Contra Geocentrism: The Socratic–Peripatetic Corpus Against Its Own Conversion

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Abstract

A reading of the corpus transmitted under the names of Aristotle and Theophrastus against its own conversion into geocentrism. De caelo II 14 concludes the resting central earth; II 13, the chapter before, holds the central fire, the earth as one of the stars, the argument that the phenomena would fall out alike for observers off the centre, and the distinction that the middle of a magnitude is not the honoured middle. Theophrastus's Metaphysics asks why only the circling bodies desire and calls the region about the middle as if pushed from the most honoured. The reports carry the case out of the school in De caelo's own construction: Theophrastus on Plato's repentance of giving the earth the middle place (Plutarch, Platonic Questions 8.1), Hicetas's turning earth ut ait Theophrastus (Cicero, Lucullus 123), the Placita that Copernicus copied; and Copernicus names Cicero first and Plutarch after as the occasion of his turn. The school commentary closes what the text left open (Aquinas on De caelo II), and the history of breaking the closure charges it to the name (Ramus, Bacon, Galileo's Aristotle against the Peripatetics). The paper argues that the calcification of authorship and the calcification of the cosmos are one operation in two applications. Every quotation is checked in the seated texts, most of them seated for it in EA-CORPORA-42 (#1799).

Body

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the lexicon was common honour vocabulary; Gutas, being paywalled, was declared and not pursued." version: v1.0 related_ids: "AXN deposit #1799 — EA-CORPORA-42: Contra Geocentrism, the seating of the texts this paper reads\nAXN deposit #1559 — EA-CORPORA-04: Aristotle undivided, the seat of De caelo\nAXN deposit #1731 — EA-CORPORA-32: the Wimmer Theophrastus, with the Metaphysics\nAXN deposit #1522 — EA-CORPORA-01: Plato, with the Timaeus\nAXN deposit #1591 — EA-CORPORA-13: the Alexander seam, with Cicero's Academica posteriora\nAXN deposit #1575 — Many and One, Heraclides and the Syracusans (§5.4)\nAXN deposit #1570 — the Measurement Register (§5.4)\nAXN deposit #1794 — The Thinkery and the Lyceum, the impiety nexus (§5.3)\nAXN deposit #1762 — The Crossing of Names, operation as precedent (§7.6)\nAXN deposit #1798 — Either Forgery or Fact v1.2, the colonized books\nAXN deposit #1733 — Legitimately Many, the many-author reading of the corpus" axn_schema_version: v2 protocol_version: alexanarch-deposit-protocol/v1 keywords: - geocentrism - De caelo - De caelo II 13 - De caelo II 14 - Aristotle - Theophrastus - Theophrastus Metaphysics - one corpus - Socratic–Peripatetic corpus - Plato - Timaeus - ἴλλεσθαι - central fire - Pythagoreans - Philolaus - Hicetas - Ecphantus - Heraclides of Pontus - Aristarchus - Seleucus - Strato - Cleanthes - impiety - Hestia - Plutarch - Platonic Questions - Numa - De facie - Placita - Aëtius - Cicero - Lucullus - Simplicius - Thomas Aquinas - Copernicus - De revolutionibus - Francis Bacon - Novum Organum - Galileo - Dialogo - Oresme - Buridan - underdetermination - absence of parallax - congealing of authorship - blaming the name - operation as precedent - reception history - history of astronomy - commentary tradition *** # Contra Geocentrism: The Socratic–Peripatetic Corpus Against Its Own Conversion

Contra Geocentrism: The Socratic–Peripatetic Corpus Against Its Own Conversion

Johannes Sigil, with Nobel Glas · 22 November 2026 · Transactions on Substrate Engineering · v1.0 · Greek and Latin from the seated texts

Abstract

The corpus transmitted under the names of Aristotle and Theophrastus states a resting central earth as a conclusion, and holds the case against it in the same treatise, in its *Metaphysics*, and in its reports of others. *De caelo* II 14 concludes that the earth neither moves nor lies outside the middle; II 13, the chapter before, sets out the central fire, the earth as "one of the stars", the argument that the phenomena would fall out alike for those who do not live at the centre, and the distinction that the middle of a magnitude is not the honoured middle. The *Metaphysics* asks why only the circling bodies desire, and whether the region about the centre is pushed from the most honoured in place and in activity. The reports carry the rest: Plato's repentance of the central earth, on Theophrastus's word (Plutarch); Hicetas's turning earth, *ut ait Theophrastus* (Cicero). The route by which the earth was turned in the sixteenth century runs through these reports: Copernicus found it "first in Cicero". The conversion of the corpus into geocentrism read the conclusion of one chapter as the corpus. Read as one corpus, it holds its own refutation and the road that refutation travelled. The authors, congealed, hide this: each is given a position, and the operation that spans them goes unread. The congealing is itself the operation the corpus is read as teaching: one name fixed at the centre of the writing is one body fixed at the centre of the heavens.

