favor of the geocentric doctrine, that the heaviest body must be in the centre, it was maintained, as a leading recommendation of the opposite opinion, that it placed the Fire, the noblest element, in the Centre of the Universe. The authority of mythological ideas was called in on both sides to support these views. Numa, as Plutarch⁶ informs us, built a circular temple over the ever-burning Fire of Vesta; typifying, not the earth, but the Universe, which, according to the Pythagoreans, has the Fire seated at its Centre. The same writer, in another of his works, makes one of his interlocutors say, "Only, my friend, do not bring me before a court of law on a charge of impiety; as Cleanthes said, that Aristarchus the Samian ought to be tried for impiety, because he removed the Hearth of the Universe." This, however, seems to have been intended as a pleasantry.

The prevalent physical views, and the opinions concerning the causes of the motions of the parts of the universe, were scarcely more definite than the ancient opinions concerning the relations of the four elements, till Galileo had founded the true Doctrine of Motion. Though, therefore, arguments on this part of the subject were the most important part of the controversy after Copernicus, the force of such arguments was at his time almost balanced. Even if more had been known on such subjects, the arguments would not have been conclusive : for instance, the vast mass of the heavens, which is commonly urged as a reason why the heavens do not move round the earth, would not make such a motion impossible; and, on the other hand, the motions of bodies at the earth's surface, which were alleged as inconsistent with its motion, did not really disprove such an opinion. But according to the state of the science of motion before Copernicus, all reasonings from such principles were utterly vague and obscure.

We must not omit to mention a modern who preceded Copernicus, in the assertion at least of the heliocentric doctrine. This was Nicholas of Cusa (a village near Treves), a cardinal and bishop, who, in the first half of the fifteenth century, was very eminent as a divine and mathematician; and who in a work, *De Doctà Ignorantia*, propounded the doctrine of the motion of the earth; more, however, as a paradox than as a reality. We cannot consider this as any distinct anticipation of a profound and consistent view of the truth.

We shall now examine further the promulgation of the Heliocentric System by Copernicus, and its consequences.

[•] De Facie in Orbe Lunce, 6.