

Theory of proper names by Vincent Blanár and research into Slovak anthroponymy

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Abstract: The authors characterize the theory of proper names elaborated by Vincent Blanár whose distinctive feature is a semiological and functionally structural concept both of the proper name and of the science of proper names. This theory is based on contentual understanding of proper names; its basic methodological starting point is the formulation of a binary (both linguistic and onomastic) status of proper names. The system of so-called living (unofficial) personal names was understood by V. Blanár as a system of anthroponymic models in which unique onomastic features manifest themselves. The anthroponymic nominational model, as a phenomenon of deep structure, consists of a contentual model (designation), a motivational model

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(anthroponymic motivation) and a word-formation model which characterizes the linguistic aspect of living personal names. The paper also deals with the methodology of modelling living personal names and gives a survey of research into Slovak anthroponymy and of results of its analysis. In addition to the research on the unofficial anthroponymic system, particular attention will also be paid to Slovak monographic and lexicographical works and relevant articles focused on the research and analysis of first names and the formation, evolution, motives of origin and linguistic aspects of surnames attested in the territory of Slovakia and of those used by families of Slovak origin living in the so-called Lower Land (especially in present-day Hungary and Serbia). The authors will also mention the still topical question of feminine forms of surnames which has currently become a wider social issue, as well as the attempts to solve it. In the final part of the paper, visions and possibilities of further research into Slovak anthroponymic material and of its elaboration will be presented.

Keywords: Theory of proper names, V. Blanár, anthroponomastics, modelling of unofficial personal names, Slovak anthroponymy.

La théorie des noms propres de Vincent Blanár et la recherche sur l'anthroponymie slovaque

Résumé : Les auteurs présentent une introduction dans la théorie des noms propres développée par Vincent Blanár laquelle se distingue par un concept sémiologique ainsi que fonctionnel et structurel du nom propre dans les études onomastiques. Cette théorie est basée sur la compréhension du contenu des noms propres : le point de départ méthodologique est la formulation d'un double statut (à la fois linguistique et onomastique) des noms propres. Le système des noms personnels dits « vivants » (non officiels) était considéré par V. Blanár comme un système de modèles anthroponymiques par lesquels des caractéristiques onomastiques spécifiques se manifestent. Le modèle de dénomination anthroponymique en tant que phénomène de structure profonde est composé d'un modèle de contenu (de désignation), d'un modèle de motivation (de motivation anthroponymique) et d'un modèle de formation de mots qui caractérise l'aspect linguistique des noms personnels vivants. L'article développe aussi la méthodologie de modélisation des noms personnels vivants et donne un aperçu de la recherche sur l'anthroponymie slovaque ainsi que des résultats de son analyse. Hormis la recherche du système anthroponymique non officiel, une attention particulière est également portée aux ouvrages monographiques et lexicographiques slovaques ainsi qu'aux articles significatifs sur la recherche et l'analyse des prénoms slovaques et sur la formation, l'évolution, la motivation et les aspects linguistiques des noms de famille du territoire de la Slovaquie, mais aussi d'autres limitrophes où les anthroponymes slovaques sont utilisés par les familles d'origine slovaque vivant sur le territoire appelé la « Terre Basse » (l'Alföld), principalement dans une partie de la Hongrie et de la Serbie actuelles. En outre, les auteurs se concentrent sur la question toujours actuelle des formes féminines des noms de famille qui de nos jours est devenue un problème social particulier que l'on cherche de résoudre. Dans la dernière partie de l'article, l'on envisage des études futures et des possibilités de recherches complémentaires du matériel anthroponymique slovaque et de son analyse avancée.

Mots-clés : Théorie onomastique, V. Blanár, anthroponomastique, modélisation des noms personnels, anthroponymie slovaque.

