



## The Early Albertus Magnus and his Arabic Sources on the Theory of the Soul

Dag Nikolaus Hasse

*University of Würzburg*<sup>1</sup>

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### Abstract

Albertus Magnus favours the Aristotelian definition of the soul as the first actuality or perfection of a natural body having life potentially. But he interprets Aristotle's vocabulary in a way that it becomes compatible with the separability of the soul from the body. The term "perfectio" is understood as referring to the soul's activity only, not to its essence. The term "forma" is avoided as inadequate for defining the soul's essence. The soul is understood as a substance which exists independently of its actions and its body. The article shows that Albertus' terminological decisions continue a tradition reaching from the Greek commentators, and John Philoponos in particular, to Avicenna. Albertus' position on another important issue is also influenced by Arabic sources. His defense of the unity of the soul's vegetative, animal and rational parts rests on arguments from Avicenna and Averroes. It is shown that Averroes' position on the problem is not clearcut: he advocates the unity thesis, but also teaches the plurality of the generic and individual forms in man. This double stance is visible in the Latin reception of Averroes' works, and also in Albertus, who presents Averroes both as supporter and opponent of the plurality thesis.

### Keywords

Albertus Magnus, Avicenna, Averroes, medieval Latin philosophy, Arabic philosophy, *De anima*, philosophy of the soul

Albertus Magnus' philosophy of the soul has received a good amount of scholarly attention. It has always been part of these efforts to understand Albertus'

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dependence upon Arabic sources in Latin translation. In his early works, such as the *De homine* and the *Commentary on the Sentences*, which he wrote when he first came to Paris in the early 1240s, Albertus incorporates an enormous range of philosophical sources, among them many of Arabic origin, with the result that his standpoint is coloured by Arabic theories. In later works, for instance in *De anima* of the 1250s, Albertus distances himself from some of these philosophical traditions. It was his apparent motive to formulate a philosophical standpoint closer to Aristotle's.

In the literature on Albertus' psychology and its Arabic sources there is a theme which deserves closer attention than it has hitherto received: the Arabic background to Albertus' definition of the soul. Scholarship of the past few decades has focused on other topics: Albertus' intellect theory and his faculty psychology.<sup>2</sup> On the surface, there does not seem much to discuss. Albertus criticizes what he calls Plato's definition of the soul as an incorporeal substance which is self-moving and, in virtue of this, moves the body,<sup>3</sup> and he distances himself from Seneca's and Alfred of Sareshel's definitions, because they do not define the soul with respect to the body.<sup>4</sup> As a result, Albertus sides with, or at

<sup>2</sup> Examples are Alain de Libera, *Albert le Grand et la philosophie* (Paris, 1990), Dag Nikolaus Hasse, "Das Lehrstück von den vier Intellekten in der Scholastik: von den arabischen Quellen bis zu Albertus Magnus", *Recherches de Théologie et Philosophie médiévales* 66 (1999), 21-77, Hendryk Anzulewicz, "Konzeptionen und Perspektiven der Sinneswahrnehmung im System Alberts des Grossen", *Micrologus* 10 (2002), 199-238, Hendryk Anzulewicz, "Entwicklung und Stellung der Intellekttheorie im System des Albertus Magnus", *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du moyen âge* 70 (2003), 165-218, Alain de Libera, *Métaphysique et noétique: Albert le Grand* (Paris, 2005), Loris Sturlese, *Vernunft und Glück: die Lehre vom 'intellectus adeptus' und die mentale Glückseligkeit bei Albert dem Großen* (Münster, 2005), Loris Sturlese, "Intellectus adeptus: L'intelletto e i suoi limiti secondo Alberto il Grande e la sua scuola", in *Intellect et imagination dans la Philosophie Médiévale*, ed. M.C. Pacheco & J.F. Meirinhos, 3 vols (Turnhout, 2006), 1: 305-321, Jörn Müller, "Der Einfluß der arabischen Intellektspekulation auf die Ethik des Albertus Magnus", in *Wissen über Grenzen: Arabisches Wissen und lateinisches Mittelalter*, ed. A. Speer & L. Wegener (Berlin & New York, 2006), 545-568.

<sup>3</sup> Albertus Magnus, *De homine (Summa de creaturis, secunda pars)*, Opera omnia, ed. A. Borgnet, vol. 35 (Paris, 1896), qu. 3, 20: "Dicit enim Plato quod anima est substantia incorporea movens corpus." Cf. qu. 3, a. 1, sol., 28: "Dicendum quod anima non movetur aliqua specie motus, ut probant philosophi, Aristoteles et Avicenna, Averroes, Constabulinus, Alfarabius et Collectanus [i.e. Gundisalvi] et multi alii naturales. Movet autem corpus ipsa existens immobilis per se."

<sup>4</sup> Albertus Magnus, *De homine*, qu. 3, 20: "Seneca autem dicit quod anima est spiritus intellectualis ad habitudinem in se et in corpore ordinatus. In libro secundo De motu cordis sic diffinitur: Anima est substantia incorporea, susceptiva illuminationum, quae sunt a primo." Cf. qu. 3, a. 2, sol., 30: "Dicendum quod istae duae diffinitiones datae sunt de anima in comparatione ad optimum, et quia hoc percipit sine corpore, propter hoc non faciunt mentionem de corpore."

least shows his clear sympathies for, Aristotle's definition as formulated in *De anima* II.1 (412a27): "We shall therefore posit the definition of the soul, as stated at the beginning of the second book of *De anima*, where the philosopher says: The soul is the first actuality of a natural body having life potentially": *Anima est primus actus corporis physici potentia vitam habentis*.<sup>5</sup> Albertus' Arabic sources, Avicenna (Ibn Sīnā) and Averroes (Ibn Rushd) in particular, also adopt Aristotle's definition. Albertus does not seem to do more than to continue the Peripatetic tradition of defining the soul as the actuality of the body. Finally, it is well known that Albertus Magnus—in line with many other scholastic writers—is much influenced by Avicenna's *De anima*, but the main body of this influence concerns Avicenna's faculty psychology and not the theory of the soul proper. The first four chapters of Avicenna's *De anima*, which present his concept of the soul, are rarely quoted and discussed in the Latin West—even by Albertus Magnus, the most knowledgeable of all Latin readers of Avicenna.<sup>6</sup> The chapters I.1-4 were nevertheless influential, both among the masters of arts and the theologians.<sup>7</sup> Several scholars have pointed out the fact that Albertus' definition and theory of the soul is coloured by Arabic sources: Albertus follows Avicenna in teaching that "one must distinguish what the soul is in itself from what it is in relation to the body",<sup>8</sup> and he adopts Avicenna's contention that Aristotle's analysis of the soul "was focused on the function and not the essence of the soul".<sup>9</sup> These are general statements, which need to be supplemented with evidence. This is the aim of the present paper.

