

# Introduction

The first volume of the *Proceedings of the 27th International Congress of Onomastic Sciences* centres around toponomastics. The volume begins with two keynote lectures. In the first one, **Sheila Embleton** describes names in India – toponyms and anthroponyms – from a historical point of view, which has a bearing on the subcontinent’s present onomastic situation. She pays particular attention to post-colonial changes of the names of cities, states and streets. She also outlines the principles of personal naming in India: while given names are often indicative of their bearers’ religion or ethnicity, many surnames are linked to caste or occupation, though some may mark the town or region of origin; there are also instances of mononyms or vestiges of the patronymic system.

The second keynote lecture, by **Peter Jordan**, analyses in depth the much-debated concept of the exonym/endonym divide as relevant for the study

of toponymy in a supranational perspective. Either shunned as nationalist, or admitted as cultural heritage, exonyms are politically entangled. A more nuanced analysis reveals the possible perception of the exonym/endonym relation as a dichotomy or as a continuum that spans intermediate stages. The intricate interplay of spelling and pronunciation is also discussed, including the idea of transformations that are linguistically unavoidable. Finally, definitions of exonyms and endonyms are invoked.

The main body of the volume following the keynote talks features 31 contributions by 42 scholars. The language of most of the texts is English, though there are also two papers in German, and another two in Russian. The topics covered are multifarious and range from purely theoretical issues to narrowly focused case studies. The place names studied represent a vast variety of types, including countries, districts, counties or municipalities, cities, towns, villages and other settlements, as well as urbanonyms, but also hydronyms, nesonyms, farm and plantation names, or diverse anoikonoms. Some toponyms are examined synchronically, whereas others are viewed in a diachronic perspective; the status of particular place names varies too: from those that have existed since time immemorial, such as river names, to those established relatively recently in human history, as exemplified by the names of bus stops. Many contributions have been prepared using time-honoured methods of data collection, such as fieldwork, but digital onomastics has clearly gained a permanent foothold as well, as evidenced by a substantial body of research in this area.

True to the inherently interdisciplinary character of onomastics, and in line with the underlying motif of the congress, which underscores the interaction of the study of proper names with other branches of science, researchers explore the interface of onomastics and an extensive array of disciplines, including though not limited to: cognitive studies, dialectology, phonetics and phonology, sociolinguistics, historical linguistics, anthropology, history, geography, postcolonial studies, administration and policy studies, and even geology.

The articles are arranged alphabetically by the authors' last names. In the first one, **Wolfgang Ahrens** and **Sheila Embleton** discuss the broadly understood onymic heritage related to Baltic German navigators and explorers in the service of the Russian Empire in the 19th century. Their personal names, mostly surnames, gave rise to many names of islands and of other geographic features along the Alaskan and Siberian coast, as well as in the Pacific, including even South America's Pacific Rim. The authors also mention

names of ships, plants, and animal species that to this day commemorate German Baltic explorers, as well as the features named by them.

**Barbara Bába** shows in her paper how the toponymic data included in the charters from the early Old Hungarian Era (895–1350) may be useful in establishing the relative chronology of sound changes operative at the time, which may thus aid research in Hungarian historical dialectology. At the same time, she warns against uncritical trust in onomastic material, especially in the case of non-attested, inferred etymons.

The contribution by **Harald Bichlmeier** is polemical in character. Taking as his point of departure the 2016 work by J. Andraschke, who considers over 40 toponyms from the area in the west of Upper Frankonia and the east of Lower Frankonia to be of Germanic rather than (as has so far been generally believed) Slavic origin, he compellingly argues for the actual Slavicity of Andraschke's corpus. To support his thesis, he invokes the phonological and phonetic phenomena well attested in the history of Slavic languages.

The focus of **Žaneta Dvořáková's** paper is anoikonyms (names of fields, meadows, forests, waters, roads, etc.) with the element *Žid* 'Jew' in Bohemia. They might be reminiscent of the places where Jews once lived, attest to Jewish land ownership, or document tragic events; metaphors or even nicknames might also lie at the root of some onyms. Through this etymon they preserve in the Czech toponymy the traces of the presence of Jews in the area. The author bases her analysis on the data collected in the years 1963–1980.

**Åke Engsheden** in his contribution considers toponyms of Coptic origin found in papyrological sources, referring to places located mainly in Egypt. Collected in a database, the names are classified in the form of a list, which may later be developed into a dictionary. Contrary to the traditional dictionary practice that sorts entries by consonants only, the author proposes alphabetical ordering. To avoid inaccuracies, he also advocates consulting the edited texts alongside the indices.

