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Interreferentiality of Music, Soul, and Cosmos in Eriugena's Commentary on Martianus Capella's De Nuptiis, Book I

Keywords

John Scottus Eriugena, De Nuptiis, philosophy of music, liberal arts

Disciplines

Christianity | Music

Comments

Paper presented at the International Congress on Medieval Studies at Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo, Michigan, May 16, 2015.

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16 May 2015

International Congress on Medieval Studies, 2015
 Society for the Promotion of Eriugenian Studies
 Conference Paper

“The Interreferentiality of Music, Soul, and Cosmos in Eriugena’s Commentary
 on Martianus Capella’s *De Nuptiis*, Book I”

My paper today will primarily address a short treatise on music found inserted in John Scottus Eriugena’s comments on Book I of Martianus Capella’s textbook on the liberal arts, *De nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii* (*On the Marriage of Philology and Mercury*). Using my own translation of the treatise and its surrounding context in Eriugena’s glosses, I will demonstrate that Eriugena’s placement of his musical treatise after §15 in Book I was purposeful; i.e., I will show how his Latin glosses for §§11–15 of *De Nuptiis* outline much of the material presented more fully in his treatise. In the end, I will explain how Eriugena’s treatise is not strictly about music, or the supposed music of the spheres, or the human soul. Rather, we will see that for Eriugena there was an interreferentiality in his discussion of all three: music, soul, and cosmos.

As a textbook much respected in the Carolingian era, *De Nuptiis* (*DN*) encompasses the seven liberal arts. There is a framing narrative to the work: Mercury, representing the divine mind, seeks a wife, and he eventually chooses Philology, symbolizing human learning. At the wedding, Mercury presents a dowry of seven maidens who each expound one of the seven liberal arts.

Music is a special case in *DN*; musical references appear throughout the first two introductory books, and Harmonia, the maiden personifying theoretical musical knowledge, makes her presentation to the wedding party last of all the maidens, who embody each of the

liberal arts. The overall importance of Harmonia is confirmed by Capella at the beginning of Book IX, when Apollo declares of her, “It would be a grave offense to exclude from this company the one bridesmaid who is the particular darling of the heavens, whose performance is sought with joy and acclamation.”¹

In his commentary over *DN*, Eriugena wrote fluently concerning music theory and its connections to cosmology, drawing upon Calcidius and Macrobius.² Eriugena’s *Annotationes in Marcianum*, as they are called, are preserved in several manuscripts, notably, one found at the Paris Bibliothèque nationale (Latin 12960) and one at the Oxford University Bodleian Library (Auct. T.2.19). The Paris manuscript was created in the monastery of St. Pierre in Corbie in the late ninth century, and it was edited and printed in 1939 by Cora Lutz.³ The Oxford manuscript dates from the late ninth or early tenth centuries and is probably from St. Vincent in Metz. Eduard Jauneau published an edition of Eriugena’s glosses on *DN* Book I in the Oxford manuscript, in 1978.⁴ Interestingly, Eriugena’s music treatise, titled *De Armonia Caelestium Motuum Siderumque Sonis* (“Concerning the Harmony of Heavenly Movements and the Sounds

¹ William Stahl, *Martianus Capella and the Seven Liberal Arts*, Vol. 2 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977), 346. I should point out that, in contrast to my assertion, Ilsetraut Hadot, in *Arts Libéraux et Philosophie dans la Pensée Antique* (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1984), did not read Harmony’s placement at the end of *DN* as emphasis: “A partir du livre III commence la présentation des sept sciences cycliques, à raison d’une science par livre, dans l’ordre suivant: grammaire, dialectique, rhétorique, géométrie, arithmétique, astronomie, harmonie (= musique). L’ordre des sciences mathématiques doit probablement son caractère inhabituel à des raisons purement artistiques: le récit des sept sciences sera suivi par les noces de Mercure et de Philologie, et il était donc convenable de finir par la discipline qui puisse habilement faire la transition avec les chants de l’hyménée. La dernière place, qui est assignée à la musique, s’explique, je crois, par cette considération” (149).

