

## RELIGIOUS STREETS` NAMES IN POLAND

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**Abstract:** The aim of the paper is to show the spatial differentiation of street names related to religion in Polish cities. All voivodship capitals have been chosen to analyze the kinds of religious streets` names. There are only 869 streets` names (3,1 %) originated from religious culture among 28.264 streets in 18 voivodship capitals. Kraków (Cracow), the capital of Minor Poland, is the unique city because there are as many as 125 religion - related streets` names. Cities as Szczecin, Opole, Rzeszow and Katowice as well as Cracow have the biggest participation of religious names (4 % and more). Religious streets` names of voivodship capitals indicate the Christian tradition, mainly Roman-Catholic. The most frequently street`s name is John Paul`s II which is present in every city and in some of them even twice. Only 61 streets` names (7 % of religious names) derive from non - Christian origin like Jewish, ancient Greek and Roman religions, Slavic and Baltic religions. A few streets` names (10) come from other Christian religions for example Orthodox Church street.

**Key words:** streets` names, geography of religion, Poland, voivodship capitals

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Municipal naming is contemporary a very expanded linguistics branch which obtain 3 elementary types: 1) areas, e.g. districts, outskirts, 2) tracts, e.g. streets, alleys, boulevards, 3) points, e.g. places, bridges, squares, monuments, hills, cinemas, towers and many more (Jaracz, 2004, p. 139). Streets` names, called plateonims (platea means street in Greek), are dominant component of municipal naming (Mrózek, 2004, p. 85).

Cities` naming connected with religion and cult M. Jaracz includes to the group of sacred names (Jaracz, 2004, p. 140). Otherwise E. Breza uses the term „cult names” understood as those „which include the name of God, His Mother and saints” as well as names “consolidating cult names, people performing cult and names of the objects needed for cult” (Breza, 1993).

According to M. Buczyński cult places` names consist of 2 principal groups: pagan names, pre-Christan and Christian names (Buczyński, 1997, p. 140). Names of streets, alleys and roundabouts dealing with religion the author of this paper called hierotoponims in the previous works (Przybylska, 2008). In the following paper the term “religious names”, “cult names” and “hierotoponims” have been used interchangeably. Religious naming of public places is the element of immaterial culture.

The choice of persons taken for streets` patrons is “the expression of believed values and their hierarchy as well as the attitude of local community to their history” (Miszewska, 2004, p.

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145). After-war Poland's history shows that it is easier to change symbols and names than eliminate sacral objects from the landscape. Since 1989 local governments often came back to pre-war streets' patrons and started to give names after recently died priests of merit to local community. The analyze of Wrocław, Słupsk and Gdynia city's plans are the example of this phenomena (Romanow, 2000).

The aim of the paper is to show the spatial differentiation of streets' names related to religion in Polish cities. All voivodship capitals have been chosen to analyze religious streets' names. The article also answers the question: What kind of religious streets' names are present in 18 Polish voivodship capitals?

It can be stated that the present paper, because of the focus on spatial aspect of linguistics topics, pretend to be a work on linguistics geography in the broadest understanding of H. Karaś who characterized this field of study as „the subject of research which contains all what is both linguistic and geographical” (Karaś, 2010).

The database TERYT of Central Statistical Office in Warsaw was the source of information about official streets' numbers and names in the cities. In the database and in the present article the term „street” implies not only a street but an alley, a square, a cirrus, a roundabout and a bridge as well although streets are in vast majority.

There are only 869 streets' names (3,1 %) originated from religious culture among 28264 streets in 18 voivodship capitals (table 1).

