



A Page From the Boke: Late Period Portuguese Names

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1 Introduction

This article is the third in a mini-series where I discuss at a rudimentary level the most common naming practices of a specific culture. These guides are not meant to be all-encompassing or conclusive, but rather provide a 'skeleton' from which you can start building your own name. These guides deal only with the most common types of naming practices in the cultures under consideration; I will not be discussing obscure or rare practices. In an effort to keep each of these guides to a page or less (for ease of photocopying and distribution to all interested – each article will carry at the bottom a disclaimer giving permission for said reproduction), many details will be glossed over; however, I will try to provide references for further information. With these caveats in place, I'll now discuss Portuguese names.

2 Language

The Iberian peninsula in prior to 1600 was not divided into fixed countries each of which spoke a fixed language. The kingdoms and principalities grew and shrank and changed significantly over our period of study, and the languages changed with the same fluidity. Portuguese arose in the 12th century, though it was never commonly spoken outside of Portugal, Galicia, and Portugal's colonies. It persists in much the same form to modern times. [1] The data that I am focusing on for this article is from the mid-16th century. The main spelling differences that can be seen is the preponderance of <ey> for modern <ei>. [5]

3 Given names

In 1565 a tax of the people of Lisbon was conducted. Many hundreds of people's names were recorded. The 10 most popular masculine names are (listed in order of popularity of variants; most popular variants are listed first): [5]

1. Antonio, Antão, Antan
2. João, Johan, Joan, João, Joham, Joam, Johane, John
3. Francisco, Francisquo, Françisquo, Franciscque, Françisco
4. Pero, Pedre, Pedro, Per
5. Dioguo, Diogo, Díoguo, Dyoguo
6. Fernão, Fernan
7. Manoel, Manoell, Manol, Manel, Manuell, Mannuell
8. Jorge
9. Guaspar, Gaspar
10. Simão, Symão

The 10 most common women's names are:

1. Isabel
2. Maria, Marya
3. Caterina
4. Ana, Anna
5. Briatiz, Britiz
6. Lianor, Lyanor
7. Margaida
8. Ines, Inez, Innes
9. Antonia
10. Francisca, Francisqua

4 Bynames

There are three main types of bynames found in this document: Patronymics (indicating the bearer's father's given name), locatives (indicating the bearer's city of residence), and descriptives (referring to physical or other characteristics of the bearer). By the 16th century, these bynames were not always used literally (e.g., a man named Antonio Fernandez might have been the son of João Fernandez, not Fernão Pirez), but were sometimes used like modern day inherited surnames. So far as I can tell, the locative bynames and most of the descriptives were still used literally at this time.

4.1 Patronymic bynames

These are the most common bynames. Almost all patronymic bynames in Portuguese are formed by taking the father's given name and putting it into the genitive (possessive) case.

TABLE 1: PATRONYMIC BYNAMES

No	Name	Patronymics
1.	Antonio, Antão, Antan	Antunnez, Antonio, Antão, Antonio
2.	João, Johan, Joan, João, Joham, Joam, Johane, John	Anes, Eanes, Joanes
3.	Francisco, Francisquo, Françisquo, Franciscque, Françisco	Francisco, Francisquo, Francisquo
4.	Pero, Pedre, Pedro, Per	Pirez, Peres, Perez, Pires, Pyrez
5.	Dioguo, Diogo, Díoguo, Dyoguo	Diaz, Dias, Diogo
6.	Fernão, Fernan	Fernandez, Ferannez, Fernandez
7.	Manoel, Manoell, Manol, Manel, Manuell, Mannuell	Manoel
8.	Jorge	Jorge
9.	Guaspar, Gaspar	<i>No patronymic based on this name found in this source</i>
10.	Simão, Symão	Simões, Simoa

This generally involves changing the end to -ez or -es, though there are some exceptions. In general, names that already end in -s or -z don't change spelling when used as a patronymic. Table 1 (above) shows the patronymics formed from the masculine names listed above, listed in order of frequency.

4.2 Locative bynames

Standard locative bynames in Portuguese are extremely easy to form: Take a city in Portugal, determine what it was called prior to 1600, and prepend de 'of' to the name of the city. If the name begins with a vowel, de elides to d'. Some commonly found locative bynames include: d'Abreu, d'Allmeida, de Crasto, de Meneses, de Sousa. More examples can be found in source [5].

4.2 Descriptive nicknames

These descriptives can be based on physical characteristics, occupational facts, or other noteworthy features. Common ones in this 16th century source include Carvalho (masculine)/Carvalha (feminine) 'an oak tree', Correa 'a thong of leather', Fereyra perhaps

related to the word for 'smith', Lobo (masculine)/Loba (feminine) 'wolf', Pinto (masculine)/Pinta (feminine) 'freckled'. Many descriptive bynames take different forms depending on whether they are used by women or men.

5 Name constructions

Because of the changes in the naming pool over the years, the names discussed here may not be appropriate for an earlier period. The same is true for name constructions.

An overwhelming majority of the people in this document had a single given name and a single byname. I found no examples of people with more than one given name. It was not especially uncommon for someone to have two bynames; when this was the case, they were almost always a patronymic followed by a locative, or a patronymic followed by a descriptive. Combining descriptives with locatives, using more than two patronymics, or more than two descriptives were all very rare practices, and should not be used if you want a typical 16th century Portuguese name.

References

- [1] Levin, Craig. "Romance Languages of the Medieval Iberian Peninsula" (WWW: Academy of S. Gabriel, 1999) <http://www.s-gabriel.org/names/pedro/iberianlang.html>
- [2] Smith, Julia. "Early Portuguese Names" (WWW: Academy of S. Gabriel, 2001) <http://www.s-gabriel.org/names/juliana/earlyportuguese/>
- [3] Smith, Julia. "Portuguese Names 1350-1450" (WWW: Academy of S. Gabriel, 1998) <http://www.s-gabriel.org/names/juliana/portuguese/>
- [4] Smith, Julia. "Portuguese Names from the 16th Century" (WWW: Academy of S. Gabriel, 1999) <http://www.s-gabriel.org/names/juliana/portugal16/>
- [5] Uckelman, Sara L., "Portuguese Names from Lisbon, 1565" (WWW: Self-published, 2002, 2004) <http://www.ellipsis.cx/~liana/names/lisbon1565.html>