ONOMASTICS

in Interaction With Other Branches of Science

Volume 1
KEYNOTE LECTURES
TOPONOMASTICS

Edited by
URSZULA BIJAK
PAWEŁ SWOBODA
JUSTYNA B. WALKOWIAK

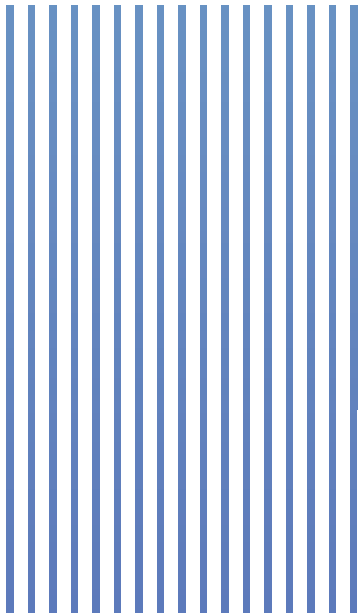# ONOMASTICS

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Keynote Lectures

Toponomastics

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Reflection of Social and Political Changes in the Linguistic Landscape: Demonstrated by Examples From Banská Bystrica

Abstract

The paper analyses historical and political changes in the linguistic landscape (hereafter LL) using as exemplification the names of streets in Banská Bystrica (hereafter BB) which reflected significant social and political changes that took place in the course of the 20th century. This viewpoint covers a synchronous approach; however, diachrony will be examined too. The LL is documented by means of changes in BB urbanonyms and by means of analysis of historical photographs depicting particular historical periods. Urbanonyms represent a significant part of LL, and compared to other elements, react the most significantly to examined historical and political changes. The dominant political establishment ideologically influences inhabitants, and this is also done by means of official urbanonyms known in LL as top-down signs. Diachronic urbanonymy of BB centre covers naming changes of several streets in the years 1525–2019.

1. Introduction

In this paper we pay attention to social and political changes and their reflection in the linguistic landscape (hereafter the LL) of the city centre of Banská Bystrica (hereafter BB). In addition to the viewpoint of proper nouns, we must also notice common nouns that make the semantic context of the LL complete. The time span of the period under study is the beginning of the 20th century – a period in which Slovakia was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the end of World War I and the emergence of independent Czechoslovakia, the outbreak of the Slovak National Uprising in August 1944 – an important stage of liberation of Czechoslovakia, and 1989 – the onset of democratic change associated with private enterprise and the opening up of Slovakia to the West. At the same time, we contextualize the language situation against the background of contemporary language policy in a given territory at a given time. The decisive moments on the timeline were the periods of change in the political order in the language area.

2. Definition of the linguistic landscape

In defining the notion LL and the content characteristics of this term, we proceed primarily from the definition of a pair of authors – Rodrigue Landry and Richard Z. Bourhis (1997), who characterize the LL as "the language of public road signs, advertising billboards, street names, place names, commercial shop signs, and public signs on government buildings" (p. 25). In the Slovak linguistic space, we can mention the definition of the LL by Satinská (2014), who understands the language landscape as a visual representation of language in public space (p. 158). According to her, all inscriptions belong here, regardless of their origin. She understands the LL as a dynamic entity created by institutions or individuals, but, on the other hand, the LL influences people who pass through this space and perceive it. Therefore, she not only analyzes the names of companies, shops, inscriptions on the walls, but also considers who this information is intended for and how people can perceive it.

Bauko (2019) also dealt with the issue in a linguistically mixed area, examining the LL in the bilingual Slovak-Hungarian environment of Komárno. However, Bauko understands the LL more broadly, because in addition to verbal (written) text, according to him, the LL also includes extralinguistic elements. Therefore, he does not use the term LL, but works with the term 'onomastic-semiotic image of the landscape', which according to his definition consists of onyms (especially anthroponyms, toponyms and chrematonyms) found on nameplates, signs in public spaces, various areas (e.g., posters, buildings, tombstones, plaques) and extralinguistic signs (e.g., photos, statues, emblems, drawings) that point to their own names (Bauko, 2019, p. 138). Therefore, taking into account not only the onomastic side of the language system, but also its appellative part, we should rather consider the lexical-semiotic image of the landscape. This example also shows the multidimensionality of the LL issues and its different perceptions in onomastics, sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, sociology, etc.

