

Onoma 58

Journal of the International Council of Onomastic Sciences

ISSN: 0078-463X; e-ISSN: 1783-1644

Journal homepage: <https://onomajournal.org/>

Jürgen Udolph, *Namen – Zeugen der Geschichte* (Hg. von Kirstin Casemir & Uwe Ohainski), Heidelberg: Winter (Indogermanische Bibliothek Dritte Reihe Untersuchungen), 2023, 470 S., ISBN 978-3-8253-6771-8

Peter Ernst*

Institut für Germanistik der Universität Wien, Austria

To cite this article: Ernst, Peter. 2023. Jürgen Udolph, *Namen – Zeugen der Geschichte* (Hg. von Kirstin Casemir & Uwe Ohainski), Heidelberg: Winter (Indogermanische Bibliothek Dritte Reihe Untersuchungen), 2023, 470 S., ISBN 978-3-8253-6771-8. *Onoma* 58, 353–360. DOI: 10.34158/ONOMA.58/2023/22

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.34158/ONOMA.58/2023/22>

© *Onoma* and the author.

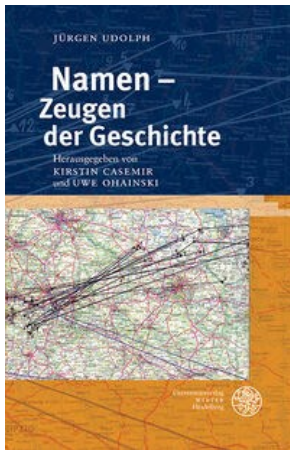
Article history

Received on 29 September 2023.

Final form accepted on 28 December 2023.

Published online on 30 December 2023.

* Contact: peter.ernst@univie.ac.at.



(https://www.winter-verlag.de/de/detail/978-3-8253-6771-8/Udolph_Namen_Zeugen_der_Geschichte/)

The present volume represents a collection of toponymic essays by the eminent name researcher Jürgen Udolph, newly published on the occasion of his 80th birthday. This is an excellent idea, as it makes important works by the jubilarian easily accessible in a single volume. The book is intended as a continuation of the *Festschrift zum 75. Geburtstag*, which deals with anthroponymic topics (Udolph 2018). The special feature lies in the fact that the contributions are not simply reprinted unchanged, but are newly edited and updated by the author himself. Thus, not only significant works by the jubilarian are made easily accessible to the audience, but also enriched with new insights.

The contributions are summarised in four thematic chapters:

Section I: Introduction

The first contribution, “Zu neuen Ufern – Namenforschung heute und morgen” (‘Towards new shores – Name research today and tomorrow’, pp. 13–22), immediately demonstrates the volume’s advantageous principle. Published in 2005, it deals with an inventory and future prospects of onomastics. The author takes the opportunity now to pursue the question of how the situation presents itself today and whether the future prospects of that time have been fulfilled or not. The first complex is taken up by considerations on water names. The overview of Germany’s water names requested by Jürgen Udolph in 2005 has since been fulfilled by Greule (2014). On place names: The “Thuringian place name book” planned with Hans Walther (†2015) could not be realised. However, there are individual studies on the subject as well as the radio programme series “Thuringian Register of Place Names” organised by the jubilarian with the Mitteldeutscher Rundfunk (MDR), which received widespread attention. Public interest is still high, especially in the case of first names and surnames, and reference is made to the “Family Name Dictionary of Germany” under the direction of Konrad Kunze and Damaris Nübling, which is currently being compiled. The first names are being researched by the name advisory service at the University of Leipzig and Udolph’s own Zentrum für Namenforschung [Centre for Name Research]. The greatest upswing has been in the research of surnames, on which the jubilarian can also boast widespread participation in television programmes. Field names should generally be worked on in the near future, as they are on the wane.

Section II: The Slavic Area

At the beginning there is the article “Die Landnahme der Ostslaven im Lichte der Namensforschung” (‘The land grabbing of the Eastern Slavs in the light of naming research’, pp. 25–42); a topic with which the jubilarian has already dealt many times (apart from the literature mentioned above, summarised also in [Udolph 2014](#)) and which is obviously very close to his heart. Among other things, “appellatives which Eastern Slavonic in its entirety or in parts lacks today will be contrasted with words which were still known to early Eastern Slavonic, and [...] their distribution in the name material will be recorded, mapped and the results interpreted” (p. 29). This is exemplified by means of the word groups 1. **vъsb* – *derevnja*, 2. *poto* – *ručej* and 3. *korč-*, *gar*, *dor* and substantiated with corresponding maps. The results are completely convincing, namely that the origin of the settlement of Eastern Europe by the Eastern Slavs began in the Ukraine and ran from there northwards to Lake Ilmen, from there eastwards and finally southwards.

