DIVINE NAMES UNDER A MULTIFOCAL LENS

BONNET, Corinne (ed.), *The Names of the Gods in Ancient Mediterranean Religions*. Translated by Ralph Häussler. Pp. xxiv + 282, b/w & colour ills, colour map. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2024 (originally published as *Noms de dieux. Portraits de divinités antiques*, 2021). Cased, £85, US$110. ISBN: 978-1-009-39482-6.

KAJAVA, Mika, *Naming Gods. An Onomastic Study of Divine Epithets Derived from Roman Anthroponyms*. (Commentationes Humanarum Litterarum 144.) Pp. vi + 159. Helsinki: The Finnish Society of Sciences and Letters, 2022. Paper, €25. ISBN: 978-951-653-490-2.

PALAMIDIS, Alaya / BONNET, Corinne (edd.), *What's in a Divine Name? Religious Systems and Human Agency in the Ancient Mediterranean*. Pp. xx + 876, b/w & colour ills. Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, 2024. Cased, £136.50, €149.95, US$164.99. ISBN: 978-3-11-132627-6 (978-3-11-132651-1 open access).

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The past three decades have witnessed a renewed interest in divine onomastics across the ancient Mediterranean. Divine names are a privileged entry point for investigating the construction and functioning of polytheistic systems. The proliferation of digital corpora – DEPHis (*Divine Epithets in Hispania*), SIRAR (*Sylloge Inscriptionum Religionis Africae Romanae*) and the vast database of the ERC Project MAP (*Mapping Ancient Polytheisms*) – has vastly expanded the base for analysis, enabling detailed local and broad comparative studies. The volumes under review – the English translation of a wide-ranging miscellany (Bonnet), a focused monograph (Kajava) and the proceedings of a major workshop (Palamidis and Bonnet) – reflect the current state of scholarship, but also push its boundaries, questioning inherited taxonomies, foregrounding human agency and exploring the pragmatic dimensions of naming the divine. I will engage with these multifaceted materials through my disciplinary lens: the linguistic approach, relatively underrepresented in the three volumes, can offer cross-cutting readings and expand the range of disciplinary perspectives on religious onomastics.

Rigid dichotomies between theonym and epithet and between literary epithet and cultic epiclesis (still explicit in N. Belayche et al. [edd.], *Nommer les dieux. Théonymes, épithètes, épiclèses dans l'Antiquité* [2005]; cf. the notion of 'cultic double name': R. Parker, *Greek Gods Abroad. Names, Natures, and Transformations* [2017], pp. 1–31) prove to be unsatisfactory when dealing with heterogeneous material. A broader category – *onomastic sequence/formula*, a sense unit formed by combining *onomastic attributes* – proves more effective (C. Bonnet et al., *Studi e materiali di storia delle religioni* 84 [2018]; cf. J. Alvar

The Classical Review (2026) 76.2 427–434 © The Author(s), 2026. Published by Cambridge University Press on behalf of The Classical Association. This is an Open Access article, distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike licence (https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/), which permits non-commercial re-use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the same Creative Commons licence is used to distribute the re-used or adapted article and the original article is properly cited. The written permission of Cambridge University Press or the rights holder(s) must be obtained prior to any commercial use.

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Ezquerra et al., 'Divine Onomastic Attributes in the Graeco-Roman World. Proposal for a New Taxonomy', in: A. Alvar Nuño et al. [edd.], *Calling Upon Gods, Offering Bodies. Strategies of Human-Divine Communication in the Roman Empire. From Individual Experience to Social Reproduction* [2024]). Depending on each author's background, this category is not applied consistently across the volumes. For instance, P. Brulé ('Athena–Artemis', in: Bonnet) presents a semantic classification of Athena's and Artemis' attributes – referencing entry numbers in the *Banque des Données des Épiclèses Grecques* (no longer accessible online) – to identify overlapping and opposing competencies (a structural approach also adopted by S. Lebreton, 'Dionysos in the Mirror of Poseidon', in: Bonnet). He still distinguishes between literary epithets and cultic epicleses, noting that cultic portraits of the goddesses frequently diverge from poetic stereotypical depictions (p. 262). To achieve a comprehensive understanding, cultic and literary sources, along with local and Panhellenic divine representations, should be integrated as complementary (cf. V. Pirenne-Delforge and G. Pironti, *The Hera of Zeus* [2022], pp. 5–6).

