

Pozvánka na přednášku v rámci přednáškového cyklu

Renesance a středověk II

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Petrarch, the physicians and the scholastic world

Petrarch, the “first modern man” (Ernest Renan), was one of the fundamental critics of the scholastic world which he detested as “ossified” and spiritually retro-orientated. For the poet of the “Canzoniere” – may be the most influential intellectual of the 14th century – “scholastic” was a very negative term. It was a kind of generic term of the traditional methods and discourses which characterized formation and thinking of contemporary physicians as well as of lawyers, philosophers (and of all those who felt bound to the medieval tradition which had, as Petrarch believed, falsified the cognitions of the ancient authorities). The period of the “studia humanitatis” (a term found one generation later by Salutati) was to replace the (supposed) stupid parroting of medieval doctrines and authoritative texts which were imparted, at least in university circles, from generation to generation. Petrarch’s view of the academic world was absolutely negative. The quarrel about methods and intellectual aims of humanists and scholastic was also a fundamental dispute about the prerogative of the interpretation of the world, about the new ranking in spiritual things. Petrarch was deeply convinced that the medieval world, as he saw it, was dying – and that a new time would begin. Ancient history, moral philosophy, poetry, rhetoric became the leading topics. Spiritual health seemed more important now than that one of the body.

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