

# RURAL HUMAN TOPONYMY IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF ASSIS BRASIL, STATE OF ACRE: AN ANALYSIS OF SEMANTIC-MOTIVATIONAL ASPECTS

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## ABSTRACT

This article analyzes the rural toponyms of Assis Brasil (AC- BRAZIL), focusing on their semantic-motivational aspects. The methodology used was by Dick (1990, 1992), and the initial studies of the State toponyms was carried out by Sousa (2007). We aim to present the description and the analysis of rural toponymy in the municipality of Assis Brasil, in the State of Acre (Brazil), regarding semantic-motivational aspects. Data were selected from spreadsheets of rural settlements. They were recorded in lexicographical-toponymic forms as adapted from Dick's proposal (2004). Findings showed: the greatest influence of *anthroponyms* (23,59%) is related to people who were somehow notable in the social, historical, and cultural context; *hagiotoponyms* (12,4%) are related to saints from the Catholic discourse; and *zootoponyms* (10,12%) refer to the local fauna.

**Keywords:** Toponym, Human landscapes, Alto Acre Region, Municipality of Assis Brasil.

## Introduction

Onomastics is the field of Linguistics devoted to studying proper names (AMARAL; SEIDE, 2020). Its subfields include, among others, Anthroponymy, which investigates

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people's proper names, and Toponymy, which addresses the proper names of places (SOUSA; DARGEL, 2017; 2020). This article<sup>3</sup> focuses on the latter (i.e., Toponymy).

Toponymy is a traditional field in the Brazilian academia. The first works in the field were etymology-oriented and particularly dealt with indigenous toponyms. Examples include: Sampaio (1901), who addressed Tupi contributions to Brazilian geographical names; Oliveira (1957), who studied indigenous toponyms in the City of Rio de Janeiro; Cardoso (1961), who analyzed the influence of Arawak and Caribbean languages on toponyms in the State of Amazonas; Drumond (1965), who explored the marks of Bororo in Brazilian toponyms; and Mello (1967), who investigated indigenous toponyms in the State of Amazonas.

From the 1980s onwards, with the studies of Maria Vicentina de Paula do Amaral Dick, from Universidade de São Paulo (USP), Brazilian toponymic research has expanded its fields of analysis and how it explores the toponym (a place's proper name). As a result, the structure of the toponymic sign and its semantic-motivational dimensions have been described and analyzed to produce the toponymic profile of a given geographic space.

In the State of Acre, the first toponymic studies were performed by Isquerdo (1996), who researched the toponyms of 'seringais'<sup>4</sup> and 'colocações'<sup>5</sup> in the Juruá region (in the south). Then, Sousa (2007) carried out a toponymic investigation of localities and rivers in the state. Sousa's study was the starting point for the ongoing project *Toponymic Atlas of Western Brazilian Amazon*, developed at Universidade Federal do Acre by Professor Alexandre Melo de Sousa. This project has generated other studies, including Oliveira (2015), Saar (2016), Silva (2017), Martins (2017), Sampaio (2018), and Santos (2019), to name but a few. In all such studies, toponymic data from the State of Acre have been analyzed focusing on either urban or rural toponyms. Only Santos (2019) dealt with the application of urban toponyms in Portuguese language classes in Basic Education. The

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<sup>3</sup>This article presents the results of the second author's research. The results are part of the *Toponymic Atlas* coordinated by the second author.

<sup>4</sup> The word "*seringal*" (plural *seringais*) could be literally translated as "rubber plantation". However, according to Ranzi (2008, p. 137), it is more precisely a *community* in the middle of the forest where the economic activity of latex extraction is developed. The word in Portuguese will be used throughout this article.

<sup>5</sup> The word "*colocação*" (plural *colocações*) could be roughly translated as "settlement". According to Ranzi (2008, p. 169), it is more precisely the place in the middle of the forest where the rubber tappers live and work. The word in Portuguese will be used throughout this article.

data described and analyzed in the present study have also contributed to the development of aforementioned project and are, therefore, part of it.

This article is a part of a larger study (see Silva, 2017) focused on the rural toponyms of a region named Alto Acre, which includes the following municipalities: Assis Brasil, Brasileia, Epitaciolândia, and Xapuri. The overall study analyzed 913 toponyms that name the geophysical and human landscapes in the rural areas of these municipalities, considering both the structural dimension and the semantic-motivational dimension. However, the present article focuses on the rural toponyms in the Municipality of Assis Brasil: its *ramais*<sup>6</sup> (dirt roads) and *seringais* (rubber plantations).