My focus is on the early Albertus Magnus, and, specifically, the author of the *Summa de homine* and of the *Commentary on the Sentences*, who still treats Greek and Arabic sources with equal sympathy. Since the older Albertus changes his mind on several issues, it is important not to confuse his writings

<sup>5</sup> Albertus Magnus, *De homine*, qu. 4, 31, *Über den Menschen: De homine*, select ed. and German transl. by H. Anzulewicz & J. R. Söder (Hamburg, 2004), 46 (I cite qu. 4 a.1 and qu. 7 a. 1 after this latter edition): "Ponamus ergo diffinitionem animae, quae ponitur in secundo De anima in principio, ubi sic dicit Philosophus:..."

<sup>6</sup> Scholastic references to the first four chapters of Avicenna's *De anima* are listed in Dag Nikolaus Hasse, *Avicenna's De Anima in the Latin West: The Formation of a Peripatetic Philosophy of the Soul, 1160-1300* (London & Turin, 2000), 234-240.

<sup>7</sup> As shown by Bernardo Carlos Bazán, "The Human Soul: Form and Substance? Thomas Aquinas' Critique of Eclectic Aristotelianism", *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du moyen âge* 64 (1997), 95-126.

<sup>8</sup> Richard C. Dales, *The Problem of the Rational Soul in the Thirteenth Century* (Leiden & New York & Cologne, 1995), 90.

<sup>9</sup> Markus L. Führer, "Albert the Great", in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. E. N. Zalta (Spring 2006 Edition).

from different periods. The three major Arabic figures on whom Albertus draws are Avicenna, Averroes and Ibn Gabirol, the Jewish philosopher of eleventh-century Andalusia.<sup>10</sup> The latter was known in Latin as Avicbron. Ibn Gabirol, as a Jew, usually figures in histories of Jewish philosophy; in this context, he is subsumed under Arabic philosophy because his philosophical writings were all in Arabic.

### 1. Albertus' Theory of the Soul

The first section of this article is devoted to Albertus' theory itself, the second section to the question whether Albertus prolongs Arabic traditions in this matter. Albertus' theory will be described with respect to four topics: the definition of the soul, the composite or simple nature of the soul, the relation of the soul to its faculties, and the unity or plurality of substance.

(1) First: the definition of the soul. As I have indicated above, Albertus, in *De homine*, shows his preference for the Aristotelian definition as the first actuality of a natural body. But Albertus rarely calls the soul the form of the body. Instead, he prefers the terms *actus primus* or *perfectio* (*actus* is the term chosen by the Greek-Latin translator of Aristotle, *perfectio* by the Arabic-Latin translator),<sup>11</sup> because these terms make the soul less dependent upon the body.<sup>12</sup> It is in accordance with this standpoint that Albertus does not maintain that the soul imparts corporeality to matter—whereas this is exactly what Thomas Aquinas teaches later. Aquinas, famously, insists that the soul is the form of the body on the grounds that it is the soul's essence which is united to the body; this is a major divide between Albertus and his pupil.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Less influential than these three authors is Qusṭā ibn Lūqā, *De differentia spiritus et animae*; Albertus invokes his authority, under the name of "Constabulinus", in support of the thesis that the soul is a substance in: *De homine*, qu. 2, a. 1, sed contra 1, 11b, and that the soul is incorporeal, *ibid.*, qu. 2, a. 2, sed contra 1-5, 14, and against Plato's definition of the soul as self-moving, *ibid.*, qu. 3, a.1, sol., 28a. Further references are in qu. 1, a. 1, 9b and in qu. 4, a. 5, 49b.

<sup>11</sup> The Greek-Latin translation of II,1 412a27-28 is printed in: Albertus Magnus, *De anima*, Opera omnia . . . edenda . . . curavit Institutum Alberti Magni Coloniense, vol. 7.1, ed. C. Stroick (Münster, 1968), 66; the Arabic-Latin is in: *Averroes, Commentarium magnum in Aristotelis De anima libros*, ed. F. S. Crawford (Cambridge, Mass., 1953), 136. See the convenient list of Aristotelian definitions current in 12th- and 13th-century translation literature in Daniel A. Callus, "The Treatise of John Blund 'On the Soul'", in *Autour d'Aristote: recueil d'études de philosophie ancienne et médiévale offert à Monseigneur A. Mansion* (Louvain, 1955), 490-491.

<sup>12</sup> Albertus Magnus, *De homine*, qu. 4, a. 1, ad 6, 35a.

<sup>13</sup> For an analysis of Thomas' position within its historical context, see Bazán, "The Human

(2) The second topic, the composite nature of the soul, concerns the thesis which is usually termed “universal hylomorphism”. The partisans of this theory claim that all immaterial beings, such as the soul and the intelligences, are composed of matter and form, so that there are in man two kinds of matter: a spiritual matter intrinsic to the soul and the corporeal matter of the body extrinsic to the soul. Albertus rejects this doctrine. He traces its sources to the writings of Ibn Gabirol and Dominicus Gundisalvi, who is dependent upon Ibn Gabirol.<sup>14</sup> As has long been shown, the doctrine of universal hylomorphism was accepted by a number of Franciscan thinkers: Roger Bacon, Bonaventure, John Pecham and others.<sup>15</sup> Its main argumentative advantage was that it offered an explanation of the difference between creatures and God, in particular between angels and God, because angels could be described as consisting of spiritual matter and form, whereas God is simple. The theory’s main drawback, in the eyes of Albertus Magnus, is that it excludes the possibility that any being could exist without matter. If even the human soul is not entirely immaterial, it cannot have true intellectual knowledge.<sup>16</sup> What is Albertus’ own view on the question of whether the soul is simple or composite? He rejects universal hylomorphism, but he does not maintain that the soul is simple. Rather, it is composed of *quod est* and *quo est*.<sup>17</sup> Albertus here uses a

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Soul”, 113-126; for an analytical interpretation see Robert Pasnau & Christopher Shields, *The Philosophy of Aquinas* (Boulder, Colo., 2004), 153-174. On Albertus see Dales, *The Problem of the Rational Soul*, 89-92, and, still informative, Arthur Schneider, *Die Psychologie Alberts des Grossen*, Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie des Mittelalters, vol. 4.6 and 4.6 (Münster, 1903 and 1906), 20-21.

<sup>14</sup> Albertus Magnus, *De homine*, qu. 7, a. 3, sol., 102b: „et hoc dicit expresse Collectanus“ (i.e. Gundisalvi); idem, *Commentarii in libros Sententiarum*, Opera omnia, ed. A. Borgnet, vol. 25-30 (Paris, 1894), II, dist. 1 A, a. 4, 14b: „et si objicitur de Platone in libro Fontis vitae...“. In later writings, such as the *De anima*, Albertus identifies Avicbron as the author of *Fons vitae*: “Ab omnibus superius inductis dissentit Avicbron in libro quem Fontem vitae appellavit” (*De anima*, lib. III, tr. 2, cap. 9, 189).

