

# *Heavenly Stuff: Peter Auriol on the Materiality of Angels and Celestial Bodies*

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1. “For some say that there is matter in every created substance, and that there is one matter of all things; and the originator of this position seems to be Avicbron. . . . The second position is that there is no matter in the incorporeal substances, but only in all corporeal ones, even if this one is one [kind]; and this is the position of Avicenna. The third position is that the celestial bodies and the elements do not share in matter; and this is the position of Averroes, and of Maimonides, and it seems to agree more with Aristotle’s claims; and thus we also choose this one.”  
*Aquinas, In Sent. II.3.1.1: Quidam enim dicunt quod in omni substantia creata est materia, et quia omnium est materia una; et hujus positionis auctor videtur Avicbron. . . . Secunda positio est quod materia non est in substantiis incorporeis, sed tantum est in omnibus corporibus, etiam una; et haec est positio Avicennae. Tertia positio est quod corpora caelestia et elementa non communicant in materia: et haec est positio Averrois, et Rabbi Moysis, et videtur magis dictis Aristotelis convenire; et ideo istam eligimus.*
2. “I say that. . . I do not see a major force in either part of this question, because the philosophers and saints who most diligently investigated about their natures, explicitly meant that they were composite of matter and form. And thus I hold [that] with them. . . .”  
*Auriol, In Sent. II.3.1.3 (Rome 1605, 59a): Dico autem quod. . . non video magnum robur in aliqua parte istius quaestionis, tum quia Philosophi et Sancti qui diligentissime investigaverunt de naturis illorum, expresse intellexerunt quod essent compositae ex materia et forma. Ideo teneo cum eis. . . .*
3. “[I]n the genus of intellectual substances, there is something that can receive all actual entities in the genus of intelligibles. But that which receives in this way cannot be in act, whence it is in pure potency without any actuality.”  
*Auriol, In Sent. II.3.1.1 (Rome 1605, 56b): [I]n genere substantiarum intellectualium est dare aliquid quod potest recipere omnem entitatem actualem in genere intellectualium. Illud autem sic recipiens non est ad actum trahibile, quare illud est ens in pura potentia absque omni actualitate.*
4. “[A]s it is impossible for something to give what it does not have, it is in the same way impossible [for something] to receive a form that it has already.”  
*Auriol, In Sent. II.3.1.1 (Rome 1605, 56b): [S]icut est impossibile alicui dare formam quam non habet, sic est impossibile recipere formam quam habet.*
5. “In these [separate] intellectual substances, and also in the soul, there are two true substances, one of which is merely potential, and the other merely act, from which they are composed intrinsically. And one [of these] is called the possible intellect, by which such a substance can undergo passion, that is, can receive an understanding of things other than itself, and consequently, by which it formally understands; the other is its understanding by which it is in act.”  
*Auriol, In Sent. II.3.1.3 (Rome 1605, 59a): In istis substantiis intellectualibus et in anima sunt duae verae substantiae, quarum una est mere potentialis et alia est mere actus, ex quibus intrinsece componuntur. Et una dicitur intellectus possibilis, quo talis substantia patitur, id est, recipit intellectionem aliorum a se, et per consequens, quo formaliter intelligit; alia vero est intellectio sui per quam est in actu.*
6. “In the genus of intellectual substances there is something that is pure potency, and this is the possible intellect, and another that is act. . . ; and a third, which is composed of these as from a formal and a material [principle].”  
*Auriol, In Sent. II.3.1.1 (Rome 1605, 56a): In genere substantiarum intelligibilium est aliquid quod est pura potentia, et hoc est intellectus possibilis, et alia quae est actus. . . , tertium vero quod componitur ex istis tamquam ex formali et materiali.*
7. “[T]o show this point, I do not propose any other argument, except those that had been proposed in the previous question, that is, in the first question [i.e., first article, ‘whether they are composed of potency and act’], nor any other authority except those that had been introduced in the second question.”  
*Auriol, In Sent. II.3.1.3 (Rome 1605, 59a): Ad probandum autem illam conclusionem, non adduco alias rationes, nisi quas adduxi in quaestione praecedenti, id est [d.] 3, 1a quaestione; nec alias auctoritates induco, nisi quae inductae sunt in secundam.*
8. “As the whole genus of sensible things differs from the whole genus of intelligible things, so does this [corporeal] matter differ from that [spiritual] one.”  
*Auriol, In Sent. II.3.1.1 (Rome 1605, 57b): [S]icut totum genus sensibilibus differt a toto genere intelligibilium, sic haec materia ab illa.*