The article is divided into four sections apart from this Introduction and the Final Remarks. Section 1 presents the framework used for toponymic analyses, especially regarding the toponymic sign. Section 2 describes the area under scrutiny and provides some historical and geographic information about the Municipality of Assis Brasil. Section 3 describes the methodology. Section 4 provides the data analysis and discussion. The article concludes with some final remarks about the findings. The results add to project *Toponymic Atlas of Western Brazilian Amazon (Atlas Toponímico da Amazônia Ocidental Brasileira – ATA OB Project)*.

## **1 Toponymy and the toponymic sign**

As mentioned above, Toponymy is a linguistic field that studies the naming of geographic spaces, both those of geophysical nature (rivers, waterfalls, mountains, etc.) and those of human nature (cities, streets, avenues, neighborhoods, etc.), whether in urban or in rural regions (DICK, 1990; 1992; 1999; ISQUERDO, 1996; SOUSA, 2007; 2019; SOUSA; DARGEL, 2020).

Unlike the linguistic sign, which is arbitrary (SAUSSURE, 1995), the toponymic sign – object of study of Toponymy – is a motivated lexical item. According to Dick (1990), the motivated nature of the toponym reflects the natural environment (geophysical nature) or the cosmovision (impressions, feelings, beliefs, culture, etc.) of the man or group of men that named the place.

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<sup>6</sup> The word “ramal” (plural *ramais*) could be roughly translated as “dirt road”. In the Amazon context, it is an unpaved road which, within the road network, corresponds to a secondary road that gives access to a primary road (SILVA, 2008).

These motivational aspects led to the taxonomic categories proposed by Dick (1990): 11 of geophysical nature (*astrotoponyms*, *chromotoponyms*, *phytotoponyms*, *lithotoponyms*, *zootoponyms*, among others) and 16 of anthropocultural nature (*anthrotoponyms*, *ethnotoponyms*, *hierotoponyms*, *historiotoponyms*, *sociotoponyms*, among others).<sup>7</sup> Some of these taxonomic categories are described and exemplified in the Data Analysis section.

The motivational aspects are reflected in the specific element (term) of the toponym. As explained by Dick (1992), a toponym consists of two elements: a generic one, which names the geographical entity (e.g., *rio* [river], *serra* [mountain range], *ramal* [dirt road]), and a specific one, which particularizes the geographical entity (e.g., *Acre*, in *Rio Acre* [Acre River]; *Cutia* [Agouti], in *Ramal da Cutia* [Dirt Road of the Agouti])<sup>8</sup>. The specific element can feature in three forms: *simple* (it has only one formant: *Madeira* [Wood], in *Rio Madeira* [Wood River], in the State of Rondônia); *compound* (it contains two or more formants: *Pau dos Ferros* [Stick of the Irons], a municipality in the State of Rio Grande do Norte), *hybrid* (the formants belong to different languages: *Santa Rosa do Purus* [Saint Rose of the Purus, with Purus being a name of indigenous origin], a municipality in the State of Acre) (DICK, 1992). According to Navarro (2013, p. 401), *Puru* derives from *poru* that is related to anthropophagy. Poru. (s) anthropophagy, the act of eating people.

Interdisciplinarity is inherent to Toponymy – especially when it comes to the different categories that oftentimes border on or intersect with each other in their semantic-motivational aspects. Sousa and Dargel (2017; 2020), for example, state that interdisciplinarity is related to the inherent cultural nature of the onomastic study, as it approaches an element of language. That is why Dick (1990, p. 35-6) stated that “Toponymy is an immense linguistic and cultural complex, one in which data from other

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<sup>7</sup>Other researchers have added new categories to those proposed by Dick (1990). Examples include: Isquardo (1996), who addressed euphoric animotoponyms and dysphoric animotoponyms; Francisquini (1998), who proposed categories graphematoponyms, higietoponyms, and necrotoponyms; and Saar (2016), who came up with category fidetoponyms. In this article, all categories had their names translated into English as literally as possible when it comes to the root or prefix of the name given in Portuguese (usually of Latin or Greek origin).

<sup>8</sup> Throughout the article, rough translations of the places' names are provided for understanding of some semantic aspects of their compositional words. However, these phrases in English are not necessarily used to refer to those places in the actual world (SOUSA, 2007).

sciences – necessarily, and not exclusively – intersect”<sup>9</sup>. Thus, toponymic research (in fact, Onomastics in general) requires knowledge that goes beyond the linguistic elements, if it is to reveal the intentional, motivational, and significant aspects of a place’s name.

