
Regula generalis, principalis, prima veritas: The Philosophical and Theological Principle of Regulae Veteris et Novi Testamenti of Matěj of Janov*

Martin Dekarli (Prague and Constance)

“There are certain rules for interpreting the scriptures which, as I am well aware, can usefully be passed on to those with an appetite for such study to make it possible for them to progress not just by reading the work of others who have illuminated the obscurities of divine literature, but also by finding illumination for themselves.”¹ These words introduce Augustine’s famous treatise *De doctrina christiana*. Likewise, within the Bohemian reform movement both before and after Hus, for instance, among the radical preachers of the Reformation,² we encounter this yearning for a correct understanding of the Scriptures. Already, Jan Milíč of Kroměříž, whom the subsequent tradition endowed with the glorious halo of a man of God (*vir dei*),³ mentions this yearning in the introductory passage of his *Knížka o Antikristu* (Book about the Antichrist),⁴ prior to the explication of biblical passages calculating the Antichrist’s arrival. Similarly, Matěj of Janov, who belongs according to the same enshrined tradition to the “triad of the Bohemian Reformation’s precursors,”⁵ devotes himself to the problem of correct understanding in his monumental opus *Pravidla Starého a Nového zákona* (*Regulae Veteris et Novi Testamenti*).⁶ He, however, is not interested in the

* Research for this article received the support of the Herbert Quadts-Stiftung (University of Constance) within the framework of the project *Prediger und Artes Praedicandi, Ekklesiologisches Denken, religiös-politische Programme und religiöse Praxis im Spätmittelalter* [The Preacher and Artes Praedicandi: Ecclesiological Thought, Religious and Political Program, and Religious Practice in the Late Middle Ages].

¹ Augustine, *De doctrina Christiana*. CSSL 32. 1 *Praefatio*, 1; R.P.H. Green trans., (Oxford, 1995) *Preface*, 1.

² Pavel Soukup, “The End of the World: Exegesis in the Utraquists’ Polemics with Chiliasm,” *BRRP* 7 (2009) 91–114.

³ FRB 1:428.

⁴ *Výbor* 1: 55,6–11.

⁵ Miloslav Kaňák, “Život a dílo Matěje z Janova” [The Life and Work of Matěj of Janov], in Matěj of Janov, *Výbor z Pravidel Starého i Nového Zákona*. (Prague, 1954) 7.

⁶ Matěj of Janov, *Regulae*. I.–VI.

technical aspects of biblical hermeneutics, but rather he endeavours to find in Scripture the ethical prescripts for the assessment of human actions and behaviour. His objective is, while noting the critical condition of contemporary society, to point out at the same time a way of correction from its misery. Undoubtedly influenced by Augustine's interpretation of the *Book of Rules* (*Liber regularum*) of Tyconius together with his concept of seven keys to the understanding of Scriptural mysteries,⁷ he discovers in the "great code of the Bible"⁸ thirteen basic rules altogether for the assessment of correct and moral activity. There are four rules for distinguishing the spirits (*discrezione spirituum*)⁹ selected from the Old Testament. Those are supplemented by a selection of eight additional rules from the canonical books of the New Testament for the assessment of hypocrisy (*ypocrisis*) and false sanctity (*falsa specie sanctitatis*).¹⁰ The Parisian Master designates as the First Truth (*veritas prima*) the most important General and Principal Rule (*regula generalis, principalis*), which includes and perfects all the other rules "as the law of life and the rule of all truth" (*lex vitae et regula omnis veritatis*).¹¹

Even though Matěj's "philosophical and theological"¹² principle has come to the attention of scholars several times,¹³ this has, however, been superficially; or mechanically with a mere transcription of the treatise text devoid of any significant analysis; or in a random way at the margins of other research interests. We can, however, agree with the general conclusion of these interpretations: the Parisian Master "uses metaphysical terms in argumentation for his empirical (social and ethical) purpose."¹⁴ It is not an easy task to

⁷ Augustine, *De doctrina Christiana*. CSSL 32. Book 3, XXX, 42–56, 102–116. Karel Skalický, "Cirkev Kristova a církev Antikristova v teologii Matěje z Janova" [The Church of Christ and the Church of Antichrist in the Theology of Matěj of Janov], in: Jan B. Lášek and Karel Skalický, edd., *Mistr Matěj z Janova ve své a naší době* [Matěj of Janov in His and Our Time] (Brno, 2002) 48.

⁸ Northorp Frye, *Great Code: the Bible and Literature* (Toronto, 2006).

⁹ *Regulae*, I: 2–7.

¹⁰ Especially, *Regulae*. I,2: 180–182.

