

Borderlands: the gendered space of epic and translation

The ancient term epic is often applied to medieval heroic tales, written in different languages and set in the liminal landscape between Byzantium, the Caliphates, and later Turkic polities. To call these rather different kinds of texts 'epic' might be seen as problematic, but it offers a useful indication of how they tend to be understood by modern readers: as traditionally male stories, focusing on war and heroic actions. And yet, heroic tales such as the Greek Digenis Akrites, the Arabic Dhat al-Himma, and the Turkic Battalname, display a wide variety of characters, both male and female, whose significance for the plot does not necessarily depend on their gender.

With a point of departure in such considerations, this dialogue will focus on the role of women characters in the gendered borderland landscapes of such texts, but also on the place of women scholars and translators in the study of texts and languages that are often seen as male.

Participants

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