

The Naming of Seas in Austrian School Atlases

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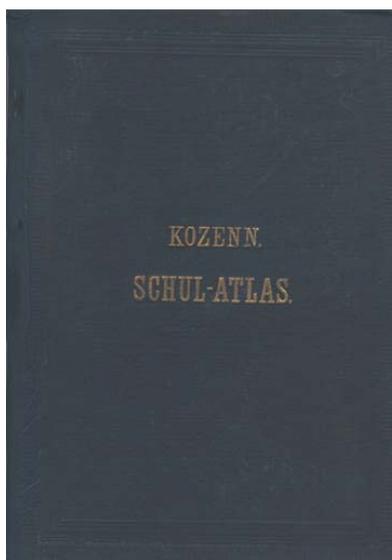
(Ed. Hölzel Gesellschaft m.b.H. Nfg KG, Austria)

Although this paper is mainly about the naming of seas in Austrian school atlases I want to start with some general remarks on the editing of the atlases.

Some facts about Austrian school atlases

Austria has a long tradition in the production of school atlases for its own schools as well as for other countries. The first school atlas was published in 1791 – the year of the death of Mozart. But in this first period there was no continuous publication of school atlases because there existed no subject dedicated to the field of geography in school.

The first periodical publication of such atlases started in 1861 when the first atlas (edited by Blasius Kozenn) was produced by the company Ed. Hölzel in Vienna.



Ill. 1: Cover of an early Kozenn atlas from 1870

There is a nearly unbroken line from this atlas to today's different products of this company. Even nowadays one of Hölzel's school atlases bears the name of Mr Kozenn.

At present there are seven different school atlases of three publishing houses for Austrian schools on the market.

All these companies are private ones. If you look back into the history of Austrian school atlases you will find only few products produced by governmental organisations.

So the responsibility for the contents has always been in the hands of the editors who worked for the companies. In most cases they have been employees of the publishing houses with academic degrees in geography or cartography. University staff played only a minor role. More important have been teachers who have acted as advisors for didactical or practical questions.

Nowadays thematic maps may make up to 50% of an Austrian school atlas. This is caused by the curriculum which is based on a thematic course and not on a progression from country to country. Moreover economics is an essential part of the geographical lessons. As a consequence topographical questions are not so important in the curriculum – and this is also true for the learning of topographical names.

The process of approval by the ministry

Like any other educational material a school atlas has to be presented for approval to the ministry of education if a publisher wants it to get an official status. The main advantage of this approval is that such a work can be ordered by schools and will be paid by public funds. The product will be checked by a commission which normally consists of 2 or 3 teachers. There are guidelines for this process which contain two main parts: formal criteria and contents. Some of these are conformity with the curriculum, observance of democratic principles, inclusion of women's rights, appropriateness for the intended age of the pupils, correctness and actuality of data, objectivity etc. But it is important for our topic that there are no rules how to write names or what maps have to be included etc. So there may be and actually are different results for naming in the Austrian school atlases. The decision about these matters lies with the editors and is mainly driven by the needs and wishes of the market (i.e. the teachers).

The process of naming in the Hölzel atlases

Names of geographical objects have always been a very important type of information in school atlases. If there are questions or complaints of teachers or pupils about our atlases it is mostly about names (although in general there are only few reactions or comments on our atlases which we get knowledge of).

So not surprisingly to find the best form of a name has always been an important task of the atlas editors. But it is a never ending discussion what would be the best form. There have been different answers to this and also some changes in the concept of naming during the 160 years of development of Hölzel atlases. So I will present you the concept which we have used for the last 10 years.

The main innovation in this period was that for the first time there exists a kind of guidelines which have been developed by experts outside the publishing house and can be used by all Austrian publishers. These are the "Vorschläge zur Schreibung geographischer Namen in österreichischen Schulatlanten" (Recommendations for the naming of geographical features in Austrian schoolatlases), edited by a sub working group of the Austrian Working Group on Geographical Names and published by the institute of geography at the University of Vienna in 1994. I will refer to them shortly as Recommendations in the following. This valuable publication contains principles for each country of the world which languages should be preferred, what romanization system should be used and what German exonyms shall be included in the atlas maps. As representatives of the main publishing houses were members of this working group together with geographers and linguists the results were readily implemented in the schoolatlases. Now most editions follow these Recommendations which led to a certain standardization of the process of naming. At present the Recommendations are under review by a second working group because there have been of course some changes of official languages, romanization systems etc. during the last years. Moreover some guidelines have not been clear enough to lead to uniform solutions in practical work. Hopefully this review will be finished till the end of this year. But as there will probably no principal changes I will now try to describe the naming process using the existing Recommendations.

First rule:

If there is a German exonym given in the Recommendations then use it (at first

position)!

