

Angels, Space, and Place:

The Location of Separate Substances according to John Duns Scotus

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The term ‘space’, as it appears in the title of this study, was not current in the Middle Ages. The notion of space familiar to us, from ordinary perception or philosophical analysis, as an undifferentiated and homogenous receptacle, was alien to the medieval mind.<sup>1</sup> The term as such was found only rarely, and then generally meaning an interval or the distance between two determinate points or places, lacking any reality of itself.<sup>2</sup> Space thus obtains between two and ‘is made to exist only by sprinkling places in it’.<sup>3</sup>

The conditions of place were altogether different. As the object of immediate perception and theoretical reflection, ‘place’ was concomitant to every individual existence and, together with time, determined it *hic et nunc*. Place was omnipresent and multiplied in a multitude of local determinations: that – uncountable – of every individual capable of movement; that of every object capable of locomotion; that of every reality with a fixed location; that of planets, stars, the world, paradise, purgatory, or hell...

The differentiation of places – some of which were charged with strong emotional or religious value – responded not only to the multiplication of physical objects, all necessarily determined locally. It also resulted from the differentiation of subjects, formulated in terms either of ontological categories (human beings, angels, God), or of moral qualities within one and the same category – those qualities in their turn producing different situations or locations in the realms beyond (hell, purgatory, paradise).

The differentiation of subjects into distinct ontological categories is what grounds the very possibility of the question of the location of separate substances. Since place is

not a homogenous space containing different things but a specific categorical determination denoting the situation of each and every object, each reality has its own place. Thus, given that separate substances constitute a distinct ontological category, any attempt to assess their status calls for an examination of the question of their location.<sup>4</sup>

But before determining what this place is, medieval thinkers inquired about the very possibility of location of spiritual substances: ‘Utrum angelus sit in loco’. This is the question that will occupy the following pages. More precisely, I shall examine the discussion of this problem in John Duns Scotus, taking into account Scotus’s predecessors in an attempt to assess his contribution both to angelology and to the physics of place.

### *1. Before Scotus*

Scotus’s discussion of angelic location follows the same approach of previous commentators of Peter Lombard’s *Sentences*. Distancing himself from Augustine<sup>5</sup> and Boethius<sup>6</sup>, who denied local presence to spiritual creatures, the Lombard distinguished between two modes of location: ‘circumscriptive’, which holds for corporeal substances - for bodies are physically situated in a place three-dimensionally; and ‘definitive’, which obtains in spiritual creatures - for non-corporeal creatures are related to a determinate place (and not to all places) without being physically circumscribed in it.<sup>7</sup> The Lombard’s distinction was in all likelihood aimed at avoiding the unpalatable thesis that spiritual creatures are ubiquitous. Subsequent commentators will follow the Lombard’s position on this issue, if granting that separate substances are located at least *definitive*.

This distinction, however, did not avoid all difficulties. The way in which ‘*definitive*’ location was to be understood remained an open question, and it is on this

point that the differences in opinion began to emerge. There were two alternative lines of thought: (1) according to the first, the relation of an angel to its physical place results solely from the angel's mental operations; (2) the second holds rather that the relation to their place inheres in the very substance of spiritual creatures.<sup>8</sup> Before examining Scotus's position, it would be helpful to identify some representatives of one and the other lines of thought, in order to provide the main points of reference and context for the Scotist discussion.

### *1.1. Location of angels by their operation*

Thomas Aquinas explicitly supports this thesis in various writings: *I Sent.*, d. 37 q. 3 a. 1-3; *Quodlibet* I, q. 3 a. 1; *Summa Theol.* I, q. 52 a. 1-3. Aquinas's adherence to the Aristotelian definition of place as 'the innermost motionless boundary of the container',<sup>9</sup> as well as his conception of the status of angels as radically immaterial substances, led him to reject the thesis that angels are located by virtue of their being, in favour of the idea that an angel's relation to a physical place results from its operations of intellect and will. These operations produce a – virtual – contact through the application of the angel's *virtus* to a specific place, in relation to which the angel is then said to be located.<sup>10</sup> An angel is therefore located not by its presence *in* a place, but by a relation to the place which remains *external*, because it is brought about solely by the application of the angel's *virtus*. We are thus confronted with a notion of location disengaged from circumscription and reduced to a relation with space that does not denote dependence. When it comes to spiritual substances Aquinas inverts the terms of the standard relation between the containing place and the contained object, redefining it in terms of *containing subject* and *contained place*: the angel virtually contains the place to which it

is related, because its status determines a relation to that place which depends on the angel's mental operations alone.<sup>11</sup> Although all kind of circumscription or commensurability to the place is excluded, the angel remains nonetheless locally determined. Its local determination does not however appear to be a permanent quality, since it results from the angel's free operations of intellect and will. It is therefore a very restricted sense of location, limited to the effective application of the angel's *virtus* to a given physical place.<sup>12</sup> Therefore, except for those who oversee celestial movement,<sup>13</sup> angels are not always located. Their freedom to relate to a place grants them control of the spatial dimension.<sup>14</sup> The Thomist position, heavily dependent on the privileged status attributed to separate substances, thus represents a 'minimalist' understanding of angels' local determination – an understanding which assumes only the strictly necessary in order to avoid the thesis of the ubiquity of spiritual creatures. In brief, Aquinas admits that an angel is related to a place '*definitive, quia ita est in uno loco, quod non in alio*'<sup>15</sup>, even if the meaning denoted by '*definitive*' appears rather weak.

This difficulty did not escape Giles of Rome. He shared the Thomist view in general lines, but sharpened it by introducing the adverb 'always', and by acknowledging the impossibility of specifying the exact meaning of the angel's '*applicatio virtutis*' to a place. After rejecting two alternative positions as unacceptable,<sup>16</sup> Giles introduces his opinion in close connection to that of Aquinas. He presents the latter as holding that '*angelus est in loco per operationem*', adding however that '*angeli aliquando non operantur circa corpora, ideo aliquando non sunt in loco per operationem*'.<sup>17</sup> At the same time, Giles takes issue with the Thomist position: '*Primum est bene dictum, sed secundum non credo*'.<sup>18</sup> He thus shares the thesis of location according to operation, but denies the possibility of an angel's non-location.<sup>19</sup>

Like Aquinas, Giles understands location according to operation as the result of the action whereby the angel applies its virtual quantity to a body.<sup>20</sup> But Giles corrects Aquinas's view saying that '*angelus semper operatur circa locum et sic semper est in loco*'.<sup>21</sup> The double '*semper*' rests on the idea of universal order, according to which the spiritual commands the corporeal and relates to it by virtual contact. That contact is constant, since separate substances are constantly exercising their influence on the corporeal world. Giles concludes on these grounds that angels are always located.<sup>22</sup> In this way, he removes the ambiguity in Aquinas's position by making of location a permanent determination belonging to separate substances: '*[angelus] semper aliquo modo circa aliqua corpora operatur: propter quod numquam contigit ipsum nusquam esse*'.<sup>23</sup>

The permanent application of the angel's *virtus* to a body does not always imply movement. An angel can also be located in relation to the empyrean, which is motionless. Therefore, Giles concludes, it must be granted that we cannot explain all forms of location, even if we must admit that angels are always located.<sup>24</sup>

Giles's argument in *Quaestiones de motu angelorum* (1288-89), composed some sixteen years later, follows the same vein. Giles preserves his position, albeit varying the vocabulary somewhat. The opposition between *quantitas dimensiva* and *quantitas virtualis* is replaced by that of *extensio* and *applicatio*, but with the same purpose of defending the thesis that bodies are located according to their extension, while separate substances are located according to their *virtus*.<sup>25</sup> Overall, Giles adheres to the Thomist thesis, but perfects it by adding some cogency to notion of angelic location. He is however unable to give further clarification on the status of the operations that bring about the permanent relation between separate substances and space.

### 1.2. Location of angels 'per se'

The thesis of location of angels 'per se' predominates after 1277. As we know, Tempier's syllabus condemned the idea that angels are not in a place, together the theses that they are located solely according to their operation, and that their substance constitutes the ultimate foundation of their location.<sup>26</sup> The ambiguous, not to say problematic, character of these three articles – already pointed out by Henry of Ghent, a member of the commission –<sup>27</sup> neither compromised nor hampered their normative value for a good number of authors who, starting with William of la Mare,<sup>28</sup> rejected the thesis that angels are located according their operation. I shall consider the account of three such authors.