1. The conventional reading

1. *De caelo* II 14 concludes: ὅτι μὲν οὖν οὔτε κινεῖται οὔτ᾽ ἐκτὸς κεῖται τοῦ μέσου, φανερὸν ἐκ τούτων, "that it neither moves nor lies outside the middle is plain from these things". The ground is the physics of natural motion: heavy things are carried from every side to the middle, a part cannot be carried from the middle unless forced, and what holds of the part holds of the whole.
2. The astronomers are called as witnesses: μαρτυρεῖ δὲ τούτοις καὶ τὰ παρὰ τῶν μαθηματικῶν λεγόμενα περὶ τὴν ἀστρολογίαν, "what the mathematicians say about astronomy also bears witness to these things": the phenomena fall out ὡς ἐπὶ τοῦ μέσου κειμένης τῆς γῆς, "as if the earth lay at the middle".
3. II 13, on this reading, is the survey of predecessors that II 14 answers: the Pythagoreans, the Timaeus, those who hold the earth flat. Their views are reported in order to be refuted.
4. Ptolemy, *Almagest* I 3–7, sets the central resting earth on observation and geometry; the schools joined Ptolemy's astronomy to Aristotle's physics, and "Aristotelian cosmology" became the name of the joined system, though the two found the central earth from opposite directions (§7.5). Copernicus overturned it.
5. On this account the corpus is geocentric, its non-geocentric material is doxography, and the history of astronomy is a history of correction from outside the corpus.

This reading is coherent and has the conclusion of II 14 on its side. What follows reads the rest of the corpus.

2. What De caelo II 13 holds

Greek from the seated text (data/corpora/aristotle, tlg0086.tlg005), checked line by line. Bekker loci are given from the seated edition's line markers, which fall every five lines, so each is exact to that interval: II 13 opens at 293a15; II 14 at 296a24.

1. **The central fire.** οἱ περὶ τὴν Ἰταλίαν, καλούμενοι δὲ Πυθαγόρειοι … ἐπὶ μὲν γὰρ τοῦ μέσου πῦρ εἶναί φασι, τὴν δὲ γῆν ἓν τῶν ἄστρων οὖσαν, κύκλῳ φερομένην περὶ τὸ μέσον νύκτα τε καὶ ἡμέραν ποιεῖν: "those about Italy called Pythagoreans say there is fire at the middle, and that the earth, being one of the stars, carried in a circle about the middle, makes night and day." (293a20–24)
2. **The others.** πολλοῖς δ᾽ ἂν καὶ ἑτέροις συνδόξειε μὴ δεῖν τῇ γῇ τὴν τοῦ μέσου χώραν ἀποδιδόναι: "many others too might agree that the place of the middle should not be given to the earth." The non-central earth is not one school's oddity. It is a view the chapter expects to be widely shared. (293a25–29)
3. **The phenomena do not decide.** ἐπεὶ γὰρ οὐκ ἔστιν ἡ γῆ κέντρον, ἀλλ᾽ ἀπέχει τὸ ἡμισφαίριον αὐτῆς ὅλον, οὐθὲν κωλύειν οἴονται τὰ φαινόμενα συμβαίνειν ὁμοίως μὴ κατοικοῦσιν ἡμῖν ἐπὶ τοῦ κέντρου: "since the earth is not the centre but stands off from it by its whole hemisphere, they think nothing prevents the phenomena from falling out alike for us who do not dwell at the centre." The text then supplies the reason: οὐθὲν γὰρ οὐδὲ νῦν ποιεῖν ἐπίδηλον τὴν ἡμίσειαν ἀπέχοντας ἡμᾶς διάμετρον, "for even now our standing off by half the diameter makes nothing evident." This is the argument from the absence of parallax, stated in the chapter. (293b20–29)

4. **II 14's witness is II 13's indecisive phenomena.** II 14 calls the astronomers to witness that the phenomena fall out "as if the earth lay at the middle" (ὡς ἐπὶ τοῦ μέσου κειμένης). II 13 has already reported that the phenomena would fall out alike if it did not (συμβαίνειν ὁμοίως). II 14 does not claim the phenomena decide by themselves: they "bear witness", beside a physics of natural motion. The observations differ in kind: II 14 cites the changing configurations by which the order of the stars is defined (μεταβαλλόντων τῶν σχημάτων οἷς ὥρισται τῶν ἄστρων ἡ τάξις, 296b35–297a4); II 13, the absence of any visible effect of standing off from the centre. But the II 14 phenomena are of the kind II 13 says would fall out alike for observers off the centre. The precise claim is underdetermination: II 13 shows the phenomena cannot decide between centre and off-centre, so II 14 cannot draw on them as independent corroboration. The conclusion stands or falls with its physics of natural place, and that physics is stated conditionally (below). Its observational support is the kind of evidence the corpus itself declares indecisive.
5. **The middle of the magnitude is not the middle of the thing.** Against the Pythagorean honour argument: καθάπερ ἐν τοῖς ζῴοις οὐ ταὐτὸν τοῦ ζῴου καὶ τοῦ σώματος μέσον, οὕτως ὑποληπτέον μᾶλλον καὶ περὶ τὸν ὅλον οὐρανόν, "just as in animals the middle of the animal and of the body are not the same, so rather must it be supposed of the whole heaven." The middle of a place ἔοικε τελευτῇ μᾶλλον ἢ ἀρχῇ, "is more like an end than a beginning". The distinction undoes the honour of the fire at the centre. It equally undoes any reason the centre should be the earth's by dignity: the centre of place is the bounded, matter, not the bounding, substance. (293b5–9 and following)
6. **The Timaeus.** ἔνιοι δὲ καὶ κειμένην ἐπὶ τοῦ κέντρου φασὶν αὐτὴν ἕλλεσθαι καὶ κινεῖσθαι περὶ τὸν διὰ παντὸς τεταμένον πόλον, ὥσπερ ἐν τῷ Τιμαίῳ γέγραπται: "some say that, lying at the centre, it winds and moves about the pole stretched through the whole, as is written in the Timaeus." (293b30–32) The corpus reads the Academy's own book as giving the earth motion. What the *Timaeus* means by its verb (40b–c) is disputed: ἕλλεσθαι, ἑλλομένην, can be read as winding, packed or held fast about the axis, or as turning. The paper does not settle Plato's meaning. The point is the corpus's reading: De caelo takes the verb as motion, and so does the report Cicero transmits (*hoc etiam Platonem in Timaeo dicere quidam arbitrantur*, §4.4). The dispute about the verb is part of the record.

