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# ***Titivillus* in learned circles at the University of Prague at the beginning of the 15<sup>th</sup> century**

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## **Abstract**

The demon named Titivillus has appeared in collections of exempla all across Europe since the 13th century. In these exempla, he is described as a demon who records the inattentiveness and laziness of clergy during church services. Outside the context of exempla, he is found in the literary production of scholars at the University of Prague at the beginning of the 15th century, especially in the works of Jan Hus. The aim of this paper is to describe the occurrence of the term “Titivillus” and its meaning in the context of this period.

## **Keywords**

Titivillus; Jan Hus; exempla; Prague University; medieval preaching

## Introduction

The first word of the quotation in this paper's title<sup>1</sup> refers to an often marginalized creature – the demon named Titivillus who was originally associated with the medieval exempla found across Europe. In these texts, Titivillus appears as a demon who records inattentiveness of clerics to church services. The demon is also sporadically found in the texts of Bohemian provenience. So far, this character has not received much scholarly attention – a fundamental treatise on this topic was published by M. Jennings in 1974. In some aspects, the recent study of J. G. Montañés (2018) complements Jennings' research and brings new facts about Titivillus, however, as far as I am aware, no study has focused on the occurrence of the term “Titivillus” in Bohemian texts. This is perhaps due to the fact that we do not possess sufficient edited material that would allow for a comprehensive work on this topic – most of the relevant preacher production of the 13<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> century is still available only in medieval manuscripts. Thus, the aim of this paper is to describe the term's usage among the learned circles at the Prague university in the beginning of the 15<sup>th</sup> century (especially Jan Hus) which did not typically work with exempla, rather than to give a full-scale account of the Titivillus exemplum in Bohemian texts. First, I will briefly depict the first references to Titivillus in European medieval literature as well as the roles he originally played in exempla. It will be shown that these roles do not always correspond with the context of the references to Titivillus in the Prague university literary production. I will also suggest certain scenarios that may have led to the increased popularity of the term “Titivillus” and its semantic modifications with Jan Hus and other Prague university masters.

### 1. Who is Titivillus?

Nowadays, the word “Titivillus” is most frequently understood (if at all) as the name for a “printing imp”. This interpretation is found not only in popular-science articles and books<sup>2</sup> and in the use of the name in public,<sup>3</sup> but also among some experts in the field.<sup>4</sup> However, this most widespread interpretation seems to be based on a relatively modern tradition, which probably emerged, as J. G. Montañés convincingly proves,<sup>5</sup> in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in France.

Indeed, a closer examination of the available sources shows that there is no evidence whatsoever that the demon called Titivillus had the function of printing imp in the Middle Ages. In fact, the term is a rare phenomenon in this period, and it does not occur

1 In his *Defensio libri De Trinitate* Jan Hus (ed. Eršil & Silagi 2010: p. 41).

2 Cf. Drogin (1989: p. 19) or the article about Titivillus on Wikipedia: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Titivillus>.

3 For example, a name of the Spanish magazine about rare prints or a Belgian company offering website design, professional CV, and consulting in communication.

4 Cf. Nechutová (2016: p. 161, n. 31).

5 Cf. Montañés (2018: Introduzione).

in any dictionary of Classical Latin while most medieval dictionaries are silent about it. The only exception is the *Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources*, where Titivillus is defined as “a demon believed to collect syllables dropped during divine office”.<sup>6</sup> From the very beginning, the demon was connected with “vaniloquia” that was often discussed and generally criticized topic in relation to preaching and also exempla. Both laymen and clergy were supposed to avoid superfluous chatter, pay attention to the ongoing liturgy, and correctly recite or sing what the divine office required. In the first third of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, we find the criticism accompanied by the first exempla that described a demon sitting somewhere in the church, collecting words of useless tittle-tattle, and wrongly pronounced or skipped syllables of the recited liturgy. The demon was then depicted while inserting these words and syllables into a huge bag and taking the bag to hell as an evidence for the future rejection of the sinner who wrongly pronounced words or syllables.<sup>7</sup> Apparently, the first evidence of this story is an exemplum of Jacobus de Vitriaco in his *Sermones* (cca 1220):

Jacobus de Vitriaco. *Sermones vulgares vel ad status*:<sup>8</sup>

*Audiui quod quidam sanctus homo, dum esset in choro, uidit diabolum quasi sacco pleno ualde oneratum. Dum autem adiuraret diabolum ut diceret ei quid portaret, ait: “Hee sunt sillabe et dictiones syncopate et uersus psalmodie que isti clerici in hiis matutinis furati sunt Deo; hec utique ad eorum accusationem diligenter reseruo”.*<sup>9</sup>

A very similar story occurs in the *Dialogus miraculorum* (cca 1230) by Caesarius of Heisterbach, a contemporary of Jacobus.