Vincent Blanárs Theorie der Eigennamen und die Forschung zur slowakischen Anthroponymie

Zusammenfassung: Die Autor:innen charakterisieren die von Vincent Blanár erarbeitete Theorie der Eigennamen, für die ein semiologisches und funktionell-strukturelles Verstehen der Eigennamen und der Wissenschaft von ihnen kennzeichnend ist. Diese Theorie basiert auf inhaltlichem Verstehen des Eigennamens, wobei als methodologischer Ausgangspunkt ein doppelter (linguistischer und onomastischer) Status der nomina propria postuliert wird. Das System der sog. lebendigen (inoffiziellen) Personennamen wurde von V. Blanár als ein System anthroponymischer Modelle betrachtet, in denen spezifische onomastische Züge zur Äußerung kommen. Das anthroponymische Benennungsmodell als ein Phänomen der Tiefenstruktur besteht aus einem Bedeutungsmodell (Designation), einem Motivationsmodell (anthroponymische Motivation) und einem Wortbildungsmodell, das die sprachliche Seite der lebendigen Personennamen charakterisiert. Weiterhin widmet sich der Beitrag der Methodik der Modellierung lebendiger Personennamen und bietet eine Übersicht über die Forschung im Bereich der slowakischen Anthroponymie und über die Ergebnisse ihrer Analyse. Neben den Forschungen zum inoffiziellen anthroponymischen System liegt ein weiterer Fokus des Beitrags auf der Charakterisierung slowakischer monographischer und lexikographischer Arbeiten sowie bedeutender Studien zu verschiedenen Themen: der Erforschung und Analyse der Vornamen, der Formierung und Entwicklung, der Entstehungsmotive und der sprachlichen Seite der in der Slowakei vorkommenden Familiennamen sowie der Nachnamen der Familien slowakischer Herkunft im sog. Tiefland (v. a. auf dem Gebiet des heutigen Ungarn und Serbiens). Weiterhin wird auf die nach wie vor aktuelle Problematik der sog. Movierung eingegangen, d. h. der Bildung weiblicher Formen von Familiennamen, die gegenwärtig in der Öffentlichkeit breit diskutiert wird, und Versuche ihrer Lösung. Der Beitrag schließt mit Visionen und Möglichkeiten der weiteren Erforschung und Bearbeitung der slowakischen Anthroponymie.

Schlüsselbegriffe: V. Blanárs Theorie der Eigennamen, Anthroponomastik, lebendige Personennamen, Personennamenmodelle, slowakische Anthroponymie.

Theory of proper names by Vincent Blanár and research into Slovak anthroponymy

IVETA VALENTOVÁ AND ĽUBOR KRÁLIK

1. Theory of proper names by Vincent Blanár

For many years, proper names have been attracting the attention of researchers, mainly those in the humanities. Starting in the early 19th century, older, pre-scientific explanations of proper names gave way to historical-philological interpretations whose aim was to uncover the etymology of their derivational bases. Etymological research on proper names continues to be an appealing facet of their study, although it does not exhaust the complexity of this vast layer of vocabulary.

Particularly after World War II, systematic and organized research on proper names went on to develop its own methodology. Concurrently, onomastics, an auxiliary science of historical and other social sciences and humanities, transformed itself into an independent linguistic discipline with linkages to various segments of humanities as well as social and natural sciences. In 1964, the Slovak Onomastic Commission was established, in keeping with the team research mandates that had been put forward by the Commission for Slavic Onomastics of the International Committee of Slavists and reflecting a broader need for planned and organized research and enquiry into Slovak onymy. The Commission's launch and remit had been set forth in Professor Vincent Blanár's blueprint for conducting onomastic research in Slovakia. Since the second half of the 20th century, a general theory of onomastics began to take shape, in tandem with the discipline's data collection and analytical efforts. A gradual transition got underway from etymological analysis of onymic data to research on the social use of proper names and their application in social communication, thus casting new light on the pragmatic and socio-onomastic qualities of proper names.