The first is Peter John Olivi, who discussed the problem of angelic location extensively in question 32 of his commentary on book II of the *Sentences*, composed in the years 1278-79. The purpose of his examination is to determine the (true) status of separate substances against the philosophical tradition which had erroneously attributed them a quasi-divine nature.<sup>29</sup> The question of location thus occupies a strategic place in Olivi's angelology.<sup>30</sup> The thesis of the location of angels 'per se' is proved by a threefold, rather elaborate argument. Essentially, it holds that there is an order or relation which intrinsically determines all spiritual creatures.<sup>31</sup> Olivi advances three kinds of relation which serve to found angelic location: (1) a relation of '*assistentia*', which can be understood as co-existence or co-presence. The actual existence of two realities necessarily implies that they are related to each other, either immediately or in a mediated way. This is the equally case for spiritual as for a bodily substances: their coexistence implies the presence of one to the other – in the case of the spirit, it consists in its immediate or mediated presence to the physical place of the body. This relation of mutual

presence determines the being of the created realities and ultimately explains their location. (2) The second type of relation is based on action. All action performed with respect to an object implies that the subject must be first intentionally directed towards it. But this intentionality already implies a presence. Therefore, angelic action implies that the angel is present to its object and its place and is, for the same reason, located. (3) The third type of relation results from the capacity to move. Indeed, the angel's freedom to move to different places implies an orientation towards the term of the movement and, on the same grounds, a presence that explains the angel's location.

According to Olivi, this threefold relation intrinsically determines spiritual creatures and explains their location as being 'per se' and not merely according to operation. This tenet is underpinned by the hypothesis of the possible suppression of material bodies: even in the absence of all physical reality angels would be located, because their location consists primarily in a relational mode of being which intrinsically determines all creatures.<sup>32</sup> The necessary relation of the angel to space is thus presented as an essential mark of its finiteness and createdness.<sup>33</sup>

At this point it would be useful to recall a second opinion, that of Olivi's contemporary Matthew of Aquasparta, who develops his position in the *Quaestiones disputatae de anima separata*, between 1277 and 1279. Matthew treats the question of angelic location together with that of separate souls, a connection which is clearly illustrated by the use of the generic term '*substantiae spirituales*' to denote both '*anima separata*' and '*angelus*'. Explicitly referring to the condemnations of 1241 and 1277, Matthew unequivocally rejects the thesis that spiritual substances are located by their operation,<sup>34</sup> on the grounds that spatial determination is inherent to created being (creatures '*sunt per se in loco*'). He explains his position on the basis of four reasons:

(1) The first one derives from the order of the universe: as creatures, spiritual substances form part of the universe and the celestial sphere which encloses the world.<sup>35</sup> Since the order of the universe assigns a place to each creature and determines its situation in relation to other things, spiritual substances are necessarily located. (2) The second reason rests on the finiteness of spiritual substances: as creatures, they are intrinsically finite in their essence and in their faculties. This limitation also implies an *ubi*, since they do not enjoy the privilege of ubiquity.<sup>36</sup> (3) Divine providence supplies the third reason for angelic location. God has assigned angels a place in the empyrean as the location most suitable to their nature.<sup>37</sup> (4) The fourth and last reason derives from divine justice, which assigns each being a place according to their merit. As creatures, it thus pertains to spiritual substances to be situated according to their moral condition (of beatitude or damnation), and consequently to be located according to essence.<sup>38</sup>

Matthew is nevertheless aware that the thesis that spiritual substances are located in a physical place is problematic on account of their simplicity and indivisibility. Eager to clarify this point, he adds that their location does not imply dependence on the place or circumscription in the sense of commensurability (*'nec per circumscriptionem sive commensurationem'*), but rather *'quandam suae [sc. angeli] praesentiae communicationem vel suae substantiae praesentationem et existentiae praesentialis definitionem'*.<sup>39</sup> Separate substances are thus necessarily present in certain places according to the limitations assigned by God to their nature.<sup>40</sup> As with Olivi, the net of structural relations which forms the universal order confers to each and every member of the cosmos its local determination. Comprised within this net, angels do not escape location, even if they relate to their place without commensurability. Location by essence appears here again as a mark of finiteness: being locally determined means, strictly



speaking, ‘not being able to be everywhere’.

This point is reinforced by Matthew’s justification of the 1277 condemnation, specifically the latter’s rejection of the thesis that angels are located according to their operation, and the denial that it is their essence or substance that explains their location.<sup>41</sup> Underlying Matthew’s justification of the condemnation is his distinction between *application to a place* and *delimitation within a place*. Application to a determinate place is explained by the order of the universe (first and third reasons above), while the delimitation within a place is explained by the finiteness which characterizes all creatures.<sup>42</sup> Matthew thus accounts for the location of angels by resorting to the relational structure of the universe and to created finiteness. He fails however to clarify the nature of this finiteness which does not seem to derive from the essence of creatures.<sup>43</sup> Universal order on the one hand and createdness on the other – i.e. relation to other created beings and relation to God: this twofold relation determines and spatializes spiritual creatures without making them dependent on a physical place. For it is their dependence on God that ultimately grounds the angel’s local delimitation. Local determination is thus articulated in terms of the limitation intrinsic to creatures: ‘*eo quod limitatae sunt, sunt in potentia ad “ubi”*’.<sup>44</sup>

A third proponent of the location ‘per se’ of angels is Richard of Mediavilla, who treats the question in his commentary on the *Sentences* (1285).<sup>45</sup> Before developing his own position, Richard brings to the fore the condemnation of 1277.<sup>46</sup> Like Olivi, he distinguishes between the ‘*applicatio virtutis*’ and ‘operation’ strictly speaking: the first requires the previous presence of the angel to its object, such that before any operation the angel is already located by being present to its object.<sup>47</sup> Richard explains this location ‘per se’ in terms of Aristotelian causality: the efficient cause of the ‘*applicatio virtutis*’ is

the angel's will and its effective capacity, as well as (indirectly) the divine will as superior efficient cause; the final cause of angelic location lies in the unity, order, and connection of the universe; finally, the final cause resides neither in being circumscribed in a place – since the angel has no dimensions – nor in the angels's operations nor in the order of the universe,<sup>48</sup> but in the relation of simultaneity between the angel and its place or the physical realities existing in that place.<sup>49</sup> Note that this thesis reintroduces Olivi's idea of the coexistence of the angel with beings of the world – an idea found as well in Matthew in Aquasparta and his conception of '*praesentialitas*' and '*communicatio praesentiae*'.

The ambiguity of the condemned articles thus incites Richard to develop an articulate explanation which results in the identification of three foundations for angelic location, the primary one being neither the angel's operation nor its essence but its coexistence with other realities of the world. It is a factual argument, for it derives from the consideration of the order of things as it manifests itself *hic et nunc*. In this vein, to the objection that denies angelic location (by their presence to a body) in virtue of God's power to suppress the corporeal world, Richard responds that the problem does not consist in knowing what God can or cannot do, but in determining what has already been done: '*quod factum est*'.<sup>50</sup>

## 2. *Duns Scotus and the place of angels*

In his commentary on book II of the *Sentences*, Scotus devotes four questions to the issue of angelic location, before he draws the consequences for the concept of motion.<sup>51</sup> Predictably, he presents the thesis of angelic location according to operation in connection to Tempier's condemnation – a condemnation to which he attributes universal

validity, in contrast to Godfrey of Fontaines, who had strongly relativized it.<sup>52</sup> Scotus then recalls the positions of Godfrey of Fontaines and Giles of Rome,<sup>53</sup> as he criticizes them for being merely disguised versions of Aquinas's inconsistencies.<sup>54</sup>

Scotus recapitulates several objections against the Thomist thesis of location according to operation. Among them we recognize an argument first found in Olivi and reintroduced by Richard of Mediavilla – that of the necessary presence of the angel to its object before acting upon it – one put forward by Giles of Rome against the Thomist position – namely, the consequences of the non-location of angels –<sup>55</sup> and the condition advanced by Richard of Mediavilla on the formal character of the location of spiritual creatures.<sup>56</sup> Despite their value, these objections are deemed insufficient by Scotus, who then spends some time developing his own position.

