

# Late Medieval Hylomorphism: Matter and Form, 1300–1600

International Conference, 9–11 June, 2022  
Institute of Philosophy, KU Leuven, Belgium

## Call for Abstracts

Later medieval philosophers would claim that all bodies are compounds of matter and form. Yet, among themselves, their ways of conceiving of the two components tended to differ substantively. The conference “Late Medieval Hylomorphism” aims at disentangling the specificities of a long-lasting debate on hylomorphism, the scope and originality of which is still unknown. While hylomorphic issues in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth century have received some scholarly attention, the later history of Scholastic hylomorphism is still to be explored. What were the main disputes concerning hylomorphism in the period? What were the main positions? Who were the interesting thinkers defending unusual points of view? These questions unfold at different levels of the ontological examination of substances. For instance, the debate about the modality of existence of prime matter conceived of as either a pure potency or an entity in act had profound impact on the later tradition up to the seventeenth century. In a similar manner, the contentious thirteenth- and fourteenth-century question of whether there is a plurality of substantial forms in any compound is present into the early modern period; but were new positions, arguments, and ideas develop over the course of the centuries? Moreover, an important view in thirteenth-century hylomorphic debates was the so-called theory of “universal hylomorphism”, which seems to disappear from the later debate; but is this in fact the case? A like question can be asked about the Augustinian notion of seminal reasons (*rationes seminales*). Additional central questions about the later medieval debate on hylomorphism ask about the ontological distinction between super- and sublunary matters, and the roles played by prime matter and substantial form in the process of substantial change. And underlying all these issues, thinkers had to address the lurking worry that no well-grounded reasoning on matter and form is possible when neither of the hylomorphic constituents can be known.

Our conference aims to bring together scholars working on hylomorphism especially between the early fourteenth and the early seventeenth century. We encourage submissions on any aspect of hylomorphism in the period.

## Topics may include (but are not limited to) the following:

- the potency of prime matter
- super- and sublunary matter
- spiritual/universal hylomorphism
- the unity or multiplicity of substantial forms
- intension and remission of substantial forms
- matter, form, and quantity

## Confirmed Speakers:

Richard Cross, Helen Hattab, Thomas Jeschke, Kamil Majcherek, Sylvain Roudaut, Adam Wood

## Practical Information:

The conference, at this point, is planned to take place in hybrid mode. Participants who wish to attend in person are responsible for arranging travel to and accommodation in Leuven.

## Submission of Abstracts:

Please send abstracts of no more than 500 words to  
**hylomorphism2022@gmail.com**

- **Deadline:** 31 January, 2022
- **Notification of Acceptance:** 15 February, 2022

## Questions?

Contact the organizers: Zita Toth (zita.toth@kuleuven.be),  
Russell Friedman (russell.friedman@kuleuven.be)  
Nicola Polloni (nicola.polloni@kuleuven.be),

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