INTRODUCCIÓN | INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION TO THE POWERS OF THE SOUL IN MEDIEVAL FRANCISCAN THOUGHT

The thirteenth century witnessed an explosion of interest in the powers of the soul, which became particularly evident in the Franciscan intellectual tradition. This tradition arose under the inspiration of Francis of Assisi, who founded his order in 1209, and yet it came to flourish in the context of the first universities, which were established in the early thirteenth century. In particular, Franciscans became leading figures at the University of Paris, which had gained its reputation as a leading centre for theological study already in the twelfth century. A number of factors converged to foster interest in the powers of the soul during this period.

One was the very existence of the universities, which created the right conditions for study and debate. Another major factor was the appearance of new translations of important philosophical works by Aristotle as well as his Islamic readers, such as Avicenna (980-1037) and later Averroes (1126-98), who handled questions concerning the powers of the soul at a level of sophistication that was relatively new to the Latin Western tradition. While Aristotle's *De anima* had been translated from Greek by James of Venice before 1160, Avicenna's own *De anima* became available together with large parts of his massive *Book of the Cure (Kitāb al-shifā')*, which was translated from Arabic into Latin between 1152-66 in Toledo.[1] Another important work was the *Fons Vitae* of the Jewish philosopher Avicebron (Ibn Gabirol), which was translated together with Avicenna; as we will see, both became extremely influential for Franciscans.

The Latin Averroes arrived somewhat later in Paris, around 1230/1, along with an Arabo-Latin translation of Aristotle that significantly improved the version of James of Venice, which had evidently been approached with caution previously. Alongside these important sources, Latin thinkers gained access to works by Greek theologians that dealt with the powers of the soul, including the *De fide orthodoxa* of John of Damascus (676-749) which was translated from Greek by Burgundio of Pisa, who was active in the mid-twelfth century.[2] Such works benefited from a knowledge of Aristotelian philosophy that Latin thinkers had not hitherto enjoyed.

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[1] Much of the material presented in this introduction is elaborated at much greater length in my *Human Nature in Early Franciscan Thought: Philosophical Background and Theological Significance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2023) and in a forthcoming article on "The High Middle Ages", in *The Oxford Handbook of Theological Anthropology*; Avicenna, *Avicenna Latinus: Liber de Anima seu Sextus de Naturalibus*, 2 vols, edited by S. Van Riet (Leiden: Brill, 1972); Charles Burnett, "The Institutional Context of Arabic-Latin Translations of the Middle Ages: A Reassessment of the 'School of Toledo", in *Vocabulary of Teaching and Research Between Middle Ages and Renaissance*, edited by O. Weijers (Turnhout: Brepols, 1995), 214-235.

By the late twelfth and early thirteenth century, consequently, conditions were ripe for Latin thinkers to explore the powers of the soul. These powers included everything from the powers of the rational soul, namely: intellect and will; sensation and the imagination which provides mental images of sense objects to be abstracted by the mind; and the so-called 'irascible' and 'concupiscible' powers that generate what we might now describe as negative and positive emotions concerning sense objects. Some early scholastics even took to treating the 'bodily' powers, such as nutrition, growth, and reproduction, which had been discussed by the Greek physician Galen (d. 129 AD) and found their way into the work of various of his readers.

These included the fourth-century bishop, Nemesius of Emesa, who offered a summary of Galenic medical knowledge in his *The Nature of Man.* This work was translated in the late eleventh century (c. 1180) by bishop Alfanus of Salerno and again in 1155-65 by Burgundio of Pisa, who also produced numerous translations of Greek medical and patristic writings.[3] The newly acquired medical knowledge had already been incorporated by twelfth-century Latin thinkers, especially those like William of St Thierry working within the Cistercian order.[4] But the incorporation of the more philosophical material mentioned above waited for the most part until the second quarter of the thirteenth century, and particularly for members of the Franciscan order, for a variety of different reasons.[5]

Perhaps the most significant reason initially concerned the repeated condemnation in Paris of Aristotle's books of natural philosophy and any commentaries on those books, or at least public lecturing on them.[6] The first such ban was issued in 1210, in the wake of efforts by certain arts masters to utilize Aristotle to promote what were at the time considered heterodox views, i.e. pantheism and materialism, or the notion that the soul is a bodily substance. This condemnation was reiterated in 1215 by Robert of Courçon, a former chancellor of the university who had since become the papal legate in Paris.[7]

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[2] John of Damascus, *Saint John Damascene, De fide orthodoxa: Versions of Burgundio and Cerbanus*, edited by E. M. Buytaert (St Bonaventure: Franciscan Institute Press, 1955).

