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ALEXANDER TREIGER
DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY

ARABIC TRANSLATIONS OF THE CHURCH FATHERS

ABSTRACT: When we hear about translations from Greek into Arabic, we immediately think of the Graeco-Arabic translation movement, the large-scale process whereby Greek philosophical and scientific heritage was transmitted into Arabic in Baghdad (ca. 750-1000 AD). This process has received significant scholarly attention due to its immense impact on the history of philosophy and science. It is much less known that there was yet another large-scale translation movement, roughly contemporary with the philosophical and scientific one, albeit continuing well into the second millennium (and arguably to the present day). This is the process whereby Christian religious heritage—the Old and the New Testaments, hagiographical and liturgical texts, and patristic literature—were translated from Greek (as well as Syriac and Coptic) into Arabic. This lecture will focus on the patristic component on this Christian translation movement: the Arabic translations of the Greek Church Fathers. Several examples—such as the Arabic translations of Dionysius the Areopagite and of the Byzantine florilegium *Loci Communes*—will be considered. In addition, the lecture will focus on one significant example of a patristic text lost in the original Greek and preserved only in Arabic—*The Noetic Paradise* (*al-Firdaws al-‘aqlī*)—and will touch on the complicated question of possible patristic influences on Islamic thought.

REGISTRATION AND CONTACT: Giulia.Rossetto@oeaw.ac.at; Adrian.Pirtea@oeaw.ac.at