

CALL FOR PAPERS

Papers are invited for presentation on the following topic:

“Academic Skepticism: Philosophical Reflections on Knowledge and Rhetoric”

For a two-day workshop in the frame of the 13th International Conference of the International Society for the Study of European Ideas (ISSEI)

University of Cyprus, Nicosia, 2-6 July 2012

The workshop will be devoted on one day to Ancient Academic Skepticism and on the other day to Modern Academic Skepticism

Please submit an abstract (one page) by January 1st, 2012 to:

Luiz Eva (University federal of Paraná, Brazil), in charge of the workshop on Ancient Academic Skepticism
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Sébastien Charles (Université de Sherbrooke, Canada), in charge of the workshop on Modern Academic Skepticism
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Speakers will have 20 to 30 minutes to present their papers in English or French (exact length to be confirmed, depending on the number of papers accepted).

Presentation of the workshop:

Many efforts have been devoted to the study of skepticism in the last few decades, be it in its ancient or modern Pyrrhonian versions. But the same cannot be said about the Academic version of this philosophical orientation, which flourished around a hundred years after Plato's death, from the time that Arcesilas became the head of the Academy. Our main extant Pyrrhonian source, the work of Sextus Empiricus, has been largely explored in many dimensions, going from its powerful and manifold argumentation schemes to its fortune. In contrast, Cicero's dialogues, which deal with these topics (mainly *Academica* and *De Natura Deorum*, among others) have been usually restrained to a literary interest. Philosophically, he was mostly seen as a less important author, be it in terms of his philosophical depth, or of his influence (albeit his work is conversely the main extant source for the study of Academic skepticism). Such a view was moreover reinforced by the most important study concerning the modern revival of Academic Skepticism, Charles Schmitt's *Cicero Scepticus*, inasmuch it mainly confirms the

classical picture offered by Richard Popkin, according to which the rediscovery of Sextus' works in the end of the Renaissance was the main cause of the skeptical crisis from which early modern philosophy sprung.

Only more recently has more philosophical attention been devoted to Cicero's version of skepticism. Not only is his impact on early modern philosophy an object of renewed appraisal now, but also his own works became the source of an autonomous philosophical interest. For what concerns the main purpose of this workshop, it is particularly noteworthy that Cicero's philosophical reflections on our epistemological failures appear to stand in close relation to his concerns on rhetoric and to his literary project in the goal of creating a new Latin culture. At the same time, his *Academica* offer a more detailed account of how these skeptical philosophers followed the "probabile" as a standard for regulating practical life and for joining in the scientific or technical activities of their times. In this workshop, we aim to explore the connections between these themes in Cicero's Academic reflections as a crucial element for enlightening Ancient Skepticism in a more complete way, as well as to improve our knowledge of how the latter was read by early modern thinkers.