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## PLACE-NAMES AND OBJECTIVITY IN HISTORIOGRAPHY: THE CASE OF SILESIA IN THE 19<sup>TH</sup> AND 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURIES

### Summary

On the basis of the introductory analysis of the intimate bond established between territory and the nation/nation-state, the author points out that the main instrument of this bonding is naming of places in the national language. Thus, it is not an innocent choice when one decides to use this or that language to render place-names of an area about the past of which one is writing. It is especially true of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> cc. when nationalism became the only globally accepted ideology. Actually such a choice may amount to repossessing the past of a territory in the interest of this or that nation/nation-state.

In order to avoid this all too rarely noticed possibility that may compromise the ideal of objectivity in historiography, the author maintains that a practical solution in regard to the last two centuries in Europe, is sticking to official forms of place-names in history writing. He shows advantages and disadvantages of this method on the exemplar of Silesia, a region that often changed hands among Prussia, Austria-Hungary, Germany, Poland and Czechoslovakia. In conclusion, the most practical ways of not ideological use of various language forms of place-names are noted with the reservation that the author does not see any simple manner in which this method could be extended to periods prior to the 19<sup>th</sup> c., and that there may be need of dropping official forms of place-names in favor of ethnic/dialectal ones when one focuses on non-dominant ethnic/regional groups.

Key Words: Central Europe, Language, Nationalism, Objectivity, Place-name, Silesia, *Szlonzoks*, Territorial State

*The idea that the [...] people of the world fall naturally into a series of national groups is one of the dominating presuppositions of our time.*

(Potter, 1962: 924)

*Smiling, disdainful, sublime, thinking of his King, of his Flag [...] he looked for the last time upon the screaming horde of black demons.*

(in Gann, 1969: 62-63)

*Veľmi sa mi páčia tie rusínske piesne, ktoré spievajú tí Ukrajinci po tých našich slovenských dedinách...*<sup>93</sup>

(Vico in Kužel, 1999: 136)

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<sup>93</sup> 'I like very much the Rusyn (Ruthenian) songs, which Ukrainians sing in our Slovak villages' [my translation].

*Nationalism and language*

Nationalism entered the fore of world politics with the American and French Revolutions which created the nation-state (in the exemplary form of the United States and France) as the model unit of the political organization of the world with its 'naturally' carved-out populace, i.e. the nation (Kohn, 1962). Albeit to this day it has not been deemed necessary to establish an official language in the US nevertheless American English fills in this unacknowledged position. Similarly not much thought was given to French as a political factor in the wake of the revolution, but already in 1794 it was considered worthwhile prohibiting the use of any other languages *but* French (Edwards 1994:154).

Following the transformation of the Spanish and Portuguese colonies into nation-states in Latin America in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> c. under the influence of the both aforementioned revolutions (Anderson 1991: 47-66), especially the French example took hold among the intellectuals, burghers and nobility in the Apennine Peninsula and in the German Confederation (*Deutsches Bund*) – the halfheartedly welcome successor to the Holy Roman Empire that Napoleon had dissolved in 1806 (Schulze 1991:48-55). Here, language in accordance with Ernst Moritz Arndt's words: *What is the German fatherland?/So name me thus my land!/ Wherever rings the German tongue/And God in Heaven sings,/So shall it be, so shall it be,/ It shall be all Germany.*' (in Fishman 1996:166) and with Friedrich Schleiermacher's statement that one can truly have only one loyalty to one's nation only (Kedourie 1993:57), became the very foundation of nation- and nation-state-building (Kamusella 2000).

In nation-states based on civic nationalism, the national language may be the very mainstay of this ideology (as in France), its value *may* be largely utilitarian only (as in the US), or it may not exist in singular at all (as in Switzerland). But in nation-states steeped in ethnic nationalism the national language *invariably* functions as one of the most significant (if not the most important) constituent of such an ideology. This situation reflects the different ways in which nation-states based on civic and ethnic nationalism usually came into being. The former as the territorial states with highly centralized administration overhauled their populations into nations, and, thus, became nation-states. The latter started as national movements, which created nations that struggled to clad themselves into their own nation-states (cf. Gellner 1983; Hroch 1985).

In civic nationalism, it is the borders of the already existing polity that outline the spatial extent of the nation-/nation-state-in-construction. This differs starkly in the case of ethnic nationalism: the nation-in-making does not match any existing polity, which tends to be spatially either much bigger or smaller than this nation. Thus, the territorial extent of such a nation is usually correlated with the geographic distribution of people speaking dialects, which are considered to be of the national language of the postulated nation. The spread of these national-language-speakers is also the basis for the claims to a nation-state that would contain all of them. Without going into details, which do not need to concern us here, one

may remark that the construction of nation-states based on ethnic nationalism entails destruction or vast territorial overhauling of the already existing polities. On the other hand, builders of nations steeped in the same kind of nationalism conveniently overlook that before the rise of standard languages, subdialects change gradually from village to village creating vast dialect continua usually corresponding to whole language groups and *not* a single standard language (Crystal 1987:25).