Poetry represents a significant area of inquiry. Bonnet ('To the Immortals Everything is Possible', in: Bonnet) deals with divine denominations in the *Iliad* (cf. G. Pironti and C. Bonnet [edd.], *Les dieux d'Homère. Polythéisme et poésie en Grèce ancienne* [2017]; C. Bonnet and G. Pironti [edd.], *Les dieux d'Homère III. Attributs onomastiques* [2021]). The attempt to show that literary epithets – 'neither mere ornaments nor simple fossils of an oral and formulaic past' (p. 36) – 'contribute to the elaboration of a complex narrative' (p. 17) may risk overestimating the poet's intention to create subtle textual cross-references across multiple books. Besides contextual usage, the inheritance of the deep-rooted oral tradition in Greek epic is worth investigating. In *Iliad* 24 the ransom of Hector's corpse is entrusted to Hermes, designated as ἐύσκοπος Ἀργειφόντης (vv. 24, 109). These onomastic attributes convey qualities of sight and radiance that the god may have inherited from an Indo-European fire deity (L. Massetti, *Aevum antiquum* 21 [2021]; L. Massetti, *Indogermanische Forschungen* 127 [2022]). Hermes' psychopompic function and watchful gaze are readily explained by this fiery association. Etymology also clarifies synchronic polysemy. Zeus's attribute εὐρύοπα refers both to his powerful voice, linked to thunder and decisive authority, and all-encompassing gaze, characteristic of deities who reside on high and guarantee justice (for Indo-Iranian parallels, see R. Schmitt, *Dichtung und Dichtersprache in indogermanischer Zeit* [1967], pp. 157–9; M.L. West, *Indo-European Poetry and Myth* [2007], p. 171). This lexical ambivalence may result from the merging of two etymologically distinct terms that Greek phonetic evolution rendered homophonous (*h_3ek^u- 'see'; *μek^u- 'speak'; cf. the polysemic ὄψ).

Etymology offers valuable insight into the interpretation of divine names (e.g. E. Langella, *Πολυώνυμοι θεοί. Ricerche linguistiche sulle epiclesi divine in Magna Grecia* [2019]). Bonnet ('Introduction', in: Palamidis and Bonnet) critiques etymological approaches that regard word history as 'a process of corruption' from an 'archetypal, unique, authentic meaning' (p. 7; cf. J.M. Vallejo, 'Divinidades y dedicatorias religiosas en Hispania occidental: lo que la lingüística (y otras ciencias) pueden decir sobre funciones teonímicas', in: M.J. Estarán Tolosa et al. [edd.], *Des mots pour les dieux. Dédicaces cultuelles dans les langues indigènes de la Méditerranée occidentale* [2021]). Accurate interpretation requires attention to specific historical, cultural and situational contexts. Reconstructing a term's original sense should not dismiss subsequent meanings but rather help historicise a divinity's profile: 'onomastic attributes also have a history' (V. Pirenne-Delforge, 'Demeter as Thesmophoros', in: Palamidis and Bonnet, p. 232). An emblematic case is Demeter Θεσμοφόρος, discussed by Pirenne-Delforge. Although semantic development eventually led to perceiving it as 'lawgiver', situating this epithet among Demeter's overwhelmingly agricultural titles precludes such an interpretation for the archaic and

