

FUNCTION WORDS IN SURNAMES — “ALIEN BODIES”  
IN ANTHROPONYMY  
(WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO POLAND)

Key words: multipart surnames, compound surnames, complex surnames, nobiliary particles, function words in surnames

INTRODUCTION

Surnames in Europe (and in those countries outside Europe whose surnaming patterns have been influenced by European traditions) are mostly conceptualised as single entities, genetically nominal or adjectival. Even if a person bears two or more surnames, they are treated on a par, which may be further emphasized by hyphenation, yielding the phenomenon known as double-barrelled (or even multi-barrelled) surnames.

However, this single-entity approach, visible e.g. in official forms, is largely an oversimplification. This becomes more obvious when one remembers such household names as *Ludwig van Beethoven*, *Alexander von Humboldt*, *Oscar de la Renta*, or *Olivia de Havilland*. Contemporary surnames resulted from long and complicated historical processes. Consequently, certain surnames contain also function words — “alien bodies” in the realm of proper names, in a manner of speaking. Among these words one can distinguish:

- prepositions, such as the Portuguese *de*; Swedish *von*, *af*; Dutch *bij*, *onder*, *ten*, *ter*, *van*; Italian *d'*, *de*, *di*; German *von*, *zu*, etc.;
- articles, e.g. Dutch *de*, *het*, *'t*; Italian *l'*, *la*, *le*, *lo* — they will interest us here only when used in combination with another category, such as prepositions;
- combinations of prepositions and articles/conjunctions, or the contracted forms that evolved from such combinations, such as the Italian *del*, *dello*, *della*, *dell'*, *dei*, *degli*, *delle*; Dutch *van de*, *van der*, *von der*; German *von und zu*; Portuguese *do*, *dos*, *da*, *das*;
- conjunctions, e.g. Spanish *y*, Portuguese *e*, Latin *vel*, etc.

Surnames that contain such function words are sometimes called multipart surnames, exemplified by such names as the following: (*Walter*) *de la Mare*, (*Mark*) *Van Doren*, (*Alex*) *van Halen*, (*Lars*) *von Trier*, as opposed to compound surnames, hyphenated or not: (*Maria*) *Skłodowska-Curie*, (*Ralph*) *Vaughan William*<sup>1</sup>; the combination of these two types (multipart and compound) is termed complex surnames<sup>2</sup>: (*François*) *de Salignac de la Mothe-Fénelon*<sup>3</sup>, (*Luiz*) *Adauto da Justa Medeiros*<sup>4</sup>, (*Afredo*) *de la Torre y Callejas*<sup>5</sup>, (*Francisco José*) *de Goya y Lucientes*<sup>6</sup>, (*Paul Emil*) *von Lettow-Vorbeck*<sup>7</sup>.

Still, there remains the question of how to treat names like (*José*) *Ortega y Gasset*<sup>8</sup>, in which two surnames of comparable status (so most appropriately a compound surname) are joined by a conjunction, not a hyphen. For this reason I decided to replace the tripartite division (multipart, compound and complex surnames) with a bipartite classification, drawing the dividing line between subordination and coordination. The former involves prepositions, while the latter — conjunctions. The additional advantage is that categorised here are only surnames with function words, to the disregard of hyphenation. Obviously, a combination of both types may also be encountered, though it will not be discussed here as a separate third category.

#### PREPOSITIONS — SUBORDINATION — DISPARATE STATUS

Surnames with prepositions once used to refer to the place from which the family originated, and they frequently — though not always — indicated the noble status of the family. In the latter case, they could be called *nobiliary particles*, such as the German *zu*, *von* (or even *von und zu*) — cf. Germany's minister *Ursula von der Leyen*. However, the category of nobiliary particles is distinguished according to pragmatic/semantic rather than formal criteria, since from the point of view of grammar they are simply prepositions and with the surname that follows they form a prepositional phrase, regardless of whether they are indicative of nobility or not.

<sup>1</sup> English composer, 1872–1958.

<sup>2</sup> The division into multipart, compound and complex surnames may be found at <http://library.queensu.ca/techserv/auth/03Personal/03multi.html> (accessed Dec. 10, 2016).

<sup>3</sup> French theologian and poet, 1651–1715.

<sup>4</sup> Brazilian mathematician, b. 1926.

<sup>5</sup> Cuban malacologist, 1917–2002.

