

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## PREFACE

The entrenchment of Eastern and Western civilizations has inculcated in African peoples a form of generalized mistrust of their own endogenous values. This anchoring has had a fatal weapon: holy war. Yes, Jihad is not limited to Islam. The other imported religions, including, of course, Christianity and, to a lesser extent, Judaism, also waged a war of expansion, more insidious and latent certainly, but just as pernicious as that of the spear and the club, for it had an equally devastating impact: the monopolization of the spirit under the cover of the Word of God, a Word of God presented as pacifist, but which in the long run raided most of the socio-cultural tropisms of the black peoples.

Without entering into the fundamental debate on the original ethical value of religions, a debate reputed to have no outcome and which

generates unnecessary tensions, I will limit myself here to recalling one fact: the African, under the influence of the Judeo-Christian and Mohammedan civilizations, is today in a generalized denial. His food, his dress codes, his languages, his arts and all his identity determinants have become archaic, savage, even shameful for him.

But let us be reassured: this is only the manifestation of a collective hypocrisy, because in reality, the African loves his culture. He just doesn't have enough audacity or honesty to wear it with pride. He will look around him at the restaurant before ordering man tindjan and will prefer Beaufort to palm wine. However, as soon as he finds himself at home away from the extroverted looks of the man-white, he becomes himself again, because he doesn't really like chicken fries. And when he is asked why this addiction to ultramarine, he

will say with a slightly shameful smile: "Hum, how are we going to do it"?

The names he gives his children are not immune to this phenomenon of self-displacement. At the birth of his child, the African, while obviously choco-biting, will use Yann, Maelle, Ovidio, Larissa and other Moctar or Habib with Sèdjro, Gbènoukpo, Yémadjro, Sègla, Ablawa or Yèyimin or Roukiath as middle names. However, these African names, presented as secondary, he gave them with full knowledge of the facts, because he is aware that they correspond either to a day of the week, or to a fetal suffering, or to the reminder of a historical fact, or to a requirement of the Fa, that they are stuck to a precise context, and that they tell a story that the tradition most often connects to the personality of the child. He knows that he is at the bottom of a compulsive assimilation against a background of cowardice, but he defends himself with light

arguments such as freedom and other clichés of globalization.

Fortunately, among the Africans that we are, black skins and white masks as Frantz Fanon would say, there are increasingly dissonant and audacious voices, which are rushing into the perilous workings of promoting values that have risen from the depths of the ages. Among these voices, we can already mention that of Gnonnantin Noutais, who chose to explore the gigantic area of first names. Of course, drafts already existed on the Internet, with more or less questionable sources. My African first name, an intimate and claiming title, is like a real cobblestone in the immense ocean of onomastics. The author makes an inventory of hundreds of first names of African origin by matching their meaning in their original language, which sounds like a big kick in the anthill of acculturations.

By thus formalizing a lexical approach not yet - to my knowledge - carried to the book stage in Benin, Gnonnantin Noutais is positioning himself as a pioneer of a form of appeal to renewal by emphasizing the most elementary and most important identity attribute: the designator.

I like to put the author on her guard: as long as young Beninese, virulent against France in their Facebook posts, are still the first to dream of being photographed in front of the Eiffel Tower, we will be far from the end of this collective neurosis of black people in the sense of Fanon, and a book on the valorization of African names may remain stuck in the internal contradictions of the people it is supposed to illuminate. On the other hand, if the political will, which starts with the family and then the school before reaching, like a malignant metastasis, the whole social fabric, uses it as the active peg of a concerted and patient

process of psychological transformation, it is to be hoped that one day, the decolonization of the spirits can be put in phase with a systematic recourse to African first names, this in order to try to launch the small children on the paths of authenticity, freed that they will be secular dogmatic imprisonments, and therefore, of this methodical misunderstanding of their culture, therefore of their soul.