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classical periods. The term initially meant 'Seed-bearer' (Langella [2019], pp. 180–98) or 'She who produces the stores of grain' (in view of successive sowing: C. Felisi, *Kernos* 38 [2025]). 'Semantic chronology' is also addressed by C. Prêtre ('The Onomastic Attributes of Greek Healing Deities', in: Palamidis and Bonnet): the gradual specialisation or dilution of Greek medical terminology influences the meanings of divine attributes, conveying specific healing properties or broader protective functions. The polysemy of οὔλιος, whose semantic ambiguity encapsulates Apollo's dual role as both fatal and healing god (p. 224), results from the merging of two etymologically distinct homophones (Ion. Οὖλος 'destructive' < *h_3olh_1-u̯ó-; οὖλος 'entire, safe and sound' < *$solH$-u̯ó-: Langella [2019], pp. 343–6, with references). Considering polysemy also helps explain divine onomastics. For example, drawing on the multiple meanings of Hebr. *rwḥ* and Gk. πνεῦμα, J. Ben-Dov ('The Lord of Spirits in the Book of Parables of Enoch from a Levantine Point of View', in: Palamidis and Bonnet) reconsiders the interpretation of the divine title 'Lord of Spirits'. Word-formation analysis can enrich the study of religious onomastics. Besides Greek epithets derived from verbal roots for 'giving' and 'bringing' (Bonnet, 'Introduction', in: Palamidis and Bonnet, pp. 20–1), the semantic field of abundance includes numerous possessive compounds portraying deities as possessing objects that serve as their gift to humanity (e.g. Demeter ἀγλαόκαρπος 'she who has → gives splendid fruits' [*Hom. Hymn. Dem.* 4+]).

From a cognitive perspective, worshippers understand polytheistic deities as lexical networks, which enable the selection and combination of appropriate divine designations (S. Peels-Matthey, 'Polytheism as Language: A Linguistic Approach to Greek Polytheism', in: T. Galoppin and C. Bonnet [edd.], *Divine Names on the Spot. Towards a Dynamic Approach of Divine Denominations in Greek and Semitic Contexts* [2021]). Human knowledge of divine names reflects a dynamic interplay between tradition and innovation. The origins of the gods' names were attributed to divine revelation or human invention. In ancient Greek perception semantically transparent epithets might be considered human creations, whereas obscure names – mainly theonyms – were regarded as divinely sourced and often prompted etymological enquiries (A. Palamidis, 'The Names of Greek Gods', in: Palamidis and Bonnet, pp. 615–16). Likewise, in *Exodus* 3:14 'I will be who I will be' serves as an *ad hoc* paretymology elucidating the enigmatic name YHWH (F. Porzia, '"I will be who I will be" [Exod. 3:14]', in: Bonnet; for the actual etymology of Yahweh see M. Leuenberger, 'Yahweh's Divine "Names"', in: Palamidis and Bonnet, p. 670). Functions and methodologies of ancient etymology – mainly grounded in phonetic resemblance – are explored by F. Padovani ('If by This Name it Pleases Him to be Invoked', in: Palamidis and Bonnet), emphasising its flexibility and variability. Exploiting onomastic ambiguity can reveal a deity's multiple facets. Moreover, ancient (par)etymology could shape the configuration of pantheons, as demonstrated by the 'onomastic paredria' of divine pairs like Ζεύς–Διώνη or Πάν–Πᾶσα (F. Quantin, 'Divine Configurations and "Pantheons"', in: Palamidis and Bonnet, also investigating other forms of divine 'gendered gemination').

Onomastic sequences not only identify and represent deities, but also have perlocutionary force (cf. J.L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words* [1962]): they establish effective communication, conjure the gods' presentification and mobilise the divine powers relevant to specific situations (C. Bonnet, 'Introduction', in: Bonnet; Bonnet, 'Introduction', in: Palamidis and Bonnet, offers a non-exhaustive typology of naming functions). Pragmatics can be successfully applied to divine onomastics (e.g. N. Janowitz, 'Speech Acts and Divine Names: Comparing Linguistic Ideologies of Performativity', in: R.A. Yelle et al. [edd.], *Language and Religion* [2019]; C. Calame, 'Nommer, qualifier, invoquer les divinités: procédures énonciatives et pragmatique poétique des formes hymniques', in: Galoppin and Bonnet [2021]). Contexts and discourse types matter. M. Herrero de Jáuregui ('Strategies

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for Naming the Gods in Greek Hymns', in: Palamidis and Bonnet) explores the Greek hymnic poets' attitudes in choosing divine designations. J. Rüpke ('Divine Names and Naming the Divine in Livy', in: Palamidis and Bonnet) compares Livy's use of divine names in direct speech invocations and historiographical narration. J. Jokiranta ('Divine Names in Ritual Settings in the Dead Sea Scrolls', in: Palamidis and Bonnet) reassesses the prohibition on pronouncing the *Tetragrammaton* YHWH, distinguishing it from concerns about indecent usage (e.g. in false oaths) and emphasising the efficacy of divine names in apotropaic texts and praise prayers. E.R. Urciuoli and R. Gordon ('Call Me by God's Name', in: Palamidis and Bonnet) investigate the rhetorical significance of Christian theophoric anthroponyms in literary contexts.