<sup>15</sup> Erich Kleineidam, *Das Problem der hylomorphen Zusammensetzung der geistigen Substanzen im 13. Jahrhundert, behandelt bis Thomas von Aquin* (Breslau, 1930); James A. Weisheipl, “Albertus Magnus and Universal Hylomorphism: Avicbron. A Note on 13th-Century Augustinianism”, in *Albert the Great: Commemorative Essays*, ed. F. J. Kovach & R. W. Shahan (Norman, Okla., 1980), 239-260; John F. Wippel, ‘Essence and Existence’, in *The Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy* ed. N. Kretzmann et al. (Cambridge, 1982), 385-410, esp. 408-410, with further literature.

<sup>16</sup> Erich Kleineidam, *Das Problem der hylomorphen Zusammensetzung*, 53-54; Weisheipl, ‘Albertus Magnus and Universal Hylomorphism’, 257.

<sup>17</sup> Albertus Magnus, *De homine*, qu. 7, a. 3; *Sent.*, I, dist. 3, a. 33; *Sent.*, II, dist. 1 A, a. 4; *Sent.*, II, dist. 3, a. 4.

well-known distinction by Boethius. The Boethian distinction itself is not free from obscurity. One of Boethius' claims is that the *quod est* is the carrier or *suppositum*, such as man, whereas the *quo est* is the form, humanity.<sup>18</sup> In Albertus' adoption, the *quod est* is the individual being which underlies the essence and in which the essence exists; the *quo est* is the essence in actuality, which is actualized and individuated through the properties of the *quod est*.<sup>19</sup> Albertus concludes: "In this sense I say that the soul is a composite substance": *hoc modo dico animam esse substantiam compositam*.<sup>20</sup> This position is not original. Albertus shares the adoption of the Boethian formula with many scholastic writers. Its argumentative aim is to explain the individual existence of the soul: its essence exists and is individuated by the *quod est*. In sum, universal hylomorphism, the theory of Ibn Gabirol, is an example of an Arabic theory which Albertus opposes in order to formulate his own viewpoint.

(3) The third theme concerns the relation of the soul to the faculties. Albertus distinguishes, in his *Commentary on the Sentences*, two respects in which this question can be discussed: the soul can be considered with respect to its being or with respect to its operation. In the first sense, with respect to its being, the faculties follow from the soul's being and are derived from it. The faculties thus do not belong to the soul's being; they are properties or accidents of the soul. In the second respect, insofar as the soul is a substance in action, the soul is a *totum potestativum* (or *totum potentiale*), a "totality of powers". Its power is perfected in its faculties; its total power is composed of the particular powers of the faculties, and hence the faculties are substantial for the soul, because without them the soul is not perfected in its power: *sunt substantiales ei sine quibus non completur in perfectione sui posse*.<sup>21</sup> "Substantial for the soul" means that the faculties are necessary properties of the soul and, as such, are part of the definition of the soul as substantial form. But it is important that

<sup>18</sup> Pius Künzle, *Das Verhältnis der Seele zu ihren Potenzen: Problemgeschichtliche Untersuchungen von Augustin bis und mit Thomas von Aquin* (Freiburg, Switzerland, 1956), 32.

<sup>19</sup> Albertus Magnus, *Sent.*, I, dist. 3, a. 33, 138b: "Id enim *quod est* est hoc aliquid, quod praedicabile est de eo quod est. *Quo est*... Boetius ponit *esse* et hoc est essentia secundum actum, quem habet in ipso *quod est*, id est in hoc aliquid vel in isto supposito; unde in talibus individuatio ipsius *esse* est a proprietatibus quae consequuntur ipsum *quod est*". Cf. Künzle, *Das Verhältnis der Seele zu ihren Potenzen*, 149-150.

<sup>20</sup> Albertus Magnus, *Sent.*, I, dist. 3, a. 33, 138b. In *Sent.*, II, dist. 3, a. 4, 68-69, Albertus uses the terms *fundamentum* and *esse*.

<sup>21</sup> Albertus Magnus, *Sent.*, I, dist. 3, a. 34, sol., 140a. The concept of a *totum potestativum* or a *totum potentiale* is discussed already in Albertus' *De homine*, qu. 6, 87b ("Ex his patet quod divisio animae per vegetabile et sensibile et rationale est divisio totius potentialis"); *ibid.*, qu. 7, a. 1, ad 8, 95b; *ibid.*, qu. 8, a. 1, sol., 105a.

Albertus writes “not perfected in its power”, *sui posse*. Because he thus distances himself from contemporary Franciscan writers, who claimed that the soul is not completed as a substance without the faculties. For Albertus, the soul is incomplete only with respect to its power, not with respect to its substance—to which the faculties do not belong.<sup>22</sup>

(4) This leads to the fourth topic: the question of the unity or plurality of substance. Albertus, already in *De homine*, rejects the idea that there are three perfections in man, i.e. the vegetative, the sensitive and the rational, because then man would not be one.<sup>23</sup> As is well known, in the later thirteenth century the question whether there are one or several forms in man was the subject of one of the most heated controversies in Middle Ages. In the centre of the dispute was Thomas Aquinas’ contention that there is only one substantial form in man.<sup>24</sup> This was not a problematic thesis in the decades before Thomas Aquinas, in the first half of the thirteenth century, when the great majority of theologians and masters of arts held that there is only one substance in human beings.<sup>25</sup> Albertus says very explicitly that the thesis of a plurality of substances is not true and is in conflict both with the philosophers and the *sancti* Augustine and Boethius.<sup>26</sup> It is specific to Albertus that he sees a consensus of philosophy and theology in favour of the unity thesis. Other authors, for instance the commentator Richard Rufus, count Aristotle among the pluralists, the argument being that Aristotle in *De generatione animalium* II.3 (736a36-b29) maintains that in the development of the embryo the vegetative soul precedes the sensitive soul, which in turn precedes the intellectual soul.<sup>27</sup>

Let us recapitulate. First, we have seen that Albertus prefers Aristotle’s definition of the soul as the first actuality of a natural body to other definitions, but avoids calling the soul the form of the body. Second, Albertus rejects Ibn

<sup>22</sup> See Odon Lottin, “L’identité de l’âme et de ses facultés avant saint Thomas d’Aquin”, in Odon Lottin, *Psychologie et morale aux XII<sup>e</sup> et XIII<sup>e</sup> siècles*, vol. 1 (Louvain et al., 1942), 483-502, esp. 497-501; Künzle, *Das Verhältnis der Seele zu ihren Potenzen*, 150-154.

