

Pozvánka na přednášku v rámci přednáškového cyklu

Renesance a středověk II

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***‘The form of the divine kind he made for the most part of fire’*: the problem of the celestial matter.
Some Renaissance readings of *Timaeus* 40a1-2**

“Doubt thou (=that) the stars are fire” writes Hamlet at the opening of his letter to Ophelia. This rhetorical doubt betrays a Platonic view of celestial matter. Indeed, Plato held that the cosmos was homogeneous and the heavenly bodies were composed of the same elements as the earth, though the element of fire predominates in them. According to Aristotle, however, the world was divided into two distinct and separated realms: the sublunary region, composed of the four elements (earth, air, fire and water), and the celestial, filled with incorruptible ether, radically different from the four terrestrial simple bodies. The Aristotelian world view was the prevailing conception of the cosmos, and especially of celestial matter, for centuries. Medieval and Renaissance natural philosopher quite unanimously admitted a different matter in the heavens, while disagreeing on the kind of matter (and species).

The recovery of ancient scientific inheritance favoured doctrinal pluralism and offered new ways of “reading” the world, alternatives to medieval Aristotelian readings. I will take into account the return to Plato and to the Timaeic elementary theory, began with Ficino’s translation of Plato’s work, since it challenged Aristotle’s physic and cosmology and paved the way for the new astronomy.

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