

[View this email in your browser](#)

Bryn Mawr Classical Review

[BMCR 2025.07.48](#)

Jonathan Edmondson, Milagros Navarro Caballero, *Onomastique, société et identité culturelle en Lusitanie romaine (ADOPIA I) / Onomástica, sociedad e identidad cultural en Lusitania romana (ADOPIA I)*. Scripta Antiqua, 178. Bordeaux: Ausonius Éditions, 2024. 2 vols. Pp. 956. ISBN 9782356136015.

Review by Carlos Enríquez de Salamanca, University of Warwick.

Carlos.Enriquez-de-Salamanca@warwick.ac.uk

[Authors and titles are listed at the end of the review]

This volume presents the findings of the *Atlas Digital Onomastique de la Péninsule Ibérique Antique* Project (*ADOPIA*), with a focus on Lusitanian onomastics. The work offers an update on the onomastic research conducted in the previous *Atlas Antroponímico de la Lusitania Romana* (*AALR*) (2003), in a way that succeeds in bringing the new evidence to the study of Lusitania's social, cultural, and legal composition. The findings of the *ADOPIA* project are presented [through their webpage](#). This digital format allows it to be constantly updated. This book comprises twelve chapters, an introduction, and a conclusion. Each chapter focuses on a case study or collection of case studies set in comparison. The underlying aim of all chapters is to observe through onomastic analysis the social diversity in Lusitania, as reflected in the different layers of population, different civic juridical statuses, and the particular histories and geographic situations of civic communities (31).

In the introduction, Jonathan Edmonson and Milagros Navarro Caballero state that a name is taken to reflect and reveal the social, cultural, and civic identity of a person (31), and in the fourth chapter, Navarro Caballero and Joaquín Gorroachategui state that to be named is to define oneself socially, juridically, and sometimes even geographically (274). Within this understanding, the project *ADOPIA* not only reveals the importance of onomastics as a tool for analysis of the ancient world, but also as a

field that can itself reveal certain aspects of the provinces' social and political realities. It is no wonder that the authors can assert that their work centres upon the understanding of ancient identities, and that epigraphy reveals itself as a driver of Romanisation (899, 883). In this way, it is an invaluable addition that fits squarely into debates around provincial identities which, although not distinctive in its methodologies, does offer an in-depth examination of onomastics that has seldom been seen before.

Chapters 1, 2 and 3 discuss three colonies in eastern Lusitania: Emerita Augusta, Metellinum, and Norba Caesarina. These show similarities that are to be expected from communities with the same legal status, but also some significant differences. As expected from Roman colonies, all three reveal a composition of, primarily, Roman citizens, evidenced by the widespread use of *duo/tria nomina* (39, 208-210, 244). While some citizens do follow the traditional onomastic formula, in many cases there is a lack of filiation, whether for freeborn citizens or *liberti*. In Emerita, Jonathan Edmonson argues that this shows that residents were not scrupulous about representing their juridical status, although this could also be ascribed to the early date (before AD 100) of some of these inscriptions (85). On the other hand, at Norba, linguistically indigenous patronymics might have been derived from local names passed down the generations, especially in familial contexts, rather than revealing recently-made citizens (251-252). This, however, must grapple with the fact that, as Navarro Caballero points out, indigenous *cognomina* are well-attested, especially tied to *nomina* usually associated with citizenship grants such as *Iulius, -a* and *Caecilius, -a* (250). Indeed, Norba is something of an outlier compared with the other two colonies: it contains more indigenous names, especially compared with Emerita, where names are overwhelmingly Latin (132).

At Emerita, the *nomina* are incredibly varied, unlike in the other two colonies: Edmonson argues that this is one of the defining elements of a colony created *ex nihilo* (129). Another interesting motif which appears in these colonies is the presence of so-called “onomastic fossils”, that is, *nomina* typical of the Republican period in Italy, probably indicating early Italian migrants to the region (110, 212-213, 247). On the other hand, indigenous *peregrini* are also attested, although usually in the territories of the colonies, and as a minority of the population.

Chapter 4 presents a comparison of two localities: the peregrine city of Turgalium and the *praefectura Turgaliensis regionis*, a prefecture of Emerita in the area near Turgalium. The *praefectura* was probably intended for colonists, but cohabitation with *peregrini* was very common – almost 50:50 (274-275, 282). On the other hand, Turgalium reveals a mixed population of Romans and *peregrini* who intermarried and cohabited also at a ratio of roughly 50:50 (275-276). Turgalium reveals a large majority of indigenous people, whether Roman citizens or *peregrini*, with, also, migrants from

neighbouring cities. By contrast, the onomastics of Roman citizens in the *praefectura* show little evidence of indigenous elements (276, 284). Whereas “onomastic fossils” are rare in Turgalium, they are better attested in the *praefectura*, probably because of ties to Emerita (293).