<sup>23</sup> Albertus Magnus, *De homine*, qu. 4, a. 1, ad 7, 35-36, and *ibid.*, qu. 7, a. 1, sol, 93, *Über den Menschen*, 104: “Dicendum secundum omnes sanctos et philosophos et naturales quod vegetabile, sensibile et rationale sunt in homine substantia una et anima una et actus unus”.

<sup>24</sup> For an introduction to these disputes see Étienne Gilson, *History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages* (New York, 1955), 416-420.

<sup>25</sup> As shown by Daniel A. Callus, “The Origins of the Problem of the Unity of Form”, *The Thomist* 24 (1961), 257-285, esp. 281-282.

<sup>26</sup> As in n. 23 above. Cf. also *ibid.*, qu. 7, a. 1, ad 1, 97a.

<sup>27</sup> Daniel A. Callus, “Two Early Oxford Masters on the Problem of the Plurality of Forms: Adam of Buckfield—Richard Rufus of Cornwall”, *Revue Néoscholastique de Philosophie* 42 (1939), 411-445, esp. 422-423, 430 and 439.

Gabirol's theory that the soul is composed of form and spiritual matter; instead, he follows the Boethian tradition by distinguishing the essence of the soul, the *quo est*, from its individual being, the *quod est*. Third, Albertus argues that the faculties, as accidents, are ontologically distinct from the soul; with respect to the soul's power, however, they are substantial for the soul. Fourth, Albertus is an advocate of the thesis that there is only one substance in man.

To what extent do these positions reflect the influence of Arabic sources? I shall discuss the four aspects of Albertus' theory in sequence, but leave out universal hylomorphism because of its limited influence on Albertus.

## 2. The Definition of the Soul

It is an Arabic inheritance that Albertus prefers the terms *actus primus* or *perfectio* to the term *forma*. In *De homine*, in the solution to the question "On whether the soul is the actuality of the body", Albertus argues that it is substantial for the soul to be the *actus* of the body. He proceeds to explain that this is not a definition *secundum esse*, but a definition with respect to the body. Albertus justifies his standpoint with a citation from Avicenna's *De anima* I.1. He adopts from Avicenna the idea that the Aristotelian definition of the soul as perfection does not define the soul's essence.<sup>28</sup> Avicenna himself supports this claim with three arguments; the first two are also cited by Albertus: first, the term "soul" is used only with respect to the soul being the cause of activities; it is not applied because it describes the soul's substance. Second, there is a difference between our knowing that there exists a mover for something moved and our knowing what this mover is in its essence.<sup>29</sup> Albertus concludes that the definition of the soul as "the actuality or mover of the body"<sup>30</sup> differs from that of its essence. Third, the term perfection (*kamāl, perfectio*) is what

<sup>28</sup>) Albertus Magnus, *De homine*, qu. 4, a. 1, sol., 34a, *Über den Menschen*, 58: "Et ideo dicit Avicenna in VI De naturalibus quod hoc nomen anima non est nomen huius rei ex eius essentia... Et cum anima diffinitur sicut diffinita est ab Aristotele, non affirmatur esse eius nisi secundum quod est principium emanandi a se affectiones".

<sup>29</sup>) Avicenna, *De anima*, I.1: Avicenna, *Avicenna's De Anima (Arabic text): being the psychological part of Kitāb al-shifā'*, ed. F. Rahman (London et al., 1959), 4-5; Avicenna, *Liber de anima seu Sextus de naturalibus*, ed. S. Van Riet, 2 vols. (Louvain et al., 1968-72), 15-16; Engl. tr. Lenn Evan Goodman, "A Note on Avicenna's Theory of the Substantiality of the Soul", *The Philosophical Forum* n.s. I, 4 (1969), 555.

<sup>30</sup>) Albertus Magnus, *ibid.*, 34 / 58: "actus corporis et motor".



constitutes man in his species,<sup>31</sup> and by which man (or animal or plant) becomes an actual man. But the definition does not say anything about the essence of the soul; it does not even say whether the soul is a substance or not.<sup>32</sup> Albertus concludes, together with Avicenna, that the definition of soul as *actus* does not apply to the soul as belonging to the category of substance.<sup>33</sup>

One may compare Aristotle's *De anima* II.1, where he equates form (*eidos*) and actuality (*entelecheia*) (412a10) and maintains that the soul is substance (*ousia*) because it is the first actuality of a natural body. In contrast, Avicenna and Albertus disassociate substance and actuality.

Albertus moves a further step away from Aristotle. In the same quaestio, he follows Avicenna in saying that the soul is better defined as perfection than as form: *melius dicitur actus vel perfectio quam forma*.<sup>34</sup> The argument given by Avicenna in *De anima* I.1 is as follows:

While every form is a perfection, not every perfection is a form. For the king is the perfection of the state and the captain is the perfection of the ship, yet neither is the form of the state or the ship. . . . It has been settled that technical usage dictates that something be a form relative to matter; an end and perfection relative to the whole. . . . Therefore it is clear that when, in the course of defining the soul, we say that it is a perfection, it will be the most indicative of its meaning. What is more, it [i.e. the term perfection] encompasses all the types of souls in all their aspects, with the soul that is separable from matter not being an exception to it [i.e. to being a perfection].<sup>35</sup>

Albertus embraces this position—because, as he says, the soul in some of its species is separate from the body: *cum . . . anima secundum aliquam sui speciem separetur*.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., ed. Rahman, 6, ed. Van Riet, 18, Engl. tr. Goodman, "A Note on Avicenna's Theory", 556.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., ed. Rahman, 8, ed. Van Riet, 22, Engl. tr. Goodman, "A Note on Avicenna's Theory", 557. On Avicenna's definition of the soul see Thérèse-Anne Druart, "The Human Soul's Individuation and Its Survival after the Body's Death: Avicenna on the Causal Relation between Body and Soul", *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy* 10 (2000), 259-273.

<sup>33</sup> Albertus Magnus, *De homine*, qu. 4, a. 1, sol., 34a, *Über den Menschen*, 58: "...ita et anima dupliciter potest diffiniri, scilicet secundum quod est anima, idest actus corporis et motor, et secundum quod est substantia quaedam contenta secundum seipsam in praedicamento substantiae."

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., ad 6, 35a, *Über den Menschen*, 62.

<sup>35</sup> Avicenna, *De anima*, ed. Rahman, 6-7, ed. Van Riet, 19-21. The English translation is from Robert Wisnovsky, *Avicenna's Metaphysics in Context* (Ithaca, N.Y., 2003), 118-119.

<sup>36</sup> Albertus Magnus, *De homine*, qu. 4, a. 1, ad 6, 35a, *Über den Menschen: De homine*, 62: "Cum igitur anima secundum aliquam sui speciem separetur, convenit ei magis secundum omnem sui partem dici perfectionem quam formam".