**Habib Dakpogan**

## FOREWORD

The story of this book is based on a commonplace fact. An idea for a blog where I proposed to share the explanation of African first names. While waiting to finalize this blog, I published some information about the subject on Facebook. It was then that a friend, having contacted me in inbox, told me that I was wasting my data in this way, and that it would be more concise and professional to do more research

in order to release a book. I found the idea interesting and set myself on this vast project which required patient and diligent work of cross-checking and synthesis. However, it must be said that the void is so wide open and the demand so strong that I first started selling e-books, in parallel with the continuation of the writing of this book.

My approach is therefore primarily factual and historical: to put content into an idea that is beginning to take up more and more space. It can then be considered as aesthetic, because it aims to make available to the public all this poetry, this musicality that makes the beauty of African first names.

## **Gnonnantin Noutais**



## Part 1: Fon Ethnic Names



<b>First names</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
<b>Adantchédé</b>	Neutral	First name which means that he who wears it will continually rely on God.
<b>Afi</b>	Female	First name given to a girl born on Friday
<b>Agbalè</b>	Female	First name given to the eldest daughter of a follower of vodoun sakpata
<b>Agbégbédo</b>	Neutral	first name which means that the person who wears it represents the leaf whose root cannot be found. It is a way of wishing that the person who wears it is unfathomable.
<b>Agohoué</b>	Male	First name given to boys who are born with the umbilical cord around their necks.
<b>Agossa</b>	Female	First name given to the girls who are born with the umbilical cord around their neck.
<b>Agossi</b>	Female	First name given to the twin that is born from the seat
<b>Agossou</b>	Male	First name given to the twin who is born by the seat
<b>Aidoté</b>	Neutral	First name given to the children to beg heaven that they have a sharp mind.

<b>Ainan</b>	Neutral	First name that symbolizes a reflection on the benefits, the goods that come from intelligence.
<b>Akobodé</b>	Neutral	First name that means the enemy will not have victories over you
<b>Akouègninou</b>	Neutral	First name that reminds the importance of money
<b>Akouèmaho</b>	Neutral	First name which means that money does not buy mankind or human beings.
<b>Akuènon</b>	Neutral	First name which literally means "rich man, rich woman".
<b>Amadji</b>	Female	First name given to the second child in a family
<b>Amaouh</b>	Neutral	First name which means "nature takes care of giving food to her children", it is better explained by the expression fon "nou dé wanvou nan dou ô, amanhou wê édé" which means "what the earthworm will eat is on the tree".
<b>Assiba</b>	Female	First name given to girls born on Sunday
<b>Assogba</b>	Male	First name given to the eldest child of a vodoun sakpata practitioner
<b>Atignon</b>	Neutral	First name that literally

means "the tree has virtues".

<b>Awia ndji</b>	Male	First name which means the one who wears it is based on the solidity of a rock.
<b>Ayaba</b>	Female	First name given to girls born on Wednesdays
<b>Bidos sessi</b>	Neutral	First name which means "under divine protection".
<b>Bignon</b>	Neutral	First name that means everything is good, God knows how to do things.
<b>Cica</b>	Female	First name which means "gold". Gives itself to the girls to express that it has a great value for oneself.
<b>Dado</b>	Female	First name given to the girl who comes just after the twins
<b>Dagbé non</b>	Neutral	First name that literally means "that does good".
<b>Dagbé ton</b>	Neutral	First name which literally means "the one who comes from the good".
<b>Dagbé wa</b>	Neutral	First name that means "happiness is here!"
<b>Dansi</b>	Female	First name of a girl whose father loves the fetish "Dan".
<b>Dansou</b>	Male	First name of a boy whose father loves the fetish "Dan", which means "snake".
<b>Danton</b>	Neutral	First name which literally means "which comes from "Dan"".