The Slovak school of onomastics is mainly rooted in the theoretical and methodological principles formulated by Vincent Blanár. This Slovak linguist supposed that, in onymic nomination, attention in communicative utterances is focused on a specific onymic object as opposed to a general concept as is the case with common (appellative) names. By virtue of identification, an act of differentiation also occurs, to distinguish from other individuals of one kind or class. What we deal with here is identification//differentiation as a general feature (function) of proper names which is coupled with pragmatic

considerations such as social relevance and the need to name and identify individuals of a given kind or class as independent objects. As such, Blanár labelled this central role of proper names with the comprehensive, integrative term of “socially conditioned identification”. Seen through this prism, the identification is of a sociolinguistic nature; as the contentual component of proper names, it represents the highest level of abstraction among their (sub)categorial features. In putting together a taxonomy of these features, Blanár borrowed terms from component analysis as well as synthesis of (appellative) lexical semantics, such as generic vs. differentiating features. These generic and differentiating attributes are what shapes that particular aspect of a proper name’s content which differs significantly from lexical semantics. Blanár construed designation as onymic semantics of proper names. Designation is a feature that is shared by entire classes of proper names within a given subsystem. Specific sets of generic and differentiating attributes are what distinguishes geonymic, anthroponymic and chrematonymic systems from each other. A proper name’s content consists of two portions: First, onymic semantics, i.e. designation (on the ‘onymic system’ plane); and second, individual attributes of an informative and encyclopaedic nature (on the ‘speech and linguistic communication’ plane. A defining quality of onymic nomination is that within a given linguistic communication, the onymic situation or context appears to act as a substitute for many of the name’s components, and indeed serves to dilute them. Identification then occurs on the strength of individual informative-*cum*-encyclopaedic attributes alongside (generic) onymic attributes at a higher degree of abstraction. It is not through a general (i.e. appellative) concept that a proper name connects with its denotatum (or referent). Neither should one presuppose an immediate link – i.e. a relationship of “direct” reference – between a proper name and an onymic object. A proper name is linked to its denotatum through a unique onymic term which in the act of onymic nomination takes the form of the proper name’s content.

The creation and use of proper names in communication is governed not only by the appellative linguistic code but also by rules that are specific to proper names. Onymic features of a pragmatic and communicative nature (such as stability, family affiliation, heredity, obligatoriness, expressiveness, etc.) and the specific use of language means with regard to lexical choice as well as to the word-formational and morphemic structure of proper names will take on different manifestations in different classes of proper names. The position of proper names in a language is characterized by an interplay of two contravening trends: On the one hand, constant interaction between proper names and the remaining vocabulary as well as the entire linguistic system; and on the other hand, a process of proper names’ steady polarization vis-à-vis appellatives. This binary relationality of proper names likewise suggests a binary status of the *nomen proprium* category. Blanár considered this fact essential for analysing proper names and for a methodological approach to onomastics in general.

Therefore he expanded Kuryłowicz's delineation of proper names' linguistic status (cf. [Kuryłowicz 1956](#)) to include their linguistic as well as onomastic status.

The specific workings of a language are rooted in proper names' particular naming needs. Thus Blanár treated *nomen proprium* as a language sign *sui generis* whose being is informed by special naming and communication requirements. When tackling issues that are related to general methodology, in addition to the method of systematic analysis and structural organization of proper names he also examined the reconstructing of model validity in onymic signs. A modelling perspective on the naming instance as well as on an entire set of onymic elements of a given class engenders a generalization of proprial naming principles. On top of that, it is conducive to an in-depth knowing and capturing of proprial relations, elements and their inner organization in their deep structure. It is the motivational model that links, in a particular language, contentual models with a specific naming instance and language onymy. The motivational model establishes a link between contentual and word-formational models. In his study *Onymická nominácia* [Onymic nomination] (1994), [Blanár](#) used a shared vantage point to systematize a naming model that encompassed a contentual, motivational and word-formational model. His perspective on onymic nomination was a semasiological as well as an onomasiological one.¹

