

**Metaphorical Toponyms of Present-Day Vilnius County:
extending Toponymy Research through Cognitive Metaphor Theory**

**Topónimos metafóricos del actual condado de Vilnius:
extendiendo la investigación mediante la Teoría de la Metáfora Cognitiva**

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Abstract: Taking present-day Vilnius County, which marks the cultural and linguistic periphery, as a case study, the attempt is made in this paper to expand the horizons of traditional onomastic research by introducing Cognitive Metaphor Theory (CMT) as an innovative approach to understanding the motivation of toponyms. Onomastic research has traditionally focused on toponyms' etymology, derivation, and historical context. In contrast, this article explores how the application of CMT enhances our understanding of the cognitive processes inherent in toponymy. In this way, this study contributes to advancing the disciplinary field of cognitive onomastics by providing insights into how language and cognition intertwine in the conceptualization and naming of geographical features. Rooted in cognitive linguistics, CMT assumes that abstract concepts are often understood and structured through metaphors derived from tangible experiences. In the context of toponymy, this research investigates how place names are not merely linguistic labels for geographic locations but are inherently linked to cognitive structures and mental representations. CMT facilitates our understanding of toponyms' linguistic and historical dimensions and uncovers the cognitive processes underlying their creation and interpretation. By bridging the traditional onomastic research with a cognitive approach, this novel perspective offers a deeper insight into the complex interplay of language, cognition, and geographical space. The analysis integrates traditional onomastic research methods with Cognitive Onomastics principles, utilizing frameworks from both Lithuanian and foreign scholars to classify selected Vilnius County toponyms through etymological, derivational, and semantic analyses, while also examining associated extralinguistic data. The analysis found that metaphorical toponyms in Vilnius County, though relatively uncommon, carry symbolic or cultural meaning. A total of 38 metaphorical names were identified among limnonyms, potamonyms, and oikonyms, highlighting their role in depicting the interplay between language, culture, and the environment.

Keywords: Vilnius County toponyms, Cognitive Metaphor theory, metaphorical toponyms, toponym semantics, meaning of toponyms.

Résumen: Tomando como caso de estudio el actual condado de Vilnius, que marca la periferia cultural y lingüística, en este artículo se intenta ampliar los horizontes de la investigación onomástica tradicional mediante la introducción de la Teoría de la Metáfora Cognitiva (TMC)

como un enfoque innovador para comprender la motivación de los topónimos. La investigación onomástica se ha centrado tradicionalmente en la etimología, la derivación y el contexto histórico de los topónimos. Por el contrario, este artículo explora cómo la aplicación de la TMC mejora nuestra comprensión de los procesos cognitivos inherentes a la toponimia. De esta manera, este estudio contribuye al avance del campo disciplinar de la onomástica cognitiva al proporcionar información sobre cómo el lenguaje y la cognición se entrelazan en la conceptualización y denominación de características geográficas. Arraigada en la lingüística cognitiva, la TMC supone que los conceptos abstractos a menudo se entienden y estructuran a través de metáforas derivadas de experiencias tangibles. En el contexto de la toponimia, esta investigación investiga cómo los nombres de lugares no son simplemente etiquetas lingüísticas para ubicaciones geográficas, sino que están inherentemente vinculados a estructuras cognitivas y representaciones mentales. TMC facilita nuestra comprensión de las dimensiones lingüísticas e históricas de los topónimos y descubre los procesos cognitivos subyacentes a su creación e interpretación. Al unir la investigación onomástica tradicional con un enfoque cognitivo, esta novedosa perspectiva ofrece una visión más profunda de la compleja interacción del lenguaje, la cognición y el espacio geográfico. El análisis integra métodos tradicionales de investigación onomástica con principios de onomástica cognitiva, utilizando marcos de académicos lituanos y extranjeros para clasificar topónimos seleccionados del condado de Vilnius a través de análisis etimológicos, derivacionales y semánticos, al mismo tiempo que examina datos extralingüísticos asociados. El análisis encontró que los topónimos metafóricos en el condado de Vilnius, aunque relativamente poco comunes, tienen un significado simbólico o cultural. Se identificaron un total de 38 nombres metafóricos entre limónimos, potamónimos y oikónimos, destacando su papel al representar la interacción entre el idioma, la cultura y el medio ambiente.

Palabras clave: topónimos del condado de Vilnius, teoría de la metáfora cognitiva, topónimos metafóricos, semántica de topónimos, significado de topónimos.

Introduction

For nearly forty years, linguists have delved into metaphor, inspired by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson's influential work "Metaphors We Live By" (1980). This book sparked an enduring interest in how metaphorical language influences human cognition and perception. Originating in Cognitive Linguistics, the study of conceptual metaphor has evolved into a vital aspect of Cognitive Semantics. Conceptual metaphor transcends literary usage, revealing a core facet of human cognition: "The essence of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another" (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980: 5). This suggests that abstract concepts often find grounding in specific domains through metaphorical mappings, indicating that metaphors are not mere linguistic embellishments but mirrors of underlying cognitive processes shaping individuals' grasp

of reality.

Conceptual metaphor's significance transcends linguistic analysis, impacting fields like psychology, philosophy, and onomastics (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999; Thibodeau & Boroditsky, 2011; Gibbs, 2012; Holyoak, Stamenković & Dušan, 2018; Reszegi, 2012, 2022; Aunga, 2018). In onomastics, this theory offers insights into naming practices' cultural, social, and psychological aspects, as names are not just arbitrary labels but often bear profound meanings. For instance, anthroponyms reflect cultural values, social norms, and personal identities (Aunga 2018: 1, 5). Similarly, toponyms encapsulate diverse information about a place, including visual depiction, geographic placement, spatial relations, historical events, demographics, and cultural characteristics (Reszegi 2023: 10). To illustrate, the metaphorical association between strength and certain names might influence parents' choices when naming their children, reflecting a desire to ingrain their offspring with attributes such as resilience and power, cf. Lith PN *Ažuolas* ← Lith *qžuolas* (oak) 'tough deciduous tree (Quercus)' (LKŽe). Similarly, we believe a metaphorical link exists between landscape elements and the names bestowed upon them during the nomination process. The names originate based on the impressions or associations likely held by the nominator regarding the object in question. By giving toponyms containing embedded concepts mirroring the most salient features of the named objects, the surrounding environment becomes more intelligible and easier to classify, providing insight into the nominator's surroundings.

