

Reviews

Onomatologos: Studies in Greek Personal Names Presented to Elaine Matthews. Edited by R. W. V. CATLING and F. MARCHAND with assistance from M. SASANOW. Pp. xxvii + 681. Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2010. \$180 (HB). ISBN: 978-1-84217-982-6

In the German-speaking world, a Festschrift is traditionally reserved to honor the exemplary scientific contributions of a senior scholar whose research has significantly advanced his/her field. Just such a scholar was Elaine Matthews. Over her long and distinguished career, her contributions to the study of onomastics in general and to Greek naming in particular were profound. She not only served for many years as the senior editor of the illustrious *Journal of Roman Studies* and honorary secretary of the Roman Society, she was also an expert contributor to the third edition of the *Oxford Classical Dictionary* and elected Faculty Fellow of the *Literae Humaniores* (Classics) at the University of Oxford.

Of all her many achievements, however, perhaps the most important was her twenty-five-year editorship of *The Lexicon of Greek Personal Names* (LGPN). Before finally succumbing to a grave illness on June 26 2011, Professor Matthews helped develop this incredible resource into an internet accessible database of more than 35,000 names “drawn from all available sources (literature, inscriptions, graffiti, papyri, coins, vases and other artefacts), within the period from the earliest Greek written records down to, approximately, the sixth century A.D.” (<http://www.lgpn.ox.ac.uk>). In appreciation of these and many other contributions, the book under review is a collection of articles written by an illustrative circle of Matthews’ long-time colleagues.

What immediately strikes the reader when looking at this nearly 700-page soon-to-be classic is its uncommon scope. From gods to vases, coins to sacred places, if the Greeks stopped to name it, the scholars here have investigated it. With 55 different articles, appearing in 4 different languages (English, French, German, and Italian) and contributed by 59 names scholars in 13 different countries, this commemorative collection is a veritable onomastic smorgasbord. The following three works illustrate the breadth of the articles this book has on offer: 1) “Foreign names, inter-marriage and citizenship in Hellenistic Athens” by Graham Oliver, senior lecturer in ancient Greek culture at the University of Liverpool (158–168); 2) “Sur quelques noms d’Apollonia du Pont” by Alexandru Avram, advisory editor of the *Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum* and professor of Greek history at the University of Main, Le Mans (368–380); and 3) “Griechische Personennamen in Lykien. Einige Fallstudien” by Christof Schuler, director of the Commission for Ancient History and Epigraphics of the German Archaeological Institute in Munich (552–568). As this brief cross-linguistic selection illustrates, this reference is a truly welcome deviation from the glut of monolingual references on the academic market today.

Matching this linguistic panorama, the articles in this reference also cover an impressive geographic terrain. Stretching across the expanse of the Greco-Roman empire, the chapters are organized into twelve areas: 1) Aegean Islands; 2) Cyprus; 3) Cyrenaica; 4) Athens; 5) Peloponnese; 6) Magna Graecia and Sicily; 7) Dalmatia; 8) Central Greece; 9) Macedonia; 10) Black Sea and Thrace; 11) Asia Minor; and 12) Near East. Of these areas, the greatest emphasis is placed upon Asia Minor.

The thirteenth and final section is a somewhat eclectic collection called “General Studies.” Here one finds such interesting investigations as the contribution by Ilisa Arnaoutoglou, senior researcher at the Academy of Athens and the Research Centre for the History of Greek Law,

“Onomastics and law: Dike and — dike names” (582–600) and “Onomastic research then and now: an example from the Greek novel” by Nikoletta Kanavou, LGPN research assistant and lecturer in ancient Greek at the University of Crete. In Index 1, the reader will find a twenty-page listing of “Personal Names” (647–667), stretching from Αβας to Ωφελους. This listing includes an extremely helpful set of subdivisions for personal names: 1) in Greek; 2) fragmentary names; 3) name prefixes; 4) name suffixes; 5) in Etruscan; 6) in italic; 7) in Latin; 8) in Lydian; 9) in Phrygian; and 10) Greek words.

