Review Article

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Proceedings of the 21st International Congress of Onomastic Sciences, Uppsala, August 19–24, 2002, vol. 1 edited by Eva Brylla and Mats Wahlberg in collaboration with Vibeke Dalberg and W. F. H. Nicolaisen (Uppsala: Språk- och folkminnesinstitutet, 2005). xxx + 570 pp. No price stated. Paperback (ISBN 91-7229-026-0)

This is the first of five volumes of proceedings of the congress. It contains "the opening and closing speeches, the plenary lectures and the papers of section 1, Name theory (chair Vibeke Dalberg, Denmark) and section 6, Names in literature (chair W. F. H. Nicolaisen, United Kingdom)". The five volumes contain, as well as the plenary lectures, 200 papers out of the 220 read at the congress. The sheer bulk of publications arising from the ICOS series arouses excitement at the degree of international interest in onomastics; and it might be tempting to view the acceptance of such a number of papers for publication as evidence of a high standard of research in onomastics. But the acceptance for volume 1 transpires, in not a few instances, to have been unrigorously overgenerous; and it represents the outcome of one of two editorial policies stated in the Preface, viz. to accept papers which had "been presented at the congress and after approval by the corresponding section chairs". The second policy is expressed thus: "editorial changes mainly concern formal and bibliographical matters, the authors themselves being responsible for the views expressed therein and for any revisions of language". In my view, both policies act to the detriment, rather than the promotion, of the subject, and of the many papers worthy of dissemination in more complete form. The result is a volume frustrating to review. The following illustration of this focusses on a selection of papers from section 1.

Many of the papers are manifestly printed in the form from which they were orally presented; and it is perhaps not fortuitous that such

presentation, most often inappropriate for printed form, also most often reflects content inappropriate for inclusion in a scholarly volume devoted to a field labelled 'onomastic sciences'. Tsushima's "The popular press does its bit for onmastics" (Section 1: e.g., p. 312: "For the popular press does know a little classical knowledge at times, and they knew that *bi* meant 'two', like in *bicycle*, see? So they came up with *monokini* because *monokini* means 'one' doesn't it?"), and Kadmon's "The Cake of Good Soap. Humour in geographical names" (Section 6: e.g. p. 470: "Suddenly a parachutist in full military kit but wearing a tartan kilt (you know, a Scottish pleated men's skirt)..."), are anecdotal and naïve. These remarks reflect no aversion to humour on my part.

As appropriate, much of section 1 focusses on what it is to be a name. And, perhaps, given the failure in many languages to distinguish lexically between what in English are 'name' and 'noun', it is understandable that a long-held tradition of viewing names as subsets of nouns still prevails. Therefore, considerable attention is directed to establishing criteria for distinguishing between members of what are considered to belong to the same category: viz., nouns. Inevitably, too, but for other reasons, attempts at the distinction invoke concepts of uniqueness of reference (or denotation) for names—and therefore the function of names as purely referential or not—, and the question of their potential for 'meaning', however this is to be defined.

Editorial intervention concerning revisions of language could perhaps have rendered more accessible Superanskaya's pursuit of theories of names published by the same author in Russian, in Russia, in 1973, and therefore unavailable to many. The arguments of this paper are not accorded justice by the opacity of the English presentation (in some instances a charitable interpretation may be that an automatic spell-check has been allowed to run unchecked: perhaps in "for imbibing names with connotations", and "politically imbibed words" (pp. 285, 291), the target verb was *imbue*?), nor by the ill-connected sequences of observations. The opening section "Names of unique objects vs. pronouns" fails to explore this potentially valid distinction (cited from Kurylowicz [sic] "1956": cf. "1976" in the References), and the focus shifts unannounced to "common nouns". That names are regarded as nouns is implicit in the claim somewhat oddly expressed as : "[a]ny