<b>Dégnon</b>	Neutral	First name which literally means "who is better among all".
<b>Dènamì</b>	Neutral	First name which means answer of the prayer
<b>Dètchédè</b>	Male	First name that means my father's blessings
<b>Djivèdé</b>	Male	First name which means "Hard to trust someone".
<b>Dohoué</b>	Male	First name which means child who was born after the twins (boy), in 2nd position
<b>Dossi</b>	Female	First name given to girls who were born after the twins
<b>Dossou</b>	Male	It is given to the boy who comes just after the twins.
<b>Enangnon</b>	Neutral	First name that means my future will be better
<b>Facamin</b>	Neutral	First name given to a child born just after the ceremony of Fâ
<b>Fènoun</b>	Neutral	First name which means "Treasure".
<b>Fifa</b>	Neutral	First name which means "peace".
<b>Fifamè</b>	Female	first name which means in peace, it is given when the child is born at the moment a particular event brings peace and happiness in the family
<b>Fifonsi</b>	Female	First name which means that it is by getting up

early that we succeed in  
doing something.

<b>Finagnon</b>	Neutral	the one who will find salvation, success, happiness
<b>Flimi</b>	Neutral	First name (in more detail "Sè flimi") which means "Fate has remembered me by giving me this child".
<b>Gbèdohoui</b>	Male	First name that has a philosophical meaning, which means that life has rules.
<b>Gbégningbèna</b>	Neutral	First name that literally means "Life has blessed him".
<b>Gbèho</b>	Neutral	First name which is a continuous invocation of the Lord, the creator of the world.
<b>Gbènagnon</b>	Neutral	First name that literally means "Life will be beautiful".
<b>Gbènassou</b>	Neutral	First name that literally means "Life will take care of everything in order".
<b>Gbènato</b>	Neutral	First name that literally means "Life will take care of everything in order".
<b>Gbètoho</b>	Neutral	First name that implies "man is complicated".
<b>Gbètondji</b>	Neutral	First name given to a child whose parents have long sought to have children
<b>Gbodja</b>	Male	First name given to



fraternal twins

<b>Gnidé</b>	Neutral	First name given to a child so that he may have prosperity in all that he undertakes.
<b>Hinnouho</b>	Neutral	First name which means that the dirty linen is washed in family
<b>Houanilo</b>	Male	First name given to a child to become an example, to leave an inheritance to the descendants.
<b>Houénafa</b>	Female	First name which means peace will reign in this family
<b>Houétègbé</b>	Neutral	First name which means that no family is perfect, is not spared from the vice
<b>Houévomè</b>	Neutral	It is given to a child born after the death of its father or whose mother died in childbirth; It means "Coming to an empty house".
<b>Houidédji</b>	Neutral	First name which means that the child's destiny is traced
<b>Houmin</b>	Male	First name Male given to a child who was born with the placenta
<b>Hounnou</b>	Male	First name given to the eldest child of an ATINMINVODOUN vodoun practitioner
<b>Hounsi</b>	Female	First name given to the eldest child of an

ATINMINVODOUN  
vodoun practitioner

<b>Jahou</b>	Neutral	First name which means "miracle".
<b>Kougblanou</b>	Neutral	First name which means "death has ruined things". It can be given to a child whose mother died at birth or who was born just after the death of a family member.
<b>Kougblénou</b>	Neutral	First name which means "death has ruined things". It can be given to a child whose mother died at birth or who was born just after the death of a family member.
<b>Kounou</b>	Neutral	First name which means "which comes from death". It can be given to a child whose mother died at birth or who was born just after the death of a family member.
<b>Koupaki</b>	Male	First name (in more detail "KU KPAKIN") which means death overcame fate or destiny
<b>Kpèmahouton</b>	Neutral	First name that literally means "the grace of God".
<b>Létchéssou</b>	Male	First name that means "My Profit is Great! Usually given to the first boy in the family to magnify the Eternal for the immense happiness that comes with the

arrival of a newborn  
baby in the family".