T. Galoppin ('All Sides of the Moon', in: Bonnet) examines an incantation prayer from the *Paris Great Magical Papyrus* (*PGM* 4), where the accumulation of divine names augments the Moon's polymorphic power. The invocation includes βαρβαρικὰ ὀνόματα, common in magic texts and reflecting the pursuit of comprehensive knowledge of the goddess' authentic names. Multiple linguistic strategies articulate the extension of divine power. In *PGM* 13 multilingualism and linguistic oddity – βαρβαρικὰ ὀνόματα, altered or hybrid forms, unintelligible expressions ascribed to non-human languages – aim 'to exceed the limits of human languages in order to reach a divine and universal reality' (F. Audureau and T. Galoppin, 'The All-Encompassing Name', in: Palamidis and Bonnet). Multisensory methods enhance the effectiveness of magic: thus, the ritual instructions of *PGM* 4 incorporate taste and smell (Galoppin, pp. 54–5). A comparable phenomenon is observed in the performative connection between writing and pronouncing divine names and spells (A.-C. Rendu Loisel, 'Writing Divine Names in Ritual Practices of Ancient Mesopotamia', in: Palamidis and Bonnet). Mesopotamian incantations illustrate the pragmatic efficacy of names: the terrifying demoness Lamaštu is identified through periphrases or characteristic attributes to avoid her proper name, which would unleash her power; conversely, the names inscribed on dog figurines designed to combat her activate their protective powers perpetually.

Onomastic attributes can also acknowledge divine intervention. The trophy erected in Kition by the Phoenician king Milkyaton celebrated the victory granted by *Baal Oz* 'Master of force', a new designation for the city's tutelary god, endowed with protective and martial power (M. Bianco, 'May the Force Be with You!', in: Bonnet). Similarly, between the tenth and the fifteenth centuries the Chinese central government recognised a deity's merits by conferring honorific titles, the accumulation of which facilitated its ascension in rank (T.S.F. Jim, 'Divine Naming in Greek and Chinese Polytheism', in: Palamidis and Bonnet).

Divine sovereignty constitutes a significant area of inquiry. S. Lebreton and G. Marano ('Zeus *hupatos kreionton*', in: Palamidis and Bonnet) explore multiple nuances of sovereignty and Zeus's pre-eminence, evident in the abundance of his titles and connections to other deities. The title Πάνθε(ι)ος/*Pantheus* designated a 'totally divine' god endowed with exceptional powers (G. Benedetti, 'Pantheus, a "Total" God in the Greek and Roman World', in: Bonnet): the intensive function of Παν° derives from its original value as a universal quantifier (cf. e.g. πάμπροτος 'the first of all'; Πανδότειρα 'She who dispenses all [gifts]'). A. Kubiak-Schneider ('Lord of Universe, the World and Eternity', in: Bonnet) analyses the Aramaic divine title *mar 'olam*, which expresses the boundless scope of the god's power by blending spatial and temporal dimensions. This is contrasted with more separative conceptualisations in other languages (e.g. the [recent!] opposition between Gk. αἰών and κόσμος). Indo-European languages occasionally exhibit category overlap. Greek examples are seen in prepositions conveying both spatial and temporal meaning (e.g. ἐπί 'behind' and 'after'), epic formulae indicating time as a function of space (πρόσσω καὶ ὀπίσσω 'forward and backward', referring to old age and prophetic wisdom), and phrases like τὰ τ᾽ ἐόντα τὰ τ᾽ ἐσσόμενα πρὸ τ᾽ ἐόντα, using verbal tense and spatial