### *2.1. The location of bodies*

The first stage is occupied with specifying the conditions of bodily location.<sup>57</sup> Following the lead of Aristotle, Scotus enumerates five: (1) being in an actual place, (2) being in a determined place because equal (to the body), (3) being in a place commensurably, (4) being in *this determinate place* at the exclusion of others, (5) being in a place in a natural or in a violent way.<sup>58</sup> The first four conditions pertain to a body as *quantum*, that is, insofar as it is endowed with mathematical dimensions, independently of the particular characteristics that qualify its nature. The body as *quantum* is in fact logically prior to any quality which could affect it, because quantity is presupposed by quality, even if in reality no corporeal quantity exists without qualities. Significantly, Scotus links this discussion with the Aristotelian hypothesis of the void. If we place a cubic body without natural qualities in the air or in water, the body will produce a void of the same dimensions. This

‘production of a void’ results exclusively from the body as *quantum* - that is, as possessing mathematical dimensions.<sup>59</sup>

Scotus’s interpretation of the Aristotelian hypothesis finds resonance in his theory of place as primarily signifying a quantity and a figure, rather than a quality and a nature. For Scotus place appears to be a pure form, ‘a mathematical property’ before becoming a physical property.<sup>60</sup> All bodies are located insofar as they are mathematical *quanta*. Only the fifth condition – being in a place naturally or violently – is fulfilled in terms of a natural quality.<sup>61</sup> Thus, despite the initial endorsement of the Aristotelian conditions of location, Scotus seems to distance himself from this teaching as he strongly relativizes the physical and natural dimension of place, tending rather towards a mathematization or geometrization of space.<sup>62</sup>

Scotus’s distancing from the Aristotelian theory is equally manifest in his thesis of the immobility of place, a thesis which in Aristotle clashed starkly with the notion of the contiguity of a place with the contained body (place being defined here as ‘the innermost motionless boundary of the container’).<sup>63</sup> The question thus becomes how to safeguard the immobility of the place at the moment when, as container, it becomes mobile? In his response, Scotus shows awareness of other solutions to this problem advanced by previous authors.<sup>64</sup> He alludes mainly to Aquinas, who had solved the question by conceiving every containing mobile place as part of the whole universal place, the latter being motionless on account of the fixedness of its centre and its poles. In other words, even if each particular place is mobile, its necessary relation to the whole universal place guarantees its immobility. Aquinas thus advances the distinction – later sharpened by Giles of Rome – between *material place* (the mobile container) and *formal place* (the relation of the mobile container to the motionless whole).<sup>65</sup> The Thomist

solution to the difficulty inherent in the Aristotelian thesis undoubtedly constituted a step forward, but remained nevertheless profoundly akin to the spirit of that thesis, especially in what regards the physical and natural status of a place – for Aquinas interpreted the contiguity of the containing place and of the contained body as a proximity of nature – and in the cosmological basis of the Aristotelian theory – for the immobility of a place was guaranteed by the fixed coordinates of the finite and motionless universe.<sup>66</sup>

Scotus finds the Thomist solution unconvincing<sup>67</sup> and instead propounds a thesis on the immobility of place which distances itself markedly from the Aristotelian position. For Scotus it is evident that if a subject changes, its accidents change too. As the accident of a containing movable body, place cannot remain under any circumstance numerically the same – i.e. permanent and motionless. Likewise, it is of no avail to attempt to fix it by attaching it to an absolute and motionless place, for, insofar as it is merely a part of such a place and the accident of a movable subject, it will always remain movable. Its immobility must therefore be guaranteed by means other than the relation to another, supposedly motionless, place. That other means consists in conceiving the immobility of a place ‘in opposition to local movement’ and its incorruptibility ‘according to a relation of equivalence to local movement’.<sup>68</sup>

What does this mean? Put more simply, place is motionless by itself and by accident when considered at a specific instant. Thus, if a containing body moves, it is that body and not the place that is movable, because at the very instant when the containing body moves, its place, as an accident, also moves and is no longer the same. It is then the case not of the *same movable place*, but of *another place* which is – instantly – motionless. Furthermore, that same place is ‘incorruptible by equivalence’, for even if the place is destroyed by the movement of its subject, the place’s foundation remains the

same throughout the succession of places by virtue of a relation of equivalence to local movement. In other words, even if different places are numerically distinct from each other, they are incorruptible insofar as they all hold the same relation to local succession. These relations of equivalence allow us to consider all places as denoting one and the same relation, which in its turn guarantees the incorruptibility of each place.<sup>69</sup>

In elaborating his position, Scotus advances the example of the successive utterance of one and the same word. Each utterance of the word is numerically distinct and successive in time. But considered in relation to its end – i.e. to signify a concept – each utterance pertains to the same word and holds a relation of equivalence with the desired end. This relation allows us to conceive the different utterances of the same word as numerically one and the same word.<sup>70</sup>

The difficulty inherent in the Aristotelian theory of place is thus solved by appealing to the twofold notion of the instant immobility of place and its incorruptibility by equivalence.<sup>71</sup> This solution is radically distinct from the Thomist one as it distances itself from the Aristotelian teaching on at least two points: (1) the first – clearly pointed out by O. Boulnois – is the rejection of the cosmological reference. By contrast to Aquinas, Scotus no longer explains the immobility of each particular place through the immobility of the universe, but rather changes the terms of reference by choosing the notion of instant: considered instantly, the place is motionless. By the same token, the place's natural properties become strongly relativized: place 'disengages itself from cosmology, and becomes a neutral space, a purely absolute form'.<sup>72</sup> (2) The second point in which Scotus distances himself from Aristotle – and Aquinas – consists in the (partial) dissociation of place (insofar as it is an accident) from its subject. Indeed, that the subject – i.e. the containing body - is movable does not entail for Scotus that its accident – the

place – is also movable. In other words, the place as accident does not share – at least not totally – the conditions of its subject, for the subject’s movement does not make *the same place* move, but rather produces *another place*. It is this dissociation which enables the immobility of place. Place thus appears to be the only accident to function in this way, i.e. by being attached to a subject without completely sharing in its condition. By virtue of this ‘detachment’ the place acquires a certain independence with regard to the subject it determines. This detachment confirms the Scotist tendency to conceive place as the specific and qualitatively neutral determination of all *quantum*.

To conclude his examination of the place of bodies, Scotus raises a question which brings to the fore another point of dissidence with the Aristotelian theory, and which will enable the transition to the problem of the place of separate substances. The question is ‘whether every body, as *quantum*, is *necessarily* in a place’.<sup>73</sup> Rather surprising at first sight if we take into account the conditions of bodily location mentioned above, the question in fact seems to obey to a relativization of the Aristotelian theory. Against this theory Scotus levels a criticism strongly indebted to the condemnation of 1277 and the theological preoccupations surrounding it.<sup>74</sup>

According to Scotus, the necessity of the location of bodies must be denied from the point of view of faith since, by virtue of his omnipotence, God could ‘create a stone without a containing body, or create it outside the universe’. In both cases, the stone would exist without being in a place. Consequently, location is not an absolute necessity and is not imposed by something absolute and external to the object – such a thing being, according to the Aristotelian theory, the external celestial sphere which encloses the world.<sup>75</sup> Here again, Scotus weakens the relation between particular places and the universal place. A *quantum* can exist in the world without being located, just as it can be

created outside of the world – which would purely and simply suppress all relation to the cosmic place. This is possible on the assumption of divine omnipotence, which here functions as a force of rupture with Aristotelian science. Thus, although taken into account at the beginning of his discussion, the Aristotelian definition of place (as the boundary of the container) is considerably relativized by Scotus, as he limits its universal import and necessity. Thereafter, location is removed from the net of physical relations between bodies and is redefined as an intrinsic condition of all being: *‘Per nihil igitur absolutum in alio, requirit necessario esse in loco, sed tantum habet necessario potentiam passivam qua posset esse in loco’*.<sup>76</sup>

## 2.2. *The location of angels*

The previous considerations provide the context for the Scotist examination of angelic location, which basically applies the conditions of bodily location to the domain of separate substances. The connection with the realm of spiritual substances is made clear from Scotus’s discussion, which declares from the outset – and in contrast to the previous Franciscan tradition – that the angel is not necessarily located (in a physical place).<sup>77</sup> The main reason for Scotus’s thesis is that God could create an angel independently from the creation of corporeal realities, or outside the physical world. This thesis excludes – and for stronger reasons than in the case of bodies – any necessity derived from circumscribing angels within the coordinates of physical space. However, the rejection of that necessity does not imply a denial of any relation with the place. Indeed, Scotus affirms that relation and grounds it on a ‘passive power which enables the angel to be in a place’.<sup>78</sup> In this way, he transforms necessity into possibility and interiorizes the latter by henceforth detaching it from an immediate reference to a physical container.



What exactly is this passive power? In response, Scotus proposes three possible foundations for it: the angel's substance itself, the limitation inherent in its substance, or something extrinsic to the spiritual creature.<sup>79</sup> He seems in the end to discard all three possibilities, for he sees no sense in seeking an intrinsic reason (i.e. intrinsic to the angel's substance) for the necessary location of spiritual creatures. For according to Scotus, there is no such reason.<sup>80</sup> By rejecting the idea of an intrinsic and necessary foundation, Scotus renders futile the question which much occupied the preceding philosophical and theological tradition of a necessary principle of angelic location. For Scotus, angelic location is no more than a possibility, and is explained solely by its compatibility (or non-contradiction) with angelic reality.<sup>81</sup>

It thus follows that, contrary to material realities (which have an intrinsic natural capacity to be located)<sup>82</sup>, the angel is not comprised necessarily and by nature within the limits of a containing body existing in act. In this respect, angelic location is equivocal to the location of material bodies.