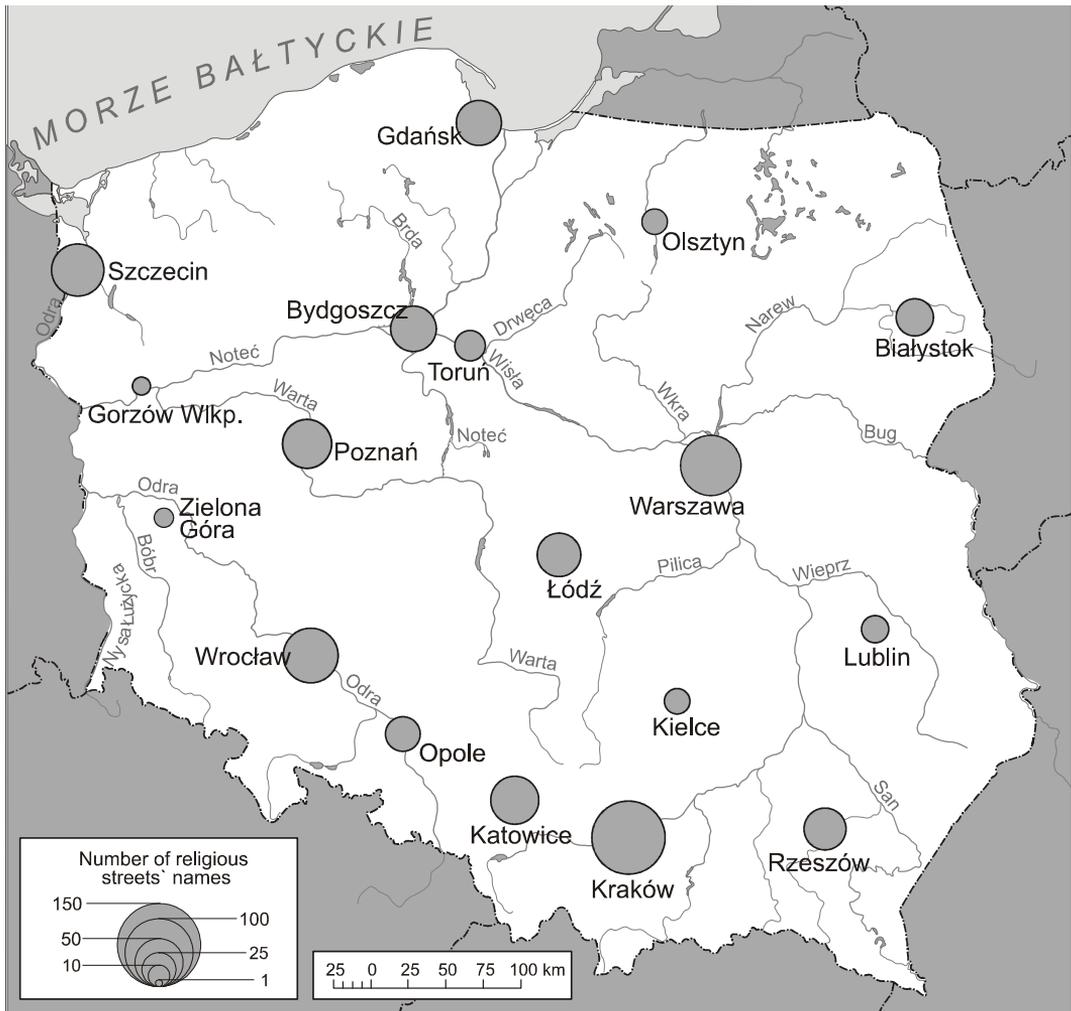
Cities with the biggest number of streets (above 2000) distinguish either minimal share of cult names of streets (Warszawa 1,7 %, Łódź 2,0%) or significant (Kraków 4,3 %). Similarly in the group of the cities characterized by small number of streets (below 1000) some of them have almost the highest rate (Rzeszów 4,9%) and others the lowest (Gorzów Wielkopolski 1,8 %). The size of the city does not influence the amount of the religious streets' names.