The comprehensive contribution “‘Handel’ und ‘Verkehr’ in slavischen Ortsnamen” (‘“Handel” and “Verkehr” in Slavic place names’, pp. 43–87) starts from the consideration of how terms of supra-regional trade relations are expressed in names. But the lexeme trade is also found in the appellative vocabulary, albeit rarely. Other expressions are East Sorbian *kramy* ‘stuff shop, shop’, East Sorbian *hermank* ‘fairground’, German *ring* ‘marketplace’, *buy* (e.g., in Russian *kupit*, *kuplju* ‘buy’), Serbo-Croatian *roba* ‘goods, dress’ (from Italian) and *pijaca* ‘market’ (also from Italian), Serbo-Croatian *pàzār* (from Turkic languages), Russian *tovar* ‘goods, burden’ (also from Turkic languages). This is followed by a section on terms that are only attested in Slavic languages, such as Old Russian *крѣнѹти* ‘buys’. Finally, another section deals with weekday designations in Slavic toponyms. They often become place names because they refer to markets that took place on these days. This is followed by a whole chapter on Slavic *myto* ‘toll, tax’, which is borrowed from Germanic and still exists in South Germanic *Maut*. The chapter concludes with a term of great importance for the East Slavic area, namely *voloki* (e.g., in Russian *volak* to the appellative **volk-*); these are towing places over which ships, boats or loads are towed. There follow brief mentions of a few more distinctive words. All in all, the article leaves an ambivalent impression: On the one hand, it impresses with an enormous amount of material, which must have taken a lot of effort to compile, as well as the detailed knowledge of earlier research on the subject. On the other hand, the statements cannot be formulated unambiguously because of the often not very precise lexeme meanings and the mixtures of appellatives and propria, of which the author himself is aware (p. 72). In any case, through the extensive and detailed mapping of certain names and appellatives, the early trade routes are discussed and often comprehensibly interpreted.

With “Heimat und Ausbreitung slavischer Stämme aus namenkundlicher Sicht” (‘Homeland and spread of Slavic tribes from a naming perspective’, pp.

89–122), one of the Jubilar’s guiding themes is taken up again. It is based on the premise that the prehistory and early history of Slavic tribes can only be recognised through the names. The connection of Slavic to other Indo-Germanic languages must also be included. As early as 1930, Max Vasmer recognised that “the question of the original Slavic homeland can be advanced primarily [...] through thorough research into loan words and place names and the fullest possible consideration of all ancient historical and geographic sources” (p. 90). As a student of Wolfgang P. Schmid, Jürgen Udolph acknowledges the core statements of the “Old European Hydronomy”, which, as is well known, is not shared by all name researchers. In the context of his remarks, it appears to be acceptable and to lead further. Max Vasmer introduced the method of “exclusion”, in which those territories are separated out that have non-Slavic place and water names. What remains is an area south of the Pripet’, west of the Volga and north of the Carpathians. As contact areas, this results in proximity to Baltic and (somewhat more distant) Germanic. The author expands the Old European hydronymy by including Slavic names, as Slavic had been included only to a limited extent. There is also explicit mention here of Western Slavs, namely that a uniform proto-language cannot be assumed. Udolph discovers a wealth of Slavic evidence, especially for the famous “water words”. Again, it turns out that no original Slavic settlement can be proven south of the Carpathians, which is supported by numerous impressive maps. Of the rich material and explanations, only the example of **brŭn-/*bryn-* ‘swamp, morass, mud’ may be singled out (p. 101), on the basis of which the jubilarian in turn concludes that the original Slavic homeland must have been in southern Poland and western Ukraine (in Bohemia, Moravia, Slovakia and in Slovenia) (p. 102). On the basis of further lexemes, the Balkans is expressly excluded as the original Slavic homeland (p. 106).

Section III: Place Names

The name of this section is not entirely clear, as contributions from other large chapters also deal with place names, as we have already seen. It is probably meant that the articles in this section deal mainly with toponyms.