The emergence of standard languages based on spoken vernaculars used in the centers of political power in the centralized territorial states, or promoted by early activists of ethnic national movements as ‘most representative’ of their postulated nations, was sparked by modernization. The development of modern capitalist economy grounded in industrialization was not possible without mobile labor/consumers. Thus, the processes of modernization that fortified the centralized state caused it to contribute to these very processes, which made it stronger economically and militarily. Soon the stratification of population on the basis of birthright gave way to equalization through overhauling them as citizens formed through popular education and compulsory military service (Deutsch 1966). Legally assured mobility of the citizenry was guaranteed by the means of rapid and mass transportation and communication (Breuille 1993:19-52; Pierson 1996:35-63).

This mobility to be effective and equally useful for the state, economy and the citizenry as a whole, all the citizens had to share one idiom only as language is the very instrument of interhuman communication. In the past one’s vernacular (spoken subdialect) limited to one’s village was enough for the overwhelmingly immobile peasantry, whereas the members of the estates spoke and wrote in chancellery/literary languages largely unrelated to these vernaculars (e.g. in Latin, Old Church Slavonic, Osmanlıca) that allowed them mobility within large empires and on the continental or even intercontinental scale (Armstrong 1982:241-282).

Drawing into the modern economic, social and political life all the populace of the state, required development of the standard language common for all and, ideally, close to the vernaculars for the sake of rapid comprehension among the citizens. Standardization and spread of such a language gradually inculcated in the populace was made possible through popular education, the conscript army, centralized state administration and the mass media (Deutsch 1966; Kamusella 1999).

Eventually, the standard language formed by a succession of codifiers (who spawned the first dictionaries and grammars as well as put this language into use in newspapers and books before elevating it to the level of the only medium of administration and education) became the *national* language. Especially in nation-states based on ethnic nationalism, the national language began to be perceived as a symbol of nationhood equal in rank with the national flag, national coat-of-arms and the national anthem. Reified as such, its paramount significance was hard to overestimate, because the very national anthem was sung in it, and it was this language, which provided the nation with the ‘proof’ where the borders of its

nation state were, thus, indirectly limiting the extent where the national flag could be unfurled, and the national coat-of-arms displayed (cf. Billig 1995).

### *Language and territory*

Because almost every Central European nationalism is ethnic in character (Kamusella 2000), standard/national languages are the main instruments of ennationalization, i.e. of making a given population of a nation, and a given territory of a nation/nation-state (cf. Kamusella 1999a). The native-level command of a national language makes one of a nation, and the lack of this mastery in children/descendants nevertheless claiming allegiance to a nation, causes the administration of the nation-state/activists of the nation to berate them that they should maintain 'appropriate' knowledge of their 'mother tongue'.

But the connection between the nation/nation-state and the physical territory is not enacted only through the overwhelming presence of the speakers of the national language. The national language is the written language par excellence, which is clearly visible in the fact that while there are about 190 states in the world, the most significant written languages number 200, thus, closely corresponding to the former number (Crystal 1987:284; Enriquez 1999:30). Hence, the written form of the national language can be physically impressed on the territory of the nation-state, in this way making it national and/or claiming it for a nation/nation-state in making.

The most obvious method in this respect amounts to seizing the practice of naming places for the sake of nationalism (cf. Wickham 1997). And, here, once again there is a gulf of difference between nation-states steeped in civic or ethnic nationalism. In the former states, as, for instance, in the US every place-name is equally easily accepted after having been transcribed into the Latin alphabet if inhabitants of a locality agree on it, even though it may be unpronounceable for an English-speaker leading to the rise of an Anglicized version of the original pronunciation of the place-name. Hence, on the territory of the US, apart from the English place-names (New York), one can also find ones in Native American languages (Massachusetts), Hawaiian (Honolulu), Spanish (Los Angeles), French (Lafourche), Russian (Tolstoi), German (Bismarck), Polish (Panna Maria), Swedish (Vasa), etc. (Stewart, 1970).

On the contrary, ethnic nationalism requires comprehensive 'translation' of the landscape into the national language of the nation-state in which this territory is contained. It is effected with little or altogether no respect for previous naming traditions. In this manner, not only is landscape repossessed by the nation-state. Through the use of the current national forms of the place-names for talking about the past which was *not* national, the fact is forgotten and the past is (re-)written so as to pose as part of the 'primordial' history of the nation/nation-state (cf. Berger 1999; Kushner 1997). As Hobsbawm & Ranger succinctly propose--the past is invented for the contemporary aims and needs usually dictated by nationalism (1983).

Then it is not surprising that when casually asked students identify such textbook-famous events as the battle of Austerlitz (1805) or battle of Königgrätz (1866) with some unspecified localities in Austria or (maybe) Germany. It is rarely pointed to one in a classroom that today both the towns known as: Slavkov and Hradec Králové, are located in the Czech Republic. Similarly, the significant battles of Tannenberg (1914) and Ivanogorod (1915) at the east front of World War I one tends to associate with Germany and Russia, respectively, though, at present, both the localities known as Stębark and Dęblin, are located in Poland.

