



Ca' Foscari
University
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Philosophy and
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Wednesday
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h. 4.00 – 5.30 p.m.

Malcanton Marcorà
Palace,
Aula Valent
Dorsoduro 3484/D,
Venice

Introduction by prof.
Pietro Daniel
Omodeo

Guest hosted by
the ERC endeavor
EarlyModernCosmology
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Workshop ERC EarlyModernCosmology

Et Spiritus Dei ferebatur super aquas.
Mosaic Physics and Life in the Young Leibniz

Stefan Heßbrüggen-Walter
National Research University, Higher School of
Economics, Moscow

This paper shows how Leibniz transforms in his *Hypothesis physica nova* the teachings of 'Mosaic physics', particularly with regard to the concept of life. It focuses on the vivifying force of the spirit of God evoked in Gen. 1.2 and discusses its relation both to alchemist doctrines of a 'fifth essence' (*quintessentia*) and manifestations of life in plants and animals. While all thinkers agree that the form of life produced by the 'Spirit of God' is a purely natural phenomenon, the integration of human life into a 'Mosaic' account is controversial: Comenius defends a unitary conception of life that applies indiscriminately to humans and other living bodies, while Alsted distinguishes natural and supernatural life - as does, at least in the speaker's reading, the young Leibniz.