As regards the second condition (being 'in a determinate place because equivalent to it'), angels fulfil it, but – again – only equivocally in comparison to bodies. For bodies necessarily occupy a place which is equivalent to their material quantity – what an angel cannot do, since it is immaterial. Still, an angel cannot be in a place which is infinitely large or infinitely small, but occupies a determinate place by its '*quantitas virtutis*'<sup>83</sup>, that is, according to the power or potency that characterizes its being. Consequently, the angel effectively occupies a determinate – i.e. limited – place, but 'in an indeterminate way'.<sup>84</sup> This caveat ('*indeterminate tamen*'), at first sight rather vague, could be understood in two ways: the indeterminacy primarily indicates that the angel is not located according to a material equivalence with the containing place; alternatively, it indicates a margin of

indeterminacy between the infinitely large and the infinitely small. Both magnitudes are excluded, but within the interval separating them an angel can occupy places in a differentiated manner (that is, not fixed or previously determined), since ‘no configuration of place is repugnant to it’.<sup>85</sup> Thus, the ‘*quantitas virtutis*’ of the angel determines the possibility of its presence in a place, but not in the sense of constituting the natural foundation of its presence in such or such a place by equivalence or proportionality. For the angel has the freedom to be in a place more or less large, provided that the place is neither infinitely large nor infinitely small.<sup>86</sup> Therefore, in respect to the second condition we find both analogy (the angel is in a sense present in a determinate place) and equivocity (it is not the case that the angel is present by equivalence) between angelic location and bodily location.

On the same grounds, separate substances fail to fulfil the third condition, since they are not commensurable to the place in which they are present, insofar as they are not composed of parts which could be adequate to the parts of the physical place.<sup>87</sup>

The fourth condition, by contrast, is verified in spiritual creatures, since each and every one of them occupies a determinate place rather than being everywhere.<sup>88</sup> Actual location does indeed occur in relation to a determinate place, which nevertheless does not imply – as already pointed out – a ‘(necessary) presence by equivalence’.

As for the fifth condition, we find again equivocity between the mode of angelic location and that of bodies. Angels do not have a natural relation to their place, so that they are not found in any place either naturally or violently, just as no containing body would be able to preserve them in a place.<sup>89</sup> The passive power which founds the possibility of angelic location is therefore neither natural nor violent, but neutral – just as a surface is indifferent to blackness or whiteness - so the passive potency of angels is

indifferent to such or such a place and can thus occupy any place provided that it is neither infinitely large or infinitely small. This neutrality or indifference allows the free exercise of the will, by virtue of which the angel can decide to move to one or another place.<sup>90</sup>

What can we conclude from this comparative study on the location of spiritual creatures? Mainly two statements: (1) just as in any other creature, in the angel there is a passive power which founds its location; (2) the angel is located in a determinate place because it cannot be everywhere.<sup>91</sup> Thus, among the conditions for the location of bodies, only one is fulfilled by angels, namely that they occupy a determinate place. This conclusion is central, as it synthesizes the Scotist solution to the initial question. Against the thesis of angelic location according to operation, Scotus opts for location ‘per se’ and grounds it on the neutral passive power which characterizes the angel’s relation to its place. He thus follows the directives of the 1277 condemnation, while refraining from identifying the foundation of location.<sup>92</sup> Finally, what is important for Scotus is that the angel is located, since it is wholly compatible not only with its condition as a creature, but also with its finiteness.

The significance accorded to created finiteness brings the Scotist position in connection to that of his Franciscan predecessors, who understood angelic location as hinging on the condition of finiteness of all creatures.<sup>93</sup> Scotus’s position remains however distinct in its denial of the necessity of the location of angels: from their location *de facto* we cannot infer a necessity *de iure*. Scotus is here proceeding according to his general philosophical approach, as he first seeks the conditions of possibility before examining the fact. This allows him to criticize, by appealing to divine omnipotence, any claim of necessity when it comes to the physical world.

Scotus's approach results in the thesis that angelic location is a pure possibility. But how is this thesis consonant with the notion that the angel occupies a determinate place? What brings about the passage from the mere possibility to the actual fact? Scotus is well aware of this difficulty and applies himself to solving it in order to lay solid grounds for the thesis of the location 'per se' and 'de facto' of angels. This difficulty is clearly formulated in the *Lectura*: '*Sed quaeres: si angelus habet possibilitatem passivam essendi in loco, a quo agitur habet quod sit in loco, cum nihil reducat se de potentia ad actum?*'<sup>94</sup> The passage from *de iure* to *de facto* cannot be achieved by the angel itself. In actual fact, each angel is already and always present in a place, even though its location does not represent more than a mere possibility in the ontological order. The example of the surface which is in potentiality to its colour can help to clarify this. For just as the surface's potentiality is reduced to actuality by surface's efficient cause – even if a wall is always and already coloured from the moment of its construction – in the same way the agent who creates the angel creates it from the outset as located in a determinate place – even if an angel cannot exist without being in a place. In other words, the neutral passive power to all possible places is determined and actualized by the same act of creation which from the outset locates the angel in some place.<sup>95</sup> The angel is thus already and always created *in the world*, as every other creature. *De facto* there is nothing outside the physical space except for God and all that his absolute power can produce. In contrast to the thesis of location according to operation – which appears to grant to the angel the freedom to 'enter the world' and locate itself in a place which does not pertain to it of itself – Scotus's thesis 'secularizes' angelic location as it makes of the angel another worldly creature by reintroducing it to the world by the very act of its creation. It is therefore God who performs the passage from *de iure* to *de facto* and it is God alone who

can dissolve the angel's relation to its place by 'de-secularizing' the angel and creating it outside of the world.

Like his Franciscan colleagues, Scotus 'secularizes', i.e. humanizes, the angel, while at the same time he frees it from the conditions of location proper to corporeal bodies as such. On the other hand, Scotus departs from his fellow Franciscans in that for him angels are not only not located '*circumscriptive*' – what was commonly accepted – but they can also, and even according to their natural possibilities, occupy many places simultaneously, provided that none of these is adequate to the *quantum* of the angel's power.<sup>96</sup> Beyond its realization *de facto*, this hypothesis is conceivable at a natural level because it does not imply contradiction.<sup>97</sup> Moreover, it is possible also, and *a fortiori*, by God's absolute power.<sup>98</sup>

Following this line, Scotus considers the question whether different angels can occupy the same place, although he is somewhat ambiguous in his response. While denying the affirmative thesis, he believes that the opposite arguments raised against it are unconvincing.<sup>99</sup> At the same time, he appears to admit its plausibility by virtue of angelic nature alone and beyond its ever possible realization by virtue of God's absolute power.<sup>100</sup> This plausibility rests, among other things, on the analogy between spatial and temporal relation. Just as two temporal realities can take place at the same time, in the same way two angels can occupy the same space.<sup>101</sup> Thus, without categorically affirming the presence of different angels in the same place, Scotus does not consider this hypothesis as necessarily contradictory. This responds to his emphasis – in contrast to Aquinas – on the angel's freedom in the exercise of his motor faculties,<sup>102</sup> and to his criticism – against his Franciscan predecessors – of a rigid understanding of the angel's relation to space as a necessary connection.<sup>103</sup>

### *3. Space: between angelological inquiry and physical theory*

The Scotist conception of the location of separate substances is significant in various respects. As way of conclusion, I will highlight some of the chief features of the Scotist contribution to angelology and the theory of physical place.

Scotus's account represents an important contribution to the discussion of angelic location, most notably in the context of the years following the condemnation of 1277. He adopts the doctrinal line enforced by the condemnation – to which he incidentally attributes universal import – and defends the location 'per se' of angels. In this respect, and like his fellow Franciscans, he reintroduces the angel in the physical space and locates it in a determinate place. Thus located, the angel can neither be nowhere nor everywhere. Although sharing a common horizon with the heirs of 1277, the Scotist account follows its own path, a path which – at least to my knowledge – can be characterized as original.

Its originality lies first of all in Scotus's particular preoccupation – here as in other instances - to identify conditions of possibility before explaining a given fact (unverifiable in the case of angels!) to which he does not accord any necessity. Now, there is only one condition of possibility for angelic location, namely their 'neutral passive power' in relation to place.

Consequently – and this constitutes the second new element in Scotus's approach – the angel is not located in the physical space by virtue of a natural capacity or an intrinsic necessity, but only because God so chose at the moment of creation.<sup>104</sup> The angel's location thus results from God's will, who comprised it as a feature of its created being. The relation to a place thus becomes an indication of the dependence and the

finiteness which characterize the angel's created condition.

The third new element in the Scotist conception lies in the twin hypotheses of the simultaneous occupation of different places by one and the same angel, and the presence of different angels in one and the same place. As we saw, Scotus is cautious with regards to the second hypothesis, but he clearly affirms the non-contradiction of the first. On this point, the Scotist view is innovative both in relation to Aquinas and to his fellow Franciscans of the time succeeding the 1277 condemnation. Scotus's acceptance of the hypothesis in question results from the priority he accords to the examination of the conditions of possibility. From this perspective, non-contradiction suffices to render a hypothesis acceptable before and beyond its actual realization. As for its significance and consequences, this hypothesis seems to allow a consideration of the relation to place in terms of non-equivalence. Furthermore, it leads Scotus at least on this occasion to dissolve the strong affinity between the angel and the human soul, usually underlined by the Franciscan tradition.<sup>105</sup> Indeed, whereas the human soul has to be present as a whole in each and every part of the body and cannot do otherwise, the angel 'can abandon the middle while remaining in the extremities, and by the same token be in two places simultaneously'.<sup>106</sup> As these features reveal, the Scotist conception of the location of separate substances represents a significant contribution to medieval angelology, which Scotus steers in a direction of 'secularization' and humanization of the angel, while at the same time drawing from the angel's *sui generis* status in the formulation of hypotheses novel to human experience.