3. Urbanonymy and ideology

In the European area, language is considered to be the main characteristic feature of nationality and a tool of power. The state, personified by political elites, is well aware of this fact and promotes ideological values also through language policy, which acts as a powerful tool for influencing the thinking and subsequent action of the inhabitants of the language area at a specific time (see Table 1 below). In this respect, the following periods on the timeline are decisive for the region of Slovakia (see Figure 1 below):

| until 1918 Austro-Hungarian Empire | 1918–1938 Interwar Czechoslovakia | 1939–1945 Fascist Slovak State (war years) | 1945–1989 Czechoslovakia – socialist period | 1989–1993 from socialist to democratic Czechoslovakia | since 1993 independent Slovakia |
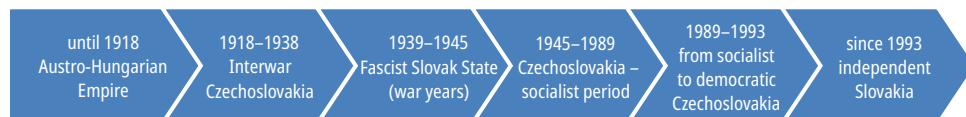
Figure 1. Timeline of political changes influencing the language situation in the Slovak area

Source: own work.

- The period of the Austro-Hungarian Empire until 1918, when German and Hungarian were considered prestigious languages. In the examined part of Banská Bystrica LL this fact was reflected in urbanonyms personified in top-down inscriptions respecting the orthographic rules of the given languages and historical figures from the monarchist context (see *Béla Király tér*, *Deák Ferenc utca* or *Kossuth Lajos utca*). During the Empire, Hungarian clearly dominated over other languages. The only nation-building element was considered to be one Hungarian political nation, where minorities could be educated and communicate in their mother tongue only to a limited extent. Article XLIV of the National Law from 1868 promoted Hungarian as the official state language in all areas of official communication. Hungarian pressure was confirmed by several subsequent laws introducing compulsory teaching of Hungarian to schools at the expense of other subjects. For example, the Act of 1896 on the Hungarianization of all geographical names in the state, as well as the Hungarianization of personal names and surnames of every inhabitant of Hungary (Mosný & Laclavíková, 2020, p. 33). These laws were amplified in 1907 with the so-called Apponyi's laws applicable to both state and church schools. According to them, everyone, regardless of their mother tongue, had to learn Hungarian in speech and in writing by the end of the 4th grade of primary school. The mother tongue (other than Hungarian) was allowed to be used in the first stage of primary school only, for a maximum of one hour per week (Mosný & Laclavíková, 2020).
- The inter-war period just after the break-up of the monarchy after the World War I in the years 1918–1938 meant a qualitative change in the field of language, but not linguistic autonomy. The first Czechoslovakia represented a "small monarchy" in the context of the language situation. Users of Czech, Slovak, Hungarian, German, Ruthenian, etc. lived in the given area. However, only the "Czechoslovak nation" (as claimed by the constitution adopted in 1920 and on which the contemporary language law was based) was considered a state-forming nation, even though it never really existed. Thus, there was no "Czechoslovak language" (cf. e.g., Bartoš, 2011), to which the law referred. In practice, this meant the ability to communicate in either Slovak or Czech. The term official or state language was not legally defined in interwar Czechoslovakia. The legislation was based on the so-called language law, that is, the right to communicate with the authorities in the respective mother tongue. In the LL of BB, this was

reflected in the change of names to Czechoslovak ones, for example, *Béla Király tér* was transformed into *Masaryk Square*, which bore the name of the first president of the inter-war period.

- The period of World War II in the years 1939–1945 represents a high degree of Slovakization (i.e. purism) at the expense of other language groups (including the Czech-speaking inhabitants) with the exception of German speakers. At the same time, the Slovak language demonstrates state power and the promotion of then predominantly clerical fascist ideals. This situation was also reflected in the LL (see Table 1 – column 1939–1945).

