

The Leibniz Lectures 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 between 1712 and 1714. Lectures are given by scholars who have gained international recognition not only in their own field, but whose research also demonstrates the differentiation potential of philosophy for both for interdisciplinary understanding and for dealing with publicly relevant issues of the present.

Leibniz Lecture

# The Relevance of Reading Classical Arabic Philosophy Today

Ali Benmakhlouf

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## CONTACT

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We would like to point out that photographs and video recordings may be taken during this event.

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**Start: 6 PM**

Austrian Academy of Sciences  
Seminarraum 1, Bäckerstraße 13  
Barrier-free access via  
Dr. Ignaz Seipel-Platz 1  
1010 Vienna

Ali Benmakhlouf is currently professor at Mohammed VI Polytechnique University (UM6P), director of the African Studies Centre (UM6P) and the Center for Arabic Classical Philosophy and Philosophy of Sciences, professor emeritus at Paris Est Val de Marne University and an honorary member of the “Institut Universitaire de France”. His research focuses on logic and the history of logic (*Frege, le nécessaire et le superflu*, 2002; *Bertrand Russell*, 2004), classical Arabic philosophy (*Al Fârâbî, philosophe à Bagdad au Xe siècle*, 2007; *Averroès*, 2000), and Montaigne (*Montaigne*, 2008). Selected recent works: *Pourquoi lire les philosophes arabes* (2015, Arabic transl., Cairo, 2018), *La conversation comme manière de vivre* (2016), *Bioéthique et droits humains* (2019), *La réalité du passé* (2022 and 2025), *L’humanité des autres* (2023 ; Arabic transl., Cairo, 2024 ; English transl. Stanford UP, 2026). He has been a member of the French National Consultative Ethics Committee (CCNE, 2008–2016) and the Consultative Ethics Committee (CCDE) of the Institut de recherches pour le développement (IRD), which he chaired (2009–2013). He is a member of the Institut International de Philosophie, of the Académie Nationale de Pharmacie (since 2020) and of the Academy of the Kingdom of Morocco (since 2022).

# Program

UNESCO World Philosophy Day

## Welcome

Christiane Wendehorst, Division President of the Austrian Academy of Sciences  
Christiane Maaß, Österreichische UNESCO-Kommission

## Introduction and Q&A moderation

Herta Nagl-Docekal, Austrian Academy of Sciences & University of Vienna

## Lecture

Ali Benmakhlouf, Mohammed VI Polytechnic University, Morocco  
*The Relevance of Reading Classical Arabic Philosophy Today*

In this lecture, I try to hint at many issues I first discovered in studying contemporary logic and the philosophy of language. I was particularly aware of the way Al Kindî, Al Fârâbî, and Averroes disclosed many theological problems with the help of linguistic and logical means. They translate major metaphysical features into semantic dilemmas. They draw attention to logical arguments and find equivalent terms for Greek notions in the Arabic language: for instance, the pronoun in Arabic replaces the Greek copula. Their focus is also on the way jurists master the transition from the particular to the general, from a literal to a metaphorical meaning. They use the Aristotelian method as a guide. For all those who are involved in renewing Aristotelian philosophy today, there is much to learn from the study of Arabic philosophers. I will also address anthropological issues related to the integration of Arabic philosophy into the great tradition of humanity that constitutes the philosophical heritage: Arabic philosophers were not simply transmitters of Greek philosophy to Renaissance Europe; they also helped shape that very Renaissance and should now be given greater prominence in philosophy curricula.



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## Reception