

## FOREWORD

THIS VOLUME PRESENTS A COLLECTION OF TEXTS offered by colleagues, disciples, and friends to a scholar of immense stature, whose work has served as a solid foundation upon which those who have followed in her footsteps can build and reach new heights. Nicole Belayche is an internationally renowned scholar who has devoted her scientific career to the study of polytheism in the Roman world. Not only is she an outstanding researcher, but she is also a distinguished educator who has devoted many years to teaching and supervising doctoral theses. As a generous colleague, she has consistently supported academic initiatives of others with the same enthusiasm she has applied to her own projects, to mentoring young researchers, and to hosting numerous colleagues at the École Pratique des Hautes Études – PSL.

Disciples and friends have gathered around an initiative led by Jaime Alvar Ezquerra, co-director of the journal *ARYS*, along with Francesco Massa and Beatriz Pañeda Murcia. The *ARYS* Association, the *alma mater* of the eponymous journal, enthusiastically embraced the opportunity to dedicate one of its volumes to the publication of this tribute.

Aware of our limitations and possibilities, we opted not to issue an open call for contributions. Such a call would have been too ambitious for a single volume of *ARYS*, and it was not feasible to dedicate several consecutive journal issues to the homage.

Consequently, we decided to extend a selective invitation to colleagues who were more directly connected to Nicole Belayche through mentorship or friendship. We received many positive responses, though a few had to decline for various reasons while expressing their enthusiastic support for the initiative.

We sincerely apologise to those who may feel excluded for not having been invited to participate in this endeavor, despite their close relationship with our honoured colleague. We also extend our apologies to those who were invited but whose participation in the tribute was hindered due to internal editorial requirements of the *ARYS* journal.

Our deepest gratitude goes to all the contributors, who accepted the challenge of delving into the divine *heuresis* of which Nicole Belayche has been so prolific, as well as to those who, despite their absence from the volume, have supported its publication from behind the scenes.

May these pages of *ARYS* bear witness to the admiration that Nicole Belayche's brilliant work has inspired. In particular, during discussions within our research team for the project RICO: "Religion: The Individual and the *Communitas*" (PID2020-117176GB-I00), funded by the Spanish Ministry of Science and Innovation, and conducted at the Historiography and History of Religions Research Group of the Institute of Historiography, Universidad Carlos III de Madrid. There we decided to organize a volume devoted to the study of Nicole Belayche's work. This is the result of this endeavor dedicated to her.

Jaime Alvar Ezquerra  
 Francesco Massa  
 Beatriz Pañeda Murcia