

Chapter 14

Buridan Wycliffised? The Nature of the Intellect in Late Medieval Prague University Disputations



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Abstract The paper delves into manuscript sources connected with various disputations held at Prague University from around 1390 to 1420 and singles out a set of hitherto unknown *quaestiones* dealing with the nature of the human intellect and its relation to the body. Prague disputations from around 1400 arguably offer a unique vantage point on late medieval anthropological issues, since they encompass an entanglement of numerous doctrinal influences from Buridianian *De anima* commentaries to John Wyclif's theories. The paper delineates several conceptual tensions regarding the nature of the intellect, e.g., between materialism (entailed by the emphasis on the intellect's inherence in the body) and personal immortality. It presents several strategies Prague masters employed to overcome these tensions. For example, an anonymous participant of the 1409 *quodlibet* develops the Buridianian distinction between the rationally demonstrable materialist tendency and the indemonstrable "catholic truth" about the intellect both inhering in and separable from the body. On the other hand, Wyclif's adherents (Jacob of Mies and another anonymous master) postulate an immortal spirit hypostatically united to each human being beside the human soul educed from the potency of the matter. Yet, the boundaries between the doctrinal standpoints in question seem permeable, whereby a rigid definition of antagonistic groups in late medieval Prague intellectual milieu (e.g., Buridians vs Wycliffites) is rendered ineffective.

Keywords Intellect · Late medieval Prague university · Medieval disputations · John Buridan · John Wyclif

Work on this study received financial support from the Czech Science Foundation (GA ČR) project "Philosophy at the University of Prague around 1409: Matěj of Knín's Quodlibet as a Crossroads of European Medieval Knowledge," grant n. 19-16793S, carried out at the Institute of Philosophy of the Czech Academy of Sciences.

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14.1 Introduction

Medieval philosophers, like many others before and after them, invested an immense amount of intellectual energy in investigating the question of what the human being is. The feature they singled out as *the* one unique for human beings, differentiating them from the rest of animate nature, was the intellect, or the capacity of universal conceptual thought. On the other hand, there was a pressing need to distinguish humans from superior, incorporeal beings, such as angels and God himself. The need was assuaged by emphasizing the human intellect's dependence on the material body. The resulting double-nature picture invited medieval thinkers to develop various more or less sophisticated strategies to answer the pivotal anthropological question.

Far from being unified, medieval accounts of the human being and the nature of the intellect evince two tendencies, not easily compatible. One strives for a *unified* explanation of nature, applicable to everything. Aristotelian hylomorphism epitomizes the tendency, treating the human as a kind of material being, in which the material body is in-formed by the soul, which serves as a principle of both bodily and intellectual operations. However, as the soul is merely a part of the composite, the issue of its separability and thus of personal immortality becomes problematic. On the other hand, the Platonic (or generally theological) tendency emphasizes a divine element of human nature *transcending* strictly material nature, potentially self-subsisting and separable and thus enabling at least a part of the human being to survive bodily death. Nevertheless, the tendency contests the unity of the human being, as the composition of two radically different natures calls for a special explanation.¹

Running after two hares, the bulk of medieval philosophers tried to embrace *both* hylomorphic composition and personal immortality. The hylomorphic model was even declared as the only one consonant with the Catholic faith at the Council of Vienne in 1312. Everybody denying that the intellective soul is *per se* and essentially the form of the human body was to be considered a heretic.² Interpreting the exact nature of the intellect-body relation was far from unanimous. The constitution did not calm the dispute over how many substantial forms there are in the human being, an issue arduously debated since the early thirteenth century.³ Unitarians, like Thomas Aquinas or John Buridan, regarded the intellect as the only substantial form of the human being, inhering directly in the body. Such a claim, however, calls for a special explanation of why the intellect is not like the forms of other material

¹For the repercussions of taking the intellective soul as a form, albeit potentially separable from the body, see De Boer (2013, 25–36); see also Dales (1995).

²See Duba (2012, 175–177) for the quotation of the constitution. Note that personal immortality had to wait until 1513 to be supported by the papal bull *Apostolici regiminis*. See, e.g., Pluta (2010, 85–89).

³Despite the assertion of the contrary, often repeated by medieval and modern scholars, the constitution does not seem to aspire to settling down the issue by condemning *pluralism*, on which, see Duba (2012, 171–180).

objects, i.e., educed from matter, inseparable, and corruptible. On the contrary, the *pluralist* perspective (taken, among many others, by Peter Olivi, John Duns Scotus, or John Wyclif) postulates several substantial forms in a single human, often at least two: a sensory soul inhering in the body, which is educed from matter and thus corruptible, and the potentially separable intellect. In such a scenario the unity of the human being becomes problematic.⁴

Although the literature on the issue is vast, the present paper aspires to shed some further light on the issue from an unconventional perspective. Instead of focusing on one or several pivotal figures and presenting their doctrine, the paper aims to reconstruct a more dynamic picture of the issue, focusing on written records of various disputational practices at late medieval Prague University, flourishing around 1400, where the anthropological topics regularly re-emerge. The overwhelming majority of such written records of acute debates of the era are extant in the form of short *quaestiones* (often without determination), drafted for various university acts (quodlibetal or ordinary disputations, determinations of students during exams). Often extant in a single manuscript copy, buried in not properly catalogued codices, they are usually considered too derivative, unimportant, and trifling to be transcribed in full and studied adequately.

The present paper suggests that even texts of this kind are worth studying, as they provide almost immediate access to actual late medieval disputational practices in raw form, not refined by several layers of author's reworking and centuries of textual transmission, which every researcher has to face when dealing with texts by the renowned medieval thinkers. Besides, Prague university milieu around 1400 offers a unique vantage point at anthropological issues, since numerous doctrinal influences are entangled in Prague disputations then, from Buridanian *De anima*-commentaries, ubiquitous at Central European universities, to John Wyclif's theories, studied nowhere so extensively as in Prague during this period. One of the aims of the paper is to suggest that these doctrinal influences were numerous and the boundaries between them were permeable and that, at least in the context of the nature of the intellect, it is not particularly effective to construe rigidly defined antagonistic groups of texts/authors (e.g., Buridians vs. Wycliffites).

The paper builds upon an idiosyncratic type of textual sources, so tightly connected with medieval scholarly practices that the specific nature of the former is not intelligible without knowledge of the latter. Hence, Sect. 14.2 is devoted to a purely historical account of the institutional context of various types of late medieval university disputations and their manuscript outcomes, both with particular respect to the Prague Faculty of Arts.

Section 14.3 introduces the text base of the paper: a set of Prague *quaestiones* dealing with the nature of the intellect and its relation to the body from different perspectives and doctrinal stances, selected from manuscripts with records of various disputational occasions. Incidentally, several textual discoveries are announced

⁴On the dispute, see, e.g., De Boer (2013, 36–43; 216–227); a metaphysical perspective is provided by Pasnau (2011, 574–596); see also Pasnau (2010).

in Sect. 14.2 and 14.3 (e.g., three Cracow codices preserving two sets of questions, possibly two hitherto unknown Prague quodlibets, or two commentary-like manuscript notes on *De anima*, possibly by John of Borotín and an anonymous Bohemian Wycliffite).

Section 14.4 presents one possible method of utilizing these allegedly second-rate texts. Basing my account on selected arguments harvested from the Prague questions, I delineate the conceptual tensions involved in the medieval articulation of the intellect's nature. I focus on different properties attributed to the intellect, their logical relations, and mutual dependence, but also the incompatibility of some of them. Also, the considerably rich range of philosophical sources exploited by Prague masters is revealed here.

Finally, Sect. 14.5 delineates several main strategies to deal with the nature of the intellect employed by late medieval Prague scholars. While both the Alexandrist materialist position and the Averroist view of a single immortal intellect shared by all people are almost absent in the Prague context, the texts often tend towards Buridianian or Wycliffite positions. A Buridianian view, advocated by an anonymous participant of the 1409 Prague quodlibet, distinguishes between the rationally demonstrable materialist tendency and the indemonstrable "catholic truth" about the intellect both inhering in and separable from the body. On the other hand, Wycliffites (such as an anonymous student or Jacob of Mies) try to overcome the Buridianian position, so prone to the unsatisfying double-truth theory, by a conceptual innovation enriching Aristotelian anthropology by the Christological notion of the hypostatic union. Even if the human intellect were educed from matter, an immortal spirit is hypostatically united with such a composite. The last piece of the picture is a passage from peculiar notes on Aristotle's *De anima*, loosely modelled after Buridan's questions on *De anima*, where Buridan is explicitly Wycliffised.

14.2 Prague University Disputations Around 1400: Scholarly Practices and Manuscript Sources

The first step in investigating the contributions of Prague scholars around 1400 to the medieval debate on the nature of the human intellect is to set the contents and boundaries of the textual corpus. To emphasize the dynamic and controversial aspect of the issue, I deliberately focus almost exclusively on the outcomes of *disputations* held at the Prague Faculty of Arts, which means that I put aside texts designed for lecturing purposes (chiefly *De anima* commentaries) and texts originating at the Faculty of Theology (primarily *Sentences* commentaries). Nevertheless, I do not follow this resolution blindly, as I make use of quotations from some Prague notes on *De anima* to corroborate claims based on the disputations-connected material and treat Jacob of Mies's question, written probably in the theological milieu, as an exemplification of the Wycliffite approach.

Before the textual base can be delineated, several idiosyncrasies of late medieval university disputations and their written outcomes ought to be introduced. Since written manuscript sources are closely related to oral disputation practice, the latter needs to be depicted to make the former more intelligible.

First and foremost, two structural patterns can be recognized in the Prague disputation questions. Both proceed from the nature of the particular type of disputation to which the questions are connected, and, thus, they differ slightly from the traditional *quaestio* format. First, there are questions without any response, designed as a preparation for the disputing master, embracing arguments *contra concedentem* (i.e., arguments to be used against the respondent affirming the question) and *contra negantem* (i.e., those by which a negative answer to the question is repulsed); particular arguments are also often independent of each other. The other kind is the actual determination proposed by the respondent, often called “position” (*positio*) in the manuscripts. It usually comprises of *notabilia* (definitions and distinctions of the terms used and theories implied in the title of the question) and conclusions with corollaries, both supplied with justifications. Solutions of the *opposing* arguments are often missing in the positions; the dialectical development of ideas, typical for the traditional *quaestio* format, must have taken place in the actual disputation between proponent and respondent and was rarely recorded.⁵

The texts investigated here are products of various types of university disputations, each with its specific features.⁶ The following sketch focuses primarily on the idiosyncrasies of written outcomes of Prague disputations as preserved in manuscript sources, delineating the corpus of disputation-connected texts, from which I select the sources on the nature of intellect. The most important disputations at the Prague Faculty of Arts were the quodlibetal ones, organized once a year, in which all masters affiliated at the faculty were expected to participate. A *quodlibetarius*, elected several months before to host the session, presided over the disputation and proposed a question to each participant.⁷ The textual outcomes of the quodlibets are twofold. First, there are the so-called handbooks or manuals, book-length texts prepared by the *quodlibetarii* and including dozens of questions for particular masters, usually in the form of preparations.⁸ Second, in some cases, the positions authored by individual masters are extant, usually dispersed in codices with materials resulting from various university acts.

Until now, research has identified 13 quodlibets taking place at Prague Arts Faculty from the 1390s to 1410s, where at least the name of the presiding master is

⁵ See Kejř (1971, 15–16 on preparations, 66–67 on positions); cf. Weijers (2015, 102).

⁶ On various kinds of late medieval university disputations, see Weijers (2013, 121–137); for Prague Faculty of Arts, see Kavka (1967, 33–38), Kejř (1960), also Pavlíček and Hanke (2021, 207–210) on the role of sophisms in various Prague disputations.