<sup>6</sup> Spanish painter, 1746–1828.

<sup>7</sup> German general, 1870–1964.

<sup>8</sup> Spanish philosopher, 1883–1955.

In fact, they may be added to the surname on the bearer's own initiative. For example, Lars Trier, a Danish film director, added *von* to his surname despite no family claim to nobility. So did two Austrian-American film directors of Jewish descent: Eric von Stroheim and Josef von Sternberg (born Jonas Sternberg), who are rumoured to have been von Trier's models for the change. Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, the president of France in the years 1974–1981, owes his surname with *d'* not to the noble ancestors but to the initiative of his father, who simply added the nobiliary particle to the family name in 1922. Sometimes such a surname modification done by a person aspiring to nobility is well premeditated:

The architect Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, from the West German city of Aachen, was originally Ludwig Mies; he added the rest (Rohe was his mom's maiden name) to give himself a little more status when pitching impressionable clients. Quoth a biographer: "He would not have dared to assume a designation of real German nobility, like *von*, but *van der* was permissible; it sounded faintly elegant to the German ear though it was common enough to the Dutch."<sup>9</sup>

In Italy some of such nobiliary particles (in Italian called *predicati*) may be used as parts of surnames, even though since the 1948 constitution nobility titles have not been legally recognised in this country. In Dutch such prepositions (which in the Netherlands do not imply nobility), for instance *van*, *bij*, *onder*, *op*, *ter*, *voor*, as well as some articles (*het*, *'t*, *de*) used in the same function are called *tussenvoegsels* (e.g. *Johan van de Velde*<sup>10</sup>, *Rembrandt van Rijn*, *Hein ter Poorten*<sup>11</sup>). *Tussenvoegsels* are treated as part of the surname in Belgium (so the surname *Van Rijn* will be listed under the letter *V*) but not in the Netherlands (where on alphabetical lists this name will be found under *R*), but in both countries they are spelled separately from the surname proper. An analogical preposition in Italian is *di*.

The Portuguese name culture makes use of *de*, *do* (*de+o*), *dos* (*de+os*), *da* (*de+a*), *das* (*de+as*), but these are only loosely connected with nobility. They do not have to be used even if present in identity documents; conversely, they can be freely added to a name even if not present in documents. They are not treated as part of the surname, i.e. *José da Costa* will be listed under *C*, not *D*. In the Anglo-Saxon culture this convention may not be followed and such names will be listed under *D*, as exemplified by the name of the well-known American writer *John Dos Passos*, who was of Portuguese ancestry in the paternal line.

<sup>9</sup> C. Adams (1990). Do Italian last names beginning with 'de', 'del', or 'della' indicate nobility? The Straight Dope, Apr. 6, <http://www.straightdope.com/columns/read/622/do-italian-last-names-beginning-with-de-del-or-della-indicate-nobility> (accessed Jan. 12, 2017).

<sup>10</sup> Dutch cyclist, b. 1956.

<sup>11</sup> Dutch general in WW2, 1887–1968.

The French language employs in surnames the prepositions *de* (*d'* before a vowel) and the combinations of prepositions and articles: *de la*, *du* (*de+le*), e.g. (*Nicolas*) *de La Mare*<sup>12</sup>, (*Henri*) *d'Ursel*<sup>13</sup>, (*Jeanne*) *du Barry*<sup>14</sup>, (*Jean-Marc*) *de Lacoste-Lareymondie*<sup>15</sup>. If indeed indicative of noble origin, these so-called *particules* are placed between the actual surname and the name of a family estate (the name of the French politician *Dominique de Villepin* is in fact short for *Dominique Galouzeau de Villepin*, with *Galouzeau* the real surname and *Villepin* the name of the estate). Interestingly enough, although used in surnames, the preposition *de* must not be used in given names, a French court ruled. In a case *Guillot v. France*, parents demanded to be allowed to name their daughter *Fleur de Marie* — the name of the heroine of Eugène Sue's novel "Les Mystères de Paris". In 1983 the registrar refused to accept the name as it did not figure in calendars and the next year a French court rejected the application on the grounds that a given name "cannot [...] consist of a combination of two names linked by a pr[e]position." The girl was to be named *Fleur-Marie* instead. In October 1996 the European Court effectively upheld that verdict<sup>16</sup>. Interestingly, a similar type of given name — *Maria del Pilar* — is acceptable in Spain.