² Teeuwen, *Harmony and the Music of the Spheres*, 152–53. Calcidius’s text is preserved in three ninth-century copies, copied in Northern France. Both Eriugena and Remigius of Auxerre cited Calcidius’s translation and commentary on Plato’s *Timaeus* when referencing Platonic ideas in their commentaries on Capella’s *De nuptiis*. In his glosses, Eriugena used astrological content found in Macrobius’s commentary on Cicero’s *Somnium Scipionis*, and Regino of Prum cites Macrobius’s discussion of musical intervals.

³ Cora Lutz, *Annotationes in Marcianum* (Cambridge, MA: Mediaeval Academy of America, 1939).

⁴ Eduard Jauneau, “Le commentaire érigénien sur Martianus Capella (De nuptiis, Lib.I) d’après le manuscrit d’Oxford (Bodl.Lib. Auct.T.2.19, fol. 1-31),” in *Quatre thèmes érigéniens*, Montreal, Paris 1978, 91–166. As to the question over whether the Paris and Oxford manuscripts come from different periods in Eriugena’s career, an original draft and then a revision, Jauneau considers them both to be derived from an earlier, more complete source (cf., Teeuwen, *Harmony and the Music of the Spheres*, 45–46 for a summary of the different perspectives).

of the Stars”), is not present in the Paris manuscript, nor is this material addressed so extensively by Eriugena in his glosses over other sections of *DN*, such as Books II and IX.

Theorizing about the movements and music of the heavens was, of course, a preoccupation and persistent intellectual pursuit since Antiquity. Some, like Pliny, in his *Naturalis historia* (II.20), likened the sounds of heaven to the lyre and proposed tuning the cosmos in terms of an octave with different distances between specific planetary pitches or in terms of the velocity and size of each planet’s orbit (a whole tone between the Earth and Moon, a semitone between the Moon and Mercury, and so on). And, in fact, Capella himself presented a scalar model of the spheres in *DN* Book II. Eriugena expounded a markedly different approach, in which the heavenly music is organized like the Immutable System of tetrachords and produces an infinite variety of musical sounds.⁵ (For any non-Musicologists in the room, the Immutable System was a two octave organization of fixed notes defining tetrachords—groups of four notes—with moveable inner notes that specify genus, i.e., diatonic, chromatic, or enharmonic.)

Turning to Eriugena’s approach, then, it should be noted that his music treatise, *De Armonia Caelestium Motuum Siderumque Sonis* (“Concerning the Harmony of Heavenly Movements and the Sounds of the Stars”), lies inserted between his comments on §15 and §16 of Book I and not at the section of Book II mentioned above, in which Capella presents an octave model of the planets and their pitches. I propose that his choice was deliberate, for Eriugena’s discussion appears to arise from this earlier portion in Book I, in which Capella describes the

⁵ Cf., Atkinson, *The Critical Nexus*, 11–15. The Immutable System combined pitches defined in the tetrachords of the Greater Perfect System (two octaves, two pairs of conjunct tetrachords separated by a middle point of disjunction, fifteen pitches) and Lesser Perfect System (spanning an eleventh, three conjunct tetrachords, eleven pitches). Considered in terms of individual pitches, the two systems overlap, so when they are combined there are sixteen pitches; the B-flat from the Lesser Perfect System being the only new note. Considered in terms of tetrachords, the combined systems result in five tetrachords with the addition of the *synemmenon* and three new pitch designations: *trite synemmenon*, *paranete synemmenon*, and *nete synemmenon*. See also Gabriela Currie’s “*Concentum celi quis dormire faciet?* Eriugenian Cosmic Song and Carolingian Planetary Astronomy,” in *Quomodo Cantabimus Canticum?: Studies in Honor of Edward H. Roesner*, ed. David Cannata, et al. (Middleton: American Institute of Musicology, 2008), 19.

sacred and mysterious grove of Apollo, where Mercury journeys, beginning at §11. In fact, Eriugena's glosses for §11–§15 outline much of the material presented more fully in his treatise.