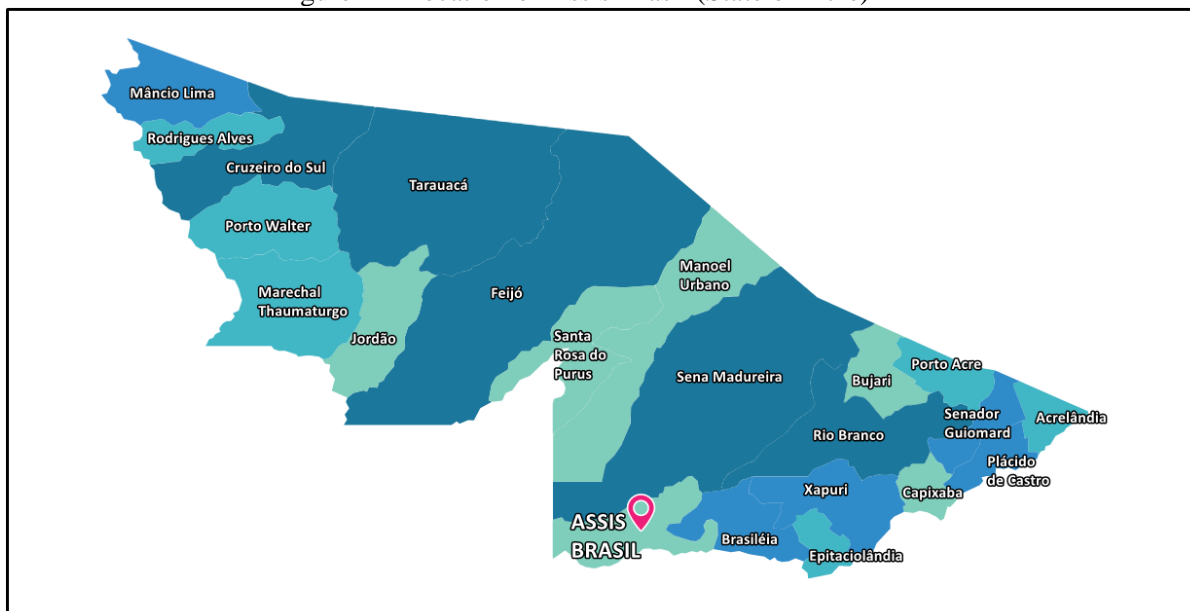
## 2 The Municipality of Assis Brasil: historical and geographical aspects

Assis Brasil is a municipality located in the State of Acre, more specifically in the Alto [i.e., High] Acre Region. According to Ranzi (2008), this region is so named because of its location in the highest part of the headwaters of the Acre River, with all its four municipalities located on the banks of said river. Specifically, Assis Brasil is the point where Brazil shares borders with Bolivia and Peru (the trinational border); it also shares borders with the municipalities of Sena Madureira and Brasiléia.

Assis Brasil is located on the left bank of the Acre River, at its most vital point, the headwaters. In other words, Assis Brasil is located at the most important point of the river, its source, a preservation site. This is the reason why it features preservation sites such as the native lands at its headwaters and Estação Ecológica do Rio Acre (Acre River Ecological Station).

Figure 1 shows the location of Assis Brasil.

Figure 1 – Location of Assis Brasil (State of Acre)



Source: Adapted from IBGE (2021).

<sup>9</sup> In the original: “a Toponímia é um imenso complexo língu-cultural, em que os dados das demais ciências se interseccionam necessariamente e, não, exclusivamente”.

According to Sousa (2019), Assis Brasil was founded on March 1st, 1963, by Vicente Bessa, but only obtained its political autonomy in 1976, when it was dismembered from Brasileia, through State Law No. 588. In the zenith of the rubber plantations, the place was also called Seringal Paraguassu (Brazil, 2010). Only later was it promoted to Vila [Village] Assis Brasil, and, finally, to Municipality. Assis Brasil was “one of the most important individuals in the process of attaching Acre to Brazil. He was at the side of Barão [Baron] do Rio Branco when he signed the Treaty of Petropolis”<sup>10</sup> (SOUSA, 2019, p. 96).

### 3 Methodological aspects of the study

Every investigation needs to have a research plan, methods, and analysis procedures (XAVIER, 2011, p. 36).