<b>Mahoudo</b>	Neutral	First name that means "God has spoken".
<b>Mahougnon</b>	Neutral	First name which means God is good
<b>Mahoussi</b>	Neutral	First name that literally means "the wife of the Lord".
<b>Mahouton</b>	Neutral	First name that literally means
<b>Mahouwènan</b>	Neutral	First name given to the twin who is born by the seat
<b>Mahugbé</b>	Neutral	First name given to the children to beg heaven that they have a sharp mind.
<b>Mahugnon</b>	Neutral	First name that symbolizes a reflection on the benefits, the goods that come from intelligence.
<b>Mahunan</b>	Neutral	First name that means the enemy will not have victories over you
<b>Mahutondji</b>	Neutral	First name that reminds the importance of money
<b>Mahuvi</b>	Neutral	First name which means that money does not buy mankind or human beings.
<b>Mankpon</b>	Neutral	First name which literally means "rich man, rich woman".
<b>Manzéguékpon</b>	Male	First name given to the second child in a family
<b>Médagbé</b>	Neutral	First name which means

"nature takes care of giving food to her children", it is better explained by the expression fon "nou dé wanvou nan dou ô, amanhou wê édéd" which means "what the earthworm will eat is on the tree".

<b>Mèdégnissè</b>	Neutral	First name given to girls born on Sunday
<b>Mèdéton</b>	Neutral	First name given to the eldest child of a vodoun sakpata practitioner
<b>Mègnon</b>	Neutral	First name that literally means "the tree has virtues".
<b>Mèhomin</b>	Neutral	First name which means the one who wears it is based on the solidity of a rock.
<b>Mèmindé</b>	Neutral	First name given to girls born on Wednesdays
<b>Mètokan</b>	Neutral	First name which means "under divine protection".
<b>Mèvognon</b>	Neutral	First name that means everything is good, God knows how to do things.
<b>Monnondé</b>	Neutral	First name which means "gold". Gives itself to the girls to express that it has a great value for oneself.
<b>Nonviyon</b>	Neutral	First name given to the girl who comes just after the twins
<b>Noudéhouénou</b>	Neutral	First name that literally means "that does good".
<b>Noukpo</b>	Neutral	First name which literally means "the one who comes from the good".
<b>Noukpongni</b>	Neutral	First name that means "happiness is here!"
<b>Sagbo</b>	Male	First name of a girl whose father loves the



fetish "Dan".

<b>Sèbio</b>	Neutral	First name of a boy whose father loves the fetish "Dan", which means "snake".
<b>Sèdami</b>	Female	First name which literally means "which comes from "Dan"".
<b>Sèdécon</b>	Neutral	First name which literally means "who is better among all".
<b>Sèdjro</b>	Male	First name which means answer of the prayer
<b>Sèdoli</b>	Neutral	First name that means my father's blessings
<b>Sègbégnon</b>	Neutral	First name which means "Hard to trust someone".
<b>Sègnimétché</b>	Neutral	First name which means child who was born after the twins (boy), in 2nd position
<b>Sèlomè</b>	Neutral	First name given to girls who were born after the twins
<b>Sèmadégbé</b>	Neutral	It is given to the boy who comes just after the twins.
<b>Sèméton</b>	Neutral	First name that means my future will be better
<b>Sèmèvo</b>	Female	First name given to a child born just after the ceremony of Fâ
<b>Sèminvo</b>	Neutral	First name which means "Treasure".
<b>Sèna</b>	Female	First name which means "peace".

<b>Sènahin</b>	Neutral	first name which means in peace, it is given when the child is born at the moment a particular event brings peace and happiness in the family
<b>Sènamì</b>	Neutral	First name which means that it is by getting up early that we succeed in doing something.
<b>Sènan</b>	Female	the one who will find salvation, success, happiness
<b>Sènou</b>	Neutral	First name (in more detail "Sè flimi") which means "Fate has remembered me by giving me this child".
<b>Sessi</b>	Female	First name that has a philosophical meaning, which means that life has rules.
<b>Sessinou</b>	Male	First name that literally means "Life has blessed him".
<b>Sètchèmè</b>	Neutral	First name which is a continuous invocation of the Lord, the creator of the world.
<b>Sètchèmin</b>	Neutral	First name that literally means "Life will be beautiful".
<b>Sèton</b>	Neutral	First name that literally means "Life will take care of everything in order".
<b>Sétondji</b>	Male	First name that literally

means "Life will take care of everything in order".

