

Foreword

In the *Principia philosophiae*, Descartes uses the metaphor ‘tree’ in order to illustrate the unity of different fields of science. The whole tree represents the totality of philosophy. The image indicates that in early modern thinking philosophy and science covered the same areas of human knowledge. However, Cartesian thinking laid the grounds for the diversification of sciences, which resulted in the separation between hard sciences and philosophy some centuries later; while at the beginning of Modernity philosophy and science were synonymous, in the Early Modern Age we can observe their separation and the proliferation of different philosophical disciplines.

The papers collected in this volume have two objectives: on the one hand, to present how early modern thinking made an effort to conceptualize science and philosophy together, and on the other hand, to analyse some stages of their separation. In the seventeenth-century metaphysics was considered as a science and it provided many links between theology and philosophy. Andreas Blank, József Simon and Cristian Moisuc investigate the overlapping problems of philosophy, theology and metaphysics, including the philosophy of religion. In this age the elaboration of methods that would guarantee the certainty of knowledge and promote the scientific research for truth was of particular importance. To this end it was necessary to learn the capacities of the human mind and to determine the rules for the accurate use of reason and also to define the conditions of scientific knowledge. Olivér István Tóth and Robert Arnăutu address these topics from different angles. Seventeenth-century thinkers tried to define the utility of science not only on a practical level but on a moral level as well. They attempted to clarify the connections between the new and earlier moral theories and to understand the implications of the new scientific knowledge for the field of ethics. Hanna Vandebussche and Márton Korányi investigate how early modern ethical thinking went beyond the elements of traditional moral theories without severing its ties with the philosophical and religious traditions. Since the seventeenth century gave rise to the gradual diversification of science concluding in its complete emancipation from philosophy, it is necessary to define precisely

the links among different fields of science and philosophy. Gábor Boros and Tamás Pavlovits analyse the connections, on the one hand, between optics and metaphysics and, on the other, between mathematics and philosophy.

The articles collected in this issue are revised versions of the papers of the international conference organised by the Department of Philosophy of the University of Szeged in the Centre Universitaire Francophone of Szeged (CUF) on November 20–21, 2015. The organizers would like to express their heartfelt thanks for the AUF (Association Universitaire de la Francophonie) and the CUF. This issue was supported by the NKFI/OTKA research project no. K125012.

Tamás Pavlovits
conference organizer, guest editor