In §11, Mercury approaches Apollo's grove and sees the scope of human history: empires rising and falling, human souls beginning and ending their earthly lives, and a "sweet music" arising from the trees—symbolizing the music of the spheres:

Amidst these extraordinary scenes and these vicissitudes of Destinies, a sweet music arose from the trees, a melody arising from their contact as the breeze whispered through them; for the crests of the great trees were very tall and, because of this tension, reverberated with a sharp sound [*acuto sonitu*, i.e., a high pitch]; but, whatever was close to and near the ground, with drooping boughs, shook with a deep heaviness of sound [*gravitas rauca quatiebat*, i.e., the lowest pitch]; while the trees of middle size in their contacts with each other sang together in fixed harmonies of the duple [2:1, octave], the sesquialtera [2:3, fifth], the sesquitercia [3:4, fourth] also, and even the sesquioctava [9:8, whole tone] without discrimination, although semitones [*limmata*] came between. So it happened that the grove poured forth, with melodious harmony, the whole music and song of the gods.⁶

The ratios arising from Apollo's trees are the basis of Pythagorean tuning, systematized in the famous series 12:9:8:6. But, remarkably, Eriugena moves in another direction and, in his commentary, applies a system of tetrachords to the sounding trees.

In all music that is made on strings, fourths and fifths arise. The first tetrachord is called *principalis principalium*, the second [tetrachord is called] *subprincipalis principalium*, the third *mediarum*, the fourth *disiunctarum*, the fifth *hyperboleon*, that is, *excellentium*. Therefore, in the first tetrachord the lowest voice is made, but in the last [tetrachord] is the highest, and whatever is in the middle is some kind of mixture between low and high. Therefore, [Capella] says in the following, *media ratis* [middle of the raft] that is, in the middle of the tree.⁷

Next, Eriugena explains that he understands the term "tone" (*tonus*) to refer to shifting proportional relationships between the planets (as opposed to fixed distances from each other),

⁶ Stahl, trans., *Martianus Capella*, 9–10. Comments in brackets are my own.

⁷ In omni musica quae cordis efficitur, tetracorda uel quina fiunt. Primum tetracordon uocatur principalis principalium, secundum subprincipalis principalium, tertium mediarum, quartum disiunctarum, quintum hyperboleon id est excellentium. In primo ergo tetracordon grauitas uocum fit, in ultimo autem acuitas, et quicquid in medio mixtura quaedam est inter grauitatem et acutum. Inde dicit in sequentibus: *media ratis*, id est media arboris.

and he affirms that in his conception the music of the spheres spans two octaves.⁸ In fact, it appears that the two octaves of the Immutable System are what Eriugena had in mind, but with a few oddities. First, in the passage quoted above, Eriugena names the tetrachords, but these designations do not align with Capella's description in *DN IX* (§961) or Boethius's in *De institutione musica* (I.25 and IV.3). Capella labels the tetrachords as *principalium*, *mediarum*, *coniunctarum*, *separatarum*, and *excellentium*, and Boethius, quoting Albinus, lists them as *principalium*, *mediarum*, *coniunctarum*, *disiunctarum* (or *divisarum* at *DIM IV.3*), and *excellentium*. In fact, Eriugena used the string names *principalis principalium* and *subprincipalis principalium* (*hypate hypaton* and *parhypate hypaton*) to refer to the first two tetrachords. Lastly, he named the *disiunctarum* (*diezeugmenon*) tetrachord, but not the *coniunctarum* (*synemmenon*).

Despite the peculiarities in how he names these tetrachords, it must be remembered, with significance for the following, that in the Immutable System the central pitch, the *mese*, occupies a central placement in the system considered as a whole as well as dynamically within the different octave species. The significance of the *mese* is observed in the act of tuning a monochord in order to make audible the intellectually discerned pitches of the Immutable System. The *mese* is the first pitch established at a ratio of 2:1, and, beginning with this one pitch, the entire array of other pitches is established (cf., Boethius's *DIM IV.5*).⁹ Therefore, it is important to note that Eriugena, glossing the word *lymmata*, identifies the Sun as *mese*:

⁸ Cf., Gabriela Currie, "Concentum celi quis dormire faciet? Eriugenian Cosmic Song and Carolingian Planetary Astronomy," in *Quomodo Cantabimus Canticum?: Studies in Honor of Edward H. Roesner*, ed. David Cannata, et al. (Middleton: American Institute of Musicology, 2008). Currie writes, "Eriugena generates, for the first time in the history of medieval re-evaluations of the Neoplatonic music of the spheres, a two-octave cosmic span with the Sun in the middle, functioning as the *mese*. It becomes the unifying element for all Eriugenian discussion of cosmic music . . ." (30).