proper name is given to this or that object. That is why substantives are easily becoming proper names. Nevertheless any part of speech may become a proper name *if it undergoes substantivization*" (p. 286; my italics identify an invalid assumption neatly disposed of by Brendler, below). Names are seen as part of "the special vocabulary" as opposed to "the common one". "*Special vocabulary* comprises technical terms and all kind of nomenclatures of science, technique, trade etc. as well as proper names" (p. 284). It is difficult to know what constraints the author imposes on what words are included in this vocabulary: where, for instance, would belong lexemes to do with technique, trade etc., such as *hoe*, *cheesegrater*, *bobbin*, but which behave as common words. The suggested criterion for distinguishing the "special" from the "common" vocabulary (p. 289) is simply bizarre: words of the former "tend to be pragmatic because they are aimed at performing some function", while "words belonging to the common vocabulary simply state facts and they cannot be used in the way depicted or changed if anyone wants to do that". (Bolotov p. 90, on the other hand, argues that "terms, which denote technical, scientific notions", are a subclass of C[ommon] N[oun]s.)

Bolotov (p. 89) states as if incontestable that "[t]he biggest opposition of nouns is the opposition of common nouns (CN) and proper nouns (PN)". In the course of his argument that the crucial distinction lies in "a naming force, i.e. ability of a noun to single out the definite referent: a) in one situation or several homogeneous situations, b) in one social field, c) in several social fields", there is introduced, however, evidence of a confusion which pervades many of the papers in the volume. Despite the formulation of the "opposition" just cited, a distinction is then referred to between "proper name and common name" (p. 91).

The potentially valuable view emerging from Hedquist's research is an anti-Millian one of names as having at least some content (contrast Coates, below). After a brutally brief summary of various views on "meaning" of names, Hedquist presents results of tests designed to elicit how people "*gestalt*" names with "the semantic component HUMAN" when applied to animals. The paper addresses "the relation between proper names and appellatives" (p. 172), invoking an

"abstraction ladder" declining from nouns with the most inclusive sense to names. The possibility is assumed of a class containing only one individual (*Rosie*: compare *cow*, belonging to a class containing millions of individuals). This possibility is given fuller treatment in Brendler (below). A distinction, seemingly gratuitous to the argument, is introduced (p. 174) between "proper names and common names", both different from "ordinary nouns". The last is illustrated by *bachelor*, definable by semantic components: "[i]f a person is not unmarried and/or male, it is not a bachelor". "Common names" are exemplified by *elephant*, which "can be defined by a set of descriptors", although one or more descriptor may be lacking. It is not clear why I am asked to believe that the "sentence 'This elephant has eighty legs' is in fact well formed". Also dogmatic on the categorial status of names are Sklyarenko & Sklyarenko (p. 277): "It is a common knowledge that the class of nouns falls into two opposite subclasses: common nouns—*a city* and proper nouns—*London*". This (bibliography-free) paper approaches what can better be described as conversion (see below) from one linguistic category to another by postulating "layers" of onomasticity, invoking "onomastic vibration of onyms" (p. 279). The appositional phrase "proper nouns (proper names)" (p. 277) claims identical status for the two terms. With respect to 'meaning' of names, the paper, like that of Hedquist, confuses, or makes no distinction between, linguistic 'meaning' and encyclopaedic knowledge.

Despite apparent distinctions drawn by the terminological usage in Bolotov, Hedquist, or Sklyarenko & Sklyarenko, none of these appears to relate to the often accepted though arguably spurious distinction drawn by, for instance, Huddleston between "proper nouns" (*John*, *London*), which "function as the head of NPs serving as proper names", and "proper names", which "may be structurally more complex".[1] The nature of their implied distinctions is therefore opaque. Whatever value is to be granted the aims to standardise onomastic terminology outlined by Harvalík's paper, the use of terms is theory-motivated. What is one man's 'proper name', for instance, may be, on

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[1] R. Huddleston, *Introduction to the Grammar of English* (Cambridge, 1984), pp. 229–30.

sound linguistic principles, another's 'name'. The terminological confusions cited above arise from confusion in theoretical interpretation, and are not to be resolved by the imposition of a standard terminology.

Bergien also uses "proper names" and "proper nouns" indiscriminately. The discussion of names from the domain of computing invokes the distinction between "proper names, appellatives and terms", which the author does not succeed in defining convincingly. Like Sjöblom's approach to "the problem of meaning and function" of names via a potentially interesting corpus of Finnish company names, the topic of her doctoral thesis, Bergien's paper reads like the result of earnest preliminary work, using bibliographic material not overtly shown to be fully understood: work worth encouraging, perhaps by accepting for oral presentation, but not by means of indiscriminate publication.