When transplanted to English-speaking countries, prepositions are often combined with the surnames that follow, which process may result in the phenomenon known as medial capitals: *Joe DiMaggio*, *Leonardo DiCaprio*, *Rocco DeVilliers*<sup>17</sup>, *Matthew VanDyke*<sup>18</sup>. What is noteworthy, the same surnames do not have medial capitals in French-, Italian- or Dutch-speaking countries, and the prepositions are usually spelled separately (cf. *Enzo di Caprio*<sup>19</sup>, *Philippe de Villiers*<sup>20</sup>, *Baldassare Di Maggio*<sup>21</sup>, *Antoon van Dijck*<sup>22</sup>). It is probably so because the prepositions in the names are still perceived in those countries as somewhat extraneous and not completely devoid of their lexical meaning. The disappearance of the original (separate) spelling might be in some contexts perceived as

<sup>12</sup> French magistrate, 1639–1723.

<sup>13</sup> Belgian film director, 1900–1974.

<sup>14</sup> Jeanne du Barry, 1743–1793, mistress of French king Louis XV.

<sup>15</sup> French politician, b. 1947.

<sup>16</sup> *Guillot vs. France*. Database of the Netherlands Institute of Human Rights, Utrecht School of Law, <http://sim.law.uu.nl/SIM/CaseLaw/hof.nsf/2422ec00f1ace923c1256681002b47f1/ba97dac40c345d83c1256640004c30dc?OpenDocument> (accessed Mar. 14, 2011).

<sup>17</sup> American film director, b. 1970.

<sup>18</sup> American journalist and photographer, b. 1979.

<sup>19</sup> Renowned Swiss hairdresser based in Neuchatel.

<sup>20</sup> French politician, b. 1949.

<sup>21</sup> Member of the Mafia, Italian government witness, b. 1954.

<sup>22</sup> Flemish painter, 1599–1641.

“a sign of a lack of sophistication”<sup>23</sup>. Also the spelling of the names of historic personages might differ to this day in their country of origin and in the USA, as shown by the example of *Gilbert du Motier, marquis de La Fayette*<sup>24</sup>, in the USA spelled *de Lafayette*.

The absorption of the prepositions into the surname proper is not limited to immigrant surnames in the USA. The process is historically attested in Europe too, as evidenced by such surnames as German *Ambach* < am Bach ‘at the brook’, French *Davignon* < d’Avignon, *Dupont* < du pont ‘of the bridge’, or Czech *Skamene*, *Skaunic*, *Zduba* (cf. Rospond, 1975, pp. 425, 426). The French *de* and *du* are combined with the surname they follow when they do not imply nobility: *Dubois*, *Delacroix*. A similar Italian example is the name (*Luigi*) *Dallapiccola*<sup>25</sup>.

Interestingly, the story of the surname of the fantasy writer Ursula K. Le Guin (an American who acquired her surname through marriage to a Frenchman) shows how unstable such surnames may be:

The practice of retaining the capital letter inside the fused form is one peculiar to American English. Early books by famed science-fiction author Ursula K. Le Guin rendered her name “LeGuin” though later reprints go with the separated form, which we may assume is her preference. The fused form has the advantage of being easier for computers to sort into alphabetized lists.<sup>26</sup>

In some Swedish and Finnish surnames the nobiliary particle *af* is used (e.g. *Barbro Hiort af Ornas*<sup>27</sup>). Generally speaking, few European countries still preserve prepositions in surnames in the sole sense of a nobiliary particle. Those that do, such as Spain, protect its use against “usurpers” of noble status: according to the Spanish decree of November 14, 1958, it is forbidden to add *de* to the surname if the surname does not already contain this particle; the practice is only permitted if the surname looks like a given name<sup>28</sup>.

In Austria, in the aftermath of the First World War, nobility was abolished in April 1919 (in 1920 even on the highest level, i.e. in the Constitution — Art. 149)

<sup>23</sup> P. Brians (2013). *Common Errors in English Usage*. Sherwood, OR: William, James & Company, <http://public.wsu.edu/~brians/errors/multipart.html> (accessed Feb. 1, 2017).

<sup>24</sup> French aristocrat famous for his participation in the French Revolution, the American Revolutionary War and the July Revolution in France, 1757–1834.

<sup>25</sup> Italian composer, 1904–1975.

