

Foreword

Various aspects of the formation, use and definition of onomastic terms are problems that have remained at the centre of attention for years. The use of various onomastic terms with different meanings by scholars is a major obstacle of proper understanding. Without clear understanding and standardization of terms onomasticians cannot exchange ideas, discuss concepts and advance knowledge, which negatively impacts the larger exchange of experience, international collaboration and the further development of onomastics.

As BOTOLV HELLELAND pointed out (HARVALÍK–CAFFARELLI 2007: 196), at an early stage onomastic research was a national science the main goal of which was to collect and investigate written and oral name material, primarily place-names and personal names, and publish these with comments and explanations. The need for an international terminology was not felt very strongly. Over the years this has changed and today onomastic theoretical and methodological problems are discussed in various international contexts, for instance at international congresses. When publishing papers and volumes for international readers it is important that the terminology is understood. This applies to onomastics in general, but is especially important when dealing with theoretical problems. It is also advantageous to use terms that are understood internationally when defining onomastic categories.

The absence of homogeneity in onomastic terminology may give the impression that onomastics is not a well-developed discipline, which serves to undermine its credibility. However, the differences in the use and/or meaning of terms are mainly caused by differing theoretical approaches to onomastics and by the divergent traditions of onomastic schools, countries and languages. This means that inconsistencies – ambiguity and vagueness of terms – do not manifest themselves on a national level, in a certain language or within an onomastic school.

The foundations of a common terminology have been laid down in several mono- and multilingual dictionaries of onomastic terminology and in terminological systems. The importance of onomastic terminology is also emphasised by the fact that even works primarily orientated either at general questions of onomastics or unique problems deal with it.

The major problems apparent in certain terminological systems are caused by the use of multiple terms for the same phenomenon or the use of the same term in different meanings in the terminology of various onomastic schools, and also by the the parallel existence of international and domestic terms.

It is understandable that the ambiguity and uncertainty of terms leads to confusion. Eventually, however, terms become both more precise and more stable but – unless this

process is coordinated – this stabilisation is a long-term process with an uncertain outcome. Therefore, any terminology utilised should be the result of teamwork and cooperation or its binding enactment may be compromised. For this reason, at the 21st International Congress of Onomastic Sciences in Uppsala in 2002, the establishment of a special onomastic commission under the auspice of the International Council of Onomastic Sciences (ICOS) was proposed, the goal of which would be to assemble an international guidebook to the onomastic terms in current use, together with their definitions (HARVALÍK 2005). This terminological group that works under the ICOS Board of Directors was founded at the meeting of the ICOS Board held in Prague 2004 (26th to 27th March) and its members represent individual languages, countries or regions and onomastic schools.

The activities of the group have been thoroughly described in HARVALÍK 2014; and summarized in this volume (BÖLCSKEI 2017, FARKAS 2017). The most important result of the group's work, a three-language version of a basic list of onomastic terms in the official languages of the ICOS (English, German, and French) was published on the ICOS website (Icosweb Terminology). One of its current tasks is to prepare new versions of the glossary in other languages, which will make it accessible to a broader circle of onomasticians. The Czech and Slovak versions have been completed, while others are under preparation. I acknowledge the publication of the Hungarian version – along with a supplementary Hungarian–English term index and a quadrilingual list presenting English–Hungarian–German–French term equivalents – in this volume with great pleasure.

Another important work in the field of onomastic terminology is the Hungarian version of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN) *Glossary of Terms for the Standardization of Geographical Names*, which is also part of this publication.

Not only as the President of the International Council of Onomastic Sciences and the Chair of the ICOS Terminology Group, but – above all – as an onomastician, I highly appreciate the work of my Hungarian colleagues that is presented in this volume. Their results prove that coordination between the terms used in different languages and onomastic schools – always taking into account their existing usage and respecting the right of pluralism – can substantially contribute to an improved understanding of the results of individual researchers in their study of proper names and thereby stimulate further development in the principles of the general theory of onomastics.

Bibliography

- BÖLCSKEI, ANDREA 2017. The Hungarian Versions of Two International Onomastic Terminological Glossaries. In: BÖLCSKEI, ANDREA – FARKAS, TAMÁS – SLÍZ, MARIANN eds., *Magyar és nemzetközi névtani terminológia / Hungarian and International Onomastic Terminology*. Uppsala–Budapest: International Council of Onomastic Sciences – Magyar Nyelvtudományi Társaság. 85–98. <https://doi.org/10.26546/5061110.10>
- FARKAS, TAMÁS 2017. Terminological Studies in International and Hungarian Onomastics. In: BÖLCSKEI, ANDREA – FARKAS, TAMÁS – SLÍZ, MARIANN eds., *Magyar és nemzetközi névtani terminológia / Hungarian and International Onomastic Terminology*. Uppsala–Budapest: International Council of Onomastic Sciences – Magyar Nyelvtudományi Társaság. 65–84. <https://doi.org/10.26546/5061110.9>

- HARVALÍK, MILAN 2005. Towards a new millennium – towards a common onomastic terminology?
In: BRYLLA, EVA – WAHLBERG, MATS eds., *Proceedings of the 21st International Congress of Onomastic Sciences. Uppsala 19–24 August 2002*. Uppsala: Språk- och folkminnesinstitutet. 1: 160–171.
- HARVALÍK, MILAN 2014. Towards a common onomastic terminology? The next step. In: TORT I DONADA, JOAN – MONTAGUT I MONTAGUT, MONTSERRAT eds., *Els noms en la vida quotidiana. Actes del XXIV Congrés Internacional d'ICOS sobre Ciències Onomàstiques. / Names in daily life. Proceedings of the XXIV ICOS International Congress of Onomastic Sciences*. Biblioteca Tècnica De Política Lingüística 11. Barcelona: Generalitat de Catalunya. 21–25. <http://www.gencat.cat/llengua/BTPL/ICOS2011/004.pdf> & <https://doi.org/10.2436/15.8040.01.4>
- HARVALÍK, MILAN – CAFFARELLI, ENZO 2007. Onomastic terminology: an international survey / Terminologia onomastica: un'inchiesta internazionale. *Rivista Italiana di Onomastica* 13: 181–220.
Icosweb Terminology = *ICOS Lists of Key Onomastic Terms*. <https://icosweb.net/drupal/terminology>

MILAN HARVALÍK
President of the International Council of Onomastic Sciences