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vocabulary to signify the whole reality (for Indo-European parallels, see Schmitt [1967], pp. 252–4; West [2007], pp. 103–4; E. Langella, 'Cosmopoetic Time', in: G. Zaccaria and I. De Gennaro [edd.], *Philosophy, Physics and Mathematics in Dialogue on the Riddle of Time* [forthcoming], with references). Notably, Imperial-era bilingual inscriptions sometimes render *mar 'olam* as Zeus Μέγιστος or Ὕψιστος. The application of superlative epithets does not necessarily imply a monotheistic cult (cf. Benedetti, pp. 187–8). N. Belayche ('The Carian Stratonicea's Exception', in: Palamidis and Bonnet) illustrates this point by examining the dual divine patronage in Roman Stratonicea, where both Hekate and Zeus Panamaros were honoured as μέγιστος(-η) καὶ ἐπιφανέστατος(-η). Even the Hebrew Bible, shaped by its layered traditions, reveals the 'plurality of Yahweh': the god's names reflect processes of identification, demarcation and integration vis-à-vis other deities from surrounding religions (Leuenberger, in: Palamidis and Bonnet).

Religious onomastics maintains a dialectical relationship with iconography (e.g. F. Porzia and C. Bonnet [edd.], *Divine Names on the Spot II. Exploring the Potentials of Names through Images and Narratives* [2023]). Coexistent verbal and visual codes enable constant negotiation of meaning and the complex construction of divine identity. Iconographic attributes amplify, nuance and enrich the functions evoked by divine names. A.-F. Jaccottet ('God's Names – God's Images', in: Palamidis and Bonnet) compares the specific local onomastic sequences with their supra-local and stereotypical visual counterparts on the so-called 'Mysian reliefs'. C. Posani ('Epithets and Iconographic Attributes of Kubaba in Syro-Anatolian Iron Age Sources') catalogues Kubaba's epithets and iconographic representations. Notably, the logogram AVIS, which characterises the goddess in writing, may also suggest her presence in certain theriomorphic iconographies. Indeed, 'writing visually manifested a series of semantic connections', as demonstrated by M. Ceravolo ('This is not a Name', in: Bonnet). Onomastics can also condition visual representation. Thus, the depiction of the Egyptian deified deceased Piyris as a falcon – a bird typically associated with Horus – stems from his theophoric personal name, meaning 'That of Horus' (G. Tallet, 'How to Create a God', in: Palamidis and Bonnet). Combining literary and iconographic evidence, A. Grand-Clément ('Golden Locks among the Greeks, or the Hair Secrets of the Beautiful Apollo', in: Bonnet) links the Apollonian triad's distinctive golden hair to their Delphic chryselephantine statues and, more broadly, the sanctuary's opulence. Comparative studies enlighten the golden associations of other deities: for example, Aphrodite's connection with gold may be explained not only as 'materialisation of beauty' with 'erotic connotations' (p. 219), but also as reflecting her inherited role as a personification of dawn (D. Kölligan, *Letras Clásicas* 11 [2017]).

Iconographic attributes also travel. M. Gaifman ('What do Attributes Say about Apollo?', in: Palamidis and Bonnet) examines intra-cultural 'visual quotation', focusing on the connections between the Athenian Apollo Patroos and his Delphic iconographic antecedents. Melqart's name acts as an identity marker for Phoenician communities throughout the Mediterranean; at the same time, the overlap with Heracles results in the adoption – and possible resemantisation – of his iconographic attributes: remarkably, the lionskin ceases to reference the Heraclean myth and instead symbolises kingship in Semitic contexts (E. Guillon, 'A Travelling Portrait', in: Bonnet). The case of Zeus Helios Megas Sarapis demonstrates onomastic and iconographic agglutination in cross-cultural settings (L. Bricault, 'The Sword and the Patera', in: Bonnet).