The chapter's census, then: of the positions it records on the earth's place and motion, the central resting earth is one; the others move it or move it off the centre. II 14's conclusion (296b25–27) is conditional on its physics (296b35–297a2, εἴπερ ἀδύνατον κινηθῆναι μὴ ὑπὸ κρείττονος ἰσχύος, ἀναγκαῖον ἂν εἴη, "if it is impossible for it to be moved except by a stronger force, it would be necessary"), and its observational support is the indecisive phenomena of II 13.

3. The Metaphysics presses the centre

Greek from the seated clean text: First1KGreek tlg0093.tlg006, Wimmer's Teubner text of 1862 (EA-CORPORA-09/01), §§9–10, read against the Didot OCR seated as EA-CORPORA-32/03. The two agree on the words; the OCR's one error of substance (χώραν for τὰς χώρας) is corrected below from the clean text. Ross and Fobes (Oxford, 1929), whose page-and-line

numbering (4a–11b) the scholarship cites, is public domain in the United States, but no open copy was found; Gutas (2010) is paywalled, declared, not pursued.

1. **Why only the circling bodies desire.** ἐπιζητήσειε διὰ τί τὰ κυκλικὰ μόνον ἐφετικά, τῶν δὲ περὶ τὸ μέσον οὐθὲν καίπερ κινητῶν ὄντων: "one might ask why only the circling bodies have desire, and nothing of what is about the middle, although these too are movable", and goes on: πότερον ὡς ἀδύνατα ἢ ὡς οὐ διικνουμένου τοῦ πρώτου, "whether because they are incapable, or because the first does not reach them"; weakness in the first would be absurd, since one would think it stronger than Homer's Zeus, who could draw up the earth itself and the sea; so the region is left "as something unreceptive and incomposite" (ἄδεκτόν τι καὶ ἀσύνθετον). The cosmology's own principle of motion, desire for the first, stops at the circle. The region about the middle moves and is given no share in it.
2. **Pushed from the most honoured.** The question follows whether the things about the middle are parts of the heaven, and if parts, how: νῦν γὰρ οἷον ἀπεωσμένα τῶν ἐντιμοτάτων οὐ μόνον κατὰ τὰς χώρας ἀλλὰ καὶ κατὰ τὴν ἐνέργειαν, εἴπερ ἡ κυκλικὴ τοιαύτη, "for as it is they are as if pushed away from the most honoured, not only in their places but in their activity, if the circular motion is such [the best]." This is De caelo II 13's honour-and-centre question, put to the system's own centre: the middle is the place of least honour, and the earth is there.
3. **Rotation as being.** Whether the circling is the heaven's very being, so that it would perish if the circling ceased, or belongs to it by some desire, accidentally. The question is asked of the motion the conclusion of II 14 assigns to everything but the earth.
4. **What these are.** The aporiai do not move the earth. They take the honour that De caelo's Pythagoreans gave the centre, which De caelo answered by separating the middle of place from the middle of the thing, and ask what the system's own centre then is: moved, desireless, pushed from the honoured. The corpus that concludes the earth at rest in the middle asks, in its first philosophy, why the middle is outside the order of desire.

What the aporetic form limits. The *Metaphysics* raises difficulties; it asserts no cosmology. What it shows is that the centre is a problem inside the system, not that the writer endorses a moving earth. The syntax, read in the clean text: οἷον marks "pushed away" as a likeness, not a predication; the subject is "these", the things about the middle, of which the sentence before asks whether they are parts of the heaven at all; "the most honoured" are what they are pushed from, the honoured regions of the heaven, whose motion is the circular, conditionally the best (εἴπερ ἡ κυκλικὴ τοιαύτη). The translation carries no more than that.

