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The Greatest Debate

An Introduction with a Glimpse into Arts Quodlibeta *Terminology*[*]

Quodlibetal debates were among the most significant types of scholarly discussion at Late Medieval universities. The records and writings from these debates form an essential corpus of texts, crucial for understanding medieval scientific thought and its connections to subsequent intellectual developments. They also provide insight into pressing issues of medieval life, both within and beyond university walls.

The tradition of the *quodlibeta* can be traced back to at least the thirteenth century. During the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, these disputations typically took place within theological faculties or in the milieu of the theological *studia* of mendicant orders. In the late fourteenth century, quodlibetal disputations began to emerge at newly established Central European universities, including those in Cologne, Erfurt, Heidelberg, Leipzig, Prague, and Vienna. The form of these disputations, however, changed considerably from that of the earlier theological *quodlibeta*. While remaining significant university events, quodlibetal debates experienced notable shifts. The locus of the *quodlibeta* moved to the faculties of arts, and it was now the presiding master (*quodlibetarius*) himself (rather than other participants, as in theological *quodlibeta*) who assigned questions to the participants, who were then tasked with solving them according to their doctrinal standpoint. Despite the growing significance of *quodlibeta* in the "new"

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universities, there remains a paucity of published works and in-depth studies on these debates.[1]

The ERC project ACADEMIA (*Reconstructing Late Medieval Quests for Knowledge: Quodlibetal Debates as Precursors of Modern Academic Practice*) aims to address this gap through a broad and in-depth study of the quodlibetal genre and the texts which originated in connection with these debates, which resembled modern scientific conferences. Arising out of this, this volume aims to partially fill the gap in our understanding of this intellectual practice and of the main doctrinal currents that converged and clashed during one of these challenging debates: the Prague Disputation of 1409. This debate is noteworthy for several reasons; firstly, it is, at least in theory, the greatest academic debate ever organised in the Middle Ages, potentially involving up to 149 scholars presenting scholarly positions. Secondly, it took place in one of the most important of the new universities, Prague, which had considerable influence on Central European universities, including in the tradition and development of quodlibetal disputations. Thirdly, its extensive corpus of textual material enables a comprehensive examination and assessment of the main doctrinal trends of the period, of the most influential sources, and of the prevailing intellectual concerns, all converging at a doctrinal crossroads of significant historical and intellectual interest. Finally, the debate occurred at a pivotal moment in the history of the University of Prague and Bohemian intellectual history, just before the secession of German masters from Prague and the subsequent strengthening of surrounding Central European universities, particularly the University of Leipzig. This made the 1409 quodlibet the last "international" scholarly debate at the University of Prague before the onset of the Hussite wars.

Our aim is to contribute to the history of intellectual practice and thought, focussing on the extant documents of the 1409 quodlibet — above all MS Praha, KMK, L 45, which is the main witness to the activity of Matthias of Knín, the *quodlibetarius*. For this reason we have referenced politico-ecclesiastical controversies only as necessary to contextualise the intellectual development of the various scholars involved, and to better understand certain unique aspects of the 1409 quodlibet.

At the same time, readers will find that some chapters repeat basic historical facts from these fields, which reflects our intention to ensure that the main chapters of the volume can stand alone and be understandable to readers who will only read a single chapter. It has not been our intention to dedicate space to an in-depth examination of the relationship between the organisation and conduct of the 1409 quodlibetal disputation and the preceding, concurrent, and immediately subsequent events significant to the history of the Bohemian Reformation and politics; this is because there is already no lack of excellent scholarship on this

1 For an essential bibliography, see O. Pavlíček, "The 1409 Prague Arts Quodlibet in the Context of Prague and Central European Quodlibetal Tradition", in *The Greatest Debate*, pp. 31–33, notes 1 and 3.

pivotal period in the religious and political history of the Czech Lands.[2] Meanwhile, much work remains to explore the ideas, doctrines, and issues considered pressing by the masters of the University of Prague, as well as their argumentative strategies, use of sources, and the interaction between different philosophical traditions, both ancient and contemporary.

Terminological Challenge: Establishing the Terminology of the Arts *Quodlibeta*

In tribute to the scholars who have dedicated their efforts to the study of quodlibetal debates, we have also aimed to standardise the terminology used over the past century of scholarship when referring to the academic practices and related works associated with quodlibetal disputes at the Faculty of Arts in Prague. The systematic study of a document such as MS Praha, KMK, L 45 inevitably raises a series of questions, suggesting the need to make some specific choices, including terminological ones, as the statutes of the Faculty itself provide next to no description of the material output expected from the master presiding over the quodlibetal disputation, nor do they offer any indication regarding the nomenclature of its parts.[3] In this regard, we have primarily considered the significant elements conveyed by the manuscript tradition, when available, and subjected the terminology adopted by the relevant scholarly literature to careful critical examination.