Divine names are also subject to cross-cultural transfer – a phenomenon encompassing appropriation, adaptation, translation, *interpretatio* (C. Bonnet and L. Bricault, *Quand les dieux voyagent. Cultes et mythes en mouvement dans l'espace méditerranéen* [2016]; Parker [2017]). From a historical perspective, I. Rutherford ('Cross-Cultural Pilgrimage and Religious Change', in: Palamidis and Bonnet) shows how multicultural pilgrimage fostered migration or translation of divine names and the expansion of religious networks. The

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dynamics of multilingual environments shaped the mobility of divine names. L. Pérez Yarza and C. Bonnet ('Divine Names and Bilingualism in Rome', in: Palamidis and Bonnet) document a range of pragmatic strategies in bilingual Graeco-Roman inscriptions, including translation of divine names, complementary distribution across languages, omission in one language and technical abbreviation. The phenomenon is salient among diasporic communities. Levantine groups in culturally tripartite Hellenistic Egypt transliterated Semitic divine names into the Greek alphabet or identified their deities under Greek names (C. Cornell, '*Interpretatio* among Levantines in Hellenistic Egypt', in: Palamidis and Bonnet). A further dimension of this process is evident in the 'interpretive rendering' of biblical divine names and attributes within the Septuagint translation (A. Angelini, 'Divine Names, Heavenly Bodies, and Human Visions', in: Palamidis and Bonnet). Assimilation and cross-cultural syncretism are addressed by S.L. Allen ('Incomplete Ištar Assimilation', in: Palamidis and Bonnet, on Mesopotamian localised Ištars, converging towards a singular 'unspecified' figure while maintaining some measure of distinctiveness) and H. Niehr ('The Many Faces of Hadad in Aramaean Syria and Anatolia [1st Mill. BCE]', in: Palamidis and Bonnet, on local storm-gods identified with/replaced by the dominant storm-god Hadad). Linguistic strategies are essential for negotiating religious identities in multicultural contexts. Some epithets arise as calques, modelled on alloglottic or substrate attributes (Niehr, pp. 169, 175). Shared generic epithets facilitate syncretism (e.g. the Mexican 'Mother' Tonantzin absorbed by Our Lady of Guadalupe, mother of God: Allen, p. 159). Perceived translinguistic consonances lead to borrowings (e.g. Apollo's attribute Δελφίνιος, maybe reflecting the Hattic Telipinu: M.R. Bacharova, 'Apollo Delphinios – Again', in: Palamidis and Bonnet), reinterpretations (e.g. Zeus Πανάμαρος, linked to the Carian toponym Panamara and understood in Greek as Πανήμερος/Πανημέριος: Belayche, in: Palamidis and Bonnet, p. 452), or *interpretatio* (e.g. the Luwian storm-god Tarhunt [**tr̥h₂u̯ent-* 'conquering'] recalling the Hattian Taru: F. Réveilhac, 'In the Name of the Gods', in: Palamidis and Bonnet, p. 475; on ancient etymology and *interpretatio*, see Padovani, in: Palamidis and Bonnet, p. 634).

Theophoric anthroponyms, functioning as onomastic sequences, reflect human perceptions of deities and the nature of relationships and attitudes towards them. They also display adaptation and hybridisation across cultures. Theophorics in multicultural contexts are studied by B. Simonson ('Theophoric Aramaic Personal Names as Onomastic Sequences in Diasporic and Cosmopolitan Communities', in: Palamidis and Bonnet). N. Andrade ('Christian Contexts, Non-Christian Names', in: Palamidis and Bonnet) investigates the Christian retention of ancient polytheistic theophorics, particularly those containing generic epithets such as 'lord' or 'god', liable to be resemanticised to refer to the Christian God.

In a peculiar subset of theophoric names, the theonym, typically explicit, may be opacified, resulting in 'ambiguously or implicitly theophorics' (Andrade, pp. 532–3). Semitic hypocoristic *Kurzformen* may omit the divine name and express only the predicate (Simonson, p. 512; G. Minunno, 'Who's in a Name?', in: Palamidis and Bonnet). Luwic personal names may incorporate divine epithets instead of theonyms. Phraseological analysis, particularly of divine onomastic formulae attested in Anatolian corpora, can help identify the implied deity (Réveilhac, in: Palamidis and Bonnet). As shown by G. Garbati and F. Porzia ('In Search of God Baal in Phoenician and Cypriot Epigraphy [First Millennium BCE]', in: Palamidis and Bonnet), Semitic *b'l* functioned as an epithet applicable to various deities at the apex of local pantheons. That may also account for its frequency in personal onomastics (Minunno, pp. 502–3). Tangentially, A. Heller ('Human Honours and Divine Attributes', in: Palamidis and Bonnet) examines the overlap between some Imperial-era human honorific titles and divine epithets, investigating to what extent men and gods share merits and prerogatives.