Following Cognitive Onomastics principles, we assert that all names hold meaning, and we firmly believe that exploring the metaphorical dimensions of toponyms reveals layers of significance beyond phonetics or semantics. This premise allows us to approach motivations behind toponyms differently, potentially uncovering novel insights. Although metaphoric names also appear in other classes of Lithuanian toponymy, for instance, several metaphorical drymonyms are discussed in Ilona Mickienė's article (2019), and micro toponyms are examined in the works

of Dalia Sviderskienė (2006, 2016, 2017, 2019, 2022, and others). However, within the framework of cognitive metaphor, Lithuanian toponyms have not been thoroughly studied. Since its inception by Kazimieras Būga in the first decades of the 20th c., Lithuanian onomastic research has primarily focused on the derivation and etymology of proper names. Cognitive research into Lithuanian toponymy has only recently begun with the first insights made into it in the works of the author of this article as well as in works of Alisa Stunžaitė (2022, 2023), who studied metonymic models in Lithuanian drymonymy. Thus, the paper **aims** to analyse metaphorical models evident in the toponymy of Vilnius County, shedding light on naming peculiarities of geographical features.

Research Material. The research focuses on 38 metaphorical toponyms (16 limnonyms, 14 potamonyms, and 9 oikonyms) currently officially functioning in Vilnius County.

Sources. The investigation is based on toponyms and the data collected from various modern electronic, printed, and manuscript (archival) sources (see Toponym Sources). These materials complement each other and help to derive and substantiate sound etymological and toponym motivation versions. Toponyms are investigated both synchronically and diachronically.

1. Theoretical Background: Cognitive Metaphor Theory (CMT) and Its Role in Onomastics.

CMT stands as a foundational and widely acknowledged aspect of Cognitive Semantics. Metaphor, regarded as integral to language, is construed within Cognitive Linguistics as a conceptual rather than purely linguistic phenomenon, entailing the structuring of one conceptual domain to another.¹ A primary function of metaphor lies in its capacity to enrich meaning by introducing new conceptual dimensions. Cognitive linguists propose that the extension of meaning

¹ It is vital to differentiate the usage of “metaphor” in Cognitive Linguistics from its literary application. In Cognitive Linguistics, it refers to a semantic concept reflecting human consciousness, involving transferring meaning from a source to a target domain (Dobrić 2010: 138), contrasting with traditional linguistic theory where metaphors juxtapose unrelated meanings based on shared properties (Vaitkevičiūtė 2007: 705).

through metaphor is pervasive across all levels of language (Evans & Green 2006: 38).

Lakoff and Johnson (1980) argue that human cognition and behaviour are inherently metaphorical, extending beyond language to shape our thoughts and actions, influencing daily experiences and perceptions. These sensory encounters generate visual or image schemas within our conceptual system. Language, crucial for understanding this framework, reveals abstract concepts through metaphors grounded in tangible experiences. Our conceptual framework operates largely unconsciously (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). Linguistic metaphors, expressions of deeper conceptual metaphors, help interpret experiences through alternate expressions, impacting thought processes and imagination in everyday contexts (Aunga 2018: 89).

Metaphors convey diverse cultural elements such as images, emotions, attitudes, values, religious beliefs, philosophies, traditions, and cognitive frameworks across societies. Onyms, aimed to distinguish specific objects, are crucial for grasping the cultural ethos and worldviews of distinct nations. Throughout the naming process, factors like geographic location, natural traits, history, and ethnocultural traditions are carefully considered. Toponyms may carry positive or negative connotations, reflecting creators' subjective attitudes and context (Rutkowski, 2011). Onymic connotations, representing extralinguistic knowledge, emerge when proper names are used metaphorically. When a proper name originally associated with one object is applied to name another, it undergoes metaphorization. Understanding these connotations is crucial for reproducing the metaphor. Analysing toponyms reveals intertwined evaluative dimensions, illuminating a nation's anthropocentric perspective, historical narratives, and reverence for sacred places (Gataullin & Fatykhova 2018: 212).

CMT finds application in the study of proper names, as exemplified by Nikola Dobrić's research on Serbian anthroponyms, in which three key aspects of names are identified: the source, the conceptual structure (cognitive traits), and the target (the anthroponym) (Dobrić 2010: 139–

141). The transfer of semantic and conceptual structures between domains is pivotal in forming onymic prototypes, such as transferring the meaning of a common noun to a proper name or using a place name to denote a person's origin. Notably, analysing onyms through CMT focuses on understanding how the conceptual structure of words influences their creation, rather than on etymology. Historically many cultures used metaphoric toponyms, reflecting a sophisticated understanding of the world (Chaikina, Monzikova & Varnikova 2004: 21–22), thus, analysing toponyms through CMT can illuminate the nominator's worldview.

Briefly and simplistically, conceptual metaphor is when one concept is understood in terms of another, as individuals engage their imagination to project and comprehend experiences by employing metaphors and metonymies rooted in visual schemes connecting the source and target domains. Based on this model, involving the transference of cognitive traits (concepts) from one domain to another (from appellatives to onyms): the source (appellative) → a conceptual structure (cognitive trait) → the target (proper name), it is possible to scrutinize concepts underpinning the origins of proper names.

