Finiteness in Greek and Latin, then and now

Dag Haug, University of Oslo

Finiteness is a crucial notion in modern theories of grammar. The concept originates in the work of ancient grammarians on Greek and Latin and it has often been thought to be inadequate for other languages. In my talk, I trace a very brief history of the idea and then show that Greek and Latin themselves actually display a number of phenomena relating to the syntax and semantics of participles and infinitives that challenge this traditional idea of finiteness. Thus, there is still a lot to learn from the grammar of Greek and Latin if one is willing to dig deeper than the traditional descriptions.