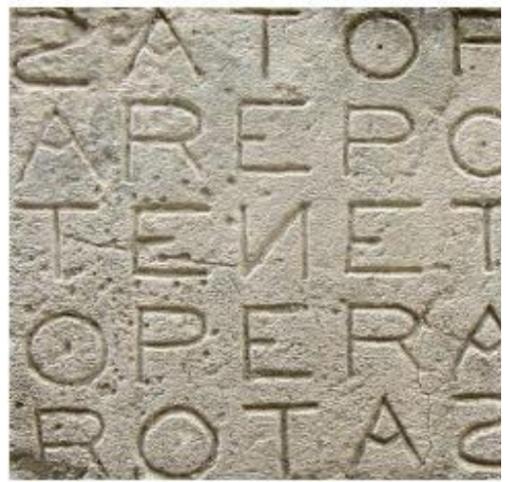


JULY 2012

◆ PAL-INDROMING AROUND AT TRANSLATION ACES ◆

What's been **PALINDROME-atic** at **Translation Aces**? Mr. Webster tells us a **palindrome** is a word, verse, sentence or number that reads the same forwards as backwards. The word originated in Greek, from *palin* (no, not her), meaning 'back again' and *dramein*, meaning 'to run.' An early **palindrome** was found as a graffito at Herculaneum, a city buried by ash in 79 CE; it was called the Sator Square [right] and is an entire sentence written in Latin: *Sator Arepo Tenet Opera Rotas* ("Planter Arepo holds a workwheel" = just one version of a translation). Quite remarkable, since the first letters of each word form the first word, the second letters form the second word, and so on. And it can be arranged into a word square reading four different ways: horizontally or vertically from top left to bottom right, or bottom right to top left. Q.E.D.!



Rather complex palindromes were experimented with in Sanskrit and Tamil poetry in the 7th Century CE, as it seems writers have always loved character- and wordplay forwards, backwards and in columns, too. The first known use in English was said to be by English dramatist / poet Ben Jonson in a verse from "Volpone" in 1606:

Or spun out Riddles, and weav'd fitty Tomes
Of Logogripes, and curious Palindromes...



A man, a plan a canal: Panama!



♀ "Madam, I'm Adam." -- ♂ "Eve."

Some fun examples of **palindromes** in foreign languages:

FRENCH:	<i>Une slave valse nue</i>	(A Slavic girl is waltzing naked)
CZECH:	<i>Ukaž mi Řim žaku</i>	(Pupil, show me Rome)
DUTCH:	<i>Koortsmeetsysteemstrook</i>	(Thermometer)
GERMAN:	<i>O Genie, der Herr ehre dein Ego!</i>	(Oh genius, may the Lord honor your ego!)
ITALIAN:	<i>Ai lati d'Italia</i>	(Alongside Italy)
LATVIAN:	<i>Alus ir(a) ari sula</i>	(Beer is also juice)
PORTUGUESE:	<i>A grama é amarga</i>	(Grass is bitter)
SPANISH:	<i>Anita, la gorda lagartona, no traga la droga latina</i>	(Anita, the fat, clever woman, isn't swallowing the Latin drug)
FINNISH:	<i>SAIPPUAKUPPINIPPUKAUPPIAS</i>	(Soap cup dealer – This is allegedly the world's longest palindromic word!)
GREEK:	<i>ΝΙΨΟΝ ΑΝΟΜΗΜΑΤΑ ΜΗ ΜΟΝΑΝ ΟΨΙΝ</i>	(Wash your sins, not only your face)

In Greek, palindromes are called "cancer phrases" because they mimic a crab's walk, taking one step in one direction and one step in the other.

◆ THIS MONTH'S HIGHLIGHT ◆



We recently translated a series of recipe cards from English into Spanish for a cooking contest in Miami!



◆ FEATURE ◆ **Lingua Quiz!**

- Which language names are **palindromes**?
 (a) Malayalam
 (b) Kayak
 (c) Corsican
 (d) Taki-Taki
 (e) Mam
- Name these famous palindromically-named real people:
 (a) Prime Minister of Cambodia
 (b) Japanese novelist
 (c) Korean author and founder of Crossing Borders
- Which of these are palindrome music?
 (a) Haydn's *Symphony No. 47 in G* (nicknamed *The Palindrome*)
 (c) Stravinsky's *The Owl and the Pussycat*
 (d) Webern's *Piano Variations, Op. 27* [et al]
 (e) A palindromic bass run performed by Bakithi Kumalo in Paul Simon's *You Can Call Me Al*

ANSWERS:

- (a) Spoken in Southern India and (e) A Guatemalan Indian dialect
- (a) Lon Nol; (b) Nisio Isin; (c) Mike Kim
- All of them! Re (a): The second half of the piece is the same as the first, but backwards.