The overall interdisciplinary character of this reference makes it an excellent financial investment for institutional libraries. This may make the reference particularly attractive, given these financially lean times and the fact that many academic departments and institutions have to fight for every new acquisition. The primary criticism of this reference, if one need be made, is that it is probably unsuitable for most undergraduate student purposes. However, for multilingual readers with an advanced reading knowledge of ancient history and onomastics, this book would no doubt be an invaluable resource. It is also a more than apt tribute to the remarkable name scholar, Elaine Matthews.

University of Cologne, Germany

I. M. NICK

Naming Nature: The Clash Between Instinct and Science. By CAROL KAESUK YOON. Pp. 341. New York: Norton. 2009. \$16.95 (PB). ISBN: 978-0-393-33871

In 2009, evolutionary biologist and New York *Times* journalist Carol Kaesuk Yoon received the award for best new science book of the year. From the mighty *Balaenoptera musculus* (blue whale) to the minuscule *Pulex irritans* (common flea), Yoon traces the history of scientists’ attempts to assign a unique name to every single life form found on the planet. Along this engrossing odyssey, Yoon not only introduces readers to some of the famous namers of the modern world. She also takes them behind the scenes to where “personal vendettas, romances, backstabbing, self-sacrifices, betrayals, and death by friendly fire” (262) continue to rock the academic *umwelt*. From the butterfly-chasing, bespectacled evolutionary taxonomist to the “decidedly oddball, [. . .] brilliant, dorky, aggressive, and sometimes shockingly lacking in normal social skills” (262) cladist, this book reveals that the academic world of naming is just as colorful and tumultuous as the natural world that it seeks to represent.

According to Yoon, the fact that the overwhelming majority of bipodal *Animalia chordata* have managed to remain blissfully unaware of this drama may not be without consequence. As the author states, “without even realizing it, we have traded a view of ourselves as living beings in a living world for a view of ourselves as consumers in a landscape of merchandise. We have unwittingly traded a facility with living things for a savantlike brand expertise, exchanging the language of the living world — the names of real plants and real animals — for a vocabulary of Tony the Tigers and Geico geckos. [. . .] While we’ve been busy shopping and the world’s diversity of human-made things has been increasing, the world’s wealth of living things has been dwindling” (282). The primary focus of Yoon’s criticism is today’s youth, who, according to her, have lost their awareness of and consequent appreciation for Earth’s natural bounty.

The above criticism is certainly not without some merit. The fact that comparatively few tweens growing up in the twenty-first century know the difference between *Oncorhynchus mykiss* (rainbow trout) and *Lepisma sacchrina* (silverfish) is lamentable indeed. However, it is important not to forget that it is exactly this same generation of young people that has also made such terms as *biodegradable*, *carbon footprinting*, *eco-friendly*, *greenhouse effect*, *recycling*, and *veganism* household words. At times, it seems Yoon’s yearnings for her own lost youth may have inured her to the heartening developments in modern bionymy, reflecting the growing environmental savvy among many young people today.

Moreover, Yoon’s tendency to overly romanticize the lexico-semantic prowess of past taxonomists seems also to have blinded her to the many crimes that have been committed in

their names. For example, in part two, “The Search for the Natural Order Begins,” Yoon details the brilliant contributions of Carl Linneaus and his 1735 classic *Systema naturae*. It is within this work that Linneaus first introduced the classification that subdivides all humanity into four major groups: *Europaeus albescens*, *Americanus rubescens*, *Asiaticus fuscus*, and *Africanus afer*.