Caesarius Heisterbacensis. *Dialogus miraculorum*:<sup>10</sup>

*Tempore quodam clericis quibusdam in ecclesia quadam saeculari fortiter, id est, clamose, non devote, cantantibus, et voces tumultuosas in sublime tollentibus, uidit homo quidam religiosus, qui forte tunc affuit, quendam daemonem in loco eminentiori stantem, saccum magnum et longum in sinistra manu tenere, qui cantantium voces dextera latius extensa capiebat, atque in eundem saccum mittebat. Illis expleto cantu inter se gloriantibus, tanquam qui bene et fortiter Deum laudassent, respondit ille, qui uiderat visionem: “Bene quidem cantastis, sed saccum plenum cantastis”.*<sup>11</sup>

6 DMLBS XVII (2013).

7 Cf. Jennings (1974: pp. 8–11).

8 Iacobus de Vitriaco (ed. Longère 2013: p. 180, sermo 10, 15).

9 Translation taken from Jennings (1974: p. 11): I have heard that a certain holy man, while he was in choir, saw a devil truly weighed down with a full sack. When, however, he commanded the demon to tell what he carried, the evil one said: “These are the syllables and syncopated words and verses of the psalms which these very clerics in their morning prayers stole from God; you can be sure I am keeping these diligently for their accusation.”

10 Caesarius von Heisterbach (ed. Nösges & Schneider 2009: p. 694, dist. 4, cap. 9).

11 Long time ago some clerics were singing resonantly and pretentiously, not devoutly in a church. A certain holy man, which was present, saw some demon with a big and long bag in his left hand standing on an elevated place. This demon collected with his right hand the voices of singers and put them into the bag.

Both descriptions of the demon are identical; however, their moral messages differ. While in the fable of Jacobus it is a critique of inattentive singing of psalms, Caesarius's story castigates clerical pride. Both versions were accepted well by other authors of exempla – the Titivillus exemplum appears in 13 texts dated to the 13<sup>th</sup> century (in 11 without a reference to the name). In the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries, the number of occurrences (with or without the word “Titivillus”) increases significantly;<sup>12</sup> nevertheless, the version of Jacobus de Vitriaco became much more widespread than that of Caesarius.<sup>13</sup>

Neither of the abovementioned texts contains the word “Titivillus”. It seems that the bag-carrying-demon took over the name only later. According to Montañés, the name “Titivillus” appeared first between 1230 and 1236 in *De universo* by Guilelmus Alvernus.<sup>14</sup> However, the first certain evidence of the name is found in the exemplum occurring in the *Tractatus de penitencia* (ca. 1280) by Iohannes Vallensis. Here the demon is named directly “Titivillus” but it is obvious that Iohannes draws on another source. At the same time, the term “Titivillus” appears in Iacobus Januensis' *Opus quadragesimale*. Both these texts contain identical verses describing the Titivillus, that later became very popular:<sup>15</sup>

*Fragmina verborum Titivillus colligit horum  
quibus die mille vicibus se sarcinat ille.*<sup>16</sup>

These or similar verses, sometimes mentioning the name “Titivillus”, sometimes only describing the demon with the bag, emerge in manuscripts from the 14<sup>th</sup> century across Europe; for instance, Munich, Frankfurt, Lüneberg, or Cambrai.<sup>17</sup>

Titivillus, however, appears also in other contexts. As a demon who records “vani- loquia” and misspelled or omitted words in the liturgy, he also accompanies women (especially in the arts), since they were generally considered to be more prone to useless gossip and chatter.<sup>18</sup> Later in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries and especially in drama, Titivillus became a recorder of human sins, in general, or a “messenger of hell”.<sup>19</sup> Subsequently, Titivillus lost his original specific task and became rather an interesting synonym for the word “devil”. Eventually, the word “Titivillus” changed to “titivillitium”, a general term indicating something worthless.<sup>20</sup>

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When the clerics finished the singing and boasted about it as if they praised God well and devoutly, the holy man, which saw the vision, said to them: “You sung very well, but you sung the whole bag.”

