

DHI Receptions Cluster

Friday, November 15th at 4:00 pm
126 Voorhies

Dr. Uwe Vagelpohl

“The Imprisoned Translator: Reading and Commenting on Aristotle's Rhetoric in Arabic”

The strange and fascinating reception history of Aristotle's *Rhetoric* could be described as a tale of failure and frustration. To a modern reader, its translation must seem flawed, its commentaries misguided: the *Rhetoric* is too deeply rooted in ancient Greek culture to be understood without knowing about contemporary literature and the political and legal system of the day.

Attracted by Aristotle's reputation as the final authority on virtually everything, Arabic translators and commentators still mounted a vigorous effort to decode this enigmatic text. The talk surveys this reception tradition and argues that, in spite of their frequent failure to grasp Aristotle's meaning, the work of Arabic translators and commentators became a tremendous success story.

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