

ONOMASTICA CANADIANA

**Journal of the Canadian Society for the Study of Names
Revue de la Société canadienne d'onomastique**

Vol. 95, No. 1

June / juin 2016

Vol. 95, No. 2

December / décembre 2016

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Rivista Italiana di Onomastica, Nouvelle Revue d'Onomastique**

ISSN 0078 – 4656

López Franco, Yolanda Guillermina. *Un siglo de nombres de pila en Tlalnepantla de Baz. Estudio lexicológico y sociolingüístico [A century of Christian/first names in Tlalnepantla de Baz. A lexicologic and sociolinguistic study]*. México, D.F.: UNAM, Facultad de Estudios Superiores Acatlán, Plaza y Valdés, DGAPA. 2011. 361 pgs. ISBN: 9786074023183.

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The transformations experienced by the Mexican anthroponymy during the past century are reflected in the example with which this study begins: “De Guadalupe y Juan a Estephany y Giovanni” [“From Guadalupe and Juan to Estephany and Giovanni”]. The book by López Franco deals with the evolution of first names in the municipality of Tlalnepantla, part of the metropolitan area near Mexico City, throughout the 20th century; López Franco uses a linguistic approach in this study. Between 1930 and 2000, the city grew from a population of 10,178 to 720,000 due to intense migration from other regions of the country; this makes its population an interesting area of research for anthroponymy. An analysis of this type is clearly conditioned by the selected sources; in this case, the oldest registry office of the city was chosen (Oficialía n° 1 del Registro Civil de Tlalnepantla). Currently there are eight registry offices in town; this one was chosen because it is the oldest and it contains the main part of the registers of the 20th century, from 1901 onwards. In chapter two, the methodological decisions are specified, with the first being the aforementioned source selection. Once the source was chosen, the sample was selected: from 1901 to 1930, one year from every five: 1901, 1905, 1910, 1915, 1920, 1926 (due to the deterioration of 1925’s book) and 1930; the data consisted of all the names of boys and girls registered every year, whose number goes from 61 (the lowest) to 290 (the highest). As of 1930, due to the rapid increase in the population, a random sampling of 10% of the annually registered names was carried out, totaling 3,070 girl names and 3,133 boy names (from 70 names in 1935, the lowest number, to 902 in 1985, the highest). Analysis of such an extensive period comes up against problems such as the lack of homogeneity in the registered data, which at some times made it difficult for the author to contrast

results and make valid conclusions. For instance, from 1945 onwards the birth rank of the newborns was omitted, so we cannot know the impact of the tradition in selecting a name for a firstborn; in 1955 this information reappeared. An additional problem is the use of initials for the most commonly used names, such as *M.* for *María* or *J.* for *José* or *Juan*. From 1970 onwards there is no reference to legitimacy or illegitimacy, and from 1988 the place of birth of the parents is omitted. In brief, we can say that the sample which has been analyzed stands out more for its abundance than for the depth of the information studied.

The book is divided into four chapters. In the first chapter, the author puts forth the basic concepts that will be dealt with – such as Christian names and anthroponymy – and her view of socioanthroponymy – “subdisciplina onomástica que pone en relación los conocimientos surgidos a partir de los campos de la lexicología, la sociolingüística tradicional y la sociolingüística cognitiva en el estudio de los nombres propios de persona” [“onomastic subdiscipline that relates the facts emerging from the areas of lexicology, the traditional sociolinguistics and the cognitive sociolinguistics in the study of the names of human beings”] (p. 25). Along with the aforementioned, the book presents the principal characteristics of the municipality under study: established at the beginning of the colonial period (1554-1556) between two different native folks, nahuas and otomíes, it was an agricultural settlement for centuries. Tlalnepantla experienced an intense transformation from 1930 onwards, due to the growth of Mexico City, and it was incorporated to its metropolitan area, going from 10,178 inhabitants in 1930 to 788,173 in 1980, the peak moment, when it became an industrial population, whose inhabitants came from all over the country, and where in 2005 97.93% of its neighbors didn't speak any native languages (p. 33-36). The second chapter contains a presentation of the source and the author's methodological decisions. The third chapter goes straight into the analysis of the extensive corpus collected by the author: after discovering the most frequently used names, the question of gender is addressed, masculine and feminine and also epicene names, because some of the most common names can be attributed to both men and women: this is the case of *Santos*, *Reyes*, *Guadalupe*, *Dolores*, *Cruz* or *Trinidad* among others,