12 For an accurate overview, see Jennings (1974: pp. 86–87).

13 Cf. Jennings (1974: p. 14).

14 Cf. Montañés (2018: Storia dell'exemplum). The author doesn't quote a specific place in the text; I wasn't able to find the term “Titivillus” in *De universo* – cf. Guilelmus Alvernus (1674: pp. 593–1074).

15 Jennings (1974: p. 16).

16 “Titivillus collects fragments of words and puts them in his bag thousand times every day.” Walther (1964: num. 9908).

17 Cf. Jennings (1974: p. 17), according to Walther (1964: num. 9908).

18 Cf. Montañés (2018: I ruoli di Titivillus, I. Notaio di parole vane).

19 Cf. Montañés (2018: Raccoglitore di peccati, Araldo dell'inferno).

20 Cf. Jennings (1974: pp. 71–73).

## 2. Titivillus' journey to the Bohemian milieu

### 2.1 The manuscript M CXXX of the St. Vitus Metropolitan Chapter Library

With regards to the original occurrence of Titivillus in exempla and edifying literature, it would seem logical to study the demon's journey to the Bohemian milieu first on the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> century preaching collections. However, the absence of critical editions of these texts makes such a task very difficult. In the secondary literature, there are several references that demonstrate certain awareness of the Titivillus-exemplum in Bohemia in the observed period.

For instance, M. Jennings mentions a variation on verses about a recording demon in the manuscript of St. Vitus Metropolitan Chapter with the signature M CXXX dated to the half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century (based on two references to the death of John Luxembourg at the Battle of Crécy). The manuscript contains diverse notes, several smaller treatises, and sets of didactic and moralistic verses,<sup>21</sup> among which we can read following verses on the folio 38:

*Littera neglecta vel sillaba murmure tecta,  
littera non recta, si sit male lectio lecta:  
a me colligitur, a summo iudice scitur.*<sup>22</sup>

Even though the first two verses are supplemented by another in the other manuscripts (*colligit hic sathanas, si non cum corde laboras*),<sup>23</sup> they clearly refer to the Titivillus exemplum. Nevertheless, the connection between this version from the Prague Metropolitan Chapter manuscript and the Titivillus exemplum is not so distinct (naturally, the first-person formulation can still be meant as an utterance of the demon itself, while *summus iudex* can be understood as the God). Apart from this occurrence, there are no other references in the secondary literature that would imply the story about Titivillus.<sup>24</sup> Nevertheless, it is not very likely, that the occurrence of the verses about a devil gathering neglected or mumbled syllables in the Prague Metropolitan Chapter manuscript is entirely isolated, just like the occurrence of the whole Titivillus exemplum, especially considering the fact that the authors of the first records of original Titivillus story, Jacobus de Vitry and Caesarius of Heisterbach, were well known and read in Bohemia.

21 Cf. Podlaha (1922: part II, num. 1491).

22 Cf. Walther (1964: num. 13900a). "Skipped letter, mumbled syllable, incorrect letter during wrong reading: these I collect and the Supreme Judge knows about them all."

23 Cf. Walther (1964: num. 13900a). "Satan collects them when you don't work honestly."

24 J. G. Montañés claims in his study that there are in the Bohemian environment variants of the term "Titivillus" such as Titivilarius, Titifillus and Tibini. Nonetheless, his claim lacks reference to any sources at all, so I was not able to verify these graphical variants. Cf. Montañés (2018: Il nome).

## 2.2 Titivillus by Jan Hus

In the light of the above mentioned, it seems intriguing that the term “Titivillus” occurs abundantly in the beginning of the 15<sup>th</sup> century in a milieu that was originally very distant from the Titivillus exemplum – i.e. the Prague university learned circles and its intellectual production. The term is found in the texts of Jan Hus several times: Nowadays, we can document the occurrence of the term “Titivillus” between years 1405 and 1416 in first synodic sermon of Jan Hus *Diliges Dominum Deum* (1405), in the preaching collection named *Dicta de tempore* (1407–1408), ascribed (probably wrong) to Hus, in Hus commentary *Super quattuor sententiarum* (1407–1409), in three quodlibets of the Prague faculty of arts (1409, 1411 and 1416) and in *Defensio libri de Trinitate* also by Jan Hus (1410).