Furthermore, the theory of place developed in an angelological context also contributes to the theory of physical place. Since the import and the novelty of the Scotist conception of place has already been exhaustively elucidated,<sup>107</sup> I will limit my task to

highlighting three points concerning angelic location which complete or confirm the Scotist theory of physical place.

(1) The first concerns the necessity of location. As has been made clear, bodies, by their nature as bodies, are necessarily present in a place, their removal from all place being only possible by virtue of God's absolute power.<sup>108</sup> By contrast, angels are not necessarily present in a place, not even from the point of view of their nature – although *de facto* they have always and from the outset been created in a place. This angelic prerogative allows to conceive location as the determination of a condition (that of creatures) and not of a nature. From this perspective, “‘per se’ location’ means ‘location by the being of a nature already in existence’. Moreover, to the extent that there is a (transcendental) priority of the ‘pure nature’ with respect to its existence, the nature will not be necessarily affected by local determination. The latter has an impact only, and inevitably, on created actual existence.

(2) The second point has to do with the naturalness of the relation to a place. Whereas bodies, in their nature as bodies, relate to a place as something natural to them, the angel relates to a place in a neutral way in that all places pertain to it equally. This detachment with respect to a natural place contributes to break with the Aristotelian theory of place. The case of angelic location thus allows to consider the relation to a place no longer in terms of natural suitability, but in terms of an existential condition. Therefore, as determining factor of all created existence, place does not have to be necessarily conceived as a relation of suitability or pertinence. On the same grounds, and in a broader perspective, the cosmological reference – essential for the Aristotelian theory – is radically put in question.

(3) The third point of rupture lies in the thesis that angels are located in a



determinate place ‘in an indeterminate manner’. This prerogative grants a ‘manoeuvring margin’ to spiritual substances with regard to the quantity of the occupied place. In other words, the angel’s location is not restricted to a quantitative equivalence (not even virtual) with the place it occupies. This factor, like the previous one, questions the adequacy between the located reality and the containing place, and by the same token levels a criticism against the notion of contiguity characteristic of the Aristotelian theory.

Therefore, the theory of angelic location not only confirms but also emphasizes the rupture between the Scotist conception of place and the Aristotelian doctrine. The three points highlighted underpin the idea of space as independent from cosmic coordinates (centre and poles of the universe) - the idea of place as a pure system of reference. The dissolution of the natural link prepares the ground for the homogenization of space, just as the given fact of the location of angels operates in favour of the homogenization of created reality.

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<sup>1</sup> For the medieval conception of space, see P. Zumthor, *La mesure du monde* (Paris, 1993). For theories of space and location, see E. Grant, *Studies in mediaeval Science and Natural Philosophy* (London, 1981), as well as vol. 25 of *Miscellanea mediaevalia* (1998).

<sup>2</sup> It must be remarked however that the rare occurrence of the term ‘space’ is characteristic of the discussions concerning location and space in the sublunar world. By contrast, the term appears fairly frequently in discussions concerning the localisation of angels. This difference further confirms the centrality of these issues in angelological discussions, which in their turn contributed to physical and cosmological reflection.

<sup>3</sup> See P. Zumthor, *La mesure*, p. 51.

<sup>4</sup> The connection between the status of spiritual creatures and their location is particularly emphasized by Thierry of Freiberg. I have examined Thierry’s account in ‘Une contribution médiévale aux théories du lieu: Thierry de Freiberg et le lieu des substances spirituelles’, in B. Mojsisch, ed., *Dietrich von Freiberg – Eckpunkte seines Denkens*, Bochumer Studien zur Philosophie (Amsterdam – Philadelphia, forthcoming 2005).

<sup>5</sup> See *De Gen. ad litt.* VIII, 26, n. 48 (CSEL 28, I, p. 265).

<sup>6</sup> See *De hebdomadibus*, ed. Steward Rand, p. 40, 18-27.

<sup>7</sup> Peter Lombard, *Sententiae in IV libris distinctae*, I d. 37 c. 6 n. 1, ed. P. P. Collegii S. Bonaventurae, Quaracchi, vol. I, p. 270, 12-17.

<sup>8</sup> The choice of one or the other option determined the solution to another important problem, that of the movement of separate substances. In this respect, see P. Porro, *Forme e modelli di durata nel pensiero medievale. L'aevum, il tempo discreto, la categoria 'quando'* (Leuven, 1996), p. 286.

<sup>9</sup> See Aristotle, *Physica* IV, 4, 212a 20-21; and Thomas Aquinas, *In Arist. Physicam*, lectio VI, n. 470. On the Thomist conception of physical place, see T. Suarez-Nani, 'Conceptions médiévales de l'espace et du lieu: les éléments d'une trajectoire', in M. Esfeld and J. M. Tétaz, eds., *Généalogie de la pensée moderne. Volume d'hommage à I. Schüssler* (Frankfurt, 2004), pp. 97-114.

<sup>10</sup> See Aquinas, *Sent.*, I d. 37 q. 4 a. 1: 'Eodem modo convenit angelo moveri in loco sicut esse in loco: et utrumque est aequivoce respectu corporalium. Dicitur enim angelus esse in loco in quantum applicatur loco per operationem'; *Quodl.*, I q. 3 a. 1: 'Sicut ergo corpus est in loco per contactum dimensionis quantitatis, ita angelus est in loco per contactum virtutis'; *ST*, I q. 52 a. 1: 'angelo convenit esse in loco: aequivoce tamen dicitur angelus esse in loco et corpus. Corpus enim est in loco per... contactum dimensionis quantitatis. Quae quidem in angelis non est; sed est in eis quantitas virtualis. Per applicationem igitur virtutis angelicae ad aliquem locum qualitercumque dicitur angelus esse in loco corporeo'.

<sup>11</sup> *ST*, I q. 52 a. 3: 'Angelus dicatur esse in loco per hoc quod virtus eius immediate contingit locum per modum continentis perfecti'. On this point, see my *Les anges et la philosophie. Subjectivité et fonction cosmologique des substances séparées au XIIIe siècle* (Paris, 2002), pp. 87-90.

<sup>12</sup> *ST*, I q. 52 a. 2: '[Angelus] voluntarie applicat suam virtutem ad corpus maius vel minus'; *Quodl.*, I q. 3 a. 2: 'cum angelus sit... sua virtute supereminens in loco: unde non habet necesse quod sequatur in suo motu conditiones loci; sed voluntati suae subest quod applicet se per contactum virtutis huic loco et illo, et si vult, absque medio'.

<sup>13</sup> See my *Les anges et la philosophie*, second part.

<sup>14</sup> *ST*, I q. 52 a. 2: 'Angelus est indivisibile extra genus quantitatis et situ existens'.

<sup>15</sup> *ST*, I q. 52 a. 2.

<sup>16</sup> The first holds that 'angeli per essentiam sunt in loco'; the second that 'angeli nullo modo sunt in loco'. See Giles, *Reportatio in I Sent.*, d. 37 q. 11, ed. C. Luna, *Aegidii Romani Opera omnia* III, 2: *Reportatio lectionum super libros I-IV Sent.* (Florence, 2003), p. 168. Both opinions already figured in Aquinas's commentary (I d. 37 q. 3 a. 1), to which Giles makes direct reference here.

<sup>17</sup> See Giles, *Reportatio in I Sent.*, d. 37 q. 1, p. 169.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> Note however that although Aquinas does not consider this possibility explicitly, it could be deduced from the voluntary character of angelic operations.

<sup>20</sup> *Reportatio in I Sent.*, d. 37 q. 1, p. 169: 'Sicut igitur corpus, applicando quantitatem suam alicui loco, est in loco, ita angelus, applicando alicui loco suam quantitatem virtualem, est in loco'.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*: 'Intelligentia ponitur in optima dispositione semper in qua potest esse, secundum Philosophum; ...sed optima dispositio ipsius universi est quod sit connexum... sic quod spirituale et corporale habeant connexionem ad invicem; sed haec connexio... est secundum contactum virtutis; ergo non erit dare instans in quo non applicet intelligentia suam influentiam corpori'.

<sup>23</sup> See *Ordinatio in I Sent.*, d. 37 pars 2 princ. 1 q. 2 (Venice, 1521), 194vb Q.