given specially to children born or baptized around one of these feasts of the Catholic calendar (p. 69). Along the length of the 20th century some of these names, such as *Santos* and *Reyes*, fell into disuse, whereas others remained either masculine or feminine (p. 71-72). In fact, López Franco has pointed out the laxity of the Mexican legislation regarding this aspect (p. 32); this work shows the large degree of freedom exercised when attributing names to newborns. Her book then gives special attention to the languages in which the names are expressed. As expected, the most common language is Spanish; also included in this research work, although to a limited degree, is what the author refers to as “substratum languages,” or in this case, native languages: náhuatl (the only native language that is a source of male names, i.e. *Cuauhtémoc*, as well as female, such as *Citlalli*), and Yucatan Maya (i.e. *Itzel*, female name), purépecha (i.e. *Yunuen*, female name) and zapoteco (i.e. *Nisarindani*, female name), all Mexican languages (p. 89-91). The rest of the languages have been borrowed from other languages, principally English (*Jessica*, *Kevin*), French (*Jacqueline*, *René*) and Italian (*Bianca*, *Giovanni*), but also included in this group are languages such as Russian (*Katia*, *Pavel*), Arabian (*Yadira*, *Omar*), Swedish (*Erika*, *Axel*), Catalan (*Montserrat*, *Antoni*) and Basque (*Arzubia*, *Estivalis*, both female names); there are also some names of unknown origin, such as *Izllana*, a female name. In this chapter, the analysis carried out by López Franco is very thorough when affirming that a name given to a Mexican child is expressed in another language: for example, the origin of *Olga* can be Russian but with the passage of time it has become a commonly used name in Spanish, written with Latin script (*Ольга* in Cyrillic script). In any case, this analysis reveals the enormous dynamism of the Mexican anthroponymic corpus and the diversity of its sources of inspiration. The study of short chronological stages allows us to see the patterns of this innovation and its asymmetry insofar as the sex is concerned: indeed, the feminine names are attributed following much more liberal patterns, much less linked to tradition. The continuous supply of examples that are given helps the reader follow López Franco’s monograph: in fact, there is a brief history of each name along the 20th century in this town: among the most common ones, *María*, *Guadalupe*, *Juana*, *Alejandra*, *Adriana*, *Laura*, *Patricia*, *Andrea*, *Gabriela*, *Leticia*, *Verónica*, *Alicia*, *Beatriz* and *Claudia*; for boys, *José*, *Juan*, *Jesús*,

Eduardo, Fernando, Carlos, David, Jorge, Ricardo, Alberto, Javier, Arturo, Daniel, José Luis, Juan Carlos, Miguel Ángel, Rafael, Gabriel and Uriel (p. 51-68).

The fourth and last chapter is dedicated to the structure and vitality of the corpus by addressing the selecting of names, whether they be simple, complex or multiple; the attribution of a name – masculine or feminine – based on Marian devotion (*María, Guadalupe, Carmen, Concepción, Rocío, Belén, Candelaria, Rosario*, among many others) or other feasts of the Catholic calendar (*Gloria, Trinidad, Cruz, Pascual, Ascensión, Natividad*); as well as the derivation and the neologisms, with this last area reflecting the creativity of the Mexican society, such as in the case of a boy (born in 1985) called *Dantonuel*, created by mixing the names of his father, *Daniel*, his paternal grandfather, *Antonio*, and his maternal grandfather, *Manuel* (p. 191). The book ends with a glossary of linguistic terms for non-specialist (i.e. eponymous), extensive annexes containing a catalog of masculine and feminine names divided into different categories (frequency of use by sex and also by year), and finally an alphabetized index of first names.

This book may not only be of interest to specialists but also to the general public because the necessary explanations of specialized terms are provided for those who are unfamiliar with the interesting aspects. For those who are interested in this topic from a historical perspective, this book is very intriguing, but it could be said that the source that was chosen leads to limited results and does not allow for delving deeper into the historical roots of the different trends. Maybe the principal consequence of the methodological option previously cited – the choice of an only source of information, the birth registry – is that it might not be possible to correlate the guidelines for attributing the names with the socioeconomic level of the families, information which, without a doubt, would have shed more light on the basic reasons behind the phenomenon under study. With respect to the bibliography, the author has a great deal of knowledge regarding the French historiography concerning this topic, even though some relevant researchers such as Jacques Dupâquier¹, Agnès Fine², Christiane Klapisch-Zuber³, Claude Larquié or Françoise Zonabend⁴, whose contributions to different historical periods are

really important, are not quoted; as for the English-speaking scientific production, more references, such as Scott Smith-Bannister⁵, would have been appreciated. There are very few references to books or articles written in Spanish, although some authors have devoted their attention especially to the peninsula, such as Claude Larquié⁶. We hope that López Franco's book helps to awaken the interest of this discipline in Latin America and particularly in Mexico.

Notes

1. Jacques Dupâquier et al., *Le temps des Jules: les prénoms en France au XIXe siècle*, Paris, Christian, 1987.

2. Agnès Fine et Françoise-Romaine Ouellette (ed.), *Le nom dans les sociétés occidentales contemporaines*, Toulouse, Presses Universitaires du Mirail, 2005.

3. Christiane Klapisch-Zuber, *La maison et le nom: stratégies et rituels dans l'Italie de la Renaissance*, Paris, Éditions de l'École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, 1990.

4. Françoise Zonabend, "Jeux de noms. Les noms de personne à Minot," *Etudes rurales*, 1979 (74), p. 51-58.

5. Scott Smith-Bannister, *Names and Naming Patterns in England, 1538-1700*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1997.

6. Claude Larquié, "Mentalités et comportements à l'époque moderne: le prénom des enfants madrilènes aux XVII et XVIII siècles," in Martine Lambert Gorges (ed.), *Les élites locales et l'Etat dans l'Espagne Moderne du XVI au XIX siècle*, Paris, CNRS, 1993, p. 125-147.



