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EXONYMS: CATEGORIES AND DEGREE OF USE OF EXONYMS

Concerning questions of the formation of categories  
of exonyms and their usage\*\*

Paper submitted by the German Democratic Republic

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In recent years, investigations have been carried out into exonyms (traditional designations which deviate from the local, national forms of names) in the German Democratic Republic. Among other things, one subject of the investigations was the question how to implement the appropriate resolutions of the United Nations Conferences on the Standardization of Geographical Names in the German Democratic Republic. Especially resolutions 28, 29 and 31 of the Second United Nations Conference (London, 1972), resolutions 4, 17, 18, 19 and 20 of the Third United Nations Conference (Athens, 1977) and resolution 20 of the Fourth Conference (Geneva, 1982) should be mentioned here.

Several findings of investigations into exonyms have been published in specialized literature, e.g. fundamental expositions of BREU and BACK (both from Austria) and of ORMELING (Netherlands), which have been incorporated into the investigations.

Starting from the statements and definitions of the term "exonyms", which are contained in the above-mentioned resolutions, and the necessary diminutions of exonyms, the German Democratic Republic proceeds from the fact that exonyms represent designations of geographical objects, the forms of names of which is read in a different way in other languages than in the language of the state or the region in which the corresponding geographical objects are situated. Names of geographical objects which are not within state sovereignty and for which there are German designations, such as for names of the seas, parts of seas etc., are not considered to be exonyms.

Concerning the investigations into the exonyms and the tasks of their diminution, one categorization has stood the test. Basically, exonyms can be divided into two categories.

The first category covers politico-geographical names. The designations of the states, administrative units, capitals, other built-up areas (towns, rural communities, residential places, isolated farms etc.) as well as other objects (plants, traffic facilities, factories etc.) created by man, belong to this category.

The second category covers physico-geographical names. Among others, the names of mountain ranges, single mountains, hills, plateaus, valleys, landscapes, peninsulas, islands, capes, lakes, rivers, glaciers, forests, woods, moors, deserts etc. belong to that category.

In the German Democratic Republic, a great deal of circumspection is shown in applying exonyms, especially for the reason that the political and geographical realities are reflected properly in the names to be used, since such a reproduction of names contributes considerably to the respect of state sovereignty and to international understanding. Reproductions of geographical names deviating from these realities are not conducive to the peaceful co-operation between States and peoples.

For quite a long time, the exonyms of the politico-geographical names have been defined in the German Democratic Republic. They are continuously being updated and revised. These exonyms are listed in the "Instruction for the Spelling of Geographical Names for Cartographical Products of the German Democratic Republic", the ninth revised edition of which was published in 1986.

For the purpose of the proper and standardized reproduction of the physico-geographical names, a document with the title "Register of Exonyms and of Other Geographical Names in German Language for Cartographical Products of the German Democratic Republic" was worked out and published in 1986, observing the resolutions of the United Nations Conferences on the Standardization of Geographical Names mentioned at the beginning.

Before starting the elaboration of the forms of names, the method of discussing and eventually defining general principles in a team of specialists has stood the test. Such a discussion is held in the Permanent Commission for the Spelling of Geographical Names in Cartographical Products of the German Democratic Republic. This Commission exists at the Administration for Mapping and Cartography of the Ministry of the Interior.

The register has the following structure:

1. General principles
2. Special remarks
3. Geographical designations in foreign languages and their German equivalents
4. Form of geographical name in foreign languages and their German equivalents
5. Exonyms and their equivalents in foreign languages.

The register under item 3 lists generic terms and other geographical terms, which frequently occur in foreign languages and maps. This facilitates the utilization of the following registers under items 4 and 5. It has the following structure:

1. Geographical designation in a foreign language
2. Language(s)
3. German equivalent.

The register under item 4 is in alphabetic order and has the following structure:

1. National form of name

2. State(s)/Region
3. Language(s)
4. German form of name
5. Geographical category.

By means of this register, it is easily possible to find the equivalent German exonym quickly in using national source materials.

In the register "Exonyms and Their Equivalentents in Foreign Languages" (item 5), the alphabetic order of the geographical names corresponds to the German form of name. It has the following structure:

1. German form of name
2. National form(s) of name
3. State(s)/Region
4. Geographical category.

By means of this register, it is again easily possible to determine quickly the national form of name proceeding from the German exonym.

A first stock-taking has been done with the elaboration of the before mentioned "Register of Exonyms". It represents a contribution to both the national and the international standardization of geographical names. Conditioned by the permanent intensification of international communication, it is important for the future to envisage an up-dating on the basis of practical experiences.

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