
“Queritur, utrum homo possit dici vere felix in hac vita”: Quaestio de vera felicitate of Jan Hus in the Context of the Debates at Prague University in the Late Middle Ages (1366–1417)¹

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Introduction

In recent scholarship the *quaestiones* of Jan Hus from his activity at the University of Prague between 1397 and 1412 are regarded as marginal and they have attracted the attention of only a few scholars.² Only three of the ten known *quaestiones* were fully studied. The early *Quaestio de materia*, dated to 1397, and the approximately nine years later *Quaestio de testimonio fidei*, were thoroughly analysed in connection with the concept of the universals by Jan Sedlák, Paul De Vooght, František Šmahel and Zénon Kałuža.³ *Quaestio de Moyse legislatore*, dated between the years 1407/1408 and 1412, was studied in detail by Jiří Kejř. On the basis of the extant manuscripts and a detailed analysis, Kejř concluded that, apparently, it is not an authentic work of Hus.⁴ Seven other known questions, among them *Quaestio de vera felicitate*, remained almost unexplored. This text was compiled sometime in late 1408 for the annual quodlibet disputation, which was presided over by Matěj of Knín (d. 1410). Even though Hus's *quaestio* has been accessible to scholars in

1 This study was supported by the Czech Science Foundation (Grant No. 17–08410Y).

2 For a critical edition of all texts see Johannes Hus, *Questiones*, ed. Jiří Kejř (Turnhout) 2004.

3 Jan Sedlák, “Filosofické spory pražské v době Husově [Philosophical Debates in Prague of Hus's Time],” in *Studie a texty*, II:206, also Paul De Vooght, *L'hérésie de Jean Huss* (Louvain, 1975) II:882–885, František Šmahel, “Hus und Wyclif: *Opinio media de universalibus in re*,” *Studia Mediewistyczne* 22 (1983) 123–130 (reprint: *Die Prager Universität im Mittelalter, The Charles University in Middle Ages* (Leiden-Boston, 2007) 515–525) and Zénon Kałuža, “Le création des universaux selon Jean Hus (À propos de la question *Utrum omne testimonium fidei*),” in J. K. Kroupa (ed.), *Sepatuaginta Paolo Spunar oblata: (70 + 2)* (Prague, 2000) 367–375.

4 Jiří Kejř, “Kvestie ‚De Moyse legislatore‘ – dílo Husovo? [*Quaestio ‚De Moyse legislatore‘ – A Work of Hus?*],” in P. R. Pokorný (ed.), *Pocta dr. Emmě Urbánkové* [In Honour of Emma Urbánková] (Prague, 1979) 171–183 (reprint: *Z počátků české reformace* [From the Beginnings of Bohemian Reformation] (Brno, 2006) 187–194 with references to earlier studies.

edition from as early as the end of the nineteenth century, the study of this small work causes certain difficulties in modern historiography.⁵

The extensive monographs about Jan Hus from the first half of the twentieth century paid virtually no attention to Hus's *Quaestio de vera felicitate*. No content analysis can be found in the works of either Jan Sedlák or Václav Novotný, who – in their reconstructions of Knín's quodlibet – pay attention only to the testimony of witnesses from Jerome's trial in Vienna, according to whom the disputation was entirely dominated by Jerome of Prague (d. 1416).⁶ An analysis of *Quaestio de vera felicitate* is missing even in the synthesis of Hus's thought compiled by Vlastimil Kybal – apparently because of its lack in comparison with other theoretical writings. Kybal, at least (in his systematic exposition of Hus's concept of beatitude), called attention to the one citation from Boethius's *Consolation of Philosophy* which appears also in the *Quaestio de vera felicitate*.⁷ Scholars, active in the second half of the twentieth century, registered Hus's *quaestio*, but only in a marginal way. For instance, Paul De Vooght presented very brief and a partial content analysis of the text. The *quaestio* did not fit into his Re-Catholicising interpretation of Hus, because he did not find there any distinct references to Thomas Aquinas. He classified the *quaestio* as another of the many examples of the scholastic character of Jan Hus's thought.⁸ Jiří Kejř published a critical edition of the text, but he did not analysed doctrinal sources, nor the content (or argumentation). In his other studies – concerning the reconstruction of the 1409 disputation and others – he did not pay any attention to the *quaestio* at hand.⁹ Recently, in the reconstruction of Hus's life and oeuvre, František Šmahel characterised *Quaestio de vera felicitate* as an entirely minor text, significant only for its references to clerical avarice that sought felicity in honours or in riches.¹⁰

5 See the first edition of the text Johannes Hus, *Quaestio de vera felicitate*, in V. Flajšhans, "Filosofická činnost Husova [Philosophical Activity of Hus]," *Devátá výroční zpráva soukromé střední školy dívčí spolku Minervy v Praze* [The Ninth Annual Report of the Private Secondary School for Girls of the Minerva Society] (Prague, 1899) 6–10.

6 Jan Sedlák, *M. Jan Hus* (Olomouc, 1915) 149–152 and Václav Novotný, *M. Jan Hus, Život a učení* [Life and Teaching] (Prague, 1919) I/1:226–227, 303–315; recent critical revision in Martin Nodl, *Das Kuttenberger Dekret von 1409, Von der Eintracht zum Konflikt der Prager Universitätsnationen* (Cologne-Weimar-Vienna, 2017) 239–249.

7 Vlastimil Kybal, *M. Jan Hus, Život a učení* [Life and Teaching] (Prague, 1931) II/3: 308.

8 Paul De Vooght, *L'hérésie de Jean Huss*, I:62–63.

9 For a critical edition, see Johannes Hus, *Quaestio de vera felicitate*, in *Questiones*, ed. Jiří Kejř (Turnhout, 2004) 33–50, for other studies see, *ibid.*, "Z disputací na pražské universitě v době Husově a husitské [From Disputations at the University of Prague in the Time of Hus and Utraquism]," in *Výbor rozprav a studií z kodikologie a právních dějin* [A Selection of Studies from Codicology and the History of Law] (Prague, 2012) 45–46, and *ibid.*, *Kvodlibetní disputace na pražské universitě* [Quodlibet Disputations at Prague University] (Prague, 1971) 77–90, as well as *ibid.*, "Husovy kwestie [Hus's Quaestiones]," in *Z počátků české reformace*, 201.

10 František Šmahel, *Jan Hus, Život a dílo* [Jan Hus, Life and Works] (Prague, 2013) 71.

Divergent views of historians about this *quaestio* of Hus indicate the need to delve more deeply into this text. In my study, I will reconstruct the debate on true felicity between Matěj of Knín, the quodlibet leader, and Jan Hus, the respondent, held during the anniversary disputation in early 1409. The debate could be retraced owing to the edited texts. Nevertheless, the doctrinal sources of the two *quaestiones* have not been examined. Further, I will contextualise both texts into the Prague University tradition, specifically into the local tradition of commentaries on Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, as well as the tradition of quodlibet debates on felicity (or beatitude), held between 1394 and 1417. Finally, I will summarise the new findings from the both texts. They are important not only for a more exact account of Knín's disputation, but also for a better understanding of the institutional and doctrinal conflict between the nominalists and the realists during the first half of 1409. Further I will also clarify other debates between Bohemian masters, held until 1417.

The Debate on True Felicity between Matěj of Knín and Jan Hus during the Quodlibet Disputation in January 1409

In the series of disputations in early January 1409, Czech Realists could draw more closely on John Wyclif in the struggle for his intellectual legacy at the University of Prague. The choice of a new quodlibet leader in the second half of June 1408 – with the volunteering of Matěj of Knín – signalled a change of strategy and a new tactic on the internal university battle ground. The Masters of the Czech University nation took advantage of their opportunity to conduct new election for important academic function and shifted from a defensive to an offensive standpoint. The Czech reformist intellectuals had been well prepared; beforehand they agreed on a clearly anti-nominalist tenor of the entire enterprise. A part of the January tournament was a debate on the character of true felicity, conducted between the master of the quodlibet, Knín, and the respondent Jan Hus.¹¹

11 Concerning events from 1408–1409 from recent most important interpretations, see especially František Šmahel, *Die hussitische Revolution* (Hannover, 2002) II: 788–832, further with respect to Hus's trial at the Curia, see Jiří Kejř, *Die Causa Johannes Hus und das Prozessrecht der Kirche* (Regensburg, 2005) 17–28, for further recent attempts accentuating, for instance, aspects of academic freedom at Prague University in Late Middle, see Olivier Marin, *L'archevêque, le maître et le dévot, Genèses du mouvement réformateur pragoise, années 1360–1419* (Paris, 2005) 156–166, 286–295, 388–403, or *ibid.*, “Les lieux du savoir, Contribution à la topographie universitaire pragoise (1348–1415),” in Patrick Gilli, Jacques Verger and Daniel le Blévec (edd.), *Les universités et la ville au Moyen Âge* (Leiden-Boston, 2007) 63–96, for Prague Archbishop Jan Jenštejn's attempts to seize control of the Prague academic discourse, M. Nodl, *Das Kuttenerberger Dekret von 1409*, 193–277 and the alternative Jiří Stočes, *Pražské univerzitní národy do roku 1409* [The University Nations at Prague University until 1409] (Prague, 2010) 99–138, for the reform mission of the Prague Reformers, see Pavel Soukup, *Jan Hus* (Stuttgart, 2014) 43–61, 87–91.

