

Special seminar of

RESEARCH CENTRE FOR THEORY AND HISTORY OF SCIENCE

with

Gábor Almási:

*Tycho Brahe and the separation
of astronomy from astrology:
the making of a new scientific discourse*

12th May 2014

Sedláčkova 19, 306 14 Pilsen

room RJ-209

14:30 – 16:00

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INVESTICE DO ROZVOJE VZDĚLÁVÁNÍ

TYCHO BRAHE AND THE SEPARATION OF ASTRONOMY FROM ASTROLOGY: THE MAKING OF A NEW SCIENTIFIC DISCOURSE

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This lecture will be based on the subject of a recently published paper (appeared in *Science in Context*, 2013), addressing the shift from an astrology-oriented astronomy towards an allegedly more objective, mathematically grounded approach to astronomy. While recent literature has emphasized the long survival of astrological belief and its importance in the interpretation of the work of eminent scholars, this lecture will not downplay the significance of astrological belief but highlight the growing gap between private belief and public rhetorical strategies regarding astrology. This will be illustrated through a close reading of Tycho Brahe's scientific development and the contemporaneous changes in his communicational strategies. It will be claimed that the Danish astronomer developed a new astronomical discourse for search of credibility, giving priority to observational astronomy and natural philosophical questions. As the lecture is decidedly historical and contextual in its approach, the emphasis will be on the ways Tycho's scholarly environment influenced his communicational strategies. As will be shown, the Czech astronomer Tadeáš Hájek (and the scholars around him, including the Hungarian Andreas Dudith) had an eminent place in this environment. The abandonment of astrology in public discourse will be thus primarily explained from Tycho's social position and greater sensibility to controversial issues.