⁷ For the Prague quodlibetal tradition and its highlights, see especially Kejř (1971), Šmahel (2007, 336–386), Weijers (2002, 298–307), Pavlíček (2018, 328–340), Székely (2019, 303–306), and Lička (2021).

⁸ However, not exclusively; as, e.g., the handbook of Matthias of Legnica contains positions, as shown below.

known. The manuscripts containing the handbooks are extant merely in seven cases.⁹ I assume that this corpus of seven quodlibetal handbooks may be expanded by two further sets of questions extant in three codices originating from Prague but preserved in Cracow. I argue that they may represent material connected with two hitherto unknown Prague quodlibets.

The first set of questions is preserved in two Cracow manuscripts (Biblioteka Jagiellońska [hereafter: BJ] 649, ff. 2v–163v, and BJ 624, ff. 1r–216v) and manifests all the salient features of Prague quodlibetal handbooks. The copy in BJ 649, which seems complete and well-organized, begins with a question which is unnumbered and explicitly designated *quaestio principalis*, on which the *quodlibetarius* himself usually disputed.¹⁰ Additionally, there are 63 numbered questions (in the form of preparations) for other participants of the quodlibets. A so-called *problema* (a further question of minor importance, often curious) is attached to each question, just as in other Prague quodlibetal handbooks. The copy is to be dated to the 1390s according to the watermarks.¹¹

The copy in BJ 624, written in a very similar, perhaps identical hand, provides the *quaestio principalis*¹² and 61 other questions (in comparison to BJ 649, two quodlibetal questions are missing in this copy). However, the majority of the questions are unnumbered, and their ordering is confused, both by the scribe and by the binding of the codex.¹³ The set includes 15 additional questions, apparently connected with an earlier Prague quodlibet organized by Henry of Ribenicz in the early 1390s, whose handbook is extant in a Leipzig manuscript.¹⁴ The watermarks suggest the 1390s as the date of the copy and that BJ 624 is slightly older than BJ 649.¹⁵ The Ribenicz intrusion corroborates the Prague origin of the codex, propounded by the authors of the catalogue, and suggests the mid-1390s as the earliest date of the quodlibet.

⁹ See the list in Šmahel (2007, 377–381). Having sifted through these seven handbooks, I singled out several questions/preparations on the nature of the human intellect from handbooks by Matthias of Knín (Matthias de Knin, handbook in MS Prague, Knihovna metropolitní kapituly L.45, ff. 1r–156v), Matthias of Legnica (Matthias de Legnitz, handbook in MS Stralsund, Stadtarchiv 1067, ff. 207ra–278rb), and Prokop of Kladruby (Procopius de Cladrub, handbook in MS Prague, Knihovna metropolitní kapituly L.27, ff. 1r–132r).

¹⁰ Actually, the position of the *quodlibetarius* is not recorded, only the debate on it.

¹¹ For the codicological description and list of questions and *problemata*, see Kowalczyk et al. (1980, 4: 398–406).

¹² Here, the principal question is untitled and again encompasses only the debate, slightly differing from the version in BJ 649.

¹³ See Kowalczyk et al. (1980, 4: 338–343); the authors try to reconstruct the original ordering of the questions.

¹⁴ Henricus de Ribenicz, *Quodlibet* (MS Leipzig, Universitätsbibliothek 1414, ff. 1v–231v). Although unnoticed by the authors of the catalogue, I have been able to identify variants of the questions 2–4, 6, 9, 12, 13, 15, 17, 19–21, 27, 30–31 of Ribenicz's quodlibet. See Šmahel (2007, 384–386) for the list of questions of Ribenicz's quodlibet, as preserved in the Leipzig codex.

¹⁵ Although the ordering of BJ 624 is messy, at least in the case of the question considered below the codex offers more a plausible reading.

Another set of questions is preserved in Cracow codex BJ 736 on ff. 81r–199r.¹⁶ Although both its Prague origin and its quodlibetal nature are probable in this case, neither is indubitable. Again, the initial question has a special status (it is unnumbered and includes both the position and a discussion of its conclusions), while other 90 questions are numbered preparations (albeit without *problemata*). The authors of the catalogue call the set *quaestiones ordinariae*; yet, they do not look like the outcome of ordinary disputations. In Prague, ordinary disputations took place every Saturday and lasted only until evening (*ad horam vesperorum*). It does not seem possible to discuss 91 questions in one day. Still, the set of questions may be a guide for organizing ordinary disputations, rather than an outcome of a single event or a series of disputations. Nevertheless, a regular element of these sessions was a disputation on sophisms (no more than three per session), in each of which three participants responded (the first by conceding, the second by negating, the third by doubting); yet no sophisms or preparations to a disputation of sophisms are included in BJ 736.¹⁷ In conclusion, the set of questions shares more similarities with other Prague *quodlibetal* handbooks than with the outcomes of other types of disputation.

The Prague origin of the codex is not self-evident either. As the authors of the catalogue assert, at least some parts of the codex originated in Prague. They suggest the handwriting of the part with the set of questions resembles that of BJ 624 and 649; the date of the part seems to be “after 1395” (according to watermarks). The codex was probably bound in Poland, perhaps for its first owner, John of Radochonic (Johannes de Radochoncze), who earned his bachelor’s degree in Prague in 1407¹⁸ and later moved to Cracow where he continued in arts and theology studies.¹⁹ He may have procured the quires later bound into BJ 736 (one of which contained a copy of the aforementioned set of questions) during his bachelor’s studies in Prague.²⁰

¹⁶ See Kowalczyk et al. (1980–2012, 5: 236–245).

¹⁷ On ordinary disputations at the Prague Faculty of Arts, see *Statuta facultatis artium universitatis Pragensis redacta anno 1390*, IV.1–2 (ed. Šmahel and Silagi, 2018, 246–247). For a general sketch of medieval ordinary disputations, see Weijers (2013, 122–133); for theological faculties, see Lawn (1993, 13–15).

¹⁸ Tříška (1981, 284).

¹⁹ Knoll (2016, 614).

²⁰ If the two sets of questions in MSS BJ 649/624 and BJ 736 represent two 1390s handbooks by Prague *quodlibetarii* (a hypothesis, admittedly, slightly more probable in the former case than in the latter one), they might have been authored by Nicolaus Magni de Jawor and Henricus de Homburg, who were elected *quodlibetarii* for the years 1395 and 1396, respectively. See *Liber decanorum facultatis philosophicae Universitatis Pragensis ab anno Christi 1367 usque ad annum 1585* (ed. Dittrich et al., 1830–1832, 1: 292, 303); and Šmahel (2007, 377). I am indebted to Ota Pavlíček for this suggestion. Nevertheless, perhaps I rush to conclusions, as several manuscripts of quodlibetal handbooks ascribe them to masters not mentioned in the *Liber decanorum* as elected *quodlibetarii* (e.g., Henricus de Ribenicz, Matthias de Legnitz, Johannes Arsen de Langenfeld). Hereafter I tentatively refer to these two texts as to anonymous quodlibets: Anonymus, *Quodlibet* (MSS Cracow, BJ 649, ff. 2v–163v, and Cracow, BJ 624, ff. 1r–216v) and Anonymus, *Quodlibet* (?) (MS Cracow, BJ 736, ff. 81r–199r).

Besides annual quodlibetal disputations, several minor types of disputations took place more frequently, some of them weekly, like the already mentioned ordinary disputations, held by masters every Saturday. Furthermore, there were extraordinary disputations of newly incepted masters on Tuesdays and Thursdays²¹ and bachelor's disputations on feast day afternoons.²² Nevertheless, these activities were so frequent and brief that their actual contents (the questions and sophisms determined during these disputations) were scarcely written down. However, some Prague codices include quires with questions (and sophisms) without determination, with blank spaces between the paragraphs, which were, most likely, intended as preparations for these minor disputations.²³

Finally, more ceremonial disputations took place during promotions of the candidates for bachelor's and master's degrees (*promotio* of bachelors and *inceptio* of masters). On these occasions, a sophism and a question were proposed to the candidate; after his determination, the older master promoting the candidate delivered a speech recommending the latter (*commendatio*), and the candidate was officially declared bachelor or master.²⁴ The promotional acts were obviously recorded, as various codices include quires with questions (positions), often intermingled with sophisms and recommendations. The questions in those manuscripts are usually very concise, the reason probably being that the candidates had to speak off the cuff, as the statutes forbade them to read aloud from a sheet of paper or a book (*de carta vel libro*) during the promotion.²⁵

²¹ *Statuta facultatis artium universitatis Pragensis redacta anno 1390*, II.31 (ed. Šmahel and Silagi, 2018, 244).

²² *Statuta facultatis artium universitatis Pragensis redacta anno 1390*, II.24 (ed. Šmahel and Silagi, 2018, 242).

²³ The set of questions and sophisms in the codex Prague, Knihovna metropolitní kapituly M.92, ff. 88r–172v (of which one question on the intellect is mentioned below) can serve as an example of this type of manuscript evidence. Already Jiří Kejř studied this codex and its relation to the quodlibetal handbooks, on which, see Kejř (1960, 53–54). Several questions (related to the problem of universals) are also listed in Šmahel (1980, 42–43).

²⁴ For an outline of the entire ceremony, see *Statuta facultatis artium universitatis Pragensis redacta anno 1390*, II.1–25 (ed. Šmahel and Silagi, 2018, 236–245) for bachelors, and II.26–32 (ed. Šmahel and Silagi, 2018, 243–245) for masters; see also Kavka (1967, 21–25).

²⁵ See *Statuta facultatis artium universitatis Pragensis redacta anno 1390*, II.16 (ed. Šmahel and Silagi, 2018, 241). The material culture of the codices provokes speculation that the candidates did not adhere to the rule universally, as some disputation volumes include little sheets of paper bound into the gatherings with promotional records. See, e.g., MS Uppsala, Universitetsbibliotek, C 639, f. 159r (a “cheat sheet” with a question on accidents not inhering in the substance). This part of the codex originated from Prague, as it includes, e.g., a question determined *Prage sub m<agistro> Rybbeni<cz>* (f. 160r).

14.3 The Intellect Disputed: A Review of Sources

Most of the texts considered here can be dated to the period between 1390 and 1420. A thorough examination of the codices related to various types (and instances) of Prague disputations (kept mostly in Prague, Cracow and Leipzig libraries today) has resulted in a corpus of 10 questions dealing with the nature of the intellect and its relation to the body. They have so far been not only unedited, but also *unstudied*; most of them are extant in a single manuscript copy. Their titles, in a tentative chronological order, are as follows²⁶:

1. Anonymus, *Quodlibet*, q. 11: *Utrum anima hominis sit extensa*, MSS Cracow, BJ 649, ff. 34r–35v; BJ 624, ff. 76v–78v. 1390s. Type and structure: Preparation; 8 arguments *pro*, 8 arguments *contra*.
2. Anonymus, *Quodlibet* (?), q. 16: *Utrum animam humanam esse indivisibilem et immortalem sive incorruptibilem possit ostendi naturali ratione*, MS Cracow, BJ 736, ff. 116r–117v. 1390s. Preparation; 8 arg. *contra*, 6 arg. *pro*.
3. Anonymus, *Quodlibet* (?), q. 17: *Utrum sit evidenter probabile naturali ratione quod anima intellectiva sit forma substantialis hominis inhaesive*, MS Cracow, BJ 736, ff. 117v–118v. 1390s. Preparation; 8 arg. *contra*, 7 arg. *pro*.
4. Matthias de Legnitz, *Quodlibet*, q. 52: *Utrum animam intellectivam esse formam hominis possit ratione evidenti ostendi*, MS Stralsund, Stadtarchiv 1067, ff. 253ra–va. 1397.²⁷ Position; 2 *suppositiones*, 2 *notabilia*, 5 conclusions (with corollaries), 2 arg. *contra conclusiones*.
5. Anonymus, *Utrum anima intellectiva educta de potentia materiae sit corruptibilis*, MS Prague, Národní knihovna VIII.E.5, ff. 55v–56v. 1400s–1410s (possibly 1402).²⁸ Position; 3 *notabilia*, 3 conclusions (with corollaries).
6. Matthias de Knin, *Quodlibet*, q. 91: *Utrum anima intellectiva sit forma inhaerens corpori humano de potentia materiae per generationem educta*, MS

²⁶I have prepared preliminary transcriptions of all the texts listed and plan to publish editions of some of them. For practical reasons, I usually do not quote from these texts *in extenso*. However, I sketch the structure of each text here in order to highlight the differences between preparations and positions.