- The post-war period from 1945 to 1989 was characterized by the promotion and cultivation of the standard form of the Slovak language in state institutions (especially in the media and at all levels of schools). An idealized narrative of anti-fascist resistance and communist ideals persisted in the LL (see Table 1 – columns 1945–1953, 1953–1961 and 1961–1989). The paradox of the time was the fact that top state officials were known to violate the norm of standard language in public speeches.

- The period after the dissolution of the Czechoslovak Federal State and the creation of an independent Slovak Republic in 1993 and after the adoption of the Act on the Protection of the State Language in 1995 and its later amendments. The Language Act stipulates the use of Slovak as the state language in the territory of the Slovak Republic (Zákon č. 270/1995). For violations, it even imposes fines in the range of 50 to 2,500 euros through the Ministry of Culture (the act passed in 1995 when fines were paid in Slovak crowns, however, fines can be charged today in Euros). In 2001, the Concept of Care for the State Language of the Slovak Republic was approved in Slovakia. Its aim is to eliminate shortcomings in the use of the Slovak standard language and to supervise compliance with its standards in the public communications sphere, which are contained in codification manuals (Franková, 2009, p. 134). There is no consensus among the experts themselves, some of whom strongly insist on compliance with the written language and sanctions in the event of a breach, while their opponents argue that respect for the written standard cannot be enforced by users of the language through sanctions. This turn in terms of politics and ideological values is also reflected in the LL (see Table 1 – column 1990–2019).

Urbanonyms and wall signs with the names of streets and squares, which belong to the group of top-down signs within the LL, have long been a means

of ideological pressure of the ruling authorities (as explained above) on people moving in the social space. David and Mácha (2012) define it as domination of the territory and the formation of a centralized state administration (p. 30). Urbanonyms (especially commemorative urbanonyms) are among the toponyms that change most dynamically with the change of political regimes (e.g., Odaloš, 1994, 1996; David & Mácha, 2012; Křížová & Martínek, 2017; Ptáčníková, 2019, 2021). Rapid changes in this part of the LL can be demonstrated on the example of changes in the names of streets and squares of the historic centre of BB in the observed period of the 20th century – five streets and or two squares – see Figures 1 and 2.

Figure 2. The map of the examined area

Source: Google Maps.

The beginnings of BB are connected with German colonists, who increased the prestige of the original settlement by developing the mining of precious metals. King Béla IV of Hungary granted BB the status of a town in 1255. The forming town centre bore German names: today's SNP Square is mentioned as the *Ring* in 1589, the lower street leading to the central square was named *Untere Gasse* in the same year, the opposite Upper Street (*Horná ulica*) bore the name *Obere Gasse*. Furthermore, today's 'Kapitulská Street' was called *Graner Gasse* in German; the motivation was its location, as it leads from the square to the river Hron (Gran in German). Other streets examined in this study are not mentioned in 1589, because they did not exist at that time.

The renaming took place in the period of Austria-Hungary in the second half of the 19th century – after the Austro-Hungarian Compromise of 1867. Kurhajcová (2012) states that the trend of renaming streets in Budapest later spread to other parts of Hungary due to the new hierarchy of political power in the country after 1867, three types of these urban places were divided in the Budapest area: 1) names according to figures referring to the pagan and Christian tradition; 2) names according to the members of the Habsburg dynasty and 3) names according to the names of important Hungarian figures (e.g. national heroes from the uprisings and the revolutionary struggles of 1848/49, regional personalities) (Kurhajcová, 2012, p. 114).

In the years 1896–1918, the Central Banská Bystrica Square (*Námestie SNP*) was named *Béla Király tér* after the Hungarian King Béla IV, who granted Banská Bystrica town status. The official names at that time were Hungarian, so the urban names also had a Hungarian form – *Dolná ulica* was called *Kossuth Lajos utca* – named after a Hungarian politician, a fighter for the ethnic purity of Hungary and Hungary's independence from Austria and the leader of the Hungarian revolution of 1848–1849; today's 'Kapitulská Street' in this period bore the name *Wesselényi Ferencz utca* – in honor of František Vešeléni (Wesselényi Ferencz in Hungarian), who also fought in the anti-Habsburg uprisings; its parallel street (today's 'Národná Street') leading from the square to the Hron was originally named after Count Serényi (*Gr. Serényi utca*), who was the Minister of Agriculture in the Hungarian government. However, no earlier than in 1913 the street was renamed 'Sokolská Street' (referring to the popular Slavic Sokol sports movement). Today's 'Horná Street' was named *Bethlen Gábor utca* – after the leader of the anti-Habsburg uprising. Also, today's 'Skuteckého Street' can be mentioned, then called *Deák Ferenc utca* – after a Hungarian politician who contributed to the Austro-Hungarian Compromise