2. Research Methods and Procedure.

The analysis draws upon a synthesis of traditional onomastic research methods and the principles of Cognitive Onomastics, developed by both Lithuanian and foreign scholars. Grounded in the frameworks of Cognitive Onomastics (cf. Hansack, 1990; Sjöblom, 2006; Langendonck, 2007; Dobrić, 2010; Brendler, 2012, 2016; Reszegi, 2012, 2022a, 2022b, 2023; Aunga, 2018; Ainiala, Saarelma & Sjöblom, 2016; etc.)², as well as traditional onomastic research models (cf.

² It should be noted that while the onomasticon has been extensively explored in international scholarly discourse over the past decades within the framework of diverse cognitive linguistic theories, research in this domain is in its initial stages in Lithuania. Notably, works by Rūta Marcinkevičienė (2000), Dalia Sviderskienė (2016, 2017, 2019, 2022), Pavel Skorupa (2021, 2023a, 2023b), and Alisa Stunžaitės (2022, 2023) represent some of the pioneering endeavours

Būga, 1958, 1959, 1961; Vanagas, 1970, 1981a, 1981b, 1988; Sviderskienė, 2006; etc.), this linguistic study classifies selected toponyms through etymological, derivational, and semantic analyses. Moreover, the paper scrutinizes extralinguistic data associated with these place names. For a comprehensive overview of the methodology employed, see Skorupa (2021, 2023a).

To approach toponyms from the perspective of conceptual metaphor, analyse their linguistic characteristics, and identify the potential underlying conceptual metaphors, the following steps were undertaken:

1) The gazetteer³ of official Vilnius County toponyms was reviewed, focusing on appellational toponyms (oikononyms, limnononyms, and potamononyms) with each toponym analysed to determine its origin and identify potential etymons. This stage involved a detailed examination of the linguistic features of each toponym, breaking down the name into its constituent parts. Toponyms derived from personal names, other toponyms, or those of unclear origins (which could potentially stem from either appellatives or personal names) were excluded from further analysis.

2) The list of toponyms and their etymons underwent another round of evaluation, with a focus on excluding toponyms of opaque origin, motivation, and semantics. Only toponyms with transparent origins and motivation were shortlisted. This stage also involved analysing extralinguistic data associated with named objects. Contextual factors such as historical documents (when available), other toponyms with similar meanings, and any connections between the toponym and historical or cultural events, myths, or legends were considered to better understand the influence on the toponym's meaning.

3) The shortlisted toponyms underwent analysis to identify any embedded metaphorical language

in the emerging field of Cognitive Onomastics within the Lithuanian context.

³ The gazetteer comprises 5126 toponyms (3900 oikononyms, 864 limnononyms, and 362 potamononyms) collected by the author in the period from 2018 to 2020.

or imagery. This involved scrutinizing the metaphorical mappings underlying each toponym, identifying the source and target domains of the metaphor, and understanding how they are connected in the name. Additionally, the impact of these toponyms on people's perceptions and attitudes towards respective places was considered.

The paper follows the conventions of Lithuanian regional toponymy studies, presenting toponyms adhering to the established criteria in Lithuanian onomastics. The geographical location, proposed etymology, explanation of origins, and meaning follow each toponym. Officially recognized current forms are emphasized visually with italics and boldface.

3. Research Findings: Unveiling Metaphorical Models in the Toponymy of Present-Day Vilnius County.

This section presents the metaphorical mappings identified in the analysed toponyms. Models are portrayed by the structure Y is X, where Y signifies the target domain, and X denotes the source domain. To prevent confusion, the LANDSCAPE IS X pattern is used to classify the toponyms: LANDSCAPE stands for a specific toponym – limnonym, potamonym, or oikonym, while X represents the source domain, transferring its conceptual structure to a toponym.

3.1. LANDSCAPE IS A TOOL metaphorical model is uniquely represented in the class of hydronyms in present-day Vilnius County. Within this conceptual framework, bodies of water are metaphorically likened to tools or instruments used within the landscape.

The potamonym *Vintara* (the Žirnaja trib; Ukm D) is related to Lith *venteris*, *venteris* (fishing net) 'net with a tail and wings, drawn across a river when fishing' (Vanagas 1981a: 386). The name suggests that the nominator perceives this river as a tool or an instrument for fishing, as it conveys a visual representation of using a specific tool (a net with a tail and wings) across the river to catch fish. This metaphorical representation signifies the river not just as a natural feature but as a

functional tool for fishing in the landscape. Naming a small stream in this manner indicates a perceived utility or purposefulness of the landscape element, emphasizing its instrumental role in fishing activities within the environment.

The limnonym *Šaukščiukas* (Labanoras eld, Švčn D) is Lith DIM Suf *-iukas* derivative from Lith *šaukštas* (spoon) ‘tool for putting liquid, thick or loose food into the mouth’ (LKŽe). The limnonym denotes a very small, elongated lake. The association with a spoon implies a visual metaphor where the lake’s elongated shape resembles the form of a spoon, particularly in how a spoon is used to hold or transfer liquids or loose food. This metaphorical link between the shape of the lake and the functionality of a spoon may indicate a descriptive way of naming the lake based on its appearance and form. Two additional examples of metaphorical lake names conceptualize reading glasses, or spectacles, which are optical devices aiding vision. The limnonym *Akulieriai* (or *Abulenis*) (Strūnaitis eld, Švčn D) refers to two nearly round-shaped lakes situated approximately 70 meters apart. The name originates from the Lithuanian Slavism *akulieriai*, *akulioriai* ‘glasses’ (cf. Vanagas 1981a: 38). Similarly, the limnonym *Okuliarai* (Trakai eld., Trak D) identifies a larger and smaller round lakes positioned 20 m apart. This limnonym is derived from Pol *okuliary* ‘glasses’ (WSJPe). Both limnonyms are motivated by the lakes’ visual resemblance to a pair of eyeglasses. In both cases, two distinct almost circular or oval-shaped water bodies are connected by a narrow strip of land, creating a shape reminiscent of the lenses and bridge of a pair of spectacles. This distinctive feature made the lake(s) easily recognizable and memorable. On the other hand, beyond their physical appearance, these limnonyms might carry symbolic meaning at the time of nomination. Since spectacles are commonly associated with vision, clarity, and perception, these limnonyms could symbolize the clarity or transparency of lakes’ waters.