9. “But in the case of natural but eternal substances another account must be given. For perhaps some have no matter, or not matter of this sort but only such as can be moved in respect of place” (Arist., *Meta.* VIII, 1044b6–8 (Barnes 2:1649); cf. AL, tr. Moerbeka: In naturalibus quidem sempiternis autem substantiis alia ratio. Forsan enim quedam non habent materiam, aut non talem sed solum secundum locum mobilem).
10. “Necessarily, then, movements also will be either simple or in some sort compound – simple in the case of the simple bodies, compound in that of the composite. . . . Supposing, then, that there is such a thing as simple movement, and that circular movement is simple, and that both movement of a simple body is simple and simple movement is of a simple body. . . , then there must necessarily be some simple body which moves naturally and in virtue of its own nature with a circular movement.” (Arist., *De caelo* I, 269a2–7 (Barnes 1:448)).
11. “[W]e assert that the proposition ‘the celestial body is not composed of matter and form in the manner of the transient ones’ is true beyond the shadow of doubt” (Aver., *De subst. orbis* I.2 (Hyman, 74)).
12. “The heavens [are] not composite, namely of matter and form, nor are they forms or matter.”  
Auriol, *In Sent.* II.14.1.1 (Rome 1605, 188b): Caelum [est] non compositum, scilicet ex materia et forma, nec forma, nec materia.
13. “If a heavenly body were composite of matter and form, it would consequently be generable and corruptible.”  
Auriol, *In Sent.* II.14.1.1 (Rome 1605, 186b): Si corpus caeleste sit compositum ex materia et forma, consequenter sit generabile et corruptibile.
14. “We should not posit a multitude [of things] unless an evident argument shows that they are necessary, [i.e.] otherwise by fewer things [the phenomena] cannot be saved; for God and nature does nothing in vain. But there is no necessity in positing matter in the heavens.”  
Auriol, *In Sent.* II.14.1.2 (Rome 1605, 189a): Multitudo ponenda non est, nisi ratio evidens necessaria illud probet aliter per pauciora salvari non posse. Deus enim et natura nihil faciunt frustra. Sed materiam ponere in caelo nulla habet necessitas.
15. “But corporeity does not imply that there is matter in the heavens; for corporeal being is given by form, not by matter. Nor does quantity imply it; for although indeterminate quantity is on account of matter, nevertheless, determinate quantity is on account of form (and in the heavens there is only determinate quantity). Third, nor does [any] sensible quality [imply it]. . . . Every accident that is in the heavens, is an accident that follows on account of form, not on account of matter.”  
Auriol, *In Sent.* II.14.1.2 (Rome 1605, 189a): Materiam enim esse in caelo non concludit corporeitas; forma enim dat esse corporeum, non materia. Nec illam concludit quantitas, licet enim quantitas interminata sit ratione materiae, tamen quantitas terminata inest ratione formae (in caelo autem tantummodo est quantitas terminata). Tertia, non sensibilis qualitas. . . . Omne ergo accidentia quae sunt in caelo sunt accidentia quae consequuntur ratione formae, non quae insunt ratione materiae.
16. “That nature which does not determine to itself its own perfect or ultimate perfections, nor its motion, nor its quantity or figure, nor anything such, but has these determinations from its conjunction with something else, is not a form. For it is of the nature of a form that it is in act, and that it determines matter . . . just as the soul of a lion requires it that its organs be of such and such a quality and shape. . . . But the nature of the heavens does not determine to itself its properties and ultimate perfections: for the nature of the heavens, as such, does not determine itself its quantity – for a body, as such, does not have it by itself that it be of such and such a size, larger or smaller.”  
Auriol, *In Sent.* II.14.1.2 (Rome 1605, 188a): Illa natura quae ex se non determinat sibi extremas sive postremas perfectiones suas, nec motum, nec quantitatem, nec figuram, nec aliud huiusmodi, sed determinationem ad talia habet ex coniunctione cum alio, illud non est forma. De natura enim formae est quod sit in actu, et determinet materiam. . . . eo modo quo anima leonis facit exigitive quod membra eius sint talis quantitatis et figurae. . . . Sed natura caeli sibi non determinat proprietates suas et perfectiones postremas: natura enim caeli, in quantum huiusmodi, non determinat sibi tantam quantitatem, corpus enim, in quantum corpus, non habet ex se quod sit tantum vel tantum, maius vel minus.
17. “The reason why [a heavenly body] cannot properly said to be matter is that the nature of matter is the nature of potency, for it is in potency to the first act, and by that it is in potency to the ultimate perfections that follow upon the first act. But the nature of the heavens is not in potency to the first act.”  
Auriol, *In Sent.* II.14.1.1 (Rome 1605, 188b): Ratio est quare non proprie dici potest materia, quia natura materiae est natura potentiae, est enim in potentia ad actum primum, et per hoc est in potentia ad extremas perfectiones quae sequuntur actum primum. Sed natura caeli non est in potentia ad actum primum.
18. “As change reveals matter, operation reveals form.”  
Averroes, *In Meta.* VIII.12, quoted from *Auct. Arist. Meta.*, 216: Sicut transmutatio facit scire materiam, sic operatio formam.