²⁷I prefer this date suggested and argued for by Ota Pavlíček, rather than those maintained by former research: 1394 (Josef Tříška and Vilém Herold), or 1399 (František Šmahel). See Pavlíček (2021, 17–19) for the issue.

²⁸The codex Prague, Národní knihovna VIII.E.5 encompasses chiefly positions presented at the promotional acts. The question on the corruptibility of the intellect is involved in the same quire as a question on Aristotle's *Metaphysics* (f. 62v) assigned to Wenceslaus de Egra (Václav of Cheb). Given that the *Metaphysics* was usually part of a master's studies (see the analysis of two lists of lectures attended by Prague students in Šmahel (2007, 316–335, esp. 329–330), and that Egra's *inceptio* took place in 1402 (*Liber decanorum*, ed. Dittrich et al., 1830–1832, 1: 369), it can be inferred that also the other questions in the same quire originated around 1402. See also Kejř's remarks on the codex in Kejř (1960, 54–55), and Kejř (1955–1956, 3: 231, note 98), where he points out Egra's name but gives a wrong date of his inception.

- Prague, Knihovna metropolitní kapituly L.45, ff. 100v–101r. 1409. Preparation; 9 arg. *pro*, 4 arg. *contra*.
7. A response to Knín's question by an anonymous master participating in his quodlibet: Anonymus, *Utrum anima intellectiva sit forma inhaerens corpori humano de potentia materiae per generationem educta*, MS Prague, Národní knihovna X.H.18, ff. 40r–42r. 1409. Position; article 1 (8 *notabilia*), article 2 (3 opinions, 2 conclusions with corollaries), article 3 (3 conclusions with corollaries).
 8. Procopius de Cladrub, *Quodlibet*, q. 26: *Utrum anima intellectiva [1] habens operationem propriam, quam non communicat corpori, [2] sit perpetua et immortalis*, MS Prague, Knihovna metropolitní kapituly L.27, ff. 41v–43r. 1417. Preparation; 6 arg. *pro supposito* [1], 10 arg. *contra quaesitum* [2], 6 arg. *contra suppositum* [1], 12 arg. *pro quaesito* [2].
 9. Jacobellus de Misa, *Utrum intellectus hominis est homo*, MS Prague, Národní knihovna V.H.13, ff. 140r–141r. 1410s (before 1419). Position; 3 suppositions, 3 conclusions with corollaries.
 10. Anonymus, *Utrum intellectus qui est potentia animae rationalis sit potentia organica*, MS Prague, Knihovna metropolitní kapituly M.92, ff. 147v–148r. 1410s–1440s. Preparation; 7 arg. *pro*, 4 arg. *contra*.

Only four of the ten texts have certain authors: the Bohemian masters Matthias of Knín, Prokop of Kladruby, Jacob of Mies, and the Silesian master Matthias of Legnica.²⁹ The texts are mainly the outcomes of (or preparations for) Prague quodlibetal disputations (no. 1–4, 6–8), but also of promotional disputations (no. 5 and possibly 9), and also of a disputation whose purpose is uncertain (no. 10).

As for the topics of the texts, various properties of the intellect are investigated, especially its relation to the body (whether it is educed from matter, is extended, or even is an organic potency—no. 1, 5–7, 10) and the issue of its (im)mortality and (in)corruptibility (no. 2, 5, 8). Some titles are reminiscent of the Vienne constitution about the intellect as the substantial form of the body (no. 3, 4; no. 9 even asks whether a human being is identical with its intellect); the issue of the intellect's inherence in the body also appears (no. 3, 6, 7). Some questions are rephrased epistemically, asking whether particular properties of the human intellect can be rationally demonstrated (no. 2–4).

Bearing in mind the ephemeral nature of these texts, a question arises: why should we deal with such second-rate sources at all? First of all, they provide a unique insight into how intellectuals at the newly founded universities in Central Europe delved into philosophical issues related to the nature of the intellect. The choice of the Prague university milieu of the 1400s is motivated both philosophically and historically, as it represents a real “melting pot” of various philosophical traditions, but the details of their overlaps and struggles are as yet understudied.

²⁹For these authors, see Spunar (1985–1995, 1: 214–250 on Mies, and 352–362 on Kladruby), and Trifška (1981, 364) for Knín and Legnica. See also a fresh recent study of Knín's Wycliffite metaphysics in Campi (2020).

Since the studied texts are connected with disputational practices, investigating them offers a picture of what late medieval university scholars were actually doing.³⁰

Further, the disputation-connected texts can compensate for the lack of full-fledged Prague *De anima*-commentaries in the period under consideration. The lecturers of Aristotle's *De anima* in Prague around 1400 usually made use of Buridan's questions on *De anima* (or its various variants and abbreviations), or else of commentaries from the same philosophical tradition (for example, questions by Lawrence of Lindores). Texts originating directly from Prague are scarce; there are only a few expositions of the authoritative text, some longer, like that by Jenek of Prague (1375); some shorter and more elementary, like those by Henry Totting of Oyta (1360s) and the anonymous exposition of *De anima* "*secundum Buridanum*" from the 1370s.³¹

I have been able to identify two peculiar materials connected with the *De anima* tradition, which can be added to this scanty list. First, there are *notabilia* related to questions on *De anima* III, written in the hand of the Bohemian master John of Borotín (d. after 1458), most likely around 1410.³² Second, there are questions on *De anima* II–III, with titles borrowed from Buridan's second (or penultimate) redaction of *De anima* questions,³³ but with contents completely reworked by a Bohemian author of Wycliffite leanings, possibly in the 1410s.³⁴ I briefly elaborate on both texts in the last section of the paper.

Another shortcoming of the disputational texts is their derivativeness: their authors borrowed many of the arguments incorporated in the questions from the popular treatises of the time. Besides Buridan and Wyclif, they refer to authors such as John Eucles, Thomas of Strasbourg, John of La Rochelle, or John of Jandun. This apparent weakness can turn out to be an advantage, since texts tightly bound to the scholarly practices of Prague masters become a precious document witnessing a clash of philosophical traditions and a gradual transition from Aristotelianism, mostly Buridanian, to Wycliffism, with different positions and accents lurking under the same terminology. Similarly, the occasional reappearance of various arguments in the questions need not be interpreted as plagiarism, but rather as constituting a

³⁰That investigating such short-lived texts may be very fruitful is evident from studies on student notebooks with reports of various disputations in fifteenth-century Cologne and Vienna; see, e.g., Hoenen (2011) and Flüeler (2008).

³¹For Jenek of Prague, see Mráz (1982); for a partial edition of Totting's exposition and a complete edition of the 1370s exposition (extant in MS Cracow, BJ 704), see Pluta (1986, 96–97) and Mansfeld (2016), respectively.

³²Johannes de Borotin (?), *Notabilia super librum III De anima Aristotelis* (MS Prague, Národní knihovna X.H.18, ff. 55r–56v); see Lička (2021, 284), for the list of questions.

³³For the redactions of Buridan's questions, see note 73 below.

³⁴Anonymus, *Quaestiones in libros II–III De anima Aristotelis* (MS Prague, Národní knihovna X.H.17, ff. 157r–180r). In the manuscript, numerous excerpts, notes and definitions are scattered among the questions on *De anima*. These passages deal mostly with theological matters, sometimes being longer than the questions themselves. They seem unrelated to the *De anima* commentary but are written in the same hand. Several Czech words dispersed in both commentary and notes suggest the author was of Czech descent.

terminological and doctrinal framework shared across several generations of Prague scholars. Also, repeating passages present in older materials may corroborate the Prague origin when not fully certain (especially in the questions from BJ 736).³⁵

Further, since the disputation context allows (even invites) one to propose bolder claims and push their consequences further than a declaratory text, such as a lecture or a commentary, the questions sometimes encompass sophisticated arguments even for heterodox positions (such as Alexandrism), or for positions explicitly condemned by the Church (e.g., the denial of the claim that an intellect is a substantial form inhering in a body). The environment of late medieval Prague Faculty of Arts might arguably have been liberal. Institutional restrictions prohibiting the *artista*e from discussing theology-related matters (such as the immortality of the human soul), notorious at Paris university, but also in Cologne or Vienna, are not documented in Prague.³⁶

Finally, the questions are also philosophically valuable, at least to a certain extent. Despite their sketchiness, one frequently stumbles upon a sharp and compelling piece of reasoning in them. As some arguments are excerpts from massive texts, such as commentaries on Aristotle or the *Sentences*, sometimes unedited, it is possible quickly to focus on the sharpest arguments, which would otherwise remain buried in the source texts among a load of other text. Historians of philosophy may object that especially the preparations are useless for their agenda. How is one to reconstruct a well-argued philosophical position, if there is *no* position maintained in the source text? In the next section, I try to demonstrate that even mere sets of arguments *pro* and *contra* can serve as material for conceptual analysis and for uncovering the framework in which the thinkers conceptualized philosophical issues. The last section will be, by contrast, devoted mainly to questions in the form of position, reconstructing some doctrinal stances of Prague philosophers.

³⁵The textual parallels between various quodlibetal handbooks have already been pointed out by Kejř (1971, 49–61) and Šmahel (2007, 339–341, 363–364, 369), and recently further evidenced by Székely (2018) and Lička (2021). The *quodlibetarii* sometimes express their dependence on former handbooks explicitly; see the reference to Arsen's handbook in Matthias of Knín's quodlibet: "Alia argumenta: quaere in M. Io. Arsen circa tale signum." (MS Prague, Knihovna metropolitní kapituly L.45, f. 43v; for Knín's other references to Arsen see Šmahel, 2007, 342.)

³⁶See Pavlíček (2018, 340–355, especially 346–351). Admittedly, various restrictions regarding Wyclif took place at early fifteenth-century Prague University (for example, in 1403, an assembly of university masters condemned a list of 45 Wyclif's theses, which had been compiled by John Hübner). See, e.g., Šmahel (2007, 467–489) and Herold (1985, 148–170). Nevertheless, these restrictions did not generally suppress the dynamic evolvement of reformist ideas, but rather provoked it. Further, as practically-oriented (mainly on ecclesiological and Eucharistic matters), these restrictions seem not to have affected the philosophical enterprise other than indirectly.

14.4 The Nature of the Intellect: Conceptual Tensions Between Materialism and Immortality

Once the corpus of the Prague questions on the nature of the intellect has been established, its contents can be examined. This section aims to present how the philosophical problems associated with the nature of the intellect were articulated in late medieval disputational practice. It exploits the arguments, especially from the preparations, to reconstruct the medieval setting of the anthropological issue. This setting, which is complex and not entirely coherent at face value, was a seedbed for the emergence of various *conceptual tensions*. Several properties are ascribed to the intellect, some of which seem to be, at least at first glance, mutually exclusive.

