

Dear reader:

One often sees Portuguese personal names, such as those of the Portuguese explorers "Tristão da Cunha" and "António de Andrade", written in English texts as "da Cunha, Tristão" and "de Andrade, António".

Such usage *distorts Portuguese names*. A Portuguese is likely to hear his(er) name pronounced in that way with an eyebrow frowning and even with a feeling of being insulted (that they are mocking of his(er) name).

The preposition "de" (or its contraction with the articles "a", "o", "as", "os" producing "da", "do", "das", "dos") *cannot* be used in Portuguese to start a name. You can somehow get the feeling of it by supposing someone named "John Bramble" being addressed as "Hi, Mr. of the Bramble!" or seeing his name written as "of the Bramble, John".

Probably the mentioned English usage has to do with the German "von" and the Dutch "van". Contrary to Portuguese usage, "Hi, Mr. von Bismarck!" or "Hi, Mr. van Weel!" sound perfectly well to German and Dutch ears.

Sometimes Portuguese names suffer other ill-treatments, such as undue contractions (e.g., "Dacunha" instead of "da Cunha") or usage of Spanish spellings (e.g., "António del Andrada" instead of "António de Andrade" or "Tristan da Cunha" instead of "Tristão da Cunha"). Non-Portuguese speakers tend to think of Portuguese as a Spanish dialect which is false. Roughly speaking Portuguese is linguistically as far from Spanish as Dutch is from German.

Dear reader:

When writing down Portuguese names please be attentive. In doubt take a quick look, e.g. to the Wikipedia (Portuguese version recommended). If you have to make a list of Portuguese names sorted by surnames simply drop the "de", "da", etc.: "Cunha, Tristão", "Andrade, António". When you see a text such as "Del Andrada continued his journey..." correct it to "Andrade continued his journey...".