

## Book Review

The Oxford Handbook of Names and Naming. Edited by CAROLE HOUGH, Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2016. Pp. 832. \$155. ISBN 9780199656431.

A sizeable tome at 832 pages, *The Oxford Handbook of Names and Naming* is a much needed resource that will prove not only beneficial to scholars of names but also attractive to more general names enthusiasts. Edited by Carole Hough, Professor of Onomastics at the University of Glasgow, the substantial volume offers a global perspective on names and naming traditions, both in regard to its broad scope and in terms of the scholarship it contains. Onomasticians from Belgium, China, Denmark, England, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Russia, Scotland, South Africa, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United States contributed their expertise and knowledge to this volume. Credit for this handbook must also be accorded Daria Izdebska, University of Glasgow, who served as Hough's assistant for this ambitious publication.

Providing separate sections on theory, toponomastics, anthroponomastics, literary onomastics, and socio-onomastics, the handbook covers major areas in names studies. Additionally, the volume provides valuable information on onomastic practices in many disciplines. A final section houses additional names studies that defy ready placement in the above categories but that are worthy of inclusion. In most sections, onomastic principles and methodologies are introduced and explained in a lead chapter, with subsequent chapters providing scholarly research and case studies that demonstrate these principles and methods in action. In this capacity, the book may serve not only as a general reference tool for names researchers but also as a useful textbook for introductory courses in onomastics at the undergraduate level and even more advanced courses at the graduate level.

While it is possible to read this handbook in its entirety cover to cover (and, should you choose to do so, allow yourself sufficient time), its design is more conducive to selective readings based on professional or personal interests. The volume's 47 chapters are arranged by category into seven major parts, beginning with a section on onomastic theory. Additionally, the editor provides useful front and back matter. In her preface to *The Oxford Handbook of Names and Naming*, Hough acknowledges explicitly the broad appeal of names studies, while suggesting implicitly the need for her very volume:

The study of names, known as onomastics, is central to the work of scholars in various disciplines. It is also of enduring interest to the wider public, many of whom participate enthusiastically in societies formed to investigate names of different kinds. Indeed, name studies is an area where it is often essential for academics and non-academics to work closely together, with local knowledge making an important contribution to scholarly research. (vii)

The handbook's front matter is comprised of Hough's Preface, a Table of Contents, a List of Figures, a List of Abbreviations, and a List of Contributors. Longtime ANS members and subscribers to the journal *Names* will surely recognize a few names among the distinguished scholars who contributed to this work: Edwin D. Lawson, Bertie Neethling, Cleveland K. Evans, and Grant W. Smith, among others. The volume's back matter provides an extensive Bibliography of publications, well worth perusing, as these works may prove of assistance in current or future names research. Finally, two useful indices are provided, one on subjects and one on languages.

Having sought such a comprehensive resource to aid my own names research in the past, and having been disappointed, I was delighted to learn that Oxford University Press was publishing the very volume I desired as part of its highly regarded Oxford Handbooks in Linguistics series. Still, upon first opening this much anticipated volume, I must confess to feelings of not only excitement but of intimidation. How to proceed? The best place to begin, I find, is Hough's Introduction. Essential reading, this first chapter provides necessary background, establishes onomastic ground rules, and previews all sections contained in the work. Of the volume's broad scope, Hough notes that "Named entities are not limited to people and places, but extend to other living creatures, man-made objects, and celestial bodies, all reflecting different aspects of the interaction between humans and their surroundings" (1). Within the editor's observation lies the logic behind her schematic for the volume's arrangement.

Name theory dates back to the ancients, Hough reminds us, and the grammatical status of names has been a topic of dispute among intellectuals ever since. *Part I Onomastic Theory* contains three chapters that address such differences of opinion. Willy Van Langendonck and Mark Van de Velde explore the pragmatic-semantic functions of names in their chapter on "Names and Grammar." In "Names and Meaning," Staffan Nyström examines the various types of meanings that attach to names. This section on theory concludes with "Names and Discourse," in which Elwys De Stefani presents his concept of interactional onomastics through an examination of the roles names play in spoken language. Collectively, these chapters present an overview of theories related to the denotative, connotative, and social functions of names.

