



VIVARIUM – Centre for Research in Medieval Society and Culture, University of Ostrava

Department of Philosophy, University of Ostrava

Department of Philosophy, Palacký University Olomouc

Call for Papers:

From Quadrivium to Natural Sciences: New Impulses in the Traditional Framework

Ostrava, 15th–16th November 2018

The conference aims to provide an opportunity to discuss research and share ideas among the philosophers and historians of science concerning the inquiry into nature, which was primarily represented by quadrivial disciplines and medicine during the early Middle Ages and further developed in reaction to emerging translations of Greek and Arabic texts on nature. The stress is put on the transformations in time, crossing the boundaries, and progressive introduction of “otherness” into the traditional conceptions.

Participants are encouraged to focus on various fields which formed quadrivium (arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy) and on other disciplines devoted to the study of nature (medicine, optics, meteorology, timekeeping, alchemy, etc.). We welcome submissions focusing on issues discussed since the 10th century and following continuities (or discontinuities) up to the 17th century. Proposed framework offers range of intertwining topics, which may include:

- Variable position of quadrivial disciplines through the centuries or an original utilization of specific discipline by individual scholars.
- Revisiting the traditional narrative inherent to the intellectual history of medieval philosophy and modern science (e.g. “scientific revolution of the 17th century”).
- Procedural inclusion of otherness: The emergence of new texts and translations, which provided new impulses for further inquiries into nature, or the influence of scientific and academic pursuits on lives outside of universities and vice versa.
- Diverse motivations (theoretical and practical) behind the pursuit of knowledge concerning the nature. Observing vs. conquering nature. Realism vs. instrumentalism, ontological commitments of scientific theories. Did premodern scholars perceived their theories as descriptions of reality or practical models (e.g. epicycles and eccentrics).
- The wisdom of quadrivial disciplines or natural sciences and the wisdom of philosophy.
- Status of quadrivial disciplines relative to other intellectual pursuits (e.g. trivium, natural sciences, theology, mysticism, etc.) and shifting boundaries of the fields in question (e.g. the use

of arithmetic in mechanics or pharmacology, geometry in astronomy or optics, or the status of the so-called *scientiae mediae* in general).

- The place and importance of natural science or quadrivium in the hierarchy of knowledge and philosophy. Encyclopaedism: the struggle for the completeness of knowledge. The changes in the classification of knowledge. How many liberal arts are there? New approaches to classification based on new translations of Arabic and Greek texts in the high Middle Ages and Renaissance.
- The methods of scientific approach: observation and experience, deductive reasoning, intuition, mysticism or the role of experiment during the Middle Ages and the Renaissance in scientific as well as philosophical endeavours.

Confirmed speakers:

Jari Kaukua (University of Jyväskylä)

Marco Sgarbi (University of Venice)

Henry Zepeda (Bavarian Academy of Sciences and Humanities)

Ovanes Akopyan (University of Innsbruck)

The conference takes place from **15th to 16th November 2018** in **Ostrava**, Czech Republic (at the Faculty of Arts, Reální 5, Ostrava). The conference language is **English** (one section in **Czech**). The scheduled length of presentations is **25 minutes** (plus approximately 10 minutes for discussion). The selected papers will be published in the form of collective monography or special issue of specialized journal.

To submit, please e-mail the title and the abstract (in the length of approximately 200 words) of the paper to David Černín (cernin.d@gmail.com). The deadline for abstract submission is 3rd September 2018. The programme of the conference will be ready by the 1st of October.

The conference is held under the auspices of the project *The Construction of the Other in Medieval Europe* (IRP University of Ostrava).

Steering committee:

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