3.2. LANDSCAPE IS A SOUND model stands out as the most productive, particularly in the class of hydronyms. This conceptual framework encompasses 8 potamonyms, 1 limnonyms,

and 2 oikonyms.

The first group of potamonyms includes names motivated by the gentle sounds of flowing water, often resembling the cheerful chirping of birds. As name givers assigned names to these streams and rivers, the bubbling and gurgling of water might evoke imagery of birdsong in their minds. This association is reflected in potamonyms like *Ciras* (or *Cýras*) (the Šalčia trib; Šlčn D) and *Cirvija* (the Merkys trib; Trak D) that are related to Lith *čirėti*, *čirvėti* ‘to warble, tweet, chirp’ (LKŽe) with the replacement of the initial *č* to *c* (cf. Vanagas 1981a: 75, 1981b: 114). Similarly, the semantics of the stream name *Vilbė* (the Neris trib; V D), which is derived from Lith *vilbti*, *vilbėti* ‘to chirp, whistle’ (LKŽe, cf. Vanagas 1981a: 370)⁴, reinforces the connection between the sound of the stream and the songs of birds. Hence, these potamonyms convey the meaning of babbling, chirping streams and rivers, and capturing the musicality of their flowing waters.

Another group of potamonyms conveys the meaning of noisy sounds produced by water flow or the surrounding environment. Sound characteristic with somewhat negative connotations is reflected in *Kabarkšta* (the Širvinta trib; Šr D) that is related to Lith *kabarkšėti* ‘to squeal, bang, rattle’ (LKŽe, cf. Vanagas 1981a: 140). Similarly, *Pabaldė* (the Šalčia trib; Šlčn D) may be related to Lith *pabalda* ‘knocking’ or may be Lith Pref *pa-* derivative from Lith *balda* ‘knocking’ or *baldyti* ‘to knock, slam’ (LKŽe). Another example in this group is *Trinkulis* (the Bezdonė trib; V D), originating from Lith *trinkėti* ‘to hum, rumble’, cf. *trinksėti* ‘to make a banging sound, snap, bang’ (LKŽe, cf. Vanagas 1981a: 348)⁵. Considering the geographical context – rugged terrains, rocky (pebbly) river beds, and areas with turbulent waters – it is plausible that these potamonyms were

⁴ Vanagas (ibid.) also suggests that the stream name may be derived from Lith *velbejoti* ‘to swish’. This would describe the sound produced by water as a soft, continuous murmur or whisper, akin to the gentle rustling of leaves or the light brushing of fabric. It is a tranquil yet distinct sound, created as the water flows smoothly over obstacles and through the surrounding landscape.

⁵ Vanagas (ibid.) proposes that the potamonym could also be derived from Lith *trinkti* ‘to wash one’s head’ (LKŽe). This could associate the potamonym with a bathing place.

motivated by the sounds produced by the currents. These streams and rivers are perceived as noisy, rattling bodies of water due to their rapids, cascades, though small, and the crashing of water against various obstacles, creating a cacophony of sounds.

Two additional potamonyms in this category exhibit sound characteristics. But could they additionally convey the emotional evaluations? **Žižma** (the Gauja trib; Šlčn D, BY) is attributed by Vanagas (1981a: 402, 405; 1981b: 115) to hydronyms that stem from the opposition between good and evil, motivated by the sound produced by the water flow. This name is derived from Lith *žiežti* ‘to growl, be angry, scold, howl’ and relates to Lith *žiežmara* ‘witch’, *žižė*, *žiūžė* ‘spitfire, harpy’ (LKŽe), with the addition of the formant *-ma*. Similarly, the meaning of the howling river is embedded in the river name **Kaukysa** (the Vilnia trib; V C), which is an intriguing example as it partly reflects Baltic mythology. This potamonym is probably derived from Lith stem *kauk-* and may be associated with Lith *kauk-as* (sprite) ‘wealth-bearing spirit of the house’ (LKŽe), but it is more likely related to Lith *kauk-ti* ‘to howl, growl, crackle’ (LKŽe). This connection is motivated by the sound produced by the water, especially during spring or autumn floods (our observations). Thus, the name can be explained as the transposition of the sound concept, meaning howling, growling stream. In the context of river names, we believe, the concept of “howling” is not typically associated with anger. Instead, it evokes imagery of rushing water or wind blowing across the landscape. The use of this concept in these potamonyms described rivers or streams with a particularly strong current, flowing through a remote, windswept area where the sound of the water is amplified. It could suggest the wild or untamed character of flowing water, emphasizing the power of the river rather than any negative emotions like anger.

The sound metaphor also motivated the naming of a small lake **Alasiukas** (Labanoras eld, Švčn D) nestled within the Macijonėliai swamp. This name originates from Lith *alapas* (cf. Pol *halas*, Bel *голос*) ‘voice; noise, scream, clamour’ (LKŽe; cf. LVŽ I 53). This linguistic association

suggests that the limnonym probably was not chosen solely due to sounds produced by the lake's water, but rather for the ambient sounds of the environmental sounds, such as the calls of waterfowls. These birds inhabit the shores of the lake and the surrounding marshes, providing a rich soundscape, particularly the diverse vocalization of waterfowls, that influenced the naming process. When naming the lake, the nominator may have been inspired by the cacophony of sounds in the environment, thus encapsulating not just the visual image of the lake but also its auditory essence, reflecting the vibrant ecosystem of the surrounding swamp.