<sup>24</sup> *Reportatio in I Sent.*, d. 37 q. 1 p. 170: ‘Sed haec applicatio non semper consistit in movendo... Quod patet, quia, cum est in caelo empyreo, in quo non est nisi per applicationem virtutis ad ipsum, tamen ipsum non movet, quia est corpus immobile, et ideo haec applicatio virtutis inexplicabilis est nobis’.

<sup>25</sup> *Quaestiones de motu angelorum*, q. 5, ed. G. Bruni, in *Analecta augustiniana*, 17 (1939/40), p. 42.

<sup>26</sup> See *Chartularium Univ. Parisiensis*, ed. Dénifle-Chatelain (Paris, 1889), vol. 1, articles 204, 218, and 219, pp. 554-5. Also R. Hissette, *Enquête sur les 219 articles condamnés à Paris le 7 mars 1277* (Paris-Louvain, 1977), articles 53 to 55, pp. 104-110 (French translation in D. Piché, *La condamnation parisienne de 1277* (Paris, 1999), pp. 140, 144, and 146).

<sup>27</sup> See Henry of Ghent, *Quodlibet* II, q. 9, ed. R. Wielockx, p. 67, 20-35.

<sup>28</sup> See *Correctorium fratris Thomae*, ed. Glorieux, *Les premières polémiques thomistes: Le correctorium corruptorii ‘Quare’* (Kain, 1927), pp. 73-7.

<sup>29</sup> See *De perlegendis philosophorum libris*, ed. F. M. Délorme, in *Antonianum*, 16 (1941), p. 43.

<sup>30</sup> See my study ‘Pierre de Jean Olivi et la subjectivité angélique’, in *Archives d’histoire doctrinale et littéraire du Moyen Age*, 70 (2004), pp. 234-316. I profit here from some conclusions derived from this study, especially part III, pp. 262-75.

<sup>31</sup> See Peter John Olivi, *Quaestiones in II Sent.*, q. 32, ed. Jansen, vol. I, p. 572: ‘Rationes autem sumuntur ex triplici respectu seu ordine qui necessario est in angelis’.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 586: ‘Dicendum quod ubi seu esse hic vel illic addit aliquid ad rem quae est hic vel illic... [hoc est] quendam modum essendi multum relativum qui locatio vel situatio vocatur’.

<sup>33</sup> See my ‘Pierre de Jean Olivi et la subjectivité angélique’, p. 273.

<sup>34</sup> *Qu. de anima separata*, q. 2, ed. V. Doucet (Quaracchi, 1959), pp. 26-27: ‘Sed ista positio [sc. quod angelus est in loco per operationem], licet aliquando fuit opinio, tamen modo non debet pro opinione haberi, quoniam ab antiquo excommunicata fuit a domino Guillelmo Episcopo Parisiensi de consilio magistrorum tunc existentium Parisius; licet non sub ista forma. Excommunicata est nihilominus recenter a domino episcopo Parisiensi, qui nunc est, de communi consensu omnium Magistrorum, tam de existentia in loco quam de motu tam substantiarum separatarum quam etiam specialiter animae separatae, in diversis articulis’.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 28: ‘Substantiae spirituales sunt de mundo et de universo; ergo, non sunt extra mundo’. As O. Boulnois shows (‘Du lieu cosmique à l’espace continu? La représentation de l’espace selon Duns Scot et les condamnations de 1277’, in *Miscellanea Medievalia*, 25 (1998), pp. 314-31), on this occasion Matthew is following Bonaventure’s argument in *Sent.*, II d. 2 p. 2 a. 2, qq. 1-4.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*: ‘Constat enim substantias spirituales creatas limitatas esse et secundum virtutem et secundum essentiam. Igitur... cum non possint esse ubique, quia limitati sunt... necesse est eas esse in aliquo “ubi” determinato’.

<sup>37</sup> *Qu. de anima separata*, q. 2, p. 26-27: ‘Tertia ratio sumitur ex divina providentia... Nam secundum naturam suam et secundum naturae perfectionem locum illis substantiis deputavit, caelum scilicet empyreum, quod est locus et naturalis conditionis et beatitudinis’.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*: ‘Quarta ratio sumitur ex divina iustitia, quae secundum meritorum exigentiam

loca distinxit: caelum ad gloriam, infernum vel purgatorium ad poenam; ...unde... necessarium videtur debere poni eos [sc. substantiae spirituales] in loco secundum essentiam, non tantum secundum operationem’.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., p. 30.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.: ‘Supposita loci existentia et ordine et connexione partium mundi ad invicem, fortassis substantia spiritualis non potest non exhibere praesentiam suam loco corporali, in quo tamen, quia simplex est, ita est in toto quod totum in qualibet parte. Sed quia limitatae est existentiae, habet certum limitem et mensuram in quanto loco potest se facere et quanto loco suam praesentiam exhibere. Quis autem sit ille terminus, puto solum Deum scire, qui novit mensuras et modos omnium naturarum et omnibus naturis proprios limites praefixit’.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., p. 31: ‘Circa declarationem autem rationis existentiae in loco intelligendum est quod operatio tantum non est ratio essendi in loco, sicut dicunt Magistri. ...Nec essentia, sicut dictum est, est ratio applicandi seu existendi in loco, nam essentia de ratione sui a loco non dependet’. In these lines, Matthew betrays his compliance with the condemnation, unlike Henry of Ghent and Godfrey of Fontaines, who rather highlight the problematic, and even incoherent, character of the three articles dealing with the location of separate substances. On this issue, see L. Bianchi, *Il vescovo e i filosofi* (Bergamo, 1990), pp. 16-61.

<sup>42</sup> *Qu. de anima separata*, q. 2, p. 31: ‘Ratio enim applicationis qua substantia spiritualis... loco se praesentem exhibet, est ordo est habitudo et connexio mundi et partium eius... Ratio autem determinationis et definitionis est propria limitatio, mensura et modus cuiuslibet naturae creatae..., et propterea sic est loco prasens quod ad locum aliquem determinatur et definitur’.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.: ‘Si quaeras quid est ista limitatio, mensura vel modus, dico quod non est ipsa essentia. Nulla enim essentia est suus modus vel sua mensura, sed consequitur essentiam, prout est sub esse actuali, et fortassis est ipsum esse sic modificatum, sic mensuratum et limitatum’.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., p. 33.

<sup>45</sup> *Sent.*, I d. 37 a. 2 q. 1 (Brixiae, 1591), pp. 325-7.

<sup>46</sup> *Sent.*, I d. 37 a. 2 q. 1, p. 326b: ‘Praeterea supradictam opinionem [sc. quod angelus non est in loco nisi per operationem] dogmatizantes, a domino Stephano Parisiensi Episcopo excommunicati sunt’.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.: ‘Cum ergo angelus praesens sit ubi est praesens virtus existens in ipso, sequitur quod prius ordine naturae angelus praesens est corpori, quam aliquam operationem causet in corpore. Ideo mihi videtur dicendum, quod angelus praeter omnem operationem, quam habet circa locum est in loco non circumscriptive, cum non sit res corporalis, sed diffinitive est praesens alicui loco determinato’.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., p. 327a: ‘Ratio autem formalis illius applicationis non est circumscriptio a loco..., nec operatio circa locum..., nec ordo universi’. Note that Richard rejects here the argument put forward by Matthew of Aquasparta, according to which the order and structure of the universe constitute the foundation for the ‘applicatio virtutis’. See above n. 35.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.: ‘Dico ergo quod formalis ratio applicationis angeli ad locum est sua simultas cum loco vel cum re in loco existente. Unde sicut formalis ratio applicationis corporis ad locum est circumscriptio, sic formalis applicatio angeli ad locum est simultas sua cum loco vel cum re existente in loco’.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., p. 327b.

<sup>51</sup> See *Ordinatio*, II d. 2, pars 2, qq. 1-4, ed. C. Balic (Rome, 1963), pp. 241-77.

<sup>52</sup> O. Boulnois ('Du lieu cosmique', p. 319) attributes to Scotus two alternative interpretations of the condemnation, one 'strict' and the other 'very severe'.

<sup>53</sup> See Godfrey of Fontaines, *Quodlibet*, VI q. 13, ed. J. Hoffmans, in *Les philosophes belges*, t. 3 (Louvain, 1914), pp. 239-40; Giles of Rome, *De motu angelorum*, q. 5, pp. 30-39.

<sup>54</sup> *Ordinatio*, II d. 2 p. 2 q. 2, p. 246: 'Sed isti videntur idem sub alio vocabulo occultare'.

<sup>55</sup> See above, n. 17. Also Scotus, *Ordinatio*, II d. 2 p. 2 q. 2, p. 248-9.

<sup>56</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 251: 'Praeterea, illud quod est angelo ratio existendi vel essendi in loco, est in eo formaliter, - alioquin nullo modo angelus erit formaliter in loco; operatio autem transiens in corpus, non est formaliter in eo, ergo etc'.