The starting point of several debates was the constitution of the Council of Vienne (1312) proclaiming that the intellect is the substantial form of the human being. The claim itself guided medieval intellectuals to a certain anthropological preunderstanding: they construed the human soul as a form in the Aristotelian sense. Historically, the claim was designed as a safeguard against Averroism and its doctrine of a single intellect only loosely connected with all human individuals.³⁷ Nevertheless, even such an Averroist single intellect can be understood as a form, albeit not informing the particular humans but merely assisting them in their operations. Similarly, the intelligences, being movers of the celestial spheres, are their forms: although they do not strictly inform them, they still function as the principles of the spheres' motion. To evade the threat of Averroism, late medieval philosophers (especially in the Buridanian tradition) carefully distinguished between two types of forms: those *inhering* in their subjects (intrinsically sustaining them and moving according to the movements of the subjects) and forms merely *assisting* the subjects in operation, present to, adhering to and appropriated by the subjects, yet extrinsic to them.³⁸ The relation of the intellect to the body must be tighter: it is not only the substantial form of the body (as the Vienne constitution asserts), but a form *inhering* in the body. Matthias of Knín provides a simple Aristotelian argument for such a claim: a property of being *A* evinced by a subject *S* presupposes the form of *A*

³⁷Cf. Anonymus, *Quodlibet* (?), q. 17: *Utrum sit evidenter probabile naturali ratione quod anima intellectiva sit forma substantialis hominis inhaesive*, pro 5 (MS Cracow, BJ 736, f. 118v).

³⁸See, e.g., Johannes Buridanus, *Quaestiones super De anima secundum tertiam sive ultimam lecturam*, III.4, §2 (ed. Hartman et al., forthcoming), Laurentius Lindorius, *Quaestiones in Aristotelis libros De anima*, III.4.1 (ed. Dewender and Pluta, 1997, 208), or Johannes Eucles, *Quaestiones in Aristotelis libros De anima*, III.4.1 (ed. Pluta, 1988, 521), who speaks about forms *coexisting* with the body. See De Libera (2014) for the big picture. In the Bohemian sources, the anonymous participant of Knín's quodlibet borrows the distinction from Eucles (Anonymus, *Utrum anima intellectiva sit forma inhaerens corpori humano de potentia materiae per generationemeducta*, a. 1, not. 3, MS Prague, Národní knihovna X.H.18, f. 40r), the anonymous *De anima* commentary speaks about *forma adhaerens*, a terminology which seems idiosyncratic for Bohemian sources; see Anonymus, *Quaestiones in libros II–III De anima Aristotelis*, q. 26 (MS Prague, Národní knihovna X.H.17, f. 176v) and the passage from Knín's quodlibet quoted in note 65 below.

inhering in *S*. Since the human body “lives rationally” (*vivere intellectiva et rationaliter*), it must be so due to an intellective form inhering in the body.³⁹

However, the emphasis on inherence creates room for unwanted consequences, balancing on the edge of materialism. How do forms inhere in matter? Medieval scholars distinguished among three opinions on this issue. First, Platonists embrace the opinion that forms are impressed into matter by an external supernatural agent, so-called form giver (*dator formarum*). The second opinion (attributed to Anaxagoras) suggests that all forms are already present in matter, even in actuality; however, they coalesce and lurk in the matter, insensible to us. The third opinion is Aristotelian, according to which forms are in matter merely potentially and are educed or derived from potentiality to actuality (*educuntur de potentia in actum*) by an external mover.⁴⁰

If the question of the origin of the intellect is posed and universal applicability is considered a virtue of the theory, then an Aristotelian-minded thinker should accept the third opinion and account for the intellect as a form educed from the potentiality of the body. Both Matthias of Knín and Prokop of Kladruby present similar articulations of the materialist intuition while asserting that any form of a body must be caused by this body.⁴¹ Such an intuition is corroborated by an argument targeted at the Platonizing notion of the intellect as a form infused into the body by an external principle. Without the intellect educed from matter, univocal generation would not be possible: if the intellect (i.e., the substantial form) were given to the offspring not

³⁹Matthias de Knin, *Quodlibet*, q. 91: *Utrum anima intellectiva sit forma inhaerens corpori humano de potentia materiae per generationem educta*, pro 2–5 (MS Prague, Knihovna metropolitní kapituly L.45, f. 100v). Note that the notion of inherence, borrowed likely from Buridianian *De anima* commentaries, plays a significant role in the questions by Legnica, Knín, and the anonymous Knín’s respondent. The older quodlibetal question, despite asking whether the intellect is the human substantial form “inhaesive” and arguing extensively against Averroism, does not employ the inherence terminology and speaks about the intellect *informing* the subject; see Anonymus, *Quodlibet* (?), q. 17: *Utrum sit evidenter probabile naturali ratione quod anima intellectiva sit forma substantialis hominis inhaesive*, pro 1–7 (MS Cracow, BJ 736, ff. 118r–v). For the distinction devised by Pierre d’Ailly between *inhering* in matter, pertaining to material forms and always entailing materialist consequences, and *informing* the body, which is typical of immaterial forms, see Klein (2019, 167, 219).

⁴⁰I follow a neat summary by Albertus de Orlamunda, *Philosophia pauperum* I.4 (ed. Borgnet, 1890, 449b). See also Richardson (2011). Note that Johannes Wyclif, *De compositione hominis*, cap. 6 (ed. Beer, 1884, 101–102) is prone to the Aristotelian position, against those who postulate *latentia formarum* or *datores formarum*.

⁴¹Matthias de Knin, *Quodlibet*, q. 91: *Utrum anima intellectiva sit forma inhaerens corpori humano de potentia materiae per generationem educta*, pro 6 (MS Prague, Knihovna metropolitní kapituly L.45, ff. 100v–101r): “[...] ‘corpus animari intellectiva substantialiter’ non potest esse nisi causetur subiective a corpore”; Procopius de Cladrub, *Quodlibet*, q. 26: *Utrum anima intellectiva habens operationem propriam, quam non communicat corpori, sit perpetua et immortalis, contra quos*. 6 (MS Prague, Knihovna metropolitní kapituly L.27, f. 42r): “[...] anima intellectiva <forma> corporis non potest esse nisi causetur a corpore, ergo anima intellectiva est educta de potentia materiae.”

by the parent but by an external principle, the parent and the offspring would not be of the same species.⁴²

One finds even bolder materialist claims in the Prague questions. Matthias of Knín and Prokop of Kladruby employ variants of the argument implying that nothing supernatural takes place in the production of the intellect. Built upon the education model, the argument assumes that the nobler matter is, and the more harmonious complexion it has, the nobler and ontologically superior the form educed from it is. However, humans are endowed with the noblest matter among all animals, with complexion balanced in the most perfect way. Consequently, a soul superior to the sensory one must originate from such well-balanced matter, which is nothing other than the intellect itself.⁴³

In the Buridanian tradition, such materialist tendencies and the terminology of the intellect educed from matter are usually connected with the late ancient Aristotelian scholar Alexander of Aphrodisias.⁴⁴ Defining Alexander's position, Buridan asserts that the intellect is a material form, which is extended and educed from matter, and its subtlety results from "the noble complexion of the human body."⁴⁵ The Bohemian scholars seem to build upon this sketchy exposition of Alexander's position and supplement it with notions from the medical tradition and

⁴²Many questions repeat the argument, see Anonymus, *Quodlibet*, q. 11: *Utrum anima hominis sit extensa*, pro 2 (MSS Cracow, BJ 649, f. 34v; BJ 624, f. 77v); Anonymus, *Quodlibet* (?), q. 16: *Utrum animam humanam esse indivisibilem et immortalem sive incorruptibilem possit ostendi naturali ratione*, contra 4 (MS Cracow, BJ 736, f. 116v); Matthias de Knin, *Quodlibet*, q. 91: *Utrum anima intellectiva sit forma inhaerens corpori humano de potentia materiae per generationem educta*, pro 8 (MS Prague, Knihovna metropolitní kapituly L.45, f. 101r); see also Matthias de Knin, *Quodlibet*, q. 40: *Utrum quaelibet anima sit forma indivisibilis quoad molem*, contra 1 (MS Prague, Knihovna metropolitní kapituly L.45, f. 47v). All passages (more or less explicitly) refer to the Aristotelian saying that "man is begotten by man and by the sun." See Aristoteles, *Physica*, II.2, 194b13–14 (ed. Leonina, 1884, 64); cf. Johannes de Fonte, *Auctoritates Aristotelis*, II.65 (ed. Hamesse, 1974, 145): "Homo generat hominem et sol."

⁴³Matthias de Knin, *Quodlibet*, q. 91: *Utrum anima intellectiva sit forma inhaerens corpori humano de potentia materiae per generationem educta*, pro 9 (MS Prague, Knihovna metropolitní kapituly L.45, f. 101r); Procopius de Cladrub, *Quodlibet*, q. 26: *Utrum anima intellectiva habens operationem propriam, quam non communicat corpori, sit perpetua et immortalis*, contra quaes. 5 (MS Prague, Knihovna metropolitní kapituly L.27, f. 42r); see also Matthias de Knin, *Quodlibet*, q. 40: *Utrum quaelibet anima sit forma indivisibilis quoad molem*, contra 1 (MS Prague, Knihovna metropolitní kapituly L.45, f. 47v). For the claim that the sensitive soul arises from the harmonious mixture of elements and Geoffrey of Aspill's criticism, see Dunne, Chap. 9 in this volume, pp. 163–190.

⁴⁴See Pluta (1994, 2001).

⁴⁵Notice that Buridan speaks about "nobilitas complexionis corporis humani" only in the penultimate redaction of his questions; see Johannes Buridanus, *Quaestiones super De anima (non de ultima lectura)*, III.3 (MS Uppsala, Universitetsbiblioteket, cod. C. 624, f. 193ra–b). The Uppsala manuscript was copied in Prague in 1375. The "noble complexion" is missing in the ultimate redaction (cf. Johannes Buridanus, *Quaestiones super De anima secundum tertiam sive ultimam lecturam*, III.3, §10, ed. Hartman et al., forthcoming).

The anonymous Prague questions on *De anima* also mentions "harmonious complexion" as the source of the intellect: "Alexander namque ponit intellectum esse formam eductam de potentia <materiae> ad actum, quae resultat de complexionem harmonica." Anonymus, *Quaestiones in libros II–III De anima Aristotelis*, q. 25 (MS Prague, Národní knihovna X.H.17, f. 176v).

John Wyclif. One version of Knín's argument justifies the claim that the matter of the human body is so noble and harmonious that it is capable of bringing forth the intellect simply by the authority of Alexander.⁴⁶ In another instance, he invokes Avicenna's assertion from *Canon* that God himself gave to man the most tempered complexion.⁴⁷ Interestingly, Prokop of Kladruby justifies the same claim by a passage borrowed from John Wyclif's *De compositione hominis*, who proposes that human souls are forms educed from matter.⁴⁸ In all three instances, the form educed from a human body is identified with the intellectual soul.

Both lines of thought corroborating the materialist view of the human soul (the impossibility of univocal generation and the pointer to the most refined nature of human body) are not frequent in late medieval *De anima* commentaries. However, they resemble two articles from the notorious list of theses condemned in Paris in 1277 by Bishop Stephan Tempier.⁴⁹

In light of the fact that many medieval scholars understood Tempier's list as condemning the articles included,⁵⁰ the late medieval Prague Faculty of Arts seems to

⁴⁶ Matthias de Knin, *Quodlibet*, q. 40: *Utrum quaelibet anima sit forma indivisibilis quoad molem, contra 1* (MS Prague, Knihovna metropolitní kapituly L.45, f. 47v): "[...] probatur tertio *De anima* auctoritate Alexandri."

⁴⁷ Matthias de Knin, *Quodlibet*, q. 91: *Utrum anima intellectiva sit forma inhaerens corpori humano de potentia materiae per generationem educta*, pro 9 (MS Prague, Knihovna metropolitní kapituly L.45, f. 101r): "[...] homo inter omnia animalia habet nobiliorem complexionem membrorum, propter quod Avicenna, capitulo *De complexionibus membrorum* dicit quod deus donavit homini complexionem temperatiorem quam in hoc mundo esse est possibile."