[3] Nemesius of Emesa, *Nemesii Episcopi Premnon Physicon*, translated by A. of Salerno, edited by C. Burkhard (Tuebner: Leipzig, 1917).

[4] See *Three Treatises on Man: A Cistercian Anthropology*, translated by B. Clark, edited by B. McGinn (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1977). Pierre Michaud-Quantin, "La classification des puissances de l'âme au XIIe siècle", *Revue du Moyen Âge latin* 5 (1949): 20, in 15-34.

[5] John Blund is an exception to this rule, having written his work on the soul probably around 1210. *Iohannes Blund Tractatus De Anima*, edited by D.A. Callus and R.W. Hunt, in Auctores Britannici Medii Aevi 2 (London: British Academy, 1970).

[6] Luca Bianchi, "Les interdictions relatives à l'enseignement d'Aristote au XIIIe siècle", in *L'enseignement de la philosophie au XIIIe siècle: Autour du Guide de l'étudiant du ms. Ripoll 109*, edited by C. Lafleur and J. Carrier (Turnhout: Brepols, 1997), 117-119 in 109-137.

In 1228, Pope Gregory IX reinforced the ban and ordered a full investigation of Aristotle's writings, which were certainly being privately studied by this point. For various reasons, this inquiry was never completed, and for all practical purposes, the ban was largely lifted by 1231. By this point in time, however, the first Latin works on the powers of the soul were already written. The first, *De anima et de potenciis eius*, was composed some time between 1224-28, according to its editor, René A. Gauthier, and makes extensive use of Avicenna's psychology.[8] This text influenced the author of a second anonymous work, the *De potentiis animae et obiectis*, which was likely written by a theologian between 1228-32. In turn the Franciscan theologian John of La Rochelle employed this text in his much lengthier *Tractatus de divisione multiplici potentiarum animae*, written between 1232/3, which undertook fuller incorporation of Avicenna's theory of knowledge, not to mention the aforementioned medical sources.[9] This tractate later became the basis for John's even lengthier *Summa de anima* which probably was written between 1235-6.[10]

This material was in turn employed by the redactor of a treatise on the rational soul in the *Summa Halensis*, a collaboratively authored, founding text of the Parisian Franciscan school, which was largely completed by John and Alexander of Hales among others between 1236-45. As recent scholarship has shown, the Franciscans were basically unique in the first half of the thirteenth century in providing such an extensive treatment of the soul and its powers, not to mention its relationship to the body.[11] As Louis-Jacques Bataillon has demonstrated, numerous other theologians of this era, including members of the Dominican order, exhibited a much more reserved attitude towards philosophical sources.[12]

For instance, Hugh of St Cher warned in a sermon delivered in 1242 that the study of philosophy can give rise to pride and prevent growth in wisdom. His teacher Roland of Cremona likewise stated that theologians should not delve into questions about the nature of the soul and its relationship with the body, which he regarded as the purview of philosophers.[13] For him, as for many from the time of Lombard, it was enough to acknowledge that such a relationship did exist without delving into its technicalities. Why Franciscans were prepared to treat these topics so much earlier than the Dominican and so-called 'secular' masters (who were priests but not part of a religious order) can largely only be a matter for speculation. However, the trend is noteworthy and laid the foundation for the further development of a particularly strong tradition of reflection on the soul and its potencies amongst Franciscans.

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[7] Stephen C. Ferruolo, "The Paris Statutes of 1215 Reconsidered", *History of Universities* 5 (1985): 1-14; Luca Bianchi, "Les interdictions relatives à l'enseignement d'Aristote au XIIIe siècle", 117.

[8] René A. Gauthier, "La traité *De anima et de potenciis eius* d'un maître des arts (vers 1225): Introduction et texte critique", *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques* 66 (1982): 24, in 3-55.

[9] René A. Gauthier, "La traité *De anima et de potenciis eius*", 22.

[10] John of La Rochelle, *Summa de anima*, edited by J. Guy Bougerol (Paris: Vrin, 1995).

[11] On the latter topic, see Magdalena Bieniak, *The Body-Soul Problem at Paris ca. 1200-1250* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2010).