We know about the course of the January quodlibet in fairly clear contours. The festive annual act on 3 January 1409 began with a formal statement of the quodlibet master and by the presentation of the introduction *questio* by a bachelor who had been chosen for that task.¹² Matěj in an extensive *quaestio principalis* – formally divided into four articles – discussed in detail the existence of the supreme good, specifically whether it is actually unchangeable; further especially, whether it is possible to identify this concept with the creator and protector of all the individual beings in the universe. Knín bolstered his extensive exposition by several references to Aristotle's treatises on natural philosophy. The final conclusion – as it was in the Prague introduction *quaestiones* most usual – was entirely positive: the supreme good, according to Matěj, is in fact the protector of the individual entities in the universe, and it maintains these entities in both their essential and their accidental being.¹³ The master of the quodlibet intended to show in his *quaestio* not merely a necessary erudition as well as the skills to deal with a complex question and a problem. According to contemporary testimonies, the last discussant in *quaestio principalis* was Jerome of Prague, whose elucidate – by means of the *Shield of Faith*, and by diverse analogies to created entities – the subtle problematic of the Trinitarian dogma, namely, the existence of a single divine substance, which is three different persons.¹⁴ None of the other delivered *quaestiones* and disputations, apparently exceeded the ordinary boundaries and standards, inasmuch as they did not leave any lasting impression on the minds of the participants. A much greater attention and uproar, however, was aroused among the members of the Bavarian, Polish, and Saxon university nations by the entirely un-standard conclusion of the annual act. More than a year later, several participants of that event – independently of each other – agreed in their testimonies at Jerome's trial in Vienna, perceiving Knín's January 1409 disputation from the perspective of the later May secession and under the influence of diverse mixtures and

12 Matěj of Knín, *Utrum summum bonum immutabile sit creator et conservator singulorum encium universi* (= henceforth *USBI*), MS Prague, National Library, X.E. 24, ff. 350r-354r, and Matthias de Knin, *Utrum summum bonum immutabile sit creator et conservator singulorum encium universi* (= henceforth *USBI*), MS Prague, National Library, X.H.18, ff. 138r-140r, additional three manuscripts are registered by Jiří Kejř, *Kvodlibetní disputace na pražské universitě, 116–117*, concerning Prague quodlibet disputations recent summary: František Šmahel, "Die Verschriftlichung der Quodlibet-Disputationen an der Prager Artistenfakultät bis 1420," in *Die Prager Universität im Mittelalter, The Charles University in the Middle Ages, Gesammelte Aufsätze, Selected Studies* (Leiden-Boston, 2007) 359–376.

13 Matěj of Knín, *USBI*, f. 354r and Matthias de Knin, *USBI*, f. 140r: "Conclusio 3^a Summum bonum est conservator singulorum encium universi; probatur: Summum bonum sustinet singula encia universi vere a suo esse essentiali vel accidentali..."

14 *Processus iudiciarius contra Jeronimum de Praga, habitus Viennae a. 1410–1412*, ed. Ladislav Klicman (Prague, 1898) 26, 31. For an edition of Jerome's text, see Hieronymus de Praga, *Scutum fidei christianae*, in *Magistri Hieronymi de Praga Quaestiones, Polemica, Epistulae*, ed. František Šmahel and Gabriel Silagi (Turnhout, 2010) 195–198.

dimensions of negative emotions.¹⁵ For the concluding day of the quodlibet, Jerome secured the attendance of highborn members of the French-Brabant diplomatic mission (staying in Prague since the winter), as well as the presence of the councillors of the Old Town of Prague. According to extant testimonies, Jerome in addition, around noontime, was to deliver a speech, "In Praise of the Liberal Arts," which reeked with nationalist arguments. Supposedly he spiced up his disquisition with a series of explicit references to an earlier foreswearing by Knín thanks to two false testimonies. Moreover, he included personal exhortation of all those present to read and to study the writings of John Wyclif, despite the authoritative prohibition of the University of Prague and of the Archbishop (respectively from 1403 and 1408). Jerome's performance elicited an explicit uproar among the masters of the three non-Bohemian university nations, who in protest walked out of the annual disputation before its official conclusion. Still, at the very end, Jerome demonstratively pulled out and read to the assembled a notarised letter of Oxford University, dated 5 October 1406, testifying to the orthodoxy and probity of John Wyclif.¹⁶ It was a document which Bohemian masters obtained thanks to the travel undertaken by Mikuláš Faulfiš and Jiří of Kněhnice (and apparently thanks to Peter Payne's generosity), and which was diligently used in reformist agitation and in defence of Wyclif's intellectual legacy.

How much do we know about Hus's engagement in the quodlibet presided by Matěj of Knín? Hus's personal participation in the annual act is confirmed in two sources, independent from each other. The extant quodlibet manual lists, as the forty-seventh item, the preparation for a *quaestio*, which explicitly notes that it was assigned to Master Jan Hus.¹⁷ In the second place, in one of the three extant manuscripts with Hus's *quaestio*, a rubric notes that the document is his text.¹⁸ Considering the significant gaps and discrepancies in the sources, which have been noted, unfortunately we do not know when exactly Hus delivered his *quaestio* during the disputation. One may consider

15 For an evaluation of all the testimonies, see M. Nodl, Das Kuttenberger Dekret von 1409, 243–249.

16 For an edition of the Oxford Testimony, see Karl Adolf Konstantin von Höfler (ed.), *Concilia Pragensia 1353–1413*, Abhandlungen der königlichen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften, Bd. XII, Folge V (Prag, 1862) 53–54, recently concerning this text and especially its rejection in the treatise *Universalis orthodoxe fidei* ascribed to Štěpán of Dolany, see Dušan Coufal, "Ke sporům o Viklefa a jeho 45 článku (I): Oxfordské testimonium a Štěpán z Dolan [On Debates over Wyclif and His Forty-Five Articles (I) The Oxford Testimony and Štěpán of Dolany]," *SMB* 7 (2015) 211–248.

17 Matěj of Knín, *Theses quaestionis de vera felicitate*, in *Questiones*, ed. Jiří Kejř (Turnhout, 2004) 45/1, 4–6: "Magister Johannes Hus (...) Quaeritur, utrum vera felicitas creature rationalis sit status omnium bonorum agregacione perfectus." On the sequence of the *quaestio* in the extant enchiridion, see J. Kejř, Kvodlibetní disputace na pražské universitě, 123–124.

18 Jan Hus, *Quaestio de vera felicitate*, 35/1 (Johannes Hus, *Quaestio de vera felicitate*, MS Prague, National Library, X.H. 17, f. 146r): "Hussonis Questio de vera felicitate 35a."

one of the days after January 1409.¹⁹ We shall never hear the authentic voices from Knín's and Hus's disputation on felicity from the annual January contest. We have only their remote echoes in texts, from which we are able to reconstruct, at least indirectly, their partial course, and especially the prepared argumentation of the quodlibet master, and the solution elaborated by Jan Hus.

On one of the days following 3 January 1409 – when the festive annual act was already in full swing, and the gathered scholars had presented a series of debates and discussions (concerning several academic disciplines) – the quodlibet master's voice announced from the university lectern that Master Jan Hus should ready himself for the disputation. Matěj of Knín, first of all, introduced Hus with the help of a jocular *probleuma*. With an explicit reference to his surname – Hus, i.e. Goose – and perhaps also to his corpulent physiognomy, or even to his favourite meal, he compared Hus to a goose, traditionally baked on the feast of St. Martin. The quodlibet master then added that there was a popular custom to foretell the future with the help of one part of such a well-baked goose. The introductory speech – lightened by humour and filled with rhetorical flourishes – aimed not only at Hus's idiosyncratic characteristics, but indirectly at the subject of the assigned question, namely, considering the significant instability of felicity, there was a natural human yearning to know, whether one would have felicity also in the future.²⁰

Knín assigned to Hus the task of presenting in his discourse a solution to the prescribed *quaestio*.²¹ In his preparation for the debate, Matěj juxtaposed two contradictory authorities, which presupposed two possible answers to the question posed, one negative, one positive. As an authority for the negative solution, Knín chose a passage from Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, where the Greek philosopher extensively explains that true felicity rests in a perfect act in accord with the highest virtue, and simultaneously in a perfect and stable life. As a positive authority for the solution of the *quaestio*, Knín utilised a citation from the Boethius – who in a passage from his famous *Consolation of Philosophy* – speaks of the true felicity as a state brought to perfection through the gathering of all that was good.²² Matěj added to

19 Jan Hus, *Questiones*, xi and Jiří Kejř, "Husovy kvestie [Hus's *quaestiones*]," 201

20 Matěj of Knín, *Theses quaestionis de vera felicitate*, 45/1–3.

21 Matěj of Knín, *Theses quaestionis*, 45/4–6: "Quaeritur, utrum vera felicitas creature rationalis sit status omnium bonorum agregacione perfectus."

22 Matěj of Knín, *Theses quaestionis*, 45/7–9, 13–15: "Arguitur, quod non, quia vera felicitas creature rationalis est operacio perfectissima secundum virtutem optimam in vita perfecta et continua, ut patet 1^o Ethicorum. (...) In oppositum est venerabilis Boecius libro 3^o De consolacione philosophie, prosa 2a dicens: 'Liquet igitur beatitudine statum bonorum omnium agregacione perfectum,...' On the cited passages, see Aristotle, *Ethica Nicomachea* I,6,1098a15–17 (*Les Auctoritates Aristotelis, Un florilège médiéval*, ed. J. Hamesse (Louvain-Paris, 1974) 233/22, on the Bohemian tradition of this text, Édouard Jeuneau, "Tendenda vela," *Excursions littéraires et digressions philosophiques à travers le moyen âge* (Turnhout,

the negative proposal of the *quaestio* solution – referring to Aristotle – that as long as true felicity involved activity, it could not be a static condition of a man brought to perfection through the gathering of all that was good. Likewise he made an addition to the negative proposal of the *quaestio* solution, namely, that true felicity was at times designated also as a state of beatitude. In the principal part of the preparation the quodlibet master, however, was especially careful to elaborate the negative solution of the proposed question from the philosophical viewpoint, in which he linked with Aristotle and criticised the theological view of the substance of felicity. First of all, Knín noted that man's true felicity – in the form of a perfect gathering of all that was good – could not be identified with either formal felicity (*felicitas formalis*), or even with objective felicity (*felicitas obiectiva*). Furthermore, Matěj argued – referring to Aristotle's authority from *Nicomachean Ethics* – that true felicity should be a perfect activity, and not a formal felicity consisting of tranquillity and repose, exempt from motion likewise action; nor an objective felicity, which is the supreme good (that is God), having an autonomous intellect, will and activity.²³

Knín further, in the negative solution of the *quaestio*, refused to recognise formal felicity as one supreme formal being (*ens summe unum formale*), which was not a perfect state of the gathering of all that was good. Afterwards he also rejected objective felicity, namely, the supreme good and unity in the form of God himself, which could not be any perfect state of the sum of all that was good, that is, because of the individualised divine characteristics (especially divine unity). As far as true felicity was to be a perfect state of the aggregation of all possible goodness, it should – according to the quodlibet leader – include everything good: past, present, and future. That, however, according to Matěj, was impossible because some good things had vanished or were destroyed long ago: for instance, during the secret creation of the world. Moreover, no human being knew how the good things which had vanished or were destroyed could be associated together. Concerning the negative solution of the proposition, Knín moreover appealed to the authority of Boethius, namely, to a passage from the *Consolation of Philosophy*, preceding the positive citation that had been used in preparatory introduction. Boethius stresses that true felicity should be the supreme good, which includes all other good things, and if something good were missing, then it would not be the supreme good. If some good thing were not a component of the supreme good, then there would exist something, for which man could yearn. Matěj further complemented Boethius's standpoint with the following conclusion. If true felicity did not include all good things – past, present, future, and even potential ones – then it would not be a goodness, sufficient

2007) 199–201) and Boethius, *Philosophiae consolatio*, lib. III, pr. 2, 3., ed. Ludwig Bieler (Turnhout, 1984) 38/9–10.