Albertus and Avicenna thus disassociate not only substance and actuality, but also form and actuality—and in this again they differ from Aristotle. “Actuality” (*perfectio*) is a more general term than “form”; it also covers souls separate from the body, such as souls after the death of the body—at least, if form is understood according to “technical usage” or *secundum naturalem philosophiam*, as Albertus puts it.<sup>37</sup> One might object: what is the soul the perfection of if not of the body? Avicenna’s answer is that the perfection is the perfection of the whole. Perfection means “a relation to the complete thing from which the actions issue”, a relation to the “composite whole”.<sup>38</sup> Albertus approves and quotes this answer: *perfectio dicitur comparationem ad rem perfectam ex qua manant actiones*.<sup>39</sup>

While Albertus stops the discussion at this point, Avicenna proceeds to justify his position. He explains why he wants to keep apart the two concepts “substance” and “form”. The reason is that a substance is defined as something which never exists in another thing as in a substrate; otherwise it would be an accident. The term “form”, in its ordinary usage, says Avicenna, implies that the “form is impressed upon matter and subsists through it”.<sup>40</sup> The “Flying Man”, the well-known thought-experiment at the end of the first chapter of Avicenna’s treatise (a passage not quoted by Albertus), is in line with this reasoning. The flying man is suspended in the air in such a way that he does not have any sense-perception. This man would not affirm the existence of his outer limbs nor of his inner organs, but he would affirm the existence of an inner essence: his soul. The flying man thus serves to establish the thesis that the soul is independent of the body.<sup>41</sup>

Dimitri Gutas and Robert Wisnovsky have argued that Avicenna’s general insistence on the separability of the soul from the body is influenced by Philoponos, the sixth-century Greek commentator. This is difficult to prove, since Philoponos’ commentary on *De anima* is not extant in Arabic translation, and there is no bibliographical record in Arabic sources of such a translation. However, the textual parallels between Arabic and Greek sources make it very likely

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., ad 6, 35a, 62.

<sup>38</sup> Avicenna, *De anima*, ed. Rahman 7 and 9, ed. Van Riet 20 (“perfectio autem significat comparationem ad rem perfectam ex qua emanant actiones”) and 24, Engl. tr. Goodman, “A Note on Avicenna’s Theory”, 557 and 558.

<sup>39</sup> Albertus Magnus, *De homine*, qu. 4, a. 1, ad 6, 35a, *Über den Menschen*, 64.

<sup>40</sup> Avicenna, *De anima*, ed. Rahman, 9 and 6, ed. Van Riet, 24 and 20, Engl. tr. Goodman, ‘A Note on Avicenna’s Theory’, 558 and 556.

<sup>41</sup> On the thought-experiment of the flying man, its different versions and purposes, see Hasse, *Avicenna’s De Anima*, 80-92.

that Arabic philosophers had access to the commentary, be it the whole text or a reworking of it.<sup>42</sup> The general line of these studies is that the Neoplatonic influences on Arabic philosophy were transmitted to a large extent via the Neoplatonic commentators on Aristotle, especially the Alexandrian school from Ammonios to Olympiodoros, and that one should not overestimate the influence of the Plotinian *Theology of Aristotle* and the Proclan *Liber de causis*.<sup>43</sup>

Philoponos, like other Neoplatonist commentators before him, explicitly stresses the separability of the soul. He has a long section in his preface to his commentary on *De anima* in which he argues for the soul's incorporeality.<sup>44</sup> Philoponos is a moderate Neoplatonic commentator, compared to more radical Neoplatonists such as Pseudo-Simplikios. Hence, he does not deny, in his commentary on *De anima* II,1, that Aristotle concludes that the soul is not separable from the body. But when he proceeds to comment on Aristotle's puzzling sentence "It is unclear whether the soul is actuality of the body in this way as a sailor of a ship" (413a8-9), he gives an explanation of "actuality" which may have influenced Avicenna and, through Avicenna, Albertus Magnus. For Philoponos associates "actuality" (*entelecheia*) with "activities" (*energeiai*), that is, "activities by which the soul perfects the animal". The activities of the steersman as steersman of the ship are inseparable from the ship, but the steersman is separated as a man, and the activities stop as soon as he leaves the ship. And Philoponos proceeds: "In this way, then, the rational soul too, inasmuch as it has a separable substance, is not actuality of the body, but inasmuch as it has acquired this relation to the body (by virtue of which also it can be called 'soul', for it is called 'soul' relative to the body), it is both actuality of the body and inseparable from it".<sup>45</sup>

<sup>42</sup> Dimitri Gutas, "Philoponos and Avicenna on the Separability of the Intellect", *The Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 31 (1986), 121-129, repr. in *Greek Philosophers in the Arabic Tradition* (Ashgate, 2000), art. XI, 121-129, esp. n. 22; Dimitri Gutas, "Avicenna's Marginal Glosses on *De anima* and the Greek Commentatorial Tradition", in *Philosophy, Science and Exegesis in Greek, Arabic and Latin Commentaries*, ed. P. Adamson & H. Baltussen & M.W.F. Stone, 2 vols. (London, 2004), 2: 77-88, 83; Wisnovsky, *Avicenna's Metaphysics*, ch. 6.

<sup>43</sup> See Wisnovsky, *Avicenna's Metaphysics*, 113-114.

<sup>44</sup> Philoponos, *On Aristotle's On the soul 1.1-2*, transl. P.J. van der Eijk (Ithaca, N.Y., 2005), 23-30. On Philoponos' theory of the soul see Henry J. Blumenthal, *Aristotle and Neoplatonism in late antiquity: interpretations of the De anima* (London, 1996), 74. Cf. also Wisnovsky, *Avicenna's Metaphysics*, 92-96.

<sup>45</sup> Philoponos, *On Aristotle's On the soul 2.1-6*, transl. W. Charlton (Ithaca, N.Y., 2005), 26. Greek: Philoponos, *In Aristotelis de anima libros commentaria*, ed. M. Hayduck (Berlin, 1897), 225.

This text contains three notions that are important for Avicenna's theory of the soul: first, the association of "actuality" (or "perfection") with activities or functions of the soul, second, the idea that the name "soul" is used to describe the relation to the body, and third, a concept of substance which is not tied to actuality—although this last point, the distinction between substance and actuality is more drastic in Avicenna. Philoponos does not, however, seem to pave the way for Avicenna's important distinction between form and perfection.