<b>Sèwa</b>	Female	First name that implies "man is complicated".
<b>Sèwanou</b>	Male	First name given to a child whose parents have long sought to have children
<b>Sèyidè</b>	Female	First name given to fraternal twins
<b>Sinmadokinto</b>	Male	First name given to a child so that he may have prosperity in all that he undertakes.
<b>Sokè</b>	Neutral	First name which means that the dirty linen is washed in family
<b>Sonangnon</b>	Male	First name given to a child to become an example, to leave an inheritance to the descendants.
<b>Sonou</b>	Male	First name which means peace will reign in this family
<b>Sossa</b>	Male	First name which means that no family is perfect, is not spared from the vice
<b>Sossi</b>	Female	It is given to a child born after the death of its father or whose mother died in childbirth; It means "Coming to an empty house".
<b>Sossou</b>	Male	First name which means that the child's destiny is traced
<b>Sourou</b>	Male	First name Male given to

a child who was born  
with the placenta

<b>Tadagbénon</b>	Neutral	First name given to the eldest child of an ATINMINVODOUN vodoun practitioner
<b>Tchédji</b>	Neutral	First name given to the eldest child of an ATINMINVODOUN vodoun practitioner
<b>Tété</b>	Female	First name which means "miracle".
<b>Todjinnangni</b>	Neutral	First name which means "death has ruined things". It can be given to a child whose mother died at birth or who was born just after the death of a family member.
<b>Todomè</b>	Male	First name which means "death has ruined things". It can be given to a child whose mother died at birth or who was born just after the death of a family member.
<b>Toflimi</b>	Male	First name which means "which comes from death". It can be given to a child whose mother died at birth or who was born just after the death of a family member.
<b>Togbédji</b>	Male	First name (in more detail "KU KPAKIN") which means death overcame fate or destiny
<b>Togla</b>	Neutral	First name that literally means "the grace of

God".



<b>Tognissè</b>	Male	First name that means "My Profit is Great! Usually given to the first boy in the family to magnify the Eternal for the immense happiness that comes with the arrival of a newborn baby in the family".
<b>Tohouanou</b>	Male	First name that means "God has spoken".
<b>Tohouégnon</b>	Male	First name which means God is good
<b>Tonakpon</b>	Neutral	First name that literally means "the wife of the Lord".
<b>Vigbè</b>	Neutral	First name that literally means
<b>Vigninou</b>	Neutral	First name given to the twin who is born by the seat
<b>Vignon</b>	Neutral	First name given to the children to beg heaven that they have a sharp mind.
<b>Vihoutou</b>	Male	First name that symbolizes a reflection on the benefits, the goods that come from intelligence.
<b>Vikpon</b>	Male	First name that means the enemy will not have victories over you
<b>Vinagnon</b>	Neutral	First name that reminds the importance of money

<b>Vivèna</b>	Male	First name which means that money does not buy mankind or human beings.
<b>Yavo</b>	Neutral	First name which literally means "rich man, rich woman".
<b>Yélian</b>	Male	First name given to the second child in a family
<b>Yélognissè</b>	Male	First name which means "nature takes care of giving food to her children", it is better explained by the expression fon "nou dé wanvou nan dou ô, amanhou wê édé" which means "what the earthworm will eat is on the tree".
<b>Zinsou</b>	Male	First name given to girls born on Sunday
<b>Zountchégnon</b>	Male	First name given to the eldest child of a vodoun sakpata practitioner

## Part 2: Gun Ethnic First names

