



Departments of Classics & Near Eastern Languages & Cultures present

Dr. Coleman Connelly

Becoming Demosthenes in Ninth-Century Iraq

Tuesday, April 18 - 4:00-5:30 pm - Hagerty 46

The *Rhetoric* of the Syrian Orthodox Christian Antony of Tagrit (Tikrit) is the earliest and nearly the only extant treatise on rhetorical theory to survive in Syriac. In it, Antony makes a startling claim: of all the nations of world, only the ancient Greeks possessed a scientific ‘craft’ of rhetoric. The Syrians, he writes, along with the Arabs, Armenians and all the rest possess a native rhetorical ‘power’, but all have failed to systematize their oratory. This talk places Antony’s claim in its ninth-century Iraqi context, arguing that it constitutes his unique solution to the great controversy of his day concerning the relative superiority of the Arabs and their non-Arab subjects. Moreover, at a time that witnessed the mass translation of Greek works into Syriac and Arabic, Antony’s claim provides neglected evidence for one Iraqi’s views on what the ancient Greeks had achieved as a civilization and how that achievement could be reproduced, centuries later, in Iraq.

Coleman Connelly is an ACLS Postdoctoral Fellow in Ohio State’s Department of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures and Department of Classics, having received his PhD in Classics from Harvard University in 2016. His research focuses on how and why ancient Greek texts were translated into Syriac and Arabic in eighth- through tenth-century Baghdad, with a particular focus on the Galen translations of the Hunayn circle. His current book project investigates competing claims for ownership of and access to the ancient Greek past made by Christian, Muslim and other intellectuals in ninth-century Iraq.