Wisnovsky has shown that Philoponos bequeathes to the Arabic tradition a Neoplatonic concept of "actuality": actuality as final cause.<sup>46</sup> When we turn to the later Latin phase of this tradition, other features become more important: the association of the term "actuality" with activities or functions, and the disassociation of substance and actuality. Albertus Magnus, in his early *De homine*, continues this Graeco-Arabic tradition of interpreting the Aristotelian definition of the soul, which allows him to stress the soul's separability from the body.<sup>47</sup>

### 3. The Soul and its Faculties

As was pointed out above, for Albertus the soul is distinct from its faculties ontologically. With respect to the the soul's activities, it is a *totum potestativum*, a "totality of powers", which is composed of the particular faculties. Albertus' standpoint owes much to the Boethian tradition. Boethius had developed the idea that the soul is the *totum* of which the capacities are the parts.<sup>48</sup> In the early Middle Ages and in the twelfth century, the dominant thesis was the identity of soul and faculties—a thesis which was attributed to Augustine. The Boethian concept of a *totum potentiale* was known, but was not employed to keep soul and faculties apart ontologically. Albertus, however, uses the concept for exactly this end: the *totum potentiale* concept allows

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<sup>46</sup> As in n. 42 above.

<sup>47</sup> I therefore do not agree with those who make Albertus a protagonist of the *anima forma corporis* formula, as does Ingrid Craemer-Ruegenberg, *Albertus Magnus* (Munich, 1980), 39; cf. the balanced criticism in Georg Wieland, *Zwischen Natur und Vernunft. Alberts des Großen Begriff vom Menschen* (Münster, 1999), 19.

<sup>48</sup> Boethius, *De divisione*, Patrologia Latina 64, 888c: "Partes enim hae animae sunt, sed non ut in quantitate, sed ut in aliqua potestate et virtute" ("These are parts of the soul, but not as in a quantity, but as in some capacity or power").

him to connect the soul and the faculties in the realm of power, without maintaining their ontological identity.

Albertus' solution therefore appears to be the result of a medieval development rather than an example of Arabic influence. Here too, however, Avicenna exerts his influence. Albertus supports his thesis with one of his favourite citations from Avicenna: "From one substance, which is the soul, emanate some organic capacities and some non-organic capacities, as Avicenna says": *ab una substantia quae est anima... fluunt quaedam potentiae organicae et quaedam non organicae, ut dicit Avicenna*.<sup>49</sup> Albertus draws on a passage in Avicenna's *De anima*, chapter V.1 where Avicenna writes: "Not one of these (powers) is the human soul, but the soul is a thing to which these powers belong; the soul itself is, as we have shown, an independent substance (*jawhar munfarid*), which has an aptitude towards (different) actions some of which can only be perfected with organs, ... some of which do not need organs".<sup>50</sup>

Avicenna is thus a clear advocate of an ontological distinction between the soul and the faculties. The soul possesses many powers, but is essentially one. We can see that this position follows from Avicenna's insistence on the separability of the soul. If the soul is, in its essence, a substance which exists independently of its actions and of its body, then it follows that the powers cannot inhere in the soul itself.

Avicenna's position has an additional advantage for Albertus, one that leads us to the final topic: the unity or plurality of substances in man.

#### 4. The Unity or Plurality of Substances

Albertus, as was said before, defends the unity thesis: the thesis that the soul is one and not several substances, i.e. vegetative, sensitive and rational substances. But the drawback of Albertus' position is that the same substance appears to be corruptible and incorruptible, as he himself admits: in a human being only the rational part is immortal, whereas the vegetative and sensitive

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<sup>49</sup> This quotation is from the late *Summa theologiae*, II, qu. 1-67, Opera omnia, ed. A. Borgnet, vol. 32 (Paris, 1895), II.13.77, 87 (it is quoted here because of the explicit mention of Avicenna), but similar sentences appear in many other writings; see the list of such sentences in Hasse, *Avicenna's De Anima*, 239. When writing this book, I was not yet aware of the passage in *De anima* V.1 quoted in the next footnote.

<sup>50</sup> Avicenna, *De anima*, V.1, ed. Rahman, 208, ed. Van Riet, 80. Albertus may also have been inspired by a similar passage in *De anima*, I.4, ed. Van Riet, 64-65: "Postea autem declarabitur tibi quod anima una est ex qua defluunt hae vires in membra".

parts die with the body.<sup>51</sup> Albertus replies with the dictum, borrowed from Avicenna, that the human soul is an incorruptible substance from which emanate some powers which operate without bodily organs. Corruption concerns organs only, not the soul.<sup>52</sup>

Avicenna's distinction between organic and non-organic powers therefore enables Albertus to remedy a weakness of his position. Albertus solves the problem that the same substance appears mortal and immortal by making the soul essentially one, from which flow diverse powers, some of which survive the death of the body, whereas the organic powers die. This seems an elegant way to deal with the problem which Aristotle poses in *De anima* II.1, where he says: "Yet some parts of the soul may be separable, because they are not the actualities of any body at all" (413a5-7). The alternative to the Avicennian-Albertinian solution would be to say that the substance of the rational part is capable of existing separately, whereas the substance of the vegetative and sensitive parts is not separable. This, however, jeopardizes the unity of the soul.

The other important Arabic source for Albertus' position is Averroes, who influenced the Latin unity versus plurality debate in several respects, as a source on Plato's views on the issue and as a philosopher in his own right. In his *Long Commentary on De anima* I.90, Averroes presents the Platonic tripartite division of the soul in such a way that Plato appears a protagonist of the pluralist doctrine: "the intellective part is in the brain, the desiring part in the heart, the nourishing part in the liver."<sup>53</sup> Some Latin commentators of the thirteenth century sympathize with the Platonic thesis of the composite nature of the soul as formulated by Averroes, among them Adam of Buckfield.<sup>54</sup> The quotation from Averroes thus became an important source for the pluralist camp.<sup>55</sup>

<sup>51</sup> Albertus Magnus, *De homine*, qu. 7, a. 1, sed contra 1, 90b, *Über den Menschen*, 88: "Rei corruptibilis et incorruptibilis numquam est eadem essentia et substantia; sed sola anima rationalis incorruptibilis est, ceterae vero corruptibiles; ergo numquam est earum substantia una".

<sup>52</sup> Albertus Magnus, *ibid.*, ad 1, 94a.

<sup>53</sup> Averroes comments on a sentence in Aristotle's *De anima* I.5: "Some hold that the soul is divisible" (411b5-7). Averroes, *Commentarium magnum De anima*, comm. I.90, 121: "Innuit Platonem, qui opinatur quod anima essentialiter dividitur in corpore secundum divisionem membrorum in quibus agit suas actiones diversas et quod non communicatur in aliquo membro, ita quod pars intelligens est in cerebro tantum et desiderans in corde tantum et nutriens in epate".

<sup>54</sup> Callus, "Two Early Oxford Masters", 419-420.

<sup>55</sup> On the consequences for the Western image of Plato, see Dag Nikolaus Hasse, "Plato Arabico-Latinus: Philosophy—Wisdom Literature—Occult Sciences", in *The Platonic Tradition in the Middle Ages: A Doxographic Approach*, ed. S. Gersh & M.J.F.M. Hoenen (Berlin & New York, 2002), 31-65, esp. 34-45.

