

Handout

A Reflection on the Name of the Capital City of Slovakia, Bratislava

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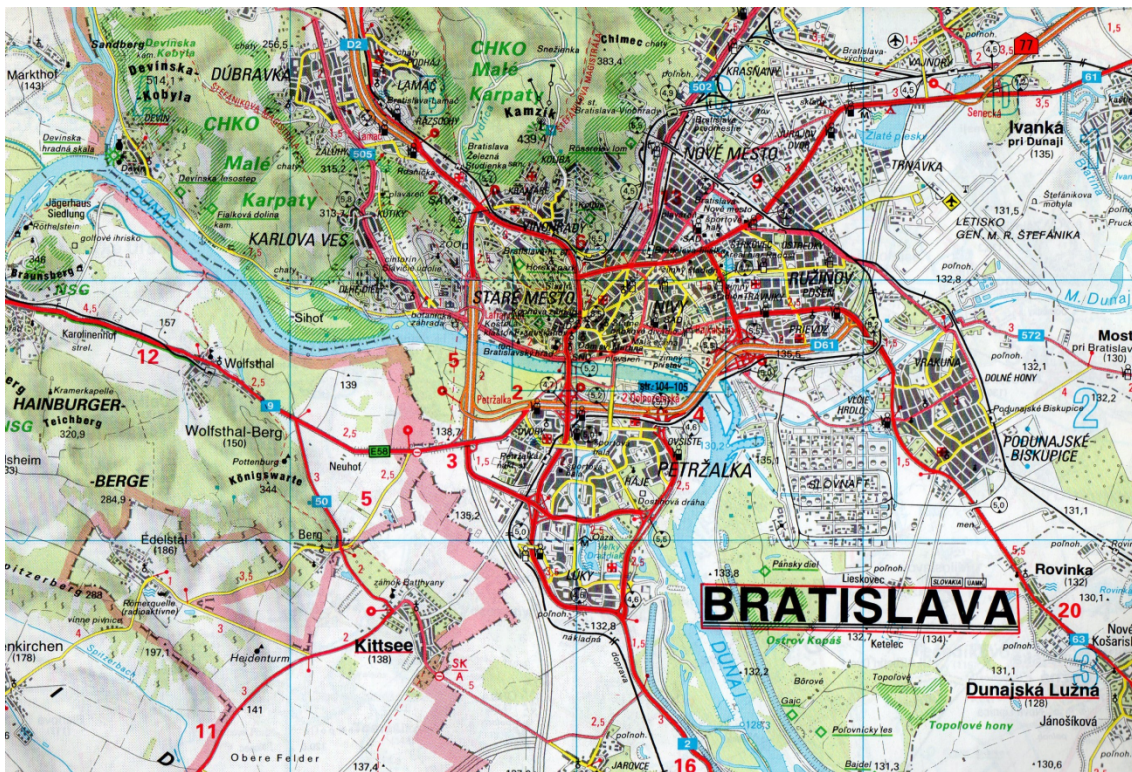
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Angelika Šabíková, 2011

Outline

- I) An historical overview of the metamorphosis of the name of the city, present-day Bratislava.
- II) How was the name “Bratislava” (re)constructed?
- III) When did Bratislava become Bratislava?
- IV) The aftermath of renaming Bratislava after 1919.



Podrobný autoatlas - Slovenská republika, Harmanec 1995

I) An historical overview of the metamorphosis of the name of the city, present-day Bratislava.

Bratislavský topografický lexikon [The Topographic Lexicon of Bratislava], Bratislava 1990.

805 – Wratislaburgium, Pisonium, 907 – Brezalauspurc, 1001 – Poson, 1108 – Presburch, 1137 – Comitatus Posoniensis, 1138 – Posonium, 1189 – Bresburc, Bosonium, Prespurc, 1221 – Burgum, 1271 – Presburch, 1273 – castrum Pusonii, Posonium, 1298 – castrum Posiniense, 1773 – Posonium, Posony, Presburh, Pressporek, 1786 – Pressburg, 1808 – Pozsony, 1918 – Prešporok, 1919 – Prešpurek, Wilsonovo město [Wilson's city], 22 February 1919 – Bratislav, 6 March 1919 – Bratislava.

Milan Majtán: "Vznik názvu Bratislava" [Origins of the Name Bratislava], Bratislava 1996.

