American Toponymy as Reflection its History and Culture

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ABSTRACT

This article represents the study of anthroponymic astionyms in the United States, i.e. city or town names derived from personal given names. Different linguistic, cultural, and historical information is carried by this sort of toponym. This study will classify them on several levels and attempt to demonstrate how the creation of anthroponymic astionyms from given names contributes to the preservation of the cultural and historical memory of the American people.

KEYWORDS: *anthroponymic astionyms, cultural, given names, social, signigicance, toponym.*

Toponyms are an important part of each language's word stock since they reflect varied sociocultural, historical, geographical, and other factors. As a result, there is no doubt about the importance of studying toponyms in relation to extralinguistic data – in sociolinguistic, ethnopsycholinguistic, culturological, and cognitive elements that shed light on the mentality of their creators. It is worth noting that toponyms (astionyms) are significant cultural and historical monuments. They are valuable sociological, cultural, and ethnographic resources, reflecting, for example, economic realities in people's lives at various times, spiritual and religious perspectives, and language originality. Their name choices are influenced by a variety of circumstances and offer us with a plethora of linguistic and cultural data. Each anthroponymic astionym has a unique background. Even when the orthographical forms of different towns and cities are the same, the substance and cultural information associated with the namers and their social surroundings are distinct.

In this regard, academics are particularly interested in American toponyms because of their distinct character and, in the some ways, originality as a result of numerous extralinguistic variables. Naming was particularly important in the development of a new American society: its history began with the problem of a name and, first and foremost, with the study, we see that a toponym is the result of naming geographical places of the country.

In the comment to Mark Twain's famous novel "The Adventures of Tom Sawyer" it is stated: "The Americans often give to their petty townships high-sounding names of capitals. They have several Parises, three or four Jerusalems, Constantinople and so on". This sentence can well serve as a key to understanding the mentality of Americans through their toponyms. This is a unique case which has, in fact, no analogs in other cultures. Thus, for example, Aberdeen, Athens, Burlington, Cambridge, Clinton, Columbus, Freeport, Jackson, Lebanon, Middletown, Newton are met in four different states, toponyms Ashland, Columbia, Franklin, Newport, Washington are met in five states. What is the reason of such a "nomadic life" of American toponyms? There is one unproved explanation about it: the American lives as they want, their personal interests are above everything for them, they are individualist and egocentric by nature, for them his country comes first of all to themselves. That is why they will use, if they want, for the fourth or fifth or even sixth times the toponym with reference to their town: they don't care whether there might be such toponyms in other places – in any case Franklin or Washington is the first among the towns having the same name because it is their town.

It is common that emigrants who establish new nations try to numb their nostalgia to some extent by transferring geographical names from their home country, as though replicating its image on a new territory. At the same time, bestowing the name of a big capital on a provincial town or a tiny settlement exalts its population, associating past prestige and importance to both the new communities and their inhabitants. And it doesn't matter if the new Paris or London isn't quite as famous as the old ones; what matters is that the "New Americans'" vanity is being gratified. And, maybe, every resident of American Paris secretly rejoices that he still lives in the "capital of the world."

It is well known that anthroponyms are the basis for a large number of toponyms in many languages, the analysis of which provides a clear knowledge of the significance and role of this or that proper name for the given culture. Out of the fifty US states, ten of them include anthroponyms: Delaware, Georgia, Louisiana, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, Pennsylvania, Washington, Virginia and West Virginia.

There are four categories of anthroponymic astionyms: 1) transfer names; 2) names from literary sources; 3) Indian names; and 4) citizens' names

Anthroponymic Astionyms in Transfer: The first settler in the country's history was a person who emigrated from the Old World and brought with him all he valued in his previous life to a new land. It's no accident that transfer toponyms were among the first toponyms to appear on the US map. This practice dates back to the formation of the first settlements. It could have started with John Smith, the first colonial leader, who drew the words New England on his map. As a result, he appended the new prepositional attribute to his native country's name and shifted it to the new hemisphere.

The loss of original meaning is a common element of the transfer of anthroponymic astionyms. That is to say, when the term is used to refer to a new characteristic, the meaning of the word as it evolved in relation to the original trait becomes less essential or lost. Many transfers come from names derived from given names, despite the fact that a new set of social relationships serves as the foundation for a new meaning.

For example,

Allerton (Massachusetts), named after the English city of Allerton: Allerton, Old English given name Ælfræd (< Ælf, Elf + Ræd) + tûn an estate, a town;

Buxton (Michigan), named after the English city of Buxton in the county of Norfolk: Buxton, Old English, given name Bucca + tûn, etc.

