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Patricia Carvalhinhos*

University of São Paulo, Brazil

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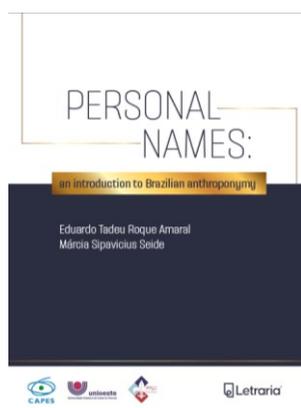
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* Contact: University of São Paulo, Faculty of Philosophy, Languages and Literature, and Human Sciences, Brazil, São Paulo, Av. Professor Luciano Gualberto, 403, Sala 4, Edifício, Prof. Antonio Cândido, Cidade Universitária, Postal Code: 05508-900, patricia.carv@usp.br

E.R. Amaral & M.S. Seide, *Personal names: An introduction to Brazilian anthroponymy*, Translated by Emanuele Fernandes, Araraquara: Letraria, 2022, 254 pp., ISBN 978-85-69395-91-1

PATRICIA CARVALHINHOS



(<https://www.lettraria.net/personal-names/>)

The book *Personal Names: An Introduction to Brazilian Anthroponymy* is very welcome within today's Name Studies scenario in Brazil. This book was written by university professors and researchers who have specialised in the study of Personal Names. In recent years, they have proposed and supervised many academic papers that have researched the anthroponymic phenomenon in Brazil. This is a theoretical consideration – a pioneer in the proposed format – of the personal naming process and its anthropological, sociological, linguistic (*lato sensu*) and cultural (*stricto sensu*) implications, even though over the last few decades, lexical studies of proper names in general, and specifically of place names and personal names, have shown strongly increasing growth due to the expansion of postgraduate courses, and hence of research, joint projects, and the qualification of new researchers, which in turn have also increased the number of publications and diversified possible approaches to Onomastics Studies.

Here we must point out that the Portuguese version is substantially relevant from an educational perspective, as knowledge of foreign languages is often a major barrier for Brazilian students. Although not presenting anything new to researchers when compared to the abundant collection of theoretical works in English, the version we are reviewing here shares quite particular views of the naming issue that could indeed be crucial for non-Portuguese speaking researchers interested in this aspect of Brazilian culture and linguistics.

The book plays three key roles. First, it collects, analyses, and considers the specific literature, taking the reader over to the anthroponyms in their linguistic, philosophical, and socio-onomastic perspective from the late 19th century to the current day, presenting its key writers and researchers. Secondly, the book links the above reflection to the concrete results from research projects led by the authors and their collaborators, thereby adding a key empirical dimension to the proposed literature. Finally, it has a relevant educational function,

attributable not only to the work in its entirety, but also to the proposal of summary charts at the end of each chapter, presenting a synthesis of the main topics discussed (*Chapter Summary*). In this sense, we also mention that the authors stand out by using clear, reader-friendly language, as specially recommended for students starting their academic journeys and careers as onomasticians. The resource of approaching and exemplifying the content with the Brazilian reality, whenever possible, is also didactic. This resource is highly empathetic, and is beneficial for entry-level students. It also proves useful to foreign readers, enabling comparisons between two different personal-naming realities: the Brazilian reality and that of the reader.

In structural terms, the authors organised the book into eight chapters with three very different parts, which, in a way, relate to the roles mentioned in the previous paragraph. An overview comprising Chapters 1 (*Overview of Onomastic Studies*), 2 (*The Category of Proper Names*), 5 (*Semantics, Part 1*), and 6 (*Semantics, Part 2*) introduces the reader to something we may refer to as ‘Personal-Name Universals’. A second part delves into the Brazilian personal-name phenomenon, including the typology of anthroponyms according to the authors (Chapter 3, *Typology of Anthroponyms*) and morphological and syntactical aspects of personal names in Brazil (Chapters 4 and 5). Finally, we identified a socio-onomastic view that establishes a direct dialogue with the results of research carried out and supervised by the authors, in Chapter 7 (*Anthroponyms and Lexicon*) and Chapter 8 (*Anthroponyms and Other Areas*).

