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THEATERSAAL
SONNENFELSGASSE 19
1010 VIENNA

ACADEMY LECTURES

LEIBNIZ LECTURE

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ARISTOTLE'S DYNAMIC PHILOSOPHY OF NATURE AND ITS RELEVANCE TODAY

DEMETRA SFENDONI-MENTZOU

Interdisciplinary Centre for Aristotle Studies, Aristotle University, Thessaloniki

WELCOME

Ulrike Diebold | Vice-President of the Austrian Academy of Sciences
Claudia Isep | Deputy Secretary General of the Austrian Commission for UNESCO

Introduction and Moderation of Q&A:

Herta Nagl-Docekal | Austrian Academy of Sciences and University of Vienna

Under the patronage of



Aristotle's philosophy of nature has been underestimated for centuries. His *Physics* was considered by the protagonists of the "Scientific Revolution" as a sterile system; the idea that there is no place for an Aristotelian perspective in science was, subsequently, reinforced by the development of Newtonian mechanics. Against this traditional view, the lecture seeks to show that Aristotle's conception of nature is one of his most fruitful ideas, and that the insights gained from Aristotle's work are becoming increasingly relevant to contemporary science. Furthermore, the lecture argues that, in the light of the impressive discoveries in numerous fields of science, especially in physics, a closer look at Aristotle's work will reveal that the Stageirite has elaborated a dynamic model of nature, which is much closer than Newtonian physics to the new scientific image of nature emerging today. At the same time, Aristotle's insights into the inter-relation of all disciplines and the unity of knowledge can respond to the growing need for a re-unification of the various sciences through an interdisciplinary approach.

Demetra Sfendoni-Mentzou is Professor Em. of Philosophy of Science, the founding and current President of the Interdisciplinary Centre for Aristotle Studies, Aristotle University Thessaloniki, Greece, and Fellow of the Charles S. Peirce Society. She served as President of the Greek Philosophical Society (2006–08) and the Charles Sanders Peirce Society (2014–15). Her research focus on the importance of Aristotle's thought for the current sciences is documented in her studies on Quantum Mechanics, Microphysics and the Bio-Sciences. She edited *Aristotle and Contemporary Science* (two volumes, 2000/2001) and *Aristotle–Contemporary Perspectives on his Thought* (2018). Furthermore, she demonstrated how the philosophy of American Pragmatism relates to Aristotle's thinking. As President of the C. S. Peirce Society she chaired the "Charles S. Peirce International Centennial Congress," Lowell, Massachusetts (2014). Most importantly, she initiated, organized and chaired the "World Congress Aristotle 2400 Years" Thessaloniki 2016, under the auspices of the President of the Hellenic Republic, and edited the Proceedings of that Congress (2019). Currently, Prof. Sfendoni-Mentzou is establishing a joint Greek-Chinese research program that was initiated at the international "Aristotle-Confucius Symposium on Ethics for the 21st Century" that she co-organized in July 2023.

The **Leibniz Lectures**, as part of the Academy Lectures of the Austrian Academy of Sciences, refer to the fact that Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz presented the first plans for a „Society of Sciences in Vienna“ to the Emperor during his time in Vienna in 1712–1714. Lectures are given by scholars who have gained international recognition not only in their own field, and whose research demonstrates the differentiation potential of philosophy both for interdisciplinary understanding, and for dealing with publicly relevant issues of the present.

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