23 Matěj of Knín, *Theses quaestionis*, 45/17–26.

unto itself (*bonum per se sufficientissimum*).²⁴ In the positive proposal of the *quaestio* solution, Knín admitted that man's true felicity was the perfect state of the aggregation of all good things. According to him, true felicity as to its substance was sufficient and best. Specifically, it was the stable and permanent life of man, which in its substance excluded any flaws and confusion, as well as any kind of imperfection with suffering. This resulted from a correct understanding of intellect and a disciplined will, because then life was filled with potentialities, deriving from its own sovereignty. Finally, Knín proposed a thesis that the highest human felicity (*ultima felicitas hominis*) rested in his best behaviour.²⁵ With the positive part of the ritualised format of the disputation, the quodlibet master paved the ground for the performance of the respondent.

Jan Hus, during the disputation – in resolving the question posed by Knín – started from theological position. First of all, he mentioned briefly some incorrect opinions about felicity that in different ways divert many people from its true nature. According to him, there were people, who assumed, that felicity rested in wealth; according to others, felicity rested in secular honours, or, as the case may be, in royal secular governance, in worldly glory or physical pleasure; perhaps also in friendship and so forth. Many people eagerly yearn for all the noted types of untrue felicity. Erroneously, of course, they assume that the effort expended in the highest degree, for instance because of wealth, made them happy. Many avaricious ones submit too much effort – with even clerics among them. However, they do not heed the Lord's words about true beatitude, embedded in the Psalms (Ps 143:15), and ignore them. All these mentioned people – with their false views on felicity – not only deviate from the true nature of felicity on the theoretical level, but also on the practical level (that is, in their actions), because their reason is literally lulled to sleep by their unbridled affections. According to Hus, such people are barred from accessing even a glimpse of the supreme good.²⁶

In solving the posed *quaestio*, Hus proceeded in the following manner: first of all, he distinguished two forms of true felicity: an objective one (*felicitas obiectalis*) and a formal one (*felicitas formalis*). Objective felicity – meaning the One, the Truth, Goodness, simple Infinity (*unum, verum, bonum, simpliciter infinitum*) – exists, according to Hus, in a certain relationship to formal felicity, whereby he means the created object, more exactly the rational entity (human being). The mutual relationship between the two types of true felicity is explained by Hus on the basis of analogy with light. According to him, objective felicity is the first light (*lux prima*), the effective and final cause (*causa efficiens et finalis*). Formal felicity is the created light (*lumen creatum*).

24 Matěj of Knín, *Theses quaestionis* 47/82–48/126 and Ancius Manlius Severinus Boethius, *Philosophiae consolatio*, lib. III, pr. 2, 3., 38/5–9.

25 Matěj of Knín, *Theses quaestionis*, 49/133–150.

26 Jan Hus, *Quaestio de vera felicitate*, 35/14–37/62.

Objective felicity, as the first light, completely fills the object of the formal felicity, which is specifically memory, intellect, and the will of man, that is, the created entity endowed with intellect. Every created being, endowed with reason, naturally yearns for a lasting and constant knowledge of objective felicity. Namely they yearn for the feeling of the fullest enjoyment and the dearest joy so that it might in the highest degree fulfil, satisfy, and realise all its potentials. As long as man holds in his memory – and in pure thoughts safely views and loves – the One, the Truth, and the Good, which rule and direct his will, then he finds himself in perfect calm and sovereignly fulfils all that he can according to his potentials and powers. According to Hus, formal felicity is then the one, who in himself – as in the rays of light – reflects the fullness of the first light, from which his fullness, joy, and satiety derive.²⁷

Thereafter Hus aimed in detail at an analysis of formal felicity, and distinguished its two types – the first resulted from merits (*meritoria*) in this life, the other from the reward (*praemiatoria*) in the future eternal life which is truly perfect and entirely adequate.²⁸ Hus went on to describe both types of formal felicity, as well as to further explain substantial differences between the two. The formal felicity, resulting from the reward, possesses, according to him, a sufficiency of all goodness without difficulties or other needs. Happy in this manner is the man, who has everything, he wants, and does not desire anything evil. Formal felicity, which results from reward, can be attained by people during their lives through distancing themselves from evil, and approaching the good. Of course, during the human pilgrimage in this world, it is always a condition mediated by felicity, which results from merits. On the contrary the formal felicity resulting from merits is anchored in an ordered love of the good (*amor ordinatus boni*). It yearns for everything, and it belongs to a created rational being in this earthly life as its just and defined insufficiency, so that it might seek what it lacks (that is the supreme good) and yearn for it. As long as a man, according to Hus, does not love, or outright hate, the supreme good or another man or, as the case may be, people hate each other, then they are unhappy. It is so because they hate the work of the creator which is the supreme good. In his role as a respondent, Hus, therefore, answered the proposed question of the quodlibet master, Knín, from a theological position and, contrary to the latter, positively.²⁹

In his *quaestio* on felicity, Jan Hus supports the view that the true felicity of man exists in the form of a perfect aggregation of all good things. It is a matter of formal felicity deriving from the reward in the future eternal life. In connection with the citation from Boethius, quoted in the preparatory question by the quodlibet master Knín, formal felicity was a theological category of beatitude, which was a perfect state of the aggregation of all the good

27 Jan Hus, *Quaestio de vera felicitate*, 37/63–38/105.

28 Jan Hus, *Quaestio de vera felicitate*, 38/106–109.

29 Jan Hus, *Quaestio de vera felicitate*, 40/163–41/207.

things and had an entirely perfect, supremely sufficient form (that is, having everything whatever the individual wants, and not wishing for anything evil). The guarantor of formal felicity was the One, the Truth, the simple Infinite, and the Creator of the universe. Hus simultaneously recognises the existence of felicity deriving from merits of human life in the world and had the form of the proper love for good, desiring, yearning for, and seeking what it lacked, in other words, the supreme good, that is, God.

We do not know exactly how the following debate on the compatibility of the two positions proceeded, or who among the masters took part. The discussion about the character of true felicity in the quodlibet of early January 1409 apparently remained within the usual parameters of such debates in Prague. Evidently its course was not marked by any extraordinary happenings, much less anything scandalous, considering that the significance of the discussion remained un-noted in the sources, nor did it leave any traces in the memory of the participants.

Doctrinal Sources of Both Texts and Their Contextualisation into the Intellectual Tradition of Prague University in the Late Middle Ages

The solution of the issue of true felicity presented by the participants during Knín's quodlibet was in no way ground-breaking. Another fact is important: both texts offer a unique testimony about the influence of the two influential textual traditions significant for the development of the Prague University during the late middle ages. The diffusion of this influence casts an entirely new light on the debate between Knín and Hus on the nature of true felicity. At the same time, the wider contextualisation of this debate reveals an unknown aspect of the final phase of the conflict between the nominalists and the realists at Prague University, which culminated between January and May 1409, as well as of the hitherto unknown debates among the Bohemian masters up to 1417.

First of all, we shall consider the doctrinal sources of the quodlibet master's introductory question. Matěj chose, as a positive authority for his text, a paraphrase of a passage from Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*.³⁰ This choice was not purely accidental. In the second half of the fourteenth century, it was a canonical work of ethical discourse at Prague University – required for all students of the Faculty of Liberal Arts. According to the two extant articles of the statutes, the lecturers were to use tested manuals of famous masters used at the universities of Paris and Oxford. Therefore the Prague masters tended to resort to excerpting *quaestiones* from the commentaries of the John Buridan (d. 1362). Since 1370, it was prohibited to take over abbreviated *quaestiones* – *accurtata* or *puncta* – if were abbreviated by somebody

30 See also Matěj of Knín, *Theses quaestionis*, 45/7–9, 13–15, see note 22.

else and the lecturer was unwilling to accept them as his own.³¹ A casual perusal of Buridan's commentary to the *Nicomachean Ethics* reveals whence the quodlibet master adopted his authoritative citations to his preparation for the debate on felicity. It was from the *quaestio*, where Buridan analyses the problem "whether a man can be really called happy in this life," and quotes here two authorities responding to the question: one negatively (Boethius), the other positively (Aristotle).³²

In his preparation, Matěj utilised quite consciously arguments which stem from Buridan's individualistic concept of ethics.³³ Knín – following Buridan and relying on Aristotle's authority – argued in his debate with Hus in favour of felicity, attainable in the earthly life, which is designated as acting according to virtue (*operacio secundum virtutem*) and which has an accidental character. In his commentary, Buridan even claims directly on the basis of Aristotle's authority that he does not speak about felicity after death or in the future life (that is, about beatitude in eternity). And he is aware of the incomplete character of human felicity, which he connects with human endeavours in this world.³⁴ Thus Buridan, and in tandem with him Knín (during the quodlibet disputation in early January 1409) was distinctly inspired by Aristotle's concept of felicity. For instance, Buridan, leaning on Aristotle, speaks specifically about felicity as attainable in this life and founded on the natural or common conditions of human life.³⁵ Moreover, he considers felicity as the best possession of man (*felicitas est optimum bonorum humanorum*) and the final goal (*ultimus finis*) resting in itself. It has no material form, nor does it derive from riches, except perhaps good health, for which it is necessary to strive, because it ensures human capability of proper conduct. Of

31 On the use of expositions compiled by famous masters in Oxford and Paris for teaching purposes, see *MHUP* I/1, 13–14 (record from 20. 4. 1367), on abbreviated *quaestiones* John Buridan and other masters, see *MHUP* I/1, 82 (record from 13. 7. 1370).