This model is also reflected in two examples in the class of oikonyms. The oikonyms ***Krokšlės*** (Kietaviškės eld, El) and ***Krokšliai*** (Jašiūnai eld, Šlčn D) are derived from Lith *krokšlė* 'whooping cough; throat disease, diphtheria', cf. *kriokšlys* 'one that rattles; gargle' (LKŽe). The oikonyms' motivation might be tied to a disease experienced by the inhabitants. This connection might symbolize the symptoms or effects of the disease. For example, the names could allude to sounds or sensations experienced during illness, reflecting the impact of this disease on the community.

As demonstrated by the examples in this category, geographical objects can be grouped based on the sounds they evoke or are associated with. These ambient sounds, emitted by both living and non-living nature, play a significant role in naming geographical features. This practice highlights the connection between the landscape and auditory experiences, showing how people link specific objects to distinct sounds, which may reflect characteristics such as the speed or volume of water flow, or environmental noises produced by people, animals, or vegetation. This indicates that the nominator perceived these objects not just visually or geographically, but also through the sounds.

3.3. LANDSCAPE IS A CONTAINER model is observed exclusively within the class of hydronyms. This conceptual framework is represented only by two examples from the sub-class of limnonyms: ***Bliūdinėlis*** (Kaltanėnų eld, Švčn D) and ***Bliūdukas*** (Vievis eld, El D) which are

derived from Lith Slavism *bliūdas*, cf. Rus *блюдо* ‘bowl; amount it holds’ (LKŽe). Being the Lith DIM Suf *-ėlis* and *-ukas* derivatives, these limnonyms indicate the small size of the respective water bodies. Both lakes exhibit nearly circular shapes. The choice of these names suggests that the nominators perceived the lakes as resembling or possessing characteristics akin to a bowl-shaped object. This association conveys not only the rounded forms of both lakes but also implies that they contain or hold water in a manner reminiscent of a bowl. This visual analogy or conceptual link suggests the perception of the lakes as distinct containers, reinforcing the idea that the water body is a container within the realm of limnonyms.

The sub-class of potamonyms has more examples of this metaphorical model. *Manierka* (the Neris trib; Švčn D, V D) which denotes a small stream is related to Pol *manierka* or Rus *манерка* (flask, bottle) ‘flat closure bottle for carrying drinking water or a drink, attached to a waist belt or shoulder strap or carried in a pocket’ or ‘small vessel for holy water’ (WSJPe, SRYe, cf. Vanagas 1981a: 204; 1981b: 112). This metaphorical conceptualization might imply that the stream is perceived as a vessel or channel that holds or carries water, much like a bottle does. The potamonym could suggest the stream’s significance as a source of water or its role in supplying water to the area it flows through. Additionally, the metaphorical connection to a small vessel for holy water might imply a sense of reverence or importance attributed to the stream, possibly indicating its symbolic or cultural significance within the local community.

Another example is the potamonym *Praustuvė* (the Neris trib; Šr D) which indicates a small stream with a winding riverbed and is derived from Lith *praustuvė, praustuvė, praustuvė* ‘washing dish, washbasin’ (LKŽe). This potamonym was most probably motivated by the concept of water containment, reflecting various associations and perceptions of the water body by the nominator. One association linking this stream to the washbasin could be its shape and form, particularly its meandering path, which creates a basin-like indentation in the landscape. Just as a washbasin holds

water for washing, the stream might also be perceived as having a similar function. Additionally, the presence of natural pools along the stream's course suggests the stream's functionality beyond cleansing. The stream not only provides water for drinking or irrigation but also supports the surrounding ecosystem. Eventually, this potamonym may have been inspired by the visual resemblance of the stream's course to the washbasin, prompting the nominator to use this visual similarity when naming the stream.

The compound potamonym *Puodašikinis* (the Skaistupis trib; Švčn D) naming a small stream, is Lith Suf *-inis* derivative from Lith *puodas* 'vessel, pot; the amount that fits in this container' and *šikti* 'defecate' (LKŽe, cf. Vanagas 1981a: 268), suggesting a negative association with impurities. By incorporating the concept of the container into this potamonym, the nominator likely perceived the stream and highlighted its importance to the community of Kackonys village as a natural sewerage system for waste disposal. Alternatively, it could be motivated by the stream's poor water quality, either naturally muddy or heavily polluted. In this case, the name could ironically highlight the degradation of the stream's water quality. The potamonym might also imply obstruction by debris, vegetation, or other obstacles, making it unattractive and impractical. Thus, this potamonym could reflect the nominator's perception of the stream as a functional but potentially polluted or obstructed feature, emphasizing its role in supporting human activities, specifically waste disposal, or highlighting concerns about water quality or accessibility.

The above analysis suggests that the concept of container or vessel in hydronyms highlights the practical role of natural water bodies that either hold water or facilitate its flow through the landscape. These names may have a symbolic meaning and reflect beliefs or practices regarding water usage, or simply reflect the physical shape of rivers and lakes that could influence their naming. Naming rivers and lakes after various container types could emphasise their utility, as these landscape features are crucial as sources of water for drinking, irrigation, and other human

activities.