[12] Louis-Jacques Bataillon, "Problèmes philosophiques dans les œuvres théologiques", in *L'enseignement des disciplines à la Faculté des arts (Paris et Oxford, XIIIe-XVe siècles)*, edited by O. Weijers and L. Holtz (Turnhout: Brepols, 1997), 450 in 445-453.

The relationship between the first Franciscans and their later successors has not often been acknowledged, on account of a historiographical tendency to assume there was a major split in the school between Bonaventure and John Duns Scotus. While Bonaventure and his teachers, including Alexander of Hales, supposedly followed Augustine in the field of psychology, Scotus turned Franciscan attentions to the new works of Aristotle, although in a way that strongly contrasted with that of the Dominican Thomas Aquinas. This way of thinking has been challenged in recent scholarship, including my own, which has drawn attention to the particular way in which early Franciscans utilized Augustine.[14]

First of all, the initial Franciscans who developed their school's views in the realm of psychology rarely invoked Augustine's own writings on this subject and turned much more frequently to spurious works like the *De spiritu et anima*, which was written by a Cistercian before 1170, although it was widely attributed to Augustine in the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries.[15] Later generations of Franciscans would find 'proof texts' in actual works by Augustine to support their views, which has led many scholars to believe that they are somehow genuinely 'Augustinian'. However, there is little in their thinking, at least on the powers of the soul, that can seemingly be traced explicitly to the thinking of Augustine himself, when the context and contents of the Bishop's works are carefully considered.

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[13] Daniel A. Callus, "The Treatise of John Blund on the Soul", in *Autour d'Aristote. Recueil d'études de philosophie ancienne et médiévale affert à Monseigneur A. Mansion* (Louvain: Publications universitaires de Louvain, 1955), 471-495, 482; *Iohannes Blund Tractatus De Anima*, 13-15. On Roland, Dag Hasse, *Avicenna's De anima*, 38; Callus, "The Powers of the Soul", 157.

[14] Lydia Schumacher (ed.), *The Legacy of Early Franciscan Thought* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2021); Lydia Schumacher, *Early Franciscan Theology: Between Authority and Innovation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019).

[15] Bernard McGinn, *The Golden Chain: A Study in the Theological Anthropology of Isaac of Stella* (Washington: Cistercian Publications, 1972); Constant J. Mews, "Debating the Authority of Pseudo-Augustine's *De spiritu et anima*", *Przegląd Tomistyczny* 24 (2018): 321-348. Constant J. Mews, "The Early Diffusion of the *De spiritu et anima* and Cistercian Reflection on the Powers of the Soul", *Viator* 49/3 (2019): 297-330.

The same can be said of the extensive use of John of Damascus by early Franciscans and scholastics more generally.[16] The Franciscans engaged in significant distortions of his thinking, not least on psychology. In many cases, these distortions allowed for the adoption of positions found in Avicenna's *Book of the Cure*, which was much more popular and accessible than the translation of Aristotle's *De anima*, the quality of which was sometimes in doubt, during the first half of the thirteenth century.[17] Although it has sometimes been construed as such, the *Book of the Cure* was not a mere commentary on Aristotle but a highly original work that nonetheless followed a longstanding prior tradition of reconciling Aristotle with elements of Neo-Platonism.[18]

This aspect of Avicenna's work made it attractive to Latin thinkers who themselves possessed a Christianized version of Platonism in the works of their own authorities like Augustine, Boethius, Pseudo-Dionysius, and others, and could therefore find in Avicenna a means to reconciling Christian Neo-Platonism with Aristotelianism, broadly construed. This is arguably what happened in the early Franciscan school.[19] Later on, as Aristotle came to the fore, following the production of revised translations of his works from the 1260s, and the full incorporation of Averroes' commentaries on Aristotle, the Augustinian attributions of Franciscans were in some cases jettisoned in favor of presenting a particular brand of Aristotelianism, which could be contrasted with that of Aquinas.

In one way or another, however, the historiographical categories of 'Augustinianism' and 'Aristotelianism' have masked not only the Arabic sources of Franciscan thought but also the originality of this tradition, which following its founding in works like the *Summa Halensis*, blossomed and developed in all kinds of ways that could be conceived from some of the same fundamental, often Avicennian, insights. Among others, these include the unity of the powers of the soul, the question of the identity of the soul with its powers, the plurality of forms – body and soul – in the human person, and the nature of their union, and the ultimate independence of intellectual from sense powers. From Avicebron, Franciscans gleaned further questions about whether the soul is itself comprised of form and 'spiritual matter' – a view known as universal hylomorphism – and whether the existence of the rational soul in humans implies the maximal composition of the body.

