

# Les noms propres : intraduits ou intraduisibles ?

## Troisième rencontre des jeunes chercheurs sur les Intraduisibles de l'Antiquité

### CALL FOR PAPERS

Αἰαῖ τίς ἄν ποτ' ὤεθ' ὧδ' ἐπώνυμον  
τοῦμὸν ξυνοίσειν ὄνομα τοῖς ἐμοῖς κακοῖς;  
νῦν γὰρ πάρεστι καὶ δις αἰάζειν ἐμοὶ  
καὶ τρίς· τοιούτοις γὰρ κακοῖς ἐντυγχάνω.  
Sophocles, *Ajax* 430-433

Alas! Who ever would have thought that my name would come to harmonise with my sorrows? For now I can say "Alas" a second time [and a third; such are the sorrows I am encountering].

In ancient and modern languages, proper names are a special category because they are often untranslated. Nevertheless, it is sometimes necessary for a proper noun and its etymology (or para-etymology) to be intelligible to speakers of the target language. The difficulties inherent in translating proper nouns are especially patent in the modern renderings of a passage from Sophocles' *Ajax*: the translation struggles to render the wordplay between the eponymous character's name (Αἴας), the interjection αἰαῖ, "alas", and the verb αἰάζω, "to wail". *Ajax*'s words (ἐπώνυμον τοῦμὸν ὄνομα, "my eponymous name") also serve to introduce the distinction between a proper name and an idionym: on one hand, the proper name, conceived as an abstract entity, embraces several categories, such as: anthroponym, theonym, ethnonym, toponym, ergonym, etc. On the other hand, the idionym tallies with the proper name as borne by an individual, a deity, a place, etc, anchored in its historical, regional, social, cultural and family context. Beyond the mere linguistic interpretation and understanding of names, it is necessary to study the context to which each idionym belongs. Here the anthropological approach comes into play.

Thus, the purpose of the workshop is to examine the untranslatability of proper names in the Ancient Worlds. The aim is specifically to assess the relevance of anthropological and historical data to studying the ties between proper names and idionyms. We invite scholars to explore the following non-exclusive and exhaustive perspectives :

- How can anthropological approaches improve the understanding of the factors leading to the non-translatability, or even untranslatability, of proper names? What kind of new light can those shed on the linguistic understanding and interpretation of the proper names?
- Is it really necessary to translate proper names? If so, what are the underlying conditions for translation and non-translation? And what are the consequences?
- "The name of the god is therefore a common thread for understanding the meanings of the god in the religious context to which it belongs" [translation]. Taking our cue from N. Belayche and Fr. Prost's words (2005) on divine names, scholars are invited to

consider the act of naming whether it be that of an individual, a place, etc. This act carries meaning, and refraining to translate it prevents to understanding its original sense in the target language.

The conference will be held on **3 and 4 May 2024 in Paris** (at the Galerie Colbert, 75002). **Proposals for papers** (500 words), accompanied by a selective bibliography, should be sent in PDF to the address [intraduisibles2020@gmail.com](mailto:intraduisibles2020@gmail.com) by **6 February 2024** at the latest. You must write down a brief personal introduction and indicate your academic affiliation. The official languages of the workshop will be French and English.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- N. Belayche et P. Brulé (éd.), *Nommer les dieux. Théonymes, épithètes, épicleses dans l'Antiquité*, Turnhout (2005).
- B. Cassin (éd.), *Vocabulaire européen des philosophies. Dictionnaire des intraduisibles*, Paris (2004).
- E. Eichler et alii (éd.), *Namenforschung, Name Studies, Les noms propres. Ein internationale Handbuch zur Onomastik*, Berlin – New York (1995-1996).
- P. M. Fraser, *Greek Ethnic Terminology*, Oxford (2009).
- S. Minon (dir.), *Lexonyme. Dictionnaire étymologique et sémantique des anthroponymes grecs antiques*, vol. 1, A-E, Genève (2023).

## CALL FOR POSTERS

Alongside the call for papers, we are offering young researchers, from Masters onwards, the opportunity to submit a poster which they will present at a dedicated session. In addition to the perspectives proposed for the papers (cf. above), the posters may also deal with broader subjects concerning the Untranslatables of Antiquity, such as:

- the product of a transfer between an ancient language (such as Ancient Greek or Latin) and a modern language (e.g. Lat. *dictator*); between Ancient Greek and Latin;
- the result of different integration processes of a word, or a category of words, attested in either Ancient Greek or Latin, among distinct modern languages (e.g. the category of the “*divinité poliade*” existing in the French and Italian scholarship) ;
- a word whose successive translations have atrophied the original polysemy, (e.g. Gr. κάλλος, *kallos*, translated as “beauty” in the philosophical and esthetical lexicon but bearing in Ancient Greek a more complex and shaded meaning);
- a lexical homology for concepts which do not overlap completely (e.g. *religio* and *superstitio* in the Roman world), producing a semantic shift, thus the creation of modern epistemological categories (e.g. religion and superstition), not covering the same semantic function as in the Ancient World;
- a reality of the Ancient World which does not exist in the target language, resulting in a borrowing (e.g. *agora*, *forum*...) rather than to a translation.

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Practical recommendations for the posters: A1 size, maximum 1000 words, including presentation of the subject, methodology, demonstration, conclusion and a short bibliography.

For the questions examined during the previous editions, do not hesitate to take a look at our website: <https://lida.hypotheses.org>, under "Événements".

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