¹¹ *Regulae*, II,1,1: 30.

¹² Vlastimil Kybal, *M. Matěj z Janova. Jeho Život, Spisy a Učení* [Matěj of Janov: Writings and Teaching] (Brno, 2000) 82.

¹³ Kybal, *M. Matěj z Janova*, 82–89; Emil Valášek, *Das Kirchenverständnis des Prager Magister Matthias von Janow (1350/55–1393). Ein Beitrag zur Geistesgeschichte Boehmens im 14. Jahrhundert* (Rome, 1972) 62–69; Jana Nechutová "Filosofické zdroje díla M. Matěje z Janova" [Philosophical Sources of the Work of Matěj of Janov] *FČ* 18 (1970) 1010–1018; Vilém Herold, *Pražská univerzita a Wyclif. Wyclifovo učení o ideách a geneze husitského revolučního myšlení* [The Prague University and Wyclif: Wyclif's Teaching about Ideas and the Genesis of the Hussite Revolutionary Thought] (Prague, 1985) 225–229, 232–233; Jana Nechutová, "Matěj of Janov and his Work *Regulae Veteris et Novi Testamenti*: The Significance of Volume VI and Its Relation to the Previously Published Volumes," *BRRP* 2 (1998) 15–24; (cit. 2009–08–31) accessible on the web: <http://www.brrp.org/proceedings/brrp2/nechutova.pdf>; Jana Nechutová, "Matěj z Janova: znovu objeven biblický princip?" [The Biblical Principle Discovered Again?] in *ARBI V, Miscellanea*. (Prague, 2004) 9–10.

¹⁴ Nechutová, "Filosofické zdroje díla M. Matěje z Janova," 1011.

justify this view. It becomes necessary to reconstruct the general framework of Matěj's thought: to follow his intellectual detours running through several levels of discourses, consequently uncover in a detailed manner the basic principle of his thought, and set this principle in reverse into that broader frame. The concept of the First Truth (*prima veritas*) or the General Principal Rule (*regula generalis, principalis*) is an integral part of the speculatively oriented metaphysical vision of the world, and this concept is in a certain manner impressed on the total hierarchical structure of the world. To understand this principle, it is at first necessary to sketch at least fleetingly the fundamental structures of the Parisian Master's thought, and consequently to call attention to the interrelation of these structures with the ethical and moral discourse.

* * *

Matěj was convinced that all that existed was governed by an asymmetry of the divine and the created. According to him, two different worlds existed: the world of divine being (*divinis*) was governed by unity, stability and self-sufficiency; in contrast to this, was the world of created beings (*creata*) by multiplicity with changeability and dependence. The divine being contained the divine Trinity (God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit); the created world consisted of intelligences beyond the heavens (*intelligencie insuper celeste*),¹⁵ the apostate spirits (*apostatici spiritus*),¹⁶ man and other living and inanimate beings. Inasmuch as diverse levels of being are involved, the Parisian Master employs diverse terminology to describe them. In describing the divine being, he retains the framework of a theological discourse; on the contrary, with the created beings we find ourselves in the realm of natural philosophy. When afterwards he describes in greater detail the First Truth (the fundamental axis of his speculation), he returns to the framework of theological discourse and occasionally hones his previous standpoints. The argumentative sequence of the Parisian Master proceeds in three stages: it starts with immutable beings, continues with the outpouring of divine powers (the creation), and ends with a return into the divinity. Hence, it involves the classical explicatory scheme of the Platonic tradition: 'procession – permanence – return.' First, let us look into the world of the divine being.

The author of this world is God alone (*solus deus*), who is infallible (*infallibilis*) and "in everything absolutely self-sufficient" (*omniquaque sibi ipsi sufficiens*).¹⁷ He "needs no external direction or model" for his being,¹⁸ "he

¹⁵ *Regulae*, II,1,5:10.

¹⁶ Loc. cit.

¹⁷ *Regulae*, II, 1, 1:3.

¹⁸ *Regulae*, *ibid.*: "non ege[m] gubernaculo extrinseco vel exemplo,"

makes everything out of himself and according to himself,”¹⁹ because “his will is his law and his wisdom is his principle.”²⁰ Such a divine being is according to Matěj “undiminishing, immutable and eternally stable;”²¹ it is also “the most correct, most beautiful and most joyful.”²² God as “Father himself” (*ipse pater*) is “the form or the rule of the divine,”²³ hence a kind of model of the internal relations in the Holy Trinity.