Differentiating Semasiology from Onomasiology is relevant for the present research plan. Semasiology, which is concerned with meaning, aims at a lexical and semantic analysis, beginning with an observation of the name to then search for the concept; in the communication cycle, this search is the procedure adopted by those who hear a name and scan their mental archives to retrieve meaning. In turn, Onomasiology considers the procedure of a speaker who formulates a concept in their mind from their observation of the actual and/or fictitious world and looks for a name to designate a given element (BALDINGER, 1996[1962]). In this study, the research plan focused on the onomasiological aspect, as the toponymic sign exists through the act of naming.

The method of analysis adopted was inductive, which consists of analyzing data based on the constancy of repetitions and interpreting/measuring the significance of these repetitions for the phenomena under scrutiny (XAVIER, 2011, p. 8). The procedure adopted was the typological method, which consists of interpreting the toponymic phrase concomitantly with the social-historical-cultural facts, including the iconic properties, i.e., resources that describe colors and other dimensions that possibly have motivated the name-giving agent (DICK, 1999, p. 48).

Data were recorded in Brazilian Portuguese in lexicographical-toponymic forms, which included information about the toponyms, such as: municipality; localization;

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<sup>10</sup> In the original: “foi um dos personagens mais importantes no processo de anexação do Acre ao Brasil. Esteve ao lado de Barão do Rio Branco na assinatura do Tratado de Petrópolis”.

toponym; landscape, whether human or geophysical; taxonomy; etymology; lexical entry; morphological structure; history; encyclopedic information; example in context; researcher's name; reviewer's name; and collection date. This form, illustrated in Figure 2, was originally proposed by Dick (2004, p. 131).

Figure 2 – lexicographical-toponymic form (in Brazilian Portuguese)

<b>ATLAS TOPONÍMICO DA AMAZÔNIA OCIDENTAL BRASILEIRA REGIONAL DO ALTO ACRE</b>	
<b>Município: Assis Brasil</b>	<b>Localização: Regional do Alto Acre</b>
<b>Topônimo: Assis Brasil</b>	<b>AH: Município</b>
<b>Taxionomia: Antropotopônimo</b>	
<b>Etimologia: Assis é originário do Latim, originário de Assis (Itália). Brasil, vocábulo derivado do vocábulo italiano brasileiro de origem controversa. Nome com o qual os portugueses nomearam os indígenas do Brasil; associado ao pau-brasil século XVI.</b>	
<b>Entrada lexical: Assis Brasil</b>	
<b>Estrutura morfológica: Topônimo específico composto subst + Subst.</b>	
<b>Histórico: O município Assis Brasil originou-se no seringal Paraguaçu, em 1958 foi denominada Vila de Assis Brasil, nomeação feita ao político e diplomata, Francisco de Assis Brasil.</b>	
<b>Informação enciclopédica: Assis Brasil também é conhecida como a cidade das três fronteiras, devido ao fato de estar situada na fronteira Brasil/Bolívia/Peru. Assis Brasil pertencia ao município de Brasília, sendo desmembrado em 14 de maio de 1976. Quem o nomeou foi o governador Valério Caldas Magalhães em homenagem a Assis Brasil devido a sua atuação política junto ao Barão do Rio Branco na ocasião de negociação com a Bolívia no que tange à compra da porção de terra a qual denominaram Acre.</b>	
<b>Fonte: Dicionário de nomes próprios de Iba Mendes (PDF); Dicionário Etimológico Nova Fronteira de Antônio Geraldo da Cunha; Plano Territorial de Desenvolvimento Rural Sustentável – PTDRS; Site do Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística – IBGE.</b>	
<b>Pesquisadora: Sandra Mara Souza de Oliveira Silva</b>	
<b>Revisor/ Orientador: Alexandre Melo de Sousa</b>	
<b>Data: 02 de julho de 2016.</b>	

Source: Research data.

Completing the form was the second step in the list of procedures that preceded data analysis itself. The procedure included the following steps:

- a) Surveying toponymic data through maps, spreadsheets, among others,
- b) Completing lexicographical-toponymic forms,
- c) Interpretating toponymic phrases through analysis of taxonomic classifications,
- d) Organizing toponymic data in tables, according to naming nature and type,
- e) Finding percentage distribution of taxonomic occurrences in the motivational survey,
- f) Showing linguistic strata in the names of geophysical and human landscapes,
- g) Discussing the lexical and semantic aspects of the names in the rural area of Assis Brasil.

Descriptions and analyses of the toponyms in the rural area of Assis Brasil are reported below to provide the toponymic profile of its human landscapes.

#### 4 Data analysis and discussion

The human landscapes in Assis Brazil under scrutiny are generally referred to by the names: *seringal* [rubber plantation, see footnote 1], *colônia* [colony], *fazenda* [farm], *ramal* [dirt road, see footnote 3], and *estrada* [road], in a total of 89 toponyms. Percentages are provided per taxonomy in Table 1.