The essay “Die Ortsnamen auf *-ithi*” (‘The place names on *-ithi*’, pp. 125–181) already shows by its extraordinary length what rank this topic occupies in the work of the jubilarian (it is also dealt with in other articles). This Germanic word-formation element, which is already treated by Bach (1981) and is attested as Old Saxon *-ithi* and Old High German *-idi/-ida* (from German **-iþja*), was intensively discussed in older research. Apparently, there is a suffix with the meaning ‘provided with, rich in’ (p. 125). Place names formed with this are generally attested a great age. Jürgen Udolph distinguishes four major groups of occurrences: 1. toponyms which can be assigned with great certainty to a Germanic stratum; 2. *-ithi*-names with proximity to the Germanic vocabulary

without recognisable direct connections (for example, in the case of ablaut deviations to the appellative vocabulary); 3. names with connections to Germanic appellatives; 4. a group whose mode of formation is not clearly recognisable and which have therefore not been included in the maps of pp. 171 and 176. What is special about the explanations is that here, in a new approach to research, the soil acquisition is also included: Surveys, deepening, location (water bodies, climate, colour and lighting, forms, miscellaneous), flora (forest, tree species, other plants), fauna, trade-trade-transport-assembly, agriculture and animal husbandry, forestry-hunting-clearing, boundaries, property-settlements, abstracts. This list alone shows how much the author has studied the subject and what new, comprehensible approaches he has found.

With the contribution “Die Landnahme Englands durch germanische Stämme im Lichte der Ortsnamen” (‘The land grabbing of England by Germanic tribes in the light of place names’, pp. 183–223) one of the core topics of the jubilarian is presented. Since his fundamental monograph (Udolph 1994), he has taken up this topic again and again and specified the results. They have also found their way into the historical sciences, rarely enough for results in name research, for example in Ludiwici (2022: 74, 81). Already in the middle of the 18th century and again especially around the middle of the 19th century (Ernst Schwarz), there were calls to evaluate the relevant data material. On the basis of the lexemes *reip*, *fenn*, *-ithi*, *Strut-/Strod-*, *-wik*, *skarn-*, *-riede*, *mar-*, *hor-*, *-hude* and *-büttel* and other groups of evidence, Udolph convincingly demonstrates that, contrary to previous assumptions, the settlement of England must not have come from Schleswig-Holstein and Denmark, but from Flanders and northern France – with the “last foothills of Germanic expansion on the continent” (p. 219) – across the Channel. The English Germanic place names show a complete adoption of the name types.

“Nordisches in deutschen Ortsnamen” (‘Norse in German place names’, pp. 225–235) is again based on the Old European hydronymy in Wolfgang P. Schmid’s version and assumes that there are a large number of water names in Europe that cannot be assigned to any single Indo-European language. Eastern Europe plays a key role for Germanic and the honouree can be credited with having made significant contributions in this respect. This article shows the linguistic influences from northern Europe on northern Germany.

Closely related to this is “Ortsnamen und Siedlungsgeschichte in Ostfalen” (‘Place names and settlement history in Eastphalia’, pp. 237–257). It deals on the one hand with basic place-name words, and on the other with specific word-forming elements (*-ing-*, *-l-*, *-ithi*, *-büttel*, *-leben*, **ard-*, *ber-*, *-lage*, *-lar*) as well as important lexemes such as *Dolgen*, *Elbe*, *Ohrum-Oerte*, *Rhön* and *horst* [sic!]. The author reveals the relations to the Baltic, to the Slavic East and to Scandinavia. He proves that Eastphalia is part of all Old Germanic name elements, i.e., that it is the result of Old Germanic naming, and that it had ancient connections to the North and the West, as well as connections to the Baltic and the Slavic.

With the contribution “Suffixbildungen in alten Ortsnamen Nord- und Mitteldeutschlands” (‘Suffix formations in old place names of North and Central Germany’, pp. 259–298), the jubilarian takes up again questions already dealt with in this volume and refines the results. The overall conclusion of this finding confirms Udolph’s earlier observations that the Eastphalian namescape is based on an original Germanic settlement in this area.

The author also clears up old, erroneous attempts at explanation with “Der Name *Schlesien*” (‘The name *Schlesien*’, pp. 299–316). He answers the previously discussed question of whether the name is of Germanic or Slavic origin by saying that neither is the case whereby very precise reference is made to the research done so far. Rather, *Schlesien* goes back to an Indo-European pre-single language water name *Ślęza*, whereby again the Old European hydronymy advocated by the author proves its worth.

Section IV: Baltic, Slavic and Indo-European

These theses deal in particular with the relationships between the Baltic, German und Slavic languages.

In “Die Bedeutung des Baltischen für die niedersächsischen Ortsnamenforschung” (‘The significance of the Baltic for Lower Saxon place-name research’, pp. 319–333), the role of the Baltic language area for the namescape of northern Germany is again examined. The basis for this is the “Niedersächsische Ortsnamenbuch (NOB)”, which has been published since 1998 and has planned 28 volumes. On the basis of 42 toponyms, it is shown how Baltic foundations can be found in the Lower Saxon names, although for a larger group of names there are also no relations to the Baltic.