32 John Buridan, *Quaestiones in I-X libros Ethicorum Aristotelis*, lib. 1, q. 18, MS Prague, National Library, V.B.24, ff. 15va-15vb: "Queritur, utrum homo possit dici vere felix in hac vita. Arguitur quod non, quia felicitas est status omnium bonorum aggregatione perfectus secundum Boetium, (...) Oppositum arguitur auctoritate Aristotelis, (...) dicere felicem secundum virtutem perfectam operantem..." See also, Matthias de Knin, *Theses quaestionis*, 45/7–9, 13–15 see note 22.

33 John Buridan, *Quaestiones in I-X libros Ethicorum Aristotelis*, lib. 1, q. 8–10, 12–14, 16–18, 20, MS Prague, National Library, V.B.24, ff. 5ra-10ra, 10va-13ra, 13va-17ra, 17va-18ra. For an analyses of Buridan's concept of felicity, see Jerzy Bartłomiej Korolec, "La philosophie de la liberté de Jean Buridan," *Studia mediewistyczne* 15 (1974) 109–152, as well as Joël Biard, "La place de la félicité intellectuelle dans l'Éthique buridanienne," in Jan A. Aertsen and Andreas Speer (eds.), *Was ist Philosophie im Mittelalter?* (Berlin-New York, 1998) 977–983.

34 John Buridan, *Quaestiones in I-X libros Ethicorum Aristotelis*, lib. 1, q. 18, ff. 15va-15vb.

35 John Buridan, *Quaestiones in I-X libros Ethicorum Aristotelis*, lib. 1, q. 17, f. 15rb: "... <nos> (sicut Aristoteles in hoc libro) philosophice loquimur de felicitate secundum quod est nobis acquisibilis in hac vita secundum nature et conditionis humane communem cursum."

course, it is not an end in itself – merely a precondition of felicity.³⁶ Buridan, and Matěj in his footsteps, view felicity as a type of human activity, which comes about through realisation of moral decisions, thanks to free activity of the will and according to the counsel of reason. For Buridan, human felicity is the individual goal of the ethical striving of every man. The attainment of felicity in this world is difficult for man, and it is connected with overcoming a series of obstacles.³⁷

Knín's negative argumentation (in the quodlibet preparation), rather consciously attacks views of felicity (or more precisely of beatitude), formulated from theological positions, specifically the concept of formal and objective felicity. Wherefrom did he adopt this antithesis for his quodlibet preparation? It was a relatively influential concept, which was known, for instance, thanks to the prominent Franciscan theologian John of Ripa, who had commented on the *Sentences* at the University of Paris in the late 1350s.³⁸ One cannot exclude the possibility that Knín was inspired by John of Ripa (or other theologians), although the same juxtaposition can also be found in the writings of an important late medieval Czech theologian, who Matěj undoubtedly knew well. The literary oeuvre of Stanislav of Znojmo – the most influential propagator of John Wyclif at Prague University during the last decade of the fourteenth century includes several items devoted to moral theology. Among them for example *Tractatus de felicitate*, which was written around 1400 and an apparently somewhat later *quaestio* on felicity, perhaps belonging to a cycle of *quaestiones* from his commentary on the *Sentences* which has been preserved only in a very fragmentary condition.³⁹ In his treatise about felicity Stanislav dealt extensively with philosophical anthropology, as well as with the ways in which man could attain to beatitude. The *quaestio* on felicity contains the same argument and several fragmentary additions of his opinions. In the introductory part of his treatise adopted a clearly critical stand against Buridan's concept of felicity, which dominated the discourse on ethics at the University of Prague during the last third of the fourteenth century.⁴⁰

36 John Buridan, *Quaestiones in I-X libros Ethicorum Aristotelis*, lib. 1, q. 8, ff. 6va-7rb.

37 John Buridan, *Quaestiones in I-X libros Ethicorum Aristotelis*, lib. 1, q. 10, ff. 8ra-10ra.

38 John of Ripa, *Lectura super primum Sententiarum*, q. 1, ar. 4, conc. 1, ed. André Combes (Paris, 1961) 264/16–17 and Johannes de Ripa, *Quaestio de gradu supremo*, ar. 1, ed. André Combes – Paul Vignaux (Paris, 1964) 175/55f.

39 Stanislav of Znojmo, *Tractatus de felicitate*, ed. Stanislav Sousedík, *MPP* 19 (1974) 65–126, on dating, see Spunár, I:293, as well as Stanislav of Znojmo, *De gracia et peccato*, ed. Zuzana Silagiová (Prague, 1997) ix–x and Stanislav of Znojmo, *Utrum felicitas formaliter plene sapiens hominem sit bonitas accidentalis eiusdem* (= henceforth *UFPF*), MS Prague, National Library, V.H.27, ff. 148v-149v (see also Jan Sedlák, "Stanislavovy incepte a Chvála theologie [Stanislaus's Inceptions and Praise of Theology]," in *Studie a texty*, 2:372–373 and Spunár, I:296).

40 Stanislav of Znojmo, *Tractatus de felicitate*, 68/3–8. On Stanislav's views on beatitude, see especially, Stanislav Sousedík, *Stanislav ze Znojma. Charakteristika myšlenkové obsahu jeho díla a kritická edice jeho traktátu De felicitate* [Stanislav of Znojmo. A Characteristic of the

Stanislav distinguished – from theological positions – two kinds of true human felicity (*vera felicitas hominis*). Objective (*obiectalis*) felicity is the supreme good, namely God (*summm bonum, puta Deus*); formal (*formalis*) felicity, which is only a mode (*modus*) or, in other words, an ordered yearning (*amor ordinatus*) aiming exclusively at the supreme good. He defends a similar conceptual asymmetry in the question on felicity.⁴¹ In an extensive treatise on felicity he further explains that man through an orderly arrangement of his internal processes can gain only formal felicity. A man should have Christ as a foundation (*fundamentum*) and as a model (*forma exemplaris*) so that he might actually perform virtuous deeds and develop his own moral virtues. An analogous argumentation can then be found in the question on felicity.⁴²

Jan Hus proceeded, in the solution of the prescribed question – from theological positions – quite differently, compared to Knín. The general structure of Hus's doctrinal position is an eclectic combination of the views on felicity of John Wyclif and Stanislav of Znojmo.⁴³ Hus based the positive response on the opposition of formal and objective felicity adopted from Stanislav; then from Wyclif, he utilised the characteristic of objective felicity (that is, God) as the first light.⁴⁴

All the noted concepts were developed by Hus according to the requirement and purpose of the *quaestio* formulated by the quodlibet master. Everything, of course, indicates that Hus was also inspired by a passage from John Buridan's commentary on the *Nicomachean Ethics*. Buridan in his explication of the problems of felicity – in contrast to Hus – very carefully avoids the theological discourse, even though he undoubtedly knew well the contemporary theological discussions. In one *quaestio* of the commentary he maintains openly that theologians distinguish two kinds of felicity. The first kind, which is a result of the reward (*praemiatoria*) excluding all evil, guilt, and punishments, and including all the good things. Thanks to it a man

Thought Content of His Works, and a Critical Edition of His Treatise 'De Felicitate'] (Ph.D. Thesis, Prague, 1972) 99–113.

41 Stanislav of Znojmo, *Tractatus de felicitate*, 68/8–11 a Stanislav of Znojmo, *UFPF*, ff. 148v–149r.

42 Stanislav of Znojmo, *Tractatus de felicitate*, 71/104–112 a Stanislav of Znojmo, *UFPF*, ff. 149r–149v.

43 Concerning John Wyclif's views on felicity, see, for instance, John Wyclif, *Tractatus De Trinitate*, ed. Allen duPont Breck (Colorado, 1962) 9: "... finis ad quem naturaliter ordinatur homo est felicitas que consistit in contemplacione fidei veritatum. Unde secundum theologum loco fidei meritorie in via succedet clara visio pro premio fidei esistenti in patria. Ideo non dubium philosopho, quin homo ordinatur ad finem quo cognoscat, amet, et laudet veritatem." As well as John Wyclif, *Tractatus de officio regis*, ed. Alfred W. Pollard and Charles Sayle (London 1887) 249/4–19.

44 On the difference between formal and objective felicity, see Stanislav of Znojmo, *Tractatus de felicitate*, 68/8–9 and Stanislav of Znojmo, *UFPF*, ff. 148v–149v, for God as the first light see John Wyclif, *Tractatus de tempore*, MS Licoln, Cathedral Chapter Library, C.I.15, f. 326va (I would to thank Ivan J. Müller for providing me with the materials with a preliminary transcription of the treatise).

becomes proper and quite fully blessed – of course, human beings attain such a state only after death. The second kind is a result of merits (*meritoria*) – excluding only evil transgressions, but not excluding evil punishments, whereby this kind is accessible to man in the earthly life.⁴⁵

These two concepts can be also found in the treatise on felicity by Stanislav of Znojmo, who in contrast to Buridan, more than in human felicity, was interested in the theological category of beatitude. In the formal sense, according to Stanislav, beatitude is a type of a form which in itself is divinity, in which man participates. Thanks to a realisation of this participation, the divine itself becomes a component of man. As a component of man, however, it is not something created, but it transcends the boundary of categories, when as a form it exists between God and created things. In a blessed man, the human and the divine substances are connected, whereby the human one is pushed into the background, and is much more God than man.⁴⁶

In his positive part of the *quaestio* Hus took into account the explications of both Buridan and Stanislav, and incorporated them into the framework of arguments in his *quaestio*. He subordinated to formal felicity both the first and the second cases of felicity (as a result of merit and as a result of reward). At the same time – in distinction from Stanislav and in opposition to Buridan – he attempted to inter-connect both types of felicity (the earthly character of felicity in this life, and the beatitude in the future life in eternity). Nevertheless, in the end, in the solution of the *quaestio* he gave a clear preference to the theological category of beatitude – just as Stanislav had done under the influence of the authority of Boethius.

