Plato’s Gorgias

XIIth Symposium Platonicum Pragense
Prague, Villa Lanna Praha 6, V Sadech 1
November 13–15, 2019

Wednesday, 13th of November

14:00–15:00 Kryštof Boháček (Prague) | Ethical or aesthetic criterion in Gorg. 447a-448e and 523a-527e? Two underlying concepts of kosmos
15:15–16:15 Vladimír Mikeš (Prague) | Is ethically neutral rhetoric (460c-461a) a real option for Plato and if not why?
17:30–19:00 Public Key Note Lecture: Michael Erler (Würzburg) | Socrates and the weakness of the strong man: The rhetoric of the true politician

Thursday, 14th of November

09:30–10:30 Panos Dimas (Oslo) | Justice, happiness and desire in the Gorgias
10:45–11:45 Tushar Irani (Middletown) | Socrates’ great speech in the Gorgias
12:00–13:00 Naly Thaler (Jerusalem) | Socrates and Callicles on pleasure and intrinsic value
15:00–16:00 Marie-Pierre Noël (Paris) | De l’Amphion d’Euripide au Socrate de Platon: la construction de l’héroïsme philosophique dans le Gorgias

Friday, 15th of November

09:30–10:30 Marta Jimenez (Atlanta) | Empeiria in Olympiodorus’ commentary to the Gorgias
10:45–11:45 Jamie Dow (Leeds) | What is true rhetoric in Plato’s Gorgias?
12:00–13:00 David Machek (Bern) | Warum ist Unrechttun schlimmer als Unrechtleiden?
15:00–16:00 Frisbee Sheffield (Cambridge) | Desire, friendship and community in Plato’s Gorgias
16:15–17:15 Louis-André Dorion (Montréal) | Se délivrer du mal: elenchos et châtiment dans le Gorgias
Socrates and the weakness of the strong man: The rhetoric of the true politician

kterou prosloví

Prof. Michael Erler
Julius-Maximilians-Universität Würzburg

Kde: Vila Lanna, Praha 6, V Sadech 1
Kdy: 13. 11. 2019 v 17:30

Abstrakt:
The *Gorgias* is one of the most extensive and richest of Plato’s dialogues but also one of the most relevant to our contemporary situation. Two concepts of life are up for discussion – that of the traditional politician and orator, who is focussing on increasing his or her own power and influence, and the life of the philosopher or – to put it in modern terms – the intellectual, which is regarded as alien, apolitical and too weak for self-help, and therefore becomes the subject of the mockery of comedy. Plato’s *Gorgias* reacts to such attacks by showing that traditional politicians or even the tyrants are weak, because they do not have the knowledge which is necessary to distinguish between good and bad. They therefore fail to achieve what really is good for them. Plato’s Socrates offers a new understanding of what he calls true politics and true rhetoric, which is bound by norms and focuses on people, the addresses or audiences, rather than on one’s own benefits. This new focus requires a fundamental reorientation and transformation of traditional political and rhetorical concepts and instruments, but also helps to understand Socrates’ claim that those true politicians or rhetoricians, i.e. philosophers or intellectuals, are not weak but do have power. Plato thus reacts to developments in his own time like the growing theatricality of politics as described by Thucydides which might look familiar to us in times when populism and anti-intellectualism seem to gain importance.