
Prague Nominalist Master John Arsen of Langenfeld and His *Quaestio* on Ideas from Around 1394/1399¹

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I

The British philosopher Alfred North Whitehead (1861–1947) once characterised the history of philosophy as a series of footnotes to Plato.² Plato's invention of ideas has become a fundamental conceptual figure and a classical inventory of the history of European thought. An important chapter from the history of Platonism is represented by the reception of the concept of ideas in medieval thought.³ One of the hitherto insufficiently explored contours of the history of Platonism in the Late Middle Ages is the textual landscape of the Prague quodlibetal disputations at the turn of the fourteenth century. This study provides a doctrinal analysis of one Prague quodlibetal question in order to shed light on this reception history.

The historiography of the quodlibetal disputations at the University of Prague is closely connected with research on the Bohemian Reformation by the Czech historian, Jan Evangelista Sedlák (1871–1924).⁴ At the start of the twentieth century, he published the pioneering editions of several quodlibetal questions (*quaestiones*) of a number of Czech masters and promoters of John Wyclif, the *evangelical doctor*, most notably those of Jan Hus and Jerome of Prague. He was also the first who presented – on the basis of the manuscript materials – an overall sketch of the most significant doctrinal controversies of the period and described the main outlines of Wyclif's

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² Alfred North Whitehead, *Process and Reality: An Essay in Cosmology* (New York, 1978) 39. See also Christoph Kann, *Fußnoten zu Plato: Philosophiegeschichte bei A. N. Whitehead* (Hamburg, 2001) 25–36. For the history of Platonism, see Werner Beierwaltes, *Fussnoten zu Plato* (Frankfurt a. M., 2011).

³ For general aspects of this development, see the entry "Idee" in: *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*, Joachim Ritter, Karlfried Gründer, and Gottfried Gabriel, eds. (Basel, 1976) 4:55–134; and Maarten J. F. M. Hoenen, "Propter dicta Augustini. Die metaphysische Bedeutung der mittelalterlichen Ideenlehre," *Recherches de Théologie et Philosophie Médiévales* 64 (1997) 245–262.

⁴ On this, see the brief introduction to the reprint of the essential editions in: Jan Sedlák, *Miscelanea husitica Ioannis Sedlák* (Praha, 1996) 7–11.

philosophical legacy at the University of Prague.⁵ In the 1920s, Václav Novotný (1869–1932) extended and fine-tuned the results of Sedlák's research. He incorporated his detailed draft of the Prague disputes on universals (*universalia realia*) into a monumentally composed and influential biography of Jan Hus.⁶ The discovery of Hus's quodlibetal enchiridion in the second half of the 1930s signified a new era of research on the Prague quodlibetal disputations.⁷ A historical-critical edition of this text, published ten years later, gave a strong impulse to new research that began mainly after World War II.⁸ From the 1950s on, one can follow the systematic research of Jiří Kejř into the manuscript sources.⁹ After more than twenty years, the procedural aspects of the Prague quodlibetal disputations were reconstructed, and likewise the extant quodlibetal manuals were systematically and chronologically described.¹⁰ The doctrinal and manuscript studies of František Šmahel, as well as the survey of Wyclif's manuscripts of Bohemian provenance by Vilém Herold at the turn of the 1960s, marked important milestones in the research on the Prague quodlibetal discussions.¹¹ Since then, further intensive manuscript research and, above all,

⁵ See Jan Sedlák, *Studie a texty*, vv. 1–2 (Olomouc, 1914–1915), which provides editions of key texts, and above all his outline of the doctrinal discussions in Prague, in: *M. Jan Hus* (Prague, 1915) 35–47 and 66–257. For a complete English summary of Sedlák's research, see Matthew Spinka, *John Hus and Czech Reform* (Chicago, 1941) 15–20.

⁶ Václav Novotný, *M. Jan Hus, Život a učení Díl I. Život a dílo I/1–2* [M. John Hus, Life and Doctrine, Vol. 1. Life and Works I/1–2] (Prague, 1919–1921). For the doctrinal disputes and the reception of Wyclif's legacy specifically, see vol. I/1, 103–134, 206–374, and 400–443; and vol. I/2, 5–8, 90–93, 113–115, and 123–143.

⁷ Concerning this discovery, see Václav Flajšhans, "M. Io. Hus – Quodlibetum 1411," ČČH 44 (1938) 267–295.

⁸ See Bohumil Ryba ed., *Magistri Johannis Hus Quodlibet, Disputationis de quodlibet Pragae in Facultatis Artium mense Ianuario anni 1411 habitae enchiridion* (Prague, 1948). A new, revised version appeared as Bohumil Ryba and Gabriel Silagi, eds. *Magistri Johannis Hus Quodlibet, Disputationis de quodlibet Pragae in Facultatis Artium mense Ianuario anni 1411 habitae enchiridion*, (Turnhout, 2006) [CCCM 211].

⁹ Jiří Kejř, "Quodlibetní questie kodexu UK X E 24," [Quodlibetal *quaestio* of the MS UK X E 24] LF 78 (1955), 216–221; and 79 (1956) 228–233.

¹⁰ See Jiří Kejř, "Z disputací na pražské universitě v době Husově a husitské," [From the Disputations at the University of Prague in Hus's and Hussite Times] SB 7 (1960) 47–78; idem, "Struktura a průběh disputace de quolibet na pražské universitě," [The Structure and Procedure of the Disputation de quolibet at the University of Prague], AUC-HUCP 1 (1960) 17–54; idem, *Stát, církev, a společnost v disputacích na pražské universitě v době Husově a husitské* [State, Church and Society in the Disputation at the University of Prague in Hus's and the Hussite Era] (Prague, 1964); idem, "O formě disputace na pražské universitě," [On the Form of Disputation at the University of Prague], *Strahovská knihovna* 5–6 (1970–1971) 181–189; idem, "Eine quaestionensammlung Prager Herkunft," *Folia diplomatica* 1 (1971) 145–151; and his systematic interpretation of this issue with a useful index in: *Kvodlibetní disputace na pražské universitě* [Quodlibetal Disputations at the Prague University] (Prague, 1971).

¹¹ František Šmahel, "Wyclif's Fortune in Hussite Bohemia," in *The Charles University in the Middle Ages, Selected Studies* (Leiden and Boston, 2007) 467–489. On Wyclif's Bohemian

a new holistic methodological approach to the manuscript materials have characterised the effort for more precise doctrinal and institutional assessment. One of the many results of this research is František Šmahel's essential study from the late 1970s, in which he summed up the results of his discovery of the quodlibetal enchiridion attributed to the German master John Arsen of Langenfeld.¹² Here, the contribution of the Bavarian master to the Prague discussions on universals (*universalialia realia*) was demonstrated for the first time. This analysis proved the nominalist character of Arsen's thought, and the extant manuscript material depicts him as one of the most profound critics of John Wyclif and a direct opponent of the Bohemian "friends of the ideas." In the 1980s, Šmahel presented a comprehensive and irreplaceable register of sources and several other significant studies, as well as a brief summary of doctrinal controversies in Prague.¹³ Finally, in the mid-1980s the fundamental monograph of Vilém Herold was published, which summed up almost twenty years of his manuscript research, including a doctrinal analysis of the selected textual landscape of quodlibetal disputations.¹⁴

This wide-ranging research demonstrated that subtle differences existed concerning the concept of ideas and universals between Wyclif and his Bohemian followers. Even if a group of Czech masters accepted the intellectual core of Wyclif's metaphysics, nevertheless, they did not accept some consequences of his theory of ideas (e. g. strict deterministic consequences). Herold, in his doctrinal interpretation, also used the

manuscripts, particularly the *editio simplex* of the introduction to Wyclif's treatise *De universalibus*, see John Wyclif, *De universalibus* (*Summa de ente libri primi tractatus sextus*), Vilém Herold ed., FČ 18 (1970) 999–1009.