Let us start with the vehicle of our knowledge of the preparatory materials for the 1409 *quodlibet*. Podlaha's catalogue lists the contents of our manuscript as "Quodlibet quaestionum".[4] This description of the codex, however, does not fully correspond to what is found within the manuscript itself. On the verso of the opening guard-leaf of MS Praha, KMK, L 45 there is a reference to the register of questions in this form: "2m quodlibet, registrum vide in fine", which suggests that in the second half of the fifteenth century — according to the dating of the handwriting of this note[5] — the manuscript was described in very general terms

2 See the works by František Šmahel, mainly F. Šmahel, *Die hussitische Revolution* I–III, Hannover 2002, with a Czech updated version published as F. Šmahel, *Husitská revoluce* I–II [Hussite Revolution], Praha 2023–2024.

3 The statute from 29 October 1379 only mentions that the *quodlibetarius* has to dispatch a question in a written form to each master of the Faculty of Arts three or four days before the start of the quodlibet; see *Statuta et Acta rectorum Universitatis Carolinae Pragensis 1350–1614*, ed. F. Šmahel, G. Silagi, Praha 2018, p. 248: "[…] et illam disputacionem iuxta morem consuetum continuet diligenter singulis magistris de facultate presentibus in studio, questiones per tres vel quatuor dies ante initium sue disputacionis in scripto, ut consuetum est, dirigendo."

4 A. Podlaha, *Soupis rukopisů knihovny Metropolitní kapitoly pražské* [A Catalogue of the Manuscripts of the Prague Metropolitan Chapter Library], Praha 1922, vol. 2, p. 226.

5 M. Dragoun, "The Quodlibetal Book of Matthias of Knín in MS Praha, Knihovna Metropolitní Kapituly, L 45 Viewed by a Codicologist", in *The Greatest Debate*, p. 107.

simply by referring to its content, namely a quodlibet. The practice of referring to this kind of material precisely in this manner is also evidenced by the medieval catalogue of the library of the College of the Bohemian Nation in Prague, which records two codices in its collection containing the *quodlibeta* of John Hus and Simon of Tišnov in the following forms: "N 9 Quodlibetum magistri Simonis Tissnow. N 10 Quodlibet magistri Iohannis Hus".[6]

The common practice in scholarly literature of calling these documents "manuals" or "handbooks" does not, as far as we can tell, seem justified by any manuscript witnesses. In spite of their being widely adopted by both scholars and editors,[7] such terms seem inadequate from several perspectives; above all, they are usually employed to refer to texts used for teaching or studying specific disciplines, aimed at providing fundamental doctrinal foundations.[8] Although highly significant from an educational standpoint, the Prague *quodlibeta* cannot strictly be regarded as didactic activities, nor can the literary works associated with them be accurately termed "manuals" or "handbooks". Additionally, such terms etymologically hint at texts that are easily handled and readily accessible, whereas MS Praha, KMK, L 45 is a volume that, although relatively manageable, requires considerably more effort to consult.

In the absence of an attested medieval term for these collections of materials, and finding the term used in scholarly literature inadequate, we have opted for the designation "quodlibetal book", which both effectively conveys the unity of the book artefact and, following the medieval usage, explicitly refers to its distinctive content.

A quodlibetal book like MS Praha, KMK, L 45 conveys various contents,[9] most of which have long been referred to in academic literature as "preparations".

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6 *Catalogi librorum vetustissimi Universitatis Pragensis*, ed. Z. Silagiová, F. Šmahel, Turnhout 2015 (= CCCM, 271), p. 103.

7 In his seminal contribution to the study of Prague *quodlibeta*, Kejř repeatedly refers to the documents collecting materials prepared by the *quodlibetarii* as "příručka" — a Czech term that, in the French abstract appended to the study, has been consistently rendered as "manuel". Cf. J. Kejř, *Kvodlibetní disputace na pražské universitě* [Quodlibetal Disputations at the University of Prague], Praha 1971, passim (pp. 201–206 for the French abstract). This term became firmly established in international scholarly literature, which adopted the English term "handbook". As a matter of fact, the practice of referring to collections of materials related to individual *quodlibeta* as "manuals" had already been introduced in previous Czech-language scholarly literature, a notable example being Ryba's (quite surprising) adoption of the term of Greek origin "enchiridion" to refer to John Hus's quodlibetal book in his critical edition. See Iohannes Hus, *Quodlibet*, ed. B. Ryba, Turnhout 2006[2] (= CCCM, 211); cf. below, note 12. Bartoš had already used the term; see F. M. Bartoš, "Poslední kvodlibet pražské university před vypuknutím husitských válek [The Last Quodlibet of the University of Prague before the Outbreak of the Hussite Wars]", *Časopis národního musea* 102 (1928) pp. 69–73.