Albertus adopts Averroes' picture of Plato when he criticizes Plato in his later *De anima* for being the originator of the localization thesis.<sup>56</sup>

Albertus Magnus attacks Averroes directly for supporting the plurality thesis. As he says in *De homine*: "Therefore many have been in error on this issue, the first of whom is the commentator himself, Averroes, who says that [Aristotle's] definition [of the soul] fits the soul in terms of prior and posterior. It is clear that this is only true if we assume that there were three perfections in man, which is impossible."<sup>57</sup> In view of this, it comes as a surprise that Albertus later in *De homine* quotes Averroes as a supporter of the unity thesis: "Averroes says in this very commentary that the soul is one according to substance and that it performs different acts through different powers."<sup>58</sup> Can this discrepancy be explained?

The latter quotation draws on a passage in the *Long Commentary on De anima* I.7, where Averroes contrasts Plato's and Aristotle's positions: Plato places the three powers of the soul in brain, heart and liver, whereas Aristotle thinks that they are one in subject and many with respect to powers: *unam subiecto et plures secundum virtutes*.<sup>59</sup> Albertus rightly assumed that Averroes would always side with Aristotle against Plato, and hence with unity against plurality.

The former quotation, which makes Averroes a pluralist, comes from a passage where Averroes comments on Aristotle's remark that the nutritive power is contained in the sensory power just as the triangle is contained in the square (*De anima* II.3, 414b28-30). Averroes explains that this ought to be understood "according to prior and posterior": The prior figure, the triangle, exists potentially in the later figure, the square, and likewise does the earlier nutritive power exist potentially in the later sensory power.<sup>60</sup> Albertus suspects that Averroes is advocating a pluralist position in the footsteps of the above-mentioned argument from Aristotle's *De generatione animalium* that in the

<sup>56</sup> Albertus Magnus, *De anima*, lib. I, tr. 2, cap.15, 58. I am not aware of a similar passage in *De homine*. Cf. Hendryk Anzulewicz, "Die platonische Tradition bei Albertus Magnus. Eine Hinführung", in *The Platonic Tradition in the Middle Ages*, ed. S. Gersh & M.J.F.M. Hoenen, 207-277, esp. 258-259.

<sup>57</sup> Albertus Magnus, *De homine*, qu. 4, a. 1, ad 7, 35a, *Über den Menschen*, 64-66: "Unde hic decepti sunt plurimi quorum primus est ipse commentator Averroes, qui dicit quod haec diffinitio per prius et posterius aptatur animae. Quod patet non esse verum nisi poneremus in homine tres esse perfectiones, quod impossibile est".

<sup>58</sup> Albertus Magnus, *De homine*, qu. 7, a. 1, 90b, *Über den Menschen*, 88: "Averroes in commento ibidem dicit quod anima est una secundum substantiam et diversa agit diversis virtutibus".

<sup>59</sup> Averroes, *Commentarium magnum De anima*, comm. I.7, 10: "Plato enim dicebat quod virtus intelligibilis est in cerebro, et concupiscibilis in corde, et naturalis, scilicet nutritiva, in epate. Aristoteles autem opinatur eas esse unam subiecto et plures secundum virtutes."

<sup>60</sup> Averroes, *ibid.*, comm. II.31, 176: "Quemadmodum enim invenitur in figuris prius et posteriori et prius existit in potentia in posteriori, ita est de virtutibus animae."

embryo the vegetative precedes the sensitive and the sensitive precedes the intellective soul, with the consequence of a plurality of perfections.

But Averroes does not adopt this line of argument. In his comment on the triangle passage, he argues that there is one universal definition of the soul and several special definitions of each of the powers of the soul. As Averroes explains in his *Middle Commentary on De anima* (not translated into Latin), the general definition of the soul is not predicated univocally of all faculties of the soul: "It is, rather, one in respect to priority and posteriority, for some perfections of the soul's faculties exist prior to others".<sup>61</sup> That is why the definition of the soul is analogous to the definition of a figure such as the square. It is important to note that Averroes does not speak of several perfections of the soul itself or of several substances. In both commentaries, he contrasts the general definition (or perfection) of the soul with the special definition (or perfection) of the faculties. The first definition is one, the second is many and ordered in terms of prior and posterior. Thus while these passages make Averroes a pluralist of faculties, they do not yet make him a pluralist of souls or substances.

But other passages do, as the later reception of Averroes shows. In the later Middle Ages and in the Renaissance, Averroes was invoked as an authority both for and against plurality, as Emily Michael has shown.<sup>62</sup> The advocates of the unity thesis cite a passage from *De substantia orbis*, where Averroes claims that it is impossible that one subject has more than one form; a form can only be replaced if the previous form is destroyed.<sup>63</sup> Those who favour plurality, such as William de la Mare and Richard of Middleton, quote a passage from the *Long Commentary on the Metaphysics* VIII.10 on the concept of an "ultimate form": the unity of the compound is realized only through the ultimate form.<sup>64</sup>

<sup>61</sup> Averroes, *Middle Commentary on Aristotelis De Anima: Talḥīṣ kitāb an-naḥṣ*, ed. A.L. Ivry (Provo, Utah, 2002).

<sup>62</sup> Emily Michael, "Averroes and the Plurality of Forms", *Franciscan Studies* 52 (1992), 155-182.

<sup>63</sup> Averroes, *De substantia orbis*, ed. M. Alonso, *Comentario al 'De substantia orbis' de Averroes (Aristotelismo y Averroismo) por Alvaro de Toledo* (Madrid, 1941), 60: "Si enim haberet formam, nullam aliam reciperet nisi illa destructa. Unam enim formam habere nisi unum subiectum impossibile est" (cf. the wording in Michael, 'Averroes and the Plurality of Forms', 160: "unum enim subiectum habere plus quam unam formam est impossibile"). Cf. Arthur Hyman, "Aristotle's 'First Matter' and Avicenna's and Averroes' 'Corporeal Form'", in *Harry Austryn Wolfson Jubilee Volume*, 3 vols (Jerusalem, 1965), 1: 385-406, esp. 404.

<sup>64</sup> Averroes, *Long Commentary on the Metaphysics*, Arabic ed. M. Bouyges, 3 vols. (Beirut, 1938-48), VIII.10, 1067, Latin edition in Aristotle/Averroes, *Aristotelis Stagirite omnia quae extant opera... Averrois... commentarii aliique ipsius in logica, philosophia et medicina libri* (Venice, 1562), repr. (Frankfurt a. M., 1962), vol. 8, f. 218rb: "Nos autem dicimus quod unum quod significat definitio una, est unum per substantiam que est forma, scilicet per ultimam formam et ultimam differentiam." Cf. Richard of Middleton's discussion in Roberto Zavalloni, *Richard de*



These authors understand the *De substantia orbis* passage differently: they argue that Averroes here refers only to the complete form, which has to be destroyed when another form arrives.<sup>65</sup>

The pluralists apparently have a point: Averroes teaches a plurality in two senses. First, with respect to the forms of the elements, he argues that the elementary forms are contained in the “composed form” (*ṣūra murakkaba, forma composita*) of the compound,<sup>66</sup> but in a diminished way, which is possible since the elementary forms are not substantial forms in the full sense<sup>67</sup>—this is Averroes’ well-known theory of the intention and remission of elementary forms.<sup>68</sup> Second, with respect to generic and individual forms, Averroes teaches that matter “first receives the form of the genus, receiving later, through the intermediary of the form of the genus, all other forms up to the individual forms”.<sup>69</sup> The last form to be received is the so-called “ultimate form”. Averroes does not say clearly whether the forms prior to the ultimate form remain in the matter or are destroyed. In view of his parallel theory of elementary forms, it is possible that he thought that the ultimate form unites all previous forms without their being destroyed.