905 [805? –S.N.] – Vratislaburgum, 907 – Braslavespurc, Preslavasburc, 1042 – Brecisburg ... Prešpurk, Prešpurek, Prešporek, 1830 – (J. Kollár) Wratislawa, 1832 – (J. Kollár) Tatranská Wratislawa, 1837 – (P. J. Šafárik)

Bracislaw, Brecislaw, Břetislaw, 1837-1838—(L. Štúr) Tatranská Vratislava, 1838—(L. Štúr a iní) Břetislava, 1838-1841— (J. Petrovič, M. Hamuljak) Breislava [in the Slovak literary language initiated by Anton Bernolák – S. N.], 1838— (J. Kollár) Břetislav, Břetislava, 1839—(S. B. Hroboň, J. Kollár and others) Tatranská Břetislava, 1841— (L. Štúr and others) Břetislava nad Dunajem, 1843 — (J. Francisci) Bratislava, 1844 — (L. Štúr and others) Bratislava, 1844—(L. Štúr) Bratislava nad Dunajom, 1845—(L. Štúr and others) Breislava, 1849—(A. Radlinský) Vratislava, 22 February—6 March 1919—Bratislav, 6 March 1919—Bratislava.

Názvy obcí Slovenskej republiky (Vývin v rokoch 1773 – 1997) [Place names of the Municipalities of the Slovak Republic (Development in the years 1773-1997)], Bratislava 1998

1773—Posonium, Posony, Presburg, Pressporek, 1786—Preßburg, Posony, Pressporek, Posonium, Pisonium, 1808 — Posonium, Posony, Pozsony, Preßburg, Pressporek, 1863, 1877-1913 — Pozsony, 1873 — Poson, 1920 — Bratislava.

- 1) the place names Vratislaburgum and Brezalauspurc found in the mediaeval chronicles and considered as names of the 9th – 10th centuries;
- 2) the German names (Presburch, Bresburc ... Pressburg), recorded since the beginning of the 12th century;
- 3) the Latin names (Posonium etc.) recorded also since the 12th century;
- 4) the Hungarian names (Posony, Pozsony) supposedly derived from Slavic personal names (there are different interpretations);
- 5) the Czech and Slovak names (Prešpurk, Prešporok etc.), “corrupted” forms of the German “Pressburg”. They were registered after the second half of the 18th century;
- 6) a series of “original Slavic names” (Wratislaw, Bracislaw, Brecislaw, Břetislaw ... Břetislava ... Bratislava), which were (re)constructed by nationally oriented Slovak intellectuals in the first half of the 19th century on the basis of place names in the medieval chronicles ;
- 7) Wilsonovo město (“Wilson’s city” in Czech) of 1919 [it must be 1918? – S. N.], named after the President of the United States (at the time), Thomas Woodrow Wilson.

II) How was the name “Bratislava” (re)constructed?

1) Ján Kollár, *Rozprawy o Gmenách, počátkách i starožitnostech národu Slawského a geho kmenů* [Discussion on Names, Origins and Antiquities of the Slavic Nation and its Tribes], Buda 1830. -- “**Wratislawa**”

2) Ján Kollár, *Sláwy Dcera. Lyricko-epická báseň w pěti zpěwjch* [The Daughter of Slavs. A Lyric-epic Poem in Five Parts] , Pešt 1832. -- **Tatranská Wratislawa [Tatra’s Wratislawa]**

“When we see Tatranská Wratislawa/ the evening throws a shadow into nature,/ Here the storm throws waves onto the ship,/ But Milek tired slumbers;/ [...] / As soon as the day opened the veil of night,/ We went first to visit the Czecho-Slavic/ Circle in the city:/ Then we feasted our eyes by the Tatra mountain with wine-hairs/ Which ennobled my young soul/ sometime for five years here by its beauty”.

3) Pavol Jozef Šafárik, *Slovanské starožitnosti* [Slavic Antiquities], Prague 1837. -- “**Bracislaw or Brecislaw or Břetislaw**”

“In the Slovak area there is a city [called] Brecisburg, namely Bracislaw or Brecislaw or Břetislaw, now Prešpurek.”

4) Ján Kollár, *Díla básnická Jana Kollára we Dwau Dyljch* [Poetic Works of Jan Kollár in Two Parts], Budín 1845. -- “**Tatranská Břetislawa**”

5) Juraj Zvestoň Bulla, “Žalmy tatranského Slovana” [Psalm of a Slav in the Tatra Mountains], *Lipa* [Linden], Budín 1860. – “**Bratislava**”

“Bratislava, Bratislava!/ There the glory of the Slavs fell;/ There the heathen hordes raged,/ and cut down the Slavic youth”

III) When did Bratislava become Bratislava?

1) October 28, 1918: the proclamation of the independent Czechoslovak state in Prague

2) October 30: the Martin declaration was accepted by the Slovak political representatives by which the Slovak territories were incorporated into the Czechoslovak state.