But the Titivillus appears here not to be a demon collecting piffles and stumbled syllables, as we saw him in the 13<sup>th</sup> century authors and (maybe) in the Prague Metropolitan Chapter manuscript. It seems more likely that Titivillus left his exclusive function and became a demon distorting a meaning of authoritative texts and seducing people to crime. The semantic shift from the original function of Titivillus in exempla is relatively clear here. The idea of Titivillus recording the mispronunciation or gabbling of a recited liturgical text is not distant from the distortion of sacred texts on the interpretative level. Analogously to the function of seducing people to crime, Titivillus also plays roles traditionally attributed to the Devil and his minions. After all, this tendency corresponds to the development of the term’s use in medieval and early modern English drama (see note 19). This can be demonstrated on the following examples found in Hus’ texts:

1405: *Sermo synodalis Diliges dominum Deum*<sup>25</sup>

1407–1408: *Dicta de tempore*<sup>26</sup> (*dubium*)

*Et patet ulterius, quod clerici, manifesti concubinarij sunt manifesti dyaboli, et occulti in conspectu hominum fornicarij – occulti dyaboli, destruentes ecclesiam Iesu Cristi. Quodsi titivillus de cetu fornicancium, tamquam hereticus prosiliens, obicit, quod non sit peccatum mortale simplex fornicacio, eximatur contra reptantem tytivillum verbi Dei gladius, quo caput tam nephandi sceleris in tytivillo prescindatur. Nam dicit Salvator Mathei Vo: Dictum est antiquis: Non mechaberis. Ego autem dico vobis, quia omnis, qui viderit mulierem ad concupiscendum eam, iam mechatus est eam in <corde> suo. (...) Nec habet excusacionem tytivillus fornicans, quod hoc intellexit Dominus de muliere coniuge aliena.*<sup>27</sup>

25 Jan Hus (ed. Lukšová 2017: p. 152).

26 *Dicta de tempore Magistro Iohanni Hus attributa* (ed. Zachová 2011: p. 791, sermo 36).

27 Jan Hus (ed. Lukšová 2017: p. 152). The clerics living manifestly with concubines are the manifest devils, and these who do this secretly, are the hidden devils destroying the Church of Jesus Christ. And if Titivillus leaping out from the heretic crowd of fornicators will object that simple adultery is not a mortal sin, let take the sword of God’s word against the groping titivillus and cut out on him the head of so abominable sin. Because the Saviour says in the 5th chapter of Matthew: *You have heard that it was said, ‘You are not to commit adultery’. But I say to you, anyone who stares at a woman with lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.* Here is no excuse for the adulterous titivillus that the Lord meant it only about a wife of someone else.

In this passage from Hus synodal sermon *Diliges* from year 1405, which is also contained in the same form in the later collection of sermons *Dicta de tempore*, the term “Titivillus” represents a cleric, which claims in breach of Holy Scripture that adultery isn’t a mortal sin. In meaning is in fact a synonym for “devil”, what is the term, which Hus used in the first sentence for the clerics, they live manifestly or secretly with concubines.

Titivillus also appears in a similar context in Hus’ university commentary *Super IV Sententiarum* from 1407–1409. In this text, priests who deviate from the true doctrine and seek justification for their symonistic practices are called *Antichristi titinilli et nunccii*:

1407–1409: *Super IV Sententiarum*<sup>28</sup>

*Ab hac doctrina discedentes filii ecclesie degeneres, ut ignavi trutanni balbuciant, ut rane coaxant et ut cicade ciccitant, velud Antichristi titinilli et nunccii volentes exaccionem pro baptismo, confessione, sacra unccione et pro sacramentis ceteris defendere et dampnatam consuetudinem tanquam laudabilem approbare.*

The term “titinilli” occurs here alongside other expressions used for meaningless, empty chatter – priests croak like frogs and chirp like crickets. Thus, in this passage, Jan Hus (intentionally or accidentally) follows the original usage of the term found in the Titivillus exemplum. However, at the same time, he associates the term “titinilli” with the abuse and misinterpretation of authoritative texts in order to excuse sins.

In connection to crickets, Jan Hus also uses the word “Titivillus” in his *Defensio libri De Trinitate* from year 1410, which represented his reaction to combustion of Wycliffe’s books ordered by Prague archbishop Zbyněk Zajíc of Hazenburg. This text has basically a form of thematic sermon and its aim was to prove that Wycliffe’s texts (not only *Liber de Trinitate*) are not heretic and should not be burnt.<sup>29</sup> Hus uses in his argumentation a lot of rhetoric figures and the term “Titivillus” was very suitable for it:

1410: *Defensio libri de Trinitate*<sup>30</sup>

*Item obiciunt: non est de fide turbis coadunatis publice disputandum.*

*O utinam isti titivilli garrientes in angulis et cicade in rimis ciccicantes legerent aliquando Cristi evangelium et invenirent, quociens Salvator noster et magister optimus de fide cum turbis Iudeorum et pontificibus disputavit; quomodo denique sui discipuli, ut patet in Actibus apostolorum, quomodo sancti doctores ecclesie et quomodo denique doctores scolastici sacre Scripture de fide Iesu Cristi Domini, non ipsam impugnantem temerarie, disputarunt (...)*<sup>31</sup>

28 Jan Hus (ed. Flajšhans & Komínková 1900: pp. 7–8, I, Inceptio, I, 9).

29 Cf. Nechutová (2016: pp. 154–156).

30 Jan Hus (ed. Eršil & Silagi 2010: p. 41).

31 They also object: It is not allowed to discuss openly about the faith ahead of assembled crowd. I wish, if only these titivilli babbling on corners and cicades stridulating in cracks read sometimes the gospel of Christ and found out, how many times our Saviour and best teacher discussed about the faith with the crowd of Jews and priests; how his disciples, as we can see in Acts of Apostles, how holy doctors of church and scholastic doctors of Holy Scripture discussed about faith of Jesus Christ, and they didn’t fight against it recklessly (...).



In this text, the term “Titivillus” is reserved for Hus’ opponents who claimed, in contradiction to the Gospel, that the questions of faith should not be discussed with common people. The formulation “titivilli babbling on corners” goes, as it could seem, back to the original concept of demon with a bag, but in this context it is surely a designation of a man, who because of his ignorance, stupidity, or laziness, distorts the right meaning of the Scripture and authorities.

### 2.3 Titivillus in the problemata of quodlibetal disputations at the Prague university

Even though Titivillus occurred as a demon in a different context at the Prague university the term was still predominantly used in sermons (with the exception of the commentary *Super quattuor sententiarum* and the polemic *Defensio libri De Trinitate*, which, however, corresponds in its structure with the thematic sermon). In addition, we can find Titivillus in three quodlibetal handbooks:<sup>32</sup>

1409: Matěj of Knín: *Quodlibet*, fol. 121v<sup>33</sup>

*Quare titivili libenter equos equitant et complicant crines hominum intricat?*<sup>34</sup>

1411: Jan Hus: *Quodlibet*<sup>35</sup>

*Problema: Quare, ut docet communis experientia, spiritus, qui dicuntur titivilli, conversantur cum virginibus plus quam cum aliis hominibus?*<sup>36</sup>

1416: Šimon of Tišnov: *Quodlibet*, fol. 121r<sup>37</sup>

*Quare titivilli libenter equos equitant et complicant hominum crines et iubas equinum?*<sup>38</sup>

Only the titles of the problemata survived which makes their interpretation restricted. Problemata of Šimon of Tišnov and Matěj of Knín evidently follow one another, or some

32 This type of manuals is one of the most important sources of knowledge to s.c. quodlibetal disputations which were held periodically at the Faculty of arts at Prague university in the beginning of 15<sup>th</sup> century. Their aim was to enable all masters of the faculty to discuss any kind of questions. One chosen master prepared and subsequently presided these discussions. The preparations of some *quodlibetarii* are preserved in medieval manuscript copies. Apart from regular *questiones*, each discussing master had to respond a *problema* (or *probleuma*) too, a short question beginning usually by the word “quare” – why. The term “Titivillus” appears just in this type of questions in Prague quodlibets. For more about quodlibetal disputations see Kejř (1971) and Šmahel (2016: pp. 326–348).

33 Library of Prague Metropolitan Chapter, manuscript sign. L 45, fol. 121v.

34 Why titivilli like riding a horse and why weave human hair into confusion?

35 Jan Hus (ed. Ryba 1948: p. 235, magistrorum series 50).

36 Problema: Why, as the common experience says, the demons named titivilli associate usually with maidens and not with other people?

37 Library of National Museum Prague, manuscript sign. V C 42, fol. 121r.

38 Why titivilli like riding a horse and why they weave manes of horses and human hair?

other common source. They both depict Titivillus as fond of horse riding and causing confusion. The confusion causing is related, to certain extent, to other roles mentioned by Jan Hus in his sermons and other writings in connection to Titivillus, such as distortion and confusion of authoritative texts. However, it is impossible to prove this connection without other sources. It is also interesting that the problema of Hus' *Quodlibet* introduces Titivillus without any such connection. In this sentence, Titivillus is defined as a demon primarily seeking contact with maidens, a role that can be understood as a common function of a devil – seducer to sin.