⁹ Boethius, *De institutione musica*, trans. Calvin Bower (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 126ff. "Divide AB into four parts with three points: C, D, and E. Therefore the total, AB, will be the duple of DB and AD, and AD and DB will each be duples of AC, CD, DE, and EB. Thus AB will be the lowest (the *proslambanomenos*), and DB the *mese*, for it is half the total length, and as AB is double the length of DB, DB is twice as high as AB. For,

Lymmata, that is, a semitone [*emitonia*]. He says this, because some say the tones from the Sun to the Moon are whole [*tonos integros*]. Again, the tones from the Sun to Saturn are said to be whole. Thence, it turns out that the Sun is the *mese*, that is, it keeps a middle place [*locum*, i.e., orbit].¹⁰

In §12 and §13, Mercury explains to Virtue that hearing the celestial music in Apollo's grove makes sense, since all the spheres of the cosmos are modulated (*moduletur*) by the Sun. Mercury then shows Virtue seven rivers (beginning in §14) that they must cross and which symbolize the planetary orbits. Capella presents these multicolored rivers in the following order: Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, the Sun, Venus, Mercury, and Moon. In describing these rivers, Capella pays special attention to Venus, over which human souls seem to obsess:

Within shone a river purer than amber, with a crowd of people standing beside it who desired this more than the other rivers of the Destinies [*Fortunarum*]; some of these people were allured by its fragrant perfume; others were charmed by the sound of gentle melody from its waves. Many were thirsting to taste a drink of its delicious stream, while some people wanted the water to bathe and sooth themselves and to be immersed in it.¹¹

For Capella, the individual and corporate destinies of humans are connected to the movements of the planets, symbolized in these multicolored rivers. After an earthly death, these souls must then ascend back to Heaven, traversing the same celestial path; some souls make it, while others are lost, forever caught in “the lower regions.” And it is here, with this mention of the plight of souls transmigrating the sounding spheres, that Eriugena inserted his harmonic treatise, “Concerning the Harmony of Heavenly Movements and the Sounds of the Stars.”

Eriugena's treatise, *De armonia*, begins by dividing the heavens into two octaves, just as in his glosses. The lowest pitch is produced by Saturn, the highest by the Firmament; the Sun stands in the middle as the *mese*. Specifically, there are eight pitches produced by the seven

as was discussed above, the relationship of length and pitch is always reversed; to the degree that a string is higher, it will be shorter” (128).

¹⁰ *Lymmata*, id est emitonia. Hoc dicit quia a Sole usque ad Lunam quidam tonos integros dicunt. Iterum a Sole usque ad Saturnum toni etiam integri dicuntur. Inde conficitur ut Sol mise, id est medium locum teneat.

¹¹ Stahl, trans., *Martianus Capella*, 10–11.

planets and the Firmament. These pitches are determined by speed, length of orbit, and, in the case of the planets, their relation to the whirling Firmament. Eriugena states that the pitches rise between Saturn and the moon (the opposite of Capella's description in *DN* Book II) and that those planets below the Sun strain upwards toward those sounds that are higher in terms of placement.¹²

Eriugena makes the notable assertion that it is “not the positioning of the planets, but the proportional ratio of the pitches [that] produces the heavenly harmony,”¹³ and he explains 1) why this understanding is significant and 2) possible sources of confusion. Using the Sun and Saturn as an example, he clarifies that depending on their placement in relation to each other, not their position above the Earth, these planets can bring forth an octave, a fifth, and a fourth. That is, as the Sun and Saturn approach each other in their courses, the harmony between them will change. Eriugena claimed that once this principle is grasped, one may believe “that in the eight sounds of the heavens all possible musical consonances can be made—not only through the three genera, I mean the diatonic, chromatic, and enharmonic, referring to tetrachords, but, likewise, even in others, [i.e., other genera,] which are beyond all mortal reasoning.”¹⁴