¹² František Šmahel, "Ein unbekanntes Prager Quodlibet von ca. 1400 des Magisters Johann Arsen von Langenfeld," *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalter* 33 (1977) 199–215. This article has been reprinted in: *The Charles University in the Middle Ages*, 336–358.

¹³ For a list of extant quodlibetal questions relevant to the discussion on universals (*universalialia realia*) in Prague, see František Šmahel, "Verzeichnis der Quellen zum Prager Universalienstreit 1348–1500," MPP 25 (1980) 22–34. See also his essays: "Hus und Wyclif: Opinio media de universalibus in re," *Studia Mediewistyczne* 22 (1983) 123–130; "Kvodlibetní diskuse ke kwestii principalis Michala z Malenic roku 1412" [Quodlibetal discussion to the *quaestio principalis* of Michal z Malenic in 1412] AUC-HUCP 11 (1981) 27–52; "Universitní kwestie a polemiky Mistra Jeronýma Pražského" [University questions and polemics of M. Jerome of Prague], AUC-HUCP 22 (1982), 7–41; "Pražský spor o 'universalialia realia': nové prameny – nové otázky" [The Prague Controversy on 'universalialia realia': New Sources and New Questions], *Studia Comeniana et Historica* 13 (1983) 139–149; and his brief summary of academic disputes in Prague in: *La Révolution hussite: une anomalie historique* (Paris, 1985) 59–83.

¹⁴ Vilém Herold, *Pražská univerzita a Wyclif, Wyclifovo učení o ideách a geneze husitského revolučního myšlení* [The University of Prague and Wyclif. Wyclif's Concept of Ideas and the Genesis of Hussite Revolutionary Thought], (Prague, 1985); and idem, "Wyclifova filozofie a platónské ideje (Příspěvek k dějinám panteisticko-materialistických tendencí ve středověké filosofii)" [Wyclif's Philosophy and Platonic Ideas: A Contribution to the History of Pantheistic and Materialistic Tendencies in Medieval Philosophy] FČ 33 (1985) 47–96.

recently discovered quodlibetal *quaestio* on ideas ascribed to John Arsen of Langenfeld. For the first time, Arsen's indirect polemic with the founder of Bohemian reformed theology – M. Matěj of Janov – was revealed.¹⁵ In the 1990s, Šmahel used his manuscript research to present a holistic picture of the Hussite age and outlined a standard interpretation of doctrinal controversies at the University of Prague.¹⁶ Together with Pavel Spunar, Herold further summarised the historiography of the Prague quodlibetal disputations.¹⁷ Šmahel has recently produced two more accounts of his lifelong research into this subject.¹⁸ Several hitherto unpublished sources of the Prague quodlibetal disputations have also appeared in the recent critical edition of Hus's *Quaestiones*.¹⁹ New horizons for future research are indicated in several recent works.²⁰

This brief historiographical survey of the quodlibetal disputations at the University of Prague indicates the relevance and importance of John Arsen of Langenfeld's manuscript *oeuvre*. It represents one of the main textual monuments to, and components of, a diversified mosaic of a relatively broad historical textual landscape, part of the essential ground for the doctrinal reconstruction of the Prague discussions on universals (*universalialia realia*) and ideas. This study aims to present a detailed doctrinal analysis of Arsen's – hitherto unpublished – quodlibetal *quaestio*, which is extant together with acts of the quodlibetal discussion of M. Matěj of Lehnice.²¹ Thus far only

¹⁵ On the significance of Arsen's *quaestio* for the Prague discussions on universals (*universalialia realia*), see Vilém Herold, "Nové prameny k české středověké filozofii" [New Sources for Bohemian Medieval Philosophy] *FČ* 32 (1984) 304–342; for an early doctrinal analysis see *idem*, *Pražská univerzita a Wyclif*, 225–229, 232–233 (abstract in German, 297–298).

¹⁶ František Šmahel, *Die Hussitische Revolution*, (Hanover, 2002) 2:717–929; and *idem*, "The Faculty of Liberal Arts," in *A History of Charles University 1348–1802*, Ivana Čornejová and Michal Svatoš eds. (Prague, 2001) 1:93–122.

¹⁷ Vilém Herold and Pavel Spunar, "L'Université de Prague et le rôle des disputations de quodlibet sa faculté des Arts à la fin du XIV^e et au début du XV^e siècle," in *Compte rendu. 69e session annuelle du Comité Prague, du 11 au 17 juin 1995* (Bruxelles, 1997) 27–39.

¹⁸ František Šmahel, *The Charles University in the Middle Ages*; and *idem*, *Život a dílo Jeronýma Pražského, Zpráva o výzkumu* [Life and Work of Jerome of Prague. A Research Report] (Prague, 2010) especially 161–238.

¹⁹ Johannes Hus, *Questiones* [CCCM 205] (Turnhout, 2004).

²⁰ See, for instance Brian Lawn, *The Rise and Decline of the Scholastic 'Quaestio disputata'* (Leiden–New York–Köln, 1993) 53–65; Olga Weijers, *La 'disputatio' dans les Facultés des arts au moyen âge* (Turnhout, 2002); *eadem*, *Queritum utrum, Recherches sur la 'disputatio' dans les universités médiévales* (Turnhout, 2009); Christopher Schabel, ed., *Theological Quodlibeta in the Middle Ages: The Fourteenth Century* (Leiden–Boston, 2007); and Christopher Schabel, "Reshaping the Genre: Literary Trends in Philosophical Theology in the Fourteenth Century," in *Crossing Boundaries at Medieval Universities*, Spencer E. Yound, ed. (Leiden–Boston, 2011) 51–84.

²¹ Johannes Arsen de Langevelt, *Utrum ideae aliqua ratione cogente propter generationem rerum naturalium sunt ponendae* (MS Stralsund Stadarchiv HN NB 24, q. 9, ff. 222va–223va). For a brief introduction to the text, see Josef Tříška, *Starší pražská univerzitní literatura*

a single manuscript is known, and it is preserved in a codex in the State Archive of Stralsund in Germany. The text is written as the ninth question (*quaestio*) in Lehnic's quodlibetal dispute. Arsen's authorship is testified by the concluding remark of the text.²² The date of Lehnic's quodlibet is still in dispute. Herold, in his detailed survey concerning the doctrinal reception of Wyclif's legacy at the Prague University, leans toward a date ca. 1394.²³ Šmahel, on the other hand, inclines to ca. 1399, a dating linked to his theory of the masters' alternation for the quodlibetal discussions according to the four university nations (Bohemian, Bavarian, Polish and Saxon).²⁴

The determination of the date of Lehnic's quodlibetal disputation might contribute, indirectly, to the elucidation of some discrepancies associated with the transmission of Wyclif's intellectual heritage within the congregation of the Bohemian masters in Prague. The years 1397 and 1398 are considered as an important milestone in this process. In 1398 the young Jan Hus completed a copy of the complex of Wyclif's philosophical treatises – a codex now held in Stockholm – written at the request of his elder mentor and friend M. Křišťan of Prachatic. ²⁵ Several new pieces of evidence were recently proposed by Ivan J. Müller in the introduction to his critical edition of the Prague commentary on one of Wyclif's crucial treatises, *Tractatus de universalibus* (at present ascribed to Štěpán of Pálec on the basis of an indirect attribution).²⁶ Müller dated the commentary, in the form of *expositio textualis problematum*, to the year 1394–1395. That is the same period as the crucial *Tractatus de universalibus realibus (maior)* was edited by the prominent Bohemian senior M. Stanislav of Znojmo at that time an avid propagator of Wyclif's theological realism.²⁷ The author of the commentary has verifiable knowledge of Stanislav's tract and also knew

a karlovska tradice [Early Prague University Literature and the Caroline Tradition] (Prague, 1978) 141–146.