<sup>57</sup> For a detailed reconstruction of the Scotist theory of place, see R. Cross, *The Physics of Duns Scotus. The Scientific Context of a Theological Vision* (Oxford, 1998), pp. 193-213.

<sup>58</sup> Scotus, *Ordinatio*, II d. 2 p. 2 q. 2, p. 253: 'Corpori enim cuilibet, praeter "ultimum" (cuius non est aliud extra continens) quinque conveniunt: esse in loco actuali, esse in loco determinato quia aequali, esse in loco commensurative, esse in loco hoc determinate vel alio, et esse in loco naturaliter vel violenter'.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 254: 'Licet enim nullum quantum existat nisi ipsum si quale, - et secundum hoc, prius naturaliter est mathematicum quam quale, hoc est, tale quale primo consideratur a mathematico, per se et primo. Hoc intendit Philosophus IV physicorum "De vacuo", quia vult quod "si corpus cubicum ponatur in aerem vel in aquam - licet nullam habeat passionem naturalem, tantum tamen facit distare quantum est ipsum corpus impositum", ita quod quantum est ipsum corpus, tantum facit distare; et hoc non convenit sibi in quantum scilicet est tantum naturale, sed in quantum in se est "quantum" praecise, et ita mathematicum'. See also Aristotle, *Physica* IV, 8 (216a – 216b 8).

<sup>60</sup> See O. Boulnois, 'Du lieu cosmique', pp. 327-8. Note however that being a 'mathematical body' or reality does not signify for Scotus being a purely intelligible reality. To this effect, we read in his *Lectura*, II d. 2 p. 2 q. 2 ed. Balic (Rome, 1982), p. 161: 'corpus enim mathematicum non est tantum in imaginatione..., sed est in re extra, nam quantitas est prior naturaliter qualitate, et sic consideratur ut in re praecedit qualitates sensibiles, et sic ab eis abstrahi potest secundum prioritatem naturalem, et non solum per considerationem intellectus'.

<sup>61</sup> See *Ordinatio*, II d. 2 p. 2 q. 2, p. 253: 'Prima quattuor conveniunt corpore in quantum "quantum" vel corpus, ultimum convenit sibi in quantum est corpus naturale'.

<sup>62</sup> See O. Boulnois, 'Du lieu physique', p. 328.

<sup>63</sup> Aristotle, *Physica* IV, 4 (212a 20-21).

<sup>64</sup> *Ordinatio*, II d. 2 p. 2 q. 2, p. 255: 'Ultra autem istam continentiam praecisam, adhuc habet locus immobilitatem..., quam immobilitatem nisi sunt diversi diversimode salvare per respectum ad polos et ad centrum'.

<sup>65</sup> See Aquinas, *In Aristotelis Physicam IV*, lectio VI. For an account of the Thomist conception of place, see my 'Conceptions médiévales de l'espace et du lieu: les éléments d'une trajectoire', in M. Esfeld – G.M. Tétaz, eds., *Généalogie de la pensée moderne. Volume d'hommages à Ingeborg Schüssler* (Frankfurt, 2004), pp. 97-114. For Giles's theory of place, see C. Trifogli, 'La dottrina del luogo in Egidio Romano', in *Medioevo*, 14 (1988), pp. 235-90.

<sup>66</sup> On this issue, see my 'Conceptions médiévales de l'espace et du lieu', pp. 105-06.

<sup>67</sup> *Ordinatio*, II d. 2 p. 2 q. 2, p. 256: ‘Et si dicatur quod est ultimum totius universi, et licet ut est ultimum continentis varietur, tamen ut est ultimum totius universi non variatur, nec hoc solvit, quia non est ultimum totius universi nisi quia partis: et ideo si est aliud partis alterius et alterius, non est idem totius universi’.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*: ‘Dico igitur quod locus habet immobilitatem oppositam motui locali omnino, et incorruptibilitatem secundum aequivalentiam per comparationem ad motum localem’.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 258: ‘Nullus autem motus localis potest esse ab uno “ubi” ad aliud “ubi”, nisi quae duo “ubi” correspondent duobus locis differentibus specie, quia habentibus alium respectum... ad totum universum; ex hoc illi respectus qui sunt tantum alii numero, videntur unus numero quia ita sunt indistincti respectu motus localis sicut si tantum essent unus respectus’. See also R. Cross, *The Physics of Duns Scotus*, p. 209-10.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*: ‘Exemplum huius patet aliquantulum in nominibus significatis, quia haec vox “homo”, quotienscumque prolata, dicitur una vox numero, et differt ab hac voce “lapis” numero; ...tamen quia ad finem vocis (scilicet conceptum) exprimentum, per aequivalentiam sunt idem numero “homo” vel “lapis” quotienscumque prolata, ideo dicuntur esse una vox numero respectu illius finis’.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 258-9: ‘Sic dico in proposito quod locus est immobilis per se et per accidens, localiter, tamen est corruptibilis moto subiecto localiter, quia tunc non manet in eo illa ratio loci; et tamen non est corruptibilis in se et secundum aequivalentiam... ad comparationem ad motum localem’.

<sup>72</sup> O. Boulnois, ‘Du lieu cosmique’, p. 330.

<sup>73</sup> *Ordinatio*, II d. 2 p. 2 q. 2, p. 259: ‘Sed numquid omne corpus – aliud a primo corpore – necessario sit in loco quia “quantum”?’ This question is not included in the discussion of the same problem in *Lectura*, II d. 2 p. 2 q. 2.

<sup>74</sup> The problem at hand concerns the presence of Christ’s body in the Eucharistic bread. The discussion on place developed in *Quodlibet* 11, a. 1 constitutes an attempt to find a solution to this problem. Scotus’s solution consists in conceiving the location of bodies as a possibility and not as a necessity. On this issue, see R. Cross, *The Physics of Duns Scotus*, pp. 196-202.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 259: ‘Oppositum tamen videtur esse verum secundum catholicos, quia Deus posset facere lapidem, non existente aliquo alio locante corpore, aut separatim existentem ab omni alio corpore, quia posset illud facere extra universum; et utroque modo esset “non in loco”, et tamen esset idem secundum omne absolutum in se. Per nihil igitur absolutum in alio, requiritur necessario esse in loco’.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 261: ‘Ad propositum igitur ista applicando de angelo, dico quod angelus non necessario est in loco’.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*: ‘Et tamen in angelo est potentia passiva, qua potest esse in loco’.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*: ‘Et ipsa potentia vel fundatur immediate in eius substantia, vel in ipsa in quantum est natura limitata actualiter existens, vel in aliquo extrinseco angelo (quidquid sit illud)’.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*: ‘Et ideo non oportet quaerere aliquam intrinsecam rationem essendi angelum in loco, necessario, quia ibi nulla est’.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*: ‘Tantum est in ipso [angelo] potentialitas passiva, qua potest esse in loco quia non repugnat sibi’. Scotus’s position appears to be ambivalent. Indeed, although we can detect some conformity with Etienne Tempier’s view that the angel can be in a place by its substance - as O. Boulnois points out, p. 321 – Scotus’s argument in fact operates at a different level, for he refocuses the problem and treats it in terms of necessity and

possibility. In other words, location is not considered as a given fact which must be explained by identifying its foundation, but is rather dealt with as a pure possibility. This way of approaching the question is verified in question 3 ('Utrum angelus posset simul esse in duobus locis'), in which Scotus explicitly contrasts his position with the *de facto* approach to the question of the 'possibilitas naturalis' (ibid., p. 270).

<sup>82</sup> See Scotus, *Quodlibet*, 11 a. 1, in F. Alluntis and A. B. Wolter, *John Duns Scotus. God and Creatures. The Quodlibetal Questions* (Princeton, 1975), p. 259.

<sup>83</sup> In *Lectura*, II d. 2 p. 2 qq. 3-4, p. 171, we also find the term 'gradus entitatis'.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., p. 264: 'De isto articulo videtur concedendum quod habet locum determinatum, indeterminate tamen. Hoc modo et aliquis est quo maiorem non posset habere, et aliquis quo non posset habere minorem (loquendo de loco continuo)'.

