

THE MEDIEVAL WORLD VIEW: THE PTOLEMAIC SYSTEM

Table 1. Explanation of the Diagram of the Universe, from the Outer Circle to the Center:

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The Empyrean Heaven, the Habitations of God and of all the Elect. (Stable, incorruptible, above the realm of time.)

The Tenth Heaven, the First Mover. (An envelope containing the universe: clockwise rotation period of 24 hours; the motion is imparted to the 7 planetary spheres.)

The Ninth Heaven, or Crystalline Sphere.

The Eighth Heaven, the Firmament or Sphere of the Fixed Stars.

The Sphere of Saturn. (Counter-clockwise rotation period of approximately 12 years.)

The Sphere of Jupiter. (“ ” 12 years.)

The Sphere of Mars. (“ ” 2 years.)

The Sphere of the Sun. (“ ” 1 year.)

The Sphere of Venus. (“ ” 224 days.)

The Sphere of Mercury. (“ ” 88 days.)

The Sphere of the Moon. (“ ” 27.5 days.)

The Belt of Fire.

The Belt of Air.

Earth. (A stationary globe at the center of the universe, smaller than any planet save the moon. Everything on earth is a corruptible compound of the four elements—namely, fire, air, water, earth.)

Figure at top: a pre-Copernican diagram of universe. (Slightly adapted from an image available at <http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ptolemaicsystem-small.png>) See also Claudius Ptolemy: The Geography. Ed. Edward Stevenson. New York: Dover, 1991; The Riverside Shakespeare. Boston: Houghton, 1974, and Petrus Apianus, *Cosmographia*, Antwerp, 1574. From Stanford University Libraries. (Thanks to Prof. Vicki Silver of UC Irvine for this guide.)