Translation as transformation:
The first translation of the Qur’an into Greek (8th/9th century A.D.)

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Lundi 14 mars 2011, 18h00
À l’Ifpo – Abou Roumaneh – Damas

The first translation of the Qur’an into a European language dates back to the 8th/9th century A. D. and is preserved as fragments within a single manuscript (Vat. gr. 681), which was circulated throughout the Byzantine Empire during the 9th century. It seems at first to be an exact translation of the holy book of Islam. However, on closer inspection and comparison with the Arabic text of the Qur’an, the translation reveals some subtle textual differences of theological significance. These can be interpreted as a result of a Christian hermeneutical reading of the Qur’an.

The lecture aims to give an overview of the development and influence of this important document of early Islam and to discuss the transformation that the Qur’anic text underwent in this translation.

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