A component of the Trinity is furthermore the Son (*filius*). This second divine person is “the image of divinity” (*imago in divinis*).²⁴ As the “Word of the Father” (*verbum patris*), which is consubstantial with the Father, the Son is similar to the Father as intellect (*intelligentia*) and in the form or the rule.²⁵ Matěj further characterizes the second person of the divinity as “an immutable and eternal form or idea of all created things,”²⁶ and as a “super-being, and living similitude or form of all things.”²⁷

Another entity in the divinity is the Holy Spirit (*spiritus sanctus*). The third divine person is, according to the Master of Paris, also “alone a form or rule in the divinity,”²⁸ and it is endowed with “precision, beauty, splendour, and goodness.”²⁹ These qualities are not in their essence (*in essentia*)³⁰ different from the divinity’s form itself. Thanks to the third divine person “through himself and in himself the form and the image of God are poured out into all created beings.”³¹

An illusory multiplicity does not exist in the divine being, but rather “the highest identity, the most perfect equality, and full and corresponding similarity,”³² because there are here no different rules or forms, “but only a single rule exists for everything.”³³ It is possible to sum up the immanent relationships inside the divine being in the following way: God the Father is the rule or form, out of which and with regard to which everything is (*ex qua vel ad quam omnia*);³⁴ the Son is the rule according to which everything

¹⁹ *Regulae*, II,1,2:5.

²⁰ *Regulae*, II,1,1:3: “... voluntas sua est lex sua, et sapientia eius est regula eius,”

²¹ *Regulae*, *ibid.*: “... indiminute et inmutabiliter ac sempiternae immobiles...”

²² *Regulae*, *ibid.*: “... rectissima, pulcherrima et delectabilissima...”

²³ *Regulae*, *ibid.*: “... que forma vel regula est ipse pater in divinis, ...”

²⁴ *Regulae*, II,1,1:4

²⁵ *Regulae*, *ibid.*: “Item simili intelligentia filius est illa forma patris vel regula a patre, quia est verbum patris et in patre et id, quod pater, substantialiter”

²⁶ *Regulae*, *ibid.*: “...filius est forma vel ydea inmutabilis et eterna omni creature,”

²⁷ *Regulae*, *ibid.*: “...aut in filio est supersubstantialiter et vitaliter similitudo vel forma omnium, que facta sunt.”

²⁸ *Regulae*, *ibid.*: “...ipsa forma vel regula in divinis”

²⁹ *Regulae*, *ibid.*

³⁰ *Loc cit.*

³¹ *Regulae*, *ibid.*: “Unde per ipsum et in ipso forma et ymago in omnia creata derivatur.”

³² *Regulae*, II,1,1:5: “... summa idempnitatis, summa equalitas, plena et adequata similitudo”

³³ *Regulae*, *ibid.*: “... sed unica est regula omnibus”

³⁴ *Regulae*, *ibid.*

exists (*secundum quam omnia*);³⁵ the Holy Spirit is the rule in which everything is (*in qua omnia*).³⁶ Hence, this is how the subtle world of the divine being looks. Now we shall turn our attention to the world of created beings.

This world is one of multiplicity, of mutability, and of a certain dependence. Its components are – as already mentioned – intelligences beyond the heavens (*intelligencie insuper celeste*), the apostate spirits (*apostatici spiritus*), and people (*homines*). The Parisian Master assumes that every such created being has its own “two internal principles” (*duo principia intrinseca*),³⁷ hence it is composed of two fundamental ontological elements – form (*forma*) and matter (*materia*). The form (*forma*) is the superordinate component and an intrinsic principle of a thing (*forma intrinseca rei*);³⁸ it affects matter – or in Matěj’s words, the correct body (*corpus rectum*) – and it supplies individual existence (*esse*) to particular beings. It cooperates in the formation of multiple (*multiplex*) and diverse species (*diversitas specierum*) of the creation, as to their “number, weight, and measure (*numerus, pondus et mensuras*).”³⁹ Such a “pefection of the universe” (*perfeccio universi*) is guaranteed by “the natural law” (*lex naturalis*).⁴⁰ This law as “a movement and tendency, or inclination, to the last goal of its existence”⁴¹ was at the moment of the world’s creation internally (*intrinsece*) impressed into all the created beings. Therefore, every entity in this world possesses “natural impulses” (*naturales motivas*)⁴² and “its own intrinsic powers” (*suas proprias vires intrinsecas*),⁴³ thanks to which it manages to exist and on the basis of which it is able to interact with other beings and objects. The created beings, according to Matěj, differ in principle from the entities in the divine world. They derive their existence “from another” (*ab alio*)⁴⁴ higher being, which also “directs and governs” (*gerbantur et dirigitur*) them⁴⁵ in their dealings, actions, development, and movements. This “another form or rule” (*alia forma vel regula*)⁴⁶ is called by the Parisian Master the First Truth (*veritas prima*) and – as he notes – it is also called by Scripture “Son of the Father” (*filius patris*),⁴⁷ “the word of God” (*verbum dei*),⁴⁸ “the will of God” (*voluntas dei*),⁴⁹ and “the beginning and the

³⁵ Loc. cit.

