The Types of Czech Exonyms and Incorporating Foreign Geographical Names into Czech

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Abstract

Domestic forms of foreign geographical names, exonyms, have belonged to the vocabulary of each language since earliest times. Although as proper names they are a part of the language system, their origin and existence are determined by extra-linguistic factors, such as by the particular political, economic, religious and cultural contacts between particular countries as well as by the educational level of the population.

In this paper, I analyse the methods of classifying Czech exonyms based on their origins, on the frequency of their occurrence over time, and on their language formation. Special attention is given to the processes by which foreign geographical names have been adapted into Czech considered from the perspective of individual language levels. The set of Czech exonyms, ranging from earliest times down to the present, is also reviewed, as is the contemporary usage of Czech exonyms and the standardisation of geographical names in general. Approaching the problem from a linguistic point of view, an attempt is made to determine the boundaries between exonyms and endonyms (the opposite of exonyms), especially in connection with the existence of so-called phonic exonyms whose graphic form does not differ from the written form of endonyms. The analysis of the processes of adaptation which lead to the creation of exonyms employs a systemic approach that helps to identify regularities according to which such foreign geographical names are Czechified. By studying the ways in which endonyms have been assimilated into Czech over time, sufficient space is given to more general thinking regarding the relation between the centre and periphery within the onymical system.

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The set of toponyms of every language, including Czech, includes domestic forms of foreign geographical names, known as exonyms. This is a special group of toponyms which is studied – mainly in connection with the standardization of geographical names – both by cartographers and linguists. In recent times however, considerable attention had been devoted to exonyms by journalists, radio and television commentators and the public in general.

Although exonyms belong to a language system, historical reasons of their origin are determined by extra-linguistic factors. This is true of Czech and all other languages. Domestic names of foreign geographical objects come into being when the local population first comes into close contact with this object, and therefore considers it necessary to name it to differentiate it from other similar objects of the same type. The rise and existence of exonyms has from the oldest times been connected with the development of international relations on the political and economic level, with the spread of religious influences, rich cultural contacts between individual countries, and last but not least with the development of mass media and the level of education of the population.

Unlike the extra-linguistic circumstances which give rise to exonyms, the form of the name, often considerably different than the original, results from the types and degrees of

integration of the adopted name into the system of the adopting language. These types of differences and the varying degrees of incorporation are influenced to a significant extent by the times in which the exonym is created. Even without closer inspection it is clear that the exonyms of a certain national language (Czech for example) constitute a very heterogeneous group and from a number of perspectives these names can be further divided into several types (Harvalík 1998, Harvalík 2004: 104-114).

The following classification is based on the division commonly used in Czech cartographic literature (Čáslavka *et al.* 1982: 1-3). To provide the most comprehensive possible view of exonyms from the greatest number of perspectives, I shall examine other investigations into this subject (Berger 1991-1992, Back 2002). Individual categories of exonyms are set apart based upon the origin of names, the period of their use, and also with a view to the degree and manner of their incorporation into Czech.

With respect to origins, exonyms can be divided into national names used in only a single language (e.g. in Czech *Řím* 'Roma', *Paříž* 'Paris', *Lipsko* 'Leipzig', *Mnichov* '*München*', in German *Mailand* '*Milano*'), and international names used by at least two languages (e.g. in Czech and Slovak *Benátky* '*Venezia*', *Helsinky* '*Helsinki*', *Varšava* '*Warszawa*'; in Czech, Slovak, German, English and other languages *Peking* '北京市/*Beijing*'). International exonyms are commonly used to name objects often found in remote parts of the world, especially in former European colonies in Asia and Africa. The geographical names from these areas typically enter international consciousness through a mediating language, most often English, French, German, Spanish, Dutch, Japanese and Russian. The pronunciation of some of these international exonyms, especially oriental and African ones which spread through English, differs in individual languages from the pronunciation in the mediating language (English). Aside from modified pronunciation in Czech, minor changes are gradually made in spelling (especially when designating quantity).