²² Arsen, *Utrum ideae*, f. 223va: "Et haec est positio Magistri Iohannis Arczen tamen in forma commentariis etc."

²³ Vilém Herold, *Pražská univerzita a Wyclif*, 225, with reference to Josef Tříška, *Starší pražská univerzitní literatura a karlovska tradice*, 141.

²⁴ František Šmahel, "Die Verschriftlichung der Quodlibet-Disputationen an der Prager Artistenfakultät bis 1420," in *Prager Universität im Mittelalter*, 368–369.

²⁵ Jiří Daňhelka, "Das Zeugnis des Stockholmer Autographs von Hus," *Die Welt der Slawen*, 27 (1982) 225–233. For a general analysis of the manuscript transmission of Wyclif's works, see Anne Hudson, *Studies in the Transmission of Wyclif's Writings* (Aldershot and Burlington, 2008); and *eadem*, "From Oxford to Bohemia: Reflections on the Transmission of Wycliffite Texts," *SMB* 2 (2010) 25–37.

²⁶ *Commentarium in De universalibus Iohannis Wyclif Stephano de Palecz ascriptus*, Ivan J. Müller, ed. (Prague, 2009).

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 21–25. The text of Stanislav's treatise was mistakenly published among Wyclif's genuine works. See John Wyclif, *Miscellanea philosophica II*, Micheal Henry Dziewicki ed. (London, 1905) 1–151. This error was first noted by Jan Sedlák (*Studie a texty* 2:119), and more conclusively by Samuel Harrison Thomson in his "Some Latin Works Erroneously Ascribed to Wyclif," *Speculum* 3 (1928) 382–391.

several other works of the *evangelical doctor* – he explicitly refers to some of his logical treatises, *De Ideis* and *De Trinitate*.²⁸ The text of the commentary was dated – similarly to the mentioned work of Stanislav – and was used for the practice of university teaching, offering a basis for discussions. Further, according to Müller’s conclusions, the knowledge of Wyclif’s treatise on universals within Bohemia must have existed somewhat earlier, thus the text must have been available in Prague as early as 1381 or 1382.²⁹ Müller also stressed the thesis of “an older Bohemian tradition” of Wyclif’s *Tractatus de universalibus*, which is supported by an incomplete, extant fragment (together with variants of the Bohemian manuscript corresponding with passages in the commentary ascribed today to Štěpán of Pálec).³⁰ Müller’s conclusion and hypothesis requires reconsideration, not only through historic-critical editions of other important texts (e. g. Wyclif’s tracts *De ideis*, *De tempore*, *De intellectione dei* etc.) but, above all, through further manuscript research.

The aim of this study is, first, to examine the life and literary work of the Prague nominalist master John Arsen of Langenfeld. The doctrinal interpretation of his work will further provide a detailed analysis of Arsen’s question (*quaestio*) on ideas, especially with respect to its argumentation and doctrinal sources. In particular, our attention will be focused on one part of Arsen’s text where he indirectly argues against the first theologian of the Bohemian Reformation, M. Matěj of Janov. In answering the question of the doctrinal sources of the Bavarian master, I shall also outline the history of the reception of Jean Buridan’s texts at the Prague University during the late Middle Ages in an attempt to re-evaluate current perspectives on his influence. In conclusion, I will also draw attention to some philosophical treatises of Marsilius of Inghen that together with Buridan’s expositions on Aristotle deeply influenced doctrinal positions of the Prague nominalist *schola communis*.

²⁸ See, e.g.: *Commentarium*, 101, 116, 119, 224, 291, and 299.

²⁹ *Commentarium*, 18, and 36. Direct references to several of Wyclif’s treatises (*De tempore*, *De potentia Dei productiva ad extra*, *De incarnatione Verbi*, *De Eucharistia*, either *Purgans errores de universalibus de communi* or *De universalibus*) along with a critique of some of his views on universals were can be traced in the commentary on Lombard’s *Sentences* by Mikuláš Biceps (d. 1390/1391), even in version A (from ca. 1380/1381). On this, see Włodzimierz Zega, *Filosofia Boga w Quaestiones Sententiarum Mikołaja Bicepsa* [The Philosophy of God in Quaestiones Sententiarum of Mikuláš Biceps] (Warszawa-Bydgoszcz, 2002) 100–101 (English summary on 226–227).

³⁰ *Commentarium*, 36–37. On Wyclif’s treatise *De universalibus* and its incomplete Bohemian manuscript fragment Z (MS Prague, Národní knihovna, III.G.10, ff. 70r-104v), see John Wyclif, *Tractatus de universalibus*, Ivan J. Müller ed. (Oxford, 1985) xli-xlii, and lv–lvii.

II

We do not know much about Master John Arsen of Langenfeld (d. ca. 1404), a member of the Prague congregation of the Bavarian nation (*natio Bavarorum*). A few terse records in official documents of Prague University yield only cryptic testimonies about his life and academic career. His exact birth place is unknown, largely because Langenfeld's location is difficult to identify at the present. The statutes for university nations required a more precise localisation only for members of the Bohemian nation, while this was not required for the other three nations.³¹ The congregation of the Bavarian nation included – on the basis of their origin – students from a wide geographic area. This encompassed the territories of present-day Bavaria, Hessen, Rhineland, Baden-Württemberg, as well as the Netherlands, Austria, and even today's Southern Tyrol and some parts of Switzerland.³² The place of Arsen's origin can only be presupposed hypothetically. Presently, two localities bear the name of Langenfeld: the first one northwest of Nuremberg, the other southwest of Innsbruck in Austria. Also, we can only assume that Arsen arrived to study in Prague at the turn of the 1370s and 1380s. His academic *curriculum vitae* definitely started, in May 1384, when he achieved the bachelor's degree at the Faculty of Liberal Arts as second among forty candidates.³³ Two years later he attained the master's degree, this time as third among twenty candidates. The extant university record affirms that he was promoted as *magister artium* on 4 March 1386 by the Saxon master and a member of both examiners' commissions, Ditmar de Swerte. About this master it is known only that he decided to leave Prague for the newly-founded University of Heidelberg, together with twenty-four masters and bachelors of the German congregation around the year 1387.³⁴

After the prescribed two-year preparatory period, Arsen began his prolonged and surely demanding teaching career, presumably connected only with the Faculty of Liberal Arts in Prague. During his academic career he obtained a series of academic grades and not only among the congregation of his own university nation. He was appointed as a member of the examining commissions for the bachelor degree nine times (in 1388, 1390, 1394, 1396–1397, 1399, 1401, and 1403), and four times as a member of analogous commissions for the master's degree (1393, 1396, 1398, and 1402).³⁵ He also

³¹ MHUP III (1848) 10.

³² For details about the university nations, see Jiří Stočes, *Pražské univerzitní národy do roku 1409* [Nations and the University of Prague up to 1409] (Prague, 2010) especially 62–65.

³³ MHUP I/1 (1830) 221–222.

³⁴ MHUP I/1 (1830) 236, and 241–242. For a biography of Ditmar de Swerte, see Josef Tříška, *Reperitorium biographicum Universitatis Pragensis praeussiticae 1348–1409* (Prague, 1981) 92–93.

³⁵ For the bachelor examinations commissions, see MHUP I/1 (1830) 260, 268, 289, 314, 323, 345, 365, 373, and 377; for the master examinations committee, see MHUP I/1 (1830) 280, 309, 329, and 368.

served as the *promotor* of fifteen bachelors' and six masters' candidates.³⁶ Six times he was appointed as the treasurer of the Faculty of Liberal Arts, three times as a member of a commission supervising the faculty statutes, and twice as the auditor of accounts.³⁷ Arsen reached the peak of his academic career in 1392 when he served as the Dean of the Faculty of Liberal Arts during the summer semester.³⁸ A later university record from 17 March 1404 confirms him as a generous donor of books who made substantial bequests to the university colleges.³⁹ Acting as promoter of John Eschenban from the Bavarian nation for a master degree on 17 March 1404 was probably his last academic act, since there is no more documented evidence of any other university activities after that.