3.4. LANDSCAPE IS A MYSTICAL CREATURE presents a model with examples solely from the class of limnonyms. *Laumena* (Pastrėvys eld, El D), *Laumena* (Aukštadvaris eld, Trak D), and *Laumenas* (Pabradė eld, Švėn D) are related to Lith *laumė* ‘hag, witch’ (LKŽe, cf. Vanagas 1981a: 183–184). This mythological creature was believed to swap children, oppress the sleeping at night, or hide the end of the thread in a coil, etc. Hags were considered highly menacing creatures, posing a significant threat to humans, especially men. They resided in areas close to water, often dwelling in dense forest thickets or abandoned bathhouses. It was believed that they sustained themselves by consuming water vapour and harboured a deep fear of linen blossoms and metal, particularly objects made of iron. Legends described them as capable of tearing apart and consuming both adults and children, adding to their fearsome reputation (Gimževskienė, 2019; VLEe). Hence, these limnonyms may draw from local folklore linked to these supernatural beings. They suggest that the lake’s traits or surroundings echo qualities tied to these creatures, hinting at mysterious aspects of the landscape. This reflects the cultural significance of the folklore surrounding these beings and their perceived presence in the environment.

One more group of limnonyms in this conceptual framework comprises names that are associated with the creatures of the underworld. Two homogeneous limnonyms *Velniukas* refer to distinct lakes: one situated between lakes Nikajė and Jagomantas (Pabradė eld, Švėn D) and the other located in Varnėnai forest (Pabradė eld, Švėn D). These names are derived from Lith *velnias* ‘devil’, a deity associated with the underworld and often depicted as an evil spirit in various religions. This word also denotes a negative quality of a person, animal, thing, action, etc. (LKŽe). Here, we believe, also semantically belongs limnonym *Pikėiukas* (Onuėkis eld, Trak D), which is related to Lith *piktas* ‘one that gets angry quickly; angry, irritated; large, severe; poor, useless; harsh, unfavourable, unpleasant (of weather, climate, etc.); harmful to health, poisonous;

loathsome’ (LKŽe). However, Vanagas (1981a: 257–258) categorizes this limnonym under the hydronyms with demonological meaning and derives it from Lith *piktas* ‘evil, evil spirit’ (cf. LKŽe). The metaphorical conceptualization might suggest that these limnonyms are linked to perceived negative or ominous qualities in the landscape. They could reflect stories, legends, or cultural beliefs attributing sinister or foreboding characteristics to the lake, possibly due to its appearance, surrounding environment, or mysterious aspects. These names might be motivated by a perceived sense of danger, darkness, or mystique associated with the named lakes.

3.5. LANDSCAPE IS A TRANSACTION model, despite having only several oikonoms, can be deconstructed into three smaller ones that are related to the concept of money. **SETTLEMENT IS A PURCHASE** model is reflected in the oikonym *Pirktinė (I)* that is highly likely related to Lith *pirktinė* ‘purchase’, cf. *pirklas* ‘purchase’ (LKŽe) and may be motivated by the concept of financial transaction. It is possible to claim that either the settlement and/or lands in the vicinity have been purchased, and this may have been reflected in the oikonym, which almost certainly conveys the meaning of a purchased settlement or lands. Certainly, a more comprehensive examination of historical sources would likely confirm this interpretation regarding the origin of the settlement’s name.

The conceptual model **SETTLEMENT IS MONEY** includes a bigger number of oikonoms. *Ataukai* (Svirkos eld, Švėn D) is likely the Lithuanised version of the Polish variant of this oikonym *Gotówka* ← Pol *gotowy* ‘ready, finished’ (WSJPe). On the other hand, this oikonym may be derived from Pol *gotówka, gotowizna* ‘cash’ (WSJPe, also cf. LVŽ I 203). The oikonym bearing similar semantics is *Penkininkai* (Trakai eld, Trak D) derived from Lith *penkinis, penkinė* ‘banknote of five monetary units, coin; (obsolete) twenty-five copecks coin’ (LKŽe). Each of these oikonoms could be motivated by a concept of money. On the one hand, given the certain historical context of the origins of each settlement, both oikonoms might reflect a notable event where the

settlements' lands were bought outright with cash, distinguishing them from lands that might have been inherited, granted, or otherwise acquired. On the other hand, the oikonyms could indicate a sense of pride or legitimacy in the ownership of the settlement, emphasizing that they were paid for in full and thus rightfully owned by the purchaser. Alternatively, the names might convey the economic origins of both settlements, suggesting that their establishment and development were directly tied to a financial investment.⁶

Another oikonym in this category is motivated by and reflects the past's historical economic and social realities. *Padūmė* (Labanoras eld, Švčn D) is derived from Lith *padūmė* '(historical) a tax levied on a peasant's yard, smoke' (LKŽe). This oikonym reflects **SETTLEMENT IS A TAX** model. Historically, *padūmė* was a state tax in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, levied on homesteads to support the army. It was imposed on peasants alongside other taxes and persisted in the Kaunas and Vilnius Governorates until the mid-19th century (cf. VLEe). Thus, the motivation behind this oikonym can be explained in several ways. First, the name commemorates a historical tax imposed on households, indicating that the area was once subject to this specific form of taxation. This reflects the economic burden on peasants and highlights a significant aspect of the community's past. Second, the oikonym suggest something about the financial status of its residents at the time, implying that the community was largely composed of peasants or lower-income households subject to such taxes.

Toponyms derived from money-related concepts typically indicate historical economic significance, such as areas known for past wealth, trade, or taxation. These names can commemorate the community's economic activities, emphasize its financial importance, or preserve the memory of specific taxes levied on its residents. The motivation behind such names

⁶ To confirm or refute these versions, a more detailed study of historical sources is required. So far, no reliable records of the history of these two settlements have been found.

stems from the settlement's historical financial transactions, economic status, and the impact of taxation on the community's identity.