Eight chapters comprise *Part II Toponomastics*, the section of the handbook that focuses on the study of place names. The first entry in this section, Simon Taylor's "Methodologies in Place-name Research," offers an overview of practices associated with studies in toponomastics. Subsequent entries provide case studies. Some chapters, such as Svante Strandberg's "River Names," Peter Drummond's "Hill and Mountain Names," and Peder Gammeltoft's "Island Names," address the naming of natural geological features. Other chapters focus on the naming of civilization's byproducts. These include Carole Hough's "Settlement Names," Julia Kuhn's "Rural Names," and Bertie Neethling's "Street Names: A Changing Urban Landscape." The final chapter in this section, Stefan Brink's "Transferred Names and Analogy in Name-formation," deviates somewhat from other chapters in this section as it "deals not with a type of referent but with a type of naming strategy" (5).

The lead chapter in *Part III Anthroponomastics* – the study of individual and group names – is supervised by Edwin D. Lawson. A true collaboration, "Personal Naming Systems" includes individual reports on naming systems in 15 representative languages as prepared by 15 noted scholars. Their reports are arranged alphabetically from *Hebrew* through *Zulu*. Bookending these reports is Lawson's own comparative study on "the relationships of naming systems to one another," which includes an expansive chart that documents similarities and differences within these systems (170). An apt companion piece is Katharina Leibring's "Given Names in European Systems," which covers both historic and recent European naming trends. Patrick Hanks and Harry Parkin's "Family Names" and Eva Brylla's "Bynames and Nicknames" explore important branches in the anthroponomastic family tree. Adrian Koopman's "Ethnonyms" – names given to ethnic groups – considers "the relationship between ethnonyms and race, nationality, geography, language, and religion" (252). The final chapters in this section, Ellen S. Bramwell's "Personal Names and Anthropology" and George Redmonds' "Personal Names and Genealogy," expand the scope of individual naming practices by connecting them to research fields.

As a practitioner of literary onomastics, I am mildly disappointed that – with the exception of the theory section – *Part IV Literary Onomastics* contains the fewest entries in the handbook, but the quality of these chapters more than compensates. Grant W. Smith's seminal chapter, "Theoretical Foundations of Literary Onomastics" both opens and grounds this section. Smith reviews several theories relevant to literary onomastics before he weighs in favor of a semiotic approach to the study of literary names. Other chapters in this section emphasize key approaches to scholarship in this field. Birgit Falck-Kjällquist explicates a "Genre-based Approach to Names in

Literature.” In her “Corpus-Based Approaches to Names in Literature,” Karina van Dalen-Oskam argues for larger datasets in literary names analysis, the collection and processing of which computers and software programs now make possible. Think, for example, of compiling all the names in Jane Austen’s oeuvre for data analysis! Paul Cavill applies linguistic methodology to the study of names in fiction in “Language-based Approaches to Names in Literature.” Drawing his examples from various time periods, Cavill references the naming practices of Chaucer, Shakespeare, and Dickens, among other literary-historical personages. What appears at first to be a misplaced chapter is Bertie Neethling’s case study, “Names in Songs: A Comparative Analysis of Billy Joel’s *We Didn’t Start the Fire* and Christopher Torre’s *Hot Gates*,” but the author makes a compelling case for his inclusion of song lyrics in the literary category, noting their relationship to poetry. I find Neethling’s chapter among the most accessible and enjoyable in the volume.