of 1867. Naming these central streets and squares, the Hungarian government declared its political power, with streets dedicated to important personalities of Hungarian history who greatly contributed to the strong position of Hungarians in the monarchy. The paradox was that some of these personalities fought against the Habsburg dynasty, who also ruled in Hungary.

An important social and political phase was the year 1918, which marked not only the end of World War I, but also the disintegration of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the establishment of the first Czechoslovak Republic led by President Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk. The square in BB was renamed 'Masaryk Square' in his honor; its upper part was set aside as a separate square and was given the name *Horné námestie* ('Upper Square'). Today's streets – *Dolná ulica* ('Lower Street') and *Horná ulica* ('Upper Street') – were given Slovak names according to the direction to the square; *Skuteckého ulica* ('Skutecky´s Street') was called *Súdobná ulica* ('Courts' Street') – because of the courts that are still there today; the original *Serényi utca*[1] ('Serényi's Street', later Sokolská Street derived from the Sokol Movement) after 1918 was called *Národná ulica* ('National Street'), and with that name was dedicated to the Czech-Slovak nation which was forming as the basis of the new state unit; finally, *Kapitulská ulica* ('Kapitula Street', derived from the seat of the bishops) was named after the bishop's church at its end into the square.

Another important stage, which ideologically influenced the urbanonyms of BB, were the years 1939–1945, the period of the establishment of the fascist Slovak state, arising from the will of Adolf Hitler. The Slovak state, despite the declaration of independence, was under the control of Germany. The ideological pressure of the clergy fascists was also reflected in the renaming of urban places. The first Czech-Slovak president was a persona non grata and the square was renamed after the (then deceased) leader of the strongest political party, Andrej Hlinka, whose name is associated with the cult of personality, which was declared the state ideology of the then Slovak state. The second significant change was the renaming of *Súdobná ulica* ('Courts' Street' – today's 'Skutecky's Street') to 'Adolf Hitler Street' (*Ulica Adolfa Hitlera* in Slovak). The other streets around the square were not renamed, which means that the ideological pressure of the state manifested itself only in renaming the central square and "out of gratitude" to Nazi

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[1] Till 1918, the streets bore Hungarian names, e.g. *utca* for 'street'.

Germany one street was renamed in honor of Adolf Hitler. The renaming of this street as a dedication to the German Führer is also related to the fact that on this street were situated courts and a city prison, prominent institutions of suppressive power.

The next important phase was the end of World War II and the re-establishing of the pre-war Czechoslovak Republic, also manifested by the urbanonyms returning to their pre-war form. The resonance of democratic principles manifested itself in urbanonymy. For instance, despite the communist coup in 1948 and the establishment of a totalitarian regime, the name of the central square, 'Masaryk Square', remained. This situation may also be related to the fact that the son of T. G. Masaryk – Jan Masaryk – served in the postwar government until his assassination as Minister of Foreign Affairs. Totalitarian communist power and the vassal relationship with the Soviet Union were manifested in the renaming of the streets only in 1953. In this year, the main square was renamed *Námestie Národného povstania* ('the National Uprising Square') – after the Slovak National Uprising in 1944. The original 'Upper Square' (*Horné námestie*) was renamed 'Red Army Square' (*Námestie Červenej armády*), whereas 'Dolná Street' became 'Malinovského Street' (*Malinovského ulica*), after the Marshal of the Soviet Union R. J. Malinovsky, who commanded the 2nd Ukrainian Front and liberated much of Czechoslovakia. The defeat of Hitler was symbolically completed in BB by renaming former 'Adolf Hitler Street' (now Skuteckého Street) to 'J. V. Stalin Street'. Ideologically, the name of today's 'Horná Street' was also changed to 'Širokého[2] Street' – the then Prime Minister of Czechoslovakia (1953–1963) and representative of the centralist and dogmatic wing of Slovak politics in the 1950s. Communist ideological pressure, the irreconcilability of communist ideology with the church and the presentation of symbols of communist power were also reflected in the renaming of today's 'Kapitulská Street' to 'Polevého Street' – after the Soviet journalist and writer. Furthermore, 'Národná' Street was renamed 'February Victory Street', which was related to the establishment of communist totalitarianism in February 1947. The ending of the cult of personality in the Soviet Union after Stalin's death, as well as in Czechoslovakia