Knín's preparatory text and the elaborated *quaestio* of Jan Hus have several areas of contact. Both texts contain a distinction between formal and objective felicity. While Matěj is critical of this distinction, Hus erects his positive solution on its basis. If the sequence of their arguments is compared, it is difficult to avoid the impression that in Knín's introductory statement both two concepts appears intentionally. The quodlibet master apparently knew *a priori*, or suspected, that Hus would in one way or another utilise both terms in his solution of the *quaestio*. Of course, it is evident that a connection, even a close relationship, existed between the two scholars. Knín, in fact, was one of the pupils of Jan Hus, who on 9 March 1399, presided over Knín's graduation as Bachelor of Liberal Arts.⁴⁷ Thus, the two scholars most likely agreed *a priori* between themselves about the course of the disputation. Matěj quite intentionally presented himself as a proponent of Buridan's concept of felicity, although this was not at all his actual view. Hus, during the disputation, then presented a critique of Buridan's nominalist concept of felicity from the theological and methodological standpoints of realism. Most likely, the intent

45 John Buridan, *Quaestiones in I-X libros Ethicorum Aristotelis*, lib. 1, q. 18, f. 15va.

46 Stanislav of Znojmo, *Tractatus de felicitate*, 78/341–342, 81/462–468.

47 *MHUP* I/1, 339.

of both scholars was to sharpen the antinominalist course and character of the entire disputation tournament.

The Commentary Tradition on Nicomachean Ethics at Prague University between 1366 and 1415: An Overview of Extant Sources

The influence of John Buridan's through on Knín's preparatory text and also through Hus's elaborated *quaestio* indicates the first group of texts deriving from the Prague late medieval tradition, the influence of which is reflected in each of the short texts under review here. It is a matter of the commentary tradition on Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, and now we shall introduce the extant sources. In the future – in addition to the noted influence of the exposition of the Parisian nominalist, John Buridan – it shall be necessary to assess diverse passages on the theme of felicity, from other known commentaries, for their possible influence on the texts from the debate on true felicity during Knín's quodlibet.

There exist a series of significant examples of lectures from moral philosophy, thanks to which we have relatively clear knowledge about the discourse on ethics at Prague University in late fourteen and early fifteen century. The source foundation of the commentary tradition on Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* is undoubtedly the most important one. The first group involves texts which were clearly used for school exercises; we know about their existence only indirectly owing to entries in the book catalogues of the University colleges.⁴⁸ The second group consists of the manuscript materials which have come down to us.

The records of University catalogues yield some twenty entries of various Latin translations of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*.⁴⁹ A large majority of them referred to the – undoubtedly in the Middle Ages most widespread and used – Latin translation *recensio recognita*, composed by William of Moerbeke (d. 1286) after 1260. As further indicated by the book registers, other additional translations of Aristotle's work on ethics were available. These included the earliest known Latin translations *Ethica vetus* and *Ethica nova*. At present are ascribed to Burgundius of Pisa (d. 1193) and were produced sometime before 1150 (they cover only the first three of the ten books of Aristotle's known Greek text).⁵⁰ In addition, there is, perhaps, the first version of the complete translation of all ten books of the *Nicomachean Ethics*,

48 *Catalogi librorum vetustissimi Universitatis Pragensis, Die ältesten Bücherkataloge der Prager Universität*, ed. Z. Silagiová and F. Šmahel (Turnhout, 2015).

49 Aristoteles Latinus, *Ethica Nicomachea*, ed. R.-A. Gauthier, 5 vv. (Leiden-Brussels, 1972–1974) and *Catalogi librorum vetustissimi Universitatis Pragensis*, 9/64–66, 33/3–8, 33/14–15, 33/18, 34/23, 34/45, 134/26–27, 135/47, 135/49, 136/75, 137/103, 137/119, 138/159, 138/165–166, 141/270.

50 *Catalogi librorum vetustissimi Universitatis Pragensis*, 134/26–27.

known as *recensio pura*. It was compiled between 1246 and 1248 by the Bishop of Lincoln Robert Grosseteste (d. 1253), including the Greek commentaries, for instance, from Eustratius of Nicaea.⁵¹ Among the commentaries to Aristotle, the library catalogues register two compiled by Thomas Aquinas (d. 1277), and at least two (in the form of *quaestiones*) composed by John Buridan, as well as several other anonymous expositions.⁵²

The extant manuscript material can be divided roughly into four groups. Of the first group, we have at present available expositions with Aristotle's text at least in two forms.⁵³ The second group includes commentaries in the form of questions of John Buridan. Precisely these were most often used during the lectures on practical philosophy at Prague University. At present we know of the existence of at least eight of Buridan's commentaries to the *Nicomachean Ethics* linked directly to the Prague intellectual milieu.⁵⁴ The third (rela-

51 Catalogi librorum vetustissimi Universitatis Pragensis, 33/6, 136/90–91, on Grosseteste's translations of Greek commentators, see *The Greek Commentaries on the Nicomachean Ethics of Aristotle in the Latin Translation of Robert Grosseteste, Bishop of Lincoln* († 1253), ed. H. P. F. Mercken, 2 vv. (Leiden-Leuven, 1973–1991).

52 Catalogi librorum vetustissimi Universitatis Pragensis, 9/63–64, 34/33–35, 34/37–45, 39/195, 92/1090, 138/169, on Thomas's exposition, see Thomas de Aquino, *Sententia libri Ethicorum*, 3 vv. (Romae, 1969–1971), on the manuscript tradition of John Buridan's commentary, see B. Michael, *Johannes Buridanus, Studien zu seinem Leben, seinem Werken und zur Rezeption seiner Theorien im Europa des späten Mittelalters* (Berlin, 1985) I:321–389.

53 Among the expositions containing also Aristotle's text anonymous work known as *Expositio I-X librorum Ethicorum Aristotelis cum textu*, MS Wien, ÖNB 5431, ff. 1r–112v, details in Mieczysław Markowski, *Repertorium commentariorum medii aevi in Aristotelem Latinorum quam in bibliothecis Wienae asservantur* (Wrocław-Warszawa-Kraków-Gdańsk-Lódź, 1985) 129, 263 129, 263 (this text of *Nicomachean Ethics* with an exposition was compiled in Prague in 1385), or further the text with marginal glosses Aristoteles Latinus, *Ethica Nicomachea cum expositione marginali*, MS Prague, Prague Castle Archive (= Metropolitan Chapter), L.46/2, ff. 1–66r, for details see Mieczysław Markowski, "Die Aristotelica in den Mittelalterlichen Handschriften der Bibliothek des Metropolitankapitels zu Prag," *Acta Mediaevalia* 8 (1995) 243.

54 Two codices are preserved in Prague (first John Buridan, *Quaestiones in I-X libros Ethicorum Aristotelis*, MS Prague, National Library, V.B.24, ff. 1a–218vb compiled in 1393, and second an incomplete text John Buridan, *Quaestiones in I-IX libros Ethicorum Aristotelis*, MS Prague, National Library, V.A.25, ff. 1a–222vb, dated to the second half of the fourteenth and fifteenth century; for details see Jerzy Bartłomiej Korolec, *Repertorium commentariorum medii aevi in Aristotelem Latinorum quae in Bibliotheca olim Universitatis Pragensis nunc Státní knihovna ČSR vocata asservantur* (Wrocław-Warszawa-Kraków-Gdańsk, 1977) 36–37, one likewise complete commentary extant in Melk in Austria (John Buridan, *Quaestiones in I-X libros Ethicorum Aristotelis*, MS Melk, Bibliothek des Benediktinerstiftes, 48, B.12, ff. 2ra–246rb, dated to 1382, details in Mieczysław Markowski, *Repertorium commentariorum medii aevi in Aristotelem Latinorum qui in bibliothecis austriacis: Admons, Furt bei Göttweig, Graz, Heiligenkreuz, Klagenfurt, Klosterneuburg, Kremsmünster, Linz, Melk, Salzburg, Sankt Florian, Vorau, Zwettl asservantur* (Kraków, 2008) 84–85, 207), further one complete Viennese codex (John Buridan, *Quaestiones in I-X libros Ethicorum Aristotelis*, MS Wien, ÖNB 5431, ff. 1r–291vb) is from the turn of the fourteenth century, listed in Mieczysław Markowski, *Repertorium commentariorum medii aevi in Aristotelem Latinorum quam in bibliothecis Wienae asservantur*

tively large) group includes additional expositions from important masters of the high and late middle ages. In the Prague intellectual milieu we must count unambiguously with the influence of the commentary to Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* by Thomas Aquinas, as well as that by the English Dominican Robert Kilwardby (d. 1279), and by the German Augustinian Hermit, Henry of Friemar the Elder (d. 1340); possibly also with those by the Franciscan Peter of Aquila (d. 1361) and by the Mertorian Richard Kilvington (d. 1362); as well as with the commentary by Marsilius of Inghen (d. 1396), and more than likely with the exposition of Albert the Great (d. 1280).⁵⁵ The fourth group is represented in the manuscript tradition by expositions that originated within the milieu of the Prague nominalist *schola communis*.

The earliest known exposition of the *Nicomachean Ethics* from the Prague milieu, however, extant only in fragmentary form, originated in 1366 and its authorship is ascribed to Otho of Werder (d. after 1367).⁵⁶ Otho belonged to

(Wrocław-Warszawa-Kraków-Gdańsk-Łódź, 1985) 120–121, 263), one complete and another fragmentary manuscript are held in Cracow (John Buridan, *Quaestiones in I-X libros Ethicae Aristotelis*, MS Kraków, BJ 658, ff. 2ra-332vb, dated to cca. 1390, fragment as John Buridan, *Quaestiones super libris VI-IX Ethicae Nicomacheae Aristotelis*, MS Kraków, BJ 744, ff. 1r-100r, details about both manuscripts in M. Kowalczyk – A. Kozłowska – M. Markowski – Z. Włodek – J. Zathey – M. Zwiercan (eds.), *Catalogus codicum manuscriptorum medii aevi latinorum qui in Bibliotheca Jagellonica Cracoviae asservantur* (Wrocław-Warszawa-Kraków-Gdańsk-Łódź, 1988) IV:420–422, and M. Kowalczyk – A. Kozłowska – M. Markowski – Z. Włodek – M. Zwiercan (eds.), *Catalogus codicum manuscriptorum medii aevi latinorum qui in Bibliotheca Jagellonica Cracoviae asservantur* (Wrocław-Warszawa-Kraków, 1993) V:279–281) and two fragments in Uppsala (John Buridan, *Quaestiones super libros Ethicorum Aristotelis*, Uppsala, Universitetsbiblioteket, C.603, fol. 121r–228v from ca. 1400 and John Buridan, *Quaestiones super libros Ethicorum*, Uppsala, Universitetsbiblioteket, C.609, fol. 156v–296r dated between 1374 and 1379, cf. M. Andersson-Schmitt – H. Hallberg – M. Hedlund, *Mittelalterliche Handschriften der Universitätsbibliothek Uppsala* (Stockholm, 1993) VI:96–97, 107–109).