Van Langendonck also regards as ongoing the struggle to distinguish "proper name" and "common noun" (thereby, again, implicitly accepting 'name as noun'), and particularly items regarded as transitional categories between the two, the *Gattungseigennamen*, "or appellative proper names": names of brands, languages, diseases etc. His proposed solution rejects the idea that the definition of a name depends "on the pragmatic context of the utterances, even on the intention of the speaker" (p. 316: contrast Coates: see below). It is effected by the introduction of "proprial lemmas" (or lexemes), which may have different grammatical functions. Thus *John* and *Napoleon* are both proprial lemmas, but in 'John admires Napoleon' each is a "'proper name'" because it functions proprially, but in 'another John', the proprial lemma functions "as a common noun (appellative)". The concept relies on acceptance of the concept of polysemy; on acceptance, for instance, that "the English lexeme *work* can be used as a noun …, or as a verb". The form *John*, in different semantic-syntactic contexts is a "polyreferential proprial lemma. Note that in the case of appellatives we would speak of polysemy" (p. 319). I will invoke, however, the very Occam's razor referred to by the author, by rejecting polysemy and therefore the need for the extra 'layer' of "proprial lemmas". In 'another John' (above), the name has simply been converted to a common word: a common word derived from a name, with

no 'polysemous' relationship. What is valuable in Van Langendonck's paper is the invocation of prototypicality, and the classification of personal and place-names as "prototypical proper names"; and he himself invokes metaphor and metonymy in the derivation of "appellatives" (p. 321). This can be extended to name-based derivation of other common-word classes, as in 'My sister Houdini'd her way out of the locked closet'.[2]

Duke's lucidly organised and well-exemplified discussion of African anthroponyms is based on the premise that the primary, universal function of names is "the precise identification of referents". Names are one of "three possibilities of referring to a specific entity", the others being pronouns and definite descriptions with appellatives. This summary of Werner (1974) tallies with Lyons' classification as nominals, of "three grammatically distinct kinds of singular definite referring expressions: proper names, definite noun-phrases and pronouns",[3] the implications of which I draw out below. Duke assesses the three types in terms of proportional ease of performance versus competence, and applies Nübling's (2000) proposed "ideal characteristics" of names to her corpus: precise identification, brevity, ease of memorisation, formal marking of onomastic status. The analysis illustrates communicative functions of the African names which go beyond the purely referential: communicative (secondary) functions which may account for absences of the "ideal characteristics" in the onomastic systems discussed here.

Nübling's meticulous account of "Implizite und explizite Verfahren proprialer Markierung" is based on data from languages in which personal names face a "Dilemma" arising from the diachronic source of the names in appellatives on the one hand, and the need for names, with their monoreferential function, to identify themselves as such (again, names are associated with appellatives, even if only diachronic-

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[2] Cited in F. Colman and J. Anderson. 'On metonymy as word-formation: with special reference to Old English', *English Studies*, 85 (2004), 547–65 (p. 552); E. V. and H. H. Clark, 'When nouns surface as verbs', *Language*, 55 (1979), 767–811 (p. 784).

[3] J. Lyons, *Semantics*, 2 vols (Cambridge, 1977), II, 640.