3.6. LANDSCAPE IS DISPUTE conceptual model, which pertains to property or disputes over property, is found in the class of oikonyms. The settlement name *Deferencija* (Želva eld, Ukm D) that marks a steading, is derived from Lith *diferencija, which is equivalent to Pol *dyferencja* 'difference; dispute over property (boundary of land parcel)' (PWN). The motivation behind this name is likely rooted in disputes over property boundaries, reflecting historical conflicts in the area and highlighting the significance of property and boundary issues in the settlement's history. This oikonym suggests that land ownership and boundary issues were important to the residents of the steading. These disputes were likely crucial in shaping the settlement, influencing property rights, and defining its territorial boundaries.

3.7. LANDSCAPE IS BODY(PART) model contains several examples in the class of limnonyms. The limnonym *Papis* (Baltoji Vokė eld, Šlčn D) is derived from Lith *papas* 'breast; nipple' (LKŽe, cf. Vanagas 1981a: 244). It is likely motivated by the shape of the lake which resembles a breast. On the other hand, the motivation of the limnonym may be of a deeper, symbolic meaning to the nominator, as the breast in many cultures is considered the primary source of food for a newborn. Thus, lake *Papis* could have been considered a source of food (fish, birds, etc.) for people living in its vicinity. The limnonym *Pakaliukas* (Labanoras eld, Švčn D) is derived from Lith *pakalas*, *pakala* (butt) 'back, bottom' or *pakalys* 'butt' (LKŽe; cf. Vanagas 1981a: 239). This small lake is located immediately to the northeastern part of the Peršokšnai Lake. The name was likely inspired by its position concerning the larger lake. At the time of naming, this small lake was probably perceived as the "rear" or "bottom (butt)" of Peršokšnai Lake, as it is located behind it from a certain viewpoint. This conceptualization reflects how the smaller lake's location and orientation relative to the larger lake influenced its naming, emphasizing its position as a secondary

or subsidiary water body.

It is interesting that in this model, not only human but also animal body parts are used to name geographical objects. The composite limnonym ***Kačianagis*** (Magūnai eld, Švėn D) is derived from Lith *katė* ‘cat: *Felis domestica*’ and *nagas* ‘nail: horny callus at the end of the finger’ (LKŽe; cf. VANAGAS 1981a: 141). The name is motivated by the shape of the lake, which visually resembles a cat’s claw. The conceptualization behind this name reflects the practice of using familiar natural shapes to describe geographical features. The lake’s outline likely reminded the nominator of a cat’s claw, making the limnonym a vivid and relatable description. Hence, it may be claimed that this approach ties local geography to everyday objects and animals, adding cultural meaning and a connection to the natural world.

3.8. LANDSCAPE IS A SIGN metaphorical model served as the conceptual basis for the potamonym ***Špigulė*** (or ***Špyguitis***, ***Piguičius***) (the Merkys trib; Šlėn D). This name refers to a 6,5-kilometer-long stream in Rūdninkai forest and is derived from Lith *špyga / špygas* (fig) ‘fist with the tip of the thumb protruding through the other fingers, gnawing’ also ‘flop (about wasted expectations, efforts)’ (LKŽe; cf. VANAGAS 1981a: 335) employing Lith DIM Suf *-ulė (-uitis)*. This hydronym, conveying a sign of mockery or contempt, could have been motivated by at least two factors. Firstly, the stream’s very winding riverbed resembles the shape of a “fig” (there is an expression in the Lithuanian language “Susukti špygą” (“To twist the fig”)). Secondly, the small size of the stream – its limited length, depth, and width – means it supports little to no fish. Consequently, the name of the stream may reflect human expectations related to fishing or hunting that ultimately led to disappointment. Semantically, this is a hydronym of configurational meaning associated with the names of body parts.

3.9. LANDSCAPE IS A ROAD model served as the basis for the potamonym ***Birvėta*** (Bel *Bipvema*) (the Dysna trib; Švėn D, BY), which is related to Bel *бepвa* ‘wet road paved with logs;

corduroy road’ (Skarnik.by; cf. VANAGAS 1981a: 65). The motivation and conceptualization of this name can be traced back to the historical use of the river for timber transportation. Historical sources, such as the compendium of residential places in Vilna Governorate by Josif Goshkevich (G1905) and the statistical data of Vilna Governorate collected by Anton Korevo (K1861), reveal that many larger rivers and their smaller tributaries, including the *Birvėta*, were used for navigating and transporting logs from the forests. This economic activity was crucial, as it facilitated the movement of timber, a valuable resource, from the forested areas to other locations for further use or trade. The sight of logs floating down the river would have been common and striking for people at the time, leading to the conceptualization of the river as a “wet road paved with logs”. Just as a corduroy road is made by laying logs side by side, the river filled with floating logs would resemble a roadway. The name *Birvėta* captures this visual and functional resemblance, reflecting the cultural and economic significance of timber transportation. It shows how the local population perceived and utilized their environment, embedding their economic practices and experiences into the potamonym.

3.10. LANDSCAPE IS SUPPORT model is reflected in the potamonym *Galba* (the Šventoji trib; Ukm D), which embodies the concept of ‘support’ or ‘assistance’. Derived from Lith *galba* ‘help, salvation’ (LKŽe), this name is assigned to a small stream stretching approximately 6 kilometres in length. The motivation behind this name likely stems from the stream’s vital role in providing support to the surrounding landscape and communities. As it meanders through cultivated fields in the valley of the Šventoji River, the stream becomes an essential resource for irrigation and sustenance. It offers assistance by supplying water to the cultivated lands, ensuring their productivity and supporting agricultural activities. This metaphorical naming approach highlights the stream’s role as a lifeline, providing essential support to the landscape and those who

depend on it for their livelihoods.