<sup>26</sup> See note 23.

<sup>27</sup> Swedish actress, b. 1921.

<sup>28</sup> Decreto de 14 de noviembre de 1958 por el que se aprueba el Reglamento de la Ley del Registro Civil [decree of 14 November 1958 approving the regulations of the Civil Registration Act], Artículo 195, [http://noticias.juridicas.com/base\\_datos/Privado/rrc.t5.html](http://noticias.juridicas.com/base_datos/Privado/rrc.t5.html) (accessed Feb. 1, 2017).

and consequently the particle *von* was forbidden, alongside with such titles as *Durchlaucht, Erlaucht, Edler, Ritter, Freiherr, Graf, Furst, Herzog*<sup>29</sup>. In an attempt to circumvent this, ex-nobles would simply replace *von* with a hyphen, but this practice was likewise frowned upon by the Ministry of Interior and ultimately outlawed by the Supreme Court. Nevertheless, there were exceptions:

The famous conductor Herbert von Karajan — an Austrian — told Austrian officials that he would not conduct concerts in Austria if he would not be allowed to use his ‘von’ on posters — in my eyes a clear case of ignoring the aforementioned law. As Austrian officials naturally were interested in Herbert von Karajan continuing to conduct in Austria, they found a brilliant solution: In Karajan’s passport a note was made that his stage name was “von Karajan.”<sup>30</sup>

#### CONJUNCTIONS — COORDINATION — EQUIVALENT STATUS

These conjunctions in European surnames (and in the countries outside Europe influenced by European naming patterns) may be broken into two types: those with the sense of ‘or’, and those meaning ‘and’. The former type implies uncertainty about the surname, in some cases possibly documenting the historical process of the stabilisation of the surname. The latter mostly reflects the inheritance of the paternal *and* maternal surname by the offspring.

A frequent function word of the first type is *vel*, a Latin conjunction meaning ‘or, aka, alias’, equivalent to Latin *sive, vulgo, dictus*, German *genannt*, or French *dit*. If it is present in contemporary German surnames (then called Genanntnamen or Vulgonamen), then they are treated in official situations and in documents as frozen entities, with the function word *genannt* abbreviated to *gen.*, while in informal situations usually the second surname only is used by the name’s bearer. The emergence of this type of surname was often occasioned by an acquisition of a new estate, the surnaming pattern being the name of the acquired manor (Hofname) followed by the hitherto used surname of its new owner. The reason for a Genanntname might also be the illegitimacy of the child. Thus the mother of a famous German chemist Justus von Liebig bore the maiden surname *Fuchs gen. Moser*: she was an illegitimate daughter of Elisabetha Fuchs, and her mother only twelve years after her birth married a man named Möser, who adopted his wife’s daughter. Yet another reason for the use in Germany of two surnames

<sup>29</sup> Noble titles usually considered equivalent to the following English ones: *Durchlaucht* — His/Her Serene Highness (HSH), *Erlaucht* — His/Her Illustrious Highness, *Edler* — noble, *Ritter* — knight, *Freiherr* — baron, *Graf* — count, *Furst* — prince, *Herzog* — duke.

<sup>30</sup> G. (Freiherr von) Froelichsthal. *Austrian Nobility Since 1918* (shortened version of a speech before the *Deutscher Adelsrechtsausschuss* in September 1997), <http://www.chivalricorders.org/nobility/austria.htm> (accessed Jan. 26, 2011).

joined by *genannt* or *vulgo* might be the high frequency of the (first) surname in a village, with the second surname added to help distinguish an individual. Reportedly, this phenomenon was once common in Hesse<sup>31</sup>.

A second-type conjunction is the Spanish *y* (or *e*, if the following surname begins with *I*-, *Y*-, or with *Hi*- followed by a consonant, e.g. *Iribe*, *Yglesias*, *Hirales*), meaning ‘and’ and equivalent to the Catalan *i*. It joins the paternal and the maternal part of the surname, at the same time preventing the first of them from being understood as a second given name. In Spanish the paternal surname traditionally used to precede the maternal one. The traditional Portuguese order of surnames is the opposite, and the conjunction *e* meaning ‘and’ is used to link the two. In 2010, however, a bill was submitted in Spain for parliamentary debate which left the order at the discretion of the child’s parents. Should they fail to reach a consensus, the elements of a child’s surname would be registered in alphabetical order, which would justify the suspicion that in the future in Spain there might be a plethora of *Alvarezes* and *Aznars*, to the detriment of *Zamoras* and *Zabals*<sup>32</sup>. However, the bill was rejected and the new law finally entrusted civil registry clerks with the decision about the surname order.