Table 1 – Toponymic taxonomies of human landscapes in Assis Brasil

<b>Taxonomies</b>	<b>Numbers</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Anthropotoponym	21	23,59%
Hagiotoponym	11	12,40%
Zootoponym	09	10,12%
Animotoponym	06	06,74%
Numerotoponym	06	06,74%
Corotoponym	05	05,62%



Phytotoponym	04	04,49%
Cardinotoponym	04	04,49%
Ergotoponym	04	04,49%
Sociotoponym	03	03,38%
Astrotoponym	03	03,38%
Hydrotoponym	02	02,24%
Hodotoponym	02	02,24%
Chronotoponym	02	02,24%
Lithotoponym	02	02,24%
Fidetoponym	01	01,12%
Dirrematoponym	01	01,12%
Ecotoponym	01	01,12%
Igneotoponym	01	01,12%
Meteorotoponym	01	01,12%
<b>Total</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Silva (2017, p. 110).

The table shows the two most recurrent anthropo-cultural taxonomies. First, there are *anthropotoponyms*, which are “toponyms related to individual personal names. E.g.: Abel (in the State of Minas Gerais) [...]”<sup>11</sup> (DICK, 1990, p. 40). *Anthropotoponyms* in Assis Brasil include the very name of the municipality: as informed in the lexicographical-toponymic form, the name Assis Brasil was attributed to the municipality in honor of the homonymous diplomat who, together with Barão [Baron] do Rio Branco, acted in the negotiations with Bolivia that culminated in the Treaty of Petropolis.

The second most recurrent taxonomy was the one referring to “toponyms related to saints of the Roman hagiology. E.g.: São Paulo [Saint Paul] (in the homonymous state)

<sup>11</sup> In the original: “*topônimos relativos aos nomes próprios individuais. Ex: Abel (MG) [...]*”.

[...]”<sup>12</sup> (DICK, 1990, p. 40). Examples of *hagiotoponyms* referring to human landscapes in the rural area of Assis Brasil include: ‘Colônia São Francisco’[Saint Francis]; ‘Seringal São Pedro Porção’[Saint Peter Porção (a surname)]; ‘Ramal São Bento’[Saint Benedict]. Considering Ranzi’s (2008) discussion about life in the rubber plantations and considering that the toponyms reverberate the worldview of a group of people who lived or passed through certain places in the past, the high recurrence of *hagiotoponyms* in Assis Brasil unveil the faith of those human beings who faced several challenges in the middle of the Amazon rainforest. Ranzi (2008, p. 185-186) discusses the “psychological and emotional”<sup>13</sup> distress of both rubber tappers and rubber plantation owners: mostly from northeastern Brazil, they were affected with homesickness, loneliness, and particularly diseases; and they brought with them their Christian faith-based sociocultural experience, which says a lot about the state of mind of all the social actors who experienced the daily life in the rubber plantations.

*Hagiotoponyms* are included in the larger group called *hierotoponyms*, which refer to place names related to:

- sacred names from different faiths: Christian, Hebrew, Mohammedan, etc. E.g., ‘Cristo Rei’ [Christ King] (State of Paraná), ‘Alá’ [Allah] (lake in the State of Amazonas),
- religious events: e.g., Natividade [Nativity] (State of Goiás), Natal [Nativity] (State of Acre),
- religious associations: e.g., Cruz de Malta [Maltese Cross] (State of Santa Catarina),
- places of worship: e.g., Serra da Igreja [Mountain Range of the Church] (State of Paraná), Capela [Chapel] (State of Alagoas).

*Hagiotoponyms* are toponyms related to the saints of Roman Catholic Church hagiology – e.g., São Paulo [Saint Paul] (in the homonymous state), Santa Teresa [Saint Theresa] (State of Goiás). *Mitotoponyms* are toponyms related to mythological entities – e.g., Ribeirão do Saci [Saci’s Streamlet] (State of Espírito Santo), Lago do Curupira [Curupira’s (mythological creature of Brazilian folklore) Lake] (State of Amazonas).<sup>14</sup> (DICK, 1990, p. 66)

<sup>12</sup> In the original: “*topônimos relativos aos santos e santas do hagiológico romano. Ex: São Paulo (SP) [...]*”.