3.11. LANDSCAPE IS FOOD model served as inspiration for the oikonym *Lazanka* (Medininkai eld, V D), which originated from Lith *lazankos* (← Pol *lazanki*) (lazanka) ‘dish: type of pasta’ (LKŽe). This flour meal, prevalent in the former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, involves crafting wheat, rye, or buckwheat flour dough into thin pancakes, subsequently cut into triangles or squares, and boiled. It is traditionally served with crackers, olive oil, or sour cream. Introduced in the 16th century by Bona Sforza, the wife of Sigismund I the Old, as part of Italian cuisine, *lazanka* swiftly integrated into the culinary fabric of the Commonwealth. The dish is traditional during the fast (Belarus.by, Librowska, 1985). The motivation behind this name is somewhat ambiguous, but it is plausible that the simplicity and affordability of the dish led to its widespread popularity among lower social classes. Consequently, naming the settlement after this dish may have reflected the socio-economic status of its inhabitants. Alternatively, the oikonym could be deeply rooted in the historical and cultural significance of the dish within the region, highlighting food’s role as a cultural symbol and sustenance. This naming approach effectively connects the landscape to a fundamental culinary tradition, thereby enhancing the cultural identity of the region.

3.12. LANDSCAPE IS HARDSHIP metaphorical model is embedded in the oikonym *Trūdai* (Švenčionėliai eld, Švčn D), derived from Lith *trūdas* ‘hardship’ (LKŽe). This name suggests that the landscape itself embodies or evokes a sense of difficulty or adversity. The motivation behind this name is multifaceted. On the one hand, the oikonym may reflect the challenging living conditions experienced by the village inhabitants at the time of its establishment. On the other hand, it could signify the enduring struggle or resilience of the community against various hardships over time. Alternatively, the oikonym might signify the lower social standing of the settlement’s residents. In either case, this metaphorical naming approach effectively conveys

the idea of hardship as an inherent aspect of the local environment.

Final Remarks and Conclusions

This study of metaphorical models in hydronyms and oikonyms within Vilnius County presents several insights into how landscapes are perceived and named. These models demonstrate the rich interplay between language, culture, and the environment, illustrating how people conceptualise natural and man-made features. CMT effectively explains our tendency to understand abstract ideas by relating them to concrete experiences gained through living in and moving through specific landscapes and among named geographical objects. The analysis of toponyms demonstrated that toponyms are not merely labels for geographical objects; they are deeply intertwined with cognitive structures and images.

Toponymic metaphors convey symbolic or cultural meanings, yet they are relatively uncommon in the toponymy of Vilnius County. A total of 38 metaphorical names were identified in the classes of limnonyms (16 out of 864), potamonyms (14 out of 362), and oikonyms (9 out of 3900). Most of them are in the class of potamonyms – 3,88 %. In the class of limnonyms – 1,85 %. In the class of oikonyms – 0,23 %. Hydronyms likely hold the largest number of metaphors due to their status as ancient linguistic artefacts that encapsulate the figurative worldview of past cultures.

1. The primary and most prolific metaphorical models are LANDSCAPE IS A SOUND that captures the auditory experiences associated with named geographical objects (8 potamonyms, 1 limnonym, 2 oikonyms) and reflects the nominator's sensory experiences; LANDSCAPE IS A CONTAINER highlights the practical roles of natural water bodies as holders or carriers of water (3 potamonyms, 2 limnonyms) and emphasizes their utilitarian view; and LANDSCAPE IS A MYSTICAL CREATURE that reflects cultural and mythological associations with the landscape (5 limnonyms) and suggesting mysterious or foreboding qualities.

2. Less frequent models are LANDSCAPE IS A TOOL that emphasizes the functional roles of water bodies (1 potamonym, 3 limnonyms); LANDSCAPE IS A TRANSACTION that reflects historical economic activities (4 oikonoms); and LANDSCAPE IS A BODY(PART) presents names inspired by human and animal body parts (3 limnonyms) and reflects shapes and symbolic connections to anatomy.
3. The least common toponym source domains include DISPUTE which reflects property disputes (1 oikonym), highlighting settlement history; SIGN demonstrates symbolic characteristics of landscapes (1 potamonym); ROAD captures the river's historical use for timber transport and its economic significance (1 potamonym); SUPPORT highlights the stream's role in irrigation and agriculture (1 potamonym); FOOD connects the settlement to a traditional dish, reflecting cultural identity (1 oikonym); and HARSHIP signifies challenging conditions and socio-economic context (1 oikonym).

The metaphorical models reveal the diverse ways in which the inhabitants of these territories perceived and interacted with their environment. Toponyms not only describe physical features but also encode cultural, functional, auditory, and mythical dimensions, enriching our understanding of the region's linguistic landscape. Research on Lithuanian place names within the theoretical frameworks of cognitive linguistics and onomastics is still in its early stages. As a result, it is currently difficult to determine the extent and types of toponyms in Vilnius County and across Lithuania that were influenced by the metaphorical patterns discussed in this paper, or by other metaphorical patterns. This represents a promising direction for future research into Lithuanian toponymy.

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Abbreviations

Al – Alytus; An – Anykščiai; Bel – Belarussian; BY – Belarus; C – city; cf. – compare; D – district; DIM – diminutive; El – Elektrėnai; eld – eldership; En – English; Est – Estonian; *f* – feminine;

Finn – Finnish; *ibid.* – in the same source; Jdr – Judrėnai (Klaipėda D); km – kilometre; Kv – Kvėdarna (Šilalė D); Ldk – Lyduokiai (Ukmergė D); Lith – Lithuanian; Pbrd – Pabradė (Švenčionys D); PN – personal name; Pol – Polish; Rus – Russian; Suf – suffix; Šlčn – Šalčininkai; Šr – Širvintos; Švčn – Švenčionys; Trak – Trakai; trib – tributary; Ukm – Ukmergė; V – Vilnius.

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- Švenčionys District Municipality website at: http://www.svencionys.lt/lit/I_pradzia
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