**Table 1.** The number of religious streets' names of voivodship capitals in Poland.

City	Streets		
	All	Religious names	Religious names (%)
Białystok	1058	36	3,4
Bydgoszcz	1469	46	3,1
Gdańsk	1673	64	3,8
Gorzów Wielkopolski	613	11	1,8
Katowice	1145	61	5,3
Kielce	682	22	3,2
Kraków	2877	125	4,3
Lublin	1263	29	2,3
Łódź	2389	48	2,0
Olsztyn	562	18	3,2
Opole	694	28	4,0
Poznań	2351	56	2,4
Rzeszów	831	41	4,9
Szczecin	1641	70	4,3
Toruń	861	27	3,1
Warszawa	5387	92	1,7
Wrocław	2190	79	3,6
Zielona Góra	578	16	2,8
Sum	28264	869	3,1

Source: own study based on TERYT database ([www.stat.gov.pl](http://www.stat.gov.pl); access 09.06.2011)

In the map of Poland Kraków (Cracow), the capital of Minor Poland, is the unique city because there are as many as 125 religion-related streets` names (figure 1). None of the cities has as many as 18 streets` names coming from the orders` names, e.g. Franciscan Street, Benedictine Street, Cistercian Street. The uniqueness of Kraków considering its sacral function was underlined by E. Jurkiewicz, Z. Górka who stated that among cities they analyzed (Gniezno, Opole, Poznań and Warszawa) „Kraków becomes „a monastic city” - 1 clergyman per 200 members of the church, whereas in Warszawa – per 600, and in Opole - per 1000” and „in comparison to the whole country Kraków concentrates about 1% Roman-Catholic churches, parishes and priests – and as many as 10% monks and nuns” (Jurkiewicz, 1993, p. 77).



**Figure 1.** Religious streets` names of voivodship capitals in Poland in 2011  
Source: own study based on TERYT database ([www.stat.gov.pl](http://www.stat.gov.pl); access 09.06.2011)

It must be underlined that the cities with the highest rate of streets` names connecting with religion (except from Szczecin) are situated in the southern Poland. Cities as Opole, Rzeszów and Katowice as well as Kraków have the biggest participation of religious streets` names (4 % and more). Those southern voivodship capitals are located in the dioceses characterized by a dominant rate in the period 1980 - 2009 higher than Poland`s average. Additionally since the

eighties Przemyśl and Tarnów diocese and separated in 1992 Rzeszów diocese are continuously (in rotation) on the first, second or third position in the country in the aspect of the participation of the faithful in Sunday masses (dominicantes rate 59,0 % - 87,0 %) (Zdaniewicz, 2010).

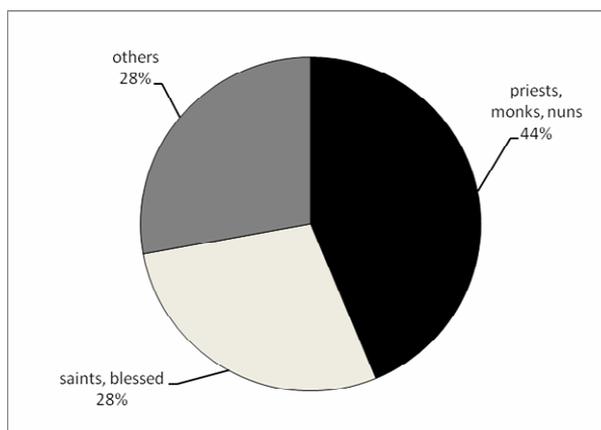
Religious streets' names of voivodship capitals indicate the Christian tradition, mainly Roman-Catholic. The most frequently chosen street's name is John Paul's II which is present in every city and in 6 of them even twice (e.g. there is John Paul's Street and John Paul's Square in Katowice). Other popes are not so popular as there is only one street dedicated to John XXII in Kraków and to Paul VI in Szczecin.

Streets' names coming from priests, monks or nuns make the most numerous group of hierotoponyms in voivodship capitals (380 names). Beside popes there are streets dedicated to honourable priests of XX century: cardinal Stefan Wyszyński (in every city excluding Zielona Góra, Kielce, Lublin, Opole) and priest Jerzy Popiełuszko (excluding Wrocław, Gorzów Wielkopolski, Zielona Góra, Gdańsk).

There are only 25 streets' names pointing out nuns' or monks' name. The most popular persons Brother Albert and Mother Theresa from Calcutta have been made streets' patrons in 4 voivodship capitals. Other streets' names beginning with the word "sister", "father", "abbot" are the exceptions in different cities.