What the author inexplicably fails to discuss, however, is the fact that, since their introduction, such hierarchies have been systematically used not only to excuse but also actively to encourage the systematic exploitation, subjugation, and annihilation of peoples deemed unequal, undeveloped, and undesirable. As the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature explains on its official website, Linneaus’ system did far more than describe the physical characteristics of each grouping. It also offered character profiles entirely “in line with then current European notions about their own superiority. For example, while *europaeus* was, of course, ‘governed by laws’, *americanus* was governed ‘by customs’, *asiaticus* ‘by opinions’, and the African subspecies *afer* ‘by impulse’” (<http://iczn.org/content/who-type-homo-sapiens>). Nowhere in the book’s 299 pages or twenty pages of endnotes does Yoon discuss these historical abuses. Instead, the author goes so far as to suggest the rejection of over a century of scientific evidence and social progress that the world has undergone and advocates the reinstatement of race. In chapter 11, “This Strange Station,” Yoon writes: “In the human *umwelt*, there is clearly a sensed order among the human beings we encounter. [...] [I]f we are trying to understand life on a local scale, say the cultural, social, or economic divides in a community, then our *umwelt*’s vision of race may be exactly the vision we need” (277, 278). As justification for this suggestion, Yoon argues for the primacy of simple human perception. Following this logic, one might just as well argue that we turn back the clock to the time before Galileo and return to the days when sea monsters lurked just before the oceans crashed over the Earth’s edge. What Yoon seems to forget is that one of the highest responsibilities of science is to push humanity beyond the all-too-comfortable, stereotype-laden limits of human perception.

The fact that Yoon seems to have forgotten this moral duty becomes blatantly clear in the dazzling number of denigrating descriptions she provides of “the world’s wacky diversity of prescientific and non-scientific orderings [...] [and] the endearing kookiness of people’s ways of looking at the living world against the backdrop of the clarifying correctness of modern science” (10–11). For example, Yoon pokes fun of “how Filipino headhunters appeared to conceive of orchids as human body parts, explaining to a bewildered anthropologist that here grow the thumbs, there the elbows” (11). Evidently, in her cultural myopia, Yoon overlooked the fact that, in the nomenclature of the English language, cabbages have heads, apples have skin, corn has ears, potatoes have eyes, pumpkins have flesh, and so on. And, when one looks to widen the sociolinguistic scope even further, it becomes immediately clear that such metaphorical extensions are relatively commonplace, so much so that what Yoon describes as “kookiness” is much more likely the result of a common or garden lexicalized cognitive link that exists between the semantic domains *botanical bodypart* and *human body part*. At best, Yoon’s insistence upon infantilizing the world’s folk etymologies may be seen as a product of a misplaced sense of humor. At worst, it represents the type of ethnocentric prejudice that sadly continues to infiltrate popular scientific writing. Is reading this book then a complete waste of time? In a word, no.

Despite the book’s aforementioned shortcomings, the author does succeed in providing a tantalizing smorgasbord of onomastic oddities. In chapter 6, “The *Umwelt* among Babies and the Brain-Damaged,” Yoon presents many fascinating case studies that will whet the analytical appetite of every onomastician. There is the puzzling 1940s case of “Flora D,” the forty-six-year-old Los Angeles-based stenographer who reportedly lost her ability to name living beings. Some forty years later, in England, the forty-one-year-old bank employee “C.W.” stumped neurologists and psychologists again when he lost the ability to name inanimate objects but had little or no difficulty correctly naming objects shown him from the living world.

Equally fascinating is chapter 5, “A Surprise in the Tower of Babel.” Here, Yoon discusses the possibility that all human beings possess an innate, phonologically determined system for assigning names. Were such a system to exist, Yoon reasons, it certainly might help to explain why people, irrespective of their native language(s), pick out the same set of words when asked to identify “bird names” from the following set of nonsense terms: *chicikia, terès, takaikit, máuts*. Onomasticians interested in anthropology, philosophy, and/or cognitive psychology will find this re-examination of Brent Berlin’s clinical findings intriguing. For those whose interests gravitate more toward mathematics and statistics, chapter 8, “Taxonomy by the Numbers,” can be highly recommended. Not to be missed is the truly amusing story of how Robert Sokal, “in pursuit of a six-pack of beer, would on a lark, immerse himself in a swarm of bees” (191) and emerge triumphant as one of the founders of “numerical taxonomy.” Yoon’s enjoyable retelling of the countless frustrations which Sokal faced along the way to his final success highlights perhaps the most compelling reason for recommending this work to onomastic scholars: the simple voyeuristic pleasure that comes from observing other scientists as they take on the mammoth task of classifying and naming all of Mother Nature’s creatures, both great and small. Despite all its many faults, then, *Naming Nature: The Clash Between Instinct and Science* remains an intellectually stimulating and highly enjoyable read.

