

13th Conference of the FIEC

Proposal

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Preferred Panel: the Powers of Persuasion

Title: Rhetoric and Metaphysics: Gorgias according to Sextus Empiricus

Abstract: An important source on Gorgias' *On not being* is Sextus Empiricus' *Adversus Mathematicos*. Gorgias' text is presented in *Against the Logicians*, and it is of note that references to Gorgias appear only in that book; there is no reference to him in the book *Against the Rhetoricians*, even though it begins by discussing Plato's *Gorgias* and making reference to beauty as one of the instruments of persuasion, reminding us of Helen. Why, when dealing exhaustively with rhetoric as the art of persuasion, does Sextus not say anything about Gorgias? In light of these considerations, I would like to discuss a) how Sextus' approach to Gorgias gives us a new perspective on *On not being*, and consequently on the so-called rhetorical texts *Encomium of Helen* and *Defence of Palamedes*; b) how we can understand the use and meaning of the word "truth" (*aletheia*) in Gorgias' texts. In my interpretation of Gorgias, I propose an analogy with a contemporary trend in the philosophy of mathematics--Intuitionism--and argue that there is a similarity in the conception of truth for Gorgias and for the intuitionists, which helps us to rethink the issues of rhetoric and metaphysics in classical antiquity.