[Blanár](#) presented his theory and methodology in a number of articles (1970, 1975b, 1976, 1980a, 1989b, 1990a, 1994, 2004b, etc.)² as well as in the monographs *Teória vlastného mena. Status, organizácia a fungovanie v spoločenskej komunikácii* [A theory of proper names. Status, organization and functioning in social communication] (1996, German edition 2001) and *Vlastné meno vo svetle teoretickej onomastiky. Proper names in the light of theoretical onomastics* (2008, bilingual Slovak-English edition 2009). A compilation of his selected onomastic writings was published in Germany under the title *Selecta linguistica et onomastica* (2000).

2. Research on living personal names and their modelling methodology

One area that warrants scholars' attention is the application of [Blanár's](#) modelling methodology to Slovak anthroponymic material, particularly to what is known as *živé (neúradné) osobné mená* (living [non-official, unconventional] personal names).

In general terms, *a living name* is an unofficial personal proper name which in spoken language refers to an individual, a group of individuals or a

¹ [Ľuba Sičáková](#) (2011) applied modelling methods to hydronymic data. In Czech onomastics, [Rudolf Šrámek](#) (1972) and [Jana Pleskalová](#) (1992) have used methods of modelling toponymy.

² Some of them were also published in German ([Blanár](#) 1969, 1973, 1975a, 1977, 1980b, 1985, 1989a, 1990b, 1993, 2004a).

family collective; in other words, it substitutes the function of an *official name* (which is its opposite). This category includes, e.g. *living personal name* (i.e. an individual's unofficial name, e.g. *Jano Hliničanovie, Ščefiny Dzurajky Jožko, Hana od Bohuša, Vreštiak*), *living family name* (an entire family's unofficial name, e.g. *Jančekeje, Horákoje, Hliničanovie, Milionári*)³, *(living) house name* (the unofficial name of a homestead and its members, e.g. *Do Lindaka, U Pacalov, Ku Mišovi Trníkovi*)⁴ and *living inhabitant name* (or *inhabitant nickname*, e.g. *Kefári* – inhabitants of the village of Brodzany, *Bosoráci* – inhabitants of the village of Hradište). Living names are used in unofficial or semi-official communication. In Slovak onomastics, living name as a concise term has also come to refer to, more specifically, informal personal names of individuals. Emblematic of Slovak onomastics, the term *živé meno* (living name) was first put forward by Blanár.⁵ According to Blanár (2009: 36), the adjective 'living' (in Slovak: *živý*) was meant to capture not only the name's informal nature and use in communication but, crucially, the "living" character of its motivation: Those who use the name are still conscious of the original naming motive, referred to as *onymic motivation*, e.g. *Šubíček* ('who polished shoes'), *Icika* ('who was very small in height'). This is in contrast to other types of anthroponyms such as first or Christian names, surnames and, more broadly, other categories of proper names where the onymic motivation has ceased to be of relevance for their use.

The emergence of living personal names dates back to the time of Josephine reforms, which were named after their proponent, Austrian (and Holy Roman) Emperor Joseph II (r. 1780–1790). Prior to that, *all* personal names were by definition unofficial; however, because the official-vs.-unofficial dichotomy had not been in place yet, the concept of 'living' as opposed to official names did not apply. Following Emperor Joseph's codification of surnames, these were established as both hereditary and legally enforceable. Since the 13th century, the Slovak milieu had given rise to bynames which over time were superseded by hereditary surnames. The creation of living names was largely a matter of reproducing this existing pattern. Given their unofficial nature, the emergence and use of informal names were driven by the dictates of social communication. Like in the case of first names, the codification process resulted in a relatively fixed taxonomy of surnames. In close-knit rural communities, the common

³ A group (collective) anthroponym. In the Slovak literary language, suffix *-ovci* is used to derive such forms from substantival surnames (e.g., Slovak *kováč* 'smith' > surname *Kováč* > group anthroponym *Kováčovci*; cf. English *the Smiths*). The etymon (anthropolexeme) and/or suffix of a family living name is not identical with that of an official family name, e.g. surname *Beseda* > official family name *Besedovci* vs. living family name *Jančekeje*. This form of a family name often becomes part of an individual's living name (*Jožo Jančekeje*).