[2] Viliam Široký was a significant personality in the Czechoslovak communist regime holding various high positions during his life (Prime minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs, MP, etc.). The examined street was renamed after the then living personality, one of the main developers of the cult of personality, K. Gottwald.

after the death of Gottwald, did not yet lead to the mitigation of the harshest totalitarianism accompanied by contrived political processes. The mitigation only started to occur in the early 1960s, which was reflected in the change of street names. 'Stalinova Street' was renamed 'Obrancov mieru Street', 'Širokého Street' returned to its original name 'Horná Street' and 'B. Polevého Street' was named 'Moyzesova Street', after Catholic Bishop[3] and First Chairman of the Slovak Matica, Štefan Moyzes. The central square was renamed *Námestie SNP* in 1961. These changes in urban planning are also a reference to the retreat of the Bolshevism of the Communist Party from the 1950s and the release of the hard pressure of the totalitarian regime. Nevertheless, the LL emphasized the main role of the Communist Party in society, the celebration of and loyalty to the USSR.

Political and social changes in the countries of Central Europe, which until then were political satellites of the USSR, also led to the fall of communist totalitarianism and democratization of life in Czechoslovakia. These changes were also reflected in the renaming of streets and squares throughout the country (see e.g., Odaloš, 1994, 1996). The ideologically significant street dedicated to Hitler or later to Stalin was named after the important painter Dominik Skutecký, who lived and worked in BB from 1889. The name of the street leading from the square near the Chapter Church returned to the original name 'Kapitulská Street' and the personality of Štefan Moyzes was honoured by naming the upper square to *Námestie Š. Moyzesa*, *Horná* and *Dolná ulica* remained named after their location, thus fulfilling one of the postulates of the urban planners of the time – the de-ideologisation of names. The older name from the communist period – 'February Victory Street' – changed to 'Národná Street', and thus the requirement of remembrance of urbanonyms was met (Odaloš, 1996, p. 83).

The changes of the monitored urbanonyms in the BB centre from a diachronic point of view are documented in Table 1:

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[3] The Catholic bishop was important for the communist regime as a crucial figure from the past fighting for national emancipation of Slovaks in the second half of the 19th century. He became the first chairman of Matica slovenská, the important Slovak institution established to help Slovakians emancipate themselves in the 19th century in the Austro-Hunagarian Empire.

Table 1. Diachrony of street names in the centre of BB

1525–1526	1589	1896–1918	1918–1939	1939–1945	1945–1953	1953–1961	1961–1989	1990–August 1990	1990–2019
	Ring	Béla Király tér	Masarykovo námestie	Hlinkovo námestie	Masarykovo námestie	nám. Národného povstania	nám. SNP	Námestie SNP	Námestie SNP
			Horné námestie	Horné námestie	Horné námestie	námestie Červenej armády	námestie Červenej armády	Nám. baníckeho povstania	Moyzesovo námestie
Špitálska	Untere Gasse	Kossuth Lajos utca	Dolná ulica	Dolná ulica	Dolná ulica	Malinovského ulica	Malinovského ulica	Dolná ulica	Dolná ulica
		Deák Ferenc utca	Súdobná ulica	ulica Adolfa Hitlera	Súdobná ulica	ulica J. V. Stalina	ulica Obrancov mieru	Skuteckého ulica	Skuteckého ulica
Horná	Obere Gasse	Bethlen Gábor utca	Horná ulica	Horná ulica	Horná ulica	ulica V. Širokého	Horná ulica	Horná ulica	Horná ulica
Hron-ská	Graner Gasse	Wesselényi Ferencz utca	Kapitulská ulica	Kapitulská ulica	Kapitulská ulica	ul. B. Polevého	Moyzesova ulica	Kapitulská ulica	Kapitulská ulica
		Gr. Serényi utca, od 1913 Sokolská ulica	Národná ulica	Národná ulica	Národná ulica	ul. Februárového víťazstva	ul. Februárového víťazstva	Národná ulica	Národná ulica

Source: own work.