Depending on the frequency of incidence over time, exonyms are divided into three groups: living (current), waning (disappearing) and historical (obsolescent) exonyms. Living exonyms (*Paříž* '*Paris*', *Londýn* '*London*', *Řím* '*Roma*', *Benátky* '*Venezia*', *Vídeň* '*Wien*', *Drážďany* '*Dresden*', *Norimberk* '*Nürnberg*', *Temže* '*Thames*') are generally well known and widespread in contemporary Czech, are considered a natural component of the language and continue to be used in communication. Knowledge of the second group of waning exonyms (e.g. *Zhořelec* '*Görlitz*', *Tubinky* '*Tübingen*', *Trevír* '*Trier*', *Solnohrad* '*Salzburg*', *Opolí* '*Opole*', *Vratislav* '*Wrocław*'), is more a generational matter contingent upon degree of education, cultural and historical awareness, and sometimes even geographical location. The third group of historical exonyms such as *Kouba* '*Cham*', *Děvín* '*Magdeburg*', *Dobrosol* or *Dobrohora* '*Halle*', hardly appears in contemporary Czech with the exception of a few cases where the names are used in historical context (e.g. in the work of medievalists, or when teaching history at school).

The boundaries between individual groups are of course not sharply defined, as there may be fluid and gradual movement of terms along this axis of living – waning – and historical exonyms. This variability is described in R. Šrámek's study on exonyms:

> Repertoár exonym není uzavřený, nýbrž se mění a aktualizuje podle dobových společenských podmínek, zvláště s ohledem na politické a kulturní styky se zahraničím. Repertoár je vnitřně uspořádán v zásadě do dvou velkých skupin: na jedné straně existuje určitý soubor exonym, který má po staletí relativně ustálený obsah, a jména sem náležející mají v podstatě neměnnou podobu a dědí se z generace na generaci (...). Lze říci, že tato jména tvoří jádro exonymické zásoby češtiny; na druhé straně existuje však široká proměnná část repertoáru, která zahrnuje pojmenování buď užívaná jen po jistou, někdy jen krátkou dobu (...), nebo která se patrně jako uměle vytvořená obecněji nijak neujala a jsou dnes spíše historickou kuriozitou (Šrámek 1997: 281).[1]

The process of transition is most evident in waning and historical exonyms, nevertheless in recent years there has been a decline in use of less established transient exonyms, and the core group of Czech exonyms has also reduced, due in part to efforts to standardize geographical names.

The integration of names into the adopting language takes place in many ways and on individual language levels. It is clear that if the name taken from a foreign language is to be incorporated into the adopting language – which is an essential condition for its functioning in normal communication – then the particular toponym must be adopted in a certain manner. This is why, when being integrated into Czech, foreign geographical names must undergo changes to their phonetic, morphemic and derivational structure to allow them to be smoothly integrated into the Czech language system. It may even be said that although not necessarily obvious in every case, each foreign geographical name is to some degree subjected to the grammatical and syntactic structure of Czech, both when written and spoken.

The defining feature of when classifying exonyms from a linguistic perspective is the relation between the adopted form and the original form of the geographical name. Depending on this relationship, the set of Czech exonyms is divided into several subgroups.

The differences between the original form of the name and the exonym may only be expressed phonetically, i.e. the name has been integrated into the domestic phonetic system, while the written form of the name remains the same as the original. These phonic exonyms (e.g. in Czech *Brighton*, *Marseille*, *Aberdeen*, *Barcelona*) represent the lowest level of incorporation of such a name into the adopting language. Phonetic modification is obligatory in Czech, and takes place according to the same principles which apply to the pronunciation of all foreign appellatives. Regardless of the pronunciation in the original language, the accent in Czech is regularly shifted to the first syllable and – similar to other languages – the phonemes which do not exist in the adopting language are replaced with the domestic phonemes which are closest in sound (cf. Lutterer 1968).

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[1] 'The set of exonyms is not closed, but is continually changing and being updated according to the social conditions of the day, especially with regard to political and cultural relations with foreign countries. The set is internally divided into two large groups: on the one hand there is a certain set of exonyms which has remained relatively consistent for hundreds of years, and the names found here are essentially unchanging in form and inherited from generation to generation (…). It may be said that these names constitute the core of Czech exonyms; on the other hand however, there is a broad and variable group of exonyms which are only used for a certain and sometimes short period of time, or which were artificially created and never really caught on, and are now fading away into historical curiosities'.

The principles for pronouncing foreign phonemes in Czech (along with examples of toponyms) are included in the appendices of Czech atlases, and certain foreign geographical names and their pronunciation are listed in the *Dictionary of Standard Czech for School and the Public* (*Slovník spisovné češtiny pro školu a veřejnost* 1994: 624-640). Maintaining the original pronunciation or attempting to imitate it in Czech sounds (unless it is a direct quote) unnatural and affected, is seen as grossly insensitive to the mother tongue, and is generally perceived negatively as snobbery or perhaps a misguided attempt to sound posh.