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[16] Johannes Zachhuber, "John of Damascus in the *Summa Halensis:* The Use of Greek Patristic Thought in the Treatment of the Incarnation", in *The Summa Halensis: Sources and Context*, edited by L. Schumacher (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2020), 91-116.

[17] See Amos Bertolacci, "On the Latin Reception of Avicenna's Metaphysics before Albertus Magnus: An Attempt at Periodization", in *The Arabic, Hebrew and Latin Reception of Avicenna's Metaphysics*, edited by D. Nikolaus Hasse and A. Bertolacci (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2012), 197-223.

[18] See Herbert A. Davidson, *Alfarabi, Averroes and Avicenna on Intellect* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992).

[19] This has already been acknowledged long ago by, e.g. Étienne Gilson, "Les sources gréco-arabes de l'augustinisme avicennisant", *Archives dhistoire doctrinale et littéraire du Moyen Âge* 4 (1929-30): 5-149. However, Gilson tended to see the use of Avicenna as a genuine expression of Augustinian views.

This latter topic is the focus of the contribution by **Dominic Dold**, who examines the text of the *Summa Halensis*, which offers two arguments according to which the human body is the most composite of all bodies. This doctrine, which draws its inspiration from Avicebron, is linked for the Summa to the notion that the rational nature of the human adds a dimension to its being beyond that of the sensitive and vegetative faculties found in animals and plants, respectively, but possessed by humans as well. As Dold explains, the rational soul of human beings facilitates more operations than are possible for other beings, and for the Summa, these operations require a more complex and thus maximally composite human body.

The chapter by **Lydia Schumacher** also deals with the *Summa Halensis* and the personal works of its editors, Alexander of Hales and John of La Rochelle, on the question of the will. The Franciscan tradition is well known for its emphasis on the will's priority over the intellect. John Duns Scotus is the most famous formulator of the Franciscan theory of two wills, one of which follows the recommendations of the intellect, and one of which is characterized by an absolute freedom to choose or decline to follow these recommendations. As the article by John Marenbon later in this edition will explain, such a theory is often described in terms of 'synchronic contingencies' whereby the will remains able at the moment of willing to choose either A or not-A. The purpose of this article is to show that such a theory can already be found in the work the first-generation Franciscans. This has been masked by the fact that these thinkers attribute the theory to John of Damascus, while Scotus attributes his account to Anselm. By distinguishing the Franciscan theory from the ideas of both these authorities, this chapter highlights both the innovative nature of the Franciscan theory of the will and some broad continuities in the tradition.

The primacy of the will also comes to the forefront of the discussion in **Krijn Pansters'** chapter on the *De exterioris et interioris hominis compositione*, by the thirteenth-century Franciscan spiritual master, David of Augsburg. Like his contemporary Bonaventure but before him – the *De exterioris* was written in the 1240s in Regensburg, while Bonaventure's famous *Itinerarium mentis in Deum* dates to 1259 – David employs Pseudo-Dionysius' paradigm of beginning, progress, and perfection to trace the steps of the spiritual life which ultimately culminates in an experience of God. In each of these stages, as in Bonaventure's work, the triad of will, understanding, and memory, originally found in Augustine's *De Trinitate*, but heavily reconfigured by Franciscans, played a significant role – although the will is crucial not only to initiating each stage but also to bringing it to completion, as the one that motivates the use of understanding and memory.

The contribution by **Marcia L. Colish** deals with a closely-related question about the passions, what we might call emotions, and, in particular, anger, in the work of Roger Bacon. The tradition of talking about the passions had long been dominated by Aristotle's view that all passions, including anger, are neutral, and their viciousness or virtuousness depends on how the will handles or responds to them. As Colish points out, the Stoic thinker Seneca condemned this view, explaining why he sees anger as an irrational passion which will always be vicious. Bacon took his inspiration from Seneca and argued that anger and other emotions are always problematic. In this regard, he moves beyond his Franciscan predecessor John of La Rochelle, who held that passions are unavoidable and thus not strictly speaking sinful. Although they can be counted as venial sins insofar as they can be controlled by reason, they do not become mortally sinful unless approved by the will; as such, they have the potential to inspire virtue, in a way that Bacon totally rejected.[20]