- 3) November 11: the end of World War one. Germany and Austria-Hungary are defeated. Newly established Czechoslovakia is on the victorious side.
- 4) January 1, 1919: the incorporation [or occupation] of Prešporok (Bratislava) by the Czechoslovak army.
- 5) February 4: the transfer of the Ministry for Slovakia from the city of Žilina (in northern Slovakia) to Prešporok (Bratislava).

Slovenský denník [The Slovak Dairy] on January 1, 1919

“It comes as joyful news which touch gracefully every Slovak heart: Prešporok, or our time-honored Bratislava will soon fall under the power of our army”.

- 1) The Request of the Ministry of National Defense addressed to the Presidium of the Ministerial Council of the Czechoslovak Republic (later for short: the Presidium) on “the correct name of the city of Prešpurk”. (February 10, 1919, Prague)
- 2) The Request of the Presidium addressed to the Ministry of the Interior on “the correct name of the city of Prešpurk”. (February 14, 1919, Prague).
- 3) The Notice of the Presidium addressed to the Ministry of the Interior on its decision on February 19, 1919, to use the name “Bratislav” for the city of Prešpurk. (February 22, 1919, Prague)
- 4) The Request of the Presidium addressed to the three subordinate offices in Prague, Brno and Opava on the decision of February 19 (i. e. Bratislav). (March 3, 1919, Prague).
- 5) The Question of the Head of the Prešporok district, Samuel Zoch, addressed to the Minister for Slovakia, Vavro Šrobár, where he (Zoch) asks the official name of the city. (March 6, 1919, Bratislava)
- 6) The Request of Minister V. Šrobár addressed to the Presidium to use only the officially codified name of Bratislava for the city. (March 13, 1919, Bratislava, no. 1837/1919)
- 7) The Notice of the Presidium addressed to the Ministry of the Interior on using the correct name for the city of Bratislava. (March 16, 1919, Prague.)
- 8) Publication of the decision of Minister V. Šrobár on the official name of Bratislava (March 25, 1919, Bratislava, no. 3086/1919) in *Úradné noviny Župy Prešporskej* [The Official Bulletin of the Prešporok District].
- 9) The Request of the Presidium addressed to the three subordinate offices in

Prague, Brno and Opava on the decision of March 16 (i. e. Bratislava). (March 28, 1919, Prague).

Conclusion

In my opinion, at that time they [the Ministry for Slovakia] did not choose the name Bratislava, as later philologists in various ways said, neither directly from P. J. Šafárik's *Slovanské starožitnosti* [Slavic Antiquities], nor from Ján Kollár's *Slávy dcera* [The Daughter of Slavs], nor from Ľudovít Štúr's precedent.

My hypothesis is that they chose in 1919 the name Bratislava, mainly remembering J. Z. Bulla's poem with the effective refrain "Bratislava, Bratislava". It is said that this poem was widely read and sung not only by intellectuals but also by ordinary people. To support this hypothesis, however, we have for the moment only several indirect references in newspaper articles from that time.