The seven chapters in *Part V Socio-Onomastics* examine both personal and place names through various social lenses. In “Names in Society,” Terhi Ainiala reminds readers that “Names are always born in the interaction between people, the linguistic community, and the environment” (371); she provides important context for the more pragmatic chapters that follow. While several sections in this volume limit discussions of theory and practice to a single overview chapter, *Part V* includes discussions of theory and methods within a number of entries. Exemplary in this regard are Emilia Aldrin’s “Names and Identity” and Guy Puzey’s “Linguistic Landscapes,” as they offer veritable blueprints for conducting socio-onomastic research. Generously, both authors provide suggestions for future studies in their areas of interest. Other entries that demonstrate sociolinguistic methods applied to names research include Laura Kostanski’s “Toponymic Attachment,” Irma Taavitsainen and Andreas H. Jucker’s “Forms of Address,” Katarzyna Aleksiejuk’s “Pseudonyms,” and Paula Sjöblom’s “Commercial Names.”

*Part VI Onomastics and Other Disciplines* addresses the interrelatedness of names studies. Not surprisingly, it is the most expansive section in the volume with 10 chapters. Certainly, as other sections attest, onomastics may stand alone as a field of inquiry, but often it is in connection to other disciplines that its practice occurs. In this section, almost every title begins with “Names and...”. Chapters are arranged alphabetically and include “... Archeology” by Richard Jones, “... Cognitive Psychology” by Serge Brédart, “... Dialectology” by Margaret Scott, “... Geography” by Peder Gammeltoft, “... History” by Gillian Fellows-Jensen, “... Historical Linguistics” by Richard Coates, “... Language Contact” by Berit Sandnes, “... Law” by Andreas Teutsch, and “... Lexicography” by Alison Grant. True to their titles, the authors explore the various ways names interface with these diverse disciplines. Only the last chapter breaks the titular pattern. Kay Muhr’s “Place-names and Religion: A study of Early Christian Ireland” investigates how landscapes become sacralized through naming processes. That the editor might have placed Muhr’s chapter in *Part II Toponomastics* further emphasizes the interdisciplinary nature of names studies. Hough admits that the chapters in *Part VI* are representative rather than complete: “Their number could easily have been multiplied, and readers will no doubt be able to think of other topics that could have been included” (10). As the volume editor suggests, “Names and ...” could extend exponentially.

Picture if you will *The Oxford Handbook of Names and Naming* as a wardrobe bureau with seven drawers. In the uppermost drawer are neatly folded onomastic theories. Further, imagine an onomastician choosing a theory from the top drawer, then sliding open a lower drawer from which to select an item to coordinate with the chosen theory. In this manner an onomastic ensemble may be assembled and research questions addressed. Drawers two through four in descending order hold place names, personal names, and literary names. Third up from the bureau’s base is drawer five, in which societal names nestle comfortably. Second from the bottom, in drawer six, specialty items from other disciplines are arrayed. What shall the onomastician pair with names today? Will it be archeology, cognitive psychology, or perhaps geography? Only the bottom drawer remains to be explored. This is the proverbial *junk drawer*, where onomastic topics that don’t pair well with items in the upper drawers appear to be tossed.

As the concluding section in the volume, *Part VII Other Types of Names* provides a catch-all for six names studies that don't correspond to the foci of the better established sections. Full of curiosities, it is perhaps the most interesting drawer in the bureau. Among these six marvels, four focus on moving objects: Guy Puzey's "Aircraft Names," Richard Coates' "Railway Locomotive Names and Train Names," Malcolm Jones' "Ship Names," and Marc Alexander's "Astronomical Names." I am somewhat puzzled by the placement of Adrian Koopman's "Names of Dwellings" in this section as it appears to me to fit within the realm of toponomastics. In his study, Koopman looks at the names accorded private houses, country homes, and castles. Finally, Katharina Leibring's contribution presents an overview of "Animal Names" culled from many places and time periods. I recommend rifling through this *junk drawer*, as it contains assorted onomastic treasures.

*The Oxford Handbook of Names and Naming* deserves placement on an accessible reference shelf in every public library, university library, and, for active names researchers, private home library. Expansive in scope, logical in its arrangement, finely edited, and replete with contributions from leading names experts around the world, this is the essential reference guide to all matters onomastic, for which we have long waited.

*Louisiana Tech University*

DOROTHY DODGE ROBBINS