No such mistakes are committed in the case of the course of the war in the West because Ypres is still Ypres in Belgium, and Verdun is still Verdun in France. But France was established as a nation-state at the turn of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries and Belgium in 1830, and since then their national territories with the corresponding networks of place-names have remained largely unchanged. Fate, however, dealt a different history for Central Europe as pointed above. During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Vienna strove to preserve as much of the tradition of the Holy Roman Empire as possible. Incidentally, from the time of the absolutist Theresian and Josephine reforms at the close of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, it meant preserving the place-names in German/ized forms. However, the destruction of the German Confederation (1866) and the establishment of the German nation-state (1871) twisted the emperor's arm enough so that Francis Joseph I made concessions to nationalism. After 1867 Magyar/ized forms of the place-names in Transleithania became official, and the Polish ones in Galicia. In 1882 Czech forms of the place-names in Bohemia were accepted along the German counterparts, and a similar development unfolded in Moravia after 1905. But the full thrust of the national change, of course, came with the break-up of Austria-Hungary and annexations of formerly Russian and German territories as the basis for the springing up of the new nation-states of Austria, Czechoslovakia, Estonia, Finland, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Yugoslavia. Consequently, Russian forms of the place-names were banned from this area and the German and Magyar forms got limited, respectively, to the postwar Germany and Austria, and Hungary.

#### *Historiography and objectivity*

Having pointed to the ideological uses of place-names that form rarely noticed part of everyday routine reality, the historian is in danger of glossing over their usualness that seems so banal (cf. Billig 1995) so as not worth conscious mentioning. This approach may easily compromise the ideal of objectivity, in line with which the historian should analyze the past impartially and not passionately. If it comes to that she does not look at the past any more but at her musings and wishful thinking about the past. This forms excellent fodder for politics, propaganda or legends but is not a base for sound scholarship. Obviously, absolute objectivity in the Enlightenment tradition of search for the Truth, is not possible because we know only through the inherently a-rational medium of language

(Lakoff 1980), thus, all our knowledge is discursive in character (Foucault 1977). What is more, the retrieval capacity of the human brain though vast is limited and abysmally diminutive in the comparison to the whole of the Earth and let alone the Universe. We can manage only sketchy maps/interpretations of reality because to reflect something to its every tiny detail one would have to re-construct this piece of reality in its entirety.

But this impossibility of absolute knowing should not deter one from improving one's analytical instruments as long as it is viable and practical. It is especially true of historiography, a simplistic practice of which may replace the historian with a propagandist, or worse, turn the former into the latter.

In this article I concentrate on the problematic of place-names so as to expose the ideological uses of them in the context of various nationalisms, as well as errors that crop up when one uses the present-day forms of place-names and applies them irrespectively to various moments in the past when they were not<sup>94</sup>. My focus is Silesia because knowing the problematic of this region quite intimately, not only can I present the complexity of the issues of its place-names but also wrap it up with some tentative hints how to avoid the pitfalls of the unreflective use of place-names.

#### *Silesia's place-names and nationalism*

Before the rise of nationalism and the centralized territorial state, place-names were of more utilitarian value than ideological one. They were used for: topographic orientation, improved administration of delimited territories, establishing unambiguous borders, and collecting taxes. Because most of the population of premodern Europe were illiterate, quite immobile and their travels were limited to the vicinity of one's town of residence or several neighbor villages around that hamlet where one had been born, it was enough for one to use the names of the frequented localities in their local dialectal forms. On the other hand, members of the estates (*natio*) having to administer the state and their own lands, they had to standardize place-names in order to avoid ownership disputes or double taxation should one locality had two variegated names.

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<sup>94</sup> Certainly, errors can be of various order. As a highschooler, I remember trying to locate on a map of today's Poland the somewhat mysteriously named city of Preszburk that was mentioned in my history textbook. Despite the evidently Polish spelling of its name I could not find it, and only years later I got to know that it was Bratislava. Prior to 1918 the present-day Slovak capital was officially known as Pozsony in Hungarian and Preßburg in German. It was the latter form which gave rise to the Polonized form Preszburk.

On the other hand, some authors using current forms of the place-names in order to talk about the past have problems with matching some smaller localities with the present-day forms of their names. For instance, Żukowski speaks consistently about Wrocław in the 18<sup>th</sup>-century context though it was known as Breslau then, but sticks to Pless (i.e. Pleß) albeit it is Pszczyna today (1994:69).

This standardization of place-names was effected through committing them to parchment, and at that time the only widespread written language extant in Western and Central Europe was Latin.<sup>95</sup> Hence, one wrote down place-names striving to convey their original phonetic realization in Latin spelling which led to certain Latinization of the official forms of the place-names. For instance Wrocław (Breslau) was rendered as Vratislavia. Because with the 12th century more original literature started to be written in chancery German and this language began to be more widely used in administration along Latin, one started to write place-names in German spelling too, especially in the Holy Roman Empire and in the Central and Eastern European areas where settlers from this empire established their villages and towns. In multilingual localities along the official Latinized form of the place-name oral Germanic and Slavic versions of it were used too. Due to lack of standardized rules of spelling to which all the users would subscribe, often Latin and German versions of a given place-name varied quite widely. The first 16th- and 17th-century maps of Silesia (Mrass, 1995) and Knie's topographic dictionary (1845) are the best introduction to the Latin and various early German forms of the Silesian place-names.