The two case studies presented by **Sofia Evemalm-Graham** are concerned with the place names in the Outer Hebrides (Tobha Mòr/Howmore in South Uist and Uineabhal in North Uist) that reference Norse women. As shown in her research, the analysed toponyms may show how Gaelic-speakers understood the Norse past, and generally provide an insight into the mentality of the community that created them.

Onomastics as a discipline can benefit considerably from the use of new technologies. A case in point is geolocation-oriented digital onomastics, the

topic explored by **Peder Gammeltoft**, who is trying to reconcile the multi-referentiality typical of toponyms with the inherent feature-orientedness of geolocation. In their contribution, **Daniel Orongo Nyangweso** and **Mátyás Gede** evaluate the experience of web gazetteer users, discussing the application of geographical ontology in a study of toponyms.

**Botolv Helleland** outlines the twists and turns of the 2017 and 2022 municipal reforms in Norway. They resulted in the creation of new, often contested names of counties and municipalities, to the detriment of some traditional ones considered part of the national cultural heritage, and possibly in violating the Norwegian Act on placenames of 1990. The actors of the dispute were, among others, the Norwegian Language Council, local politicians, and the tourism business.

**Carole Hough** makes a case for a reappraisal of the role of metonymy in place names. Starting with the traditional division of English toponyms into habitative, topographical, and folk-names, she proposes to treat the first of the three categories as an example of PART FOR WHOLE, the pattern that she finds to underlie more toponymic phenomena than earlier assumed, and the second as PART FOR PART metonymy. Such an approach considerably broadens the scope of place naming attributable to metonymy, traditionally linked only to the category of folk-names (i.e. referring to the inhabitants of a settlement), and characterised by metonymic transfer.

Historical and political changes in the linguistic landscape of Banská Bystrica, Slovakia, are the topic of the contribution by **Petra Jesenská** and **Jaromír Krško**, who explore the city's urbanonymy against the backdrop of the changing language situation: from the dominance of German and Hungarian in the Austro-Hungarian Empire until 1918, via the inter-war period with Slovakian and Czech, to the constantly rising role of Slovakian since World War II.

The paper by **Frances Kane**, **Justin Ó Gliasáin**, and **Úna Bhreathnach** takes stock of the history and present state of Ireland's place-name research, which since 1921 has been developing in parallel in the north and south of the island. Though the methodology appears similar, and collaboration proves fruitful, both the legal position of Irish and the recent history of Irish-language place names differ on both sides of the border; this in turn has consequences for the respective research aims, funding and outcomes.

**Róbert Kenyhercz** introduces the reader to the county of Spiš at the northernmost edge of the medieval Kingdom of Hungary. His purpose is

an overview of its place-name system on the basis of a large dataset of settlement names, collected using both original documents and transcribed or copied charters. Spiš was a multicultural and multilingual area, with its toponyms influenced by Hungarian, Slovak, German, and Polish; all these languages contributed to particular place-name types, though in different proportions.

Based on self-collected field-research data, **Katarzyna Konczewska's** Russian-language paper is concerned with the toponyms of the Grodno region in contemporary Belarus, which is a typical border area, characterised by a complex sociolinguistic situation. The author employs an interdisciplinary approach, using dialectological material and attempting a classification of the collected names according to their motivation.

**Brittnee Leysen**, referring to the place names of Aotearoa New Zealand's Otago region, looks to classics of anthropological literature for a fresh postcolonial perspective that might help shed a new light on the study of toponyms.

**Junkai Li** and **Yiyang Ouyang** investigate the various ways in which the name of the Chinese city of Guangzhou, known in many European languages as Canton, has been romanized in the course of history, and identify the complex language ideologies underpinning the choices made in the transliteration of this toponym. They compellingly demonstrate how the decision to base the romanization on Mandarin rather than Cantonese reflects the nation-building narrative and power struggles.

Working at the interface of onomastics and dialectology, **Alasli Malak** analyses the role of official Moroccan toponyms vis-à-vis their dialectal variants – including both the written and spoken forms. She collects her dialectal data on the basis of sixty interviews, with the objective of comparing the toponymy as depicted on maps with the actual vernacular usage in Darija (Moroccan Arabic).

**Michal Místecký** and **Kristýna Kovářová** reflect on the euphony of nearly a thousand hydronyms – including the names of rivers, ponds, and springs – from the basins of two Czech rivers: Ostravice and Morava. Their methodology involves, on the one hand, a quantitative component using a formula typically used in analysing poetry, and on the other qualitative research based on a survey of secondary-school pupils and university students.

Utilising data from an 11th-century Latin-language census of the Benedictine monastery in Bakonybél (a village in the west of Hungary), which contains over a hundred place names, **Katalin Pelczéder's** text in Russian deals

with Hungarian-Slavic language contact in the Carpathian Basin. To this end she employs the method of historical place name reconstruction, verifying her results against several other contemporaneously created documents.

