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UNITED REFERENCE BOOK OF THE
GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES FROM THE VALLEY OF
THE DANUBE RIVER */

Paper presented by the People's Republic of Bulgaria

*/ Prepared by Senior Research Associate Engineer B. Cohen.

PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA

Council of Orthography and Transcription of Geographical Names
under the General Administration of Geodesy, Cartography and Cadastre

UNIFIED REFERENCE BOOK
OF THE GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES FROM THE VALLEY
OF THE DANUBE RIVER

Senior Research Associate Engineer B.Cohen

Paper presented to the III UNO
Conference on the Standardiza-
tion of Geographical Names,
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The question of a Unified Reference Book of the Geographical Names from the Valley of the Danube River has been discussed for several years. The motion for its compilation was made by the representatives of the People's Republic of Bulgaria at the International Conference of Representatives of the 6th and 7th Regional Groups for the Standardization of Geographical Names, held in Prague, Czechoslovakia, in 1971. This motion was in the spirit of Resolution 8 (Elaboration of names of objectives falling outside the sovereignty of a single country) of the First UNO Conference on Geographical Names in Geneva, 1967, and expresses the incessant endeavour of our country for international cooperation in this sphere.

The discussions and the exchange of opinions between the Danubian countries which took part in the 6th and 7th Regional Groups show that the idea of compiling the Reference Book was accepted. Our country has carried out investigations embracing both the technical and language problems in connection with its compilation.

The report on this project at the present Conference is aimed mainly at the following:

1. To show a model of a project for the compilation of a Reference Book of geographical names connected with a navigable river, the course of which passes through the territory of several countries. This experience could also be used in other similar cases.

2. To reach an agreement on the implementation of this project on the basis of the international cooperation of the Danubian states.

We think that both aims coincide with the spirit and the

We shall report on a highly specified draft of a Reference Book, as well as on some basic problems in connection with its compilation, namely:

- I. Destination
- II. Contents
- III. Method of Organizing the Work

I. Destination

The Reference Book will be aimed at reflecting and unifying the geographical names in a limited strip of the valley of the Danube River. In this way, it will be able to be used as initial material and as a basis for unifying the geographical names and for their correct representation in making different maps for the region of the River (for pilots, tourists, general geographical maps, etc.).

We must point out that in the last 25-30 years a number of changes have taken place in the river zone. New settlements have made their appearance, as well as engineering and other equipment, a great part of which have their names. There are also a great many re-named inhabited places, localities, tributaries, etc. In many cases they have not been reflected in the navigation and other maps.

We all know that the Danube River is a lively waterway, with the help of which through the ages the peoples of Eastern and Central Europe have established economic and cultural contacts. The names of the inhabited places on the Danube River banks have always been more popular among the peoples inhabiting the Danubian countries than in those lying farther away. Nevertheless, there are many defects in the rendering of the geographical names from the valley of the Danube. Suffice it to mention the great number of toponymic synonyms.

The stepped up relations among the peoples of the Danubian

countries call for a more exact rendering of the geographical names in this region. The Reference Book which is offered will be able to fulfil this task.

There is a whole series of characteristic toponymic questions which can be solved with the help of the Reference Book. These questions include linguistic problems and problems connected with the history of cultural relations between the Danubian countries.

II. Contents

We suggest that the Reference Book should include the geographical names in the Valley of the Danube River and, more particularly, in two strips situated on both sides of the fairway. The first strip extends on both sides of the fairway to a distance of 10 kilometres, and the second includes the area situated between the 10th and 15th kilometre on both sides of the fairway. In this way, the whole included area will come up to approximately 85,000 square kilometres.

We call the first two strips (the strips which are 10 km wide) 'first zone', and the second ones, the more distant and narrow strips - 'second zone'. These two zones, combined with a transverse division along the fairway of the river, beginning from its estuary, will serve for designating the location of the toponyms contained in the Reference Book.

It is desirable that all toponyms should be included which are usually included in topographical maps of a scale of 1:25,000.

The structure of the Reference Book, as projected, will be the following:

1. Title page in the languages of the participating countries.

persons, participating in the work of compiling the Reference Book.

3. A preface - indicating the way to use the Reference Book, in all languages of the participating countries (German, Hungarian, Slovakian, Serbo-Croatian, Bulgarian, Romanian and Russian).

4. Alphabetical Index of the geographical names in the Latin alphabet.

5. Alphabetical Index of the geographical names in the different languages.

6. Alphabetical List of the toponymic synonyms.

7. List of the names, based on the character of the objectives.

8. Scheme of the location of the compilation strips and sectors.

The Alphabetical Index (4) which constitutes the main content of the Reference Book, will contain the geographical names in their original form for the languages using the Latin alphabet. As to the names from the territory of Yugoslavia, Bulgaria and the Soviet Union, in which the Cyrillic alphabet is in use, the names will be given in the Latin alphabet, according to the official system for rendering the names in Latin characters, adopted by the respective country.