4. The reports

Greek and Latin from Perseus (canonical-greekLit tlg0007.tlg133 and tlg0007.tlg005, perseus-grc2; canonical-latinLit phi0474.phi046, perseus-lat2), read in the TEI with the apparatus set aside. Seated in EA-CORPORA-42 (#1799, seats 42/01 and 42/03), and every quotation below checked in the seated text layer.

The reports give the earth the middle place in De caelo's own construction. De caelo II 13: μὴ δεῖν **τῇ γῇ τὴν τοῦ μέσου χώραν ἀποδιδόναι** (293a27–28). Theophrastus in Plutarch: ὡς οὐ προσήκουσαν **ἀποδόντι τῇ γῇ τὴν μέσην χώραν** τοῦ παντός (1006C). The same

verb, the same dative, the same object: to give the earth the place of the middle. Around it the same inference: the middle is owed to what is most honoured (προσήκειν), the earth is not most honoured, so the middle is not owed to it. Honour words are common coin in Greek cosmology; this is not a common word but a collocation and an argument, carried from the chapter into the report. It is the section's claim; the passages follow.

Each report is doubly mediated, and the layers are kept: Plutarch reports Theophrastus reporting Plato; Cicero reports Theophrastus reporting Hicetas. The Greek collocations can be checked against Greek. Cicero's Latin is Cicero's wording.

1. **Plato's repentance, on Theophrastus's word.** Plutarch, *Platonic Questions* 8.1 (1006C): Θεόφραστος δὲ καὶ προσιστορεῖ τῷ Πλάτωνι πρεσβυτέρῳ γενομένῳ μεταμέλειν, ὡς οὐ προσήκουσαν ἀποδόντι τῇ γῇ τὴν μέσην χώραν τοῦ παντός, "Theophrastus further reports that Plato, grown older, repented of having given the earth the middle place of the whole, which did not befit it."
2. **The question it answers.** The same Question asks whether the Timaeus moved the earth as it moved the sun, the moon and the five planets: καὶ ἔδει τὴν γῆν ἰλλομένην περὶ τὸν διὰ πάντων πόλον τεταμένον … στρεφομένην καὶ ἀνειλουμένην νοεῖν, ὡς ὕστερον Ἀρίσταρχος καὶ Σέλευκος ἀπεδείκνυσαν, ὁ μὲν ὑποτιθέμενος μόνον ὁ δὲ Σέλευκος καὶ ἀποφαινόμενος: the earth "winding about the pole stretched through all" is to be thought of "as turning and unrolling, as Aristarchus and Seleucus later showed, the one only as hypothesis, Seleucus also declaring it." The word ἰλλομένην is the one De caelo II 13 reads (ἴλλεσθαι, "as is written in the Timaeus").
3. **The same report, unnamed.** Plutarch, *Numa* 11.1–2: the Pythagoreans set fire at the middle, τὴν δὲ γῆν οὔτε ἀκίνητον οὔτε ἐν μέσῳ τῆς περιφορᾶς οὖσαν, ἀλλὰ κύκλῳ περὶ τὸ πῦρ αἰωρουμένην οὐ τῶν τιμιωτάτων οὐδὲ τῶν πρώτων τοῦ κόσμου μορίων ὑπάρχειν, "the earth neither unmoved nor at the middle of the revolution, but swung in a circle about the fire, not of the most honoured nor of the first parts of the cosmos"; ταῦτα δὲ καὶ Πλάτωνά φασι πρεσβύτην γενόμενον διανενοῆσθαι … τὴν δὲ μέσην καὶ κυριωτάτην ἑτέρῳ τινὶ κρείττονι προσήκουσαν, "and they say Plato too, grown old, thought this of the earth, as standing in another place, and the middle and most sovereign belonging to something else, stronger."
4. **Hicetas, *ut ait Theophrastus*.** Cicero, *Lucullus* (*Academica* II) 123: Hicetas Syracosius, ut ait Theophrastus, caelum solem lunam stellas supera denique omnia stare censet, neque praeter terram rem ullam in mundo moveri; quae cum circum axem se summa celeritate convertat et torqueat, eadem effici omnia quasi stante terra caelum moveretur. atque hoc etiam Platonem in Timaeo dicere quidam arbitrantur, sed paulo obscurius. "Hicetas of Syracuse, as Theophrastus says, holds that the heaven, sun, moon, stars, all things above, stand still, and nothing in the cosmos moves but the earth; and that, as it turns and twists about its axis with the greatest speed, everything comes out the same as if the earth stood and the heaven moved. And some think Plato says this too in the Timaeus, but more obscurely."
5. **The words cross.** The reports speak De caelo II 13's vocabulary of the centre. The honour argument: τῷ γὰρ τιμιωτάτῳ οἴονται προσήκειν τὴν τιμιωτάτην ὑπάρχειν χώραν (De caelo); ὡς οὐ προσήκουσαν ἀποδόντι τῇ γῇ τὴν μέσην χώραν (Theophrastus in Plutarch). The sovereign middle: τὸ κυριώτατον τοῦ παντός (De caelo, the Pythagorean guardhouse of Zeus); τὴν μέσην καὶ κυριωτάτην (Numa). The earth outside the most honoured: ἀπεωσμένα τῶν ἐντιμοτάτων (Metaphysics); οὐ τῶν τιμιωτάτων οὐδὲ τῶν

πρώτων τοῦ κόσμου μορίων (Numa). The indecisive phenomena, in Latin and so in Cicero's words, not Theophrastus's: τὰ φαινόμενα συμβαίνειν ὁμοίως (De caelo); eadem effici omnia quasi stante terra (Cicero, on Theophrastus). Here the shared thing is the argument, that the appearances come out the same either way, not a collocation.