“Alteuropäische Hydronymie und urslavische Gewässernamen” (‘Old European hydronymy and Proto-Slavic water names’, pp. 335–374) approaches the question of hitherto less considered meanings of Slavic water names for Old European Hydronymy or, vice versa, the applicability of Old European Hydronymy to Slavic water names. The focus is on the use and occurrence of diminutives and suffixes, with the combination “Old European water name + Slavic suffix” playing a special role. Again, it becomes apparent that Baltic, Slavic and Germanic must have developed from an Indo-European dialect area.

This topic is also treated from a different but similar perspective in “Baltisch, Slavisch, Germanisch – Kontakte und Beziehungen aus onomastischer Sicht” (‘Baltic, Slavic, Germanic – Contacts and relations from an onomastic perspective’, pp. 375–404). His core statement is that “All the language families mentioned emerged from an Indo-European dialect area; traces of this preliminary stage can be found in Old European hydronymy” (p. 375). The use of the term “geographical name” instead of “toponym” is striking. The answer to the question of the homeland and expansion of Germanic is new. Udolph counters the *Communis Opinio* that a differentiation into North, East and West

Germanic took place only after the large-scale settlement of Northern, Eastern and Central Europe with his insight that the homeland of Urgermanic is to be placed in a relatively small geographical area (p. 383).

Section V: Popular Representations

It is well known that Jürgen Udolph has always endeavoured to conduct science as “Science to Public” (S2P). His very successful radio and television appearances have already been mentioned. Now it is a matter of popular scientific treatises, which of course lose nothing of their scientific nature.

With “Zogen die Hamelner Aussiedler nach Mähren? Die Rattenfängersage aus namenkundlicher Sicht” (‘Did the Hamelin emigrants move to Moravia? The Pied Piper Saga from a naming perspective’, pp. 407–462), the author takes up again the questions about the destination of the legendary Pied Piper’s train. Various places and spaces were under discussion, such as Moravia or Transylvania. In his usual manner, the author examines the respective name landscapes to see if there are any equivalents for Low German place names and comes to the conclusion that, due to striking similarities, only the Weser region and the colonisation areas north of Berlin come into question. Compared to the first printing of the essay in 1997, two further points of discussion are added: The rats mentioned in the legend really did exist as a direct plague, for the name *Hameln* itself was handed down for centuries as *Quernhameln* and thus points to a mill (Old Saxon *quern* and further evidence from other Germanic languages), as it were a point of attraction for rats and mice. In addition, family names are referred to *Quernhamel* for the first time. One enjoys following the author’s explanations, which are also entertaining.

The same applies to the last contribution, “Woher hat der *Riesling* seinen Namen?” (‘Where did the *Riesling* get its name?’, pp. 463–470), in which the author proposes a new etymology: *Riesling* is related to Alemannic *rüesling* and is to be placed with Alemannic *rues* ‘soot’ because the grapes in their ripest state turn from yellow to brown.

On the whole, both the editors and the jubilarian as author are to be credited with an outstanding achievement. The volume indeed contains Jürgen Udolph’s most important toponymic works in an updated version, although his oeuvre comprises a huge number of toponymic papers. Factual topics taken up again and again show his core interests; the approach from different sides at different times strengthens the chains of argumentation and brings multiple confirmation of the statements. Thus, for the reasons mentioned, the book represents a great gain for the readership and should not be missing in any specialist library.

References

- Bach, Adolf. 1981. *Deutsche Namenkunde*. 2. Aufl. Bd. II, 1. Heidelberg: Winter.
- Greule, Albrecht. 2014. *Deutsches Gewässernamenbuch*. Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter.
- Ludiwici, Babette. 2022. *Die Sachsen*. München: C. H. Beck.
- Udolph, Jürgen. 1994. *Namenkundliche Studien zum Germanenproblem*. Berlin: De Gruyter. (Ergänzungsbände zum Reallexikon der Germanischen Altertumskunde 9.)
- Udolph, Jürgen. 2014. Ethnogenese und Urheimat der Slaven. In Gutschmidt, Karl (†) u.a. (Hg.), *Die slavischen Sprachen*, Bd. 2, 1131–1144. Berlin u.a.: De Gruyter. (Handbücher zur Sprach- und Kommunikationswissenschaft 32.2.).
- Udolph, Jürgen. 2018. *The connecting link. Familiennamen als Bindeglied zwischen Wissenschaften und Gesellschaft*. (Hg. von Andrea Brendler & Silvio Brendler.) Hamburg: Baar.