³⁶ Loc. cit.

³⁷ *Regulae*. II,1,2:6.

³⁸ Loc. cit.

³⁹ Loc. cit.

⁴⁰ *Regulae*. II,1,2:5; *Regulae*. II,1,6:13.

⁴¹ *Regulae*. II,1,2:5: “... rei motum et tendenciam vel inclinacionem ad suum finem ultimum”

⁴² *Regulae*. II,1,2:5.

⁴³ Loc. cit.

⁴⁴ Loc. cit.

⁴⁵ Loc. cit.

⁴⁶ *Regulae*. II,1,2:6.

⁴⁷ Loc. cit.

⁴⁸ Loc. cit.

⁴⁹ Loc. cit.

end" (*principium et finis*).⁵⁰ It is the one and only metaphysical and abstract truth, "the only rule common to all" (*communis regula omnium*), which according to the Scriptural witness, "internally and externally" (*intus et foris*),⁵¹ three times inscribed (*tripliciter est descripta*)⁵² in the form of laws into world history. As noted previously, the first of them was the natural law, inscribed into the world at the moment of creation. It was followed by the written law, revealed to Moses on Mt. Sinai, and everything in history culminated in Jesus Christ with his law of grace, which combined, revived, and renewed the two preceding types of law.⁵³ The First Truth is identical with the very Jesus Christ,⁵⁴ the Son of God, the rule of every truth (*regula omnis veritatis*).⁵⁵

On the basis of our dense sketch of Matěj's model of universal existence together with his very condensed history, our interpretation can now deal in greater detail with his concept of the First Truth in its relation to humanity. It will be, therefore, necessary in the first place to describe, in greater detail, the history, the laws of the world, and the role of man. Afterwards, we shall supplement our basic sketch for greater precision by additional details. Only then will it become possible to show in a manner of proof, how the ethical discourse of the Parisian Master rests on – and to an extent intertwines with – his views from natural philosophy and theology.

We have stated that, according to Matěj's interpretation of biblical history, the first inscription into the history of creation was natural law in the form of natural impulses and internal powers. Every human being received this law as an internal imprint on his mind (*mens*) and intellect (*intellectus*).⁵⁶ The law had a fundamental significance for him. It allowed man to possess a sufficient self-understanding, ability of self-control, and an aptitude to assess justly and weigh himself and others according to this inscribed rule.⁵⁷ In contrast to other living creatures in heaven and on earth,⁵⁸ man was the only one who, thanks to his self-love and ill will, departed from this law and violated it. Because this internal law was erased from human memory, its existence was obscured.⁵⁹ Because of his love for man, God decided to inscribe it into the world for a second time. He revealed this second law to Moses on Mt. Sinai in the form of stone tablets (Ex 24:12) i.e. externally so that it would be evident "through eyes to physical senses" (*coram sensu corporis*),⁶⁰ and people would

⁵⁰ Loc. cit.

⁵¹ *Regulae*. II,1,11:30, see also *Regulae*. II,1,10:24.

⁵² *Regulae*. II,1,6:13.

⁵³ *Regulae*. II,1,6:15.

⁵⁴ *Regulae*. II,1,7: 18: "Et hic est deus et dominus noster Jhesus crucifixus." Also, for instance, III,1,8:21; III,1,10:30.

⁵⁵ *Regulae*. II,1,11:30.

⁵⁶ *Regulae*. II,1,9:24; II,1,5:13–14.

⁵⁷ *Regulae*. II,1,6:14.

⁵⁸ *Regulae*. II,1,9:24.

⁵⁹ *Regulae*. II,1,6:14.

⁶⁰ Loc. cit.

be bound by it more firmly. For the sake of transgressors, God added “punishments and avengers” (*penas et ultores*),⁶¹ who received the power to enforce a subordination to God from a transgressor even against his free will. The ten divine commandments expressed the formerly revealed natural law (*lex naturalis*) with greater precision. As if through “some ten rudders of human life” (*quasi decem gubernacula vite hominis*),⁶² man obtained an ability, according to these prescriptions, again and better to assess the justice (*iusticia*) of his own acts and those of others. However, even this second time the law – written extrinsically for the benefit of human senses – failed to correct the internally corrupt and apostate people. Rather, it opened the space for greater confusion and further internal hardening in sin. God, of course, showed his mercy to man once more. This time, for the last time and perfectly (*ultimo et perfecte*), he imprinted the law of grace, both “internally and externally” (*intus et foris*), into the created world.⁶³