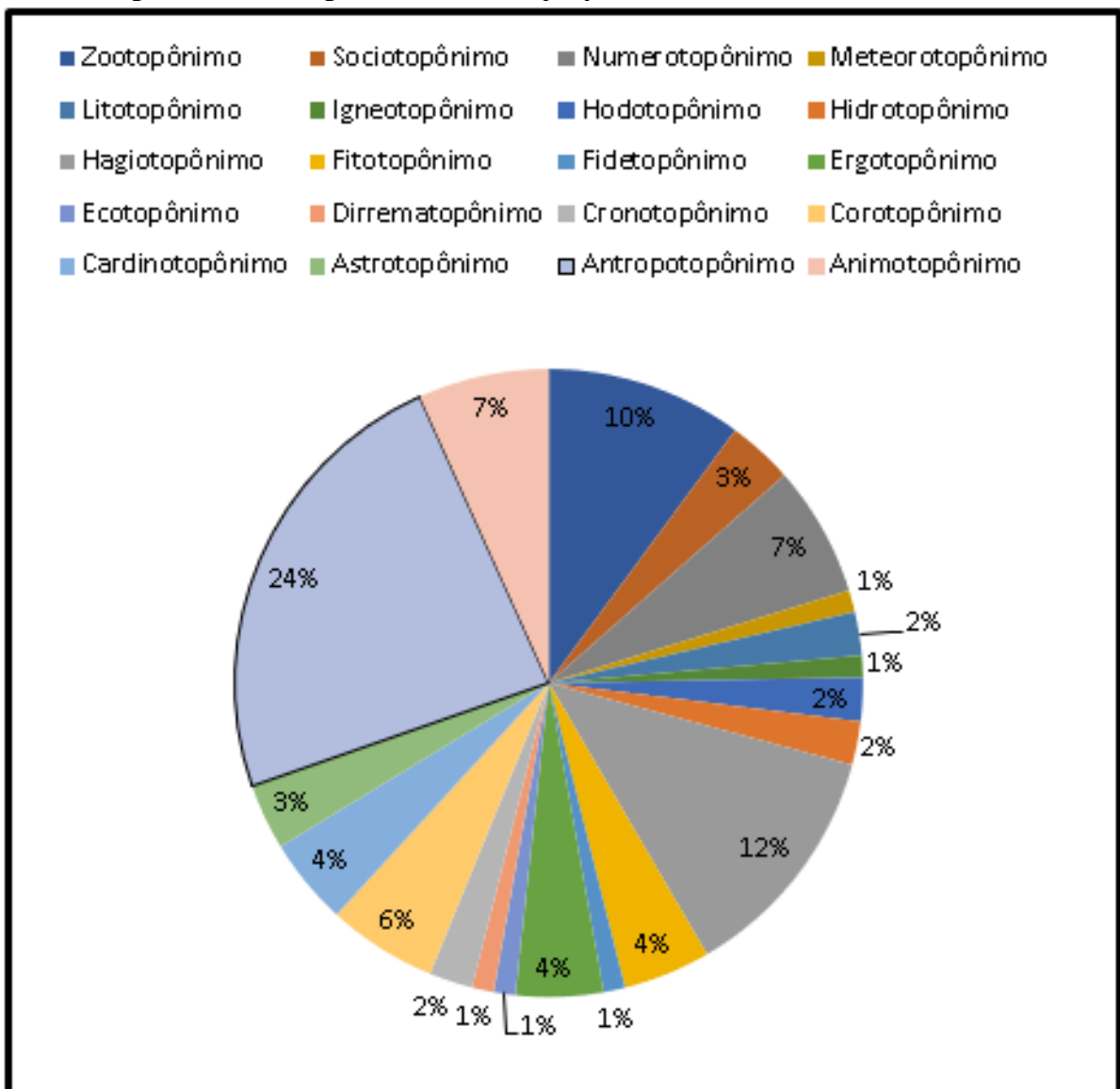
<sup>13</sup> In the original: “*psicológico-afetiva*”.

<sup>14</sup> In the original: “*topônimos relativos aos nomes sagrados de diferentes crenças: Cristã, Hebraica, Maometana, etc. Ex: Cristo Rei (PR), Alá (lago, AM); às efemeridades religiosas: natividade (GO), Natal (AC); às associações religiosas. Ex: Cruz da Malta (SC); aos locais de culto. Ex: serra da Igreja (PR), Capela (AL). hagiotopônimos– topônimos relativos aos santos e santas do hagiológico romano. Ex: São Paulo (SP), Santa Tereza (GO). b) mitotopônimos, topônimos relativos às entidades mitológicas. Ex: ribeirão do Saci (ES), lago do Curupira (AM).*”

Building on Ranzi's (2008) assumption that most emigrants who populated the rubber plantations were people from the State of Ceará, the occurrence of toponyms 'Ramal Iracema' [Iracema Dirt Road] and 'Colônia Iracema' [Iracema Colony] stands out. They are probably motivated by the literary character and/or work *Iracema* by José de Alencar, which has acquired the status of a myth of the Brazilian people's origin.

