

Rhetoric and mobility: an innovative vision of mobility in the post Diocletian era.

In one of the most complicated periods of the Ancient world- the post Diocletian years- when army, bureaucracy and the figure of the Emperor became central and, first Rome and then Constantinople, are the most important centres of the whole Empire, one wonders: what space do the local communities occupy? What role do their elites play? Many careful reflections about rhetoric led it to become a technical matter, with clear and specific rules, to the point that there are many manuals designed to train the future local establishment. Rhetoric represents the only instrument to define the fate of local communities that have been affected by Diocletian's important administrative reforms. Little attention has been paid to rhetoric as a tool for the mobility of many intellectuals that, all over the Empire, welcome, visit, celebrate proconsuls, officials and mostly emperors defining and increasing such specific speeches, e.g βασιλικὸς λόγος, ἐπιβατήριος λόγος or προσφωνητικὸς λόγος in which they conceive their ideal of power and government. Rhetors like Themistius, Libanius and especially Himerius are the clear evidence of the interconnection that characterizes this period: they hang out at the court, attend the schools scattered around the world and enjoy political projects. Therefore, through rhetoric, there is a strong political and intellectual mobility.

I propose to examine how rhetoric, in all of its part, is an unavoidable instrument to consider the Mediterranean mobility in an innovative way.

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