6. **What that shows.** One lexicon of the centre runs through the treatise, the first philosophy and the reports: who is owed the middle, what is most sovereign, what is pushed from the honoured, whether the phenomena can tell. The reporter of Plato's repentance and of Hicetas's turning earth is the writer of the aporia about the desireless centre. Read as two authors, these are a loyal pupil's doubts and a doxographer's notes. Read as one corpus, they are the case against the central earth, carried in the corpus's own words from the chapter that states it to the reports that took it out of the school.

5. The route

1. **Copernicus found it in Cicero first.** The dedication of *De revolutionibus* (1543) to Paul III gives the order of his reading: "I found first, indeed, in Cicero, that Niceta perceived that the Earth moved" (Fordham translation). Niceta is Hicetas; the Cicero is *Lucullus* 123; the report there is *ut ait Theophrastus*. Copernicus names Cicero, not Theophrastus; the Theophrastus is in Cicero's sentence. The first ancient warrant Copernicus names for moving the earth is a report Cicero gives on Theophrastus's word. The Latin (seated, 42/08): Ac reperi quidem apud Ciceronem primum, Nicetum sensisse terram moveri. Postea & apud Plutarchum inveni quosdam alios in ea fuisse opinione; and, after the Greek of the Placita: Inde igitur occasionem nactus, coepi et ego de terrae mobilitate cogitare, "taking occasion from this, I too began to think about the mobility of the earth." The reports are not his precedent after the fact; by his own account they are the occasion.
2. **Plutarch second.** Then Plutarch, whose passage he quotes: Philolaus the Pythagorean, the earth revolving in a circle; Heraclides of Pontus and Ecphantus the Pythagorean, the earth moving without changing its position. The passage is *Placita* III 13, the doxography that came down under Plutarch's name, a different transmission from the *Platonic Questions* of §4.1. The Greek Copernicus copies stands in the seated Placita (42/02): Φιλόλαος δ' ὁ Πυθαγόρειος κύκλῳ περιφέρεσθαι περὶ τὸ πῦρ … Ἡρακλείδης ὁ Ποντικὸς καὶ Ἔκφαντος ὁ Πυθαγόρειος κινοῦσι μὲν τὴν γῆν, οὐ μήν γε μεταβατικῶς … τροχοῦ δίκην. On Diels's reconstruction (*Doxographi Graeci*, 1879) the *Placita* descend through Aëtius from Theophrastus's *Physical Opinions*; Mansfeld and Runia have since qualified the stemma, so this second link is the conventional account, not a settled one.
3. **Aristarchus and the succession.** Aristarchus of Samos, who set the sun at the centre (Archimedes, *Sand-Reckoner*), is reported as a hearer of Strato, Theophrastus's successor at the head of the Lyceum: Ἀρίσταρχος Σάμιος μαθηματικὸς ἀκουστὴς Στράτωνος (Aëtius I 15, On colours, in Stobaeus's column of Diels's *Doxographi Graeci*, seated 42/06, the OCR reading ἀχηυστὴς). The Sand-Reckoner (42/04) gives his hypotheses: Ἀρίσταρχος δὲ ὁ Σάμιος ὑποθέσιών τινων ἐξέδωκεν γραφάς, the fixed stars and the sun unmoved; and the *Placita* (II 24): Ἀρίσταρχος τὸν ἥλιον ἵστησι μετὰ τῶν ἀπλανῶν, τὴν δὲ γῆν κινεῖ. The closure's first recorded enforcer was not the corpus but the Stoa: Cleanthes held that the Greeks should indict Aristarchus for impiety, ὡς κινοῦντα τοῦ κόσμου τὴν ἑστίαν, "as moving the hearth of the cosmos" (Plutarch, *De facie* 923A, seated 42/01). Hestia is the name *Numa* 11 gives the Pythagoreans' central fire; Clean-

thes gives it to the earth. Plutarch's Question pairs him with Seleucus as the ones who "later showed" what the Timaeus's winding earth meant (§4.2). The impiety charge that the corpus's own reports record against its school (#1794) is here the charge against moving the earth.