**Francesco Perono Cacciafoco** and **Niki Cassandra Eu Min** operate within the framework of experimental historical-phonetic toponomastics, using the comparative method. They assume as their working hypothesis the Indo-European origin of Minoan Cretean toponyms written in the hitherto undeciphered Linear A script. The basis for their etymologies are the phonetic values of Linear B, which is known to have been the script used for Mycenaean Greek.

**Xavier Planas-Batlle**, **Joan Tort-Donada** and **Jordi Corominas** highlight the give-and-take between geology and toponymy, proposing ways in which each domain can inform the other. In contrast with the toponymy motivated by the elusive elements of the plant and animal world, place names related to geological features are more stable. The researchers illustrate their theses with examples from Andorra and Catalonia.

In her German-language paper, **Rita Póczos** revisits early toponyms from the Carpathian Basin, found in 11th-century charters. Her conclusions regarding their etymology in most cases point to possible multiple etymons from multiple languages; this is contrary to previous findings, in which the decision to select a particular etymology over others was rather arbitrary.

Basing on the features of the web mapping service Google Maps, and also factoring in the constraints on in-person fieldwork imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, **Sara Racca** suggests a novel online way of toponymic data collection. She takes as her case study the microtoponymy of the Italian town of Savigliano in Piedmont, where the Google My Maps application allowed her informants to self-complete a map by adding place names before sharing it with the researcher.

**Yaroslav Redkva** and **Michael Lukashchuk** deal, both diachronically and synchronically, with the phonetic, lexical, semantic, derivational and functional peculiarities of oikonyms of the border area of western Ukraine and eastern Poland. Their paper defines the framework and directions for future research.

The topic of a joint project by **Katalin Reszegi** and **Marie A. Rieger** is the conceptualisation of place and space as expressed in language, of which toponymy is part. They base their work on the model developed by the former researcher, while the latter contributes two Tanzanian case studies – from

Dar es Salaam and from the Usambara Mountains – to which this model is applied. Special attention is paid to culturally determined differences in the cognitive maps involved.

In her individual, German-language contribution, **Marie A. Rieger** examines the colonial names of 41 German company-owned plantations and 61 privately-owned farms in the Usambara Mountains (Tanzania) from the 1898–1913 period. About one fifth of the total carried German names, a tendency more marked for private than institutional ownership. This partly corroborates earlier studies, which highlighted the predominance of local names (though the ratio of German toponyms is found to be markedly higher than earlier reported), with the surmise that orientation was more important for settlers – especially in the early phase of settlement – than identification.

**Agostinho Miguel Magalhães Salgueiro** discusses gender articles that (obligatorily, optionally or never) precede toponyms in Portuguese, drawing for data on the official reference for toponymy in Portuguese-speaking countries, the pluricentric-based resource *Vocabulário Toponímico*, aiming to identify the general rules governing gender article usage. His focus is on the names of Portugal's districts, islands and municipalities, on toponyms with the generic *Rio* 'river' or *Ribeira* 'brook', and on the names of foreign countries and their capitals.

**Pavel Štěpán** concentrates on the multiple standardisation of names of Czech towns or villages that results from the existence of diverse bodies responsible for naming: railway, post office or cadastral authorities, alongside the Ministry of the Interior, which approves the municipality level decisions. He emphasises the resulting uncertainty about the "proper" names among strangers and locals alike, offering a quantitative analysis of the scale of the problem, but also invoking individual cases as illustration.

The object of **Väinö Syrjälä's** article is the names of bus stops in Helsinki and Stockholm. The topic is novel, hence their onomastic status must first be defined. In most cases bus stops may be perceived as secondary referents of names that primarily denote districts and other areas, streets, squares, parks, train and metro stations, or other city landmarks, such as buildings. Considering the large number of bus stops in the two cities, the analysis is performed using sampling.

The paper by **Paul Tempan** is concerned with the etymology of the element *sceilg* 'steep rock, crag', anglicised as *skellig* and present in some Irish toponyms. Analysing the place names containing this element, as well as

the topography of their referents, the author concludes that it is a borrowing of the Vulgar Latin *spelū(n)ca*, which originally meant ‘cave (especially an inhabited one), den’.

The written records of the early Old Hungarian Era – several hundred thousand Hungarian place and personal names preserved in Latin charters – are a major source for Hungarian historical linguistics. Of the two categories, the former (mostly names of settlements) appear to be the more reliable one, and they also became the object of study by **Valéria Tóth**, who considers their usefulness as indirect sources for ethnic history.

*Justyna B. Walkowiak, Urszula Bijak, Paweł Swoboda*