Now sequentially following the official book structure, we start with the authors’ introduction. The introduction makes it quite clear that, despite being very specific, interest in the content is by no means restricted to academic spheres, and may be useful to many different segments of society. One point in favour of this purpose is a modest usage of terminology – only when absolutely necessary. This means that the text is neither contaminated nor difficult to understand. It is worth noting that, in the Portuguese version, the authors have decided on the term Anthroponomastics (*Antroponomástica*). Despite being recommended by the International Council of Onomastic Sciences (ICOS), this term is not a consensus among Brazilian researchers, and tradition confirms the wide usage of the term Anthroponymy (*Antroponímia*) for both the subject and the list of personal proper names. Aparecida Negri Isquerdo, who penned the preface to this work, draws the reader’s attention to this aspect at the very beginning of her preface: “The International Council of Onomastic Sciences (ICOS 2011) has listed Toponomastics and Anthroponomastics among the onomastic terms to name two areas of Onomastics, traditionally identified by the terms Toponymy and Anthroponymy, respectively. The authors of this work, following this trend, have opted for the term Anthroponomastics” (Isquerdo 2022: 11–12). One cannot fail to observe a certain inconsistency in the terminology used by the authors, as in the first chapter they base their option of “Onomastics” on Brazil’s long-term usage of the term, which conflicts with their explanation

for the use of the binomial Anthroponymy/Anthroponomastics – “Although some authors have tried to differentiate the terms onomastics and onomatology, and some consider them synonyms, in this work, we will use the first one, which has been used for a long time” (Amaral & Seide 2022: 29). In this case, maybe they only opt for the traditional terms as these match those suggested by the ICOS. Anyway, the lack of uniformity in the usage of place-name terminology, as well as the almost total absence of discussions addressing this issue, has already been reported by [Carvalhinhos & Santos \(2021\)](#), and may be related to the “adolescence” of the field in Brazil.

Going back to the reviewed book, we go through the first chapter, in which the authors contextualise their object and the naming act from a diachronic perspective, showing how the name and its intra- and extra-linguistic relationships have always provoked researchers, right from Antiquity. This path leads to the most modern phase of science from the 19th century onwards, a time when the proper name was a key source for Philology studies. In addition to this timeline, Amaral & Seide list the key authors and associations who, during the 20th century, have been established as a *locus* for studying and discussing the proper name. Such an overview – both comprehensive and synthetic – is a priceless benefit for young researchers. This overall picture, encompassing the proper name as a whole, applies both to the personal name and the place name and is followed by a summary of the main application fields of anthroponymic studies in the world. In this way, the authors present a collection of researchers involved in studies of the following sub-areas: fictional anthroponomastics, comparative anthroponomastics, anthroponymic language policy and anthroponymic jurisdiction, and, last but not least, historical anthroponomastics. Setting out based on this international level, the authors focus on Brazil to show the reader how Onomastics has been evolving and growing since the early 20th century, shifting from an essentially philological and etymological study – typical of this period – to a more comprehensive study of the naming phenomenon involving other areas of knowledge.

In Chapter 2, Amaral & Seide have focused on their object description – the proper name – within traditional and descriptive Brazilian Portuguese grammar works, thus embarking upon their strictly linguistic journey. In a concise but clarifying way, the authors outline Dionysius of Thrace (II BCE), then the Port-Royal Grammar (17th century), and then arriving at the current perspectives on the proper name within Portuguese grammar works. The authors also address the problem of the reference and relationship between the object and its name, considering that “proper names are linguistic units devoid of class identifying semantic features, which are part of the linguistic repertoire of the speaker, allowing him to refer to a single entity in a universe of knowledge” (Amaral & Seide 2022: 52). Making a similar move, applying international literature in the Brazilian context, Amaral & Seide conduct a review to propose their own typology of proper names. Once again, the usefulness of the work