4. **The produced Syracusans.** The archive has argued (#1575, *Many and One*; #1570, the Measurement Register) that Hicetas and Ecphantus of Syracuse were speaking positions in the dialogues of Heraclides of Pontus, an Academic who also heard Aristotle, received by the doxographic tradition as historical philosophers: "The reputational apparatus did not detect them. It produced them." This is a second and separate claim, conditional on #1575: if it holds, the Syracusans Copernicus cited are the school's own characters, carried into history by the school's own reports, and returned to astronomy as its ancient precedent. The road in 5 does not depend on it. Copernicus cited Hicetas and Ecphantus as historical precedent; the road is a history of transmission, and it holds whether they were philosophers or speaking positions.
5. **The road, end to end.** De caelo II 13 records the moving and off-centre earth. Theophrastus reports Hicetas's turning earth and Plato's repentance. The *Placita* carry Philolaus, Heraclides and Ecphantus. Cicero and Plutarch transmit the reports. Copernicus reads Cicero first and Plutarch second, and turns the earth. Every station on the road before Copernicus is the corpus or its reports. What travels is not one system: Hicetas's earth turns on its axis; the Pythagorean earth circles a central fire; Copernicus joins the daily turning to a yearly orbit. The road carries the alternatives to the fixed central earth, not a heliocentric doctrine.

6. Inside the commentary

1. **1277.** The Paris condemnations of 1277 denied, among other things, that God could not move the heavens in a straight line. Their effect on natural philosophy, as the conventional account has it, was to open what Aristotle's physics had closed as impossible to discussion as possible under God's power.
2. **Buridan.** In his *Questions on De caelo* (II, q. 22), Buridan takes up whether the earth turns daily while the heavens rest, sets out that the appearances would be saved either way, and keeps the resting earth on physical arguments, among them the arrow shot straight up that falls back to the same place.
3. **Oresme.** In the *Livre du ciel et du monde* (1377), II.25, a French translation of De caelo with commentary made for Charles V, Oresme argues that neither experience nor reason can prove that the heavens rather than the earth turn daily, answers each argument for the resting earth, and then keeps the common opinion.
4. **What these are.** On the conventional account, the strongest late-medieval case against the resting earth was made in commentaries on De caelo, from inside the book the doctrine was drawn from, and it uses the book's own instrument: that the phenomena would fall out alike. Both commentators left the conclusion where the schools held it.
5. **Status of this section.** Items 2 and 3 rest on the conventional account of the two commentaries: no open edition of either was found (Oresme, ed. Menut and Denomy, 1968; Buridan, ed. Moody, 1942), and this is declared, not pursued. The commentary's operation is shown on seated texts in the paragraph that follows.

The commentary holding the cosmology (seated, 42/05 and 42/07). The place where

the two closures of §7 meet in one text is the school commentary on De caelo itself. Simplicius, in Greek, records that Heraclides of Pontus, supposing the earth at the centre turning and the heaven at rest, σώζειν ὠετο τὰ φαινόμενα, "thought he saved the phenomena" (In De caelo, Heiberg p. 519). Aquinas, in Latin, does four things in his exposition of book II, each read in the Leonine text as the Corpus Thomisticum gives it:

1. He reports the turning earth and names its holders, and makes the resting earth a supposition: quod quidem dicitur posuisse Heraclitus Ponticus et Aristarchus. Supponit autem Aristoteles ad praesens quod terra quiescat, quod postmodum probabit, "Aristotle supposes for the present that the earth rests, which he will prove later" (lect. 11 n. 2).
2. He concedes underdetermination for the astronomers: Illorum tamen suppositiones quas adinvenerunt, non est necessarium esse veras: licet enim, talibus suppositionibus factis, apparentia salvarentur, non tamen oportet dicere has suppositiones esse veras; quia forte secundum aliquem alium modum, nondum ab hominibus comprehensum, apparentia circa stellas salvantur, "their suppositions need not be true; for though the appearances are saved on them, perhaps they are saved in some other way not yet understood" (lect. 17 n. 2).
3. He closes the gap II 13 left open. On the indecisive phenomena: Sed hoc intelligi posset si terra per modicum spatium distaret a medio: non autem si distaret per multum spatium, "this could be understood if the earth were a small distance from the middle, not a great one"; and he adds an argument the chapter does not make, the lunar eclipse (lect. 21 n. 4).
4. He closes the word. On the Timaeus's ἰλλομένην: Hoc autem quod dicitur illomenum, si in Graeco scribatur per iota, significat alligationem; si vero scribatur per diphthongum, significat prohibitionem. Videtur autem a Platone sumptum istud vocabulum secundum quod significat alligationem, "written with iota it means binding, with the diphthong, restraint; Plato seems to have taken it as binding" (lect. 21 n. 5). Where De caelo read the Academy's book as moving the earth, the commentary reads it as binding the earth fast.

The authorized text holds the debate; the commentary on it supplies what the text lacked, the eclipse, and settles the disputed word against motion. That is the operation of §7 in one text: the name's conclusion fixed by the commentary, and the case the text carried closed in the commentary's margin.

6a. Blaming the name

The history of breaking the closure is largely a history of charging the closure to the name it was built on.