ally). The specific function of names requires its specific expression, and will, as it were, strive after it. In German, the marking of a personal name is not primarily entrusted to morpho-syntax and context, though these may 'protect' a name from confusion with an appellative (cf. "*Sie geht ... nach Neustadt*" vs. "*sie geht ... in die Neustadt*": p. 250). German family names, in a system which has been officially fixed since the seventeenth century, illustrate implicit marking. As the original common words on which the names were based become obsolete or confined to regional dialects, undergo lexical-semantic change, etc., the names stagnate, while time divorces them from their common-word bases. German thus uses the difference between the synchronic words, the result of dissociation of the name from the common word, as onymic marking. But names fall into a scale of transparency: from those readily confusable with their common-word bases, to those with opacity. The former "nur durch wortexterne propriale Indikatoren disambiguiert werden" (p. 256). The German family-name system is compared with that of Polish (with acknowledgement to Renata Szczepaniak's "Onymische Suffixe als Signal der Proprialität—das Polnische als Paradebeispiel" in the same volume), whose progress, unlike the former system, has been unhampered by official regularisation and 'fixing'. Whereas German has, for instance, the partially transparent family name *Schmidt*, Polish uses the pure appellative *kowal* 'Schmied', and confers proprial status by means of an explicit onymic suffix in, e.g. *Kowalska/Kowalski*, which prevents 'collision' of the names with other parts of the lexicon. The penultimate section discusses the case of so-called "*ert*-Namen": family names (e.g., *Ebert*, *Lambert*, *Kellert*) whose final syllable has resulted from 'obscuration' of an original deuterotheme of a dithematic name, or from addition of unetymological *t* to -*er*. This is particularly interesting as a potential instance of Germanic dithematic names developing, by obscuration and phonological reduction, not, as usual, to simplex, or monothematic names, but to suffixed, or complex ones. Since very few German common words end in -*ert*, had it not been for the fixing of the German system, this sequence had the potential to develop as an onymic suffix, identifying names formed from other lexemes, as is possible for the Polish suffixes.

Brendler seeks to distinguish between what he, too, regards as subclasses of substantives: that is, names and appellatives. His primary objection to previous distinctions between the two in terms of unique reference attributed to the former (or "die Vorstellung vom Namen als bilaterales Zeichen", p. 104) is couched in a stern warning to those of us who fail to acknowledge the significance of cognitive theory for analyses of names. The theory espoused here regards the brain as incapable of processing and storing deluges of individual items: it is more economical to do so when items are classified. This is merged with set-theory ("Mengenlehre"), in which it is mathematically-logically possible to propose single-item classes: "[d]iese läßt Mengen oder Klassen mit nur einem Element zu". The basic premise is, then, that since it is theoretically possible to have single-item classes, this must be supposed for the processing of information in the brain. Thus, the distinction between name and appellative is no longer one between something uniquely referring and something identifying an object in a class, but as expressed (pp. 104–05), between the different type of class to which each belongs: "*Der Name ist ein Wortlaut, der eine (Einelement-klassen-)Bedeutung indiziert*" … "*Das Appellativ ist ein Wortlaut, der eine (Mehrelementklassen-)Bedeuten indiziert*". As represented, however, the theory and definition of classes implies that the brain has an even more complicated 'layer' of things to store: for one thing, it has to recognise an item as belonging to a single- rather than multi-item class. The theories espoused here are invoked further in addressing some very apt questions: questions whose welcome responses simply do not need this 'extra layer' of single-item class (Occam's razor again). With respect to discussion of names and 'meaning', cognitive theory as presented here is not needed in order to separate linguistic from encyclopaedic knowledge (p. 107), nor to separate 'etymological meaning' from considerations of 'sense'. And with respect to the frequently alleged appellative origins of names, the valid statements (p. 109) on other word-classes as name-bases do not need the support of any cognitive theory. A particular value of this paper lies in its emphasis on 'man the namer' (p. 98): the impossibility of isolating onomastics from the givers and bearers of names, and from their natural (including human social) context (perhaps particularly in this light, I find very

odd the author's insistence (p. 103) that metaphorical use of terminology is not in keeping with the requirement of a precise mode of expression in linguistic theory: so much of the terminology with which man seeks to make sense of the world is of necessity metaphorical, as is the word *metaphor* itself). The insistence that "[e]in Name ist ein Wort" (p.109), in contradiction to some recent claims, invites discussion of the linguistic categoriality of names. This brings us to Coates.