Surnames that include such elements as conjunctions, prepositions or articles, are typically taken for granted and thus “invisible” in the countries and cultures from which they originate (this is especially true of Spanish and Portuguese-speaking countries). By contrast, when transplanted to a different culture, they stand out and since they might pose problems in everyday life, they are often “levelled” to the naming traditions of the recipient country. For instance, they might be omitted altogether and thus simply disappear in the next generation — this might be the case with the Spanish conjunction *y* in the USA, with the concomitant hyphenation of the paternal with the maternal surname, or with the simultaneous omission of the maternal (typically second) one<sup>33</sup>. The omission of one of the surnames in Spanish and Hispanic names when transplanted to non-Spanish environment is in fact common, as evidenced by the fact that outside Spain *Francisco Franco Bahamonde* is known simply as *Francisco Franco*, under his paternal surname, and *Pablo Ruiz y Picasso* (baptised *Pablo Diego José Francisco de Paula Juan Nepomuceno María de los Remedios Cipriano de la Santísima Trinidad Ruiz y Picasso*) — as simply *Pablo Picasso*, i.e. under his maternal surname.

<sup>31</sup> [http://wiki-de.genealogy.net/Genannt\\_\(bei\\_Familiennamen\)](http://wiki-de.genealogy.net/Genannt_(bei_Familiennamen)) (accessed Feb. 1, 2017).

<sup>32</sup> Spain to Erase Male Bias from Double-Barrelled Surnames. *The Telegraph*, Nov. 5, 2010.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. K. Powell, Spanish Surnames — Meaning and Origins, [http://genealogy.about.com/cs/surname/a/spanish\\_names.htm](http://genealogy.about.com/cs/surname/a/spanish_names.htm) (accessed Feb. 1, 2017).

## PREPOSITIONS IN POLISH SURNAMES

Such surnames document the transition of toponymic surnames in Poland: from (proto)surnames in the form of analytic constructions as one of the historical naming patterns, to synthetic surnames characteristic of the contemporary Polish anthroponomasticon (especially those ending in *-ski*, iconic for Poland). As Z. Kaleta pointed out,

[...] surnames in the form of a toponymic prepositional phrase were analytic (two-word) formations, discordant with the structure of the Polish language, which expresses most of the semantic relationships with synthetic (one-word) forms, using various suffixes. Therefore, such surnames, prevailing among the gentry since the second half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, were replaced with surnames with *-ski*, derived from the same place-names as appeared in the toponymic prepositional phrase, e.g. *de Niezwojowice* > *Niezwojowski* [...] (1998, p. 45; transl. by J. B. W.).

Some space has been devoted to analytic constructions by J. Bubak in his study of the formation of surnames of townspeople and peasants in Poland (Bubak, 1986). His material comprised 40 historical documents (nearly all of them handwritten), dated 1488–1700, mostly municipal documents, such as guild records, court documents, inventories, etc., from *Sądecczyzna* (the *Sądecki* district) in southern Poland. These documents were characterized by high repetitiveness of many of the people mentioned (cf. Bubak, 1986, p. 14). For a researcher this might be an advantage, since the inconsistencies and transitional forms can be observed in reference to the same person, thus attesting to the gradual emergence of the contemporary Polish surname. However, the same repetitiveness is also a disadvantage: calculations are more difficult, and the data themselves — less representative, especially considering the spatial limitations of J. Bubak's study.

This said, certain statistics of interest for the present topic can nevertheless be extracted from these data. Of the 4887 analysed surnames, in the 15<sup>th</sup>–17<sup>th</sup> centuries analytic toponymic constructions constituted only 311 (i.e. about 6 per cent)<sup>34</sup>. Overall, in two-thirds of these the Latin preposition *de* was used, and in the remainder — Polish *z(e)* 'from'. Interestingly, none of the 15<sup>th</sup>-century documents contained the Polish preposition, and in the 16<sup>th</sup> century the prevalence of the Latin preposition was still striking (at the ratio of roughly six to one), while in the 17<sup>th</sup> century a complete reversal of those proportions can be observed: there were thirteen times as many surnames with the Polish *z(e)* as there were occurrences of the Latin *de*. As Rospond (1975, p. 425) emphasized, it is not certain whether the Latin *de* (present also in other European countries, not only in Poland) was merely an artifact of chancellery language, or a Latin-language reflection of the widespread usage of the Polish *z(e)* 'of' in living speech of the time.

