Translation and Paraphrase in Late Antiquity

This panel explores approaches to translation in the literature of Late Antiquity from the fourth to the sixth centuries. The three papers respectively present case studies of translation in Latin, Greek, and Syriac literature, together taking into consideration both 'pagan' and Christian texts. Within the papers, translation is broadly understood to include both interlingual translation (from one language to another, e.g. Greek to Latin) and poetic paraphrase of prose texts, an example of what has been termed 'intralingual' translation (Jakobson 1959; Marinatos 2008, 369–70; Roberts 1985, 9-10). There has been much interest in Greco-Roman translation in recent years (Bettini 2012; Glucker-Burnett 2012; McGill 2012; Bonnet-Boucher 2013; McElduff 2013), only some of which has included Late Antiquity. Bettini (2012) in particular has usefully explored the cultural specificity of translation in antiquity and suggested a distinction between Greco-Roman and Judaeo-Christian approaches to translation. Building upon this work, the papers in this panel turn the focus to Late Antiquity, also broadening the scope to include Christian Syriac literature, towards a deeper understanding of the practices and cultural import of translation in the period.

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