8 Cf. O. Weijers, *Le maniement du savoir. Pratiques intellectuelles à l'époque des premières universités (XIII[e]–XIV[e] siècle)*, Turnhout 1996, pp. 14, 16, 19, 21, 25, 27–37.

9 For an overview of the different textual materials transmitted by the 1409 quodlibetal book see L. Campi, "Matthias of Knín's Road to the 1409 Prague *Quodlibet*: An Intellectual Biography

These are usually textual sections that present the title of a question, open to either an affirmative or negative answer, followed by a brief series of arguments for both responses (referred to individually as a "propozice" — i.e. proposition — in Czech and sometimes back-formed into Latin as "propositio"), and finally a list of arguments against each side.[10] These sides may represent an affirmative or a negative answer to the *quaestio* on the one hand, or a more nuanced answer limiting the affirmation or negation on the other. In the former case, the passages are usually preceded by headings "Dicenti quod non" or "Dicenti quod sic" and suchlike, and in the latter by headings specifying the answer, for example, "Contra partem dicentem quod […]".

"Praeparationes" is not a term documented in sources related to academic activities in Prague during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Attested already in Bartoš's articles,[11] it is likely a back-formation into Latin of a term used by scholars to describe these specific textual materials,[12] which then came into use. Among the scholars who have contributed most to the study of Prague's quodlibetal disputes, Kejř preferred to refer to the so-called preparations with another

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and Some Notes on the Long Introductory Section to the 1409 *Quodlibet*", in *The Greatest Debate*, pp. 71–100 and O. Pavlíček, "Catalogue of Texts in MS Praha, Knihovna Metropolitní Kapituly, L 45, Including Matthias of Knín's Quodlibet of 1409", in *The Greatest Debate*, pp. 109–149.

10 The term "propositio" (in Czech "propozice") has previously been used in the literature in connection with Prague *quodlibeta* by V. Flajšhans, "M. Io. Hus: Quodlibetum 1411", *Český časopis historický* 44 (1938), pp. 267–295: 276 (who appears to understand the term to mean the entire set of arguments, including the list of arguments against each side), Bohumil Ryba (see note 12 below) and Jiří Kejř. Though Kejř and others do not describe the origin of this word, the fact that the masters might have received the title of the question and the brief series of arguments before the quodlibet may have been in the background. Furthermore, we find in the corresponding positions statements like "questio ut proponitur est vera" or "mihi propositum est", which may shed light on the choice to use this term. In the absence of more effective descriptions, we continue to use the Latin term, but only for the sake of clarity, while stressing that its occurrence is not strictly documented. Cf. Kejř, *Kvodlibetní disputace*, p. 66, F. Šmahel "Die Verschriftlichung der Quodlibet-Disputationen an der Prager Artistenfakultät bis 1420", in *Die Prager Universität im Mittelalter. Gesammelte Aufsätze / The Charles University in the Middle Ages. Selected Studies*, Leiden / Boston 2007, pp. 359–386: 370. We would like to thank Lukáš Lička and Barbora Kocánová for a consultation about this term.

11 See, for example, Bartoš, "Poslední kvodlibet pražské university", p. 72.

12 In introducing (in Latin) the readers to his edition of John Hus's *Quodlibet*, Ryba commented on these materials, saying that they are likely intended as resources that the *quodlibetarius* had "prepared" for use during the debate. See B. Ryba, "Praefatio", in Iohannes Hus, *Quodlibet*, pp. xv–xl: xxxix–xxx: "Librum lecturos memoria teneant oro in opere, quod edimus, non acta disputationis de quolibet a. 1411 habitae, sed quodlibetarii ipsius enchiridion contineri. Itaque ne mirentur, quod in eo praeter Hussii prooemium, arengas in magistris praesentandis adhibitas, perorationem celeberrimam, 'quaestiones' cum 'propositionibus', quas singulis magistris proposuit, denique praeter copias ad arguendum, quas sibi videtur praeparavisse, magistrorum 'positiones' non inveniuntur, quae 'positioni' baccalaurei, quaestionem principalem sequenti, correspondeant."