Eriugena discerned that confusions in terminology were a hurdle to be overcome in understanding his presentation. In the next section of his treatise, he took up the term *tonus* and explained its interpretive possibilities. For the sake of time, I won't read the following and

¹² “Moreover, [the planets] located under the Sun stretch toward the higher sounds, because they are both farther from the speed of the sphere and run in shorter orbits in the heavens.” (Quae autem sub Sole localiter, quoniam et longius a spherica uelocitate distant et in breuioribus mundi spatiis discurrunt, acutiores sonos extendunt.)

¹³ The full sentence reads as follows: “And, through this, not the positioning of the planets, but the proportional ratio of the pitches produces the heavenly harmony, particularly since this ratio does not depend upon the position ascending and descending in the cosmos.” (Ac per hoc, non locorum positio sed proportionis sonorum ratio caelestem efficit armoniam, presertim cum non sinat ratio sursum et deorsum localiter in uniuerso.)

¹⁴ Ac per hoc, in octo caelestibus sonis omnes musicas consonantias fieri posse credendum est, non tantum per tria genera, diatonicum, dico, chrommaticum, enarmonicum, uerum etiam in aliis ultra omnium mortalium ratiocinationem.

simply point out that Eriugena is again expanding on material he covered in his glosses, discussed above, i.e., in his treatise, he describes his application of the Immutable System of tetrachords to the sounding spheres and then explains the interpretive possibilities of the word *tonus*.

And it should be noted that these tones [*toni*, i.e., considered as distances], which are calculated from the Earth to the Sphere, e.g., the tone [*tonus*] from Earth to the Moon, may not be in the ratios of the pitches [*in proportionibus uocum*], but in the distances of their positions. For there are many kinds of tones. Accordingly, tones [*tonorum*] are distances between the stars, i.e., how far each [planet] is apart from another and how far the Moon is removed from the Earth. [These] tones [*tonorum*] vary according to the diversities of [the planets'] arcs and orbits. It is this kind of tones [*tonorum*] that Martianus defines, saying, "A tone [*tonus*] is a distance with a measure, determined by rule." This kind [of tone] is called "interval" [*diastema*] in music. [Alternately,] there are tones of time [*toni temporum*], arranged in long or short duration. There are tones of breath [*toni spirituum*], defined in density or sparseness of sounds [*uocum*]. [And] there are tones of harmonies [*toni armonici*], which are now under discussion [*de quibus nunc agitur*], defined in lowness and highness of sounds, of which each proportion of consonances [*omnis proportionalitas simfoniarum*] is composed.

In this discussion, Eriugena initially explains Capella's use of the term *tonus* in a way that would encompass one sense of *modus*, as a specific set of pitches and intervals, though what mattered for Eriugena were the proportional relationships at play within the entire moving system, the "tones of harmonies" and not specific pitches applied to each planet.¹⁵ As an example, Eriugena pointed to the organ. The placement of any particular organ pipe makes no difference for the proportional relationships between all the pipes considered as a system. In another analogy, this time to a choir of vocalists, Eriugena summarized all of the preceding argument:

¹⁵ Cf., Barbara Münxelhaus, "Aspekte Der Musica Disciplina Bei Eriugena," in *Jean Scot Érigène et l'Histoire de la Philosophie* (Paris: Éditions du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1977), 262. Münxelhaus summarizes the exceptional nature of Eriugena's presentation thus: "Damit geht Eriugena über die traditionellen Systeme der Planetenskalen, die in ihrer Intervallfolge festgelegt sind, weit hinaus. Weder vor Eriugena noch nach ihm sind mir Systeme der Sphärenharmonie bekannt, die von einer festgelegten Planetenskala abgehen und in dieser erstaunlichen Konsequenz zu einem grundsätzlich variablen System führen." (Thus, Eriugena goes far beyond the traditional systems of planetary scales that are defined in their interval sequence. Neither before Eriugena nor after him are systems for the harmony of the spheres known to me that deviate from a fixed planetary scale and lead in this amazing consequence to a fundamentally variable system.)