1. **Ramus.** At his master's examination in 1536 Peter Ramus is said to have defended that whatever Aristotle said was false (*quaecumque ab Aristotele dicta essent, commentitia esse*). The thesis is attested late and its historicity is doubted (Wikipedia, with Ong). Its target, in the *Aristotelicae animadversiones* (1543), was the school logic: what the commentary curriculum had made of the *Organon*, charged to Aristotle.
2. **Bacon.** *Novum Organum* I.63 (seated, 42/09): Primi generis exemplum in Aristotele maxime conspicuum est, qui philosophiam naturalem dialectica sua corrupit, "the most

conspicuous example of the first kind is Aristotle, who corrupted natural philosophy by his dialectic." Among the charges: motum singulis corporibus unicum et proprium … asseruerit, that he asserted "one proper motion to each body", which is the premise of De caelo II 14 (μία γὰρ φορὰ τοῦ ἑνὸς καὶ ἁπλῆ τοῦ ἁπλοῦ). Bacon's charge strikes the chapter's conclusion and lays it on the name; the chapter before, which carries the alternatives, is not in the charge.

3. **Galileo, against the Peripatetics, for Aristotle.** *Dialogo*, Day 1 (seated, 42/10; Favaro's Edizione Nazionale VII): Salviati, "io non dubito punto che se Aristotile fusse all'età nostra, muterebbe oppinione", "I do not doubt at all that if Aristotle were in our age he would change his opinion", as his own way of philosophizing shows: writing that the heavens are inalterable because nothing new is seen to come to be or perish there, he lets it be understood that had he seen such a thing he would have judged otherwise. Simplicio, the Peripatetic, holds the conclusion as authority, while granting that Aristotle put "le sensate esperienze", the experiences of the senses, before any discourse made by human wit. Galileo separates the corpus from its custodians in the book that argued the earth's motion against them.
4. **The modern verdict.** The twentieth century kept the charge on the name. Russell's *History of Western Philosophy* (1945), the most widely repeated form of it, is in copyright and is not quoted here.
5. **What the charge does.** Each break with the closure is recorded as a break with Aristotle, and so each confirms the operation it breaks: one name at the centre, its doctrine fixed, everything else at the circumference. The closure is charged to the corpus that held the case against it (§§2–4), and the custodians who made the closure are recorded under the name of the one they closed. Galileo's Salviati is the exception that shows the rule: the turn of the earth was argued against the Peripatetics in Aristotle's name, and the history of science kept the opposition and dropped the distinction.

7. Why congealing the authors blinds

1. **Aristotle the geocentrist.** Given a position, the corpus is its conclusion. II 13 becomes doxography, the phenomena that do not decide become a refuted opinion, and the corroboration II 14 draws from the astronomers is not compared with what II 13 said of the same phenomena.
2. **Theophrastus the critic, or the loyal pupil.** Given a position, the *Metaphysics* is a successor's doubts about a master's system, and the scholarship divides on how far the doubts go (the older view, that he gives up the prime mover and teleology; Meister 2026, an internal critic still committed to the framework). Either way the aporia about the desireless centre is read against "Aristotle", not as the corpus's first philosophy putting its own question to its own cosmology.
3. **Theophrastus the doxographer.** Given a position, the reports of Plato's repentance and of Hicetas are a historian's notes on other people. The words that cross from De caelo into the reports (§4.5) are not read as one lexicon, because a doxographer's words are not supposed to be his own.
4. **Heraclides the eccentric; Hicetas and Ecphantus the obscure Pythagoreans.** Given positions, the non-geocentric earth is spread over minor figures at the edge of the schools, and the possibility that they are the schools' own speaking positions (#1575) is not raised.

5. **Ptolemy and the schools.** Given positions, "Aristotelian cosmology" names a joined system in which the physics is Aristotle's and the astronomy Ptolemy's; the joint is not a text of the corpus. Tupikova (2016) shows the two founded the central earth in opposite directions: Aristotle from a physics of natural place, with the astronomers as witness; Ptolemy from observation and geometry, with physics after. "Aristotelian cosmology" is a post-Aristotelian joint, not a system any text of the corpus states.
6. **What the positions do.** Each author, fixed, carries one piece: the conclusion, the doubts, the reports, the oddities, the astronomy. The operation that spans them, one body of writing that states the central earth and carries the case against it in its own words to the reader who would turn the earth, has no author to belong to, and so is not read. The procedure here treats operation as precedent, since operation is the only evidence to which we have access. Operation means what a body of writing does as it stands and as it travelled: what it states, what it holds against its statement, what it hands on, and in whose words. It does not mean what any writer intended, which §8.3 leaves aside.

The same operation, twice. "Aristotle" is the closed position. The name fixes one author at the centre of the corpus and gives that author one doctrine; whatever in the corpus moves against it is sent out to the circumference, as reports of others, a successor's doubts, the opinions of obscure Pythagoreans. Geocentrism is the same operation applied to the heavens: one body fixed at the centre, everything else carried around it, and the honour of the centre made the ground of the fixing. The textual colonization that made "the Philosopher" an authority of the schools ran both closures with one instrument: an authorized name at the centre of a body of writing, and a resting earth at the centre of a body of heavens. The commentary on the authorized text held the cosmology in place, and the cosmology confirmed the centre the commentary assumed. The calcification of authorship and the calcification of the cosmos are one operation in two applications.