term that — to our knowledge — does not seem to be attested in the sources of the time for this purpose, namely "theses".[13] On the other hand, there is a term documented within the quodlibetal books and used by the *quodlibetarii* to refer to the contents of these lists — a term, it must be said, at once technical and generic, i.e. "argumentum".[14] In the eyes of their drafters, the short notes taken against an affirmative or negative answer must have appeared as arguments, i.e. integral parts of a demonstrative reasoning aimed at attacking an answer to the problem raised by the "quaestio". At the same time, though, being the typical and specific components of a demonstrative procedure, "argumenta" clearly sound generic to those interested, as we are, in defining a particular academic practice. Indeed, it is precisely because of its coeval attestation and its specific yet generic nature that this expression seemed particularly appropriate. To refer to such lists of arguments, therefore, we have decided to abandon the expression "praeparationes" in favour of "sets of arguments".

Scholarly literature has often used the term "positio" to refer to the elaborated solution given to a "quaestio". Understood as a stance taken and publicly defended by a master in compliance with his academic duties and obligations, "positio" is widely attested in the sources, occurring in the titles assigned to certain texts in the manuscripts transmitting them,[15] in their incipits or explicits,[16] and in the

13 Cf. Kejř, *Kvodlibetní disputace*, p. 16 and passim. See also the editorial title given by Kejř to the set of arguments prepared by Knín for the question he assigned to John Hus for the quodlibetal dispute of 1409, in Iohannes Hus, *Questiones*, ed. J. Kejř, Turnhout 2004, p. 42: "Additamentum: Theses quaestionis de vera felicitate magistro Iohanni Hus praesentatae (Extractum e libro manuali disputationis de quolibet a magistro Mathia de Knin in facultate artium Pragae anno 1409 habitae)."

14 The counter-argumentation to the 1409 *quaestio principalis* refers to the contents of the set of arguments to a specific question assigned to a master using the term "argumenta"; cf. Matthias de Knin, *Argumenta contra questionem principalem*, ed. L. Campi, in *The Greatest Debate*, pp. 372–394: 382, ll. 912–913: "Contra primam partem conclusionis vide argumenta in illa questione 'Utrum inter omnia encia universi tantum primum ens est summe simplex'". Even Hus's quodlibetal book bears traces of the use to refer to these materials as "argumenta"; cf. Iohannes Hus, *Quodlibet*, pp. 187 ("Ex iam dictis possunt argumenta colligi pro parte negativa vel affirmativa"); 198 ("3° argumento isto"); and 248 ("Istis notatis possunt trahi multa argumenta pro utraque parte").

15 See MS Praha, NK ČR, X H 10, fol. 106r: "Posicio magistri Jacobi de Miesa de percepcione venerabilis sacramenti sub bina specie"; MS Praha, NK ČR, X H 18, fol. 73v "Posicio magistri Iohannis Huss"; MS Praha, NK ČR, VIII F 22, fol. 104r: "Posicio Johannis de Ragusio in concilio Basiliensi contra communionem utriusque speciei de suburbani inferni introducta."

16 See MS Praha, NK ČR, X H 18, fol. 103r: "Incipit posicio magistri Stephani de Palecz"; MS Praha, NK, XI D 5, fol. 179r: "Et sic est finis posicionis magistri Jacobelli quam posuit sub magistro Czykone de Antichristo maximo etc."; MS Praha, NK ČR, IV H 5, fol. 119v: "Expliciunt posiciones finite in die cinerum anno domini millesimo trecentesimo octuagesimo quarto in vigilia beati Mathie etc."; MS Praha, NK ČR, VIII G 6, fol. 84r: "Et sic est finis istius posicionis magistri Stephani etc."

references made by the authors themselves to their own or others' texts[17] — and this is also the case with texts relating to the 1409 quodlibet.[18] In light of this bounty of textual evidence, we have maintained the custom of calling the determinations of the questions assigned by the *quodlibetarius* to individual masters "positiones".

As for "quaestio", or question, then, we have followed the widespread practice in the texts, in which the term serves to designate both the doctrinal content — the actual problem that the question is about — and the wording that the question takes on in the title. Thus, "quaestio" is a more general term than "set of arguments" or "positio" and may refer to both of these types of texts, as the same question (title) usually stands before the wording of both sets of arguments and *positiones*.

Volume Structure

This volume is divided into three parts, the first of which provides essential elements for placing the 1409 quodlibet in its proper context.