Until the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy (1918), the situation of Slovaks in Hungary was very difficult. Hungarian laws suppressed Slovaks' rights to national identity, Slovakian was banned as a language of instruction in schools, and Magyarization of Slovaks gained momentum, especially in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. These pressures also manifested themselves in the LL. Originally Slovak proper names as parts of company names, some urbanonyms, and loyalty to state institutions were reflected in the inscriptions on the buildings – for example, the name of the roller mill, which was situated at the beginning of 'Dolná Street' at the entrance to the town, was in Hungarian (Figure 3). The Hungarian name *Első Beszterczebányai henger malom* can be translated as the 'First Banská Bystrica Roller Mill'.

Figure 3. First Banská Bystrica Roller Mill

Source: Archive of the Central Slovak Museum in Banská Bystrica.

Names of owners of shops and companies were in this period written in the Hungarian order with the surname first, followed by the given name (unlike the Slovak order – with the given name followed by the surname). Thus in Figures 4 and 5, first the surname of the owner (*Stollmann*) is given, then the abbreviation of the given name (*A.*). The full name is written in Hungarian spelling, because the Slovak form of the name is *Alexander Štollmann*. Hungarian writes the sound š in the s form. The name of the female shop owner (Figure 6) is also written in Hungarian form and in Hungarian spelling – the Slovak name *Žofia Juráková* is in the typical Hungarian order – the surname followed by her given name. Her surname has the masculine form (without the Slovak feminine surname suffix -ová), and the first name Žofia is written in the Hungarian form *Zsófia*.

Figure 4. Private signs

Figure 5. Detail of the sign

Figure 6. Female name

Source: Archive of the Central Slovak Museum in Banská Bystrica.

Several historical photographs from the end of the 19th century show two triumphal arches or gates in the area of the beginning of 'Dolná Street', by which the ruling officials of the time manifested their political preference regarding the Hungarianization of Slovakia – the official inscriptions on the gates are in Hungarian. Both gates were erected on occasions of welcoming certain dignitaries and dismantled shortly afterward. On the first gate (Figure 7, detail in Figure 9) there was the inscription *Isten Hozott!*, which can be translated literally as 'Greetings to the Lord God!', or in a free translation as 'Welcome!'. Some historians believe that it was to welcome Štefan Tisza – Prime Minister of Hungary in 1903–1905 and 1913–1917. According to researcher historian at

Matej Bel University, A. Kurhajcová,[4] (e-mail correspondence of June 13, 2021), it was a solemn welcome of the newly appointed bishop of the BB diocese, Karol Rimely on September 13, 1893. In her opinion, this is also evidenced by his personal coat of arms placed in the middle of the gate (Figure 8).

Figure 7. Gate

Figure 8. Detail of the gate

Figure 9. 'Welcome'

Figure 10. Triumphal Arch

Figure 11. Detail of the sign on the Triumphal Arch

Source: Archive of the Central Slovak Museum in Banská Bystrica

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[4] Whom we would like to thank for her co-operation.

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The second triumphal arch (Figure 10, detail in Figure 11) was built exactly at the same site in 1897 on the occasion of the appointment of Baron Radvanský to the office of mayor of Zvolen County. On the gate was the inscription *Éljen báró Radvánszky János!*, translated as 'Long live Baron Ján Radvanský!' In addition to the Hungarian language, the Hungarian order of names and the Hungarianized form of both his surname (Radvánszky) and given name (János) were used in this inscription.