Besides the names written in Latin characters, this section (4) also will include the following information about each name: indication of the sector and zone; state in which the toponym is situated (state in abbreviated form); indication of the character of the named objective; serial number of the toponym, necessary for finding it in the Alphabetical Index of the corresponding language (Section 5).

The indication of the character of the objective named will

the most typical objectives in the valley (town, village, port, island, river, mouth of river, forest, locality, pond, lake, peak, elevation, fortress, monastery, technical equipment, etc.). The exact indication of the character of the objectives is to be the subject of a special Instruction for compiling the Reference Book.

The Alphabetical Index in the national languages will contain the names from the respective territory, given in their national form and transcribed in the respective language. The arrangement of names in the national alphabetical order will be effected in the alphabetical order adopted in the respective language, with indication of the numbers of the toponyms in the basic list.

The list of toponymic synonyms (traditional names) should be made on the basis of generally accepted rules by the participating countries. The main tendency should be towards a gradual curtailing of these names and the adoption of the phonetically transcribed official names in the respective territories.

The lists of names made out according to the character of the objectives (Section 7) contain names arranged in an alphabetical order and differentiated into groups according to the character of the objectives (inhabited places, rivers, islands, etc.).

The chart for the location of the basic sectors and strips from which all names in the Reference Book will be taken will be drawn up in a suitable scale and will contain the zones in which the toponyms are situated.

Preliminary calculations have shown that the Reference Book will contain between 20,000 and 30,000 names, duly elaborated according to the above-indicated scheme. The Reference Book is intended to be published in one volume, containing 250-300 pages, format H - 4.

III. Method of Organizing the Work

Work on the compilation of the Reference Book can be started in the beginning of 1978 and be finished during the second half of 1979 or the first half of 1980.

The work on the compilation of the Reference Book must be effected with the participation of the national bodies for the standardization of geographical names of the Federal Republic of Germany, the Republic of Austria, the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic, the Hungarian People's Republic, the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia, the Socialist Republic of Romania, the People's Republic of Bulgaria and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

The fundamental questions affecting the principles of the compilation and publishing of the Reference Book, its printing, legal rights, etc. are to be settled at work conferences of the representatives of the participating countries. The basic coordinating work and organization of the compilation and publication of the Reference Book is to be assumed by the country-coordinator, which we suggest to be the People's Republic of Bulgaria.

It will be necessary to work out a special Instruction in connection with the Reference Book. We think that the Instruction should contain the following basic sections:

1. Destination and contents of the Reference Book.
2. Initial materials.
3. Linguistic approach to the establishment of the names.
4. Method of discussing and adopting the names.
5. Technical instructions for filling in the perfo-cards.
6. Methods and time limits for exchanging the materials with the coordinating country.

Let us give some very brief explanations of some of the

sections of the Instruction proposed by us.

The First Section should develop to the end the principle embodied in the present information and reveal the possibilities for a widest utilization of the Reference Book for practical purposes. In this connection, we hope that additional studies will lead us to a specification and enrichment of the originally mapped out contents.

The Section for Initial Materials should give concrete recommendations for the finding, evaluation and utilization of the initial materials (topographical maps, toponymic investigations, etc.).

The Section for Linguistic Approach is fundamental and it should solve the main problems of spelling the names and of their orthography in a science-based manner.

The Fourth Section will determine the most suitable forms and the method of work of the International Commission on the publishing of the Reference Book.

It is suggested that the preparatory work on the elaboration of fundamental information and the publishing of the Reference Book should be effected with the help of perfo-cards with a broader perforation of a size of K-5/207 x 147 mm. The coordinating country will make a model of the perfo-cards, diapositives of which will be sent to all participating countries. These diapositives, of a size of 1 x 1 should be able to be used for the printing in each participating country of the necessary quantity of perfo-cards. The perfo-cards filled in by every country will be sent to the country-coordinator for elaboration and preparation of the material for discussion and adoption. The further use of the material (systematized in the perfo-cards) will be in the hands of the country-coordinator according to the technology that has been adopted.

In the present information, a number of details contained in the Instruction, and which have been discussed at work conferences of the Commission on the Preparation and Publishing of the Reference Book have purposefully been omitted.

In pointing out in brief the main lines of the work on the proposed project, we are profoundly convinced that the practical work along this line will become one more model of fruitful international cooperation, to which our country has always been one of the warmest adherents.