And the closed position is not that closed. II 14's necessity is conditional (εἴπερ … ἀναγκαῖον ἂν εἴη, "if …, it would be necessary"), and its witness is the phenomena II 13 has already called indecisive. Even the name's own conclusion is held open in the text that states it. Unfixing the author and unfixing the earth are the same reading. Refusing to let the conclusion of one chapter fix the whole corpus is the same operation as refusing to let one name's conclusion fix the whole, and both refusals are needed to see the corpus's own counter-case. The identity claimed is of operation, a textual effect; its meeting place in a single text is the school commentary (§6, Aquinas).

8. What is claimed and what is not

1. **Claimed.** The corpus under the names of Aristotle and Theophrastus holds, in De caelo II 13, the *Metaphysics* and the reports, the arguments, the difficulties and the testimonies against the resting central earth, in a shared vocabulary of the centre; and the ancient warrant Copernicus names first for moving the earth is a Theophrastus report.
2. **Not claimed: that the corpus is heliocentric.** De caelo II 14 concludes the resting central earth, and the reading here leaves that conclusion standing as the text states it.
3. **Not claimed: intent.** Nothing is said about what the writers meant to do. The claim is about what the corpus holds and how it travelled.

4. **Not claimed: a settled stemma.** The descent of the *Placita* from Theophrastus is Diels's account, qualified since; the Heraclides reading of Hicetas and Ecphantus is the archive's argument (#1575), to be developed in its own place.
5. **Not claimed: a modern astronomy in antiquity.** Neither the indecisive phenomena nor the turning earth is the Copernican system. The claim is that the corpus contains the case against its own conversion, not the system that replaced it.
6. **The conversion.** What the schools made of the corpus is read here as a reading: the conclusion of one chapter taken for the whole. It is the reading the corpus itself supplies the means to contest. The question the paper leaves is therefore not how geocentrism was overthrown, but how a body of writing that carried the case against its own conclusion came to be represented as the authority that made that case inadmissible.

The title. *Socratic–Peripatetic* names the corpus as the archive reads it: the Academy's and the Lyceum's writings as one body (#1575, *Many and One*), here the *Timaeus* as De caelo and the reports read it, the Plato of Theophrastus's report, and the treatises and first philosophy under the names of Aristotle and Theophrastus. *Contra geocentrism* names the case the corpus carries against the doctrine made of it, not a claim that the corpus is heliocentric (8.2).

Texts and seats

Text	Edition	Seat	Loci read
Aristotle, *De caelo*	Perseus canonical-greekLit tlg0086.tlg005	EA-CORPORA-04/01 (#1559)	II 13, 293a15–296a23; II 14, 296a24–298a20
Theophrastus, *Metaphysics*	First1KGreek tlg0093.tlg006 (Wimmer, Teubner 1862); Wimmer, Didot 1866	EA-CORPORA-09/01; 32/03 (#1731)	§§9–10
Plato, *Timaeus*	Perseus (Burnet)	EA-CORPORA-01/08 (#1522)	40b–c
Plutarch, *Platonic Questions*, *De facie*, *Numa*	Perseus tlg0007.tlg133, tlg126, tlg005	EA-CORPORA-42/01 (#1799)	Plat. Q. 8.1, 1006C; De facie 923A; Numa 11.1–2
Pseudo-Plutarch, *Placita*	Perseus tlg0094.tlg003	42/02	II 24; III 13
Cicero, *Lucullus*	Perseus phi0474.phi046	42/03	123
Archimedes, *Arenarius*	First1KGreek tlg0552.tlg006 (Heiberg)	42/04	Aristarchus's hypotheses
Simplicius, *In De caelo*	First1KGreek tlg4013.tlg001 (Heiberg, CAG VII)	42/05	p. 519; p. 541

Text	Edition	Seat	Loci read
Diels, *Doxographi Graeci* (1879)	Internet Archive, OCR	42/06	Aëtius I 15 (Stobaeus)
Aquinas, *In De caelo*	Leonine 1886, Corpus Thomisticum	42/07	II lect. 11 n. 2; 17 n. 2; 21 nn. 4–5
Copernicus, *De revolutionibus*	Latin Wikisource (1543)	42/08	the dedication to Paul III
Bacon, *Novum Organum*	Latin Wikisource (1620)	42/09	I.63
Galileo, *Dialogo*	Italian Wikisource (Favaro, EN VII)	42/10	Day 1
Oresme, *Livre du ciel et du monde*; Buridan, *Questions on De caelo*	no open edition found	declared	II.25; II q. 22
Russell, *History of Western Philosophy*	in copyright	declared	not quoted

Every quotation in the paper is checked in the seated text layer named in the table, except Ramus's thesis (reported, after Wikipedia and Ong) and the two declared items. The Fordham translation of Copernicus's dedication is kept as a link for the English reader.

Scholarship cited: Tupikova, "Cosmology and Epistemology: A Comparison between Aristotle's and Ptolemy's Approaches to Geocentrism" (Edition Open Access, 2016); Meister, *Theophrastus on First Principles* (Cambridge Elements, 2026; paywalled, declared, not read); Diels, *Doxographi Graeci* (1879, public domain). The archive: #1575, *Many and One*; #1570, the Measurement Register.

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