⁴⁸ Procopius de Cladrub, *Quodlibet*, q. 26: *Utrum anima intellectiva habens operationem propriam, quam non communicat corpori, sit perpetua et immortalis, contra quaes. 5* (MS Prague, Knihovna metropolitní kapituly L.27, f. 42r): "Omnis anima intellectiva est forma educta de potentia materiae [...] <quod probatur> sic: 'Proportionaliter, ut materia est in commixtione vel complexione perfectior, sufficit nobiliorem ex se principiari et educere formam. Sed constat quod corpus humanum est plus reductum ad temperamentum quam quodcumque corpus sublunare; ergo multo perfectius sufficit formam superadditam principiari.' Si ergo quodcumque corpus bruti ratione suae complexionis educit et principiari animam sensitivam, sequitur quod corpus humanum nobiliter complexionatum animam principiabit et educet non viliorem; quae erit intellectiva, dummodo nulla mediat inter illas." The portion of the text designated by inverted commas ('...') is verbatim borrowed from Johannes Wyclif, *De compositione hominis*, cap. 4 (ed. Beer, 1884, 59).

⁴⁹ The first argument (for the eduction model of the production of the intellect, without which allegedly univocal generation is not possible) corresponds to article 120: "Quod forma hominis non est ab extrinseco, sed educitur de potentia materiae, quia aliter non esset generatio univoca." (See Hissette, 1977, 195–196.) The second argument (that from the most harmonious matter the noblest soul, i.e., the intellect, arises) resembles article 133, according to which the soul is inseparable and perishes with the disintegration of bodily harmony: "Quod anima est inseparabilis a corpore; et quod ad corruptionem harmoniae corporis corrumpitur anima." (See Hissette, 1977, 212.) Note that Roland Hissette interprets both articles as targeted not against materialism, but against Averroism.

⁵⁰ For example, Peter of Abano was allegedly accused of proposing the materialist view on the production of the intellect, on which see Hasse (2001, 635–636). However, see Bianchi (1998, 93–96) for the claim that Tempier's list was probably not intended as a doctrinal *condemnation*, but rather as a "mere" *prohibition* to teach certain theses in order to protect less capable students from error.

have been much more benevolent to discuss the arguments on behalf of heterodox positions. As these arguments occur in a purely dialectical context (in a preparation for disputation, not in a position actually propounded), they might even have been intended as disguised references to the condemned doctrines. In such case the respondent might have been expected to recognize these hints and take special care in dealing with the intricacies of the heterodox doctrines.

The materialist consequences of the hylomorphic framework, which are in an implicit tension with the Christian doctrine of personal immortality, emerge not only in the context of commenting on Aristotle, but also among philosophically trained theologians, namely amidst the disputes regarding unicity vs plurality of forms. The preparation from one of the 1390s quodlibets echoes a particular chapter in the story of these debates, testifying that purely theological literature also gained access to the handbooks of Prague *quodlibetarii*.⁵¹ The anonymous author of asks “whether the human soul is extended,” addressing a tension arising from the claim that there is only one substantial form in a human being. If the intellect is the only form of a human, then it should also adopt properties of the lower sensory soul which is, as a material form, educed from the potency of matter and materially extended. However, if the intellect is understood as immaterial, the sensory part of the soul evinces properties incompatible with the properties of the intellect, and, thus, the former cannot be identified with or subsumed within the latter.

The set of arguments for the affirmative answer in this preparation begins with the assumption that the human soul is a form educed from the potency of matter (which is taken for granted), which naturally implies that the soul is extended.⁵² However, the most interesting justification of the same claim is a thought experiment about a handicapped man’s new hand. Imagine a man deprived of his hand which is, however, miraculously re-created by God. How will the newly acquired hand be animated? A newly created soul will not inform the hand since the man would consequently have two souls, nor does the soul informing the body before the miracle move to the new hand from other parts of the body, leaving them inanimated. Thus, the most plausible option is that the soul *extends* itself into this new part of the body. This picture, however, testifies that the human soul is actually extended.⁵³ To the objection that it is rather the sensory soul that informs the limbs,

⁵¹Note that almost all Prague *quodlibetarii* were students of theology while organizing quodlibets at the Faculty of Arts and preparing their handbooks.

⁵²Anonymus, *Quodlibet*, q. 11: *Utrum anima hominis sit extensa*, pro 1 (MSS Cracow, BJ 649, ff. 34r–v; BJ 624, f. 77r).

⁵³Anonymus, *Quodlibet*, q. 11: *Utrum anima hominis sit extensa*, pro 3 (MSS Cracow, BJ 624, f. 77v; cf. BJ 649, f. 34v): “Capiatur mancus et tribuat sibi deus miraculose manum, tunc quaeritur vel huiusmodi manus animabitur seu informabitur per animam de novo creatam, aut anima praeexistens movebitur ad istam partem [...] derelinquens alias partes quas prius informavit, aut anima praeexistens et manens in partibus istis quas prius informavit extendet se ad istam partem de novo creatam per sufficientem divisionem. Non primum, quia tunc unus homo haberet duas animas realiter distinctas [...]; nec secundum, quia tunc aliae partes corporis [...] fierent inanimatae [...]. Igitur relinquitur tertium et per consequens sequitur intentum, quod ipsa <anima hominis> est vere extensa.”

endowing them, for example, with the sense of touch, it may be replied that if unity of forms is taken for granted, it must be ultimately the intellect itself which informs all parts of the body, providing them, among others, with bodily functions.⁵⁴

The Prague master did not design the thought experiment himself; most likely, his ultimate source was the early fourteenth-century Carmelite theologian Gerard of Bologna. Gerard endorsed unitarianism and investigated whether or not this position results in the claim that the intellect, as the sole form of the body, is extended. He gathered several arguments for the claim without taking a determinate position.⁵⁵ The anonymous Prague *quodlibetarius*, however, does not seem to have drawn directly on Gerard, but rather on the Augustinian theologian Thomas of Strasbourg, whose commentary on the *Sentences* (written in the 1330s in Paris and later influential at Prague University) includes a version of the argument with the newly-created hand.⁵⁶ Altogether, many arguments included in Prague disputation-connected texts imply a surprisingly materialist view of human nature. This view results from various tenets and influences, from the basic principles of Aristotelian hylomorphic physics, the legacy of Alexander of Aphrodisias's provocative view, to the unitarian position proposing that the human being is informed by only one substantial form.

Another crucial tenet emerging in the Prague disputations is the personal immortality of humans. The recurrent claim is that the intellect not only inheres in matter (which accords with its individuality, against Averroism), but at the same time is understood as an incorporeal entity, potentially separable from the body and, thus, immortal (against Alexandrism). Two anonymous *quodlibetarii* argue for the incorporeal nature of the intellect from a Neoplatonic perspective. The intellect evinces a unique property: it is a form capable of reverting upon itself (*super se ipsam conversiva*). Such a property, however, is an unmistakable sign of incorporeal nature, as substantiated by references to Proclus's *Elements of Theology*.⁵⁷

⁵⁴A unitarian response to this threat can be that strictly speaking, *no* form as such is extended. See Klima (2017, 56–57) for this point in Aquinas. A similar argument is also included by the Prague master, see Anonymus, *Quodlibet*, q. 11: *Utrum anima hominis sit extensa*, contra 8 (MSS Cracow, BJ 649, f. 35v; BJ 624, f. 78v).

⁵⁵See Nolan (2013, 37–38).

⁵⁶Although Gerard's *Quodlibets* are extant in three manuscripts entirely and in other five manuscripts fragmentarily, no manuscript is of Central European origin (see Schabel, 2007, 505–514). On the contrary, the dissemination of Thomas of Strasbourg's commentary was apparently wider. A copy of Book I, originating from Prague around 1400, is preserved in MS Prague, Národní knihovna III.B.8, ff. 1ra–190rb. Besides, one of the most eminent pre-Hussite Prague scholars, Conrad of Soltau, was heavily inspired by Strasbourg's commentary while lecturing on the *Sentences* in Prague around 1380, on which see Schabel et al. (2015, 30–33); see also Lička (2021, 258–259) for a further piece of evidence. For Strasbourg's rendering of Gerard's scenario with the newly created hand, see Thomas de Argentina, *Commentaria in IV libros Sententiarum*, I.8.2.1 (Genova 1585, ff. 53vb–54ra; see also MS Prague, Národní knihovna III.B.8, f. 75rb).

⁵⁷Anonymus, *Quodlibet*, q. 11: *Utrum anima hominis sit extensa*, in oppositum (MSS Cracow, BJ 649, f. 34r; BJ 624, ff. 76v–77r); Anonymus, *Quodlibet* (?), q. 16: *Utrum animam humanam esse indivisibilem et immortalem sive incorruptibilem possit ostendi naturali ratione*, in oppositum (MS Cracow, BJ 736, f. 116r). The arguments do not concord literally; the version in the latter source is, however, almost literally borrowed from Thomas of Strasbourg's *Sentences* commentary,

Needless to say, the Aristotelian tradition also emphasizes the unique nature of the intellect. The Prague authors were well aware of the fact that the overwhelming majority of Aristotelians, especially among the Christian thinkers, did not understand the intellect as an ordinary material form, which comes to being by eduction from matter. Instead, they tend to view the intellect as an immaterial form infused into the body by a divine principle. Matthias of Knín introduces an argument asserting that it is precisely the unique immaterial and incorporeal nature of the intellect that makes its eduction from matter impossible. The intellect is created “from above” by the First Cause.⁵⁸ After all, Aristotle himself explicitly advocates this conception of the human intellect as something divine in an embryological passage of his *De generatione animalium*: whereas the vegetative and the sensitive souls are gradually derived from the matter provided by the mother and father’s semen, the intellect is infused into the foetus from the outside.⁵⁹

If an act of creation (and not simple generation) produces the individual human intellect, it does not perish like an ordinary material form (due to the disintegration of the hylomorphic composite), but is immortal, annihilable only by God himself. The Prague sources sometimes justify the immortality of the intellect by a simple reference to the Christian faith.⁶⁰ Prokop of Kladruby provides further reasoning for

even from the same article from which the author of the former source takes Gerard of Bologna’s arguments. See Thomas de Argentina, *Commentaria in IV libros Sententiarum*, I.8.2.1 (Genova 1585, f. 53va–b); see also MS Prague, Národní knihovna III.B.8, f. 75ra. Both anonymous *quodlibetarii* evidently drew on Strasbourg’s commentary (or an excerpt from it). All three sources incorporate explicit references to propositions 15 and 146 of Proclus’s *Elements of Theology*. For the first reference, see Proclus, *Elementatio theologica* (ed. Boese, 1987, 11), prop. 15: “Omne quod ad se ipsum conversivum est incorporeum est.” The second reference is, however, rather to prop. 186; see *ibidem* (ed. Boese, 1987, 91): “Omnis anima est incorporea substantia et separabilis a corpore.”

⁵⁸ Matthias de Knín, *Quodlibet*, q. 91: *Utrum anima intellectiva sit forma inhaerens corpori humano de potentia materiae per generationem educta*, contra 4–5 (MS Prague, Knihovna metropolitní kapituly L.45, f. 101r): “Cum ergo anima intellectiva habeat in se esse immateriale et spirituale et incorporeum, sequitur, quod ipsa non potest educi de potentia materiae, sed desuper causari a prima substantia intellectiva.”

⁵⁹ See Aristoteles, *De generatione animalium*, II.3, 736b27–28 (ed. Drossaert Lulofs, 1966, 54); also Johannes de Fonte, *Auctoritates Aristotelis*, IX.13.190 (ed. Hamesse, 1974, 224): “Solus intellectus est in nobis ab extrinseco, quia ipse solus est divinus.” In Prague context, the passage is advocated in Anonymus, *Quodlibet*, q. 11: *Utrum anima hominis sit extensa*, contra 1 (MSS Cracow, BJ 649, f. 35r; BJ 624, f. 78r); Anonymus, *Quodlibet* (?), q. 16: *Utrum animam humanam esse indivisibilem et immortalem sive incorruptibilem possit ostendi naturali ratione*, pro 4 (MS Cracow, BJ 736, f. 117r). Medieval thinkers built on the passage already since the thirteenth century; see Dales (1995, 10, 29, 36–37, 187–188).