The contribution of **José Filipe Silva and Tuomas Vaura** addresses one of the major questions debated amongst Franciscans and other scholastics as to whether the three powers of the human soul – vegetative, responsible for bodily functions like nutrition and growth, sensitive, responsible for capturing mental images of sense objects, and rational, which draws abstract conclusions based on sense experience – represent three distinct souls or one. The authors examine this question especially in the work of Peter of Trabibus, a student of Peter John Olivi. Like many Franciscans before him, Trabibus holds that the human being, like all beings, is comprised of a plurality of substantial forms, above all, that of the rational soul and the body. In this regard, however, Trabibus goes even further to contend that the powers of the soul, such as the intellect and will, themselves comprise substantial forms, insofar as they explain or govern certain actions, and only a form can perform such a function. By contrast, many other Franciscans, such as the authors of the *Summa Halensis*, would have argued that higher powers presuppose lower ones, which allows them to remain an ultimate unity, a view which had also been affirmed by Avicenna. Although Trabibus denies the simplicity of the soul's powers, he does not think he undermines its unity. To explain why, he follows Olivi in invoking the notion of the soul's spiritual matter, which serves as a kind of common substrate which all the different substantial forms of the soul inform and which establishes their unity.

In a further contribution, **Matthew Wennemann** explores a related question concerning the soul's powers, namely, whether they are identical with the soul itself. This question was considered to be of Augustinian origin but is more accurately derived from the pseudo-Augustinian text *De spiritu et anima*.[21] Although scholars like Albert the Great raised doubts about the work's authenticity, the early Franciscan authors of the *Summa Halensis* continued to employ it liberally, because of its amenability to incorporation with

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[20] See Lydia Schumacher, "The Affections", in *Human Nature in Early Franciscan Thought: Philosophical Background and Theological Significance*, edited by L. Schumacher (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2023), 228-248.

[21] About the debates concerning the work's authorship, see Constant J. Mews, "Debating the Authority of Pseudo-Augustine's *De spiritu et anima*" and Constant J. Mews, "The Early Diffusion of the *De spiritu et anima* and Cistercian Reflection on the Powers of the Soul"; Bernard McGinn, "Introduction", in *Three Treatises on Man: A Study in Cistercian Anthropology* (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1977), 65.

Avicennian ideas, such as the thesis concerning the soul's identity with its powers.[22] As Rega Wood and Zita Toth have recently shown, early Franciscans like Alexander of Hales devised a more subtle way to affirm this identity than many of their contemporaries, which avoided certain infelicities associated with the doctrine, such as the suggestion that the soul is always 'in act' by virtue of its identity with its powers.[23] This involved arguing that the soul's powers are identical with its substance, rather than with its essence.[24] While the essence of a thing is that which makes it what it is, the substance is that in which the powers inhere, without which a thing cannot exist. This innovative solution comes to fruition in the work of Duns Scotus, who invokes his famous formal distinction to explain the relationship between the soul and its powers. As Wennemann explains, the formal distinction is "less than real but more than conceptual"; it implies that "something is really the same as something else but does not include it in its definition". According to Scotus, this relationship "holds between the divine essence and the divine intellect and will, as well as between the human soul and its Powers" on account of their univocal status. Thus, there is a real identity of the soul and its powers, as there is between the divine powers and the divine essence, which nevertheless does not efface the difference between them. This univocal relationship between God and beings also establishes the absolute freedom of both the human and divine wills.

The contribution by **Nena Bobnovik** further explores the Franciscan debates about the soul's relationship to its powers, focussing especially on William of Ockham's rejection of a position initially advanced by Henry of Ghent, a secular master who nonetheless was strongly sympathetic with Franciscans and adopted some similar positions, which Duns Scotus however strongly criticized. As Bobnovik explains, Henry held the view that the powers of the soul are defined with respect to the activities or operations they perform, such as knowing or willing. Ockham however rejects this view that the powers are defined in terms of their relations to objects, on the grounds that the powers would exist and be capable of functioning even if there were no objects to which they would relate. To demonstrate this claim, Ockham invokes a version of Avicenna's famous flying man thought experiment, which other Franciscans like John of La Rochelle and the authors of the *Summa Halensis* had used to prove the existence of the soul and of God. In Avicenna's version of the argument, we are asked to envision a man suspended in mid-air who lacked any access to his senses. In Avicenna's opinion, such a man would still be able to reflect upon himself and thus know he exists as a rational soul, which cannot cause itself and must therefore be caused by God. This kind of quasi-ontological argument for God's existence, which proves the reality of God on the basis of an understanding of who he is, was characteristic of the Franciscan tradition and contrasted sharply with the approach of Dominicans like Aquinas who sought to prove God's existence on the basis of his effects in the natural world. According to Ockham's rendition of Avicenna's argument, the 'flying man' illustration confirms that God has the power to create a rational soul before he created anything else upon which the rational soul could exercise its faculties. Thus, the powers of the soul exist and must be defined independently of the question of what they are powers-for.