<sup>85</sup> See ibid., p. 262: 'Sed in angelo nulla figuratio loci, in quo est, sibi repugnat; igitur si potest esse in uno aequali, et in altero, et per consequens, si potest esse in quadrato parvo, et non repugnat sibi esse in quadrato quantumcumque stricto (quod oportet dicere, dicendo quod non repugnat sibi esse in quantumcumque loco)'. Scotus appears to be here indebted to Mathew of Aquasparta's comments in *Quaestiones disputatae de anima separata*, q. 2, p. 38.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., pp. 264-5: 'Utrum autem determinatum locum requirat et determinate, ita quod habens tantam virtutem (si est praesens loco) de necessitate est praesens tanto loco, nec in potestate sua est ut sit praesens maiori vel minori loco (sicut est in corporibus, quia quodlibet necessario est in loco sibi aequali; ...hoc dubium est, quia non videtur posse probari faciliter, necessario, una pars nec alia. Quod enim inconveniens est si quantitas sua virtutis (per quam potest esse praesens alicui loco) sit naturalis ratio essendi in tanto loco suo modo, sicut quantitas corporis naturalis est ratio essendi in loco suo modo..., vel si ponatur quod quantitas eorum habet aliquem locum adaequatum quo maiorem non posset habere, licet tamen ipsa subsit voluntati angeli ut possit non semper habere illum locum, sed maiorem vel minorem, non sequitur inconveniens'.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., p. 265: 'De quarto patet quod non est in loco commensurative, quia non habet partem et partem cum parte loci'.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.: 'De quinto dico quod est in hoc loco vel in illo, quia non est ubique'.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., p. 266: 'De sexto dico quod non est in loco aliquo naturaliter, quia tunc esset in alio loco violenter; tunc etiam aliquod corpus haberet naturalem habitudinem ad ipsum conservandum in loco, ea aliud corpus ad ipsum corrumpendum'.

<sup>90</sup> *Lectura*, II d. 2 p. 2 q. 2, p. 167: 'Neutrum tamen sibi repugnat; et ideo est in potentia neutra ut sic possit moveri voluntarie aut quiescere a movente voluntarie'. The 'neutrality' of the angel's passive power in respect to its place is what ultimately distinguishes angels from corporeal creatures, whose passive power is not neutral but determined towards their natural place.

<sup>91</sup> *Lectura*, II d. 2 p. 2 q. 2, p. 169: 'Duo ergo affirmativa conveniunt angelo respectu loci, scilicet quod sit in hoc loco vel in illo, et habeat possibilitatem passivam essendi in loco (quae neutra est)'.

<sup>92</sup> Henry of Ghent also abstained from making such an identification, when in *Quodlibet*, II q. 9 he stated 'quod omnis creatura distat et differt a Deo per primam limitationem suam, clare video. Quomodo vero necesse est omnem creaturam differre et distare ab eo per secundam limitationem quia ipse est ubique, omnis autem creatura necessario alicubi, sed non ubique, et an prima limitatio, in natura scilicet et essentia, sit causa et ratio istius secundae limitationis, vel quodcumque aliud illud sit, dico quod penitus ignoro' (ed. R.

Wielocks, p.71).

<sup>93</sup> See above, Olivi and Matthew of Aquasparta's comments on this point. The latter in a sense anticipated the spirit of the Scotist position as he wrote that 'certum est enim quod, eo quod limitatae sunt, [substantiae spirituales] sunt in potentia ad ubi' (*Qu. disp. de anima separata*, q. 2, p. 33).

<sup>94</sup> *Lectura*, II d. 2 p. 2 q. 2, p. 169.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 170: 'Sic in proposito angelus eadem possibilitate passiva est in potentia ad "ubi" et ad "hoc ubi", et agens quod creat ipsum et facit ipsum esse in "hoc ubi" cum dat virtutem motivam (ut voluntatem vel aliam virtutem) per quam potest se facere in alio loco'.

<sup>96</sup> *Ordinatio*, II d. 2 p. 2 q. 3, p. 270: 'De possibilitate tamen eorum naturali, videtur probabile quod non possit simul unus esse in duobus locis quorum uterque sit sibi adaequatus secundum ultimum potentiae suae: puta, si secundum ultimum potentiae suae potest esse in loco unius milliaris, non posset virtute sua propria esse in duobus locis talibus, quia tunc iste locus non videtur sibi esse adaequatus secundum virtutem suam naturalem'.

<sup>97</sup> *Lectura*, II d. 2 p. 2 qq. 3-4, p. 172: 'Non tamen video quare non (ex quo non est in omni loco – in quo est – secundum ultimum potentiae suae) potest derelinquere medium et manere in extremis, et sic esse in duobus locis simul'. Note however that this opinion is not shared for example by Richard of Mediavilla, who denied that possibility in the natural order: 'Unus angelus non potest esse simul in diversis locis saltem per operationem cuiuscumque virtutis creatae... Si autem quaeras causam dicti dico, quod talis natura existentiae rei limitatae in loco, ut res illa diffiniatur a loco: sed non diffiniretur suo loco si existens in illo simul posset esse in alio... Ponere, quod in duobus talibus spatiis simul esse possit propria virtute statim videtur includere contradictionem' (*Sent.*, I d. 37 q. 3, p. 329).

<sup>98</sup> *Ordinatio*, II d. 2 p. 2 q. 3, p. 27: 'Sed quod in duobus locis (sive adaequatis sive non) posset esse per potentiam divinam, certum puto, quia nullam contradictionem includit, ut dicitur in IV, in materia de eucharistia'. This passage makes reference to *Ordinatio*, IV d. 10 q. 2, in which the question of place is examined in relation to the Eucharistic sacrament. A similar discussion appears in *Quodlibet*, 11 a. 4.

<sup>99</sup> Scotus is alluding on the one hand to Aquinas (*ST*, I q. 52 a. 3), and on the other to the arguments advanced by Richard of Mediavilla, who on the grounds of the axiom of impenetrability solves the question in the negative: 'Respondeo quod plures angeli non possunt esse simul in eodem loco virtute creata, quia quaecumque simul sunt in eodem loco oportet, quod unum penetret alium... Sed nullus spiritus virtute creata potest alium spiritum penetrare: et ideo duo angeli virtute creata in eodem loco proprio non possunt simul esse' (*Sent.*, I d. 37 a. 2 q. 4, p. 329b). The editors of Scotus's *Lectura* also suggest William of Ware as a possible reference. I was unfortunately unable to find access to the unedited text.

<sup>100</sup> *Ordinatio*, II d. 2 p. 2 q. 4, p. 276: 'Quidquid sit de facto et de possibili potentia naturali eorum, de possibili tamen respectu potentiae divinae non videtur impossibile quin per ipsam possint simul esse'. In *Quodlibet*, 11 q. 4 in an Eucharistic context, Scotus formulates a similar hypothesis on the presence of many bodies in the same place, by resorting to the idea that place is an accident signifying an extrinsic relation. On account of this, Scotus believes that we can assume that different bodies may hold such a relation to the same place (see *Quodlibet*, 11 a. 4, ed. Alluntis-Wolter, p. 268).



<sup>101</sup> *Lectura*, II d. 2 p. 2 q. 4, p. 177: ‘Similiter, duo temporalia sunt in tempore simul; quare non sic in proposito?’ For a similar argument, see *Ordinatio*, II d. 2 p. 2 q. 4, pp. 277-8. For the Scotist conception of time, see R. Cross, *The Physics of Duns Scotus*, pp. 214-56 and O. Boulnois ‘Du temps cosmique à la durée ontologique? Duns Scot, le temps, l’*aevum* et l’éternité’, in P. Porro, ed., *The Mediaeval concept of Time* (Leiden-Boston-Köln, 2001), pp. 161-88.

<sup>102</sup> See Aquinas, *ST*, I q. 52 a. 3, and Scotus’s criticism in *Ordinatio*, II d. 2 p. 2 q. 4, p. 277 and *Lectura*, II d. 2 p. 2 q. 4, p. 177.

<sup>103</sup> See Richard de Mediavilla, *Sent.*, I d. 37 a. 2 q. 4 and Scotus’s criticism in *Ordinatio*, II d. 2 p. 2 q. 4 p. 277-8 and *Lectura*, II d. 2 p. 2 q. 4, p. 177.

<sup>104</sup> Olivi and Matthew of Aquasparta hold a different opinion. According to these authors angelic location results from the angel’s necessary presence to the beings forming part of the world. See above, section 1.2. In the same spirit, Henry of Ghent attributes angelic location to the finiteness of the angelic nature. See *Quodlibet*, 2 q. 9, ed. R. Wielocks, p. 68.

<sup>105</sup> For Olivi, see my study ‘Pierre de Jean Olivi et la subjectivité angélique’, pp. 297-303. For Matthew of Aquasparta, see *Quaest. de anima separata*, q. 2 p. 30.

<sup>106</sup> *Lectura*, II d. 2 p. 2 q. 3, p. 172: ‘Non tamen video quare non [possit esse in duobus locis] (ex quo non est in omni loco – in quo est – secundum ultimum potentiae suae) potest derelinquere medium et manere in extremis, et sic esse in duobus locis simul’.

<sup>107</sup> See R. Cross, *The Physics of Duns Scotus*, and O. Boulnois, ‘Du lieu cosmique’, pp. 325-31.

<sup>108</sup> The hypothesis on the ‘non ubietas’ of bodies formulated in *Quodlibet*, 11 a. 4, pp. 269-70, does not imply ‘non-location’ but rather results from the distinction between ‘ubietas’ and ‘locus’ which does not feature in the discussion on angelic location in *Ordinatio*, II d. 2 q. 2.