On the other hand, at the height of the Renaissance when the fad was to look for and/or invent ancient roots of one's locality and region, Ptolemy's map of the world became the source of inspiration. In 1503 the Breslau (Wrocław) humanist Sigismundus Fagilucus (Sigismund Buchwald)<sup>96</sup> identified Breslau (Wrocław) with the Ptolemaic town of Budorgis.<sup>97</sup> The Oder (Odra) was found identical with the Ptolemaic Viadrus, and the Sudetic Mountains received their name from the 'Sudetes', which at Ptolemy's map seem to be separating Bohemia from Silesia. When no 'original' ancient place-name could be found for a smaller town, the learned resorted to translating extant place-names into Latin or Greek, for instance, Ziegenhals (Glucholazy) became Civitas Capricollis, and Grünberg (Zielona Góra) Prasia Elysorium or Thalloris.<sup>98</sup> Also Tacitus's *Germania* proved to be a useful source of inspiration. In 1558 Philipp Melanchton, known as Praeceptor Germaniae, identified the Silesians (whose name he wrote in Latin as Silesii) with the Elysi from Tacitus's work. Consequently, since that time the name Elysium had been used to denote Silesia until the waning of this usage at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries.

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<sup>95</sup> Obviously, Central Europe was to a certain degree influenced by Byzantine Greek, Old Church Slavonic and Osmanlıca that were used in Eastern Europe and South-Eastern Europe but this problematic does not fall into the scope of this article.

<sup>96</sup> Before the 16<sup>th</sup> century one's name was written down in a Latinized form as it was the case with place-names, but with the rise of interest in Antiquity one also tended to translate one's name into Latin.

<sup>97</sup> The Breslau (Wrocław) aldermen opposed the widespread use of the Ptolemaic form of the name of their city, and championed the Latinized form Vratislavia which emperor Charles V officially recognized in 1530 (Conrads 1994:252-253).

<sup>98</sup> Latin or Greek forms of Silesian place-names were often used by students at their matriculation certificates (Conrads 1994:251).

The superimposition of classical veneer on the Silesian onomastic reality intensified in the 18th century under the influence of rapid administrative reforms. They came after Prussia had wrenched most of Silesia out of the grasp of Vienna in 1740-42, leaving the latter with one-eighth of the region's territory.<sup>99</sup> The concomitant spread of literacy gave an ever-growing circle of Silesians access to the printed word bringing about establishment of the first Silesian newspapers and intensification in the use of Antiquity for contemporary needs. What is more, the varied geographical configuration of the land facilitated such comparisons. Thus, Silesia known as Elysium was often likened to Arcadia especially in the context of numerous sheep herds in the Sudetic Mountains. The Greek Helicon and Apollo of Delphi the Silesians substituted with the Sudetes and the refined version of the mythic Sudetic mountain spirit Růbezahel (Liczyrzepa). Breslau (Wrocław) excelled as old Athens and the Jablunka (Jablunkov) pass provided the perfect location for Silesia's Thermopylae. These comparisons with ancient places also extended to people, hence, the Silesian Martin Opitz (1597-1639) dubbed as the 'father of German poetry', was also lauded as a German Homer, and such Silesian Baroque poets as Christian Hofman von Hofmannswaldau (1616-1679) and Daniel Casper von Lohenstein (1635-1683) extolling in writing tragedies, were likened to Euripides and Sophocles, respectively (Conrads 1994:250-152; Malicki 1987:8-9).

Modernization which entered Silesia after the Prussian conquest and became *the* framework of the economic, social and political change in Prussian and Austrian Silesia by the second half of the 19th century, also introduced German as the official language in the course of the efforts leading to the establishment of the Little German nation-state in 1871. This standard language gradually became the only medium of the burgeoning civil service and popular education. On the other hand, German was used in the press and the army. After 1871, in Germany education and registration of births, marriages and deaths were wrestled by the state away from the Catholic and Protestant Churches the more fortifying the dominance of the official language. In the case of Germany it was also the national language of this nation-state.

Modernization in the sphere of language resulted in the spread of command of standard German, and in standardization of the forms of the Silesian place-names in conformity with German spelling. The same also applied to writing down surnames and choosing appropriate forms of Christian names for children.