Chapter 5 focuses on comparing cities of different political statuses:

Ammaia, Ebora, and Pax Iulia. Ammaia had a higher indigenous presence, typical of a peregrine city; Ebora was a Latin *municipium*, with a strongly Latinised population; Pax Iulia was a Roman colony. Ebora, despite only being a Latin *municipium*, shows a higher percentage of *nomina* than the Roman colony of Pax Iulia (389). Furthermore, the differences ascertained between these two cities are not clear-cut, perhaps due to the colony’s strong evidence base in its territory, which would thus highlight rural population, who were more commonly *peregrini* (391). In any case, the differences are most easily seen between Ebora and Pax Iulia as compared with Ammaia. This shows that political developments were of key importance in the subsequent development of the localities’ social composition into becoming more typically “Romanised”.

Chapter 6 focuses on two cities in the *conventus Scallabitanus*: Scallabis and Olisipo. Scallabis, a Roman colony, boasts so few inscriptions that it is impossible to draw conclusions. Olisipo, on the other hand, boasts a great number of inscriptions, even in its territory, a fact that indicates that there must have been a diverse rural population of comparative wealth (405). In the overwhelming majority of cases, individuals at Olisipo present *duo/tria nomina* typical of Roman citizens, which is to be expected given the (rare) status of the city as a *municipium civium Romanorum* (396). “An unusually high proportion of freeborn *Olisiponenses* included their tribal affiliation” (432), which might have been because of the unusual status of the city, motivating citizens to express their citizenship unequivocally. There is also a great deal of variety when it comes to the *nomina* of the *Olisiponenses*, although the common *Iulius*, -a still predominates, indicating locals awarded citizenship and their descendants (439). Additionally, there are “onomastic fossils” evidencing early Italian migration, some of these unique to Olisipo (441-442). In general, Olisipo reveals a linguistically Latin landscape, but indigenous names are also well-attested (457). These are present both in the *cognomina* of Roman citizens, and as idionyms of *peregrini*, although there seems to be a gradual move to Latinisation early on (459-463). All of this makes up the “cosmopolitan nature of local society” as would be expected of a major Atlantic port-city (464).

Chapter 7 examines the Atlantic area of the *conventus Scallabitanus* through an analysis of five cities in the region: Aeminium, Conimbriga, Collippo, Seilium, and Eburobrittium. They all had a similar political and juridical evolution from being stipendiary cities under Augustus to Latin cities during the Flavian period (488). Despite the scarcity of evidence, some tendencies can be discerned at Aeminium (500-

501), namely a high degree of integration into Roman structures: Latin onomastics, a high number of citizens compared with *peregrini* (500), and a relatively diverse social composition, although citizens clearly predominate (490). This social composition, however, might be explained by the fact that most inscriptions are dated to the 2nd century AD, when Latin status had been implemented. Conimbriga shows the same high level of Latinisation, probably due to similar reasons (507). Some “onomastic fossils” can also be found, which the authors argue was the result of close ties to Emerita, rather than early Italian migration (519). Thus, the onomastics reveal a city that Latinised quickly and adopted/adapted Roman structures early on. At Collippo, the nomina present among the Roman citizens reveal some indigenous roots (539), although most are traditionally Latin. Alongside these, however, there is some evidence of “onomastic fossils”, which seem to have been assumed later on, a very uncommon phenomenon (546, 555). Indigenous names, though also attested, are rare in the context of this highly Latinised city. Sellium and Eburobritium are also highly Latinised, although in these cities most if not all inhabitants were locals, revealing the high levels of intermarriage between citizens and *peregrini* (563).

Chapters 8 and 9 focus on three cities established in the central-eastern region of Lusitania: Igaeditanorum, Capera, and Caurium. In all three, the majority of the population was indigenous, and the legal composition shows little implementation of Roman citizenship, tied as well to the prevalence of linguistically indigenous onomastics (592, 652, 665, 672, 690). The low degree of Romanisation/Latinisation in these cities explains, too, the irregularities in the onomastic formulae of the Roman citizens that do appear –all of them Romanised locals– usually missing tribal affiliation, filiation, or presenting indigenous filiation, rather than a typically Latin one (677-678, 701-702). Differences, however, are also present. Capera and Igaeditanorum were much more attractive for migrants, because of the presence of mines and their geographical location, than Caurium. This led to Caurium experiencing a lower degree of social, economic, and material evolution in comparison with the other two (718).

