

INSTITUT FÜR PHILOSOPHIE HUMBOLDT-KOLLOQUIUM



Jonathan Beere is the author of *Doing & Being: An Interpretation of Aristotle's Metaphysics Theta*. He was Assistant Professor at the University of Chicago, before joining the faculty at the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, where he is now Professor für antike Philosophie und Wissensgeschichte and director of the graduate program in ancient philosophy and the Research Training Group, „Philosophy, Science and the Sciences.“ His primary interests are in ancient philosophy, especially issues about rationality, substance, psychology, language, and reasoning, but also a burgeoning interest in ancient political philosophy. He has a great interest in Greek mathematical texts. He also has a long-standing secret interest in Wittgenstein.

Jonathan BEERE

BEING-IN-ENERGEIA AND BEING-IN-CAPACITY IN ARISTOTLE'S METAPHYSICS

In this paper, I solve a problem about *energeia* (and capacity) in Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. The problem is that *energeia* sometimes seems to be actuality and sometimes to be activity, and yet "*energeia*" is not ambiguous. Interpreters have been unable to explain what *energeia* is because they have thought that Aristotle explains the expression "to be in *energeia*" (and the corresponding expression "to be in capacity") by first explaining a special sense of *energeia* (and of "capacity") and then explaining the whole expression "to be in *energeia*" in terms of that special sense. But this is wrong. Aristotle explains "to be in *energeia*" (and "to be in capacity") as a whole, not in terms of a special sense of "*energeia*" (or of "capacity"). This insight enables me to explain how "*energeia*" is sometimes best translated "activity" and sometimes "actuality" and yet is not ambiguous. Moreover, I raise and answer the question of when there is an *energeia* corresponding to a true statement that contains the expression "to be in *energeia*". And I elucidate in some detail how *energeia* differs from actuality (even in contexts when it is aptly translated "actuality"). My talk focuses on *Metaphysics* Θ .3 (especially 1047a30-b2) and Θ .6 (especially 1048a25-b17); Θ .1 and Δ .7, Δ .12 are also useful background.

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15:15 - 18:00
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