Due to the development of Polish and Czech nationalisms in Silesia at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, an increasing number of maps of Silesia with Polish and Czech forms of the main Silesian place-names was produced. The basis for this was old Slavic usages ((re-)written down in standard Czech and Polish) as

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<sup>99</sup> Silesia gained by Prussia became known as Prussian Silesia. It consisted from the regions of Lower and Upper Silesia. This fragment of Silesia (mostly the southern slither of Upper Silesia) that remained with Vienna was dubbed Austrian Silesia and comprised two territorially discontinuous parts of West and East Silesia.



chancery Czech (i.e. Bohemian) was an official language (along Latin and German) of Upper Silesia from the 16th to 18th century, and some princely courts of Upper Silesia also used chancery Polish. What is more, from 1849 to 1873 standard Polish and the Moravian language<sup>100</sup> were quite widely used in education and church life in Upper Silesia, which prompted Slavic-speaking inhabitants to write down the names of their localities with the use of one of these Slavic spelling systems rather than in German. Knie notes these aforementioned old Slavic usages (1845).

However, with the clash of Polish, Czech and German nationalisms in Silesia, Polish and Czech nationalists tended to invent Slavic names for localities, which bore unambiguously German names with no Slavic counterparts. But the latter had a penchant to write the German versions down in Czech spelling (e.g. Münsterberg--Minsterberk in Czech, Ziębice in Polish, Frankenstein--Frankštein in Czech, Żąbkowice in Polish). For Polish versions of Silesian place-names as used prior to 1918 see Gregor (1904) and Haardt (c. 1908: map No. 31), and for Czech ones see Anon. (1905: map bet. pp. 368-369). After World War I Czechoslovakia's incorporation of its part of Austrian Silesia and the Hultschiner Ländchen (Hlučínsko) (transferred from Upper Silesia) prompted phasing out of the German versions of the place-names and almost instantaneous introduction of the Czech ones as the only official ones. The Polish authorities followed the same route in these parts of Lower Silesia, Upper Silesia and East Silesia that had been granted to Poland and mostly incorporated into the Silesian Voivodeship. This rapid Polonization/Czechization of place-names was a surprise to many a *Szlonzok*, *Slunzak*, *Morawec*,<sup>101</sup> and, let alone, to the German-speaking Silesians. The last ones observed how their homeland turned out to be a foreign place in a matter of days, while the former ones found their homeland somehow un-homely as Warsaw and Prague did not care to utilize the extant dialectal Slavic versions of the place-names but rather went for the versions written down in the spellings conforming with standard Polish and Czech, in the interest of fortifying unity of the newly established nation-states. So Königshütte became Królewska Huta/Chorzów rather than Królefskou Chuta, Piekary--Piekary rather than Pekary, Kattowitz--Katowice rather than Katowicy, Tarnowitz--Tarnowskie Góry rather than Tarnowsky Góry etc. More on local dialectal forms of Upper Silesian place names see Olesch (1958-1959, Vol I:123-127).

Few place-names were also Germanized prior to 1933 but rather due to the wishes of inhabitants of a locality and not to administrative pressure. The most famous example is the city of Hindenburg that received its name in 1915 in honor of the general who had saved Upper Silesia from the incursion of the Russian army at the onset of the Great War. Prior to that date it was Zabrze.<sup>102</sup> In 1933 Hitler set

<sup>100</sup> Akin to Bohemian but steeped in the dialects of Moravia.

<sup>101</sup> The three ethnic groups concentrated in Upper and Austrian Silesia (see Kamusella, 2000a).

<sup>102</sup> Nowadays, the city's name is Zabrze again, but it is good to remember that the official German pronunciation of the name before 1915 was /tsabrtseh/ while Poles pronounce it /zabzheh/. The difference

out on the actualization of the program of *Gleichschaltung* (homogenization) which was to produce a unified nation-state on the basis the homogenous German *Volksgemeinschaft* (nationhood) not sub-divided with regional, linguistic, dialectal or ethnic differences anymore. The Germanizing changes in the forms of the too Slavic-sounding Silesian place-names, carried out in 1934-1939, are noted in Barran (1993:342-349). After the Munich agreement Germany regained the Hlučínsko (Hultschiner Ländchen) and seized West Silesia, and Poland obtained most of the Czechoslovak part of East Silesia and the area north of Čadca (Csacza). Berlin reintroduced there the German versions of the place-names, while Warsaw Polonized the Czech and Slovak ones. Czech, German and Polish versions of place names in Czech Silesia one can look up in Pfohl (1987) or Hosák (1970-1980).

During World War II, when Berlin gained the enlarged Silesian Voivodeship and incorporated it into the Province of Silesia with the adjacent counties of the Cracow and Kielce Voivodeships, the pre-division German versions of place-names were re-introduced in the Upper Silesian and East Silesian sections of the erstwhile Silesian Voivodeship, while only most important place-names were Germanized in the Kielce and Cracow counties. Regarding changes in these non-Silesian counties see Stüttgen (1976).

After 1945 Prague regained all of its interwar Silesia and the Czech versions of the place-names returned. On the other hand, Warsaw not only recovered its interwar Silesian Voivodeship (less what it had seized from Czechoslovakia in 1938), but also was granted with all of Silesia east of the Oder-Neisse line. So besides, the reintroduction of the interwar place-names on the territory of the prewar Silesian Voivodeship, Warsaw set out on the course of Polonizing all the place-names in the newly-gained sections of Silesia. The Polish and German versions of these place-names in Upper and Lower Silesia one can look up in Choroś (1997),<sup>103</sup> Choroś (1995)<sup>104</sup> and Kaemmerer (1988).