The phonetic adaptation of foreign geographical names in Czech dates back to the earliest records, where (due to the difference in articulation of the given phoneme in the original language and Czech) even phonemes which existed or exist in Czech were replaced. The Czech forms of foreign geographical names were written and recorded, giving a particular spelling to the exonym as spoken, and these forms gradually stabilized. In certain cases however, even in contemporary Czech certain variability in individual names or phonemes can be sometimes encountered, which comes from their unstabilized usage and sometimes even affects not only the spoken, but also the written form of exonyms (cf. Pokorná 1980, Šrámek 1997: 284-285). An important guide for the orthographic codification of the Czech forms of foreign geographical names is the *Index of Czech Exonyms. Standardized Forms. Variants* (Beránek *et al.* 2011).

As written form of endonyms and the corresponding phonic exonyms do not differ, many language users do not consider the phonic exonym to be the domestic form of a foreign toponym. From the perspective of language system however, this concept cannot be accepted.

The exactness of the phonetic reproduction of geographical names in Czech, just as in any other language, is, as mentioned above, subject to certain restrictions, caused primarily by the fact that the adopting language does not have all the phonemes which are common in the languages from which the name is being adopted. Needless to say, a similar language enabling ideal adaptation is difficult to imagine. The integration of an exonym into a language system takes place at various levels of language (phonological, morphological, lexicological and semantic) and it is not important how or in what way the domestic form of the name differs from the original one (cf. Lutterer 1980: 94-95). The degree to which exonyms are adapted according to the rules of the adopting language is not a primary criterion for their linguistic classification, but merely an aid for establishing certain types or categories within the entire set of exonyms of a given language. It can be said that every foreign toponym is incorporated into the adopting language in a certain manner, simply by its use outside the original language.

Domestic forms of foreign geographical names which are written differently than corresponding endonyms are more clearly distinguishable than phonic exonyms which merely sound different. Among these names, graphic exonyms, there are several subgroups depending on the various ways these names are integrated into the adopting language.

The smallest subgroup includes Czech and international exonyms the form of which is independent from the form of endonyms in the original language. In other words, such exonyms are completely different than their corresponding endonyms. An example of such exonyms in Czech would be the name used for Austria. Most European languages adopted either the German form *Österreich*, or the older Latin form of the name (Eng. *Austria*, Fren. *Autriche*, Span. *Austria*, Hung. *Ausztria*, Isl. *Austurríki*, Dan. *Østrig*, Rus. *Австия* etc.), but the Czech exonym for *Österreich* is *Rakousko*. In Old Czech, the exonym *Rakuš* or *Rakús* originally referred to the borderland castle *Ratgoz* (today *Raabs*) and only later it was used to denote the

land which one entered when crossing the Czech border at this castle (Lutterer *et al.* 1976: 222-223).

An ancient layer of exonyms are the names which do come from the original endonym, but since they were adopted at a time of major changes (especially phonetic ones) in the adopting language, their present form is a result of these changes and often differs significantly from the original (e.g. in Czech *Cáchy* 'Aachen', *Benátky* 'Venezia', *Řezno* 'Regensburg').

Closer to endonyms are those exonyms in which the original stems of endonyms are left unchanged and only the rest parts of original names are adapted to morphological needs of the adopting language, so that the original endings, suffixes or components are replaced with domestic endings, suffixes or components (e.g. in Czech *Loira* 'Loire', *Seina* 'Seine', *Somma* 'Somme', *Brémy* 'Bremen'). The need for Czech to decline foreign names was already pointed out by Czech national revivalists back in the 19th century. One of them, P.J. Šafařík, even posited the hypothesis that if declension disappeared in Czech, as it had in Bulgarian, the impetus for such disappearance would be precisely the failure to decline foreign proper names (Šafařík 1852: 116-117). Such morphological adaptation, the aim of which is to place a name in the declension paradigm, is virtually obligatory in an inflective language like Czech. There is just a small group of exonyms which are not declined in Czech because their endings make it impossible to assign the name to one of the Czech declension types, for example *Bordeaux*, *Buenos Aires*, *Coventry*, *Honšú*, *Karlsruhe*, *Lille*, *Los Angeles*, *Marseille*, *Mississippi*, *Missouri*, *Peru*, *Port au Prince*, *Swansea*. Another type of morphological adaptation of plural names is the replacement of the original plural ending with a Czech plural ending, e.g. *Alpy* 'Alpen', *Ardeny* 'Ardennes'. Older Czech exonyms such as *Gotinky* and *Tubinky* arose in a similar manner for the German forms *Göttingen* and *Tübingen* originate from the dative plural (*zu Göttingen*, *zu Tübingen*).