Now, let us use a certain example so that it may be clearly evident what we are trying to assert. In a choir where many singers sing together simultaneously, the place where each [singer] is situated is not considered, rather, the proportional relationship of his sounding voice [to the others]. For, wherever the person who sings the lowest pitch will have been positioned, it is necessary that he should maintain the lowest ratio of all pitches [*uocum*]. By the same reasoning, wherever in the choir might be the one who sings [*profert*] the highest pitch, he necessarily will hold the highest of all pitches [*sonorum*]. Accompanying voices [*succinentibus*] should be similarly understood; of which, not the placed position, but the proportional relationship between the voices [*proportionalis uociferatio*] is distinguished in the whole of the melody. Therefore, in vain, one considers the heavenly music to be constrained by the ratios of local intervallic distances [*localium interuallorum rationibus*], in which nothing else is seen except the ascent and descent of lowness and highness.

It is here, after such a fascinating and challenging discussion, that previous scholars have ended their considerations of Eriugena and the harmony of the spheres.¹⁶ Examining the context for Eriugena's treatise suggests that more should be said, though. You'll remember that the last glosses before this treatise begins were on the topic of human souls, and, similarly, Eriugena's treatise now continues specifically on the topic of souls:

[The following is according to] the Platonic sect of the most ancient Greeks concerning the fall and returning [*apostrophia*] of souls, who, as with all souls simultaneously created before earthly bodies, are led astray, having been deceived in the starry heavens [*in celestibus stellarum aditis delirantur*]. Being neither strong enough nor willing to follow the speed of the celestial sphere, they choose the slowness of Saturn. First, down from the celestial seats they fall into the revolutions of Saturn, and from there, beginning to fall and without reason strong enough to hold them, they are impelled to fall through the various orbits of the planets all the way to earthly bodies, in which, by diverse sins and polluted by filth, they are forced again to be loosened and to descend to the lower regions, i.e., to that life which follows the death of the flesh.

Sin is the obstacle that keeps these souls from regaining Heaven, and apotheosis (a.k.a. deification or theosis) is needed (remembering that Eriugena understood apotheosis as the final

¹⁶ By which, I mean that other scholars have not incorporated Eriugena's subsequent discussions of the soul when explaining Eriugena's account of the harmony of the spheres, e.g., Münxelhaus, "Aspekte der Musica Disciplina."

and complete union of elect souls with God).¹⁷ Eriugena's treatise on the harmony of the spheres ends with the following:

[Souls] are unable to reach [their former placement] without the purification called ἀποθέωσις [i.e., apotheosis], i.e., redeification, because of the corporeal stains of pollution. [The Ancient Greeks] believed that [as souls] cling first to divinity in [indivisible] unity, [there they should] return, after having been cleansed, [but stained souls] are unable to make it back. It is in these pathways of the planets [that the Greeks] believed souls to be cleansed. Since the ethereal spaces are not of the same nature, indeed, some are said to be cold, some fiery hot, some temperate, they assigned each one [i.e., souls] individually a place according to their own merits. The pathway of Saturn is called the river Styx; this is sadness, to which Martianus alludes calling Saturn the “most unhappy of the gods,” because of its excess of cold, which comes about due to its distance from the Sun and the slowness of its orbit. The pathway of Mars is called πυριφλεγέθων, i.e., fire inflaming. In these two pathways [i.e., Saturn and Mars], wicked spirits are either always to be tormented, if they had been excessively wicked, or to be cleansed, and so are able to return to a certain respite [*quietem*]. This respite was believed to be in the pathway of Jupiter and Venus, in which are the Elysian fields [i.e., Ἠλύσιον πεδίων], this is what they thought to be the plains for the relaxation from penalty. But, because of love of the flesh, to which they have been yoked from birth, these souls are neither in the state of purifications nor in the forgetful rest of those having been cleansed, rather, and seek to return again to a body. [On the other hand,] some [souls] completely despise their bodies and naturally approach the stars from which they evidently had fallen. Therefore, he [i.e., Capella] says, some [souls] are restored to the shores, that is, to a former state, some to be entirely freed from bodies. Moreover, the free balance of souls, by which it is considered whether they are going to return to bodies or, having scorned all fleshly lodging, to return to their former seat, is signified through one of the destinies [i.e., *fortunarum*] moving out of and returning to various streams. Indeed, not even a malicious wave could restrain them, as he himself said. So great is the freedom of the human soul that if it should wish to remain in misery, it remains, [and, contrariwise,] if in its integrity [*cinceritate*] it should persevere. So much is sufficient [to say] concerning the misery of human thinking and concerning the machinations of the unfaithful.¹⁸