Considering thorough treatment of various Polish and German alternatives of the place-names in the territory of the interwar Oppeln (Opole) Regency,<sup>105</sup> one can consult Hanich (1997). In these aforementioned dictionaries usually only names of localities are covered, so that when one looks for various linguistic versions of names of rivers, lakes and mountains one should see Battek (1998). Albeit the Sorbs are marginal to history of Silesia, some areas in the west of Lower Silesia were

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in pronunciation is the result of reading the graphic representation of the city's name in accordance with the different rules of the German and Polish languages governing phonetic realization of the same Latin-alphabet graphemes.

<sup>103</sup> This dictionary also contains Polish and German versions of the place-names in Poland's section of East Silesia.

<sup>104</sup> This dictionary also contains German and Polish versions of the place-names in the small fragment of Saxony, which was cut away from Germany following the Oder-Neisse line, and today forms the very south-western corner of Poland.

<sup>105</sup> The western section of Upper Silesia that remained in Germany after the division of this region in 1922.

inhabited by them, and the curious reader may look up the Sorbian versions of Lower Silesian place-names (especially west of the Oder-Neisse line) in Eichler (1987-).

This list of references on the Silesian place-names is thorough but not exhaustive. However, even a full list of them would be of no help when it comes to deciding on the linguistic versions of the name of an obscure locality or geographical object. Then it is frequently essential to resort to comparing maps and atlases that were published before 1918, during the interwar period, during World War II and after 1945 in Austria-Hungary, Germany, Poland and Czecho(slovakia).

#### *How to use place-names more objectively*

There are no ready-made answers to this problem as only recently authors writing on traditionally multilingual areas with various written standards started tackling this problem. Peter F. Sugar in his *Southeastern Europe under Ottoman Rule, 1354-1804* (1977), uses the present-day forms of the place-names but in the 'Glossary of Geographic Names' notes the various linguistic forms used in this area during the period he covers. On the other hand, Kann and David in *The Peoples of the Eastern Habsburg Lands, 1526-1918* (1984) are quite eclectic. Sometimes they use present-day forms of place-names appending them in parentheses with the forms that were used in the period they write about. Then they revert this practice putting the modern form into parentheses or do away with the modern form at all sticking only to the form used in the past.

Ambitiously, in his *Historical Atlas of East Central Europe* (1995), Paul Robert Magocsi presents on the maps the present-day forms of the names of localities appending them in parentheses with as many of their historical forms as possible. He also listed all of them in the index with appropriate cross-references in twenty-six languages. Last but not least, Norman Davies in *The Isles: A History* (1999) uses such linguistic forms of place-names which were used in various periods of time by different ethnic groups/nations in the regions of their abode/ domination within the geographical range of today's United Kingdom and Ireland. He lists the forms with their English counterparts according to the chapters where they are employed (p. 1094-1095), and gathers some of them in a list in which their alternative forms are shown in nine languages (p. 1093). Moreover, not to be guilty of anachronism when he writes about the pre-historic period from which no written/oral records on place-names survive, Davies transposed all the place-names, he had to use in this context, into imaginary but time-neutral forms (cf. p. xlii).

But to come back to Silesia, in my PhD dissertation entitled *The Emergence of the National and Ethnic Groups in Silesia 1848-1918*, the place-name is given in such a form that was official at the period of time indicated in the narrative. Because of the period it regards, most frequently German versions of the place-names in Prussian and Austrian Silesia are used. In parentheses they are appended with the current form of the place-name, which is usually Polish or Czech. For instance, Breslau (Wrocław), Troppau (Opava). On the other hand, if a place-name

from the westernmost part of Silesia west of the Oder-Neisse line is mentioned, it is not appended with a Polish/Czech version in parentheses as this part of Silesia still remains in Germany, e.g. Hoyerswerda.

Consequently, when I mention a Polish/Czech version of a Silesian place-name in the present-day context, it is followed by its German counterpart, for example, Wrocław (Breslau), Opava (Troppau).

This straightforward approach is a bit complicated in certain cases. For instance, when I talk about Görlitz before 1945, the Polish name Zgorzelec is given in parentheses. But, subsequently, Görlitz and Zgorzelec are mentioned independently as once one city now the Polish-German border splits it into two separate urban organisms. So the former is given as Görlitz only and the latter is appended with the German version of this place-name, i.e. Zgorzelec (Görlitz). A similar case is posed by Teschen (Cieszyn/Těšín). Prior to 1920 it was one city and afterward the Polish-Czechoslovak border cut it in two so that sometimes I speak of Cieszyn (Teschen) and some other time of Těšín (Teschen).