Chapter 10 seeks to improve upon the *AALR* in the areas of modern-day Salamanca and Zamora, in northeast Lusitania (727-730). In these regions, there is an overwhelming predominance of *peregrini* onomastics, which *ADOPIA* has revealed to be even more significant than previously thought (737-738). The landscape is dominated by communities with marked indigenous characteristics, which show low permeability of Roman influence. However, some Roman practices were adapted and adopted to some extent by these indigenous locals (738). Single names without patronymics are common among *peregrini* in this region, a practice that survived into Roman imperial times, where Latinisation only properly took root from the third century AD (783-784). Still, a *peregrinus* name + filiation remained the most common formula. These names were closely related to Celtiberian and Astur names, probably resulting from their geographic proximity, although Latin names are also attested (784).

Chapter 11 delves into a comparison of the two eastern-most *civitates* of Lusitania: Avila and Caesarobriga. At Avila, the onomastic landscape is predominantly indigenous, unlike in Caesarobriga (815), and while Latin names can be found in both, some of the *nomina* of Caesarobriga are exceedingly rare, with few parallels in either Lusitania or the Hispaniae (823-824). Furthermore, immigration is much better attested in Avila than in Caesarobriga: although the former was poorer, movement of livestock through its region might explain this phenomenon (835). While Caesarobriga seems to have followed a traditional development in socio-political and juridical terms after grants of *ius Latii*, Avila seemingly remained untouched by such an evolution, remaining highly indigenous (837).

The final chapter offers some comparisons between *AALR* and the new findings of the project *ADOPIA*, considering the new insights that have been gained through this research in regard to indigenous names in Lusitania. *AALR* concluded that 20% of attested names in Lusitania were of indigenous origins, whereas *ADOPIA* has raised that percentage to 22.12% (843-844), a change that, while not paradigm-shifting, is significant, especially insofar as it shows that Lusitania, when compared with other provinces, has a higher percentage of indigenous names (884). Indigenous idionyms are commonly used as single names by *peregrini*, with Tanginus, -a, being the most common, reaffirming the conclusions of *AALR*. However, there are also cases of these being used as *cognomina* by Roman citizens (847-851). Novel findings also include the demonstration that supra-familial structures are present, although these are most common in the central and northern regions of the Iberian Peninsula, permeating into Lusitania in those areas closer to Celtiberia (851-853); corroboration of the observation made by Pliny that the south of Lusitania was closely related to Celtiberia (846-847); and through mapping the names of different indigenous linguistic origins, the study of onomastics reveals itself as a powerful tool for studying ancient languages (859).

Authors and titles

Introduction: Étudier l'onomastique, la société et l'identité culturelle dans la Lusitanie romaine à partir d'un atlas onomastique numérique (*ADOPIA*) (Jonathan Edmonson & Milagros Navarro Caballero)

1. Onomástica y sociedad en una *colonia ciuium Romanorum* y *caput prouincia*: la *colonia Augusta Emerita* (Jonathan Edmonson)
2. Historia y sociedad de la colonia de *Metellinum*: un enfoque onomástico (Jonathan Edmonson)
3. La historia de la colonia *Norba Caesarina* a partir de la onomástica de sus habitantes (Milagros Navarro Caballero)
4. Los habitantes de *Turgalium* y de la *praefectura Turgaliensis regionis* (Joaquín

Gorroachategui & Milagros Navarro Caballero)

5. Considerações em torno da onomástica de três cidades entre Tejo e Algarve: *Ammaia, Ebora e Pax Iulia* (Amílcar Guerra)
6. Onomastics and local society at the two major cities of the *conventus Scallabitanus*: *Scallabis Praesidium Iulium* and *Olisipo Felicitas Iulia* (Jonathan Edmonson)
7. La onomástica de cinco comunidades cívicas de la franja atlántica del *conventus Scallabitanus*: *Aeminium, Conimbriga, Collippo, Seilium, Eburobrittium* (Milagros Navarro Caballero & Mercedes Oria Segura)
8. Onomástica e sociedade na *civitas Igaeditanorum* (Armando Redentor)
9. *Capera y Caurium*, dos ciudades en la Lusitania centro-oriental: caracterización socio-onomástica (Milagros Navarro Caballero & Mercedes Oria Segura)
10. Antroponimia en la Lusitania nororiental (las provincias de Salamanca y Zamora) (Juan José Palao Vicente & José María Vallejo Ruiz)
11. La onomástica de la epigrafía latina de las *civitates* más orientales de la Lusitania: *Avila y Caesarobriga* (María del Rosario Hernando Sobrino)
12. La onomástica indígena de la provincia de Lusitania. Del *Atlas antroponímico de la Lusitania romana* al proyecto *ADOPIA* (José María Vallejo Ruiz & Joaquín Gorroachategui)

Conclusion: Onomástica, sociedad e identidad cultural en Lusitania romana: avances y retos (Milagros Navarro Caballero & Jonathan Edmonson)

[unsubscribe from this list](#) [update subscription preferences](#)