As for Arsen's literary works, regrettably only a few texts have survived: two important commentaries on several of Aristotle's philosophical treatises and less than a dozen preparations of quodlibetal questions and elaborated texts. The commentaries on Aristotle's works include an extensive and significant commentary on *Metaphysics* in the form of questions (*modo quaestionis*),⁴⁰ as well as his *lectura* on Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*.⁴¹ As for the quodlibetal questions, the most important are the first question (*quaestio*) entitled *Utrum ideae aliqua ratione cogente propter generationem rerum naturalium sunt ponendae*⁴² and a presumably later, as well as longer, *quaestio principalis* under the title *Utrum primum mutans immutabile sit cum aliquo proprie componibile*, preserved in Arsen's own quodlibetal enchiridion from a disputation around the year 1400.⁴³

³⁶ Concerning the bachelors, see MHUP I/1 (1830) 247, 291, 293–295, 304, 311, 340, 352–353, 356, 358–360, and 365; concerning the masters, see MHUP (1830) I/1 302, 312, 360–361, 369, and 379.

³⁷ For more details concerning these offices, 1388–1403, see MHUP I/1 (1830) 260, 268, 280, 289, 309, 314, 323, 329, 345, 365, 368, 373, and 377.

³⁸ MHUP I/1 (1830) 276–277.

³⁹ MHUP I/1, 369.

⁴⁰ Johannes Arsen de Langevelt, *Quaestiones in I–II, IV–X, XII libros "Metaphysicae" Aristotelis* (MS Kraków BJ 699, ff. 2ra–140vb), extant as a *reportatio* of Andrew Willenbach from 6 October 1399. For details see Charles H. Lohr, "Medieval Latin Aristotle Commentaries," *Traditio* 27 (1971) 251–351, 255; Mieczysław Markowski and Sophie Włodek eds., *Repertorium commentariorum mediæ aevi in Aristotelem Latinorum quae in Bibliotheca Jagellonica Cracoviae asservantur* (Wrocław-Warszawa-Kraków-Gdańsk, 1974) 39; František Šmahel, "Verzeichnis der Quellen," 123–124; and Jan Legovicz, Roman Dudak, and Zofia Siemiątkowska eds., *Catalogus codicum manuscriptorum mediæ aevi latinorum qui in Bibliotheca Jagellonica Cracoviae asservantur*, (Wrocław-Warszawa-Kraków, 1993) 5:86–89.

⁴¹ Johannes Arsen de Langevelt, *Lectura super I–X libros „Ethicae” Aristotelis* (MS Kraków BJ 1899, ff. 1r–165v). The commentary is preserved as a *reportatio* of Conrad of Ger from the end of fourteenth century. Details are in: Lohr, "Medieval Latin Aristotle Commentaries," 255; and in Markowski and Włodek, *Repertorium commentariorum* 76–77.

⁴² See above, n. 21.

⁴³ Johannes Arsen de Langevelt, *Utrum primum mutans immutabile sit cum aliquo proprie componibile* (MS Leipzig UB 1435, ff. 259r–267r). For details with a list of particular questions, see Šmahel, "Ein unbekanntes Prager Quodlibet," 354–358.

Arsen's elaborated quodlibetal question (*quaestio*) on ideas – a part of Lehnich's quodlibetal dispute – can be divided, from the formal point of view, into five preliminary notes (*notae*) and four conclusions (*conclusiones*), which are each accompanied by two or three addenda (*correlaria*). The entire solution and doctrinal position of the Bavarian Master's work is supported by two mutually contradictory authoritative quotations. The first one is the opening proposition with thematising of the first cause (*causa primaria*) from the anonymous *The Book of Causes* (*Liber de causis*).⁴⁴ The other allusion is to one of the most famous passages from Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, where he criticises the central doctrine of Platonism, namely the ontological status of ideas.⁴⁵ Both references were most probably adopted from the text of Lehnich's quodlibetal preparation text, which, unfortunately, has not been preserved.

The Bavarian Master's preliminary notes (*notae*) delimit the conceptual field of his survey in a grammatical sense and basis. In the first and the fifth notes – on the basis of the grammatical meaning – Arsen ascribes the relation of ideas with created things, in the sense of a necessary (*necessarium*) relationship between them, and also as causes (*causae*).⁴⁶ In the second and the third notes he more precisely clarifies the extension of the concept of idea for the entire inquiry. Within the whole text of the *quaestio* the name idea (*nomen idea*) always signifies (*significat*) the Platonic ideas (*ideae Platonicae*). Arsen understands the idea – according to several authorities – as either an eternal thought or eternal mind (*mens aeterna*) in relation to things, a common nature (*natura communis*) participating in individual things, or existing in them as one in many (*unum in multis*).⁴⁷ Both of these manners of understanding the concept of ideas play a crucial role throughout the entire text, as the Bavarian Master refers to them frequently in his further survey.

In the first conclusion and the two complementary addenda, Arsen treats the question of the first cause (*prima causa*) in greater detail.⁴⁸ He relies on the authority and a paraphrase of the preliminary citation from the anonymous *The Book of Causes*⁴⁹ and accepts the existence of the first cause (*causa*

⁴⁴ Arsen, *Utrum ideae*, f. 222va: "Omnis causa primaria plus influit super suum causatum, quam causa secundaria" cf. *Liber de causis*, I.1., Adriaan Pattin, ed. (Louvain, 1966) 46.

⁴⁵ Aristotle, *Met.* VII,15, 1040a9–14.

⁴⁶ Arsen, *Utrum ideae*, ff. 222va and 223ra.

⁴⁷ Arsen, *Utrum ideae*, f. 222vb. For the eternal thought, Arsen refers to Seneca (see Lucius Annaeus Seneca, *Epistulae Morales ad Lucilium*, Leighton D. Reynolds ed. (Oxford, 1965) I. VI.6, esp. 58, 157); Eustratius of Nicaea (see Eustratius, *In Ethicam Nicomacheam*, Paul H. Mercken ed. (Leiden, 1973) I. I, c. 7, 1096a10–14, 69:88–95) and Robert Grosseteste (see Robert Grosseteste, *Commentarium in Posteriorum analyticorum libros*, Pietro Rossi ed., in *Corpus Philosophorum Medii Aevi* (Florence, 1981) II. I. I, c. 7 and c. 18, 139–140, 266). For the common nature, he alludes only to Aristotle (*Met.* I, 6, 987b7–14 and VII, 16, 1040b25–30).

⁴⁸ Arsen, *Utrum ideae*, f. 223ra.