55 An outline of the commentary tradition on *Nicomachean Ethics* in the thirteenth and fourteenth century can be found in Mieczysław Markowski, "Kommentare zur Nikomachischen Ethik des Aristoteles zur Zeit des Marsilius von Inghen," in *Marsilius von Inghen, Werk und Wirkung*, ed. S. Wielgus (Lublin, 1993) 15–30. On all details about commentaries compiled by all the mentioned masters, see Jerzy Bartłomiej Korolec, "Komentarze do 'Etyki Nikomachejskiej' na Uniwersytecie Praskim w XIV i XV wieku," *Studia Mediewistyczne* 17 (1977) 133–134, 145–147, and J. B. Korolec, *Repertorium commentariorum medii aevi*, 14, 16–17, 76, 84, as well as M. Markowski, *Repertorium commentariorum medii aevi in Aristotelem Latinorum quam in bibliothecis Viennae asservantur*, 123, 263, and M. Markowski, "Die Aristotelica in den Mittelalterlichen Handschriften der Bibliothek des Metropolitankapitels zu Prag," 233–234.

56 Otho of Werder, *Expositio V-X librorum Ethicae Nicomacheae Aristotelis*, MS Leipzig, UB 1398, ff. 76r-81rb, for details, see Mieczysław Markowski, *Repertorium commentariorum medii aevi in Aristotelem Latinorum qui in Bibliotheca Universitatis Lipsiensis asservantur* (Kraków, 2012) 117, 238 (the text in the form of *reportatio* was compiled in Prague on 24. 8. 1366), for further details, see the recent study of Harald Berger, "Neues Licht auf die Wiener Zeit Alberts von Sachsen (1363/64–1366)," *Codices Manuscripti & Impressi* 103/104 (2016) 2–4, 6.

a group of several masters-regent, associated with the foundation of Charles College in 1366; and later deserved the credit for the flourishing development of the Prague nominalist *schola communis*. Like several collegiants, for instance, Hermann of Winterswick, Fridman of Prague, Wikbold Stutte of Osnabrück, and others – also Otho of Werder started his intellectual career in the *studium generale* of Erfurt. There sometime in the 1350s he has a debate with Timon the Jew (Themon Judeus or Themo Judei de Monasterio, d. 1360) on the motion of heavenly bodies or spheres, but at the beginning of the 1360s he could not resist the attraction of prebends and the vision of authentic academic titles, and he changed from Erfurt to Prague. Also Henry Totting of Oyta (d. 1397), one of the founders of the Prague nominalist *schola communis* – during his tenure of the office of master-regent at the Faculty of Art of the Prague University, probably at the end of the 1360s – completed an exposition of the Aristotle's ethical text, in the form of a *translatio*. The task of the further research will be to determine the significance of this commentary for the intellectual milieu of the University of Prague – this influence has seemed rather marginal.⁵⁷ The partial conclusions in general indicate that Henry's exposition – from the formal and methodological standpoints – does not differ from the hitherto known expositions at the universities of Prague and Cracow that incline toward the Parisian model of John Buridan's commentary.

During the course of his studies at Prague University in the first half of the 1380s Bartolomiej of Jasło (d. ca 1406/1407), a Polish scholar, also compiled his commentary on *Nicomachean Ethics*. These indicate some of the manuscripts with the Aristotle's text which are preserved accompanied by exposition of Thomas Aquinas and with a series of marginal glosses likewise partial *quaestiones* influenced by Buridan from the Cracow manuscript collections.⁵⁸ Another two expositions on Aristotle's ethical treatise from the 1380s are available today. First one is the commentary on the *Nicomachean Ethics*, in the form of questions, composed by the nominalist Conrad of Steinsberg or of Worms (Conradus Weneri de Steynsberg alias de Wormacia, d. 1392) in the late 1380s.⁵⁹ The Bavarian master was active in Prague

57 Henry Totting of Oyta, *Translatio super libros Ethicorum*, MS Leipzig, UB 1413, ff. 172r-202r (unfortunately the extant exposition is incomplete, only to the book six), for basic information about the codex, see Olga Weijers, *Le travail intellectuel à la Faculté des arts de Paris, Textes et maîtres (ca. 1200–1500)* (Turnhout, 2001) IV: 72, other information on Henry's commentary in Jerzy Bartłomiej Korolec, "Źródła krakowskiego wykładu Etyki w początku XV w.," *Materiały i Studia Zakładu Historii Filozofii Starożytnej i Średniowiecznej* 13 (1970) 45–47.

58 Jerzy Bartłomiej Korolec, "Komentarze do Etyki Nikomachejskie w Krakowie w XV w.," *Materiały i Studia Zakładu Historii Filozofii Starożytnej i Średniowiecznej* 18 (1974) 117–118 with all references to the extant Cracow manuscripts.

59 Conrad of Steinsberg or of Worms, *Quaestiones disputatae super I-IV libros Ethicorum Aristotelis*, MS München, UB, 568a, ff. 2ra-69vb (dated to 1386–1387), for detailed information about the codex, see Mieczysław Markowski, *Buridanica quae in codicibus*

particularly in the 1370s; at the end of the 1380s he left for Heidelberg, where he even held the office of University Rector and, somewhat later, obtained the degree of bachelor of theology. Thus far, regrettably, we lack any documentation about the influence of Conrad's commentary whether in Prague or in Heidelberg. Likewise, the Polish scholar Matthias of Legnica (d. 1413) completed an extensive exposition of the *Nicomachean Ethics* during his stay in Prague during the second half of the 1380s.⁶⁰ In his conclusion, Matthias explicitly admits that in his exposition he closely followed the Augustinian Hermit, Henry of Friemar the Elder.⁶¹ There is an indication that Matthias, for his own *quaestio*, adopted a whole series of passages from Henry's commentary. In the very conclusion, he notes modestly that according to the ability of his intellect (*secundum facultatem mei intellectus*). At times he expanded the exposition, sometimes shortened it a bit (*quandoque addidi, quandoque modicum diminui*), but, of course – compared to Henry – he developed more fully (*ipso largiter solvente*) the problem of the perfection of the blessed (*perfectio beatorum*).⁶² The copy of a brief commentary on the *Nicomachean Ethics* by the Polish scholar John of Kreuzburg (d. 1436) was also composed in Prague. It was before the end of the fourteenth century by the jurist and preacher (of Polish origin) Petr of Wartenberg (d. ca 1401).⁶³ An extensive commentary and a complete exposition of all ten books of the *Nicomachean Ethics* were completed in Prague (probably at the turn of the

manu scriptis bibliothecarum Monacensium asservantur (Wrocław-Warszawa-Kraków-Gdańsk-Lódź, 1981) 112, 150. For Conrad's short biography see Josef Tráška, *Životopisný slovník předhusitské pražské univerzity 1348 – 1409* [Biographical Dictionary of the Prague University in Late Middle Ages, 1348–1409] (Prague, 1981) 83.

60 Matthias of Legnica, *Lectura summae I-X librorum Ethicorum Henrici de Alemania cum lectura Magistri Matthiae de Legnicz*, MS Prague, National Library, X.F.15, ff. 1r–193v (the exposition was completed in 1386); for detailed information about the codex, see Jerzy Bartłomiej Korolec, *Repertorium commentariorum medii aevi*, 73 and idem, "Komentarz Macieja z Legnicy do „Etyki Nikomachejskiej” w rękop. Biblib. Uniwersyteckiej w Pradze, 1941 (X.F.15)," *Materiały i Studia Zakładu Historii Filozofii Starożytnej i Średniowiecznej* 7 (1967) 38–50. For a brief biography of Matthias, see J. Tráška, *Životopisný slovník předhusitské pražské univerzity*, 364.

61 On the person of Heinrich of Friemar the Elder, and on the mixed character (combination of *modo expositionis* and *modo quaestionum*) of his commentary on *Nicomachean Ethics*, influenced by the expositions compiled by Albert the Great, Eustratius of Nicaea and also by Thomas Aquinas, further details in Clemens Stroick, *Heinrich von Friemar, Leben, Werke, philosophisch-theologische Stellung in der Scholastik* (Freiburg i. Br., 1954) 2–27, 56–59. 90–92.

62 Matthias of Legnica, *Lectura Summae I-X librorum Ethicorum Henrici de Frimaria*, MS Prague, National Library, X.F.15, f. 193v (according to Henry of Friemar the Elder, beatitude is influenced by divine causation, yet at the same time he admits the significance of contingent human causes, in the sense of accidental character of human action).

63 For short information on this commentary, see M. Markowski, "Kommentare zur *Nikomachischen Ethik* des Aristoteles zur Zeit des Marsilius von Inghen," 25–26, according to Markowski the exposition has this title *Commentum Ethicorum bonum reportatum Prage a Petro Vartenberg*, MS Wrocław, UB, IV Q 51, on both of mentioned masters, see more in J. Tráška, *Životopisný slovník předhusitské pražské univerzity*, 232, 466.

fourteenth century) also by John Arsen of Lagenfeld (d. probably after 1404). Arsen was another master inclining toward the doctrinal paradigm of the Prague nominalist school.⁶⁴ The Bavarian master is well known as one of the very active opponents of the Czech realists. Sometime during the 1390s he polemicalised with the concept of ideas, held by the founder of Czech reformation theology, Matěj of Janov (d. 1393).⁶⁵ Arsen's exposition of Aristotle's ethical treatise probably stems from this period – or possibly from a little later. According to the preliminary conclusions of Mieczysław Markowski, the exposition of the Bavarian master traces strong influence of the commentary composed by Walter Burley (d. 1344–1345).⁶⁶ The Prague intellectual milieu also has an indirect link with the commentary of the nominalist master Petr of Przemsl (d. 1433), who prior to the Decree of Kutná Hora belonged to the University congregation of the Saxon nation.⁶⁷ Petr started his work on the exposition in Prague, probably as early as the beginning of the fifteenth century but, of course, finished the work only two decades later in Erfurt. From the formal and the doctrinal standpoints, the Saxonian master's ethical exposition is supposed to be strongly influenced by the commentary of John Buridan.