⁴ A transitional type of proper names, in between anthroponyms and toponyms.

⁵ The term appears for the first time in his PhD dissertation *Osobné mená. K základom semiologickej onomastiky* [Personal names. On the foundations of semiological onomastics] (1945).

usages of this official taxonomy were becoming inadequate when it came to their fundamental role – that of identification. With a limited pool of names to go round, more and more people would share the same surname or even the entire legal name. Living names put an end to this problem. Obviously, their formation and their workings went through an evolutionary process of sorts, much like – many years later – their research and its theoretical and methodological underpinnings.

Drawing on essential semantic features, Blanár set forth an algorithm to guide his anthroponymic contentual model. Using relevant semantic features, he established the components of a proper name's contentual model to be first (Christian) name (K), surname (P), individual characteristics (CH), appellative component (A), living family name (RM) and living house name (MD): official personal name *Ján Uličný* – contentual model K + P, living personal name *Maroš Richtár* – contentual model K + Ch^z.⁶ Blanár and Matejčík produced a two-volume monograph of enquiry into the designation aspects, modelling techniques and contentual model distribution of living names in Central Slovakia: *Živé osobné mená na strednom Slovensku. I.1. Designácia osobného mena, I.2. Distribúcia obsahových modelov* [Living personal names in Central Slovakia. I.1. Designation of personal names, I.2. Distribution of contentual models] (Blanár & Matejčík 1978, 1983).

There have been other onomasticians who applied modelling methods to living names as collected from different regions of Slovakia and who successfully published their findings, including Ján Matejčík, Elena Krasnovská, Iveta Valentová, Anita Holá, Miroslav Kazík, Michal Jozefovič, Ivana Kopásková.⁷ Valentová, in her monograph titled *Živé osobné mená v hornonitrianskej oblasti* [Living personal names in the Upper Nitra region] (2009), instead of adopting a contentual model of strict designation, created a naming model which encompasses all of living names' relevant contentual, motivational and language aspects. Predicating on this model, she articulated in a comprehensive manner a specific region's informal naming system.

In his monograph *Osobné mená bývalej Tekovskej stolice* [Personal names in the former Tekov county] (1969), Štefan Krištof likewise examined at length the topic of living names. Given that Krištof had not adopted the modelling method, living names were not set apart in his work as a particular mix of functional components.

3. A brief overview of research on Slovak anthroponymy and its output to date

There are also other types of anthroponyms Slovak linguists have examined. For instance, Ján Stanislav (1939–1940, 1947–1948) conducted

⁶ Ch^z = individual characteristics based on profession, job, hobby etc. For more details, see Blanár & Matejčík (1978).

⁷ For a detailed overview of research on living names in Slovakia, see Valentová (2009, 2015a).

research on personal names in the old mononymic system, such as the names of noblemen at the court of Great Moravian Prince Pribina (9th century AD) and pilgrim names as recorded in what is known as the Gospel of Cividale. Scholars including Ján Stanislav, Ondrej R. Halaga, František Uličný and Rudolf Krajčovič analysed the oldest among Slovak personal names as valuable data that shed additional light on settlement history. These names also informed Stanislav's synthesizing *Dejiny slovenského jazyka* [History of the Slovak language] (1956–1973).