This last inscription, following both laws which the people had rejected and violated, showed mankind the road to grace, goodness, and salvation.⁶⁴ It happened intrinsically (*intus*), thanks to Jesus Christ, the Word, who became flesh and dwelt among us (Jn 1:14), through its internal illumination of this world with grace and love.⁶⁵ It happened extrinsically (*foris*), thanks to the Holy Spirit who instils new life through the apostles of Jesus and their worthy successors, as well as through the sacraments (*sacramenta*), containing and imparting grace.⁶⁶ The content of this “sole commandment in its capacity as the first law” is “the precept of love” (*preceptum dilectionis*),⁶⁷ specifically “the love of God and of one’s neighbour” (*caritas dei et proximi*).⁶⁸ According to Matěj, it is very easy to follow and respect this rule (*regula*), which is “sufficient, perfect, infallible” (*sufficiens, perfecta, infallibilis*),⁶⁹ as well as “brief and facile” (*brevis et facilis*),⁷⁰ because it contains “the law of perfect freedom” (*lex perfecte libertatis*)⁷¹ and “the life of the highest virtue” (*vitam in summa virtute*).⁷² Thus, God manifested in history his will for the last time, when he bound to himself all created beings, and in particular man, who is endowed with intellect. This new inscription of the law restored man’s internal self-consciousness so that “he might recognize in himself the divine image and

⁶¹ Loc. cit.

⁶² Loc. cit.

⁶³ *Regulae*. II,1,6:15.

⁶⁴ Loc. cit.

⁶⁵ Loc. cit.

⁶⁶ Loc. cit.

⁶⁷ *Regulae*. II,1,8:19, see also II,1,6:16: “Continet autem hec regula solum unum preceptum ad modum prime legis, videlicet dilectionem, ...”

⁶⁸ *Regulae*. III,5,8:140.

⁶⁹ Loc. cit.

⁷⁰ *Regulae*. II,1,8:19

⁷¹ *Regulae*. III,5,8,8:140.

⁷² *Regulae*. II,1,8:19

absolute similarity to God.”⁷³ This external restoration of the entire order of creation through its unimaginable force left behind divine signs (*vestigia dei*). The special task of human beings, endowed with reason, is to learn from tracking these vestiges in created beings,⁷⁴ which testify to the infinite power of God.

Let us now examine the ethical goals which Matěj, according to his vision of the universe, assigns to man. The absolutely valid metaphysical dimension of the First Truth (*veritas prima*) guarantees and imposes absolute requirements on man. The Parisian Master assumes that the goal of every man – the only being endowed with reason in the created world – should be wisdom springing from the knowledge of the First Truth (*prima veritas*)⁷⁵ and the subordination of human existence to this absolute rule. As the concrete ethical goal, human beings should imitate (*imitari*) this highest rule and in an appropriate manner shape their own existence according to this rule.⁷⁶ To conduct a proper and religious life means, according to Matěj, “to subordinate firmly one’s resolutions, intellect, and thoughts to the Truth of God.”⁷⁷ It is not enough merely to direct one’s supreme contemplative intellect (*supremo intellectu, contemplativum intellectum synderesis*)⁷⁸ to this highest principle. The human being must subordinate himself and everything in his life to the “intellect” (*intellectum*), which means that he must with its help govern “his movements, desires, behaviour, acts of will, speech, the external state of his body.”⁷⁹ This is so because the universe manifests a hierarchical superordination and inter-connection among the First Truth, the intellect, and the sensory components in man. Just as the intellect constantly seeks guidance from the First Truth and thus gains righteousness and illumination (*illuminatum*),⁸⁰ in the same way senses (*sensus*) and physical acts (*actus corporis*) are inter-connected with the intellect in individual cases.⁸¹ This hierarchical inter-relation guarantees the righteousness, propriety, and perfection of human behaviour. As long as the human being fulfils this requirement and his intellect governs his body, emotions, thoughts, and acts, he obtains the knowledge of the First Truth. Thanks to this, he gains extraordinary qualities and abilities, because all the wisdom and truth of the world

⁷³ *Regulae*. II,1,9:24–25: “Intus, ut dei ymaginem et similitudinem immediate in se videret, foris, ut per vestigia dei deum investigaret”

⁷⁴ Loc. cit.

⁷⁵ See also loc. cit.

⁷⁶ *Regulae*. II,1,8:21.

⁷⁷ *Regulae*. II,1,5:11: “... omnem suum propositum, intellectum et cogitatum studeat summo-pere veritati divine, ...”