⁶⁰ Anonymus, *Quodlibet*, q. 11: *Utrum anima hominis sit extensa*, contra 1 (MSS Cracow, BJ 624, f. 78r; BJ 649, f. 35r): “Si <anima intellectiva> esset extensa, tunc esset educta de potentia materiae, quod est falsum. Falsitas probatur, quia fide credimus quod sit creata ex nihilo.” See also the same move in the positions: Matthias de Legnitz, *Quodlibet*, q. 52: *Utrum animam intellectivam esse formam hominis possit ratione evidenti ostendi*, concl. 4 (MS Stralsund, Stadtarchiv 1067, f. 253rb); Jacobellus de Misa, *Utrum intellectus hominis est homo*, sup. 3 (MS Prague, Národní knihovna V.H.13, f. 140r).

personal immortality from an ethical perspective, borrowing a series of arguments for immortality from *Summa de anima* by the early thirteenth-century Franciscan John of La Rochelle.⁶¹ Prokop points out that the post-mortal life of all souls is necessary if rewards and punishments are to be redistributed among good and bad people according to justice.⁶²

Various conceptual tensions apparent in medieval conceptualizations of human nature become explicit and burning in the Prague disputation texts. On the one hand, the emphasis on the intellect's inherence in the human body tempted medieval intellectuals to treat the intellect as an ordinary material form—and the Prague masters were willing to develop arguments pushing the Aristotelian principles to the materialist consequences. On the other hand, the emphasis on the unique immaterial and immortal nature of the intellect was ubiquitous. The dialectic nature of the preparations considered in this section demanded sharpening the reasoning but provided no room for harmonizing these tensions. The next section reconstructs the possible doctrinal positions held by Prague intellectuals.

14.5 Doctrinal Sources and Positions in Prague Disputations

Amidst the lively Prague debates on the human intellect, four different strategies to overcome the alleged incoherence between the intellect's inherence and personal immortality crystallized. Two of the options disregard the dilemma and stress only one of its horns. The materialist *Eduction Model* of the human intellect, setting the immortality issue aside and focusing on the inherence claim, takes the intellect to be a form educed from matter. On the contrary, the *Adherence Model* favours the intellect's immortality and postulates a single intellect for all humans, not inhering in each body as its substantial form, but merely assisting, or (to use the terminology common in the Prague sources to describe such an Averroist position) *adhering to* humans in intellectual operations. Third, the *Inherence Model*, the most popular one in late medieval philosophy and also adopted by two of the Prague questions,

⁶¹Procopius de Cladrub, *Quodlibet*, q. 26: *Utrum anima intellectiva habens operationem propriam, quam non communicat corpori, sit perpetua et immortalis*, pro quaes. 1–12 (MS Prague, Knihovna metropolitní kapituly L.27, ff. 42v–43r). All twelve of Prokop's arguments are found in Johannes de Rupella, *Summa de anima*, I.VII.44 (ed. Bougerol, 1995, 134–139). La Rochelle's *Summa* gained a certain popularity among Bohemian intellectuals, as evinced by two early fifteenth-century copies (MS Prague, Knihovna metropolitní kapituly L.36, ff. 35ra–94ra, around 1415; and MS Prague, Národní knihovna V.G.10, ff. 126r–137r, incomplete, around 1400). Several glosses in Old Czech in both codices indicate Bohemian origin.

⁶²Procopius de Cladrub, *Quodlibet*, q. 26: *Utrum anima intellectiva habens operationem propriam, quam non communicat corpori, sit perpetua et immortalis*, pro quaes. 1 (MS Prague, Knihovna metropolitní kapituly L.27, f. 42v). See Anonymus, *Quodlibet* (?), q. 17: *Utrum sit evidenter probabile naturali ratione quod anima intellectiva sit forma substantialis hominis inhaesive*, pro 5 (MS Cracow, BJ 736, f. 118v), which uses the same point against Averroism as failing to secure *personal* immortality.

proposes *both* the intellect's inherence *and* personal immortality. Besides these three positions, notoriously epitomized as "the three famous opinions" in the Buridanian tradition,⁶³ the *Hypostatic Union Model* is idiosyncratic for the Prague intellectual environment. Derived from John Wyclif, it tries to preserve both inherence and immortality by postulating an immortal and created spirit hypostatically united with the human soul educed from the potency of matter.

Hardly any scholars at medieval universities embraced the Alexandrist Education Model, and only a few supported the Averroist Adherence Model (and if so then indirectly). The Prague scholars around 1400 were no exception in this matter. A modern interpretation is at pains to ascribe an Alexandrist leaning to Jenek of Prague on the basis of his *De anima* commentary; nevertheless, Jenek does not subscribe to the crucial claim of all medieval definitions of Alexander's position: that the intellect is derived from the harmonious complexion of the human body.⁶⁴

Nor had the Adherence Model found a devoted advocate among Prague masters. Nevertheless, compared to Alexandrism, Averroist influences are more palpable in the Prague texts. For example, the relation of the intellect to the body, usually illustrated by the metaphor of a helmsman navigating a ship, gets a new expression in Matthias of Knín. An argument against the intellect's inherence in the body compares the body/intellect relation to the relation between a tunic and a body. As the body does not inhere in the tunic, but rather the tunic is attached to the body, so the body is something temporarily attached to an eternal and self-subsistent intellect.⁶⁵

⁶³The triad of opinions is included in both versions of Buridan's *Questions*, see Johannes Buridanus, *Quaestiones super De anima secundum tertiam sive ultimam lecturam*, III.3, §9–12 (ed. Hartman et al., forthcoming); Buridanus, *Quaestiones super De anima (non de ultima lectura)*, III.3 (MS Uppsala, Universitetsbiblioteket, cod. C. 624, ff. 193ra–va). See Pluta (1986, 38–41), Zupko (2004, 44–49), De Boer (2013, 288–289), Klein (2019, 124–168). The triad became extremely popular in late-medieval *De anima* commentaries, see the extensive list in Andrews (2016, 241–245).

⁶⁴See Mráz (1982, 86–88). According to the passage from Jenek's commentary edited in Mráz (1982, 90–91) (cf. Jenko Wenceslai de Praga, *Commentarius in I–III libros De Anima Aristotelis*, MS Prague, Národní knihovna VIII.G.30, f. 102r), the agent intellect is identified with God and, thus, immortal, perpetual, and separated. On the contrary, the human intellect is passive, corruptible, and unable to perform intellection without the divine agent intellect. Admittedly, this accords with Alexander's position so far. Nevertheless, Jenek also explicitly asserts that the human soul is "from the outside" ("anima intellectiva [...] non est de potentia materiae educta, sed de foris data"). Surprisingly, he adds that it is not (philosophical to say it is) created, nor is it attached to the human in the Averroist sense, but, in his view, produced by *emanation* from the first principle. Mráz dubiously interprets Jenek as proposing "moderate Alexandrism." Certainly, such a view should not be read in an Averroist spirit, as Jenek explicitly refutes the doctrine of the single intellect as heretical, on which see Mráz (1982, 87).

⁶⁵Matthias de Knin, *Quodlibet*, q. 91: *Utrum anima intellectiva sit forma inhaerens corpori humano de potentia materiae per generationem educta, contra 2* (MS Prague, Knihovna metropolitní kapituly L.45, f. 101r): "[...] sicut corpus non est forma inhaerens tunicae, sed magis tunica adhaeret corpori, sic videtur, quod substantia intellectiva perpetua et incorporea [...] non est forma inhaerens corpori, sed magis corpus adhaeret illi spiritu intellectivo per se existenti." While the tunic metaphor seems original, the "helmsman in the ship" is an example popular since antiquity, by which medieval philosophers often illustrated the Platonic and Averroist conception of the

The most tangible evidence of Averroist leanings occurs in John of Borotín's *Notabilia* on *De anima*, in a passage implying a version of the plurality thesis: there are two substantial forms of the human; one inhering in and educed from the body, constituting an essential unity with the body; the other one providing an operation to the body, but not inhering in it. The inhering form is the vegetative and sensitive soul (*anima cogitativa* in Averroist terminology); the other form, the intellective soul, is merely "appropriate to" the body. Borotín probably borrowed the doctrine from the early fourteenth-century Averroist John of Jandun's questions on *De anima*, which is particularly noteworthy as no extant manuscript of Jandun's text is of Bohemian origin.⁶⁶

Two texts of the present corpus advocate the Inherence Model. One is a question from the codex with materials from Matthias of Legnica's quodlibet, asking whether one may rationally demonstrate that the intellective soul is the form of the human.⁶⁷ The position comprises a set of conclusions and corollaries supported by a shallow and clumsy reasoning, defending, step by step, that the intellective soul is a substance, a form, a substantial form, the substantial form of a human being, and,

soul as the act of the body, but not in the sense of form but as mover (*motor*). See Aristoteles, *De anima*, II.1, 413a4–10 (ed. Gauthier, 1984, 74b), Averroes, *Commentarium magnum in Aristotelis De anima libros*, II.11 (ed. Crawford, 1953, 147–148), Thomas de Aquino, *Sententia libri De anima*, II.2 (ed. Gauthier, 1984, 76b), Johannes Buridanus, *Quaestiones super De anima secundum tertiam sive ultimam lectionem*, II.1, §23 (ed. Hartman et al., forthcoming).

⁶⁶Johannes de Borotín (?), *Notabilia super librum III De anima Aristotelis* (MS Prague, Národní knihovna X.H.18, f. 56v): "Nota: duplex est forma substantialis, una inhaerens ipsi corpori et dans esse corpori formaliter et facit unum essentialiter cum corpore; alia est forma substantialis dans (dans] *scripsi*, differunt *cod.*) esse et operari corpori, ita quod non est inhaerens corpori, nec perficiens corpus. Et differunt illae formae, nam prima forma est educta de potentia materiae, secunda autem non. [...] Igitur: unius <hominis> erunt plures formae substantiales, videlicet cogitativa et anima intellectiva. Dico quod illud non est inconueniens sed <secundum> intentionem Aristotelis, ita quod una sit inhaerens ipsi, per quam sit generabilis et corruptibilis, et alia, quae sit ipsi appropriata. Et illud fuit de intentione Commentatoris." See Johannes de Janduno, *Super libros Aristotelis De anima subtilissimae quaestiones*, III.12 (Venice, 1552, f. 71ra). On the cogitative and the intellective soul as two substantial forms of a human, see Mahoney (1987, 274–276) and Brenet (2008). John of Borotín possibly had also Jandun's questions on *De sensu* at his disposal, on which, see Lička (2021, 276).

Another piece of evidence for the dissemination of Jandun's commentary among Prague intellectuals is Anonymus, *Utrum intellectus qui est potentia animae rationalis sit potentia organica* (MS Prague, Knihovna metropolitní kapituly M.92, ff. 147v–148r). The question, asking whether the intellect is an organic power, amounts to a compilation of arguments from the question in Jandun bearing a similar title; see Johannes de Janduno, *Super libros Aristotelis De anima subtilissimae quaestiones* III.8 (Venice, 1552, ff. 66ra–67va).