Majtán's *Najstaršie osobné mená a vývin priezvisk na Slovensku* [The oldest personal names and evolution of surnames in Slovakia] (1994a), *Vývin priezvisk na Slovensku* [Evolution of surnames in Slovakia] (1994b) and Blanár (e.g., in the encyclopaedic compendium *Słowiańska onomastyka* [Slavic onomastics]; Blanár 2002) trace personal names' evolution from bynames (i.e. a type of secondary names within a mononymic naming system) to hereditary surnames as part of a binomial system. Research papers by Majtán and other scholars such as Katarína Habovštiaková, Izidor Kotulič, Vincent Blanár and Ján Doruľa have contributed to a growing body of social and linguistic analysis of historical personal names. Blanár (1961) and Michal Blichá (1996, 1998) studied personal names as recorded in historical sources. Vladimír Šmilauer (1976) analysed bynames in Slovakia's Hont region. Rudolf Kuchar (1984, 1994, 1996) wrote three studies on the personal names attested in the medieval town records from Žilina and Jelšava. Ondrej R. Halaga (1972) researched the records of the city of Košice. Also of note have been scholarly contributions by Emil Kufčák, Marie Majtánová, Jana Skladaná, Miriam Giger (Sitárová) and Marianna Sedláková.

Milan Majtán and Matej Považaj compiled a popular reference book on first (Christian) names *Vyberte si meno pre svoje dieťa* [Choosing a name for your child] (1998). On top of providing parents with guidance in choosing a name for their offspring, it helps academics as well as the general public understand more about the origin of first (Christian) names and of surnames that have been derived from them. The book continues to be a widely accepted source of reference for birth registrars, contain as it does a comprehensive list of the official forms of Slovak first names.

Classification and analysis of Slovak surnames have been the object of numerous publications, especially by Blanár (1950, 1996, 1998) and Majtán who also authored a special monograph *Naše priezviská* [Our surnames] (Majtán 2014/2018). Undergirding their approach was a motivational as well as a lexical-semantic perspective, alongside linguistic aspects such as anthroponymic word formation. As a part of a publication on *Turzovské priezviská* [Surnames in Turzovka] (Gajdičiar 2011), Majtán produced a section on the origins and motivations behind surnames in the Slovak town of Turzovka. Additionally, a number of studies by other Slovak linguists such as Ferdinand Buffa, Ján Doruľa, Ján Matejčík and Matej Považaj have considered the motivational,

semantic and linguistic aspects of surnames. [Blanár](#) in his extensive study on *Morfologické kategórie vlastných mien* [Morphological categories in proper names] (2005) analysed the linguistic, mainly grammatical aspects of surnames (as well as of other kinds of anthroponyms, toponyms and chrematonyms).

Research on Slovak surnames does not confine itself to the territory of the Slovak Republic. Historically, Slovakia was subsumed into the multi-ethnic state of Hungary. Following the defeat and withdrawal of Ottoman Turks, mass migration ensued, particularly in the 18th and 19th centuries, of ethnic Slovaks from their “Upland” home region to the “Lower Land”.⁸ The migrants’ arrival resulted in a revival of settlements that had suffered depopulation as a result of the wars.⁹ Consequently, the area of today’s modern-day Hungary saw a mushrooming of Slovak-language enclaves, complete with their own sets of cultural, vernacular and naming practices. In the course of an earlier collective field research on Hungary’s ethnic Slovak minority, [Blanár](#) collected personal names from 32 places. He published his findings of the names’ linguistic and semantic analyses in his monograph titled *Príspevok ku štúdiu slovenských osobných a p miestnych mien v Maďarsku* [Contribution to the study of Slovak personal names and minor place-names in Hungary] (1950). In recent years, the Research Institute of Slovaks in Hungary located in Békéscsaba initiated a scientific project on proper names, particularly surnames that are shared by families of Slovak origin living in Hungary. To date, the project’s output has included two popularizing collective monographs: *Čabianske priezviská* [Surnames in Békéscsaba] ([Divičanová et al. 2015/2017](#)) and *Komlóšske priezviská* [Surnames in Tótkomlós] ([Divičanová et al. 2017](#)). [Valentová](#)’s substantive studies on *Pôvod priezvisk Veňarčanov* [Origin of the surnames in Vanyarc] (2015b) and *Čívske priezviská* [Surnames in Piliscsév] (2020) examine surnames from the villages of Vanyarc and Piliscsév in today’s northern Hungary. Research findings on surnames that are documented in Hungary’s Slovak-language enclaves provide valuable insight on how surnames evolve in bilingual environments. They also bring out the interference that results from a coexistence of multiple ethnic groups; cross-language interactions; and the linguistic, social and cultural

