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## Editorial

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In his commentary on Plato's *Timaeus*, the 4<sup>th</sup>-century philosopher Chalcidius expands on the Platonic theme of praising the senses. In his view, the sense of sight is not merely useful, but even necessary for both theoretical and practical philosophy. By virtue of sight we can observe the heavens and stars, which stimulates us to search for a god (theology), try to understand the causes of temporal things (natural philosophy), and understand the origins of numbers and dimensions (mathematics) by counting the alternations of day and night, the months, and years. Observing the perfect motion of the stars, we can rectify the motions of our own souls and cultivate our passions and morals, which is one of the foundations of ethics, economics, and politics.<sup>1</sup> Although the sense of sight brings more evidence (since nothing is as certain as a thing seen with one's own eyes), the sense of hearing is broader in scope, since a voice we hear informs us not only about the things that are present, but also about the ones that are absent.<sup>2</sup> Nine centuries later, the medieval scholar Roger Bacon also appraised the sense of sight in the introduction to his *Perspectiva*. We perceive everything in the heavens and on earth through vision and only vision constitutes a true experience. Unlike the animals, which are concerned with things that can be tasted and touched, genuine human wisdom is based on visual perception. Hence, according to Bacon, the sense of sight actually contributes to the dignity of the human being.<sup>3</sup>

Despite these occasional *laudationes* of the senses, philosophers since antiquity seem to have focused more on the higher cognitive power of the human being – viz. the intellect – as being both more reliable and capable of reaching genuine knowledge, and more noble and similar to God's own cognitive equipment.

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1 Chalcidius, *Timaeus a Calcidio translatus commentarioque instructus*. Ed. J. H. Waszink. London–Leiden, Brill 1975, pp. 269–270, § 264–265.

2 *Ibid.*, p. 272, § 267.

3 Roger Bacon, *Perspectiva I*, 1, 1. In: Lindberg, D. C., *Roger Bacon and the Origins of Perspectiva in the Middle Ages*. Oxford, Oxford University Press 1996, pp. 2–4.

Nevertheless, the inquiries of some historians of philosophy in recent decades have shown that philosophers between Plato and Kant were much more interested in the realm of the senses than one might expect.<sup>4</sup> The present volume is intended as a partial contribution towards such historiographic endeavours.<sup>5</sup> All topics under consideration here are related to sensory perception – or, in scholastic terminology, to operations of both the external and the internal sensory powers. Hence, not only the notion of sensory perception, its necessary components, its mechanism, and the role of more complex psychological phenomena (such as attention or perceptual judgement) are investigated here, but also the number and roles of the so-called internal senses, or the ability to grasp particulars which had traditionally been ascribed chiefly to the senses. Investigating these issues, the authors of the papers focus on several thinkers active between the 11<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century, conceived broadly as scholastics (ecclesiastic teachers, university scholars, or lecturers at *studia* of different religious orders, such as Anselm of Canterbury, Roger Bacon, Peter Olivi, John Duns Scotus, Peter Auriol, Francisco Suárez), or their interlocutors – whether authors who were read by scholastics and exerted influence on them (such as the Muslim scholar Alhacen), or some contemporaries active outside the universities who entered debate with the scholastics (e.g., Gemistos Plethon, Valeriano Magni, and others).

This volume aims to refute the disparaging image of scholastic philosophy as a rather homogeneous tradition of commentaries on Aristotle lacking in originality. Although Aristotelianism was, of course, a very important philosophical paradigm among the scholastics, their works also evince many features and tenets of Platonic or Augustinian origin. Several issues characteristic for Platonism and Augustinianism are discussed in this volume – for example, the role of attention in perception, the extramissionist theory of vision, the metaphysics of light, the illumination theory, the first-person perspective, and self-reflection. The topics investigated primarily in Aristotelianism include the ontology of sensibles, their causal efficacy, the role of the medium, and the distinction between the internal senses.