In view of this, it is not surprising that Albertus in *De homine* presents Averroes both as supporter and opponent of the plurality thesis. Averroes’ teaching on the issue allows for both interpretations. Note that Averroes himself does not link the discussion of the soul’s unity to his intellect theory, presumably because his intellect theory—which, famously, makes the material intellect one for all

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*Mediavilla et la controverse sur la pluralité des formes. Textes inédits et étude critique* (Louvain, 1951), 144.

<sup>65</sup> See Richard of Middleton, *De gradu formarum*, in: Zavalloni, Richard de Mediavilla, 153-154. Richard concludes: “Ex his satis patet, ut videtur, quod non fuit intentio Commentatoris quod in quolibet composito esset una forma substantialis tantum”.

<sup>66</sup> Averroes, *Long Commentary on Metaphysics*, XII.22, ed. Bouyges, 1520, Latin ed. of 1562, f. 308ra, Engl. tr. Charles Genequand, *Ibn Rushd’s Metaphysics: A Translation with Introduction of Ibn Rushd’s Commentary on Aristotle’s Metaphysics, Book Lām* (Leiden, 1986), 118-119. The concept of “composed form” appears also in Averroes’ *Long Commentary on the Physics*, Latin edition in Aristotle/Averroes, *Aristotelis Stagirite omnia quae extant opera... Averrois... commentarii aliique ipsius in logica, philosophia et medicina libri* (Venice, 1562), repr. (Frankfurt a. M., 1962), vol. 4, f. 6rb: “Que enim sunt preter primam materiam et ultimam formam cuiuslibet rerum naturalium sunt materie composite et forme composite”.

<sup>67</sup> Averroes, *Commentum magnum super libro De celo et mundo Aristotelis*, ed. F. J. Carmody & R. Arnzen (Leuven, 2003), III.67, 634-635.

<sup>68</sup> This theory had a significant influence on late medieval scholastic philosophy; see Anneliese Maier, *An der Grenze von Scholastik und Naturwissenschaft: Studien zur Naturphilosophie des 14. Jahrhunderts* (Rome, 1952).

<sup>69</sup> Averroes, *Long Commentary on the Metaphysics*, I.17, ed. Bouyges, 97, Latin ed. of 1562, f. 14vb.

human beings—is an epistemological theory in the first place. Thomas Aquinas criticized Averroes for turning the material intellect into a substance which cannot be the form of the body, with detrimental consequences for the unity of the soul. But it is not clear whether Averroes abandoned the concept of the unity of the soul's substance when developing his intellect theory.<sup>70</sup>

## 5. Conclusion

The first part of this paper presented an interpretation of Albertus' theory of the soul, as developed in his early writings, the second part an assessment of his debt to the Arabic philosophers Ibn Gabirol, Averroes and Avicenna. We have seen that Ibn Gabirol served as an important adversary for Albertus: Albertus traces the doctrine of universal hylomorphism to its source, Ibn Gabirol's *Fons vitae*, rejects it and distinguishes instead between a *quo est* and a *quod est* in the soul.

In Albertus' writings of the 1240s, Averroes is not yet perceived as a philosopher of the same rank as Aristotle or Avicenna. But Averroes is important for Albertus, first, as the source of the Platonic theory that the parts of the soul are localized in different organs, and, second, in the double role as supporter and also as opponent of Albertus' position that there is only one substance in man.

It has emerged that central tenets of Albertus' early theory of the soul are much influenced by Avicenna. Albertus adopts Avicenna's thesis that the Aristotelian definition of the soul as perfection does not pertain to the soul's essence, but only to its activity, and he shares Avicenna's contention that "form" is an inadequate definition of the essence of the soul. Albertus draws again on Avicenna when he tries to define the soul's relation to the faculties. Without Avicenna's ontological distinction between the soul as a substance and its powers, Albertus would have had difficulties in avoiding some sort of plurality thesis in order to distinguish a mortal and an immortal part of the soul.

Albertus thus continues a Greek-Arabic-Latin tradition of Peripatetic philosophy. This tradition accepts the Aristotelian theory of the soul, but interprets Aristotle's vocabulary in a way that it becomes compatible with the separability of the soul from the body.

The insistence upon the separability of the soul is clearly a Neoplatonic inheritance. It is true to say that Philoponos, Avicenna and Albertus do not

<sup>70</sup> Cf. Herbert A. Davidson's defense of Averroes against Thomas' critique: "Averroes did not explicitly say that the material intellect is not man's form" (Herbert A. Davidson, *Alfarabi, Avicenna, and Averroes, on Intellect: Their Cosmologies, Theories of the Active Intellect, and Theories of Human Intellect* (New York & Oxford, 1992), 300-302).

follow Aristotle's definition of the term "actuality" (*entelecheia*) when they associate the term "actuality" with "activities" and when they disassociate the term "actuality" from the term "form". However, they closely follow Aristotle on all those passages which stress the separability of the soul or of the intellect—passages that are downplayed by other readers of Aristotle who emphasize his hylomorphism.<sup>71</sup> It would therefore be a one-sided simplification to say that Philoponos, Avicenna and Albertus deviate from Aristotle's theory of the soul. The basis of a separabilist interpretation of Aristotle is in his very texts.

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<sup>71</sup> This point is also made by Wisnovsky, *Avicenna's Metaphysics*, 94-96; he supports it with a list of Aristotelian passages stressing the separability (*De anima* 408b18-19, 413a3-9, 429a22-25, *De partibus animalium* 641a32-641b10, *De generatione animalium* 736b28-30, *Metaphysics* 1026a5-6, 1070a24-26). The modern understanding of Aristotle's position concerning the soul-body relation is far from unanimous. For a survey of contemporary interpretations of Aristotle's theory of the soul in terms of materialism, dualism, functionalism, psychophysical supervenience or emergentism, see Victor Caston, "Aristotle's Psychology" in *The Blackwell Companion to Ancient Philosophy*, ed. M. L. Gill & P. Pellegrin (Oxford, 2006), 316-46.

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