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## Celestial Matter: Late 13<sup>th</sup> and Early 14<sup>th</sup> Centuries Speculations on the Hylomorphism of Heavenly Bodies

### *Abstract*

*The present contribution offers a comprehensive review of the debates in the late Medieval period (13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries) concerning the hylomorphic composition of celestial substances. By examining the responses of Aquinas and Giles of Rome to the Averroistic notion of the simplicity of the Heavens, three distinct positions come to light. Aquinas argues that the Heavenly bodies are compound substances, but he maintains that their matter cannot be of the same nature as elemental matter. On the other hand, Giles rejects such a conclusion and denies the theory of two essentially distinct matters. Instead, Giles introduces the concept of univocity between celestial and terrestrial matter, suggesting their essential identity. Giles' doctrine of univocity between earthly and Heavenly matters, inasmuch as it was perhaps implicitly endorsed by Duns Scotus, would enjoy wide acceptance among 14<sup>th</sup>-century Franciscan thinkers, including Hugh of Novocastro, William of Ockham, Landulph Caracciolo and Walter Chatton. Aquinas' theory of equivocal matters, which found early proponents in thinkers like Henry of Ghent and Richard of Middleton, would later be defended by scholars such as William of Ware, Henry of Harclay, and Alexander of Alessandria. Averroes' viewpoint, who considered the Heavens as simple forms, gained significant popularity in the 14<sup>th</sup> century and received support from Franciscan thinkers such as John of Bassoles, Peter Aureol, and Francis of Meyronnes.*