Figure 3 shows the data of Table 1 in percentages.

Figure 3 – Percentage distribution of toponymic taxonomies<sup>15</sup> of Assis Brazil



Source: Silva (2017, p. 111).

<sup>15</sup> Taxonomies: Zootoponym, Sociotoponym, Phytotoponym, Numerotoponym, Lithotoponym, Meteorotoponym, Igneotoponym, Hydrotoponym, Hodotoponym, Hagiotoponym, Fidetoponym, Ecotoponym, Ergotoponym, Dirrematoponym, Corotoponym, Chronotoponym, Cardinotoponym, Astrotoponym, Anthropotoponym, Animotoponym.

Out of the 20 taxonomies, 7 are of *geophysical nature* and 13 of *anthropo-cultural nature*, which indicates that the naming agents observe the environment and are motivated by aspects of nature, but their motivations are predominantly sociocultural. In other words, their motivations emerge from the knowledge produced by the human beings themselves who, as language users, act on the language and produce language, with the products of this articulation serving as a basis for producing more knowledge, more culture.

As the objective is to describe and analyze the lexical and semantic aspects of human toponyms in the rural area of Assis Brasil, Table 2 provides the taxonomies and the respective notions to which they allude. In other words, it shows some sociolinguistic and cultural resources of the dynamic process of meaning production in social, lexical, and discourse practices.

Table 2 – Lexicographical-toponymic taxonomies and human toponyms of Assis Brasil

<b>TAXONOMIES</b>	<b>EXAMPLES</b>
Zootoponyms: Animal-related toponyms, represented by domestic animals.	Ramal Cutia [Agoutia]
Lithotoponyms: mineral toponyms (also related to soil constitution).	Ramal da Pedreira [Quarry]
Ecotoponyms: toponyms related to housing in general.	Ramal Arraial dos Burros [Donkeys' Small Village]
Cardinotoponyms: toponyms related to geographic positions in general.	Colônia Centro [Center]
Sociotoponyms: toponyms related to professional activities, workplaces, and meeting points for community members (plaza, patio, square).	Porto Acre [Riverport of Acre]
Ignetoponyms: toponyms related to the idea of fire.	Colônia Queimada [Burned]
Phytotoponyms: toponyms related to plants, spontaneous in their individuality, in a group of the same species or of different species, in addition to individual non-spontaneous formations.	Ramal da Palha [of the Straw]
Dirrematoponyms: toponyms consisting of phrases or linguistic utterances.	Colônia Vai-quem-quer [Those-Who-Want-Go]
Astrotoponyms: toponyms related to celestial bodies in general.	Ramal Sol [Sun]
Fidetoponyms: toponyms related to faith in different beliefs.	Colônia Fé em Deus [Faith in God]

Chronotoponyms: toponyms containing chronological indicators represented by the adjectives ‘novo/a’ [new], ‘velho/a’ [old].	Colônia Nova União [New Unity]
Anthropotoponyms: toponyms related to individual personal names.	Ramal José Vilheno [José Vilheno: personal name]
Meteorotoponyms: toponyms related to atmospheric phenomena.	Seringal Primavera [Spring]
Hydrotoponyms: toponyms related to water formations in general.	Estrada Ecológica Rio Acre [Acre River]
Ergotoponyms: toponyms related to elements of material culture.	Ramal Cusco Pote [Cusco Pot]
Corotoponyms: toponyms related to the names of cities, countries, states, regions, and continents.	Fazenda Petrópolis [Petrópolis: city]
Animotoponyms: toponyms related to psychic life, spiritual culture, encompassing all products of the human psyche, whose fundamental raw material and, in its most important aspect as a cultural fact, does not belong to physical culture.	Ramal Livramento [Redemption]

Source: the author.

Figure 3 and Table 2 together show how the lexicon is a linguistic dimension that provides resources for language users to produce ideas indefinitely and how this articulation of ideas with the lexicon is immanently linked to the social, to the cultural, political, economic aspects. The predominance of *hagiotoponyms* shows how the linguistic system provides a resource for us to produce multiple meanings following structural patterns. The compositional matrix of names of Catholic saints inherited from the Portuguese continue to be used, but the meanings produced by these names are specific – for instance, in ‘Ramal São Pedro Porção’ [Saint Peter Porção (surname)] meaning is specific to the culture of the people that named the place. According to Cunha (1987, p. 623), *Portion* is a term derived from Latin and means part of something, fragment, piece of broken thing.