From an angle different from Brendler's, Coates also argues that names are not uniquely referring, and consequently properhood is not "a unique bilateral relation between a linguistic expression and an individual": it is not a structural or inherent category (compare "perhaps the most commonly-held of all views about name-expressions is that they are either proper or not proper", p. 129). "A new theory of properhood" queries the traditional view of properhood as a property of nouns, and by extension, noun phrases. One basis for this discussion recalls the Huddlestonian hierarchy (above) of proper names subsuming proper nouns as well as phrases which may or may not contain a proper noun. Adopting a strictly Millian stance, Coates identifies as "prototypical proper names" (p. 132), those proper nouns which have no sense, such as *Vercingetorix* or *Uppsala*: names of the sort whose citation has encouraged the (allegedly) hitherto undisputed view of properhood as inherent in nouns. If this is undermined, then so too is to be undermined the view of properhood as a category. Coates' problem with such a view arises from "expressions which have an equal claim to be called proper names but which are identical in form with non-proper expressions" (p. 129): (a) 'The Old Vicarage' compared with (b) 'the old vicarage'. The proposed resolution is to deny categorial status to the label 'proper', and to invoke modes of reference: purely onymic in the sense-lacking (a), versus semantic in the sense-bearing (b). Properhood is released from categorial association with nouns: it is a mode of reference, and whether an expression is being used with onymic reference (as a proper name, in (a)) or not (as a common expression, in (b)) cannot be known without insight into the speaker's intent or the hearer's interpretative response. Prototypical proper names are simply those that have lost any association with possible sense-denotation: they are "in fact simply expressions which are never

used with any of their entailments … intact" (p. 134; e.g., *Uppsala*): and are therefore presumably always used with onymic reference. But onymic reference is not the only use of names, and I wonder how one would accommodate names in vocative and nomination contexts.[4]

I confess myself less strictly Millian than Coates. Were Coates, as he speculates, to attach a sign declaring its name as 'The Old Vicarage', to a house which had never been a vicarage, I would regard it as an indication of perversity or humour. Apparently at least one customer of a particular bookshop '*gestalted*' its name as identifying a place of worship: "You must get exhausted every Saturday night, clearing it all away ready for the service on Sundays" (a customer at the Chapel Collector's Centre, Castor [a converted chapel]).[5] But for Coates (p. 128), "properhood simply *is* senselessness", and thus names are to be removed from the lexicon: "[a] separate onomasticon is required" (p. 128). This might suggest that, while into the lexicon go items with 'sense', items with no sense, i.e. names, go into the onomasticon. But this would be to categorise names, thus contradicting the denial of category status to properhood. Therefore, while the role of this onomasticon is to "take account of the fact that there are linguistic processes which apply just to names" (p. 128), I cannot make the mental leap required to envisage what it is to contain.

A separation of the onomasticon from the lexicon is also proposed by Akselberg, who nevertheless raises the question of "how the proper nouns (the names) of the onomasticon are related to the common nouns (the words) of the lexicon" (p. 67): thereby associating names with nouns (the latter curiously seeming to comprise all words). The paper advocates "phenomenological onomastics", which, as presented here, seems to involve acceptance of the rather banal observation that "[t]he way we are socialized is important for how we perceive the world" (p. 75). It reads not like a fully written paper, but a summary of topics whose discussion is not coherently fulfilled ("psykologists" p. 76, just one of several typographic errors, is not encouraging).

With reference to what it is to be a name, Johannessen provides

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[4] See, e.g., Lyons, *Semantics*, I, 216–18.

[5] S. Tyas, *Book-worm Droppings* (Stamford, 1988), p. 22.

instances of non-noun bases for ship names, a source of data exploit-
able by those who question the name-noun correlation. Johannessen's
selection for discussion of ship names also provides a context in which
to address a pervasive anomaly in the application of the word *name*.
That is, its use to refer to nouns which refer to sub-types of classes,
notably so-called 'bird names' (and see Bolotov's classification includ-
ing "zoonyms", p. 89; that of van Langendonck including "animal
names", p. 315, would appear appropriately to refer to names such as
Fido). While *Charlotte Amalia*, or *Den flygende Adler*, etc. (p. 187) are
indeed ship names, words such as *sparrow*, *tit*, *parrot*, *canary* are not
names,[6] any more than are words identifying sub-types of ship
(*schooner*, *frigate*, *ferryboat* etc.). A bird name may be *Polly*, or
Chirpie, and one can refer to 'my canary *Chirpie*': but not to 'my bird
canary'. Van Langendonck (p. 317), for instance, cites "close apposit-
ional structures" as a "syntactic criterion for names".