The opening chapter by Ota Pavlíček delves into the peculiarities of the Arts quodlibetal disputation genre at the University of Prague, placing it within the broader landscape of contemporary *quodlibeta* in Central Europe. Amongst much else, it reviews the main stages of the preparation and execution of a quodlibet, and the figures involved and their roles, attempting to reconstruct, as far as possible from available documents, the procedures in place. Offering a glimpse into the turbulent historical context of the 1409 disputation, the chapter examines various elements related to the number of participants. Through a careful analysis of paratextual elements (the addition of the so-called *problemata* to the questions) and data on the actual participation of masters in the disputation derived from MS Praha, KMK, L 45 and other manuscripts, it seems probable that not all the questions collected in the quodlibetal book were actually debated in 1409. Nevertheless, it remains clear that the 1409 quodlibet was indeed uncommon in terms of the potential number of participants for whom it was organised. Furthermore,

17 See MS, Praha, NK, X D 10, fol. 1r: "Premissis posicione scolastica et tractatulo […]"; cf. also MS Praha, NK, III G 9, fol. 1r, and MS Praha, NK, III G 28, fol. 55r. See also MS Praha, NK, VIII F 7, fol. 287v: "Et tantum sit dictum in hac posicionis mee ingrossacione etc."

18 See Matthias de Knin, *Incepcio disputacionis de quolibet*, ed. L. Campi, in *The Greatest Debate*, pp. 352–353: 353, ll. 52–55: "Et tercio contra posiciones magistrorum, ut potero, arguendo, ut racionibus sese concucientibus seu alternatim certantibus magis clare veritas lucescat — quippe ordinatur disputacio scolastica ut veritas a falsitate cognita sublimetur"; Paulus de Praga, *Utrum mundus architipus, ad cuius similitudinem iste mundus sensibilis est productus, sit multitudo ydearum in mente divina eternaliter refulgens*, ed. O. Pavlíček, in *The Greatest Debate*, pp. 397–406: 397, l. 1: "Magistri Pauli de Praga posicio".

the chapter shows that the 1409 quodlibet could have lasted two weeks, and its end may have been synchronised with the issuance of the Kuttenberg Decree.

In the second chapter, Luigi Campi provides a biographical and academic portrait of Matthias of Knín, the scholar appointed to organise the 1409 quodlibet. Known as "Magister Pater", Knín was a young academic highly regarded within Wyclif-minded circles. His association with Wyclif's ideas led to accusations of heresy, which had significant repercussions for the Bohemian academic community and is somewhat related to his role in presiding over the 1409 quodlibet. This chapter outlines Knín's intellectual profile through an analysis of texts attributed to him, as well as of contemporary testimonies. Additionally, it examines the features of the long introduction to the quodlibet, comparing the corresponding sections, if extant, from other Prague *quodlibeta*. Among the peculiarities of the 1409 quodlibet are the short determination of the *quaestio principalis* that precedes the longer one, transmitted by five manuscripts, and the detailed counter-argumentation to the *quaestio principalis*. This counter-argumentation likely resulted from an editorial revision by Knín himself, based on objections raised by the scholars who took part in the disputation, offering a remarkable insight into the scholarly debates of the time. The study of these introductory materials is also valuable for documenting Knín's sources: in this regard, some tacit borrowings from Wyclif and Hus are especially noteworthy.

Michal Dragoun is the author of the subsequent chapter, which explores MS Praha, KMK, L 45, our principal source of information on the 1409 quodlibet. Produced in the University of Prague milieu shortly after the quodlibet chaired by Matthias of Knín, the manuscript can be dated, according to watermark analysis, to the early 1410s, likely between 1412 and 1414 — in sum, quite close to the public occurrence of the disputation, but most probably not earlier than 1411. Three scribes contributed to copying the text, covering sections of the codex that exhibit a certain unity, as changes in hand coincide with the end of booklets. No codicological evidence indicates whether the copying process was intended for private use by a university member or for a college library. A fourth scribe later added numbering, two additional questions, and an index. Corrections and marginalia by other hands suggest multiple phases of entry, though their chronology remains unclear. The binding reflects common features from the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, typical in university settings. An ownership mark from the fifteenth century reads "Magistri Petri de Hradecz Regine", likely the same individual who became a master of Arts in 1415, before the codex was transferred — though it is unclear when and how — to the Prague Metropolitan Chapter.