University of Cologne, Germany

I. M. NICK

Proceedings of the 21st International Congress of Onomastic Sciences, Uppsala 19–24 August 2002

Vol. 3: Subsection 2b “The Conditions for Names” of Section 2 “Names and Society.” Edited by EVA BRYLLA and MATS WAHLBERG in collaboration with ROB RENTENAAR. Pp. 446. Uppsala: Institutet för språk och folkminnen. 2007. ISBN: 978-91-7229-041-9

Vol. 4: Section 4 “Name Dictionaries and Name Projects.” Edited by EVA BRYLLA and MATS WAHLBERG in collaboration with DIETER KREMER and BOTOLV HELLELAND. Pp. 420. Uppsala: Institutet för språk och folkminnen. 2008. ISBN: 978-91-7229-054-9

Vol. 5: Subsection 3a “(Papers in French and German)” and Subsection 3b “(Papers in English)” of Section 3 “Name Formation, Name Change and Name Loss.” Edited by EVA BRYLLA, MARIA OHLSSON, and MATS WAHLBERG in collaboration with WOLFGANG HAUBRICHS and TOM SCHMIDT. Pp. ix + 427. Uppsala: Institutet för språk och folkminnen. 2010. ISBN: 978-91-7229-074-7

The five-volume *Proceedings of the 21st International Congress of Onomastic Sciences* represents the state of scholarship in onomastics in 2002, although the last of the volumes (5) was published only recently. With all of the volumes from ICOS 21 now in print, there are approximately 1600 pages of materials on the study of names available to interested scholars.

As W. F. H. Nicolaisen noted in his review of the first two volumes of this series, the International Council of Onomastic Sciences meets every three years at academic venues to pursue and to share current research on names and names studies. The twenty-first gathering (2002) of ICOS was in Uppsala, Sweden, where a prodigious amount of onomastic material was presented by scholars from all over the world. In their preface, Eva Brylla and Mats Wahlberg give the following description of the Congress:

The congress, which in all attracted 374 participants from 41 countries, was organized in six sections: 1. Name theory, 2. Names and society (with two subsections, 2a. Names as sources and 2b. The conditions for names), 3. Name formation, name change and name loss, 4. Name dictionaries and name projects, 5. Name treatment and name planning, and 6. Names in literature. There were also three plenary sessions, two special sessions and a speech commemorating the centennial of the Royal Swedish Place-Name Committee.

I found it difficult to decide just how I might present a fair and complete review of so much material to the readers of *Names: A Journal of Onomastics* (without taxing the patience of our

editor who has strict limits set by the publisher on the number of printed pages which may appear in each issue of our Journal). So, having determined that there is no way that I can do justice to all of the work of the many outstanding scholars who published in this series, I offer the following.

Although 220 papers were read at the 2002 Congress, only 193 made it to print. It may be of interest to quickly categorize those papers in the sections into which they were assigned by the organizers:

1. Name Theory. [Volume 1] 23 papers (16 in English and 7 in German).
2. Names and Society. [Published in Volume 2 and Volume 3, below] 64 papers.
3. Names as Sources. [Volume 2] (18 in English, 9 in German, and 3 in French).
4. The Conditions for Names. [Volume 3] (20 in English, 9 in German, and 5 in French).
5. Name Formation, Name Change and Name Loss. [Volume 5] 41 papers (16 in English, 18 in German, and 7 in French).
6. Name Dictionaries and Name Projects. [Volume 4] 24 papers (10 in English, 11 in German, and 3 in French).
7. Name Treatment and Name Planning. [Volume 3] 21 papers (16 in English, 3 in German, and 2 in French).
8. Names in Literature. [Volume 1] 20 papers (6 in English, 9 in German, and 5 in French).