Thus, the occurrence of the term “Titivillus” in problemata appears to stand aside from the trend we have observed in Hus' writings. It seems that Titivillus takes on a vaguer role as the “common” devil. Nevertheless, the repetition of this expression in the problemata of Prague quodlibetal disputations proves that the word “Titivillus” must have been known, well understood, and used among the scholars of the Prague university, as the Hus' formulation *ut docet communis experientia* confirms.

## 2.4 A demon with a sack and a priest distorting the meaning of Holy Scripture

How and why did Titivillus lost his original context in Bohemian milieu and became a synonym for devil, primarily in the connection with distorting the right meaning of Holy Scripture and with adultery? For a comprehensive answer to this question we don't have enough edited material. However, the material we currently have enables us to express a certain theory, how it comes to pass.

First, the term Antichrist and the typical preaching rhetoric connected to him appear relatively frequently in the preaching of the pre-hussite period, especially in the sermons of the so-called predecessors of Hus and in the synodic and other sermons of Prague university masters. This preaching rhetoric used a variety of diverse terms when referring to the devil or his servants and could easily embrace a new, interesting word for a demon.<sup>39</sup> However, this fact alone does not explain the higher occurrence of Titivillus in Hus' texts and in the quodlibetal disputations of his colleagues.

Another explanation seems to be at hand: this is the period when Wycliffe's works got to Prague university and were accepted with enthusiasm there. The term “Titivillus” occurs in some Wycliffe's works as well as in those written by scholars in Prague. A typical example can be found in Wycliffe's preaching on epistles, in which he criticised superiors of monasteries burdening their subordinates with new, superfluous commands, which have no foundation in Gospel:

John Wycliffe: *Sermones*<sup>40</sup>

*Tales multas instancias posset logicus diffuse facere contra sentencias stolidorum qui tamquam titinillus*

39 Cf. Mazalová (2015: pp. 225–260).

40 Wycliffe (ed. Loserth 1887: p. 235, sermo 29).

*simulant repugnancias doctorum et nec scientes summulas nec leges equivocorum sive oppositorum (...) sed detegentes in scriptis suas diffinitiones invenirent ex deteccionibus logicorum quod quodlibet verborum suorum alteri sit repugnans.*<sup>41</sup>

In this passage, Titivillus (with the graphic form with -n-) designates again a person, which distorts authoritative texts: “these ones, which as Titivillus pretend contradiction between doctors”. This usage of the term “Titivillus” is very close to the context, in which Jan Hus and Šimon of Tišnov use the term in Prague university milieu. In addition, we know, that Jan Hus was familiar with *Sermones super Epistolas* of Wycliffe – he quotes other passages from these *Sermones* in his synodic sermon *Diliges*, where we can find the term “Titivillus”, too.

### 3. Conclusion

Whether we managed to describe Titivillus’ journey to the texts of Jan Hus precisely or not, we can say that the Titivillus found in the 15<sup>th</sup> century Bohemian texts partially lost his original context depicted in the exempla of Jacobus de Vitriaco. This corresponds to the development of this literary character elsewhere in Europe. Interestingly, certain connections to the exemplum persist in the Prague university milieu, albeit in a figurative sense. The Titivillus is not anymore associated with a negligent recitation of the liturgy accompanied by mumbling or making a slip of the tongue, as described by Jacobus de Vitriaco, Johannes Vallensis, and Jacobus Januensis, but rather with the distortion of the meaning of authoritative texts, particularly of the Holy Scripture. Such depiction of Titivillus is found especially in the writings of Jan Hus (with the exception of his *Quodlibet* – there Titivillus functions as a demon seducing people to sin or causing confusion). The problemata in quodlibetal disputations of Matěj of Knín and Šimon of Tišnov can be understood in the same way. We cannot rule out the option that the occurrence of the term “Titivillus” in the texts of Jan Hus and his colleagues at the Prague University may have been influenced by John Wycliffe’s work, since the Oxford theologian mentions the name of this demon in his *Sermones* in an untypical context similar to the one found in the later works of Jan Hus.

### Abbreviations

CCCM *Corpus Christinorum: Continuatio Mediaevalis*

DMLBS *Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources – online*

FC *Fontes Christiani*

MIHOO *Magistri Iohannis Hus Opera omnia*

41 A logician should do very much against opinions of stupid people, which as a titivillus pretend contradiction between doctors without a knowledge of elements of logic (...), but they found out in texts from revelations of logicians their own arguments that each word contradicts to another one.

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