Not to complicate the matters too much Bielitz is appended with the Polish form Bielsko in parentheses, and not with the more correct one Bielsko-Biała, which came into being after the merger of Bielsko (Bielitz) with Biała (Biala) in 1951. The same is true of some changes in the official forms of place-names that were not valid for too long. Hence, Kattowitz is appended with the Polish form Katowice without any mentioning of Stalinogród which was the official name of the city from 1953 to 1956 conferred on it in honor of Joseph Stalin. Similarly, Kędzierzyn is appended with the German form Kandrzin rather than Heydebreck, which was valid only for 11 years. On the other hand, when I talk about this town after the change, i.e. in the period 1934-1945, the official form Heydebreck is used with the Polish form Kędzierzyn in parentheses. Also when Katowice was Stalinogród, I do note it speaking of Stalinogród (Kattowitz).

When the narrative ventures into earlier times than the period of the work, the fact that the Silesian place-names had Slavic character before they became German/ic-sounding, is not shown with the Latinized or recorded forms of these place-names found in contemporary sources but rather with the use of modern Slavic (i.e. Polish or Czech) versions of these place-names. So before the 13th century it is Wrocław (Breslau) rather than the then current and widely varying forms Wrotizlava, Vuartizlau, Wrotizlauensis, Frodezlau, Brezlawensis, Vratizlau, Wrezlawe, Vratizlauia, Verzlaue, Vroczlauiensis, Wrezlau, Wratislauienis, Urozlau, Wratislaw, Wratisalw, Bretlaensis (Stoob 1995:17) in order to avoid unnecessary confusion.

Considering the neighboring lands with which history of Silesia more or less intensively interacted, the rule of following the use of official names only is observed too. Hence, in the case of Wielkopolska before 1918 the German forms are used: Posen (Poznań) and Gnesen (Gniezno). In Bohemia the same pattern is followed: Reichenberg (Liberec) but only until the 1882 when Czech gained the status of an official language along German in Bohemia. After that year I rather

speak of Liberec (Reichenberg). The case is even clearer in Galicia where Polish became a practically dominant official language (along much less used German) in 1869. So before that year the German form is the main one: Auschwitz (Oświęcim), and afterward the Polish one: Oświęcim (Auschwitz). But in the case of Lviv which is a Ukrainian city today, prior to 1869 the notation is Lemberg (Lviv), and after that year: Lwów (Lviv) so as not to complicate the overall system of presenting place-names in this work. Regarding various language forms of the main place-names in Central and Eastern Europe in the 19th and 20th century, one is advised to consult Batowski (1964).

In my dissertation the aforementioned rules do not straightforwardly apply to the place-names in the Vistula Land (i.e. Congress Poland) in the Russian empire, where Russified place-names or Polish place-names written in the Cyrillic script became the standard when Russian was introduced as the only official language in this area in 1865. To remain felicitous of the afore-sketched rules would demand transcribing the names from Russian (i.e. from the Cyrillic into the Latin script as employed in English) and append them with the current Polish counterpart, e.g. Lomzha (Łomża), Kieltse (Kielce). But because the main focus of the work is on Silesia, such a solution could make some passages unjustifiably too unintelligible, so I decided to stick to the names in Polish spelling only unless a given place name is not located outside today's Poland, for instance, Wilno (Vilnius). But if it was dramatically Russified (as very few were) I stick to the Russian form transcribed into English spelling, and give the Polish counterpart in parentheses, e.g. Ivanogorod (Dęblin).

In the case of the place names with extant Anglicized forms (Cracow, Prague, Warsaw, Budapest), I used them throughout the work without giving any other language versions of such place-names, as they are usually quite well known.

I am aware that sticking to official forms of place-names and their present-day forms cannot make justice to all the changes to which they have been subjected to, let alone reflect dialectal usages or usages current in the languages of minorities (e.g. in Yiddish,<sup>106</sup> Armenian or Romani), but my dissertation not being a tract on onomastics in politics, it was as much as could be done to do justice to the linguistic variety in place-names without making the text utterly unreadable.

### *Conclusion*

Above I wrote about how nationalism not only does influence one's environs through place-names expressed in accordance with the national language in the nation-state where one lives, but also the non-national past that happens to be congruent with the territorial extent of this nation-state. It often leads to the

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<sup>106</sup> In the past, Jews having been usually more literate than the average inhabitant of Central Europe, they developed their whole system of Yiddish forms of the place-names of the localities where they lived, and wrote them down in Hebrew characters (cf. Adamczyk-Garbowska 1994:167).

anachronistic use of present-day forms of place-names in the inappropriate contexts in the past, thus, causing national homogenization and wholesale repossession of the past for the sake of today's nation/nation-state.

Having noted that this may endanger objectivity of history writing, I propose to avoid this unwelcome possibility through the regular employment of these forms of place-names that were official at a given point in time and space to which we refer.

There are two basic ways to do it, through:

writing the place-name in its official form and appending it in the parentheses with the present-day form (this one I prefer best);

using the present-day official form of the place-name in all the historical contexts and appending the text with a list in which the historical forms of the place-names are correlated with the modern ones.