¹⁷ Cf., *Periphyseon* V, PL122:935C-D.

¹⁸ Quoniam uero corporalibus maculis pollutatae sine purgatione quam ΑΠΟΘΕΩΣΙΝ appellabant, id est redificationem, quoniam primo in unitate diuinitati adherabant, ut putabant, ad quam purgatae reuertebantur, illuc peruenire non poterant, in ipsis planetarum meatibus purgari estimabant, et quia aetheria spatia non eiusdem qualitatis sunt, quaedam quidem frigida, quaedam uero ardentia, quaedam temperata dicuntur esse, pro qualitate meritorum singulas singulis deputabant. Et meatum quidem Saturni Stigem uocabant, hoc est tristitiam: inde alludit MARTIANVS dicens “mestissimum deorum” Saturnum, propter nimietatem frigoris, quae Solis longinquitate et cursus tarditate nascitur. Martis uero meatum ΠΥΡΦΛΗΓΕΤΟΝ uocabant, hoc est ignem flammantem. In quibus duobus meatibus impias animas aut semper torqueri si nimiae nequitiae forent, aut purgari ut ad quietem quandam possent redire. Quam quietem in meatu Iouis et Veneris esse putabant, in quibus ΕΛΥΣΙΟΝ, hoc est solutionis ex poenis campos esse putabant. Quoniam uero amoris corporum, quibus nascentibus adiunctae sunt neque in purgationibus neque in quietibus oblitae sunt, etiam purgatae redire iterum ad corpora quaedam quidem appetunt, quaedam uero sprete omnino corporibus suas naturaliter adeunt stellas, uidelicet ex quibus lapsae sunt. Ideoque ait quasdam ad ripas redditas, hoc est ad pristinum statum, quasdam uero corporibus omnino liberari. Animarum autem liberam examinationem, qua deliberant utrum ad corpora reuersurae sunt an, omni corporea habitatione sprete, ad

Eriugena's insistence on "the free balance of souls" (*animarum autem liberam examinationem*) is interesting to note, considering his participation in the predestination controversies of the ninth century. But, more to the point, it seems that as Eriugena preferred a more complex understanding of the tones between planets (proportion in reference to the Sun vs. fixed intervals), so he articulated an approach that considered the soul's journey through the heavens to be more than a journey from point A to point B. Stated simply, his aim in these glosses was to expound his view, that the soul must regulate itself carefully in pursuit of deification.

And at this point, one observes the brilliance in Eriugena's presentation. For, as human intellect cultivated in the liberal arts understands musical proportions and modulates music well,¹⁹ the cosmos has a proportional ordering considered in reference to the central, modulating Sun (standing for divine intelligence), and, just so, the soul (metaphorically journeying through the heavens) necessitates an appropriate ordering, guided by intellect, fortified by moral strength, and undistracted by base sensuality.

sedes pristinas reuersurae, per alteram furtunarum de amne in amnem et reciprocum de flumine ad flumen reditum significat. Non potuit enim liuida unda, ut ipse ait, eas retinere. Tantaesiquidem libertatis est humana anima ut, si uelit in miseria manere, maneat, sin in sua cinceritate permaneat. Sat est de humanarum cogitationum miseria deque infidelium machinamentis.

¹⁹ Here, I am using Augustine's (as well as Censorinus's and Cassiodorus's) definition of *musica* as *scientia bene modulandi*, i.e., *modulatio*, from *modus*, the application of measure.