developed by Amaral & Seide stands out for the conception and materialisation of a situation that serves both those interested in Anthroponomastics, and those interested in Toponomastics and other types of proper names – names of organisations, entities, associations, products of human activity (e.g., artistic works, songs, brands, business names), individualised animals, and individualised events. The authors’ proposal recalls the “maximum list” pointed out by Molino (1982: 6) based on Zabeeh (1968) and Le Bihan (1974). Moreover, the discussion on legislation and proper names as proposed by both authors expands the application – not restricted to people’s proper names – which begins a useful review of toponyms, then business names, i.e. “category of proper names relevant to the legal system” (Amaral & Seide 2022: 59). Finally, the authors discuss anthroponyms, emphasising on the Law of Public Registries (No. 6,015/1973), currently in force, as well as the 2002 Civil Code.

After a general discussion involving all categories of proper names, the authors focus on their core object: the personal name, in Chapter 3 (*Typology of Anthroponyms*). Naturally, the discussion could not but start with the compendium *Antroponimia Portuguesa* [Portuguese anthroponymy], by José Leite de Vasconcellos (1928), going through the typologies proposed by researchers in other languages. They divide the Brazilian anthroponyms into two major classes: legal (“civil register or civil name”) and non-civil register names. The first class covers three types of personal names: the given name (or baptismal name), which can be simple or compound; the family name,¹ and agnomens. A Brazilian family name is often made up of the mother’s paternal family name followed by the father’s paternal family name. The authors detail each part of names according to the law, sowing how usage goes against the legislation in certain cases, such as the agnomen *Júnior*, which, stripped from its function as inherited from the Roman anthroponym, may be employed irrespectively of the usual need of having a similar name in order to be differentiated, often employed autonomously as a given name. In addition, they look at circumstances when it is legally possible to change one’s name. The second class is outside the civil register and covers the real-world usage of each type of name based on online news and data. This class includes unofficial names (allonyms) used in family settings (*nickname*, also *alias* or *cognomen*, and *hypocoristic*), in artistic settings (*pseudonym*, *codename*, *heteronym*, *artist name*, and *stage name*), and in other settings, which may be either related to the occupational or religious environment (respectively, *nom de guerre* and *religious name*), personal preferences, which may also touch the gender identity (*social name*) and usage defined by a political context (*ballot name* and *parliamentary name*).

Chapter 4, *Morphosyntax of Anthroponyms*, analyses anthroponyms based on morphological and syntactic aspects. Repeating the application of a review

¹ The technical term *apelido de família* (Port. *sobrenome*, family name) can be mistaken for *apelido*, the Portuguese word for nickname. Currently, people use *sobrenome*.

of literature in other languages into the Brazilian anthroponomic reality, in this chapter, the authors start their journey with morphological aspects, including, while not limited to, grammatical gender, number and derivation constitution, then including the anthroponym onymisation process, as well as the formation of deanthroponymic common nouns. To this section, they add a sub-section on the spelling of anthroponyms. In terms of syntax, the authors analyse the anthroponym at phrase level, specially relating to the presence or absence of a definite or indefinite article, and stressing how the presence of other elements in the anthroponymic syntagma² and pluralisation of an anthroponym can make it shift classes from proper noun to common noun (deonymisation process). Additionally, they mention the special constructions made of a title (i.e., social rank, official identity, academic or professional qualification, military or ecclesiastical hierarchy), preceding the anthroponym, as well as constructions with an adjective. It is worth pointing out that such considerations can already be found in isolated studies, but both the closer look at the anthroponym and its contextualisation based on usage are unique.