All told, of the 193 papers, 102 are in English, 66 are in German, and 25 are in French. These volumes demonstrate the preeminence of ICOS as the leading international onomastic society, drawing scholars from around the world to share their common interests in names and naming both within and across languages. These last three volumes under consideration provide an astounding wealth of onomastic scholarship which, unfortunately, we can only sample in a review of this size.

Everyone who picks up one of these volumes will find something which broadens his or her onomastic horizons. Here are some of the findings that caught my attention as I worked my way through Volumes 3, 4, and 5 which I thought might be of interest to others. Though I have limited myself to commenting on only a small number of the papers in each volume, there is much more to explore.

Volume 3: Names and Society, The Conditions for Names

- “Jüdische Patronymika vor dem Hintergrund der slawischen Kultur” [Jewish patronymics in the context of Slavic culture], by Zofia Abramowicz (5–14). We observe, on the one hand, the desire to preserve ethnic identity with personal names, while, on the other hand, the effect that the surrounding culture has had on names.
- “A Comparison of First Names in Norway and Sweden during the 20th Century,” by Gulbrand Alhaug (15–33). “The most striking result of this investigation of marker names is that Scandinavian names are much more frequent in Norway than in Sweden. There is reason to believe that such national names reflect a more general nationalistic attitude in Norway than in Sweden” (32). [A marker name as defined by the author is “a name which is used much more frequently in one region (or one period) than in the other one.”]
- “Contemporary Chinese Place-Names Consisting of Personal Names,” by Irena Kalużyńska (168–176). “The investigation of Chinese place-names consisting of personal names makes clear that in China the naming after surnames of families is to be distinguished from the naming from personal names of individuals” (175).
- “Russian Naming Patterns, 1874–1990,” by Edwin D. Lawson, Irina Glushkovskaya, and Richard F. Shell (193–206). “Our tentative conclusion is there was a significant rise in patriotic names in Soviet Russia somewhat similar to those in Latvia and Lithuania. This was due to two factors: 1) the rise of communism and 2) World War 2. There was a much less influence on the selection of names for girls” (205).

- “Generation Names in China: To Be or Not To Be?” by Li Zhonghua and Edwin D. Lawson (207–217). “Though people began to use the generation name in China more than 1,000 years ago, there has been a trend that fewer and fewer individuals are using it” (215).
- “Name Choices in Bilingual Families in Norway,” by Guro Reisæter (281–289). “The ethnically diverse town of Tromsø has been the focus of my survey of names in bilingual families. A symbol of this diversity also in names is the little boy *Mohammed*. His parents are refugees from Somalia, and Mohammed was the first child to be born in Tromsø into the new millennium. His birth and naming hopefully indicates a new period in Norwegian society of greater acceptance of the diversity and plurality in our midst, including naming culture” (289).
- “Numerology and Names,” by Rikke Steenholt Olesen (390–397). “For the practicing numerologist numerology is not only a science and a religious conviction but also a convenient way to make money” (396).