⁷⁸ *Regulae*. II,1,5:12.

⁷⁹ *Regulae*. II,1,5:12: “Studeat nichilominus homo motus, desideria, actus, voluntates, sermone set omnem habitudinem corporis extrinsecam, secundum intellectum (...) gubernare et ad ipsum conportare....”

⁸⁰ *Regulae*. II,1,9:24.

⁸¹ *Regulae*. II,1,5:12.

is contained within him, “it illuminates what is inside and outside, perfects the human intellect,”⁸² and “teaches things beneficial to salvation.”⁸³ A human being gains the ability to “explore fully and recognize the fullness of justice,”⁸⁴ “unmask easily any iniquity and avoid it,”⁸⁵ recognize “any virtues and vices in a Christian person,”⁸⁶ as well as “the knowledge how exactly to distinguish the just and the unjust”⁸⁷ among the people, the prophets, and the spirits. The acquisition of such an absolute knowledge and of the consequent advantages does, however, mean the fulfilment of the absolute requirements vis à vis oneself, the world, and the First Truth.

In his own way, the Parisian Master sketches one of the trajectories of reform, addressing the moral crisis of society. The human being obtains a reliable guide and a certainty for his life in the mutable world thanks to the ethical rationalism, the imitation (*imitari*) of the First Truth, which is identical with Jesus Christ, the second divine person (the Son), and with the natural law imprinted in the universe, which guarantees perfection and absolute righteousness. Matěj’s concept of the First Truth acts as a bond that firmly ties together two different worlds – the world of the perfect exemplary divinity and the mutable world of creation. The task of man, who finds himself in the mutable world of created beings, is to impress on his existence – with the help of the intellect – a rational order, and through the process of imitation to approximate as far as possible the immutable divine model of all being, the Son Jesus Christ.

* * *

In conclusion, let us append several remarks of a more general character. At the outset, we have already called attention to the differentiated explicatory syntax and the conceptual arsenal, with the aid of which the description of the two differing worlds of being is conducted. Concerning the created world, which is treated strictly on the level of natural philosophy or physics, Matěj uses the basic Aristotelian concepts, such as form (*forma*), matter (*materia*), and “inclination to the ultimate end” (*inclinacio ad finem ultimum*).⁸⁸ The description of the world of the divine being, conducted on

⁸² *Regulae*. II,1,8:18: “... illuminando ad ea, que sunt intus et foris, atque perficiendo hominis intellectum....”

⁸³ *Regulae*. Ibid.: “... docet utilia ad salutem, ...”

⁸⁴ *Regulae*. II,1,6:16: “... iusticia plene valet examinari et cognosci,....”

⁸⁵ *Regulae*. Ibid.: “...omnis iniquitas facile potest deprehendi et evitari,....”

⁸⁶ *Regulae*. Ibid.: “et omnium virtutum et viciorum in homine christiano,”

⁸⁷ *Regulae*. Ibid.: “... discrecio plena seu noticia potest haberi non tantum iustorum hominum inniustorum,”

⁸⁸ For instance, *Regulae*. II,1:5; II, 6:13. Matěj at the same time also adopts the principles of Aristotle’s epistemology, namely, that the intellect (*intellectus*) depends for its knowledge on sensory impressions (*rerum sensibilibium*); see *Regulae*. V,8,1:154.

the grounds of a theological discourse, is, on the contrary, full of all possible types of biblical citations and allusions. Nevertheless, several formulations and expressions, as well as the entire explicatory scheme of the universe, betray a strong influence of the Platonic tradition. When Matěj deals with the acts of creation by the Father, he tells us how God created everything “according to the similitude and image of the Father” (*adequacio patris similitudo et ymago*),⁸⁹ through his Son,⁹⁰ with regard to the Son’s similitude and form,⁹¹ “through it and with regard to it” (*per ipsam est vel ad ipsam*).⁹² As evidence of this standpoint, Matěj cites the biblical verse – famous in the Christian tradition – about the creation of man by God according to his own image and likeness (Gn 1:26). Of course, he adds immediately that the Son is “an immutable and eternal form or idea of all created things,”⁹³ “super-substantial and a living similitude or form of all created things,”⁹⁴ and elsewhere, he is even “giver of forms and the simple and general idea of the entire creation according to the teaching of Plato,”⁹⁵ when as “the Word of God he contains from the eternity the forms of all things and is all in all.”⁹⁶ We see that this is no longer biblical terminology, but the syntax and the conceptual arsenal of the Platonic tradition. As we would say today in the spirit of radical eclecticism, Matěj succeeded in creating a very remarkable textual collage, which connects in a subtle manner entirely different texts and traditions, namely, Scripture, and the Platonic and Aristotelian traditions.

