1. Waltmann, Rebekah. "Don't Take Orpheus without the Lyre: The Intricacies of Using Pagan Myths for Christian Purposes in *The Divine Comedy* and *Paradise Lost*," May 1, 2012: p. 12.

During the Middle Ages, Dante encountered not only arguments against the myths, but against all ancient poetry. The three most common arguments against using the classical myths were that they were immoral distractions, those who enjoyed and used them were in essence venerating the pagan, and that they were lascivious. Additionally, the fact that poetry was increasingly becoming a vehicle for philosophy and theology clashed with the pagan roots of the myths. After all, if a poem, such as the Comedy, presented theological concepts, then pagan materials did not belong, even if they no longer served the purpose of heretical worship. They still contained stories of pagan gods, and there was also the possibility that inspired by demons. Any author who studied the ancients and the classical myths would have been familiar with these arguments.

2. Erwin Panofsky, "Gothic Architecture and Scholasticism" (1948)

All that medieval man could know about divine revelation, and much of what he held to be true in other respects, was transmitted by the authorities (*auctoritates*): primarily, by the canonical books of the Bible which furnished arguments 'intrinsic and irrefutable' (*proprie et ex necessitate*); secondarily, by the teachings of the Fathers of the Church, which furnished arguments 'intrinsic' though merely 'probable,' and of the 'philosophers' which furnished arguments 'not intrinsic' (*extranea*) and merely probable for this very reason. Now, it could not escape notice that these authorities, even passages of Scripture itself, often conflicted with one another. There was no other way out than to accept them just the same and to interpret and reinterpret them over and over again until they could be reconciled. This had been done by theologians from the earliest days. But the problem was not posed as a matter of principle until Abelard wrote his famous Sic et Non, wherein he showed the authorities, including Scripture, disagreeing on 158 important points – from the initial problem whether or not faith ought to seek support in human reason down to such special questions as the permissibility of suicide (155) or concubinage (124). Such as systematic collection and confrontation of conflicting authorities had long been a practice of the canonists; but law, though God-given, was, after all, man-made. Abelard showed himself very conscious of his boldness in exposing the 'differences or even contradictions' (*ab invicem diversa, verum etiam invicem adversa*) within the very sources of revelation when he wrote that this 'would stimulate the reader all the more vigorously to inquire into the truth the more the authority of Scripture is extolled.'

After having laid down, in his splendid introduction, the basic principles of textual criticism (including the possibility of clerical error in even a Gospel, such as the ascription of a prophesy of Zacharias to Jeremias in Matthew xxvii, 9), Abelard mischievously refrained from proposing solutions. But it was inevitable that such solutions should be worked out, and this procedure became a more and more important part, perhaps the most important part, of the Scholastic method. Roger Bacon, shrewdly observing the diverse origins of this Scholastic method, reduced it to three components: 'division into many parts

as do the dialecticians; rhythmical consonances as do the grammarians; and forced harmonizations (*concordiae violentes*) as used by the jurists.'

It was this technique of reconciling the seemingly irreconcilable, perfected into a fine art through the assimilation of Aristotelian logic, that determined the form of academic instruction, the ritual of the public *disputations de quolibet*, and above all, the process of argumentation in the Scholastic writings themselves. Every topic had to be formulated as a *quaestio* the discussion of which begins with the alignment of one set of authorities (*videtur quod…*) against the other (*sed contra…*), proceeds to the solution (*respondeo dicendum…*), and is followed by an individual critique of the arguments rejected (*ad primum, ad secundum…*) – rejected, that is, only insofar as the interpretation, not the validity, of the authorities is concerned.

Needless to say, this principle was bound to form a mental habit no less decisive and all-embracing than that of unconditional clarification. Combative though they were in dealing with each other, the Scholastics of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries were unanimous in accepting the authorities and prided themselves on their skill in understanding and exploiting them rather than on the originality of their own thought. One feels the breath of a new era when William of Ockham, whose nominalism was to cut the ties between reason and faith and who could say: 'What Aristotle thought about this, I do not care,' goes out of his way to deny the influence of his most important forerunner, Peter Aureolus.

An attitude similar to that of High Scholasticism must be presupposed in the builders of the High Gothic cathedrals. For these architects the great structures of the past had an *auctoritas* quite similar to that which the Fathers had for the schoolmen. Of two apparently contradictory motifs, both of them sanctioned by authority, one could not simply be rejected in favor of the other. They had to be worked through to the limit and they had to be reconciled in the end.

3. Aquinas, Contra Gentiles, http://dhspriory.org/thomas/ContraGentiles1.htm#4

Chapter 3, paragraph 3 That there are certain truths about God that totally surpass man's ability appears with the greatest evidence. Since, indeed, the principle of all knowledge that the reason perceives about some thing is the understanding of the very substance of that being (for according to Aristotle "what a thing is" is the principle of demonstration) [*Posterior Analytics* II, 3], it is necessary that the way in which we understand the substance of a thing determines the way in which we know what belongs to it. Hence, if the human intellect comprehends the substance of some thing, for example, that of a stone or of a triangle, no intelligible characteristic belonging to that thing surpasses the grasp of the human reason. But this does not happen to us in the case of God. For the human intellect is not able to reach a comprehension of the divine substance through its natural power. For, according to its manner of knowing in the present life, the intellect depends on the sense for the origin of knowledge; and so those things that do not fall under the senses cannot be grasped by the human intellect except in so far as the knowledge of them is gathered from sensible things. Now, sensible things cannot lead the human intellect to the point of seeing in them the nature of the divine substance; for

sensible things are effects that fall short of the power of their cause. Yet, beginning with sensible things, our intellect is led to the point of knowing about God that He exists, and other such characteristics that must be attributed to the First Principle. There are, consequently, some intelligible truths about God that are open to the human reason; but there are others that absolutely surpass its power

Chapter 5.5: A still further benefit may also be seen in what Aristotle says in the *Ethics* [X, 7].

There was a certain Simonides who exhorted people to put aside the knowledge of divine things and to apply their talents to human occupations. He said that "he who is a man should know human things, and he who is mortal, things that are mortal." Against Simonides Aristotle says that "man should draw himself towards what is immortal and divine as much as he can." And so he says in the *De animalibus* [I, 5] that, although what we know of the higher substances is very little, yet that little is loved and desired more than all the knowledge that we have about less noble substances. He also says in the *De caelo et mundo* [II, 12] that when questions about the heavenly bodies can be given even a modest and merely plausible solution, he who hears this experiences intense joy. From all these considerations it is clear that even the most imperfect knowledge about the most noble realities brings the greatest perfection to the soul.
Therefore, although the human reason cannot grasp fully the truths that are above it, yet, if it somehow holds these truths at least by faith, it acquires great perfection for itself.

Chapter 13.10: It is to be noted, however, that Plato, who held that every mover is moved [*Phaedrus*],

understood the name motion in a wider sense than did Aristotle. For Aristotle understood motion strictly, according as it is the act of what exists in potency inasmuch as it is such. So understood, motion belongs only to divisible bodies, as it is proved in the *Physics* [VI, 4]. According to Plato, however, that which moves itself is not a body. Plato understood by motion any given operation, so that to understand and to judge are a kind of motion. Aristotle likewise touches upon this manner of speaking in the *De anima* [III, 7]. Plato accordingly said that the first mover moves himself because he knows himself and wills or loves himself. In a way, this is not opposed to the reasons of Aristotle. There is no difference between reaching a first being that moves himself, as understood by Plato, and reaching a first being that is absolutely unmoved, as understood by Aristotle.