Volume 4: Name Dictionaries and Name Projects

- “Le Dictionnaire Historique de l’Anthroponymie Asturienne,” by Ana Maria Cano González (58–67). “One of the direct consequences of the project PatRom (Dictionnaire historique de l’anthroponymie Romane) is the compilation of dictionaries from the different linguistic areas, such as the historical dictionary of asturian anthroponymy” (58).
- “An Irish Microtoponymy Project,” by Éamon Lankford (98–102). “Due to major changes in agricultural and fishing practices, urbanization, Ireland’s entry to the European Union and other factors, the minor place-name heritage of Ireland was in danger of being lost and a methodology needed to be devised, if it was to be saved” (98).
- “Comparative Encyclopædia of Slavonic Proper Names,” by Ewa Rzetelska-Feleszko (159–163). “The decision to initiate the EOS [*Encyclopædia of Slavic Onomastics*] was taken in 1998 by the Commission of Slavonic Onomastics accredited at the International Slavonic Studies Committee. It was decided that onomastics in the Slavonic countries had had notable achievements that deserved a recapitulation based on a common and uniform method” (159).
- “A New Approach to Personal Names Dictionaries: The Proposed Canadian Forenames and Surnames Dictionary,” by Ken Tucker (195–224). “This paper proposes a radical departure from current forename and surname dictionaries by introducing rule-driven selection of the names by population coverage, and by including both surnames and forenames as the links between them offer valuable information regarding the Cultural cum Ethnic cum Language (CEL) group of the surname” (195).
- “Foreign Names and Italian Law,” by Alessia Bart (265–275). “The name, as an expression of personal identity, is explicitly considered in the Italian Constitution, in art. 22, which says that nobody may be deprived of his legal capacity, citizenship and name due to political reasons. [...] ‘Nobody’ in the formula means both Italians and foreigners, since that warranty covers a fundamental right of the person” (265).
- “The National Land Survey of Sweden and the Place-Names Law,” by Annette C. Torenjöö (404–410). “Through the inclusion of the Code of Good Practice paragraph in the Ancient Monuments and Finds Act, a one hundred-year-old tradition of working for the care and preservation of place-names has been consolidated” (410).

Volume 5: Name Formation, Name Change, and Name Loss

- “La genèse des noms de famille modernes dans les documents médiéval des Marches centrales en Italie,” by Ettore Baldetti (7–19). The genesis of modern family names in medieval documents . . . recorded in the twelfth century in the *Codice di San Gaudenzio*, a monastic cartulary being published by PatRom.

- “La survie des noms de famille,” by Pierre-Henri Billy (36–52). It is possible to follow the three phases of the life of a family name: its appearance, evolution, and extinction.
- “Personennamenwandel in Korea,” by Kwang-Sook Lie (188–197). Korean given names can be divided into three types: native, Sino-Korean, and foreign. Up to the seventh century native Korean names were used by both the upper and the lower classes. Contact with China brought the use of Sino-Korean given names by the upper classes. This eventually spread to other classes. The introduction of Christianity toward the end of the nineteenth century brought other foreign names into use.
- “Toponymy of the Solar System: A Methodological Proposal for an Analysis,” by Enzo Caffarelli (305–322). “Astrotoponyms have very rarely been considered as an object of study. Astronomers have mainly dealt with them for functional needs, without attention to morphologic or syntactic issues. [. . .] [U]ntil a few years ago there were no lists, no complete sources to control the names and the explications. But now the full nomenclature of the solar system is available, released by the IAU (International Astronomical Union) on the Internet” (305).
- “Cognitive and Pragmatic Aspects of Urban ‘Speech Topography,’” by Oxana Issers (350–352). “The subject of topography is the representation of territorial objects and the production of topographical maps. The everyday necessity of communicating about urban orientation creates ‘speech’ or ‘folk topography’ of a special type. It reflects the basic territorial objects of the modern urban environment that people refer to without using official administrative names” (350).

The foregoing is meant to whet the appetite of the inveterate lover of onomastics and is only a representation of what can be found in this impressive compilation. As Nicolaisen said in reviewing Volumes 1 and 2, “an overall impression [. . .] must suffice.”

Perusing these volumes and the volumes that will result from the recent conference of ICOS 24 in Barcelona will, I would wager, greatly increase the likelihood of your attendance at ICOS 25 in Glasgow in 2014.

Bibliography

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State University of New York at Binghamton

MICHAEL F. MCGOFF