FOREWORD

The years ending in 8 are those in the history of Europe – and predominantly Central Europe and the former Czechoslovak Republic (1918–1992) – when the key historic events took place. For instance, one may mention the years 1348, 1618, 1648, 1848, 1918, 1938, 1968, etc. The closer to the modern times we are, the higher their density is.

During the previous year 2018 we celebrated two important anniversaries – it was the centenary anniversary of the foundation of the Czechoslovak Republic (28th October 1918), and twenty-five years of independent existence of the Czech Republic (1st January 1993). Those factors were in the background of the decision to prepare a special monothematic issue of the journal Acta onomastica.

Proper names, and especially personal and place names, are highly sensitive to political and social changes. They are also frequently used as a linguistic device of political power to govern or colonize public space; mostly within modern urban space, where renaming streets and squares wrote, in the 19th and 20th centuries, a history parallel to the main-stage one. It is not an inappropriate metaphor that place names are a mirror of political developments in modern European society.

The special issue, which is now in your hands, present 14 selected papers. They focus, in a wide sense, on multifarious aspects of political influence upon place names. As implied above, urban space represents the modern civilization space and it is thus understandable that most of texts pay attention to urbanonymy and its changes. However, there are also other aspects and issues discussed in the topics, for instance, the thematization of place names in different types of text, the situation of place names on the language and ethnic borders, etc.

The year 2018, ending in 8, was rich in anniversaries. However, in the current year, 2019, we also recall many important historic events – for instance, the years 1789, 1939, 1989. All those years ending in 8 and 9 are connected with political events that were reflected in toponymy, mostly through renaming and giving commemorative names. In Czech onomastics the aspect of commemorative place-naming (*honorifikující toponyma*) was precisely and shortly formulated for the first time by prof. Rudolf Šrámek in his book *Úvod do obecné onomastiky* [Introduction to General Onomastics], published in 1999. Thus, year 2019 might also remind us of the anniversary of this groundbreaking publication.

However, it is on 15th January 2019 when we commemorate a more important anniversary. It is the eighty-fifth birthday of the founding figure of our discipline, prof. Rudolf Šrámek. The happy event is the reason why we have decided to dedicate the issue to the doyen of Czech onomastics. On behalf of editors, authors, and also all colleagues in onomastics, we wish him to stay fit and enthusiastic for all the years to come!

Jaroslav David (Ostrava) – Pavel Štěpán (Prague) –
Žaneta Dvořáková (Prague) – Soňa Wojnarová (Prague), editors

Acknowledgement

This issue was financially supported by:
the Institute of Czech Language, Czech Academy of Sciences (Prague);
the Department of Czech Language, the Faculty of Arts, the University of Ostrava (Ostrava);
and the Historical Geography Research Centre under the auspices of the Institute of History, Czech Academy of Sciences, the Faculty of Science at Charles University (Prague).