The first section of the volume closes with a chapter by Ota Pavlíček containing a detailed catalogue of the contents of MS Praha, KMK, L 45, which transmits Matthias of Knín's quodlibetal book. It documents doctrinal sources connected to the 1409 quodlibetal disputation, incorporating recent discoveries. The catalogue lists questions, sets of arguments, and *problemata*, all found in MS Praha, KMK, L 45, as well as the solutions (*positiones*) that masters presented — probably in a

shorter version — during the debate, and which they refined and finalised later. While the number of actual participants in the 1409 quodlibet is uncertain, the number of surviving positions is much lower than expected, as only 17 of them were transmitted, including Matthias of Knín's *quaestio principalis*. The catalogue is divided into three sections: Section A features documentation of Matthias of Knín's long introduction, including his *quaestio principalis*; Section B lists sets of arguments found in MS Praha, KMK, L 45, and documents the presence of *problemata* and related extant *positiones*; Section C includes information on the final speech. Essential primary and secondary literature directly related to the texts or authors is referenced. The analysis corroborates the importance of John Arsen's quodlibetal book (*c.* 1400) as an influential source for the composition of the quodlibetal book in MS Praha, KMK, L 45, which transmits 25 sets of arguments directly linked to Arsen's quodlibet.

The second part of the volume is devoted to analysing a selection of the scholarly topics dealt with in the 1409 quodlibet. It opens with a study by Luigi Campi on the philosophical content of the *quaestio principalis* and its doctrinal debt to Wyclif. In particular, this chapter shows how Knín's theoretical orientations substantially aligned with those of the great English philosopher, particularly regarding his clear rejection of Aristotle's inclination towards an eternalist conception of the world. This rejection was a hallmark of the Bohemian masters inspired by Wyclif, and it played a significant role in pamphleteering activities defending various of Wyclif's writings condemned by the archbishop of Prague in 1410. The roots of this rejection can already be found in the *Recommendatio artium liberalium* delivered by Jerome of Prague at the conclusion of the 1409 quodlibet. The rejection of eternalism stems from the principles of Wyclif's metaphysics and is supported by Wyclif in several of his works, both published and unpublished. This chapter examines the argumentative strategies employed by Knín to assert the inadmissibility of the world's eternity, tracing his meticulous and original use of materials derived from Wyclif or the tradition following him, as well as other philosophical (and theological) sources; these sources relate to God's attributes, his conservational activity, the *ex nihilo* character of creation, and the issues concerning God's relationship with temporal creatures. A significant role among Knín's sources is played by John Hus, who had put forward anti-eternalist arguments of Wycliffian origin within his commentary on the *Sentences* shortly before the 1409 quodlibet.

In the second chapter of the second section, Ota Pavlíček delves into the metaphysical theme of divine ideas as presented in MS Praha, KMK, L 45. This topic is pivotal in the philosophical thought of Prague masters who embraced Wyclif's teachings. The chapter outlines the Prague supporters' system of universals and their metaphysical role, generally based on an interpretation of Wyclif's realism. Pavlíček explores how Stephen of Páleč, Knín, Jerome of Prague, and Paul of Prague incorporated divine ideas into their works. Stephen viewed divine ideas as the highest being of everything, and asserted that created universals are essentially their *supposita*. Jerome argued that the harmony of the sensible world requires

divine ideas as the highest universals in God's mind. Paul, initially a Wyclif supporter, then later an opponent of his ideas around 1412, expanded on Wyclif's renowned yet controversial concept of the *ens analogum*, the most general created entity. Knín's arguments also reflect Wyclif's influence. This chapter highlights the diverse approaches of Prague "Wycliffite" masters, shaped by their academic stages and professional interests, and underscores the integration of divine ideas in their philosophical and theological works.

The next chapter, authored by Lukáš Lička, examines several texts from the quodlibetal materials in MS Praha, KMK, L 45 that focus on sensory perception and light phenomena. Lička demonstrates that these texts are influenced by authors popular at the Prague Faculty of Arts, including Albert the Great, Robert Grosseteste, Nicole Oresme, and Themo Judaei. The quodlibetal arguments in MS Praha, KMK, L 45 are primarily Aristotelian, lacking the technical aspects of the perspectivist tradition, such as geometrical analysis. This reflects a broader trend in fourteenth- and fifteenth-century studies, which integrated *perspectiva* into Aristotelian commentaries as supplementary rather than foundational material. Lička meticulously analyses the selected quodlibetal texts, vividly documenting the research practices of medieval scholars in selecting, modifying, and integrating their sources to develop their arguments. As Lička has also shown in his earlier works, studying quodlibetal materials challenges the historiographical narrative that the 1409 Kuttenberg Decree, issued shortly after Knín's quodlibet, led to a wholesale replacement of the authority of Buridan with Wyclif and his sources. Instead, it reveals a blending of traditions, with Wycliffite ideas coexisting alongside the continued influence of Aristotelian commentaries.