⁴⁹ *Liber de causis*, I.1., 46: "Omnis causa primaria plus est influens super causatum suum quam causa universalis secunda".

prima) for every act of generation (*ad omnem generationem*) as an active, separate, and universal agent (*active agens separatum et universale*). In the following explanation, he tests the coherence of this standpoint by applying the negation, namely, whether during generation there does not exist an active, separate, and universal agent, and whether something originates from a second instead of the first cause. On the basis of the argument and authority of Aristotle's *Physics*,⁵⁰ he proves, of course, that it is impossible that more independent causes could exist than the first one which is active during the act of generation.⁵¹ Arsen also considers other possibilities and variants: e. g. to solve the problem with the possibility of a co-effect of the first cause. These and other alternative views, however, appear logically incoherent. They simply increase the number of causes for generation, which contradicts not only the first authoritative proposition and the primacy of the first cause in *The Book of Causes*, but also and principally Aristotle's explanation from *Physics*, where he admits the existence of the only one mover and one cause. In the extended addenda, the idea as an eternal thought or mind (*mens aeterna*) – with an explicit reference to the first meaning of the idea in the second preliminary grammatical note – is determined to be the main principle of every generation. Further, the concept of an idea is identified with the first cause. In addition, the presented problem is concluded with an authoritative reference to Plato's *Timaeus*. According to this passage, during every act of generation something more noble (*aliquid nobilius*) is active than what is generated, because every cause (*omnis causa*) is more noble (*nobilius*) than its effect (*effectus*).⁵²

The second conclusion of Arsen's quodlibetal question (*quaestio*) contains a surprising digression that appears as a foreign element in the entire text.⁵³ In this section, the Bavarian master critically argues against one of the important concepts of the Arabic Peripatetic Tradition, namely, the notion of the giver of forms (*dator formarum*).⁵⁴ This concept, a kind of transition between the principle of creation and the creation as such, was not, according to Arsen, appropriate to use for the explanation of the generation process. In

⁵⁰ Aristotle, *Phys.* VIII, 6, 258b10–16.

⁵¹ Arsen, *Utrum ideae*, f. 223ra: "Dato, quod aliquid generetur a causa secunda et non a prima. Tunc arguitur sic: Et sit illud B, tunc B generetur ab A. Vel ergo A generetur ab aliquo vel non." For a direct reference to Aristotle's explication of motion, see Aristotle, *Phys.* VIII, 6, 258b10–16. For a very similar argument, see Johannes Hus, *Super quattuor Sententiarum*, I, II, d. 1, <3.>, co. 2a., Václav Flajšhans and Marie Komínková, eds. (Prague, 1904–1906) 208.

⁵² Plato Latinus, *Timaeus a Calcidio translatus commentarioque instructus*, Jan Hendrik Waszink, ed. (London, 1962) 28c, 21:11–13.

⁵³ Arsen, *Utrum Ideae*, ff. 223rb–223va.

⁵⁴ Avicenna Latinus, *Liber de philosophia prima sive scientia divina*, Simone van Riet and Gérard Verbeke, eds. (Louvain and Leiden, 1980), I, IX, c. 5, 490, 493. For the Latin reception of another passage, see Averroes Cordubiensis, *Aristotelis Metaphysicorum libri XIII. cum Averrois Cordubiensis in eosdem commentariis*, v. 8 (Venice, 1562) I, VII, c. 10, 181rC–vL and I, XII, c. 18, ff. 304rA–B, 304vG.

his following argumentation, the Bavarian master utilises the authoritative quotation from Plato's *Timaeus* mentioned above (from the second note of the first conclusion) alongside his own first conclusion of the question, where he postulates the existence of the first cause (*prima causa*) or the idea in the form of an eternal thought or eternal mind (*mens aeterna*) as an active, separate, and universal agent (*active agens separatum et universale*). Arsen considers the possibility that the giver of forms (*dator formarum*) could be the first being (*primum ens*) or something before the first being (*aliquid citra primum ens*). This view, however, will be soon proved as logically inconsistent with respect to the causal connection and the impossibility of a cause substituting for an effect. The first cause is the principle of creation and created things are results of the creation. Regarding the order and process of generation, it is logically and ontologically inconsistent to turn over the succession of the cause and effect, and thus to conclude that something created should be the source of the principle of creation. In a further part of his explanation, Arsen examines the ontological status of the giver of forms in greater detail. His explication comes to the conclusion that this concept as an effective cause (*causa efficiences*) would have to be ontologically antecedent (*prior*) and axiologically more noble (*nobilius*), like every cause (*omnis causa*) vis-à-vis its effect (*causatum*) with respect to its nature (*natura*) and time (*tempus*). In that case, the giver of forms would appear to be closest to the first cause (*propinquius primae causae*), but by itself it is not an entirely motionless and stable entity like the primary cause. Complementary addenda merely recapitulate the previously mentioned inconsistency of this concept and its uselessness for the explanation of generation.

The third conclusion returns to the problem of ideas.⁵⁵ Here Arsen confirms the existence (*esse*) of the idea as an eternal thought or an eternal mind (*mens aeterna*) as the first cause (*causa primaria*), but he refuses to accept ideas as necessary (*necessario*) for or because of the generation (*propter generationem*). In two important addenda, Arsen subtly illuminates his position. The generation of things (*generatio rerum*) is impossible (*impossibile*) without the idea as an eternal thought or eternal mind (*mens aeterna*), because generation (*generatio*) necessarily requires (*necessario requirit*) the existence of the idea (*idea esse*). The Bavarian master therefore – at the end of his notes to the third conclusion – strictly differentiates two apparently similar statements, the correct one: “*necessario idea requiritur ad generationem*“, from the incorrect one: “*necessario propter generationem idea est ponenda*“.

The fourth conclusion summarises the core of Arsen's examination of his text and position.⁵⁶ It is incorrect and impossible to consider ideas – according to the second mode and Aristotle's definition cited in the third preliminary note – as a common nature (*natura communis*) that participates

⁵⁵ Arsen, *Utrum ideae*, f. 223va.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

with individuals or exists in them as one in many (*unum in multis*). It is similarly impossible – according to this manner of understanding – to recognise ideas for or because of the generation of natural things (*propter generationem rerum naturalium*). The fourth conclusion merely reiterates the explanation from the third conclusion, where Arsen emphasised the inaccuracy of the standpoint, i. e. to accept the necessity (*necessario*) of ideas for or because of the generation of natural things (*propter generationem rerum naturalium*) on the basis of the definitions introduced at the beginning of his text.

Arsen's doctrinal orientation and position are shaped by the connections of several motives from different texts: the quotation related to the sequence of causes, together with the significance of the first cause (*primaria causa*) taken from the pseudo-Aristotelian *The Book of Causes*,⁵⁷ the exposition of the admissibility of only one mover and the first cause (*prima causa*) for generation adopted from Aristotle's *Physics*; and his conviction that every cause (*omnis causa*) is more noble (*nobilius*) vis-à-vis its effect (*effectus*), which he adopted from Chalcidius's Latin translation of Plato *Timaeus*.⁵⁸ The Bavarian master concedes the existence of separate ideas for the generation of natural things in a relatively traditional medieval manner, in the sense of an eternal thought or eternal mind (*mens aeterna*)⁵⁹. He refers to the classical late medieval arsenal of authorities on this textual landscape – specifically to Seneca, Eustratius of Nicaea, and Robert Grosseteste,⁶⁰ whereby in the background of these quotations is hidden a famous authoritative passage on the status of ideas from one of Augustine's short texts.⁶¹

Further, Arsen admits the existence of ideas for the generation of natural things. In fact, he overtly maintains that generation (*generatio*) necessarily requires (*necessario requirit*) the existence of the idea (*idea esse*). He refuses, however, to recognise ideas as necessary, (*necessario*) for or because of generation (*propter generationem*). From the standpoint of predication, bonded together with events and the process of generation, he therefore distinguishes two modes of predication: a correct one (*necessario idea requiritur ad generationem*) and an incorrect one (*necessario propter generationem idea est ponenda*). A correct description of events in language must correspond to

⁵⁷ See nn. 44, 49. On Prague expositions of *The Liber de causis*, see Šmahel, "Verzeichnis der Quellen," 127–128 and Mieczysław Markowski, "Die Aristotelica in den mittelalterlichen Handschriften der Bibliothek des Metropolitankapitels zu Prag," *Acta Mediaevalia* 8 (1995) 227–270, 247.

⁵⁸ See n. 52. On the reception of Platonism and the extant manuscripts in Prague, see Édouard Jeuneau, "Plato apud Bohemos," in idem, *Tendenda Vela: Excursions littéraires et digressions philosophiques à travers le moyen âge* (Turnhout, 2007) 342–402.