Given the traditional focus of onomasts on etymologies, an
approach to place-names based on a different model might be
welcome. Gammeltoft's analyses of place-names with the same
(etymologically) deuterotheme as his own name adopts a name-
semantic model of classification which aims to focus on "the act of
naming itself" (p. 152). This focus is achieved by examining "the exact
signification of each linguistic element" in combination with "the
combined descriptive content of the entire linguistic designation" of
the name. It transpires, however, that the examination involves rather a
lot of etymologising (see, e.g., the explication of *Whartop Grange*,
p. 154; nor is it clear how uncombined names such as *London* would
be accommodated). But in this case, the etymologising is 'relabelled'
as "interpret[ing] the name from the point of view of the naming
person/persons" (p. 153).

Various threads emerge from some of the papers discussed. A
constant theme is the association of names with nouns. If we refer,

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[6] *pace* P. R. Kitson, 'Old English bird-names', in *Proceedings of the XIXth
International Congress of Onomastic Sciences, Aberdeen, August 4–11, 1996,*
edited by W. F. H. Nicolaisen, 3 vols (Aberdeen, 1998), I, 167, and R. Coates,
review of the same proceedings, *Nomina*, 25 (2002), 155–65 (p. 156).

however, to the three types of definite referring expressions cited by Duke, identified by Lyons[7] as "nominals", it is clear that "the distribution of names warrants their being seen, along with pronouns, as syntactically equivalent to (traditional) noun phrases or (more recently) determiner phrases",[8] as recognised by Coates. I simply draw attention here to the analyses of names by Anderson as belonging to a different word class from nouns.[9] Specifically, names are determinatives, a class which also includes determiners and pronouns. The concept of proto-typicality invoked by Coates and Langendonck is central. 'Core' names are personal ones, more central to the system than place-names (as supported by, for instance, the evidence of van Langendonck, and his earlier paper of 1998[10]). Despite the lack of denotation of names, they nevertheless have some linguistic content: gender for personal names (and 'HUMAN', according to Hedquist), and location for place. To deny such content would nullify, for instance, the distinction between toponymy and hydronymy drawn by Nicolaison:[11] that is, unless one is to say that such distinctions apply only at the moment of naming. The "secondary functions" of African names in Duke (p. 149) are relevant here. Divergence from the core may be signalled by departures in morphosyntax from that 'expected' of names. And non 'canonical' morphosyntactic behaviour of names may be regarded as signalling a class change, derivation by conversion: for instance, via metaphor to a noun in, e.g., 'your Webster', via metonymy to a noun in, e.g. 'an awful lot of Brahms'.[12] In these phrases Webster and Brahms are not

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[7] Lyons, *Semantics*, II, 425.

[8] J. Anderson and F. Colman, 'The importance of being Leofwine Horn', In *Words: Structure, Meaning, Function: a Festschrift for Dieter Kastovsky*, edited by C. Dalton-Puffer and N. Ritt (Berlin, 2000), pp. 7–17 (p. 7).

[9] J. M. Anderson, *Linguistic Representation: Structural Analogy and Stratification* (Berlin, 1992); *idem*, *A Notional Theory of Syntactic Categories* (Cambridge, 1997); *idem*, 'On the structure of names', *Folia Linguistica*, 37 (2003), 347–98; *idem*, 'On the grammatical status of names', *Language*, 80 (2004), 435–74.

[10] 'A typological approach to place-name categories', in *Proceedings of the XIXth International Congress of Onomastic Sciences*, edited by Nicolaisen, I, 342–48.

[11] W. F. H. Nicolaisen, *Scottish Place-Names*, new edn (Edinburgh, 2001), p. 3.

[12] See A. Seppänen, *Proper Names in English: a Study in Semantics and Syntax*, 2

names, but nouns derived from names.

This discussion, as stated at the outset, represents but a selection of papers from the volume. But the selection provides enough idea of the variety of quality in the papers published. A more selective editorial policy would allow scope for expansion of those papers which indeed make a substantial contribution to the study of onomastics. And editorial intervention in matters of English language use, and (in)coherence of argument might facilitate accessibility to potentially significant, but unconvincingly articulated, areas of interest. It would also minimise such solecisms as the printing of Coates' (p. 134) request to the conference audience "to await an appendix to this paper in the proceedings", almost immediately preceding the appendix which appears in the published version. One editorial policy with which I am in utter agreement is that of citation of references by author and publication date within the text of a paper, with an alphabetical list of works cited at the end of the paper.

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vols (Tampere, 1974), pp. 42, 46.