The differences found in the distribution of taxonomies show the complexity involved in lexical productivity, as it reflects the various perspectives that the language user observes, feels and experiences mentally to process information from the external world and converge them with their internal world.

### Final remarks

Toponymy, as pointed out by Dick (1990, 1992, 1997), is an inexhaustible source of knowledge that intertwines knowledge of history, anthropology, and geography. It is,

therefore, “a true linguistic fossil”<sup>16</sup> (DICK, 1990, p. 42) of the named place. In the case of the human toponyms in the rural area of Assis Brasil, both historical and geographical data proved to be relevant for lexicographical-toponymic classification. An example of the historical-geographic interface in this study is the name of the municipality of Assis Brasil, which was motivated by the desire to honor the Diplomat Francisco de Assis Brasil who stood out in the History of Acre for his performance in the partnership with Barão do Rio Branco in signing the Treaty of Petrópolis that guaranteed the annexation of Acre to Brazil.

The present description and analysis of the rural human toponyms of Assis Brasil and their respective motivational linguistic aspects reflect the Amazonian environment. When it comes to animals, there is, for instance, ‘Seringal Paraguaçu’, in which ‘Paraguaçu’, according to the Dicio-dictionary, is a variation of ‘parauaçu’(from Tupi,*parauasú*), which designates an Amazon-native species of Saki monkey.

There are also toponyms that possibly allude to the psychological and emotional distress of social actors who experienced the rubber plantation. This includes feelings of homesickness and hope in toponyms such as: ‘Colônia Nova Esperança’ [New Hope], ‘Colônia Esperança’ [Hope], and Ramal Bom Futuro [‘Good Future’].

Drawing on Dick’s (1992 p. 293) assumption that “the name of a place plays the role of a true chronicle, one in which current facts are projected into the future through their onomastic inscription [...]”<sup>17</sup>, it follows that the name of a place is an inexhaustible source of research. In fact, toponyms are like ‘linguistic fossils’ that bring to the present time knowledge forged in the past; they also function as chronicles that record the “current facts and project them into the future, enabling their later analysis”<sup>18</sup> (DICK, 1992 p. 293). The results add to project *Toponymic Atlas of Western Brazilian Amazon* (*Atlas Toponímico da Amazônia Ocidental Brasileira – ATA OB Project*). Currently, the ATA OB Project has analyzed 70% of data in the State of Acre, both the toponyms of the oral language (Portuguese Language and Indigenous Languages), and the toponyms in Libras (Brazilian Sign Language), as pointed out by Sousa e Quadros (2021). This Project is still ongoing and is expected to be completed in 2025.

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<sup>16</sup> In original: “*um verdadeiro fóssil linguístico*”.

<sup>17</sup> In the original: “*o nome de lugar exerce o papel de uma verdadeira crônica, em que os fatos atuais se projetam no futuro através de sua inscrição onomástica [...]*”.

<sup>18</sup> In the original: “*fatos atuais e os projetam no futuro, possibilitando, sua análise posterior*”.

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## **TOPONÍMIA HUMANA RURAL DE ASSIS BRASIL/AC: ANÁLISE DOS ASPECTOS SEMÂNTICO-MOTIVACIONAIS**

### **RESUMO**

Este artigo analisa os topônimos rurais do município de Assis Brasil (AC), com foco em seus aspectos semântico-motivacionais. Baseia-se na metodologia proposta por Dick (1990, 1992) e

nos estudos iniciais dos topônimos do Estado realizados por Sousa (2007). Objetivamos no presente artigo apresentar a descrição e análise da toponímia rural do município de Assis Brasil, Acre, quanto aos aspectos semântico-motivacionais. Os dados foram selecionados a partir de planilhas de assentamentos rurais. Os dados foram registrados em fichas lexicográficas-toponímicas adaptadas de Dick (2004). Os resultados mostraram: Antropotopônimos (23,59%) relacionados a pessoas que se destacaram de alguma forma no contexto social, histórico e cultural; os Hagiopônimos (12,4%), relacionados aos santos do discurso católico; e os Zootopônimos (10,12%), que fazem referência à fauna da região.

**Palavras-chave:** Topônimo, Paisagens humanas, Região do Alto Acre, Município de Assis Brasil.

Recebido em 24/07/2022.

Aprovado em 04/10/2022.