<sup>34</sup> Own calculations on the basis of J. Bubak's data.



As Naruszewicz-Duchlińska (cf. 2007, p. 325ff) aptly demonstrated, the choice of prepositions used in analytical constructions was once much wider than merely *de* and *z(e)*. For the 16<sup>th</sup>–18<sup>th</sup> century Ermland she found that the following prepositions were commonly used: Polish *z*, Latin *ab*, *de*, *ex*, *à*, *a*, and especially (not surprisingly, considering the borderland character of the area) the most frequent German *von* (also *vonn*, *von der*). Apart from those, in the excerpted material she has found *in*, *di* and *dem*. Unfortunately, she provides no information on the relative frequency of analytical forms, perhaps because of the methodological difficulties: in some cases the same person is referred to on one occasion by an analytic, on another — by a synthetic construction; it also happens that a German and a Latin preposition are used interchangeably of the same person. The differences between her findings and those of J. Bubak indicate that caution should be exercised when generalising inferences drawn from the anthroponomastic situation in merely one region.

A frequent consequence of the disappearance of prepositions, both Latin and Polish, was the emergence of surnames equal in form to place-names. This process may be observed as early as the beginning of the 15<sup>th</sup> century (and according to S. Rospond even earlier), when we encounter parallel forms *Joannes de Cruczburg* (1414) and *Johannes Cruczburg* (1410) to denote the same person (cf. Rospond, 1975, p. 426). E. Breza (2004), who mentions the prepositions *de*, *e(x)*, *a(b)*, *von*, lists nearly thirty surnames from Ermland that emerged in this way; most of them are used in Poland to this day. Of the early manifestations of the disappearance of prepositions in toponymic prepositional phrases, Z. Kaleta (1998, p. 43) gives an example of a record of the year 1381 referring to *Petrus de Noszilino*, in later documents to become *Petrus Noszilinski*.

S. Rospond found some 14<sup>th</sup>-century doublets, one with the analytic form, the other with the synthetic form: *Opolski* — *de Oppol*, *Młyński* — *de Młyn* and others. He also observed that even as late as the first part of the 16<sup>th</sup> century the analytic form of the 'X z [from?] Y' type was still the most popular, especially among the literati of Cracow (Rospond, 1965, pp. 260 and 261).

An analysis of vital records indexed by the Polish Genealogical Society, comprising nearly 21 million individual entries extracted from historical birth, marriage and death registers<sup>35</sup>, reveals 3,068 entries with a *de* surname, accounting for 0.015 per cent of the total. Breaking this lump value down into consecutive centuries allows for the identification of certain patterns. While *de* surnames constitute 0.020 per cent of all entries until 1700, and, similarly, 0.023 per cent of those in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, a century later there follows a drop to approximately half of that value (0.012 per cent), and in the 20<sup>th</sup> century we

<sup>35</sup> As of January 2017.

observe a return to the original relative value (0.020 per cent). The most recent data, recorded at the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Rymut, 1992–1994), are marked by a decrease of one order of magnitude (to 0.002 per cent), which in absolute numbers means only 670 people in all of contemporary Poland with *de* either at the beginning of a surname (e.g. *De Laurans*, *De Sas Stupnicki*, *De Tchorzewski*, *De Ville*, to name the most numerous), or between its two component parts (e.g. *Delalicz de Lawal*, *Fischer de Fischering*, *Horodyski de Korczak*). In terms of frequency, these are mostly moribund surnames. Only in the case of eleven of them is the number of their bearers a two-digit one (i.e. higher than nine). This clearly shows that the downward trend is continued and that a complete disappearance of surnames with *de* is imminent, though this time probably due to the extinction of the male lines bearing them rather than to the modification of the surname by deletion of the preposition.