The drawback of the former method is long-windedness of the use of place-names with their counterpart forms appended, which discourages the regular reader; and of the latter—the fact that such a list more often than not may never be referred to by the reader. A fair go-between is offered by another approach, in which a place-name is appended with the present-day form in parentheses when it is mentioned for the first time, and the concordance list of all the used forms of the mentioned place-names is included at the end of the text.

I tried to illustrate the practicalities and difficulties when it comes to using these techniques on the exemplar of my PhD dissertation where I employed the first one of them. Also as I remarked in the title, all these methods are most viable for the last two centuries only. It is so because the territorial state emerged in full after the Peace of Westphalia (1648) and the first standard languages connected to such states in the 18<sup>th</sup> c. Moreover, the direct link between the territorial state and culture/ethnicity represented by the standard language was decisively forged on the basis of nationalism only in the 19<sup>th</sup> c.

I do not have a ready-made answer how to present place-names in earlier historical contexts. I surmise that it is unadvisable to unreflectively use present-day place-names. I suggest that if the period one is writing about is not too wide, it can be practical to stick to these forms that were consistently employed on contemporary maps, in documents and other extant texts. But when one is writing about an extensive territory in a long period of time only very few names of the most important cities/regions/geographical objects retained stable forms in the pre-modern times. Then it may be necessary to use present-day forms of the place-names imaginatively. For instance, when I write on Silesia prior to the 14<sup>th</sup> c. I use the present-day Polish forms of the place-names not to claim that they were such but to emphasize the largely Slavic character of this land. In the later period I switch to the German forms of the place-names as employed up to 1945 in order to stress the increasingly Germanic (*not* German) character of Silesia.

And if one focuses on the past of some ethnic group who never dominated its landscape due to effective control by others, got assimilated or did not establish its own territorial or nation-state, one may write more objectively about such an ethnic group employing these forms of place-names which were commonly used by members of this group, usually accommodated to the spelling and pronunciation of their language. One can easily follow this advice when an ethnic group had a written tradition, as it was true of the Yiddish-speaking Jews and Armenians in Central and Eastern Europe or the *Morawecs* in Silesia. In other cases it may be impossible unless a concerned group has survived to this day and retains their own oral forms of place-names that got noted in some dictionary of their *unwritten* ethnolect (specific dialect/language form of this group closely connected to its ethnicity). In Central and Eastern Europe it is true of the Roma and in Silesia of the *Szlonzoks* and the *Slunzaks*.

But when no written documents survive and the transmission of oral history was breached as it did happen time and again all over the world where territories were seized and colonized/repopulated by Europeans, the historian faces the difficult question how to write about the past of these territories and their populaces without succumbing to Eurocentrism. Davies's proposal to invent time-neutral forms of place-names is the first step, but it is not any final or even very practical answer to this difficult methodological issue. I hope that more elaboration on it by intrigued researchers and scholars will bring forth interesting results in near future.

And though the question of how to use place-names and their various forms in historiography may seem minor, I trust, that with this article I managed to point out the wide-ranging ideological effects of anachronistic use of place-names, which is of adverse influence on objectivity in history writing. Any new methods developed in this field may contribute to making historiography a more universal tool that the scholar will be able to apply not only to Europe and cultures with written traditions but also to the 'people without history' (Wolf, 1982) whom traditional historiography did deprive of as little voice as they had had, first, in the interest of colonial empires, and, next, in the interest of the West poised against the Rest (cf. Huntington 1996).

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### Имена места и објективност у историографији: случај Шлезиије у деветнаестом и двадесетом веку

#### Резиме

На основу уводне анализе веома блиске везе која постоји између територије и нације/националне државе, аутор истиче да је њен главни инструмент именовање места на националном језику. Отуд, није баш безазлено када неко треба да изабере овај или онај језик при навођењу свих имена једне области о чијој прошлости пише. То посебно важи за деветнаести и двадесети век када је национализам постао глобално прихваћена идеологија. У ствари, избор имена може ићи толико далеко да претендује на поновно освајање прошлости једне територије а заради интереса ове или оне нације/националне државе.

Како би се избегла ова врло ретко запажена могућност која може компромитовати идеал објективности у историографији, аутор заступа гледиште да је практично решење, с обзиром на последња два века у Европи, задржати званичне облике имена места у историјским списима. Он показује предности и мане ове методе на примеру Шлезиије, регије која је прелазила из руке у руку између Прусије, Аустроугарске, Немачке, Пољске и Чехословачке. У закључку се истиче како се са резервом примају најпрактичнији начини неидеолошке употребе разних језика у именовању места јер аутор не види ниједан прост начин на који би се ова метода могла проширити на периоде пре деветнаестог века; уједно, може се јавити и потреба за изостављањем званичних назива ради њихове замене етничким или дијалекталним, посебно када се ради о интересима недоминантне етничке/регионалне групе.

Кључне речи: Средња Евопа, језик, национализам, објективност, имена места, Шлезиија, *Szlonszoks*, територијална држава.