1. Introduction

The end of the late medieval period is an era of the subtle elaboration of the results of philosophical discussions conducted over hundreds of years. Hence it may seem that groundbreaking innovations are not to be expected from a time, when the last scholastics were eagerly trying to preserve the treasures of medieval learning for the younger, more humanist oriented generations.

Such was the case at the late medieval University of Erfurt. Given the general importance of William Ockham, John Buridan and their followers for this notable German center of via moderna, it is not surprising that in the late 15th and early 16th centuries Johannes Carnificis de Lutrea, Jodocus Trutfetter and Bartholomeus Arnoldi de Usingen were discussing problems raised by the philosophical psychology of these authorities. In the following I shall sketch one development in which some problems were elaborated in the writings of the Erfurtian scholars.

2. Buridan on Parts of Animals as Animals

In the first redaction of his Questions on Aristotle’s De anima, Buridan discussed the question of whether the animal soul is in every part of the body. To answer the question he faced the objection that the affirmative answer would imply that all quantitative parts of an animal, such as their feet and heads, are to be called animals. So he concluded that the full definition of animal must include the notion of totality and that the definition of animal as ‘sensitive animated substance’ without the additional word ‘total’ is insufficient.1

1 John Buridan, Questiones in tres libros De Anima Aristotelis, De prima lectura (= QDA), II, 6, 76-99, ed. B. Patar, Louvain 1991, 281-2. The authenticity of the edited text of the
In the third redaction of *Questions*, Buridan elaborates his answer to the problem, which he now considers in the form: “whether any of the parts of an animal is one animal.” The form is similar for plants and humans. The formulation shows more clearly the obvious consequence that if that were true, we would be forced to admit that there is a plurality of horses in one horse or many humans in one human being. In this phase he admits that the problem of partial animals is particularly difficult. In the first redaction he had responded to the *dubium* rather briefly, simply noting that it could be solved by the correct definition of ‘animal’. Now he devotes a considerable amount of space to it and the form of response is more complicated.  

Since the answer will be different regarding humans, whose souls are not divisible, Buridan leaves the answer for that part to the questions regarding the third book of *De anima*. The answer regarding non-human animals is presented in two parts, in terms of two different senses of the term ‘animal’. The first follows a homogeneity principle, according to which the animal sensitive soul is composed of quantitative parts having the same nature. In this sense the term ‘animal’ is a properly substantial term, which means here that it is not a connotative one. Since the animal soul is homogenously extended throughout the whole body, every part of an animal is composed of matter and sensitive form. Therefore, if ‘animal’ stands simply for such a composition, then every part of a homogenous whole receives the same substantial predicates as the whole, as it is common to say in the case of air: every part of air is air.  

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3 Buridan, *QDA* II, 7, ed. Sobol (above n. 2), 86; 92-100.  


5 Buridan, *QDA* II, 7, ed. Sobol (above n. 2), 97: “Ergo quantum ad istam dubita-