest; the winds blow in all directions;
earth spreads and flies about in the great void of air
in the form of fine dust.\textsuperscript{277}

\textsuperscript{276}Both Bruno and Copernicus' ideas challenged "common
sense" attributes of the Aristotelian cosmos. One can see
the sun move across the sky, and things would fly off the
earth if it were whirling around. Also, Aristotle's four
basic elements made sense. In Aristotle's scheme, all
terrestrial elements sought their natural position: the
earth in the center, water laying on top of earth, the air
or sky above the hydrosphere, and fire above the air. This
explained motion--earth objects fall to their natural
position and fire moves upward. Bruno's advocation of
infinite worlds countered this system. Aristotelians
thought it absurd to imagine earth objects (other world
centers) in the sky; how can there be more than one center?
Likewise, Copernicus' earthly movement around the sun
contradicted the belief that earth's ideal position is
motionless in the center of the world. It counters the
superior status of rest with which the empyrean was
intimately tied. The micro-macro scheme broke down in the
new system. Heliocentric ideas challenged common notions of
place that had developed during centuries.

\textsuperscript{277}See Paul Henri Michel, The Cosmology of Giordano
Bruno, translated by R. E. W. Maddison (Paris: Hermann,
London: Methuen, Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press,
Galileo, with his improved telescope, brought "closer to home" another vital threat to geocentrism and the empyrean. The dichotomy between the celestial and sublunar regions lost further its physical feasibility. Mountain ranges on the moon and Galileo's discovery that stars shine "brilliantly with an eternal light" contributed to geocentrism's demise. Prior to Galileo, it was usually thought that all objects in the sky received their light from the sun. Galileo proved the intrinsic luminosity of stars, in effect making them remarkably distant. The "brilliant" distant stars robbed "our" sun of its uniqueness. The moon's earth-like qualities undermined beliefs holding that the celestial region consisted of physical laws and elements separate than those found in the terrestrial region.

I note one last factor that contributed to the empyrean's eventual demise. Donahue writes that until the late 1620s and 1630s, "the starry heavens had generally been supposed to be incorporeal, or at least quasicorporeal, by most academic natural philosophers." But at this time scholars attempted to materialize the empyrean. I

1973), 186.


279See pages 63-64 above.
believe that the attempt to materialize the non-empirical empyrean was the final effort to save the empyrean. The attempt to ascribe particular qualities to an idea such as the empyrean proved futile. Because of the barrage of factors incompatible with the realist epistemology and scholastic cosmology, the empyrean "entered the realm of fiction and poetic metaphor" during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.²⁸⁰

This thesis has shown several vital characteristics of the medieval Weltanschauung by emphasizing the empyrean in the context of these qualities. Though historians of science have generally documented well the empyrean's rational function within the Aristotelian Weltbild, empyrean historiography could be improved by further explorations into its role as a Platonic/Augustinian idea. It is as though the scientific stress on the material and the particulars, although important, has dominated the field of the history of science. But the spiritual aspects associated with medieval cosmology can be better portrayed. The role of paradise within the cosmos deserves recognition. Other explorations could describe the relation of concepts of good and evil to the empyrean. Actually, one could look at all points of the spectrum of the emanationist hierarchy. Also, noting that Plato's thought was influenced by Pythagoreanism and its stress on harmony, scholars could

²⁸⁰The quote is mine from page 68 above.
explore this relation to empyrean studies. Noting the case of Dante, the medieval poetic and allegorical literature can be better utilized as an important contributor to our understanding of the scientific thought of the Middle Ages—this literature cannot be ignored simply because modern science dismisses its significance. Certainly, a more detailed analysis of the interplay between realism and the empyrean can be presented; and one can inquire into the nature of the connection between spiritually-oriented thinkers and realism. One can ask whether nominalism affected the "new science" directly and how the question relates to paradise. Some other questions can be raised regarding empyrean history. In what ways has the Enlightenment stress on knowledge as an acquisition instead of a heritage affected hierarchic ideals? How has Renaissance humanism and the transition from a "given" to a "created" world affected such notions as paradise and idealism? How much does Weltbild reflect

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Ernan McMullin argues that Nominalism had little to do with the advent of modern science. Ernan McMullin, "Empiricism and the Scientific Revolution," 331-69, in Charles S. Singleton, ed., Art, Science, and History in the Renaissance (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1968), 344. His stance is difficult to believe when one considers nominalism's stress on the particulars and its spiritual undermining. Understandably, Copernicus was a Neoplatonist—this point only is insufficient to support his argument.

Ernst Cassirer notes of Enlightenment reason in his The Philosophy of the Enlightenment:

It is no longer the sum total of "innate ideas" given prior to all experience, which reveal the absolute
Weltanschauung? Do paradigm changes occur first in epistemology and then later in cosmology? In general, presenters of the medieval world view can better explore the importance of the empyrean within the context of the Weltanschauung.

Indeed, of immense significance in medieval studies, the scholastics endowed the empyrean with supreme roles. Greek rationality, Christian piety, the hope and joy of Christians, mysticism, cosmological functions, and the affirmation of humanity as the center of world were aspects associated with the empyrean. The glorious empyrean, proximate to the first cause at the apex of the Chain of Being, expressed the attributes of the Platonic, Aristotelian, and Christian framework that composed the medieval outlook and its piety.


I venture to add that the rise of humanism in the Renaissance, with its glorification of humanity and focus on earthly progress, had created fertile ground for this motion from a given Great Chain of Being to the autonomy of humanity separate from nature and an intervening God. Change became a praised concept in a world view that now saw humans as the creators of their world.
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