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A quantitatively marginal, though not irrelevant, phenomenon is the derivation of divine epithets from human personal names, not yet systematically investigated. The proceedings of a seminal conference on this topic have recently been published (V. Gasparini et al. [edd.], *My Name is Your Name. Anthroponyms as Divine Attributes in the Graeco-Roman World* [2025]). Coining 'anthropophoric' epithets (for the terminology, see S. Caneva, 'Divine Anthropophoric Epicleses in the Hellenistic Period', in: Gasparini et al. [2025]) represents a creative innovation in naming the divine. Occasions and motivations are not always clearly identifiable: they refer to the city's eponym, the founder of a cult, the builder of a sanctuary or a statue, the proximity of a cultic area to the property of an individual or his family, the appropriation of a personal or familial deity in search of a privileged protective rapport, or the attempt to raise an individual – mostly Hellenistic rulers or Roman emperors – to the divine sphere (e.g. *Hercules Commodianus*, a 'personalized version of the god' anticipating Commodus' complete identification as the 'Roman Hercules': Kajava, p. 73). Anthropophoric designations, basically unattested in ancient Greece (F. Camia, 'Divine Epithets Derived from Anthroponyms in Greece?', in: Gasparini et al. [2025]), are well documented in Asia Minor and the Near East of the Hellenistic and Imperial eras.

Kajava's research, originating from the same conference, investigates anthropophoric epithets in the Western Roman world (Italy and Rome, Africa, Germania). He analyses both literary and epigraphical Latin sources, focusing exclusively on Latin contexts and morphology (though the derivational basis occasionally involves Greek anthroponyms). Literary authors mostly employ anthropophoric attributes to mention temple or statue builders in antiquarian contexts, forming mere relational adjectives that do not necessarily document actual cultic designations. By contrast, religious inscriptions more likely preserve titles with genuine cultic significance (pp. 12, 14; e.g. Vitr. 3.3.5 refers to Hercules' temple restored by Pompey as *Hercules Pompeianus,* while epigraphical evidence records the god under a different title, *Herculi Invicto ad Circum Maxim(um)*: p. 42). Regarding chronology, from the first century BCE onwards antiquarian adjectives referring to the constructor or sponsor of a temple/statue are often transferred to the god by way of hypallage: for example *cedrinus Apollo Sosianus* (Plin. *nat.* 13.53); *in templo Apollinis Sosiani* (Plin. *nat.* 36.28). The generic name can be omitted, resulting in a metonymic use of the god's name (for ellipsis and adjective transfer, see O. Spevak, *Pallas* 102 [2016]). In the second century CE cultic anthropophoric epithets become increasingly common, expressing the deity's personal relationship with an individual or family rather than the monument.

In the book Kajava catalogues about 100 annotated entries, organising them by morphological derivation type (*nomen gentilicium*/individual *cognomen* + suffixes). Indeed, it is the suffix that primarily determines linguistic typology, whereas the onomastic element is more relevant to human agency and prosopography than to onomastic patterns. The most widespread formation involves the relational suffix *-ianus*/*-iana* combined with a *nomen gentilicium* (Chapter 3, *c.* half the cases) or a *cognomen* (Chapter 5, *c.* a quarter of the cases). The less frequent composite suffix *-ian-ensis* builds an ethnonym derived from a toponym, itself deriving from a personal name: as such, it reflects an indirect association with individuals, emphasising rather the connection to a place (Chapter 4). Other suffixes are extremely rare. The only certain occurrence of the relational suffix *-ius*/*-ia* peculiarly refers to the creation of a statue by an artist (Chapter 7: see esp. p. 87 for parallel examples, all notably derived from Greek anthroponyms). Apparent derivations in *-illa* should probably be dismissed (Chapter 6), as should the use of *gentilicia* without further derivation to indicate a family cult (Chapter 2). For instance, *Minerva Matusia* (Sentinum, third century CE) is not the goddess of an unattested *gens*: instead, etymology suggests understanding *Matusia* as a descriptive epithet based on **mātu-* 'right time', cognate with *Mater Matuta* and *maturus* (pp. 24–5; C. De Simone, *Rivista di filologia e di istruzione classica* 127