⁵⁹ This doctrinal position is identical to that of the prominent Prague nominalist Henry Totting of Oyta, which is elaborated upon in his abbreviation of Wodeham's *Commentary on Sentences*. See Adam Wodeham, *Super quattuor libros Sententiarum. Abbrevatio Henrici Totting de Oyta*, lib. III., d. 14, q. 3, dub. 5, John Major ed. (Paris 1512) f. 121rb.

⁶⁰ On the specific citations to these authorities, see above, n. 49.

⁶¹ St. Augustine of Hippo, *De diversis quaestionibus octaginta tribus*, q. 46, in CC 44A, 72:58.

the proper ontological process of the act of generation or to the ontological necessity of the succession of the cause and its effect. On the basis of ontological necessity or the sequence of cause and its effect, it would, indeed, be absurd to maintain that because of (*propter*) later effect (*effectus*), there must necessarily (*necessario*) exist a more noble (*nobilius*) principle of generation or the first cause (*prima causa*). Such a type of predication is therefore erroneous, because it describes the process of events incorrectly and in no way corresponds with the physical process of the generation.

III

Let us turn to the focal point of Arsen's criticism and the argumentative sources of his text. A pertinent guide is the second conclusion of his question (*quaestio*), a part marked by certain digressions, where he criticises the concept of the giver of forms (*dator formarum*) known from the intellectual tradition of Arabic Peripateticism.⁶² In this short passage, the Bavarian Master implicitly argues against the first theologian of the Bohemian Reformation, known also as the Parisian Master (*magister Parisiensis*), Matěj of Janov (d. 1394). After nine years of study in Paris in the 1370s and 1380s, Matěj returned to Prague and was engaged in an active life within a circle of Prague's reform-oriented intellectuals.⁶³ Although the Parisian Master did not devote any special treatise to ideas, his doctrinal position on them can be found in his monumental *Regulae Veteris et Novi Testamenti*, which was the evident target of Arsen's criticism. The focus of Arsen's criticism are passages where Matěj examines the immanent relations within the Trinity and

⁶² For a comprehensive analysis of this concept in Avicenna's thought, see Jules L. Janssens, "The Notion of *wāhib as-suwar* (Giver of Forms) and *wāhib al-'aql* (Bestower of Intelligence) in Ibn Sīnā," in *Intellect et Imagination dans la Philosophie Médiévale I*, Maria Cândida Pacheco and José F. Meirinhos, eds. (Turnhout, 2006) 551–562. For the reception of Avicenna's concept of the intellect, especially in the thirteenth century, see Dag Nikolaus Hasse, *Avicenna's De Anima in the Latin West* (London-Turin, 2000) especially 187–189. For discussions on Avicenna's theory of creation from the thirteenth to the seventeenth century, see idem, "Plato arabico-latinus: Philosophy-Wisdom Literature-Occult," in *The Platonic Tradition in the Middle Ages, A Doxographic Approach*, Stephen Gersh and Maarten J. F. M. Hoenen, eds. (Berlin-New York, 2002) 31–65; idem, "Spontaneous Generation and the Ontology of Forms in Greek, Arabic, and Medieval Latin Sources," in *Classical Arabic Philosophy: Sources and Reception*, Peter Adamson, ed. (London-Turin, 2007) 156–170; and most recently his "Avicenna's 'Giver of Forms' in Latin Philosophy, especially in the Works of Albertus Magnus," in *The Arabic, Hebrew and Latin Reception of Avicenna's Metaphysics*, Dag Nikolaus Hasse and Amos Bertolacci, eds. (Berlin and Boston, 2012) 225–249.

⁶³ The standard monograph on Matěj remains: Vlastimil Kybal, *M. Matěj z Janova, Jeho Život, Spisy a Učení* [M. Matěj of Janov, his Life, Works and Doctrine] (repr. Brno, 2000). On the issue of doctrinal influences on Matěj, see Jana Nechutová, "Filosofické zdroje díla M. Matěje z Janova," [Philosophical Sources of M. Matěj of Janov's Thought] *FČ* 18 (1970), 1010–1018; and Olivier Marin, *L'archevêque, le maître et le dévot* (Paris, 2005) 268–286 and 592–595.

the relationship of two realms of being – the divine and the creation. In fact, the Parisian Master refers to the Second Divine Person – the Son (*filius*) – as the immutable and eternal form or idea of all created things (*forma vel ydea inmutabilis et eterna omni creature*).⁶⁴ Matěj further expands his position by considering the Son as an entity overflowing with life and as a form of all things (*vitaliter similitudo vel forma omnium*),⁶⁵ as the giver of forms and the simple and general idea of all creation according to Plato's imagination (*dator formarum et una simplex ydea universali ymaginationem magistri Platonis*),⁶⁶ and even as the Divine Word that contains all the forms of things from eternity and is all in everything (*Verbum Dei omnium formas rerum continet ab eterno et ipsum est omnia in omnibus*).⁶⁷

The connection between the divine realm and the creation is ensured exactly by this Divine Word, which Matěj designates as the general, principal rule (*regula generalis, principalis*) or as the first truth (*veritas prima*). The Parisian Master uses this concept within his complex vision for a reform of Church and society, as well as a renewal of humanity through the restoration of frequent communion.⁶⁸ In his indirect criticism of Matěj doctrinal position, Arsen holds to the principles of simplicity and economy in the explication of generation. He further emphasises the correct usage of language in describing creation processes and predications on the level of language (i.e. both registers should correlate), as well as admitting only one active, separate, general factor, or one cause, for generation. He considers the assumption of the existence of a giver of forms (*dator formarum*) inconsistent, according to both the authority of the anonymous *The Book of Causes* and Aristotle, and especially the existence of only one agent responsible for the generation of natural things, rather than multiple factors.

The Bavarian Master conducted his indirect critique of the Parisian Master strictly in philosophical terms, and he employed exclusively philosophical arguments and authorities against Matěj (especially quotations from *The Book of Causes*, Aristotle's concept of causes,⁶⁹ and also the axiological concept of the relationship between a cause and an effect.)⁷⁰ He did not use any citations from the Bible or the Church Fathers, largely because his indirect aim was also to verify the genuine authenticity of several positions on the status of ideas circulated

⁶⁴ *Regulae*, 2:l. II, t. 1:4.

⁶⁵ Loc. cit.

⁶⁶ *Regulae*, 6:l. V, t. 8, c.1:153.

⁶⁷ Loc. cit., with reference to biblical verses Col 3:11; and also 1 Cor 12:6 and 15:28.

⁶⁸ For greater detail, see Martin Dekarli, "Regula generalis, principalis, prima veritas: The Philosophical and Theological Principle of *Regulae Veteris et Novi Testamenti* of Matěj of Janov," BRRP 8 (2011) 30–41.

⁶⁹ Aristotle, *Phys.* II, 3, 195b15–195a26, *Phys.* II, 7, 198a14–198b9, and *Met.* I, 3, 983a24–983b5. For the passage explaining the multiple meanings of "cause," see *Met.* V, 2, 1013a24–1014a25.

⁷⁰ On this concept, see above, n. 52. Arsen adopted this concept in particular from Chalcidius's Latin translation of Plato's *Timaeus*.

within the philosophical tradition. The impact of the Bavarian Master's examination has, of course, relevance for metaphysics and natural theology. Arsen refuses the notion that the Second Divine Person was the forming principle of all created things. He undermines the connection, postulated by Matěj, between the divine existence and created things – a link provided by the Divine Word. This lack of a connecting link between the two conceptual realms prevents, for Arsen, any permeability between the higher stratum and the lower one.

