

ANNUAL LECTURE 2022

25 October 2022

18:00 Lecture | 19:00 Reception

In recognition of
Giuseppe Veltri's 25 years of
service as a university professor.

Limits of Faith and Scepticism in Zhang Zai (1020–1078)

Michael Friedrich (Universität Hamburg)

When used as a practical means of achieving tranquillity or as a tool to defeat an opponent in debate, scepticism is never an end in itself, but rather serves various purposes, which have been thoroughly discussed by historians of philosophy and intellectual history. It is perhaps not by accident that not all periods have witnessed strong currents of scepticism and that "Pyrrhonism" only emerged after the establishment of the Macedonian empire. While taking the philosophical relevance of questioning the possibility of absolute scepticism into consideration, this talk will mainly focus on Zhang Zai (1020–1078), a so-called Neo-Confucian, and his intellectual career, offering a close examination and contextualisation of one of his dicta emphasising the importance of doubt on one's path to real knowledge. The results will be juxtaposed with the career of a contemporary Western scholar, allowing surprising shortcuts between times and places and some insights that are hopefully relevant to the enquiry undertaken at MCAS.

Michael Friedrich is a professor emeritus of Sinology at Universität Hamburg.

Venue

**Maimonides Centre for
Advanced Studies**

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