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[1999], p. 397). Establishing a formal homology between Latin binomial divine and human designations – comparing the structures [theonym + determining adjective/genitive] and [*praenomen* + *gentilicium*/patronymic] (p. 8; cf. P. Poccetti, 'Antichi problemi e dati nuovi: coincidenze di teonimi e di antroponimi nell'Italia antica', in: P. Poccetti [ed.], *L'onomastica dell'Italia antica. Aspetti linguistici, storici, culturali, tipologici e classificatori* [2009], pp. 230–3) –, though indisputable, may be partially misleading, as it risks obscuring the different semantic functions at play. The relational suffix indicates belonging and descent in human *gentilicia* (e.g. *Publius Cornelius*), whereas in divine onomastics it denotes characterisational or functional affinities with other gods (e.g. *Numidius Martius*). Furthermore, as Kajava demonstrates, the appropriation of personal deities is formally marked through the distinct specialised suffix *-ianus*. Anthropophoric attributes are frequently assigned to Hercules and Silvanus as protectors of rural areas. Divine figures whose very nature calls for a personal relationship with individuals (*Lares*, *Genii*, *Fortuna*) may also receive such titles, which alternate with anthroponyms in the genitive (Chapter 8). The names of the dedicators recorded in epigraphy do not necessarily match the deity's epithet; however, occasional correspondences appear between the dedicator's personal name and the divine denomination (cf. the dedication to *Diana Valeriana* by P. Valerius Bassus and his wife, though it remains uncertain whether the epithet originated from this Valerius: p. 36). In some instances, a non-anthropophoric epithet may have been associated with the dedicator's name just by a kind of consonance (Chapter 9; cf. the *Bona Dea Agrestis Felicula* addressed by Felix: pp. 97–8). Notably, the names of *fundi* often preserved their connection to the tutelary deity and its anthropophoric epithet, even after the property passed to new owners (p. 31). This onomastic persistence suggests that the divine denomination also assumed a *quasi*-toponymic function. *Caelestis Sittiana* represents a peculiar case. As the attribute refers to P. Sittius, founder of the Numidian colony of Cirta (*colonia Sittianorum Cirta*), it may convey 'a toponymic significance' (p. 62) – maybe better, an ethnonymic one. Unlike appropriated deities, whose cults were limited to individuals or restricted communities, this was likely a public cult dedicated to 'the tutelary goddess of the entire civic community', the *Sittiana par excellence* (cf. Gasparini, 'Divine Epithets Derived from Anthroponyms in North Africa', in: Gasparini et al. [2025], pp. 225–7).

Despite the morphologically based classification, the volume does not primarily address linguistic and etymological aspects; the commentary predominantly assumes an archaeological and epigraphical perspective. The catalogue demonstrates exemplary scholarly caution. Kajava proposes new readings, corrections and interpretative hypotheses, and he consistently marks several entries as doubtful or non-existent. Forms excluded from the dossier are still presented, enabling scholars to evaluate single occurrences. Photographs of the inscriptions, which would support Kajava's readings, are absent; however, references to external database images minimise the impact of this omission.

Collectively, the volumes under review demonstrate methodological innovation and empirical depth, integrating both traditional and digital scholarship. Their principal strength lies in their multidisciplinary approaches and engagement with a wide array of sources (literary, epigraphical, magical and iconographic materials) and various cultural traditions (including Greek, Roman, Semitic, Mesopotamian, Egyptian and Chinese). This breadth fosters interdisciplinary interaction and cross-cultural comparison, thereby establishing a foundation for future research on naming the divine.

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