Chapters 5 and 6 focus on Semantics. In Part 1, corresponding to Chapter 5, the authors review the concept of an anthroponym from the viewpoint of Philosophy of Language, where Semantics take up a privileged position. The core concern on whether a name has a sense (Ger. *Sinn*, Port. *sentido*) or a meaning (Ger. *Bedeutung*, Port. *significado*) was an element of discussion even before Michel Bréal. The authors divide the discussions into those theorists who support the idea of the name as a bearer of sense and reference, including Frege (1892), Russell (1956), Searle (1958), and Strawson (1971), a position reviewed in sub-section 5.1, “The Descriptivist Theory of Meaning” (Amaral & Seide 2022: 125). A second group follows John Stuart Mill’s ideas (19th century), and argues that proper names only denote and do not connote. According to the authors, the proposal raised by Saul Kripke is connected to the idea, that a proper name is a rigid designator. Hence, sub-section 5.2 focuses on this theory under the title “The Direct Reference Theory or Causal Theory” (Amaral & Seide 2022: 133). The third group shifts from philosophical to a linguistic discussion, especially after the second half of the 20th century, and is covered in sub-section 5.3, “The Proper Name as Predicate and The Theory of The Predicate Denomination” (Amaral & Seide 2022: 139). The proposals by Tyler Burge (1973) and Kleiber (1981) are outlined, although the latter was somewhat rejected, later being redesigned.

The discussion on the semantics of the proper name continues in Chapter 6, with the authors focusing on the linguistic issue from Bréal and Saussure in

² The authors use the term *anthroponymic syntagma* based on the term *toponymic syntagma* proposed by Dick (1990). In Dick’s approach, the articulation of the component terms of the toponym (generic and specific elements) characterizes a syntagma, which, in the grammar of the Portuguese language, is defined as a complex unit composed by a head (verbal or nominal) and other terms, constituting a phrase.

the late 19th and early 20th centuries, also talking about [John Lyons \(1968\)](#) and [Stephen Ullmann \(1962\)](#) and pointing out more recent discussions, such as the above mentioned [Kleiber, Molino \(1982\)](#), [Jonasson \(1994\)](#) and [Gary-Prieur \(1994, 2001\)](#). These authors oscillate between the internal discursivity of the proper name (almost considering the anthroponym as an actor; [Greimas & Courtés 1986](#)) and the need for context, which is summarised in Chart 6.1 (Amaral & Seide 2022: 157). Based on these two chapters related to Semantics, the authors conclude, in Chapter 7, that “proper names do not behave like other lexical units” (Amaral & Seide 2022: 159). Chapter 7 analyses processes as anthroponymic deonymisation by checking how it leads to lexical units belonging to different word classes, e.g., *stalinista* (‘Stalinist’, adjective), *newton* (‘Newton’, noun), *galvanizar* (‘galvanise’, verb), pointing out that anthroponyms are only indirectly included in language dictionaries through lexical units like these. Next, they present several researchers analysing the formation of these units from formal criteria, also showing how differences between the variants of Portuguese (European and Brazilian) stand out in this context. This chapter also includes the analysis of usual composition of names of brands, inventions, theories and doctrines, as well as literary names.

The final chapter, entitled “Anthroponyms and Other Areas”, exemplifies how the interdisciplinary relationship is beneficial, focusing on the following two core topics: the relationship with Literature and History, which provides several studies empirically analysing cases related to migratory movements in Brazil, especially in the Southern region, and in particular those involving Lithuanian and Japanese immigrants.

The final considerations are extremely important, as they expose the diversity of the Brazilian Linguistics and anthroponymy, acknowledging that the book in question has merely analysed the Portuguese-root anthroponyms, not focusing on other realities, such as the Native Brazilian peoples’ naming systems, or anthroponyms in Brazilian Sign Language (*Língua Brasileira de Sinais*, LIBRAS), showing the reader a few works which are the first steps towards getting a more reliable picture of the Brazilian anthroponymy in the future, albeit not as complete as this book.

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