Zuzana Lukšová has authored a chapter focusing on sets of arguments found in MS Praha, KMK, L 45 that relate to astronomy and cosmology — topics hitherto largely neglected by scholars studying Prague *quodlibeta*. Astronomy held a significant place at the Faculty of Arts in Prague, as evidenced by the 1390 statutes mandating the study of Sacrobosco's *Sphera* and Campanus's *Theorica planetarum* as foundational texts, these being quoted in the sets under examination. Lukšová compares the presence of astronomical themes in quodlibetal books from Prague disputes between the mid-1390s and 1417, demonstrating a sustained interest in these issues at the Faculty of Arts. Dealing with the influence of celestial bodies on Earth, Earth's central position and movement, excentres and epicycles, and the properties and movers of spheres, the sets of arguments show their authors' familiarity with contemporary astronomical developments, referencing experts like Buridan, Bradwardine, and possibly Oresme, with significant influence from Albert of Saxony. Another important source for MS Praha, KMK, L 45 is the quodlibetal book of the Prague master John Arsen, from which several sets of arguments in the 1409 book are entirely derived. Lukšová's analysis suggests that the compilation of arguments in MS Praha, KMK, L 45 may be a layered collection of arguments of various origins by independent individuals, not always aware of the contents of other parts of the quodlibetal book in the codex —

a scenario that challenges previous scholarly assumptions about the compilation process and aligns with the findings by Ota Pavlíček in this volume.

In the subsequent chapter, Karel Dobiáš provides a guide to reading a *positio* by Zdeněk of Labouň on a topic within the field of medical astrology or iatromathematics. This is unique in the known corpus of Prague quodlibetal questions as it is the only known surviving question addressing a specific medico-astrological problem with a detailed solution attributed to a particular master. Dobiáš reconstructs Zdeněk's academic, ecclesiastical, and civil career, highlighting his expertise in medicine, in which he obtained a bachelor's degree in 1411. In his *positio*, Zdeněk argues that, in dealing with acute illnesses, inferences about when indicative and critical days will occur should be based on the hostile aspects of the Moon. This conclusion is elaborated through a comparison with traditional medical authorities, particularly Hippocrates, Galen, and Avicenna. He also frequently cites Ptolemy, to whom he attributes the *Centiloquium*, and the *Liber Pantegni* of Constantinus Africanus, which he ascribes to Galen. Firmly rooted in the disciplinary tradition, Zdeněk's solution also displays specific nuances, leading him to critically engage with Avicenna and Galen.

The final chapter, authored by Miroslav Hanke, examines eleven sets of arguments in MS Praha, KMK, L 45, focusing on theories of logical consequence, the treatment of semantic paradoxes, rules of obligational disputations, and the theory of sentential meaning. This chapter aims to document the presence of British logic — which is distinct from Continental or Parisian logic, particularly in defining formal and material validity — within the examined arguments, which are notable for their richness of distinctions and interesting points. In analysing the contents and argumentation strategies of these sets, which fall into the two main medieval logical genres (theories of logical consequence, and obligations and insolubles), Hanke meticulously traces and evaluates both explicit and possible implicit sources of influence. Among these, aside from Aristotle and Peter of Spain, Richard Ferrybridge is notable for his impact on theories of consequence, and William Heytesbury for his treatment of insolubles. Other probable influences include John Buridan, Marsilius of Inghen, and John Wyclif.

The third and final part of the volume presents a curated selection of textual materials from the 1409 quodlibetal debate. It opens with a comprehensive introduction outlining the editorial principles adopted for preparing the critical editions of these texts and explaining the criteria used to subdivide the texts into their distinct logical components. It also provides guidance on deciphering abbreviations found in the *apparatus criticus* and *apparatus fontium*, including a list of the manuscripts' *sigla* and a list of abbreviated references to sources. Each series of editions is introduced by a short note that provides the reader with some information on the particularities of the texts and specific editorial choices.

The first section of texts, edited by Luigi Campi, contains the "long introduction" to Matthias of Knín's quodlibet, the most significant element of which, from the perspective of both doctrine and manuscript transmission history, is undoubtedly the *quaestio principalis*. Its wide circulation is evidenced by its being

preserved in five manuscript copies, far surpassing the number of copies of other Prague-origin principal questions known to be extant, including that of the 1411 quodlibet presided over by John Hus. The text of the *quaestio principalis* is preceded in MS Praha, KMK, L 45 by an *inceptio* — a customary solemn opening address — and, intriguingly, by a brief solution to the same issue addressed by the principal question. This text, which has the features of a *determinatio in utramque partem*, is unparalleled in the known Prague quodlibetal tradition and contains some textual clues that can help attribute another surviving text to Knín. Following the principal question is a lengthy and detailed counter-argumentation, occupying nearly half of this introductory section, which has been largely overlooked in the scholarly literature despite its historical and documentary significance. As previously noted, it likely stemmed from Knín's editorial revision of the objections to the *quaestio principalis* raised by the masters attending the debate. The texts are introduced by an editorial note including, i.a., a proposed *stemma codicum* for the principal question.

