

Catholic University in Ruzomberok

Faculty of Arts and Letters

Department of Philosophy

is proud to invite you to the lecture

**Dialectic and the First Principles of Science:
the Case of Aristotle's *Physics* I.2-3**

to be delivered by

Dr. Mathilde Brémond

University of Trier

Centre Léon Robin in Paris

Date and Time: **March 13 (Tuesday), 2018, 10.30 – 12.00**

Lecture Venue: Room F 403

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Mathilde Brémond is a post-doctoral Fellow in philosophy at the University of Trier (Germany), and an associate member of the Centre Léon Robin in Paris. She made her PhD in Paris and Munich on the Presocratic philosopher Melissus and his reception throughout Antiquity. The PhD was disputed in 2016 and published in 2017 by De Gruyter, with the title *Lectures de Mélissos. Edition, traduction et interprétation des témoignages sur Mélissos de Samos*. [Readings of Melissus: Edition, Translation and Interpretation of the Testimonies on Melissus of Samos]. Her main research interests are Eleatism and its reception in Platonic and Aristotelian treatises, and Dialectic.



ABSTRACT

Aristotle says in *Topics* I.2 that dialectic is a way to the first principles of science. This claim has raised astonishment, since in Aristotle, dialectic only seems to be a method used in debates to support one's thesis, and it rests on common opinions, not true premises. How can it then be of any help for the first principles on which science rests and which should, according to Aristotle in all other accounts, be reached by induction, not reasoning from common opinions?

My thesis is that dialectic does not help to find these first principles, but to defend them against adversaries who reject them. I will rest my claim on an analysis of the application of this method in Aristotle's *Physics* I.2-3, where he attacks the Eleatics. The Eleatics (Parmenides and Melissus) consider that multiplicity and movement are impossible, hence destroy the principles of physics. I will show how Aristotle uses the dialectical method to refute them even though they do not accept his principles.