As was already convincingly proven in the 1980s,⁹⁷ the last two formulations (cited above) in particular, contain “latent pantheistic elements”⁹⁸ and stand at the very margin of orthodoxy. Unsurprisingly, a reaction to those two statements followed very quickly. The standpoint, thus formulated, became the critical target of the German Johann Arsen of Langenfeld in his *questio* about the Ideas for the *quodlibet* of Matěj of Lehnice around the year 1394.⁹⁹

⁸⁹ *Regulae*. II,1,1:4.

⁹⁰ Loc. cit.

⁹¹ *Regulae*. II,1:4: “... ad formam et ad similitudinem sui filii, vel que est in filio suo, facit”

⁹² *Regulae*. II,1:3.

⁹³ *Regulae*. II,1:4: “... filius est forma vel ydea inmutabilis et eterna omni creature, ...”

⁹⁴ *Regulae*. Ibid.: “... aut in filio est supersubstantialiter et vitaliter similitudo vel forma omnium, que facta sunt”

⁹⁵ *Regulae*. V,8,1:153: “... est dator formarum et una simplex ydea universali ymaginacionem magistri Platonis”

⁹⁶ *Regulae*. Ibid.: “Ita, videlicet sicut Verbum Dei omnium formas rerum continet ab eterno et ipsum est omnia in omnibus, ...”

⁹⁷ Herold, *Pražská univerzita a Wyclif*, 227–229, especially, 232–233.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 233.

⁹⁹ *Quaestio* is entitled *Utrum ydee aliqua ratione cogente propter generacionem rerum naturalium sunt ponende*. For more details and a brief summary, see Herold, *Pražská univerzita a Wyclif*, 142, 225–229, 232–235; for a contextual framework, see Vilém Herold, “Neuplatonismus in der Ideenlehre bei Johann Wyclif und an der Prager Universität,” in: *Néoplatonisme et Philosophie Médiévale*, Linos G. Benakis, ed. (Turnhout, 1997) 255–256; idem, “Zum Prager philosophischen Wyclifismus,” in *Häresie und vorzeitige Reformation im Spätmittelalter*,

Arsen's text supplies important evidence and is a living testimony about the relevant discussions at the University of Prague before the reception of Wyclif. It is assumed that the passages concerning the Ideas in the *Regulae* of the Parisian Master are the first signs of this heterodox teaching on the soil of the Bohemian Kingdom. Later, radically inclined 'Friends of Ideas' among the Bohemian reformers undoubtedly knew the relevant passages from Matěj, and Wyclif's treatise "On Ideas" (*De ideis*) merely confirmed and legitimised their own conceptual standpoints. On the basis of these standpoints, and of further ethical and political interpretations, the radicals then went on to advance various models of the social reform. It is more than likely that Matěj's text genetically occupies the first place among the sources of this kind of thinking, which in its historical curve concludes and ends on the pyre of Constance.

Whence, however, does Matěj derive his heterodox doctrine? The extant scholarship on the whole convincingly agrees that the thought of the Parisian Master is, as to its framework, most significantly influenced by motives adopted from the texts of St. Augustine, Dionysius the Areopagite, and from the school of Hugh of Saint Victor, hence, "from the realistic line."¹⁰⁰ This is also clearly confirmed by Matěj's philosophical creed in his *Regulae*, in which he declares that the source of all multiplicity is the one, and thence the necessity derives for all to return to a union with the one.¹⁰¹ In the *Regulae*, the Parisian Master routinely refers to, and cites, these three authorities.¹⁰² In the case cited above, Matěj refers to Plato himself and ascribes to him propositions that can not be found in Plato's actual writings, namely, the Avicennian term "giver of forms" (*dator formarum*)¹⁰³, and the identity of God's Word as the form of all things, which is in all.

We shall attempt to elucidate this mystery by reference to a certain proposition. In his report on the Latin Platonic manuscripts in Bohemia, Édouard Jeaneau had already noted the relatively wide collection of florilegia in the Platonic tenor.¹⁰⁴ However, is it possible to demonstrate that the Parisian Master was actually influenced by one of them? Possibly yes, but probably not. After all, as we know for certain, Matěj obtained his education through

František Šmahel and Elizabeth Müller-Luckner, eds. (Munich, 1998) 139–140.

¹⁰⁰ Nechutová, "Filosofické zdroje díla M. Matěje z Janova," 101; Herold. *Pražská univerzita a Wyclif*, 227.