Today we are still far from determining the concrete form of the *disputata Ethicorum*, and the task of further research will be to prove the existence of a canonical schema of lectures in ethics at Prague University, which would group, for instance, some *quaestiones* from the expositions of John Buridan, Marsilius of Inghen, or other authors.⁶⁸ Similar models and exercises involv-

64 John Arsen of Lagenfeld, *Lectura super I-X libros Ethicae Aristotelis*, MS Kraków, BJ, 1899, ff. 1r–165r (extant text is a *reportatio* of Conrad Töpplini of Gera dated to the turn of the fourteenth century), for details on this codex, see Mieczysław Markowski – Zofia Włoddek, *Repertorium commentariorum medii aevi in Aristotelem Latinorum quae in Bibliotheca Iagellonica Cracoviae asservantur* (Wrocław-Warszawa-Kraków-Gdańsk, 1974) 76–77.

65 For an analysis of the argumentation, see Martin Dekarli, "Prague Nominalist Master John Arsen of Langenfeld and His *Quaestio* on Ideas from Around 1394/1399," in *BRRP* 9, 35–53.

66 M. Markowski, "Kommentare zur *Nikomachischen Ethik* des Aristoteles zur Zeit des Marsilius von Inghenu," 23.

67 Petr of Przemsl, *Quaestiones disputatae super I-X libros Ethicorum Aristotelis*, MS Wolfenbüttel, HAB, Clgulf-nov 805, ff. 161ra–291va, further information about the manuscript may be found in Mieczysław Markowski, *Repertorium commentariorum medii aevi in Aristotelem Latinorum qui in bibliothecis Saxoniae Inferiorit asservantur* (Kraków, 2007) 116–118, 308 and Mieczysław Markowski, "Komentarz Piotra z Prenzlau do *Etyki* Arystotelesa jako świadectwo wpływu burydanizmu na uniwersytetach w Pradze, Lipsku i Erfurcie," *Acta Mediaevalia* 20 (2007) 205–216.

68 This is the thesis of Jerzy Bartłomiej Korolec (see idem, "Źródła krakowskiego wykładu *Etyki* w początku XV w.," *Materiały i Studia Zakładu Historii Filozofii Starożytnej i Średniowiecznej* 13 (1970) 35–48, as well as Jerzy Bartłomiej Korolec, "Komentarze do *Etyki* Nikomachejskie w Krakowie w XV w.," *Materiały i Studia Zakładu Historii Filozofii Starożytnej i Średniowiecznej* 18 (1974) 109–140, also idem, *Filozofia moralna Jana Burydana, Paryski wzór krakowskich dysput z zakresu "Etyki" w pierwszej połowie XV w.* (Wrocław-Warszawa-Kraków-Gdańsk, 1973) 26–30 and finally, idem, "Praktycyzm

ing the *Nicomachean Ethics* were frequently used at the University of Cracow during the fifteenth century. Several of their versions in various stages of their redaction are preserved. For instance, the first one contains a compilation of the *quaestiones* from the commentaries by Buridan and Marsilius; another one is a bricolage assembled from Buridan's commentaries connected together with the exposition of Gerald Odonis, as well as several passages from the *Summa theologiae* of Thomas Aquinas.⁶⁹ Future analyses will need to consider also the textual transmission and the development in other university centres of Central Europe in the Late Middle Ages. The foundation of the ethical discourse at the University of Prague in the second half of the fourteenth – strongly influenced by Buridan's legacy – undoubtedly stood in the background of the future upsurge and expansion of the study of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, not only at the University in Cracow, but certainly also in Vienna.⁷⁰

piętnastowiecznej etyki krakowskiej,” in *Wolność, cnota, praxis* (Warszawa, 2006) 190) referring to *disputata Ethicorum* and their Prague pattern (preserved perhaps in the manuscripts *Quaestiones super I-X libros Ethicorum Aristotelis*, MS Prague, Prague Castle Archive (= Metropolitan Chapter), C.52, ff. 229r-286v, possibly also in the fragments *Quaestiones secundum Johannem Buridanum in III librum Ethicae Aristotelis*, MS Kraków, BJ, 704, ff. 107ra-107rb, or in *Quaestiones secundum Johannem Buridanum abbreviatae in I-V libros Ethicae Aristotelis*, MS Kraków, BJ, 718, ff. 1ra-46ra, possibly also *Quaestiones Pragenses (?) in I-IX libros Ethicae Aristotelis*, MS Kraków, BJ, 2643, ff. 3r-86v), nevertheless, the validity of Korolec's thesis will need to be re-examined in the future.

- 69 The form of a second version of the scheme is exhibited by the commentary to *Nicomachean Ethics* compiled by the Polish master Paul of Worczyn (Paulus de Worczin, d. ca. 1430) see Jeczry Rebeta, *Komentarz Pawła z Worczyna do "Etyki Nikomachejskiej" Arystotelesa z 1424 roku, Zarys problematyki filozoficzno-społecznej* (Wrocław-Warszawa-Kraków, 1970) 135–160, 217–230, 256–282. Pavel obtained the degree of the Bachelor of Liberal Arts at Prague University in 1403; afterwards he moved to Leipzig (where he received the degree of Master) and finally to Cracow (where he earned the degree of Doctor of Theology), see J. Triška, *Životopisný slovník předhusitské pražské univerzity*, 440.
- 70 The reception and influence of Buridan's exposition on the *Nicomachean Ethics* is retraced in Bernd E. Michael, "Buridans moralphilosophische Schriften, ihre Leser und Benutzer im später Mittelalter," in *Das Publikum politischer Theorie im 14. Jahrhundert*, ed. J. Miethke (München, 1992) 138–151. On the development of ethics at the University of Vienna, see Christoph Flüeler, "Ethica in Wien anno 1438, Die Kommentierung der Aristotelischen ‚Ethik‘ an der Wiener Universität," in *Schriften im Umkreis mitteleuropäischer Universitäten um 1400, Lateinische und Volkssprachige Texte aus Prag, Wien und Heidelberg, Unterschiede, Gemeinsamkeiten*, ed. F. P. Knapp – J. Miethke – M. Niesner (Leiden-Boston, 2004) 92–138, for some addenda, see Sigrid Müller, "Wiener Ethikkommentare des 15. Jahrhunderts," *Documenti e studi sulla tradizione filosofica medievale* 17 (2006) 445–467, as well as Christoph Flüeler, "Teaching Ethics at the University of Vienna, The Making of a Commentary at the Faculty of Arts (A Case Study)," in *Virtue Ethics in the Middle Ages, Commentaries on Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics, 1200–1500*, ed. I. P. Bejczy (Leiden-Boston, 2008) 277–346.

The Debates on Felicity in the Prague Quodlibetal Quaestiones between 1394 and 1417: An Overview of Sources

The debate on the true felicity, between Matěj Knín and Jan Hus at the annual tournament of January 1409, does not represent an isolated case of a single debate within the framework of the quodlibet disputations at the University of Prague. From the thirteen known quodlibets documented within the period from 1394 to 1417, there are extant several *quaestiones* treating the problems of felicity or, as the case may be, beatitude.⁷¹ In a preliminary way, we shall present the annual quodlibet disputations dealing with felicity, or those about which we presume (on the basis of extant sources) that such debates occurred, or were planned. During further research, it will be necessary to evaluate thoroughly the extant manuscript material, especially to ascertain the mutual interdependence among the individual *quaestiones*, including Knín's introductory statement and Hus's elaborated *quaestio*.

The earliest known document, concerning the quodlibet disputations, dates to the end of the 1370s from the statutes of Prague Faculty of Arts and involves the issuing of rules for the method of choice and the course of the entire disputation tournament.⁷² Even though during the 1380s the Prague Faculty of Liberal Arts already had at its disposal an adequate number of Masters-Regent, everything indicates that in this period the quodlibet disputations were held rarely, and possibly not at all, evidently because of the exacting character of the entire enterprise. Changes and adjustments of the rules for the execution and the course of the annual disputations appear in the early 1390s. Extensive series of formalised discussions always began on 3 January with the participation of a large majority of the academic community, and lasted for several days. A thorough preparation was mandated by them. The quodlibet master was required – aside from preparing a detailed *quaestio principalis* – also to select particular questions for the participating masters according to their academic seniority. He was obliged to deliver the written version of the assignments to all the direct participants three or four days ahead of time. Moreover, he had to prepare several dozens of his own preparations to the particular *quaestiones*, as well as actively participate in all the discussions. The masters often tried to evade this exacting task by paying fines instead. The above mentioned change of statutes (from the early 1390s) was intended to guarantee the regular performance of the

71 For a survey of Prague quodlibet disputations, see J. Kejíř, Kvodlibetní disputace na pražské universitě, 115–169 and especially also František Šmahel, *Alma Mater Pragensis* (Prague, 2016) 326–371, in general, see Olga Weijers, *In the Search of the Truth, A History of Disputation Techniques from Antiquity to Early Modern Times* (Turnhout, 2013) 133–135, 171–175, and Alex J. Novikoff, *The Medieval Culture of Disputation, Pedagogy, Practice, and Performance* (Philadelphia, 2014) 133–171.

72 *MHUP*, I/1:65–67 (record from 29. October 1379).

annual disputations.⁷³ Following the revision of the statutes, the leadership of the quodlibet belonged to that master who volunteered for the post. If more than one master volunteered, or if no-one did, then the choice of the quodlibet master belonged to the university community according to the seniority of the masters. The quodlibet debates offered suitable occasions not only for critique of opinions and doctrinal positions, but often also for a locus, where from the oratorical pulpit there resounded not only internal academic critique, but often also criticism of public life – directed beyond the walls of lecture halls, dormitories, and colleges.

First, let us look at the quodlibet disputations and the known debates on felicity and beatitude prior to 1409. The first such Prague debate on beatitude and felicity apparently took place during the annual disputation, which probably occurred at the beginning of 1394 under the direction of Master Henry of Ribenicz, a member of the Saxon university nation. At present we do not know the exact number, nor the names, of the participating masters. Of the extant forty-eight texts composed by the quodlibet master, two have, as their direct themes, the problems of beatitude and felicity – the fourteenth and the sixteenth in the order of the preparatory texts.⁷⁴ Another known discussion about felicity occurred probably in 1399 during the quodlibet, conducted under the direction of the master (of Polish origin) Matthias of Legnica. A testimony is available from one of the ninety-nine extant questions of an – at present – unknown author. Further research will have to determine to what extent the text depends on passages from Buridan's commentary on the *Nicomachean Ethics*. Also dependance on other expositions of the Prague tradition of commentaries on this treatise of Aristotle, or on the *quaestio* about felicity from the quodlibet of Henry of Ribenicz – as the title of the *quaestio* indicated.⁷⁵

After 1409 the problem of felicity was further discussed during the quodlibet disputations at the University of Prague. Among the sixty-seven extant preparatory texts for the quodlibet of 1411 – performed under the leadership of Jan Hus – it is possible to find in the fourth place a *quaestio* intended for

73 *MHUP*, I/1:101–102.

