

Dariusz Gierczak (STSM)

1. Aim & Motivation: All letter records require the accurate identification of people, places, and dates. For places, this requires capturing data describing changes in the manner in which places are both named and nested within larger geographical, administrative, and ecclesiastical entities. But most modern gazetteers (e.g. GeoNames, Getty TGN) capture little of this historical complexity. They typically lack both historical usage and a chronology of the contexts (e.g. administrative/political, ecclesiastical, military, judicial) which a given place or region has occupied throughout its history. The main goal of the STSM will be to prepare a small dataset of enriched, historical (c. 1500-1800) gazetteer pilot data for a small region of Europe (Silesia) to be used as a test case in the future development of an early modern gazetteer. A secondary goal will be to provide feedback on the draft plan for the enriched historical gazetteer (EM Places) currently in development by the Cultures of Knowledge project at Oxford.

2. Contribution to the Scientific Objectives of the Action: The STSM addresses point II.3 in the goals for Working Group 1 'Space and Time' in the Action, namely: "Develop means of creating new sub-gazetteers for extending, enhancing, and correcting existing gazetteers."

3. Techniques: Drawing in part on the sources previously identified as part of a current research project at the Herder Institute in Marburg ("Historical-Topographical Atlas of Silesian Towns") of which I am a lead member, I plan to collect data in a spreadsheet format drawn from the following types of questions (further details of which will be discussed in Oxford): - What are the official/canonical names of towns which can be used as a default 'place name' in the gazetteer? - What are the other relevant toponyms which are not found in current gazetteers? - Is it possible/feasible to trace the historical development of these town names? - What are the other relevant spelling variants which should be included in the gazetteer for the above places? - What were the historical changes in the administrative/political regions enclosing each of these six towns between c. 1500 and 1800? - Is it possible to capture analogous information for the related ecclesiastical, military, and judicial regions? - Which specific calendar systems (e.g. Julian, Gregorian) were in use in Silesia between 1500 and 1800? Were there any noteworthy regional differences? - What are the main references/resources relevant for collecting this data? - To what other (not just online) resources should an enriched, historical gazetteer entry on Silesia ideally link?

4. Planning: My work will be carried out both in the Cultures of Knowledge project offices and in the Bodleian Library. Regular working meetings with the Culture of Knowledge project members will be arranged to provide feedback on the data collected during my stay, and on the draft plans for the EM Places gazetteer. Following the STSM, my sample dataset and a short report describing the outcome of the above work will be prepared by me and shared inside the COST Action for feedback and comment by its community.