

Two-day Workshop

Dialectic and Syllogistic

Marion I, Mon 12 June 2023, 10:00-12:00

“A Reconstruction of the Rules for Dialectical Bouts in Ancient Philosophy”

In this first talk, I shall provide a set of rules for dialectical bouts in Ancient Greece, criticizing mainly Vlastos’ better-known rival account. Key features of these rules will be investigated, notably their reliance on the principle of non-contradiction, and fresh explanations of features as Socrates’ avowals of ignorance and the ‘doxastic constraint’ in terms of these rules will be provided. The key to this approach is to provide minimal rules for bouts, so that modifications and extensions over time, from the Eleatics onwards, can be plotted. One such example is the addition of a no counterexample rule, used first by Socrates in Plato’s dialogues, which stands at the origin of Aristotle’s dictum de omni. Finally, I shall briefly look at the distinction between ‘dialectic’ in its role as a tool for philosophical investigation and ‘eristic’.

Marion II, Tue 13 June, 10:00-12:00

“Ancient Dialectic: Arguments and Strategies”

In this second talk, I shall first focus on the interpretation of arguments originating in dialectical bouts, with Zeno’s arguments about motion and the Sorites as examples. I shall argue that a proper reconstruction of them leads to a new understanding, e.g., the point of Zeno’s argument was not to deny the existence of motion, but to derive this absurd conclusion from premisses conceded by his opponent. The relation of some uses of the Sorites to *reductio ad absurdum* will be discussed. Secondly, I shall focus on the deployment of specific strategies that use dialectical arguments, in particular that of ‘arguing on both sides’. This will lead to an argument for the dialectical origin of the Sceptics’ tools (their stock arguments including the Sorites) and their specific strategy for achieving ‘equality of contrary reasoning’.

Doukas Kapantais, Mon 12 June 2023, 18:00-20:00 (part I),

Tue 13 June 2023, 18:00-20:00 (part II)

“Syllogistic and Metasyllogistic in the *Prior Analytics*”

The *Prior Analytics* is a logical treatise. We can find in there the presentation of a logical system: the Syllogistic. The *Prior Analytics* is also a metalogical treatise. It raises questions and proves theorems *about* the Syllogistic. The niche in which these latter are stated and proved is a different system; it is the metatheory of the Syllogistic. Because tradition lacked the

conceptual and formal resources we now have, tradition failed to realize, or at least failed to sufficiently elaborate and comment upon, the distinction between these two systems. Sharply distinguishing between these two can help us to remove several worries tradition diachronically has had against some of Aristotle's claims in the *Prior Analytics*, like criticisms concerning "circular proofs", proofs that ought to be formal while they are contentual, and "reduction proofs" that are not reduction proofs in the modern sense. For the same reasons, tradition has failed to appreciate the extent to which the *Topic's* agenda and the *Prior Analytic's* agenda converge.