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[22] Gabriel Théry, "L'authenticité du *De spiritu et anima* dans Saint Thomas et Albert le Grand", *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques* 10 (1921): 373-377.

[23] Rega Wood and Zita Toth, "*Nec idem nec aliud*: The Powers of the Soul and the Origins of the Formal Distinction", in *Early Thirteenth-Century English Franciscan Thought*, edited by L. Schumacher (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2021), 171-98.

[24] Schumacher, *Human Nature in Early Franciscan Thought*, 117-26.

The article by **Oleg Bychkov** takes the study of the Arabic sources of Franciscan thought further, showing how both of these traditions independently developed similar arguments about the reliability of sense perception which exceed anything that can be found in the Greek philosophical tradition stemming from Aristotle. As Bychkov shows, medieval Franciscans were at the forefront of a revived interest in the question whether and how the mind can grasp external reality. This debate itself created the potential for scepticism concerning the possibility of knowledge, which did not arise to the same extent from the tradition of, say, Thomas Aquinas. While the latter invested considerable confidence in the senses as a basis for rational knowledge, the Franciscans pioneered an account which foregrounded the active role played by the mind in informing our perception of reality, as José Filipe Silva has also recently shown in numerous works.[25]

As Bychkov illustrates, this 'active' account of cognition introduced the possibility of distorting perceptions of reality and thus gave rise to concerns about the reliability of the senses, which preoccupied the fourteenth-century Franciscans Bychkov discusses, including Peter Aureol (d. 1322), William of Ockham (d. 1347), Walter Chatton (d. 1343), and Adam of Wodeham (d. 1358). Fascinatingly, these Franciscans mentioned a number of examples of mistaken sense perception, such as hallucinations, dreams, and optical illusions, which can also be found in the works of many Islamic authors, who influenced the Franciscans, above all, Avicenna and later Averroes. In light of these examples, Bychkov shows how both subsequent Islamic thinkers as well as his fourteenth-century Franciscan theologians developed two different approaches to thinking about the reliability of the senses, the direct realist or the anti-realist. The former denies that there is any intermediary, such as an intelligible species, between the external thing and the mind. On this account, consequently, the mind makes direct contact with reality, at least in cases where there is no deception of the senses, such as in hallucinations or optical illusions. What Bychkov calls the relationist view is a version of this account, which "claims that sensory perception is simply the process itself of relating to or interacting with an external object". By contrast, the anti-realist position holds that "our entire phenomenal picture is a mental construct" and does not have to correlate with "things out there", and is held by the early Ockham and Aureol. The later Ockham, as well as

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[25] José Filipe Silva, "Medieval Theories of Active Perception: An Overview", in *Active Perception in the History of Philosophy: From Plato to Modern Philosophy*, edited by J. F. Silva and M. Yrjönsuuri (New York: Springer, 2014), 117-146; José Filipe Silva, "The Chameleonic Mind: The Activity versus the Actuality of Perception", in *Medieval Perceptual Puzzles: Theories of Sense Perception in the 13th and 14th Centuries*, edited by E. Baltuta (Leiden: Brill, 2020), 38-72.

Chatton and Wodeham, however, hold the view that while human perception may not perfectly ‘map on’ to external reality, it gives us a more or less accurate insight into the nature of the world around us.