Ota Pavlíček has edited two texts on the topic of divine ideas, a subject of primary importance to Bohemian masters influenced by John Wyclif's realist metaphysics, as documented earlier in this volume. The first presents the solution developed by Paul of Prague to a question assigned to him by Matthias of Knín for public disputation during the 1409 quodlibet. Transmitted by a single manuscript, Paul's *positio* is quite short, and is likely the text that he actually presented during the quodlibet. The second text consists of the arguments Knín had prepared to immediately respond and object to Paul's conclusions during the debate. While none of the texts is of exceptional theoretical interest, the inclusion of this topic in the 1409 quodlibet is noteworthy. The arguments collected by Knín provide us with an insight into which theses an early fifteenth-century Bohemian realist master considered the most effective in defending his own conception of ideas, and which he regarded as the most insidious and worthy of greater consideration among the opposing ones.

The next section of texts contains an edition of three sets of arguments preserved in the quodlibetal book transmitted by MS Praha, KMK, L 45, which may have been discussed during the quodlibet chaired by Matthias of Knín. These arguments concern the nature of *species* of sensible qualities in the medium, in the rainbow, and in relation to the intromission/extramission controversy. The editor, Lukáš Lička, has examined these, along with other related academic texts that originated at the Prague Faculty of Arts, in a chapter in the second part of this book. An especially interesting aspect of these editions, beyond the access they provide to the prominent theses in Prague on these topics — or at least those deemed most relevant — is that the *apparatus fontium* includes transcriptions of many sources, some of which are still unpublished, that the arguments vaguely reference. This allows the reader to more fully and easily appreciate the scope of the arguments themselves.

Zuzana Lukšová has edited nine sets of arguments from the quodlibetal book preserved in MS Praha, KMK, L 45, along with a *positio* transmitted by another

codex, which holds considerable relevance for the history of the Prague Faculty of Arts. These editions offer comprehensive access to the textual materials Lukšová examined in her earlier chapter on astronomical and cosmological topics. The sets of arguments originate from different sections of the codex and were transcribed by three distinct scribes, a fact demonstrated by Michal Dragoun in a chapter in the first part of the book. In the introductory note, Lukšová identifies the unique abbreviations employed by the various scribes and elucidates the criteria she used to prepare the critical text.

Zdeněk of Labouň's position on the iatromathematical question assigned to him by Matthias of Knín, along with the relevant set of arguments prepared by the latter, are edited by Karel Dobiáš, who has dedicated a chapter in the second part of the book to providing a guide to reading Zdeněk's extensive and highly specialised text. This text is transmitted through two copies preserved in two manuscripts of great importance for the history of debates at the Faculty of Arts in Prague; both were taken into consideration in preparing the critical edition of the text. The *positio* is a document of considerable interest as it showcases Zdeněk of Labouň's expertise in the specialised field of medical astrology — the extent of medico-astrological knowledge and its dissemination at the University of Prague, and more broadly in the Czech Lands during the Late Middle Ages, have not yet been extensively investigated.

Soňa Hudíková's edition of seven sets of arguments on ethical topics from MS Praha, KMK, L 45 completes the volume by offering a more comprehensive view of the interdisciplinary issues that engaged the scholars of Prague around 1409. Practical philosophy was of particular interest; the *Nicomachean Ethics*, for example, was studied for a greater number of weeks than in Paris, and at the beginning of the master's degree course.[19] This interest is also reflected in the substantial presence of ethical arguments in Matthias of Knín's quodlibetal book. Hudíková's notes to the editions include brief introductions to each set of arguments, adding value by enumerating the authorities referenced by Knín. These edited texts allow the reader not only to ascertain the scholarly priorities of the period, but also to appreciate the integration of ethical inquiry into teaching and public discussions at the University of Prague during the Late Middle Ages.

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19 See F. Šmahel, "The Faculty of Liberal Arts 1348–1419", in Šmahel, *Die Prager Universität im Mittelalter*, pp. 239–244; F. Šmahel, "Zwei Vorlesungsverzeichnisse zum Magisterium an der Prager Artistenfakultät aus deren Blütezeit 1388–1390", in Šmahel, *Die Prager Universität im Mittelalter*, pp. 316–335: pp. 322–328.