Morphological adaptation is closely related to derivational adaptation, the aim of which is also to incorporate foreign geographical names into the morphological system of Czech more easily. This process, during which the stem of the name is retained, but the word-formative formant (the original suffix or – in case of compounds – component) is replaced with a Czech suffix is not a productive manner of creating an exonym in contemporary Czech and its use is more characteristic of an older age. Derivational adaptation has played a major role in adapting German toponyms into Czech (cf. Laurich 1988: 75-86, Berger 1991-1992: 79-80). The Czech toponymic suffix *-ov* has been used to create Czech forms of German names ending in *-au*, regardless of whether this is a composite with the component *Aue*, or whether the *-au* has a different origin (*Bernov* 'Bernau', *Pasov* 'Passau', *Thurgov* 'Thurgau', *Cvikov* or *Zvíkov* 'Zwickau'). More rarely, Czech forms of German names with the components *-hof* (*Bejdov* 'Waidhofen an der Thaya' – Šrámek 1997: 280), *-dorf* (*Drozdov* 'Drosendorf') or *-grund* (*Pavlov* 'Paulsgrund') are created in this manner. German names of Slavic origin ending in *-itz* are mostly turned into Czech exonyms by using the suffix *-ice* (*Sasnice* 'Saßnitz'), other geographical names from the German language area have been Czechified by using the suffixes *-any*, *-ín* and others.

The given examples show that the selection of a suffix in Czech tends to be influenced by similarities in sound between the Czech suffix and the original ending of the German name. Aside from the similarity in sound, there is still one more major feature of Czech and German. Since the meaning of components such as *-hof*, *-dorf*, and *-stadt* recede into the background in

settlement names from a synchronic perspective, these elements gradually attain the character of topoformants. Similarly in Czech settlement names, the original possessive meaning of the suffixes *-ov* and *-ín* is veiled and these suffixes are today understood as a word-formative means to create such a name. From a synchronous perspective, the foreign topoformant is replaced with a domestic one. This is a process which can be described by the formula:

$$T^x(t_1, t_2, t_3, ... t_n) \rightarrow T^y(t_1, t_2, t_3, ... t_n),$$

where *T* is the group of topoformants of a certain language, *x* is the original language, *y* is the adopting language and $t_1, t_2, t_3, ... t_n$ are the particular topoformants.

Next group of exonyms is characterized by incorporating into the adopting language through orthographic adaptation of the original form (e.g. *Hamburk* '*Hamburg*', *Gdaňsk* '*Gdańsk*', *Poznaň* '*Poznań*', *Varšava* '*Warszawa*', *Brašov* '*Braşov*', *Kluž* '*Cluj*', *Konstanca* '*Constanţa*'). These are called orthographic exonyms. The orthographic adaptation of foreign geographical names is in Czech only facultative.

Another way in which exonyms are created in Czech and other languages is the full or partial translation of an official endonym, usually consisting of more words; one-word names are translated less frequently. An essential condition for translation is that the name contain in some form a translatable common noun or a transparent appellative etymon (in multi-word names, as part of the composite or in the root), e.g. *Solná komora* '*Salzkammergut*', *Iberské pohoří* '*Montes Ibéricos*', *Ijselské more* '*IJsselmeer*', *Kambrické pohoří* '*Cambrian Mountains*', *Bergamské Alpy* '*Alpi Bergamasche*', *Horní Slezsko* '*Śląsk Górny*', *Chiemské jezero* '*Chiemsee*', *Žlutá řeka* '黄河/*Huang He*', *Niagarské vodopády* '*Niagara Falls*'. Appellatives in the names usually indicate the type of such named geographical object, so that, after translation, even speakers unfamiliar with the given language are able to learn what kind of object it is (cf. Rostvik 1987: 45). While the given approach is often used for names primarily designating larger natural or administrative areas (choronyms), islands, foothills, mountains, rivers and bodies of water, for settlement names this is not a very productive manner of creating exonyms (e.g. *Bělehrad* '*Београд/Beograd*', *Kapské Město* '*Cape Town, Kaapstad, iKapa*').

In Czech cartography, endonyms are generally preferred, but in certain cases exonyms are also used. Their use depends on the particular recommendations of the UN conferences on the standardization of geographical names and they are listed on maps in parentheses after endonyms (as doublets). If it is absolutely necessary, exonyms are listed together with endonyms especially in cartographic works intended for schools. Czech maps also use the Czech names for countries and continents, larger natural areas (choronyms), rivers and bodies of water flowing or spread over the territory of several countries. The same principle applies to oceans and seas, which lie outside the sovereignty of any state.

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