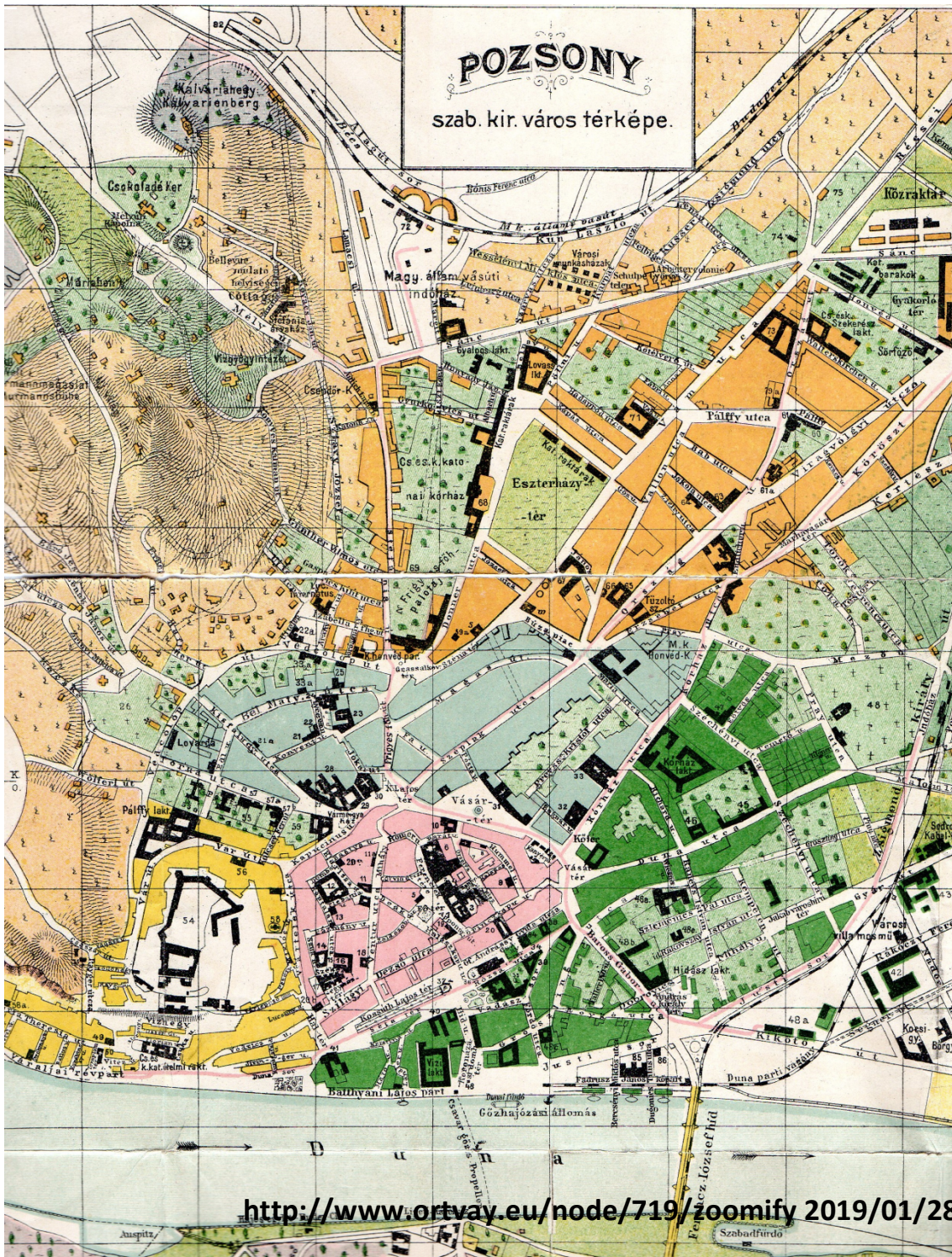
IV) The aftermath of renaming Bratislava after 1919.

Programm vtiahnutia československej vlády do Prešporoka [Program of the Entrance of the Czechoslovak Government into Prešporok] (possibly written at the end of January 1919):

"We order that on all the private houses which face the course of the parade, that is, ulica Štefanská [Štefan Street], ulica arcikniežata Fridricha [Archduke Friedrich Street], námestie Ladislava Veľkého [Ladislav the Great Square], námestie cisára Vilhelma II. [Emperor Wilhelm the Second Square], and ulica Gabriela Barošša [Gabriel Barošš Street], suitable flags should fly."

"Pozsony, szab[ad]. kir[ályi]. város térképe [Map of the Free Royal City of Pozsony]" from the Hungarian guidebook "*Képes Pozsonyi Kalauz* [The Pictorial Guidebook of Pozsony]" published probably in 1907.

the course of the parade of the delegation of the Czechoslovak government on February 4, 1919. According to the Program the delegation arrived at the railway station (just under the sign of "Pozsony, ... ", numbered 72) → Stefánia-út [Štefania Street] → Frigyes főh[erceg]-út [Archduke Friedrich



<http://www.ortvay.eu/node/719/zoomify> 2019/01/28

Street] → N[agy]-Lajos tér [Ladislav the Great Square] → district hall (numbered 29) → Vásártér [Market Square. It was renamed in 1915-16 to the German Emperor Wilhelm the Second Square] → Baross Gábor út [Gabriel Barošš Street] → the building of the Czechoslovak ministry

[numbered 85] on the left bank of the Danube river..

Nariadenie [Decree] issued by the head of the Bratislava district, Samuel Zoch on June 29, 1919.

1. All names of streets, squares, gardens, public and private enterprises based on names of the members of the former Habsburg Dynasty, the names of royal families of hostile countries, and on the names of all those who are hostile to the Czechoslovak Nation, are forbidden. Names based on actions and incidents expressing contempt toward the Czechoslovak Nation are also forbidden.

All these names must be immediately renamed by detailed arrangements done by the proper offices and changes must be immediately proposed to the district offices for approval. ... / Bratislava, June 29, 1919. / Samuel Zoch, Head of the district and governmental officer”.

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