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- 4 Cf. e.g. the pioneering study by K. H. Tachau – Tachau, K. H., *Vision and Certitude in the Age of Ockham. Optics, Epistemology and the Foundations of Semantics, 1250–1345*. Leiden, Brill 1988; or more recent collected volumes on theories of perception from ancient to early modern philosophy – Knuuttila, S. – Kärkkäinen, P. (eds.), *Theories of Perception in Medieval and Early Modern Philosophy*. Dordrecht, Springer 2008; and Silva, J. F. – Yrjönsuuri, M. (eds.), *Active Perception in the History of Philosophy: From Plato to Modern Philosophy*. Dordrecht, Springer 2014.
- 5 The papers included in this volume have been selected from among the papers presented at the conference *Issues of Perception between Medieval and Early Modern Philosophy* held under the auspices of the project *Collective Identity in the Social Networks of Medieval Europe* (IRP 201548) at the University of Ostrava in October 2016. The edition of this special issue is also a result of the research funded by the Czech Science Foundation as the project GA ČR 14-37038G “Between Renaissance and Baroque: Philosophy and Knowledge in the Czech Lands within the Wider European Context”.

The earliest of the authors considered here is Anselm of Canterbury. In his paper “Proslogion 6: ...sentire non nisi cognoscere aut non nisi ad cognoscendum est...” **Marek Otisk** presents a conceptual analysis of the notion of sensory perception in Anselm’s philosophy and its role in his theology, anthropology and epistemology, showing that (and how) these issues of perception were treated in Western Europe before the famous Greek and Muslim psychological writings were translated into Latin and assimilated by Latin scholars.

The influences of one of these new sources translated from the Arabic are traced by **José Filipe Silva** in his “Perceptual Judgement in Late Medieval Perspectivist Psychology”. He ponders whether and how perception also includes the higher and more complex cognitive and evaluative processes. The focus of his paper on perceptual judgments is on the intellectual legacy of the famous Muslim scientist Ibn al-Haytham (known to the Latins as Alhacen) as developed by the so-called Latin perspectivists – Roger Bacon, John Peckham, and Blasius of Parma.

The famous Franciscan John Duns Scotus is discussed by two papers in this volume. Whereas in his paper “Scotus on Sense, Medium, and Sensible Object” **David González Ginocchio** offers an interpretation of the theory of sensation in Scotus’s early works, focusing on his less studied *Questiones super De anima*, **Lukáš Novák** in “More Aristotelian than Aristotle. Duns Scotus on Cognizing Singulars” questions the traditional conviction that singulars are grasped directly only by the senses, while universals are primarily understood by the intellect.

The paper “Attention, Perceptual Content, and Mirrors: Two Medieval Models of Active Perception in Peter Olivi and Peter Auriol” by **Lukáš Lička** considers two of Scotus’s Franciscan confrères – the elder Peter Olivi and the younger Peter Auriol – presenting their different accounts of the active character of perception. Olivi emphasizes attention as a condition of every perceptual act, modelling it – in a quasi-extramissionist manner – as a virtual ray; Auriol ascribes to the senses the ability not only to receive information, but also to process it and produce the perceptual content.

More than a century later, in the mid-15<sup>th</sup> century, Latin scholastics received new incentives from Greek scholars such as Plethon, Bessarion, and Scholarios. These impulses – particularly Plethon’s critique of the Aristotelian theory of vision from the position of a Platonic scholar – are investigated by **Apostolos N. Stavelas** in his paper “Plethon’s Critique of Aristotle’s Theory of Sense Perception in the Light of the 15<sup>th</sup>-Century Controversy on the Philosophy of Plato and Aristotle”.

Several Jesuit scholastics of the late 16<sup>th</sup> and early 17<sup>th</sup> century, both well versed in the medieval scholastic tradition and willing to contribute to this tradition with their own original insights, are investigated by **Daniel Heider**. In his “The Internal Sense(s) in Early Jesuit Scholasticism” he focuses on the internal senses and inquires how a topic popular throughout the Aristotelian tradition – viz. how many internal senses there are and what the criteria for distinguishing them are – was

dealt with by the early Jesuits Francisco de Toledo, Manuel de Góis (one of the so-called *Conimbricenses*), and Francisco Suárez.

Finally, **Tomáš Nejeschleba** in his paper “The Role of Senses and Sense Perception in Valeriano Magni’s Philosophy” presents the lesser known 17<sup>th</sup>-century Capuchin Valeriano Magni, who was born in Italy but lived in the Czech lands since childhood. In contrast to the Jesuit Aristotelian leanings, Magni’s theory of sensory cognition seems to be endowed with some features traditionally associated with Augustinianism – e.g. the metaphysics of light or the soul’s active processing of information received by the senses.

*On behalf of the editors*  
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