74 For more details on the quodlibet of Henry of Ribenicz, see František Šmahel, "Die Verschriftlichung der Quodlibet-Disputationen an der Prager Artistenfakultät bis 1420," 368–369, 377, 382–386, specifically this concerns the preparation of No.14. *Utrum summa beatitudo consistat in summi dei dilectione vel in summi dei contemplacione*, MS Leipzig, UB 1414, ff. 72r–80v (an edition is under preparation) and No. 16. *Utrum aliquis homo possit dici vere felix in hac vita*, MS Leipzig, UB 1414, ff. 84v–88r (an edition is under preparation).

75 On Matthias of Legnica's disputation, see especially Josef Tříška, *Starší pražská univerzitní literatura a Karlovská tradice* [Early Literature of the University of Prague and the Charles Tradition] (Prague, 1971) 141–146 (esp. 141), as well as František Šmahel, "Die Verschriftlichung der Quodlibet-Disputationen an der Prager Artistenfakultät bis 1420," 363, 368–369, 377, 383, it concerns the sixth *quaestio* with the title *Utrum aliquis homo in hac vita sit felix aggregacione perfecta et felicitate, que est status omnium bonorum*, MS Stralsund Stadtarchiv NB 24, ff. 218r–220v (an edition is under preparation).

the discussion of the felicity problem. Unfortunately, for unknown reasons, the discussion itself (with the Czech master Přibyslav) did not take place. However, in a manual there is at least preserved Hus's outline of both the negative and the positive solutions of the *quaestio*. The two solutions are based on two passages of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, and probably on the very similar *quaestio* of Hus's mentor, Stanislaus of Znojmo.⁷⁶

Still another debate on felicity was evidently held during the quodlibet disputation in 1416. The annual disputation was led by Hus's somewhat younger contemporary, Šimon of Tišnov (d. ca 1432), who after the outbreak of the Hussite Wars belonged among the important supporters of John Wyclif at the University of Prague.⁷⁷ Šimon obtained the degree of Bachelor of Liberal Arts in 1395. Aside from his studies at the Prague Faculty of Arts, he was also registered since 1398 at the Prague Faculty of Law, and a year later obtained the degree of Master of Liberal Arts. Soon thereafter he evidently resumed his studies, earning the degree of Bachelor of Theology in 1410. During the first decade of the fifteenth century, he served on several examining commissions. In the summer of 1410 he joined in the University's defence of Wyclif's writings against the archbishop's order to burn Wyclif's treatises. Šimon personally undertook the defence of the logical and semantic treatise *De probationibus propositionum*. A year later, as noted above, Šimon actively participated in Hus's quodlibet. During 1413 he was a member of the Reconciliation Commission that was to prepare a proposal for a diplomatic armistice between the Reform and the Catholic parties after a sharp polemic concerning the programme of the reformation. Already in the same year he was elected as a quodlibet leader, but the disputation was postponed several times and the debates did not take place until early January 1416. Šimon's disputation undertaking is often considered as one of the most radical quodlibet at Prague University. During its course, several of the radicals among the Czech reformist masters delivered sharply critical *quaestiones* against the institution of the papacy, the sovereign power of the church, and against ecclesiastical holdings of property. This is attested by an extant manual of the quodlibet leader in one of the Prague codices. Likewise, the preparation of a debate on felicity is listed in the forty-third place.⁷⁸

76 Jan Hus, *Quodlibet, Disputationis de Quolibet Pragae in Facultate Artium Mense Ianuario anni 1411 habitae Enchiridion* (= CCCM 211), ed. B. Ryba, G. Silagi (Turnhout, 2006) 59/17–60/30 (see also Stanislav of Znojmo, *UFPF*, ff. 148v–149v) and František Šmahel, "Die Verschriftlichung der Quodlibet-Disputationen an der Prager Artistenfakultät bis 1420," 368–371.

77 For more details on the quodlibet of 1416, see Jiří Kejř, *Kvůli libetní disputace na pražské universitě*, 97–101, 149–158, as well as František Šmahel, "Die Verschriftlichung der Quodlibet-Disputationen an der Prager Artistenfakultät bis 1420," 369 a 380, on the personality of Šimon of Tišnov, see especially J. Tříška, *Starší pražská univerzitní literatura a Karlovská tradice*, 486.

78 Šimon of Tišnov, *Utrum summus legislator ex infinita potencia, sapiencia et benivolencia plenissime tradidit media homini pro ultima felicitate aquirenda*, MS Prague, Library of

The last known debate on felicity took place at the Faculty of Arts of Prague University during the quodlibet of Prokop of Kladrubby (d. 1453) in early January 1417. Prokop, until 1412, was a very highly esteemed as teacher and master among his colleagues at the Prague Faculty of Liberal Arts. A year after participating in the annual tournament, prised over Jan Hus, Prokop participated in a disputation at the University, led by Michal of Malenice, and during the winter semester of the same year, he even held the academic function of Dean of the Faculty of Liberal Arts. After the death of Jan Hus, Prokop gradually emerged as an enthusiastic adherent of Roman Catholicism, and as an opponent of the chalice, as well as of communion in both kinds.⁷⁹ In early 1417, he was in charge of the last known quodlibet in Prague, which – in contrast to the annual disputation of 1416 – bore a distinctly anti-reformist stamp. Czech Catholic masters, headed by Prokop, wished to take advantage of the official prohibition of communion *sub utraque* by the Council of Constance – together with the political displeasure of King Wenceslaus IV and the Prague Archbishop Konrád of Vechta – to intensify the pressure against the reformist masters. Prokop's choice of abstract themes for the particular discussions was designed to forestall any critique of representatives of the Roman Church, or any undesired and embarrassing debates on the current burning issues, or in the defence of the ideals of reform. A series of annual disputations was intended as a means to strengthen the power positions of the Roman Catholic masters at the University.⁸⁰ From the material, hitherto assessed by scholarship, it is evident that this intention fell short of success. For instance, the earlier mentioned reformist master, Šimon of Tišnov, took advantage of his assigned philosophical question (about the first cause) to launch into a sarcastic critique of contemporary conditions. In the quodlibet director's manual there extant – as the fourth in the series – the preparation of a question for a debate on felicity, addressed to Jakoubek of Stříbro (d. 1429).⁸¹

the National Museum, V C 42, ff. 126v–128r (an edition is under preparation), see also Spunar, I:341–342 (No. 953) and Michal Dragoun, *Soupis středověkých rukopisů Knihovny Národního muzea* [A Register of Medieval Manuscripts in the Library of the National Museum] (Prague, 2011) 60.

79 On the personality and the extant literary *oeuvre* of Prokop of Kladrubby, see especially Jaroslav Kadlec, "Die Bibliothek des M. Prokop aus Kladrubby," *Mediaevalia Bohemica* 1 (1969) 315–320, also Jaroslav Kadlec, "Mistr Prokop z Kladrubby [Master Procopius of Cladrubby]," *AUC-HUCP* 12/1–2 (1972) 91–110 and further J. Tříška, *Starší pražská univerzitní literatura a Karlovská tradice*, 470, as well as Jaroslav Kadlec, *Katoličtí exulanti čeští doby husitské* [Czech Catholic Exiles of the Utraquist Era] (Prague, 1990) 30.

80 On Prokop's quodlibet, see especially, J. Kejř, *Kvodlibetní disputace na pražské universitě*, 101–104, 158–169, also J. Kadlec, "Mistr Prokop z Kladrubby," 94–95 a Jiří Kejř, *Mistři pražské university a kněží táborští* [Masters of the University of Prague and the Taborite Priests] (Prague, 1981) 9–11.

81 Prokop of Kladrubby, *Utrum felicitas speculativa perfectior politica consistit in actu optime potencie secundum virtutem sapientie*, MS Prague, Prague Castle Archive (= Metropolitan Chapter), L 27, ff. 14r–15r (an edition is under preparation).

Conclusion

Jan Hus's *Quaestio de vera felicitate* was compiled on the basis of an assignment by Matěj of Knín for the quodlibet disputation at the beginning of 1409. It is a very important text, which illuminates hitherto unknown aspects of the January disputation. The debate between the quodlibet master and the respondent – as far as we can reconstruct it – ran its course most probably according to an *apriori* scenario facilitated by the very narrow personal connections between them. Thus, during the course of the debate, the quodlibet master Knín intentionally styled himself as a proponent of the philosophical concept of felicity developed by John Buridan whose ideas dominated in the local Prague late-medieval commentary tradition on Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*. Respondent Hus in his elaborated *quaestio* presented a solution with argumentation partially linked with John Wyclif, and even more with the theological views on beatitude of Stanislav of Znojmo. From theological positions, he presented a complex solution of the problem of true felicity taking into consideration not only the philosophical discourse but also the theological aspect of felicity, that is, beatitude. The debate of the Bohemian masters was undoubtedly a component of rather stylised rhetorical presentations and juggling improvisations, and contributed to the sharpening of the anti-nominalist course of the entire disputation tournament in the early January 1409.

However, the discussion of the two Bohemian masters represents only one part of the debate held on felicity in the intellectual milieu of the Prague University. On one hand, it is a crossroad of the influences of the local commentary tradition on Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, especially the impact of the concept of felicity and the exposition of John Buridan and other treatises (especially the two texts of Stanislav of Znojmo as well as John Wyclif). On the other hand, the disputation tournament was simultaneously a constituent part of a broader debate on the nature of human felicity, which had been carried on within the framework of Prague quodlibet disputations verifiably from 1394 to 1417. Even after the January 1409 – after the most important secession of the nominalist masters to other Central European universities during May 1409 – we have sources proving that, within the environment of the Prague University, the debate on felicity continued until 1417. At this point, however, between masters oriented respectively toward the Reformation and the Roman Church.

Translated from the Czech by Zdeněk V. David