¹⁰¹ *Regulae*. II,1,7:18: "Nam inconcussum tenemus, quod puta ab uno solo omnis multiplicatas rerum et scienciarum est derivata. Igitur eadem via necesse est, ut ad idem unum omnia redeant et colligantur"

¹⁰² Randomly, according to the Index, references to St. Augustine are the most frequent (18 times in v. 1; 13 times in v. 2; twice in v. 3), fewer to Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite (once in v. 1; 9 times in v. 2), and least to Hugh of St. Victor (once in each v. 1 and v. 2).

¹⁰³ Avicenna Latinus, *Liber de philosophia prima sive scientia divina V-X*, Simone van Riet, Gérard, Verbeke, ed., (Louvain/Leiden, 1980) IX, 5, A 411, 35: 490; IX, 5, A 413, 95: 493.

¹⁰⁴ Édouard Jeaneau, "Plato apud Bohemos," *Mediaeval Studies* 41 (1979) 162–168; also in idem, *"Tendenda Vela": Excursions littéraires et digressions philosophiques à travers le Moyen Âge* (Turnhout, 2007) 350–356.

nine years of study in Paris.¹⁰⁵ There, sometime in July 1376, he received the degree of Master of Arts (*magister regens*) under the supervision of the German Professor Gerard of Kalkar,¹⁰⁶ and he continued with the study of theology there, until his departure from Paris in 1381. It is, therefore, necessary to turn our attention to sources in Paris or reflecting the Parisian Milieu, and among them, the *Commentary on the Sentences* of Marsilius of Inghen.¹⁰⁷

Marsilius's Heidelberg Commentary on the *Sentences* from the 1390s, for which he had already gathered material during his studies in Paris, is derived especially from Paris sources of the 1370s. Similarly, it has been shown that, for instance, the *principium* of the first book and the first questions, in which Marsilius analyses the problems of the divine ideas, is inspired by the thought and texts of John of Ripa who worked at the University of Paris toward the end of the 1360s and in the beginning of the 1370s.¹⁰⁸ Also in the 1370s, and even later, we can follow his influence and work, for instance, in the commentaries on the *Sentences* of Francis of Perugia, Gerhard of Kalkar, and Peter of Candia.¹⁰⁹ It is also possible to mention certain doctrinal parallels. Perhaps the most striking one is the concordant use of the fundamental term – appearing already in Avicenna and in the *Book of Causes* (*Liber de causis*) – which both Marsilius and Matthias of Janov use in the cosmological structure of the universe, because they consider intelligence (*intelligentie, intelligentiae*) as the hierarchically highest created being.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁵ Kybal, *M. Matěj z Janova*, 10.

¹⁰⁶ For Gerard of Kalkar see Franz Ehrle, *Der Sentenzenkommentar Peters von Candia des Pisaner Papstes Alexanders V.*, (Münster, 1925) 42–44 also Gilles Gerard Meersseman, *Geschichte des albertinismus I.* (Paris, 1932) 9, for his influence in Wien see Michael H. Shank, „Unless You Believe, You Shall Not Understand”: *Logic, University, and Society in late Medieval Vienna*, (Princeton, 1988) 17–35 and in Cologne see Erich Meuthen, *Kölner Universitätsgeschichte: I. Die alter Universität*, (Köln-Wien 1988) 57, 141, 163 and Wolfgang Eric Wagner, *Universitätsstift und Kollegium in Prag, Wien und Heidelberg*, (Berlin, 1999) 114–124, 129–137.

¹⁰⁷ Marsilius of Inghen, *Quaestiones super quattuor libros Sententiarum*, Manuel Santos Noya (ed.), (Leiden-Boston-Köln, 2000), q. 1, 1–60.

¹⁰⁸ Maarten J. F. M. Hoenen, *The Commentary on the Sentences of Marsilius of Inghen*, 479–480.

¹⁰⁹ See Josef Lechler, “Franz von Perugia OFM und die Quästionen seines Sentenzenkommentars,” *FzS* 25 (1938) 29–38, for influence on Gerard of Kalkar and Peter of Candia especially Franz Ehrle, *Der Sentenzenkommentar Peters von Candia des Pisaner Papstes Alexanders V.*, 42–47.

¹¹⁰ For Matěj of Janov see above, for Marsilius of Inghen see his *Quaestiones super quattuor libros Sententiarum*, q. 1, ar. 2. Octava conclusio, p. 38–39 and Maarten J. F. M. Hoenen, Neuplatonismus am Ende des 14. Jahrhunderts: Die Prinzipien zum Sentenzenkommentar des Marsilius von Inghen, in *Marsilius von Inghen. Werk und Wirkung*, Stanisław Wielgus, ed. (Lublin, 1993) 176–178, 189–190.