⁶⁷It is not certain who authored the position, whether the *quodlibetarius* himself, who designed it as a storage of arguments for the upcoming disputation, or a master participating in Legnica's quodlibet. (The former option seems less likely, as the structure of the question does not resemble the typical structure of Prague disputation preparations.) A broader question to be determined by future research is whether the Stralsund codex preserves Legnica's handbook of preparations or proceedings from the quodlibet consisting of positions.

finally, that evident reasoning can demonstrate the last claim.⁶⁸ Legnica's justification of the Inherence Model is a little simple-minded. Any inhering form makes a subject such-and-such; thus, just as a form of whiteness makes the subject white, a soul inhering in matter makes it animated.⁶⁹ Further, humans are *ex definitione* capable of reasoning, which is granted by the intellective soul, i.e., a form inhering in the human body. As this capacity constitutes the essential property of the human being, the form enabling it is a substantial (and not merely an accidental) form.⁷⁰ Admittedly, this is only a trivial rendering of the Inherence Model, not conceptualizing its possible shortcomings. The author does not address the issue of the intellect's separability and immortality at all. On the contrary, he emphasizes that the intellect is not separated but *immersed* in the matter.⁷¹

A more refined version of the Inherence Model, indebted to the Buridianian approach to the issue, is found in the position of an anonymous participant in Matthias of Knín's quodlibet in 1409. Already the title of the question intimates Buridianian framework, as it asks whether the intellective soul is both a form *inhering* in the body and *educed* from the potentiality of matter. The Buridianian influence is not surprising given the immense popularity John Buridan's works (and his questions on *De anima* in particular) enjoyed at the newly-founded Central European universities.⁷² Prague University, of course, was no exception.⁷³

John Buridan delineates three possible positions in the issue of the nature of the intellect —Alexandrist, Averroist, and the Catholic faith. The first two, being intrinsically coherent but mutually exclusive, are both unacceptable for a medieval Christian, as Alexandrist cannot secure personal immortality and Averroist the intellect's individuality. In the second move, Buridan highlights the epistemic aspect of the issue. In his view, if one sets aside every assumption provided by the faith and

⁶⁸ Matthias de Legnitz, *Quodlibet*, q. 52: *Utrum animam intellectivam esse formam hominis possit ratione evidenti ostendi*, concl. 1–5 (MS Stralsund, Stadtarchiv 1067, ff. 253ra–va).

⁶⁹ Matthias de Legnitz, *Quodlibet*, q. 52: *Utrum animam intellectivam esse formam hominis possit ratione evidenti ostendi*, concl. 4, cor. 4 (MS Stralsund, Stadtarchiv 1067, f. 253rb).

⁷⁰ Matthias de Legnitz, *Quodlibet*, q. 52: *Utrum animam intellectivam esse formam hominis possit ratione evidenti ostendi*, concl. 4 (MS Stralsund, Stadtarchiv 1067, f. 253rb).

⁷¹ Matthias de Legnitz, *Quodlibet*, q. 52: *Utrum animam intellectivam esse formam hominis possit ratione evidenti ostendi*, concl. 4, cor. 5 (MS Stralsund, Stadtarchiv 1067, f. 253rb): “[...] intellectus humanus non est separatus a materia hominis, immo est immersus ei.”

⁷² For the dissemination of Buridanism in Central Europe, see Michael (1985, 1: 331–365, and especially 334–340 on Prague University). A sketch of the influence of Buridan's *De anima* on Central European universities (with respect to the immortality issue) is provided by Pluta (1986, 45–48).

⁷³ Interestingly, preliminary research reveals that Prague scholars used *only* the penultimate redaction of Buridan's questions (called “non ultima lectura” or “secunda lectura” nowadays). Prague even seems to be a centre of dissemination of this redaction in Central Europe (of all the manuscripts of this redaction extant today, 50% were copied in Prague and several others may relate to the Bohemian intellectual milieu). On various versions of Buridan's commentary on *De anima*, see Michael (1985, 2: 677–735); for a census of manuscripts of the penultimate redaction and the third or ultimate redaction (“tertia sive ultima lectura”) of Buridan's *Questions on De anima*, see Michael (1985, 2: 684–689, 693–704).

follows natural reason alone, then the Alexandrist materialist position is preferable; “a pagan philosopher would hold Alexander’s opinion.”⁷⁴ However, a Christian “should hold firmly” (*firmiter tenendum est*) the third position, the Catholic faith, which in Buridan’s account amounts to a combination of both Alexandrist and Averroist claims, proposing *both* the intellect’s inherence in the body and its immortality. Nevertheless, as these properties are incoherent, the position is not demonstrable by natural reason alone, unaided by faith.⁷⁵

Buridan’s framing effectively set a new paradigm of how to deal with the issue of the nature of the intellect.⁷⁶ The anonymous participant of Knín’s quodlibet draws on this Buridanian lore, his immediate source being the commentary on *De anima* attributed to an obscure master called John Eucles. The commentary, once ascribed to Albert of Saxony, is dated 1412 and preserved in a single Leipzig manuscript.⁷⁷ The date of Knín’s quodlibet and of the anonymous position, whose author draws on Eucles, entitle us to push the *terminus ante quem* of Eucles’s commentary before 1409 and understand the Leipzig manuscript as a later copy of Eucles’s commentary. The commentary apparently gained a certain popularity in Prague; it is even possible that it was composed there.⁷⁸

⁷⁴ Johannes Buridanus, *Quaestiones super De anima secundum tertiam sive ultimam lectionem*, III.4, §13 (ed. Hartman et al., forthcoming): “[...] ego puto quod philosophus paganus teneret opinionem Alexandri [...]”

⁷⁵ Buridan’s position, as expressed in the ultimate redaction of his questions on *De anima*, is scrutinized in Klein (2019, 123–223); see also Pluta (1986, 38–41), Zupko (2004, 44–50; 2007), Beneduce (2019). The scholarship is not unanimous regarding what Buridan’s position exactly was; the interpretations oscillate on a scale between the picture of Buridan as an undercover materialist (e.g., Olaf Pluta) and a reading framing the nature of the intellect as a dialectical question for Buridan, undecidable by pure reason and to be rendered to theology (Jack Zupko). Klein (2019, 214–223), providing an up-to-date investigation of the issue and the interpretative tradition, reads Buridan as compliant with materialism as a position inferred rationally from evident principles, but acknowledging the Christian faith as another source of epistemic certainty. On the contrary, Beneduce (2019) presents a fresh and textually well-argued interpretation, suggesting that the contradiction between inherence and immortality is not insurmountable for Buridan: both tenets are reconciled once the natural reason is aided by the faith, the only epistemic source capable of providing the *complete* truth on the nature of the intellect. However, as the present paper focuses on how Buridan was understood at newly founded universities (rather than what his genuine position was), it is also worth mentioning that some of his late medieval Central European readers plainly put him in the Alexandrist camp, on which, see Pluta (2007, 151–152). For a similar tension in Thomas Wylton’s account of the intellective soul’s relation to the body, see Trifogli, Chap. 10 in this volume, pp. 191–211.

⁷⁶ See De Boer (2013, 288–292). For the Buridanian vein in late medieval approaches to the issue, see, e.g., Pluta (1986, 42–49), Dewender and Pluta (1997) (Lawrence of Lindores), Pluta (2010) (John Eucles and Nicholas of Amsterdam), and Andrews (2016, 241–248) (Bero Magni de Ludosia).

⁷⁷ Johannes Eucles, *Quaestiones in Aristotelis libros De anima* (MS Leipzig, Universitätsbibliothek 1416, ff. 141ra–234rb); see Pluta (1988) for the contents of the manuscript, list of questions, and partial edition of four questions on the nature of the intellect.

⁷⁸ If before 1409, then the commentary was certainly not composed in Leipzig, as the local university was established in 1409; incidentally, mostly by the German-speaking masters who had withdrawn from the Prague University after the Kutná hora decree was issued. Pluta (2010, 93) also

Regarding the nature of the intellect, the Prague master is faithful to the Buridianian framework, textually following Eucles. Nevertheless, in contrast to Eucles, who distinguishes between the materialist and the orthodox approach to the issue very carefully and investigates the two attitudes in separate articles in each question, thus obscuring his own stance,⁷⁹ the Prague master's preference for the non-materialist version of the Inherence Model is more palpable. After the mandatory introduction of the three famous opinions,⁸⁰ he states that the intellect is *not* a material and extended form (since it does not require a corporeal organ) and that it inheres in the body (if it did not, what would guarantee that the intellect moved with the body which always has the intellect at its disposal?).⁸¹

Only after that, he points out that there are two ways to deal with the issue. The philosophical way prevents one from postulating anything not based on previous experience or not justified by an argument stronger than the one for its opposite. However, we have no experience confirming the post-mortem existence of the intellect. Further, arguments based on the principles of natural philosophy imply that the human intellect is mortal, rather than the opposite. Therefore, pure natural reason dictates that the intellect is not everlasting, but a corruptible form educed from the potency of matter and even materially extended.⁸²

But if the investigation follows the Christian faith, it reaches the conclusion that the human intellect is, in a way, eternal. Being created by God (and not generated naturally like other forms) it came into existence at a certain point of time, but since then it is everlasting (although still annihilable, at least in principle, by God).⁸³ It is telling that the author labels this conclusion as constituting the response to the question (*conclusio responsalis*), choosing the approach as his ultimate stance. Also, he does not copy the conclusion from Eucles but elaborates on his own, taking into consideration two passages from Thomas Aquinas (explicitly) and Conrad of Ebrach (implicitly).⁸⁴

implies that Eucles could have been a Prague renegade, suggesting that he may be identical with Johannes de Elbing (a Prague master of arts active there especially in the 1370s, but evidenced in Leipzig in 1409).

⁷⁹Pluta (2010, 93–94, 99).

⁸⁰Anonymus, *Utrum anima intellectiva sit forma inhaerens corpori humano de potentia materiae per generationem educta*, a. 2 (MS Prague, Národní knihovna X.H.18, f. 41r).

⁸¹Anonymus, *Utrum anima intellectiva sit forma inhaerens corpori humano de potentia materiae per generationem educta*, a. 2, concl. 1–2 (MS Prague, Národní knihovna X.H.18, f. 41r). The arguments are derived from the “faith sections” of Eucles’s questions (see Johannes Eucles, *Quaestiones in Aristotelis libros De anima*, III.3.2, III.4.1, ed. Pluta, 1988, 518, 522).

⁸²Anonymus, *Utrum anima intellectiva sit forma inhaerens corpori humano de potentia materiae per generationem educta*, a. 3, concl. 2 (MS Prague, Národní knihovna X.H.18, ff. 41v–42r). Again, the reasoning is borrowed from Eucles, but this time from a “pure reason section” of his question on whether the intellect is everlasting (see Johannes Eucles, *Quaestiones in Aristotelis libros De anima*, III.6.1, ed. Pluta, 1988, 532–533).

⁸³Anonymus, *Utrum anima intellectiva sit forma inhaerens corpori humano de potentia materiae per generationem educta*, a. 3, concl. resp. (MS Prague, Národní knihovna X.H.18, f. 42r).

⁸⁴More on this in the forthcoming critical edition.

The anonymous author responds to the question whether the intellect inheres in and is educed from matter by accepting the first claim while denying the second. Effectively, it amounts to disconnecting the claim about the intellect's inherence in the body from the claim that it is just an ordinary material form, which seems logically connected. The author does not make much effort to justify the disconnection.⁸⁵ Ultimately, he does not seem to develop much the inherited conceptual tension between inherence and immortality, but only (not in a particularly original way) acknowledges that there are two possible approaches, of which one is preferable for extraphilosophical reasons.

Finally, some Prague intellectuals were prone to the Hypostatic Union Model of the human being. The source of this conceptualization of the issue, going beyond the framework of the Inherence Model, is John Wyclif, especially his anthropological work *De compositione hominis*.⁸⁶ Wyclif seems a little reluctant to use the terminology of forms and inherence⁸⁷; in his view, the human being principally consists of two different natures: a material body and an immaterial created spirit. The unity of a human being is guaranteed by the fact that both natures constitute a single person, being hypostatically united, as Wyclif asserts using Christological terminology.⁸⁸ Into this general framework he incorporates Aristotelian terminology, evidently inclining to the pluralist position: the human soul both inheres in the human body and is educed from the potency of matter, but a spiritual, eternal and individual intellect is joined to the animated body.⁸⁹ It is not crystal clear what Wyclif means by the "human soul," which he regards as a material form. Probably only the sensory soul, as he seldom speaks about the intellect as educed from matter. The question can hardly be solved here⁹⁰; however, it is worth mentioning that some Bohemian authors inclined to the latter reading, in which even the intellectual soul is educed

⁸⁵ A possible way to temper the tension is advanced by Jack Zupko. In his interpretation of Buridan, the inference from intellect's inherence to materialism is precluded by distinguishing between two different meanings of the notion of inherence: while material forms inhere in their subjects as whole in whole and part in part, the intellect (as an immaterial form) inheres in the body as whole in whole and whole in part. See Zupko (2004, 55–56), and, more minutely, Zupko (1993); however, cf. Klein (2019, 218–220).