It is relatively difficult to present a detailed analysis of Arsen's doctrinal sources and his argumentation on the basis of our contemporary, sadly fragmentary knowledge of the Prague nominalistic *schola communis*. Arsen's criticism of the notion of the giver of forms in the second conclusion might, however, suggest some sources. In a catena of Latin texts that circulated virtually into the seventeenth century, it is possible to trace discussions on Avicenna's emanation theory and his concept of the giver of forms. The theory itself never firmly sank roots in the soil of Latin philosophical tradition.⁷¹ Although Avicenna's theory of an active intellect (as an entity separated from the material human body) was accepted by a number of authors, especially in the thirteenth century, his theory of emanation was, in fact, incompatible with the Christian concept of creation, and hence was in opposition to certain central tenets of the intellectual tradition of the High and Late Middle Ages. Many authors opposed this theory, but some – including Matěj of Janov – defended it. The doctrinal sources of Arsen's quodlibetal *quaestio*, therefore, must be sought in texts from the textual field of commentaries on Aristotle's *Metaphysics* reacting to the Arabic challenge of the Neoplatonic interpretation of Aristotle.⁷²

The relatively broad textual landscape of these responses included one text from the second half of the fourteenth century that certainly deserves our attention: a commentary on the *Metaphysics* by the renowned Parisian philosopher, John Buridan (d. 1360/1361).⁷³ Buridan's commentaries on the *corpus aristotelicum* were commonly used as an academic tool for school praxis at the Prague Faculty of Liberal Arts. This fact is attested to by university statutes and also by some extant manuscripts.⁷⁴ One question in

⁷¹ In earlier interpretations, Avicenna's influence on the Latin West in the Late Middle Ages was rather marginalised. See, e.g. Stefan Swieżawski, "Notes sur l'influence d'Avicenne sur la pensée philosophique latine du XVe siècle," in *Recherches d'Islamologie*, Roger Arnaldez and Simone van Riet, eds. (Louvain, 1977) 295–305. For a more expansive contemporary, see the essays of Dag Nikolaus Hasse cited above, n. 62.

⁷² For a general overview of Aristotle's commentary corpus in the Latin philosophical tradition, see Bernard G. Dod, "Aristoteles latinus," in *The Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy*, Norman Kretzmann et al., eds. (Cambridge, 1982) 45–79; and Charles H. Lohr, "The Medieval Interpretation of Aristotle," in the same volume, 80–99.

⁷³ Hasse, "Spontaneous Generation," 155–171; and idem, "Avicenna's 'Giver of Forms,'" 227–233.

⁷⁴ MHUP I/1 (1830) 82. Unfortunately, no copy of Buridan's commentary on *Metaphysics* has been preserved in the Prague manuscript collections. Manuscripts of this commentary from

Buridan's commentary examines the problem of whether it is necessary to postulate separate substances (*Utrum propter generationem substantiarum sensibilium necesse sit ponere substantias separatas*) or, in other words, ideas, for the generation of sensible substances.⁷⁵ In his exposition, Buridan uses two asymmetric authoritative positions: Plato's positive one, and Aristotle's negative one.⁷⁶ After stating the preliminary authoritative positions, he formulates his own solution, which was certainly influenced by both authors. According to Buridan, it seems that there is a highest reason for the existence of separated substances – or at least the existence of one such separated substance – for the generation of sensual substances as their causes.⁷⁷ The core of this argument is the presupposition of impossibility for explaining the generation of nature without postulating the existence of separated substances, or at least one such substance. In his detailed explication, Buridan demonstrates (through the example of the birth of frogs and human beings) that the material agents (*agentia corporea*), together with celestial bodies (*corpora caelestia*), do not possess a sufficient degree of perfection (*gradus perfectionis*) and substantial form (*forma substantialis*) to generate sensible substances and their forms. Necessarily (*necesse*), therefore, there must be some fundamental generating (*principale generans*) cause, a separated (*separata*) and immaterial substance (*substantia incorporea*) that generates and creates all material substances and their forms.⁷⁸ Up to this point, we can emphasise the strong correspondence between Buridan's exposition and Arsen's inquiry in his quodlibetal *quaestio* on ideas. On one important point,

the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries are preserved, for instance, in Erfurt, and Vienna. On these texts, see Mieczysław Markowski, *Repertorium commentariorum medii aevi in Aristotelem Latinorum quae in Bibliotheca Amploniana Erfordiae asservantur* (Wrocław-Warszawa-Kraków-Gdańsk-Łódź, 1987) 111–112; and Mieczysław Markowski, *Repertorium commentariorum medii aevi in Aristotelem Latinorum quae in bibliotheca Wienae asservantur* (Wrocław-Warszawa-Kraków-Gdańsk-Łódź, 1985) 112. See also: Mieczysław Markowski, "Buridans Metaphysikkommentare in ihren Handschriftlichen Überlieferungen in den Bibliotheken in Darmstadt, Erfurt, München und Wien," MPP 27 (1984) 73–88.

⁷⁵ Johannes Buridanus, *In Metaphysicen Aristotelis questiones argutissimae* (Paris, 1518) l. VII, q. 9, ff. 46va–47ra [reprinted as Johannes Buridanus, *Kommentar zur Aristotelischen Metaphysik* (Frankfurt a. M., 1964)]. For a shortened version, see Johannes Buridanus, "Abbreviationes Caminenses in Arist. Metaphysicam," in *Lectura Erfordiensis in I–VI Metaphysicam together with the 15th-century Abbreviatio Camiensis*, Lambert Maria de Rijk, ed. (Turnhout, 2008) 202–203. For extant manuscripts and incunabula of Buridan's commentaries on *Metaphysics*, see Bernd Erich Michael, *Johannes Buridanus: Studien zu seinem Leben, seinem Werkem und zur Rezeption seiner Theorien im Europa des späten Mittelalters* (Berlin, 1985) 2:792–817 and 936–937.

⁷⁶ Buridanus, *In Metaphysicen Aristotelis*, f. 46va.

⁷⁷ Ibid: "Ad questionem respondendum est quod sicut mihi videtur ratio maxima ad concludendum substantias separatas vel saltem substantiam separatam potest sumi et argui ex generatione substantiarum sensibilium."

⁷⁸ Buridanus, *In Metaphysicen Aristotelis*, f. 46va–46vb. For a paraphrase, see Buridanus, *Abbreviationes*, 202.

however, the authors differ from each another. The Bavarian Master postulates the existence of an idea for the generation of natural things and asserts that generation (*generatio*) necessarily requires (*necessario requirit*) the existence of an idea (*idea esse*), i. e. the eternal mind or the eternal thought (*mens aeterna*). Buridan, however, does not consider ideas (in the sense of separated forms) or the eternal mind as the fundamental generating (*principale generans*) cause of the generation of sensible substances and their forms, but only almighty God.

IV

In this study I have attempted to present a detailed analysis of one quodlibetal question attributed to the influential Prague nominalist Master John Arsen of Langenfeld and to clarify his concept of ideas. I have also specified the most significant sources of Arsen's argumentation, but determining his other doctrinal influences besides those found in Buridan's commentary on Aristotle's *Metaphysics* remains a task for future research. As a matter of fact, the record of the extant university statutes from the late 1360s ordered masters to use, above all, the abridged questions of Buridan (*quaestiones accurtatae Buridani*), but also those of other masters (*et aliorum magistrorum*), during their lectures – *in modo pronuntiandi*.⁷⁹ Unfortunately a complete doctrinal consideration of the Prague philosophical milieu and the doctrinal influence of Buridan's expositions is not yet available.⁸⁰ Some results of hitherto incomplete manuscript research – especially from the 1970s – have already drawn attention to the extensive textual corpus of Buridan's commentaries on the *corpus aristotelicum* among the Prague Faculty of Liberal Arts.⁸¹ The analysis of the state and number of manuscripts indicated a substantially higher original number than is known today. All of this indicates that the Faculty

⁷⁹ For the use of the works of famous masters of Oxford and Paris in university lectures, see the record of 20 April 1367 in: *MHUP* I/1 (1830) 13–14. For Buridan's abbreviated *quaestiones* and the use of other masters *in modo pronuntiandi*, see the record of 13 July 1370 in: *MHUP* I/1 (1830) 82.