⁸ The term “Lower Land” may refer to: 1. in a broader sense, to large territories comprised of Hungarian counties south of the border of the present-day Slovak Republic; 2. in a stricter sense, to the territories south of the virtual geographic axis of Budapest (Slovak name: *Budapešť*) – Miskolc (*Miškovec*) – Sátoraljaújhely (*Nové Mesto pod Šiatorom*) ([Kmeť 2010: 12](#)).

⁹ According to [Šafárik \(Schaffarik 1826: 374\)](#), the total number of Slovaks in the Hungarian Kingdom at the time (in the 1820s) was reported to be 1,800,000. Of those, 450,000 were settlers who had taken up residence in the Lower-Land counties. Recent literature indicates that during the 18th and 19th centuries more than 40,000 families (about 200,000 individuals) migrated from the territory of the present-day Slovakia to the Lower Land, constituting a significant part of the Slovak population whose number is estimated at 1,1–1,8 million for the period 1715–1770 (cf. [Mannová 2003: 185](#); [Botík 2019: 9](#)).

history of the local Slovak community. Studies of this kind also play an important role in feeding a revival of traditions, culture and language of Hungary's ethnic Slovak community. Of equal importance is the monograph *Priezviská Slovákov v Juhoslávii* [Surnames of Slovaks in Yugoslavia] (1998) by Daniel Dudok who analysed the surnames in Slovak settlements in the Serbian province of Vojvodina.

Over the past few years, the issue of surnames' feminine forms has fuelled much discussion within academia as well as in general public. The publication on *Prechýľovanie: áno – nie?* [Feminine forms of surnames: yes or no?] (Molnár Satinská & Valentová 2016) presents papers and articles that are dedicated to the genesis, the different facets and the issues surrounding the practice of deriving feminine forms of surnames. It serves up a variety of perspectives – historical, onomastic, sociolinguistic, social and legal – on feminine-form surnames in Slovakia and in several other countries. In the Slovak language, deriving feminine forms of surnames has been an organic practice – from the point of view of the underlying linguistic system and the evolution of the anthroponymic naming system, as well as in terms of its current usages both in unofficial and official (oral and written) communication.

For Slovak onomastics, the remit has been to expand and operationalize relevant theory and methodology. In the area of anthroponomastics, the onus is on linguists to continue collecting and analysing living names from Western and Eastern Slovakia, and to put together a synthesis on their findings. The existing reference book of formal Slovak first names is in need of an update that will reflect the recent proliferation of new, modern names. The gap in literature that remains to be filled includes monographs and dictionaries of historical personal names.¹⁰ The website of the Ľudovít Štúr Institute of Linguistics also displays the frequency of specific surnames as at 1995 (Ďurčo et al. 1998). This could be a good departure point for an in-depth lexicographic cataloguing of Slovak surnames. With an ever-larger portion of the public taking a keen interest in the origins of their surnames, publishing activities will do well to prioritize books and articles that help elucidate these topics.

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¹⁰ Personal names as captured in written historical sources have been extracted and documented in an archive of citations slips at the Ľ. Štúr Institute of Linguistics of the Slovak Academy of Sciences in Bratislava. Part of this historical anthroponymic data made its way to the *Historical dictionary of the Slovak language* (Majtán 1991–2008). The defining attributes for inclusion in the dictionary included personal names having been collected from majority Slovak-language territory and having their word-formation basis in a Slovak appellative.

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