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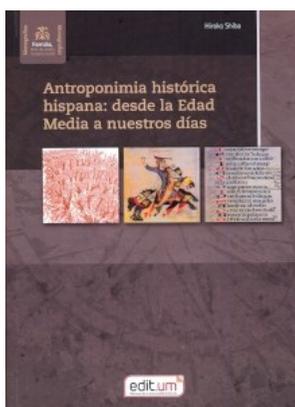
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The purpose of Hiroko Shiba's book is to analyse the formation and evolution of the Spanish anthroponomic system in an extremely broad timeframe, from the disintegration of the Roman Empire and through our modern times, although it stops to delve deeper into specific periods. If we bear in mind the complex history of the Spanish Monarchy, its expansion to other continents, the plurality of its languages and the wide variety of influences that impacted it throughout its historic journey – the author stresses that Spain is the European country that is culturally closest to the Muslim world (p. 328) – the ambitiousness of her undertaking is revealed, which seeks to endow Spanish historic anthroponymy with a summary monograph that until today had not existed. The work also handles both the analysis of first names and surnames, a circumstance that imbues the work with greater interest, in so far as studies about the surname system are generally quite rare. With regard to methodology, Shiba combines tools from Philology and from History and, at certain times, Art History and Genetics, which gives her work an interdisciplinary nature. For her synthesis, Shiba turns to published primary sources, as well as secondary sources that analyse the anthroponymy in a specific local setting, which allows for comparative analysis.

The book is divided into six chapters, as well as a prologue, conclusion and bibliography. The author follows a chronological discussion, starting from the Early Middle Ages, a period in which names were comprised of a single component. She continues with the appearance of the second component, to study the Early Modern Age and the peculiar features both of the first name and the surname. The work concludes with Spain's current situation, centring on the reasons why there are so few surnames, compared to other European countries.

In chapter one, Hiroko Shiba analyses Hispanic anthroponymy in the

medieval centuries, before the ‘anthroponomic revolution’, which entailed the emergence of a second component. As is well known, one of the main problems in studying the Early and High Middle Ages is the dearth of sources, which also has a pronounced gender bias, as women’s names are much less known. The author emphasises the presence of two phenomena that affect first names: on the one hand, the *condensation* of the onomastic stock, which reduces the number of names in use and, on the other, their *concentration*, so that an increasingly smaller number of names are used by a progressively larger number of people (p. 32). To analyse this, the author bases her writing on research done locally, although she does always focus more on the domain of the Castilian language than to other languages spoken in Spain. However, other authors ([Sánchez Rubio & Testón Núñez 2012](#)) have clarified that, with respect to anthroponymy, the Hispanic territories with non-Spanish languages have shown a greater and earlier interest in this matter.

Chapter two is devoted to the aforementioned ‘anthroponomic revolution’, which she places in the European context. The author stops to explain how the first surnames were formed and how they spread, contrasting this new usage with factors like the strengthening of urban life and contact with the Muslims, conquerors of the Visigoth kingdom in the first quarter of the 8th century. For example, according to Shiba, the interposition of *ibn* – translated in Latin as *filius* – between the son’s and father’s names was taken from Arabic anthroponymy. This stage was decisive in the shaping of Spanish surnames, to which the author devotes significant attention in the second part of her book, as this was when the patronymics ending in *-ez* were formed (*González: son of Gonzalo*), clearly the most widespread today in the Spanish-speaking world. In the author’s opinion, their appearance could date back to the 10th century. With regard to their disseminating agent, Shiba points to the peasantry as, due to the outcome of the Reconquest process and the repopulation of new territories, the colonists needed to prove the link that connected them to the previous generation, in order to safeguard their rights.

Chapter three continues with her reflections surrounding the ‘anthroponomic revolution’. Shiba sets out the discussions held between specialists on the reason that drove the adoption of this second part of the name. In this regard, the hypothesis – plausible but hard to prove – claims that the early appearance of the surname was due to the frequent homonymy caused both by the condensation and the concentration of the onomastic stock in use. The extension and diversity of Hispanic territories lead the author to specify where the changes originated, which occurred above all in kingdoms in the northern Iberian Peninsula, Navarra and Aragón, where they were detected in the 9th–10th centuries.

Chapter four moves on completely to the Early Modern Age. For this period, unlike what happened in medieval centuries, sources are extraordinarily abundant, although scholars’ interest in anthroponymy has been inversely

proportional to the wealth of documentation: few researchers have studied it and, those who have are more frequently from the field of Philology than History. Along with this, it merits mention that a common project has been lacking to organise research on modern Hispanic anthroponymy, so that the foundations Shiba turns to throughout her monograph – published sources and works by other authors – is very imbalanced. A further factor that can be added is the absence, with very few exceptions, of studies that cover the immense field of Hispanic anthroponymy in the Americas and the Philippines. For all these reasons, Shiba's summarising attempt is commendable, albeit necessarily incomplete.

In this chapter four, the first devoted to the Early Modern Age, her focus is on first names. Supported by studies published on populations at several points of the Monarchy, the author concludes that the most used names are repeated, with slight alterations to the order, in different regions: *Francisco*, *Juan*, *Pedro*, *José*, *Antonio* and *Domingo* among males, where she devotes special attention to a few of them, like *José*, which experienced enormous dissemination during this period. However, female names are not given the same attention in this chapter, beyond pointing out the absolute hegemony of *María*. The Spanish situation is compared to that of other countries, particularly France.

Chapter five analyses the surname and tries to explain the current Spanish system and its unique features. Shiba sets out the hypotheses that have supported the emergence of the second surname, generally maternal, as well as the compound surname. In the author's view, a particularly important event was the institutionalisation of the right of primogeniture by the Laws of Toro of 1505, which established that heirs to the entailed estate had to take the surname of the founders: 'a son whose parents were owners of entailed estates had to use both surnames: paternal and maternal, resulting from the compound surname, juxtaposing the two surnames and inserting *y*, and other times without the *y*' (p. 245). Spreading to the common people would not take place until much later.

It may be the final Chapter six that contains the book's most original contribution. Here, the author ponders the reason for the scarcity of surnames in modern-day Spain, to then reveal some traits of the family and society that could explain it. It is known that the number of surnames in use is significantly lower in this country than in other surrounding countries, such as Italy, and complete homonymy is abundant, despite the two-surname system. Shiba justifies it by referring to historic reasons, such as extremely high endogamy, lack of immigration and the isolation that once characterised the population, for both geographic and linguistic reasons (p. 264). The Reconquest caused the surnames of northern combatants to also spread through the south, which escalated the phenomenon. When building an explanation on this scarcity in her writing, Shiba speaks with authors who have researched the history of family and matrimony and about the different systems for the intergenerational

conveyance of property, without forgetting Genetics, which provides information on the high level of consanguinity that is seen. She also tackles the subject of the predominance in modern-day Spain of patronymic surnames and the rarity of trade or craftsmen surnames or nicknames, especially if we compare this to countries like Italy.

In summary, the book is an interesting journey through the history of Spanish first names and surnames, with the aim of explaining the origin of a rich and complex intangible heritage. Not all topics are handled with the same depth, although Hiroko Shiba's courage must be recognised in delving into problems that require an interdisciplinary perspective. It is unfortunate that the Spanish version of the text was not edited and proofread more carefully before its publication, as the book definitely merits this extra work.

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