⁸⁶ Eleven manuscript copies of *De compositione hominis* are extant today (see Thomson, 1983, 36–37), of which eight are of Bohemian origin (listed in Šmahel, 1980, 15–16).

⁸⁷ See Pasnau (2011, 565, note 14).

⁸⁸ See, e.g., Johannes Wyclif, *De compositione hominis*, cap. 1 and 6 (ed. Beer, 1884, 9, and 102–103, 107–108, 115), Johannes Wyclif, *Triologus*, II.5 (ed. Lechler, 1869, 91), Michael (2003, 356–358), and Lahey (2006, 169–177).

⁸⁹ See Michael (2003, 347, 354–358) for such a reading.

⁹⁰ The paucity of modern interpretations of Wyclif's philosophical anthropology does not help to crack this interpretative conundrum. Wyclif's thought has, admittedly, been far from neglected in the last decades—see the collective volumes edited by Levy (2006) and Campi and Simonetta (2020); editorial work is also being conducted, of which see Campi's recent critical edition of Wyclif's *De scientia Dei* (ed. Campi, 2017) and Thakkar's research on Wyclif's logical treatises (see, e.g., Thakkar, 2020 and Thakkar, forthcoming). These efforts notwithstanding, little (if any) research has been done on Wyclif's *De compositione hominis* in the last decades besides Michael (2003) and Lahey (2006).

from the potency of matter and immortality is provided by an immaterial spirit united to the ensouled body.

The first Prague question, implicitly reworking the Wycliffian lore, is the position presented in a promotional act of an anonymous candidate at the Faculty of Arts. The title of the question is suggestive of Alexandrism, as it asks whether the intellectual soul, educed from the potency of matter, is corruptible. Yet, the author of the position actually shows himself to be a keen student of Wyclif's *De compositione hominis*, from which he tacitly borrows in his text.⁹¹ He recasts the Aristotelian setting of the question in Wyclif's light. The crucial step in developing the response is to distinguish carefully between "intellectual soul" and "human soul." The intellectual soul is "a created spirit."⁹² As such, it is not educed from matter and does not cease to be with the corruption of its subject.⁹³ On the contrary, the human soul is, according to the famous Aristotelian definition, an act of the physical body, which cannot exist *per se* without the body. In Wyclif's words, it is nothing else than the fact that an organic essence is animated (*essenciam organicam animari*).⁹⁴ Being a corporeal act, the human soul can cease to exist.⁹⁵

The created spirit and the human body's animating principle (*animatio*), albeit entailing different properties, are the same thing as they express two aspects of a single human being.⁹⁶ Although humans are mortal, as for their corporeal life, they are also "personally identified" with their incorporeal, spiritual, and created intellects and in this regard immortal.⁹⁷ The anonymous author concludes that the question is false in the first sense (as the intellect is neither educed nor corruptible), but

⁹¹The date of composition around 1402, suggested above, proves to be plausible, as it seems unlikely that a candidate, responding in front of the University board composed of masters of all University nations, would choose to draw on Wyclif after the 1403 condemnation of some of Wyclif's theses (and before 1409, when the Bohemian Wycliffite party prevailed at the University).

⁹²According to the introductory distinction between the uncreated spirit (God) and created spirit (human intellect), which the author ascribes to Platonists but borrows from Johannes Wyclif, *De compositione hominis*, cap. 1 (ed. Beer, 1884, 8–9); see Anonymus, *Utrum anima intellectiva educta de potentia materiae sit corruptibilis*, not. 2 (MS Prague, Národní knihovna VIII.E.5, ff. 55v–56r).

⁹³Anonymus, *Utrum anima intellectiva educta de potentia materiae sit corruptibilis*, concl. 1 (MS Prague, Národní knihovna VIII.E.5, f. 56r).

⁹⁴Anonymus, *Utrum anima intellectiva educta de potentia materiae sit corruptibilis*, concl. 2 (MS Prague, Národní knihovna VIII.E.5, ff. 56r–v); see Johannes Wyclif, *De compositione hominis*, cap. 4 (ed. Beer, 1884, 55).

⁹⁵Anonymus, *Utrum anima intellectiva educta de potentia materiae sit corruptibilis*, concl. 2, cor. 2 (MS Prague, Národní knihovna VIII.E.5, f. 56v).

⁹⁶Anonymus, *Utrum anima intellectiva educta de potentia materiae sit corruptibilis*, concl. 2, cor. 1 (MS Prague, Národní knihovna VIII.E.5, f. 56v).

⁹⁷Anonymus, *Utrum anima intellectiva educta de potentia materiae sit corruptibilis*, concl. 3, cor. 3 (MS Prague, Národní knihovna VIII.E.5, f. 56v): "Sicut spiritus sive intellectus humanus dicitur perpetuus <et> incorruptibilis, sic homo, qui identificatur cum eodem (eodem] *scripsi*, eadem *cod.*) personaliter, est perpetuus et incorruptibilis, quamvis non secundum utramque vitam, puta spiritualem et corporalem."

true in the second one (since the human soul as the animating principle of the body is both educed and corruptible).⁹⁸

A more sophisticated rendering of Wyclif's position is provided in the question entitled "Whether the human intellect is [identical with] the human," attributed in its single manuscript copy to the famous Bohemian reformist Jacob of Mies (ca. 1370–1429). The text, composed probably in a theological milieu, almost completely omits Aristotelian hylomorphic terminology. Jacob singles out the intellect as the human "essential intrinsic being" (*esse essenziale intrinsecum*), which makes the human what she is.⁹⁹ Consequently, he identifies the human being with her intellect, which is immortal and incorruptible.¹⁰⁰ Simultaneously, perhaps to avoid any suspicion of Averroism, he hints that there are many everlasting intellects, one for each human individual.¹⁰¹ The human body, on the contrary, is mortal and corruptible, and these properties, consequently, also apply to human individuals.¹⁰² The corporeal and incorporeal substances are of the same subject, and the unity of such a twofold composite is saved by the fact that they constitute a single person.¹⁰³

Jacob, regrettably, does not address the self-ruining shortcomings of such robust dualism, e.g., the issue of mental causation (how the ontological gap between body and intellect is to be overcome, or how the intellect draws on the sensory material). Jacob's aim was not to construct a plausible psychological theory; he strives to sketch a metaphysical picture of the human being allowing one to account not only for ordinary humans, but also for Jesus Christ, the only person who is truly God and truly man. Thus, in Jacob's account, anthropology is continuous with Christology, which again resembles Wyclif. Since every human is a "personal union" of two different natures, it is easier to explain how God became man.¹⁰⁴

⁹⁸ Anonymus, *Utrum anima intellectiva educta de potentia materiae sit corruptibilis*, cor. ult. (MS Prague, Národní knihovna VIII.E.5, f. 56v).

⁹⁹ Jacobellus de Misa, *Utrum intellectus hominis est homo*, sup. 1–2 (MS Prague, Národní knihovna V.H.13, f. 140r).

¹⁰⁰ Jacobellus de Misa, *Utrum intellectus hominis est homo*, concl. 1 (MS Prague, Národní knihovna V.H.13, f. 140r).

¹⁰¹ Jacobellus de Misa, *Utrum intellectus hominis est homo*, concl. 2 (MS Prague, Národní knihovna V.H.13, f. 140r).

¹⁰² Jacobellus de Misa, *Utrum intellectus hominis est homo*, concl. 3 (MS Prague, Národní knihovna V.H.13, ff. 140r–v).

¹⁰³ Jacobellus de Misa, *Utrum intellectus hominis est homo*, concl. 3, cor. 1 (MS Prague, Národní knihovna V.H.13, f. 140v): "In eodem homine substantia corporea et incorporea sunt eiusdem suppositi et personae idem suppositaliter vel personaliter, inter quae est unio suppositalis sive personalis sic quod eadem persona est ambo illa simul et quodlibet divisim."

¹⁰⁴ Jacobellus de Misa, *Utrum intellectus hominis est homo*, concl. 3, cor. 5 (MS Prague, Národní knihovna V.H.13, f. 140v); cf. also Johannes Wyclif, *De compositione hominis*, cap. 6 (ed. Beer, 1884, 115–116) on parallels and differences between humans and Christ.

14.6 Conclusion

The paper has delved into some ephemeral texts resulting from late medieval Prague university disputations. As I tried to demonstrate, these minor texts witness, perhaps even more faithfully than works by the honourable grand authors, how vibrant and dynamic exchanges took place in the late medieval market of ideas.

The texts related to the issue of the intellect reveal tangible conceptual tensions between the far-reaching materialist consequences of some Aristotelian principles and the postulate of human immortality, whether religion-driven or a simple component of human dignity. Some texts devise strategies to overcome these tensions. The Buridanian approach, manoeuvring between the Alexandrist position, which was rationally plausible but untenable for medieval Christians, and the position of faith, which was well tenable but rationally implausible for them, left an unpleasant taste of a double-truth theory.

Idiosyncratic to the early fifteenth-century Prague intellectual milieu is the urge to rethink the issue anew from the perspective of John Wyclif. While admittedly not strong in the psychological analysis, Wyclif presents a peculiar metaphysics of the human being with the materiality-immortality tension built in from the beginning. Wyclif's Prague readers were evidently fascinated by this strategy and applied it also in questions framed by Buridanian (or generally Aristotelian) terminology.

The ultimate epitome of this tendency can be the anonymous *Questions on De anima*. Here, in the question on whether the intellect is the substantial form inhering in the body, the notorious Buridanian triad of opinions is reworked significantly. Alexandrism and Averroism remain, but the third option is not labelled "faith" and defined merely as proposing that the intellect is created and infused to the body. More surprisingly, a *fourth* position is added representing an extravagant reading of Wyclif's theory: the human intellect is educed from matter and thus corruptible, but a spirit is also united to the intellect by hypostatic union, becoming thus a true intellectual soul and serving as the substantial form inhering in the body.¹⁰⁵

Texts such as these invite us to reconsider the prevailing historical narrative about philosophy at the early fifteenth-century Prague University, which allegedly abandoned its position of the "stronghold of Buridanism" and went under the full influence of Wyclif.¹⁰⁶ Perhaps the relation between the two traditions is more entangled. Rather than simply dismissed and replaced by Wyclif, Buridan may have been gradually Wycliffised.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁵ Anonymus, *Quaestiones in libros II–III De anima Aristotelis*, q. 25 (MS Prague, Národní knihovna X.H.17, f. 176v): "Quarta <opinio> ponit, quod intellectus humanus [...] educitur de potentia materiae ad actum rei corruptibilis, sed addit, quod spiritus, cui convenit animare corpus et actuare, est etiam intellectus per hypostaticam unionem et sic sit vera anima rationalis intellectiva."

¹⁰⁶ See, e.g., Michael (1985, 1: 338–339).

¹⁰⁷ I am particularly grateful to Luigi Campi and Olaf Pluta who commented upon an earlier version of the paper, and to the editors of the volume for their careful reading and manifold suggestions. The text also benefits from numerous discussions with Ota Pavlíček on the paper (and the issue of Prague University disputations in general), as well as from suggestions made by Pavel Blažek and Miroslav Hanke.

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