K. Rymut documents about 90 surnames, borne by Polish citizens living in contemporary Poland, which are composed of two separate parts joined by *de*. Some of these surnames are unassimilated, foreign in form (e.g. *Hoerner de Roithberg*, *Longchamps de Bèrier*, *Baudouin de Courtenay*), even if the family that is bearing the name has a history of residence in Poland<sup>36</sup>. However, there are also names that combine the foreign (mostly traceable to Latin) preposition *de* with elements of native origin. Examples include *Nowicki de Poraj*, *Słoński de Ostoja* and a hundred surnames that begin with *De* followed by one or more elements, hyphenated or not (e.g. *De Trzaska*, *De Ogończyk-Roszkowska*, *De Bończa Tomaszewska*)<sup>37</sup>. It may be assumed that in most cases such a surname owes its existence in Polish to the Latinate (or sometimes German) manner of its registration in historical documents (cf. Naruszewicz-Duchlińska, 2007, p. 325). However, not to be excluded without due genealogical research are also two further factors: 1) the relatively recent foreign roots of the family bearing the surname in question, or 2) a conscious attempt on the part of the name bearers in the past to foreignise their name for reasons of prestige. J.S. Bystron mentions some Polish surnames so Frenchified by the addition of the preposition or article: *de Maudrasse* < *Modras*, *de Long* < *Dylaq*<sup>38</sup>, *L'Iquernique* < *Likiernik* (1993, p. 178).

<sup>36</sup> The ancestors of Jan Niecisław Baudouin de Courtenay reportedly migrated from France to Poland in the 18th c. (<http://encyklopedia.pwn.pl/haslo/Baudouin-de-Courtenay-Jan-Ignacy-Niecislaw;3875120.html>). Also the Longchamps de Bèrier family has lived in Poland since the 18<sup>th</sup> century (A. Rybak, *Wybitnie polskie nazwisko*, Rzeczpospolita, April 11, 2009).

<sup>37</sup> The surname elements *Poraj*, *Ostoj*, *Ogończyk*, *Bończa* are coats of arms. Sometimes such surnames, composed of a coat of arms and the surname proper, are written as double-barrelled, e.g. *Bończa-Tomaszewski*.

<sup>38</sup> Interestingly, recently a Polish actor, Paweł Deląg, Frenchified his surname in an almost identical fashion (*Delong*) for Western audiences.

## CONJUNCTIONS IN POLISH SURNAMES

J. Bubak (1986, pp. 45–46, 48–49, 51–53) noted the use in the researched documents of several Latin words: *dictus* (with the inflectional variants *dicte*, *dicto*, *dicti*, *dictum*), *cognominatus*, *cognomine*, *vocatus* ‘called’, *olim* ‘once, formerly’, *alias*, *aliter*, *al.* ‘otherwise; otherwise known as’. There were also their Polish functional equivalents *albo* and *czyli* (both meaning ‘or’). In contrast with the contemporary Polish anthroponomasticon, where they connect two surnames, in Bubak’s material such words often join a personal name (given name) with a (proto)surname, thus attesting to the process of the emergence of the contemporary Polish surname: *Mathias dictus Suchy*, *Stanislaw dicto Śliwka*, *Petrus dictus Pieprzyk*, *Martini dicti Czarny*. In the analysed material Bubak found the model with *dictus* typical only of the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries (cf. 1986, p. 46).

As evidenced by the data of the Polish Genealogical Society, the only conjunction frequent enough to merit a mention is *vel*. Other conjunctions — such as Latin *vulgo* ‘commonly [called], that is, or’, *sive* ‘or’, and *dictus* — are extremely rare in the historical material. The first of them occurred 74 times in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and 25 times in the next one (out of 21 million individual entries in the database). The other two have been noted only twice each (mostly in the 18<sup>th</sup> century).

The proportion of the surnames with *vel* in the Polish anthroponomasticon — 0.014 per cent on average — has been steadily decreasing, from 0.174 per cent until the year 1700, through 0.022 per cent in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, 0.011 per cent in the 19<sup>th</sup>, to merely 0.010 per cent in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In the Polish law surnames with the word *vel* in the middle are treated as “frozen” entities. This means that no changes consisting in the use of e.g. only one part of such a multi-word surname are allowed, unless a name change is officially requested and granted. Some *vel* surnames are merely two similar spelling variants of the same name (*Gmitruk vel Dmítruk*, *Juńczyk vel Jończyk*, *Lawendowski vel Lewandowski*), in other cases *vel* joins two completely dissimilar elements (*Pietrzak vel Matusiak*, *Dziwiesz vel Tarnowski*, *Szynkowski vel Sęk*). According to Rymut 1992–1994, in the early 1990s in Poland there were over 1500 *vel* surnames in use, but only three surnames composed of two elements joined by *alias* (e.g. *Alszer Alias Duczek*).