Among American toponyms transferred names of famous ancient cities are met as well, e.g. Palmyra – an ancient city in Syria. Moreover, there are great many small American towns named after a whole country, e.g. Albion (the poetic name of England), Angola, Brazil, Columbia, Holland, Lebanon, Mexico, Palestine, Peru, Russia. There are also names of towns which coincide with names of historic places, e.g. Arcadia – ancient province in Greece, Olimpia – region in Ancient Greece, etc.

Anthroponymic Astionyms Derived from Literary Sources' Titles: In the 19th century literature of the USA began to develop considerably. American writers and characters of their books were reflected in the anthroponymic placename stock of the country. On the map of the United States, anthroponymic astionyms formed from the names of literary sources of settlers' countries appeared later. By coining toponyms, immigrants attempted to communicate their ethnicity, language, and cultural history. Such geographical names belong to the category of associative naming since they have nothing to do with the discovery of the country's territory or its economic and political growth, but rather reflect the people's cultural history and ideals. They were given symbolic and pragmatic

characteristics, which served as the foundation for their inclusion in the place-name stock. The etymological origins of literary anthroponymic astionyms are:

➢ Homer (Louisiana, New York), Ovid (New York), and Dante (South Dakota,Virginia) are the names of classical literature authors.

➢ Names of literary characters from the Old World:

➢ Othello (Washington), Medora (Illinois, Indiana and Kansas), Romeo (Michigan), Orlando (Florida), etc.;

➢ names of Roman and Greek mythological heroes: Concordia (Kansas), Minerva (New York), Eros (Louisiana), Calypso (North Carolina), etc

Anthroponymic Astionyms Derived from Indian Given Names: At the same time, the first settler was a tolerant individual who had to embrace the aboriginal culture to some level. The trend of coining anthroponymic astionyms derived from Indian given names began to emerge in the nineteenth century. Many Indian given names were derived from appellatives that were unfamiliar or unclear to European immigrants. Because the Indians themselves rarely used personal names in this way – and especially not for printed maps – it was usually the settlers from the Old World who utilized aboriginal given names to label geographical areas. Modern Americans are fascinated by Indian names for a variety of reasons, the most common of which being their exotic sounds or poetical connections. The names of tribal chiefs with whom European settlers had close touch make up the greatest group of aboriginal antroponymic astionyms. Seattle (Washington), for example, was named after Seattle (1786-1866), a chief of the Suquamish tribe who was acknowledged by the settlers as an aid and was dubbed "the great Indian friend" by them. He had always been loyal to European settlers, attempting to support and assist them while still being the honest and powerful chief of his people. Others include Keokuk (Iowa), Hyannis (Massachusetts), Pontiac (Michigan, Illinois, Missouri), and others.

The names of a family circle of tribal chiefs were coined as anthroponymic astionyms by the white pioneers: Tama (Iowa), Pocahontas (Arkansas, Iowa), Azusa (California), and so on. The toponymic system of the area reflected the names of local Indians: Anamosa (Iowa), Kewanee, Watseka (Illinois), and so on.

Citizens' Given Names Derived Anthroponymic Astionyms: The victory over the British opened up new avenues for coining anthroponymic astionyms for Americans. That was already an era of existence marked by a shift in perspective: a period marked by elections, democracy, the presidency, and courageous service to the newly independent country. If Americans had previously relied on England for material to create place names, that was no longer the case. They began to refer to their country by its name rather than the names of the royals, their family members, ministers, and so on.

This group of American toponyms is quite diverse, for example, Lincoln – the name of an American president, Aurora – the name of a Greek goddess, Bismarck – the name of a German chancellor, Bolivar – the name of a Venezuelan revolutionary, Euclid – the name of an ancient Greek mathematician, Hannibal – the name of a Karfagen general, Racine – the name of a French writer, Shelley This category of toponyms, which includes names of prominent historic and state officials, writers, mythological names, saints' names, and so on, frequently identifies small and insignificant places.

On the US map, anthroponymic astionyms derived from citizens' given names appeared. This category of names may be described in the following sub-categories:

- ➢ Presidents' given names: Georgetown (Kentucky), Quincy (California, Florida, Illinois), Ulysses (Kansas, Nebraska, Pennsylvania), and so on;

- ➢ political figures' given names: Starke (Florida), David City (Nebraska), Edmundston (Nebraska), and so on.

- ➢ national/local heroes' given names: Dansville, New York), Lewisville (Arkansas), Solon (Ohio), etc.

The use of anthroponymic astionyms as a means of preserving given names in people's cultural and historical memory clearly demonstrates the dynamics and evolution of a person as a name-giver, as well as the pragmatic potential of the place-names coined: intentions, personal motives, bilingualism, psychological, ethnic, and cultural aspects, associations, and different images in the name-consciousness and all these are coded in the anthroponymic astionym itself. Such naming made it easier for individuals to assert and identify themselves in the New World and to leave their personal imprints on American culture and on the maps that describe it.

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