An important milestone, which significantly affected the LL (especially top-down inscriptions), was the year 1918. In that year, World War I ended, but the most important fact was that the First Czechoslovak Republic was established on the ruins of the disintegrated Austro-Hungarian Empire. The very establishment of Czechoslovakia was preceded by several important agreements, which also influenced the form of the LL. The union of two independent nations – Czechs and Slovaks – into one state unit was guaranteed by the Cleveland Agreement of 22 October 1915, and also guaranteed the use of the Slovak language as a state language. The later Pittsburgh Agreement, signed on 30 May 1918, guaranteed the use of Slovak in offices, schools and public life. Legislatively, the issue of street renaming also began to be addressed. A bill passed 24 July 1919 regulated the naming of streets, squares and businesses (see Odaloš, 2000, pp. 281–282). The legislation had two parts: instructional and prohibitive, in which restrictive measures were defined. For example, streets, squares, parks could not be named after the names of members of the Habsburg family, after the names of the ruling families of enemy states, after the names of persons who had been hostile to the Czechoslovak nation and after the events that humiliated the Czechoslovak nation. The naming of streets in the new state was defined by Act no. 266 of 14 April 1920 on the names of towns, villages and streets, as well as the designation of municipalities by local tables and the numbering of houses (Odaloš, 2000, p. 282).

The first important historical turning point in the 20th century was the establishment of Czechoslovakia (1918), which meant the disintegration of monarchy and the end of Hungarianization in Slovakia. Figures 12 and 13 (see below) depict the expressions of loyalty to the new Republic: until 1918 *Holesch Arpád*, after 1918 *Arpád Holesch*. Hungarian naming order is overturned in favor of Slovakian naming order.

Figure 12. Sign before 1918: Holesch Arpád

Figure 13. Sign after 1918: Arpád Holesch

Source: Archive of the Central Slovak Museum in Banská Bystrica.

During the spring of 1945 ideologization in the LL was obviously demonstrated by the following inscriptions neglecting the fact that other nationalities participated in the liberation of the area as well (Figure 14): *„проверено, мин нет („provereno, min net“), СИВ*[5] *Стл-т*[6] *Диков“* means 'Verified, no mines, Engineer Troops, Senior Lieutenant Dikov'.

Figure 14. Russian sign

Source: https://www.pamatihodnosti.sk/pamatihodnost/?itemId=26

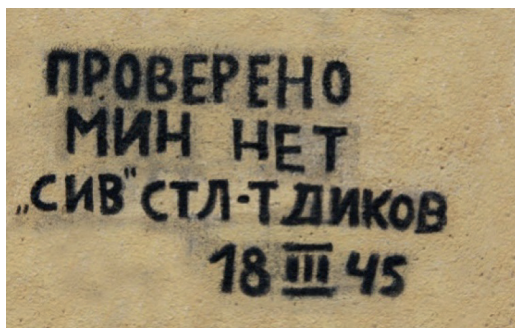The city of Banská Bystrica was liberated by units of the 40th Red Army of General F. F. Žmačenko and the 4th Romanian Army of General N. Dăscălescu, which penetrated the city from three sides. On March 25, 1945, by two o'clock in the afternoon, the city was liberated. Subsequently, Red Army soldiers

[5] Саперно-инженерное войско 'Engineer Troops'.
[6] Стл-т – старший лейтенант 'senior lieutenant'.

identified the mined objects and ensured their demining. They marked the objects with the words "verified, without mines". The inscription included the date and names of the soldiers who carried out the inspection. This laconic announcement was a guarantee of safe use of the objects. To this day, four such inscriptions have been preserved in the town: in Národná and Robotnícká Streets, in the Hronské suburb, in Štefan Moyses Square. They are a reminder of the day when freedom came to our city and they remind us of the price we had to pay for it.

All four inscriptions are entered in the Register of Monuments of the City of Banská Bystrica. Since 2010, the Banská Bystrica self-government has adopted a generally binding regulation, the aim of which is to preserve and improve the state of the city's sights for future generations (Pastuchová, 2012), and thus also the inscriptions in Russian.

The third milestone was the political coup in 1948 – the establishment of the communist dictatorship which meant censorship, a ban on private farming, ideological inscriptions, slogans and banners (see Figure 15 and 16):

Figure 15. Signs after 1945

Source: Archive of the Museum of the Slovak National Uprising in Banská Bystrica.

Figure 16. SNP Square of the 1950s: *The Soviet Bookstore*

Source: Archive of the Central Slovak Museum in Banská Bystrica.

Another historic milestone in 1989 marked revolutionary changes: the return of the private economy, the opening to the West, and (among other things) the influence of the English language.