People chosen as streets' patrons are either famous throughout the country like sister Faustina and priest Jerzy Popiełuszko or known only to local community. The latter are in majority in the category of religious streets' names related to different kinds of priests, monks and nuns. Bishop Edward O'Rourke Street and Bishop Andrzej Wronka Street in Gdańsk can be a good example.

Apart from clergymen there are 2 other principal categories of religious streets' names as it is shown at figure 2. The second most frequently present group on cities' plans is the category which includes words "blessed", "saint" or "holly" (247 names). Saint Wojciech (Adalbert) Street is the most popular street in Polish voivodship capitals. Saint Adalbert was a bishop of Prague and a missionary martyred in his efforts to convert the Baltic Prussians in the year 997. He was made the patron saint not only of Poland but Czech and Hungary as well.



**Figure 2.** The kinds of religious streets' names in voivodship capitals in Poland

Source: own study

Streets' names dedicated directly to Saint Mary, mother of Jesus, are not very common in Polish cities what seems strange as most Roman-Catholic sanctuaries in Poland are devoted to this holy person (Jackowski, 2003, p. 226). Blessed Virgin Mary Street is only in 4 voivodship capitals (Kielce, Wrocław, Białystok, Gdańsk). However, if taking into consideration a group of streets indirectly pointing out Saint Mary for instance Marian Square, classified to the third group called "others" because of the lack of the adjective

”saint”, “blessed” or “holy” the number of “Marian” streets arises significantly up to 17 outnumbering any other street dedicated to a canonized or beatified person.

The group „others” is made of 242 different religious streets` names. They come from places and objects (Three Crosses Square in Warszawa, Church Square in Opole), ecclesial function (Bishop Street in Kraków), other denominations (The Mennonites Street in Gdańsk), names of non-Christian gods and goddesses (Zeus Street in Warszawa), referring to Blessed Virgin Mary (Marian Square in Szczecin) or Jesus (The Saviour Street in Warszawa) and feasts (Divine Mercy Street in Kraków).

Streets referring to monastic tradition make the most numerous group nearly 1/3 of the category „others” (64 streets and squares). Saint Franciscan Street is the most popular among them (9). Nearly 1/3 of monastic names is located in Kraków where there are names commonly used throughout the country as Franciscan Street or Cistercian Street and observed only in Kraków like Trinitarians Street (from the Order of the Holy Trinity).

Summarizing, streets` names related to religion are not a numerous group in 18 voivodship capitals. The rate varies from 1,7 % in Warsaw to 5,3 % in Katowice. It is characteristic that among 5 cities with the highest rate of streets` names connecting with religion 4 of them are situated in the southern Poland. Analyzed religious streets` names indicate the Christian tradition, mainly Roman-Catholic and hundreds of streets` names dedicated to saints and blessed as well as priests, friars and nuns clearly prove it. Only 61 streets` names (7 % of religious names) derive from non-Christian origin like Jewish, ancient Greek and Roman religions, Slavic and Baltic religions. A few streets` names (10) come from other Christian religions for example Orthodox Church Street (figure 2).

Not many streets` names refer to past denominational structure of Poland. In the period between the two World Wars there were 12 % Orthodox Church, 10 % Greek-Catholic, 10 % Jewish and 2,6 % Protestant (Jackowski, 1999, p. 35). Contemporarily there are no streets` names in voivodship capitals beginning with a word „pastor” or „pop” documenting religious minorities` activity. It can be observed that religious streets` names of voivodship capitals in Poland are dominated by Roman-Catholic denomination just like the denominational structure: there are 96,1 Catholics per 100 inhabitants in Poland (The Statistical Yearbook of the Republic of Poland, 2010, p. 847). Author`s conclusions coincide with the tendency in Polish municipal naming in the period 1997 - 2003 distinguished by E. Borysiak who noticed „growing streets` number coming from clergymen`s name and surname, especially Catholic priests” (Borysiak, 2005, p. 44).

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