The contemporary connotations of *vel* surnames in Poland, if any, are rather negative. As emphasized by a secretary of the Polish Language Board,

If [vel] appears with two surnames, it is an indication that somebody was (or still is) using those two surnames; at least one of them is usually false or changed on purpose so its owner could conceal his or her identity. Thus using surnames joined by *vel* does not evoke good associations; in any case, a construction of the “Iksiński vel Igrekowski” type is mostly found in police an-

nouncements and in crime columns. In today's issue of the daily *Gazeta Wyborcza*, to take an example, there is a feature on a gang of fraudsters, in which we can read: "Everybody handed the keys to the fraudster on the very first day. Cebula *vel* Kurak wanted to get them fast [...]"<sup>39</sup> (transl. by J. B. W.).

#### OTHER, LESS FREQUENT "ALIEN BODIES" IN CONTEMPORARY SURNAMES

It must be stressed that occasionally other elements of surnames can also be present. Among these, there are numerals: *II, III, 2nd, 3rd*, etc. (mostly in the USA); titles of nobility, such as *Count, Graf, Furst, Marquis*, etc.; seniority titles, which are used mainly in the USA: *Junior (Jr.)* and *Senior (Sr.)*, but also in Portugal (*Filho* 'son', *Filha* 'daughter', *Neto* 'grandson', *Sobrinho* 'nephew', etc.). They are typically placed at the end of the full name.

Surnames with those elements are extremely rare in Poland, therefore their presence may lead to confusion among those who come into contact with a person bearing such a name. That is in fact what happened to a Polish politician Róża Thun (whose full married surname is *Gräfin von Thun und Hohenstein*) during the 2009 elections to the European Parliament (for details see Walkowiak, 2016, pp. 209–210).

Before the Second World War, some Polish surnames contained the words *recte* ('in fact, actually, correctly') or *false* ('incorrectly'). Those words appeared in Jewish surnames when a couple entered into religious (ritual) marriage only, without the required state registration. Children born of such marriages were treated by the law as born out of wedlock. Their surname would combine the surnames of the two parents and would contain the word *recte* if the surname of the father was followed by that of the mother, or the word *false* in the case of the opposite order (cf. Rajkowski, 1955, p. 74). Rymut (1992–1994) documents in contemporary Polish material only two surnames containing the element *recte*, and none with *false*.

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<sup>39</sup> [http://www.rjp.pan.pl/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=1048:vel&catid=44&Itemid=145](http://www.rjp.pan.pl/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1048:vel&catid=44&Itemid=145) (accessed Jan. 25, 2017).

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## SUMMARY

FUNCTION WORDS IN SURNAMES — “ALIEN BODIES” IN ANTHROPNYMY  
(WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO POLAND)

This article aims to discuss function words in surnames, such as *vel*, *alias*, *de*, in selected countries with European naming traditions, with particular reference to Poland. Despite the many centuries of surname evolution, such function words are still present in some contemporary surnames in Poland, and quite common in certain other regions (Spanish and Portuguese-speaking areas). In the article, surnames have been divided into two categories: the prepositional type (e.g. *de*, *von*, *van*, *du*, *della*), where the relationship between the conjoined name elements (usually the given name and the surname) is that of subordination, and the conjunctive type (e.g. *y*, *e*, *sive*, *alias*, *vel*) where the relationship between the conjoined elements (usually two surnames) is one of coordination, with the function word meaning „and” or „or”. From a grammatical perspective, however, not all function words are prepositions or conjunctions, as there are examples of closed or open compounds formed from prepositions and articles (French *du*, Dutch *van der*), as well as of participles (Latin *dictus*, German *genannt*). The paper addresses the various types of function words in surnames, outlining their genesis in some cases, as well as exploring issues that arise from their everyday use, especially in instances where two different naming cultures come into contact. Statistics on the frequency of Polish surnames (both past and present) containing function words are given. These data are also used to model the decline and eventual extinction of function words in the Polish anthroponomastic.

**Key words:** multipart surnames, compound surnames, complex surnames, nobiliary particles, function words in surnames