4. Conclusion

The article analysed the LL of selected streets of the BB city centre where significant social and political changes were reflected in the course of 20th century. The naming changes of several BB city streets covered the period from 1525 to 2019. The LL has been documented by means of changes in BB urbanonyms and by means of analysis of historical photographs depicting crucial historical periods. Urbanonyms, as a significant part of LL, react most quickly to political and social changes which has been proven by our research. The dominant political establishment ideologically influences inhabitants and this is done by means of top-down signs in the LL, among other methods. This paper proved that the dominant force in a given territory displays its control through a prestigious variety of language presented in the LL. Simultaneously, the acquired store of urbanonyms reflects historical and political landmarks that influenced the change of names, that is, the arrival of German colonists and the foundation of German municipal patriciate, the Hungarianization of urbanonyms after the Austro-Hungarian Compromise of 1867, de-Hungarianization after the establishment of the Czechoslovak Republic (1918), its breakup and the creation of the fascist wartime Slovak State (1939–1945), post-war democratic development (1945–1947), communist coup d'état in 1948, the strengthening of the communist regime in the 1950s, the process of political reform movement in 1960s and revolutionary changes in the year 1989. The aforementioned pivotal points

in history can be matched with the changes of street and main square names: for example, *Ring* (1589) > *Béla Király* (1896–1918) > *Masarykovo námestie* (1918–1939) > *Hlinkovo námestie* (1939–1945) > *Masarykovo námestie* (1945–1953) > *nám. Národného povstania* (1953–1961) > *nám. SNP* (1961–1989) > *Námestie SNP* (1990–2020). The evolution of today's *Skuteckého ulica* ('street') was as follows: *Deák Ferenz utca* (1896–1918) > *Súdobná ulica* (1918–1939) > *ulica Adolfa Hitlera* (1939–1945) > *Súdobná ulica* (1945–1953) > *ulica J. V. Stalina* (1953–1961) > *ulica Obrancov mieru* (1961–1989) > *Skuteckého ulica* (1990–2020).

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Onomastics is an area of scholarly interest that has grown considerably in importance in recent years. Consequently, the 27th International Congress of Onomastic Sciences, held in 2021 in Kraków, Poland, gathered scholars from all over the world, active in all subfields of onomastic enquiry, as well as those exploring the areas bordering on other disciplines of the humanities. It thus became a venue for presenting state-of-the-art research in the study of proper names, proposing novel approaches and opening new vistas for future research.

The present work is the first of the three volumes of conference proceedings that were the fruit of the congress. Devoted to place naming, it contains 33 contributions by 43 scholars. The language of most of the texts is English, though there are also two papers in German, and another two in Russian. The topics range from purely theoretical issues to narrowly focused case studies. The toponyms studied represent a vast variety of types, including the names of countries, districts, counties or municipalities, villages and other settlements, as well as urbanonyms, but also hydronyms, nesonyms, or diverse anoikonyms. Some toponyms are examined synchronically, whereas others are viewed in a diachronic perspective. The status of particular place names varies too: from those that have existed since time immemorial, such as river names, to those established relatively recently in human history, as exemplified by the names of bus stops. Many contributions have been prepared using time-honoured methods of data collection, such as fieldwork, but digital onomastics has clearly gained a permanent foothold as well, as evidenced by a substantial body of research in this area.

True to the inherently interdisciplinary character of onomastics, and in line with the underlying motif of the congress, which underscores the interaction of the study of proper names with other branches of science, researchers explore the interface of onomastics and an extensive array of disciplines, including though not limited to: *cognitive studies,* dialectology, phonetics and phonology, sociolinguistics, anthropology, history, historical linguistics, postcolonial studies, administration and policy studies, and even geology. The toponyms studied are gathered from all over Europe – including Belarus, the Czech Republic, Finland, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Ukraine, the United Kingdom – but also from countries on other continents, such as China, Egypt, India, Morocco, New Zealand, Russia, or Tanzania.

The book is a must not only for onomasticians, but also for researchers in related disciplines, ranging from history, via human geography or philosophy of language, to social studies. However, professionals active in naming will find it useful as well, since it provides a much-needed supranational perspective and enables cross-cultural comparisons.