Jordan Lavender’s contribution further explores the nature of the sensory powers in William of Ockham and Walter Chatton, in particular, their ‘materiality’. As Lavender shows, Ockham posits that sensation and cognition differ in that the former is “material and embodied” while the latter is not. This tended to be a common opinion until Ockham’s time, namely, that the subject of sensation—the faculty or power that senses—is material, whereas the subject of thought, that is, the power that thinks, is not. However, Chatton rejected the notion that sensory cognition is distinguished from intellection by virtue of its materiality, in what became an increasingly common view, starting in the second quarter of the fourteenth century. One significant reason Chatton gives in support of his view is that, as Lavender puts it, “nothing about the nature of *sensory experience* indicates that it is material or embodied in a way that requires a distinct subject from the subject of thought”. This argument is consistent with what Silva has described as an ‘active’ account of perception, typical of Franciscan thinkers and their later medieval confrères, in which sensory perception nevertheless involves a kind of active cognitive grasp of a sense object.[26]

John Marenbon examines the Franciscan doctrine of free will, as it is treated by Scotus, Peter John Olivi and Robert Grosseteste, who argue in different ways that the will has the power to choose between opposites at one and the same moment. In other words, the will is not simply capable of preferring A over B, or A at one time and not-A at another, as many previous authors had affirmed, but instead discriminates simultaneously between A and not-A. As Marenbon notes, “this position has often been used to support, and is interpreted in the light of, the view that Scotus was a great modal innovator, who introduced the idea of synchronic possibilities, thereby opening the way to contemporary theories of possible worlds”. However, Marenbon contests the notion that the Scotist doctrine of the will should be interpreted as an attempt to articulate a new modal theory. On his account, the goal of positing the possibility of “synchronic contingencies” was mainly to assert the absolute freedom of the will, not only in human beings but also in God. In the work of Scotus, for instance, such freedom requires that the will retains the power to will opposites in the same instance, for otherwise, it would be necessitated to one decision over the other. Likewise, for Scotus, God’s will must remain contingent, or undetermined to one option over another at the moment of willing, otherwise his will would pre-determine human choices. On this basis, Marenbon draws the conclusion that the typically Franciscan tendency to describe the will as capable of willing simultaneous opposites is primarily concerned with preserving freedom, as Franciscans understood it.

The final article by **Zita Toth** deals with the powers of angels. This topic was very relevant to the study of the human soul and its powers, at least in the view of Franciscans, for whom angels are more like than unlike humans, though they lack human limitations. The question Toth explores specifically concerns the materiality of angels. This might seem surprising, since angels are generally regarded as purely spiritual or immaterial beings. In the Franciscan tradition, however, the tendency quickly developed to adopt Avicebron's universal hylomorphism, according to which all substances other than God – including spiritual substances like angels and the rational soul – must be comprised of matter of some kind, namely, a spiritual or intelligible matter, in order to be regarded as substances in the full sense of the term. Among the other reasons Toth highlights why Franciscans regarded angels as subject to material composition is that they have qualities that belong to material beings, in particular, the ability to change, not only in the sense that they are created by God and thus move from non-being into being but also insofar as change occurs in the angelic intellect when it receives influence from another angel or God. The view that change implies matter was already found in Franciscans like Bonaventure and Peter John Olivi, who set the terms for the debate of the early fourteenth-century Franciscans Toth discusses, including Gonsalvo of Spain, Duns Scotus (or at least work attributed to him), Peter of Trabibus, who, as we have seen, was heavily influenced by Olivi, and Peter Auriol. As Toth explains, these thinkers agree not only that angels possess some material component, but they also present four similar arguments as to why this is the case. The first argument from passibility entails that angels undergo change, which implies materiality; the second argument is that all beings are comprised of act and potency which entails form and matter, respectively; the third, that matter necessarily underlies all further accidents, including mental acts and volitions; and fourthly, that the individuation of angels within a species requires matter. Nevertheless, fourteenth-century Franciscans disagreed as to whether the matter in angels is the same as the matter in corporeal beings, insofar as it shares some of the same characteristics, such as being perfected by form and entailing potency.

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[26] Silva, “Medieval Theories of Active Perception: An Overview”.

As the foregoing summary of the articles in this issue confirms, a number of common threads run through medieval Franciscan debates about the powers of the soul, which center on the unity-and-difference of the powers in relation to one another, the question of the soul's matter-form composition, as well as that of angels, the relationship between the body and the soul, and the priority of the will over the intellect. These signature ideas of the Franciscan intellectual tradition stood in stark contrast to the priorities of Dominicans, above all, Thomas Aquinas, whose ideas have been well-studied elsewhere. Thus, the current special issue seeks to contribute to a deeper understanding of the distinctive aspects of the Franciscan tradition while at the same time showcasing the diversity of approaches to its development

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