⁸⁰ For a summary attempt to gather together the history and effect of "Buridanism," together with the significance of Buridan's abbreviated explication at the universities of Central Europe, see Michael, *Johannes Buridanus*, vol. 1, 321–389. The central role of Prague University in the transmission of these texts is discussed on 332–340. See also Mięczyński Markowski, "L'influence de Jean Buridan sur les universités d'Europe centrale," in *Preuves et raisons à l'Université de Paris: Logique, ontologie et théologie au XIV^e siècle*, Zénon Kaluza and Paul Vignaux, eds. (Paris, 1984), 149–163.

⁸¹ See, above all Jerzy B. Korolec, *Repertorium commentariorum medii aevi in Aristotelem Latinorum quae in Bibliotheca olim Universitatis Pragensis nunc Státní Knihovna ČSR vocata asservatur* (Wrocław, Warszawa-Kraków-Gdańsk, 1977), 20–22, 29–30, 36–37, 51, 67, 71–73, and 80. See also: František Šmahel, "Verzeichnis der Quellen," 62–63, 87–88, 107–117, and 121–122; and Markowski, "Die Aristotelica," 231–235, 241–242, and 252–255.

of Liberal Arts was a stronghold of Buridan's philosophy and nominalism throughout the last third of the fourteenth century.⁸² That said, extensive research into the Buridian commentary tradition at a number of universities in central Europe (i.e. Prague, Erfurt, Cracow, and Vienna) has revealed differences in the doctrinal aspects and problems which formed the particular focus of university discussions. At the University of Cracow, for instance, far-reaching discussions were reconstructed related to the natural philosophy and especially the *impetus* theory, which were deeply influenced by the nominalist critique of Aristotle. These debates significantly contributed to the genesis of the modern natural science.⁸³

As for Prague, though, only one adherent of the *impetus* theory is indirectly known: Master John Ondřejův, also known as Šindel (d. after 1455).⁸⁴ The reception of Wyclif's philosophical legacy, however, together with the growing nationalism and nationalistic emancipation of the Czech masters, had a fundamental impact on Prague intellectual discussions at the turn of the fourteenth century. At that point, the hitherto relatively serene intellectual environment was stirred up by a sharp and tense doctrinal dispute on universals (*universalia realia*) and ideas, so discussions on physical theories were subsequently marginalised.⁸⁵ The University of Prague, seen from the standpoint of textual transmission of Buridan's commentaries (and also the commentaries of other authors), has begun to be regarded as a transit centre for Buridianian texts, as hundreds of copies were further diffused to other universities in Central Europe (Cracow, Heidelberg, Erfurt, Vienna, and Leipzig). Further research in the Prague intellectual tradition should also work towards a complete analysis of the commentaries and texts of "the other masters" who are mentioned by the Prague university statutes. The record evidently refers to additional texts of the so-called Buridianian school. Extensive contemporary research, as well as new critical editions from the last three decades,

⁸² Michael, *Johannes Buridanus*, 1:338.

⁸³ Mieczysław Markowski, *Buridanizm w Polsce w okresie przedkopernikańskim* [Buridanism in Poland before Copernicus] (Wrocław-Warszawa-Kraków-Gdańsk, 1971) 120–186 and 200–221. For a general outline of the development of the Buridian philosophy of nature at the universities of Central Europe, see Mieczysław Markowski, "Die Naturphilosophie des Buridanismus an den alten Universität in Europa," *Acta Mediaevalia* 15 (2002) 131–152.

⁸⁴ For a brief biography, see Trůška, *Repertorium biographicum*, 303. For more detail, see Spunar, 1:133–140. For Ondřejův's doctrinal positions, see Zdeněk Horský, "Aristotelova kosmologie a český podíl na jejím překonání," [Aristotle's cosmology and Bohemia] in Zdeněk Horský, *Koperník a české země* [Copernicus and Bohemia], Vojtěch Hladký, Tomáš Hermann and Iva Lelková eds. (Prague, 2011) 175–183, here: 180–181.

⁸⁵ Discussions on universals and ideas were not, of course, monopolised by the University of Prague. Similar debates, albeit in a less rancorous form, also took place in Cracow. For a summary of the Cracow debates, see Mieczysław Markowski, "Problematyka uniwersaliów w polskich piętnastowiecznych pismach nominalistycznych," [The problem of universals in Polish nominalist texts from the fifteenth century] *Studia Mediewistyczne* 12 (1970) 73–166.

however, have undermined the idea of doctrinal homogeneity or even of the existence of a so-called Buridanian “school,” a notional group that included and connected intellectuals like John Buridan, Albert of Saxony, Nicholas Oresme, and Marsilius of Inghen).⁸⁶ The Prague registers of manuscripts clearly show that – as far as the Prague Faculty of Liberal Arts is concerned – the commentaries of Marsilius of Inghen were in as great a vogue as the commentaries of Jean Buridan. Indeed, entire sets of Marsilius’s commentaries on the *corpus aristotelicum* extant in Prague and in other manuscript collections, expositions that were certainly used in university lectures and teaching from the 1380s on.⁸⁷ Likewise, the influence of some of Marsilius’s texts was already detected in several treatises on logic from the 1390s, specifically in tracts by the radical nominalist Master Ludolph Meistermann (d. 1418), who was deeply involved in the remanence affair of the prominent Czech promoter of the *doctor evangelicus*, M. Stanislav of Znojmo (d. 1414).⁸⁸ Only further research and work on the critical edition of Arsen’s text will determine whether his quodlibetal *quaestio* on ideas was also influenced by Marsilius of Inghen or other additional doctrinal sources. Only in this way can the complex and variegated landscape of Aristotelian thought in late medieval Prague be revealed.

(Translated from the Czech by Zdeněk V. David)

⁸⁶ Above all, see Johannes M. M. H. Thijssen, “The Buridan School Reassessed, John Buridan and Albert of Saxony,” *Vivarium* 42 (2004), 18–42. Through his thorough prosographic research and a detailed doctrinal analysis of several versions of Buridan’s *lectura* on Aristotle’s *Physics* and the *quaestiones* of the same text by Albert of Saxony, Thijssen has convincingly demolished conventional ideas about the doctrinal homogeneity, and even the existence, of a Buridanian school. Instead, he suggests that scholars should speak about a small intellectual network which connected these intellectuals. Maarten J. F. M. Hoenen had reached a similar conclusion in his comparison of Buridan’s and Marsilius’s commentaries on Aristotle. For this comparison, see Maarten J. F. M. Hoenen, *Marsilius of Inghen: Divine Knowledge in Late Medieval Thought* (Leiden, 1993), 16–17.

⁸⁷ František Šmahel, “Verzeichnis der Quellen,” 64–65, 73–74, 82–83, 90, 97, 100–101, 104, 112–113, and 125.

⁸⁸ Egbert Peter Bos, “Towards a Logic of Fiction: Ludolph Meistermann of Lübeck,” in *Was ist Philosophie im Mittelalter?* Jan A. Aertsen and Andreas Speer, eds. (Berlin-New York, 1998) 809–817. In his four treatises on logic set from the early 1390s (edited ca. 1392/1393 in Prague), Meistermann discusses the theory of supposition (*suppositio*) of Marsilius of Inghen, Thomas of Manlevelt, and Albert of Saxony. He also explicitly cites some of their tracts on logic. On Stanislav of Znojmo and the remanence affair, see Stanislav Sousedik, “Stanislaus von Znaim († 1414): Eine Lebensskizze,” *MPP* 17 (1973), 37–56.