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ON THE RUSSIAN CONVENTIONAL NAMES
OF GEOGRAPHICAL ENTITIES OF FOREIGN
COUNTRIES

Submitted by A.M.Komkov, U.S.S.R.

On the Russian Conventional Names of
Geographical Entities of Foreign
Countries

The term "conventional (traditional) name" is applied to the Russian name forms of foreign entities which are not identical with the local official forms in the normalized Russian rendition thereof. It is also applied to the names of international features which lack local forms or which have more than one local form approved for optional use.

Among the conventional (traditional) names, truly conventional and conventionally wrong ones should be distinguished.

The term "truly conventional" is meant to refer to the following categories of names:

1. Those of international features which lack local form (Средиземное море for Mediterranean Sea, Атлантический океан for Atlantic Ocean); such names are usually translated in all languages.

2. Those of international features which have more than one local name in different languages, each of them being official (Дунай for Danube, Альпы for Alps).

3. Russian translation of local names (Огненная Земля for Tierra del Fuego, Скалистые горы for Rocky Mountains, Большое Невольничье озеро for Great Slave Lake).

4. Russified local forms (Валенсийский залив in lieu of зал. Валенсия for Golfo de Valencia, Багамские острова in lieu of острова Бахама for Bahama Islands).

5. Those which entered the Russian language via a mediator language (Саксония in lieu of Заксен for Sachsen, Финляндия in lieu of Суоми for Suomi, Париж in lieu of Пари for Paris).

The term "conventionally wrong" is meant to refer to the names which are Cyrillized in disconformity with the approved rules (Гамбург in lieu of Хамбург for Hamburg, Гульль in lieu of Халл for Hull, Виргиния in lieu of Верджиния for Virginia, Гондурас in lieu of Ондурас for Honduras). Such names have appeared in Russian due to various causes: differences in phonetic and writing systems between the Russian and foreign languages, insufficient elaboration of scientific and methodical grounds for the conversion of names, the usage of mediator languages at early stages of international communication and others.

The conventional names used in Russian now come in total more than 1100. All of them are gathered in the Guidelines for rendering geographical names into Russian from each language (which amount to 50). A sample of the list of conventional names, as it is presented in the Guidelines, is shown in Annex I.

In conformity with the recommendations of the 2nd

UN Conference on the standardization of geographical names our today's policy towards the conventional names is to reduce gradually their number and substitute local (national) forms for them. However, many of them have entered the Russian classic literature (e.g. the novels by L.Tolstoi, F.Dostoyevsky and others) as well as the Russian active vocabulary where they have produced many derivatives (Париж - парижане) and even fixed word combinations (Рим - римское право, пала римский). Therefore, while dropping the conventional names of secondary features we have to preserve a considerable number of them for countries, capitals, a few major cities and some other entities.

We are now planning the preparation of the gazetteer of conventional names which will include both truly conventional and conventionally wrong ones. We have worked out a pattern of this gazetteer (see Annex II) and submitted it for a wide discussion. It is quite possible that its form will be somehow changed after that. All necessary explanations to its contents and structure, after they are finally defined, will be given in the foreword. Since we cannot yet show the final version of the foreword we have supplied the presented sample with some footnote explanations. The last column is purposed for the popularization and gradual introduction into use of local name forms with a view that in the course of time they will substitute the wrong forms.

List of conventional names

German name	Normalized transcription	Adopted conventional form
Bayern	Байерн, земля	Бавария, земля
Bayerische Hochebene	Байернше-Хохэбене, плоскогорье	Баварское плоскогорье
Bayerischer Wald	Байерншер-Вальд, горы	Баварский Лес, горы
Bodensee	Бодензе, озеро	Боденское озеро
Deutsche Demokratische Republik	Дойче-Демократише Републик	Германская Демократическая Республика
Deutsche Bundesrepublik	Дойче-Бундесрепублик	Федеративная Республика Германии
Donau	Донау, река	Дунай, река
Donaukanal	Донау-канал, канал	Дунайский канал
Drau	Драу, река	Драва, река
Dresden	Дресден	Дрезден, нп, округ
Duisburg	Дюсбург	Дуйсбург, нп
Elbe	Эльбе, река	Эльба, река
Erzgebirge	Эрцгебирге, горы	Рудные горы
Franken	Франкен, ист. обл.	Франкония, ист. обл.
Frankenwald	Франкенвальд, горы	Франконский Лес, горы
Fränkische Alb	Френкише-Альб, плато	Франконский Альб, плато
Hamburg	Хамбург, нп, земля	Гамбург, нп, земля
Hannover	Ханнофер, нп	Ганновер, нп
Helgoland	Хельголанд, остров	Гельголанд, остров
Helgoländer Bucht	Хельголендер-Бухт, бухта	Гельголандская бухта
Hessen	Хессен, земля	Гессен, земля
Hohe Tauern	Хох-Тауэрн, горы	Высокий Тауэрн, горы
Jena	Ена, нп	Йена, нп
Kärnten	Кернтен, земля	Каринтия, земля

DRAFT CAZETTEER OF CONVENTIONAL NAMES

Conventional Russian name	Designation	Country Territory Sea, Ocean	Name in national script (in official or state language) ^{1/}	Romanized name form ^{2/}	Normalized Russian form (according to the approved guides) ^{3/}
Августов	НИ	Польша	Augustów	-	Августув
Аддис-Абеба	НИ	Эфиопия	አዲስ አበባ	Addis Abeba	Аддис-Абэба
Айхуньцунь	НИ	Китай	瑯 瑯 村	Aihuncun	Айхуньцунь
Албания	ГОС-ВО	Ю-В Европа	Shqipëria	-	Шкиперия
Алеутские острова	С-ЗА	США Тихий ок.	Aleutian Islands	-	Алушен-Айлендс
Алжир	ГОС-ВО	Сев. Африка	الجزائر	Al Jazair	Эль-Джазайр
Альпы	ГОРН. СЕСТ.	Ц. Европа	Alpi /ИТ./ Alpen /НЕМ./ Alpes /ФР./	-	АЛЬПИ АЛЬПЕН АЛЬП
Амазонка	река	Бразилия Перу	Rio Amazonas /ПОРТ./ Río Amazonas /ИСП./	-	Амазонас Амасонас
Амнокканское нагорье	ПЛОСТ.	Корея	암 노 강 고 원	Amnokkang-kowön	Амноккан-Ковон
Анкор	КОС. НАМ.	Камбоджа		Angkor	АНГКО
Апеннинские горы	ГОРН	Испания	Cordilleras Béticas	-	Кордильерас-Бетикас
Атток	НИ	З. Пакистан	اٹک	Attock	Атак

^{1/} When an entity has several name forms in different languages each of them being official, all the existing forms are given, the language indicated. When several variant forms of a name exist in the source-language all of them or the main are given without additional explanation.

^{2/} The non-Roman alphabets are romanized 1) in the romanization system officially accepted by the country concerned; 2) in the most widespread romanization system in the case of lacking the official one.

^{3/} The column is purposed for the normalized Russian forms (as they should be) of the conventionally wrong names and of some truly conventional names.