Example

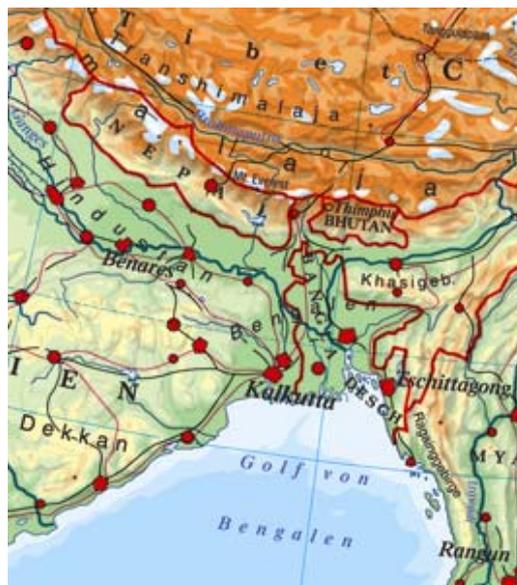
Bangladesch (= Bangladesh)

Language: Bengali

towns:

Tschittagong (Ex), Chatagrâm (End)

So for this large town in Bangladesh we will have to use the German exonym at first position.



Ill. 2: map sample with the recommended exonyms

Second rule

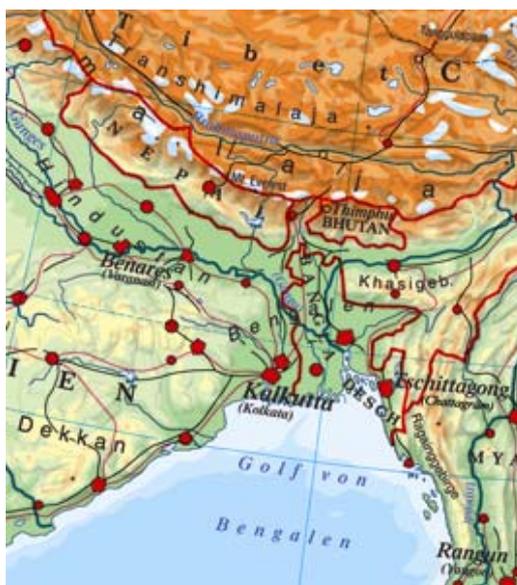
For places add the endonym between parentheses.

This results in the following form: Exonym (Endonym)

For rivers add the endonym if given in the list. If a river touches different countries add the endonym within the corresponding language area.

This is: Exonym (Endonym1) (Endonym2) ……

This rule means that for place names and for rivers not only the exonym should be given. It is important that pupils shall know the endonyms, too. This rule should be executed at least once in an atlas, normally on the map with the largest scale. Maybe in smaller-scale maps there may not be enough space to add the endonym to the exonym.



Ill. 3: the same map sample with the exonym-endonym combinations

Third rule

Show all other names only with their endonym.

Endonym: Name of a geographical object in a certain official language and romanization system as defined by the Recommendations.

To define which endonym should be used if there are some alternatives, in most cases the Recommendations recommend only one official language and romanization system for a country or sometimes an administrative region of a country. Some examples are

Bangladesh

Language: Bengali

Romanization system: as BGN/PCGN (= system of the U.S. Board on Geographic Names)

China/Tibet

Language: Tibetan.

Romanization system: as written in the official Pinyin

India

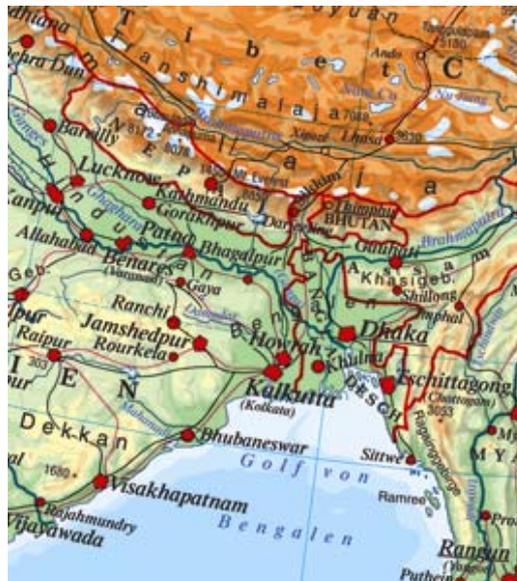
Language: Hindi, English

Romanization system: prefer the English form as used in official documents (this rule is under review)

Korea

Language: Korean

Romanization system: McCune-Reischauer (this rule is under review)



Ill. 4: map sample with all names including the endonyms

In some cases it is possible or recommended to use more than one endonym or exonym for an object. Then they have to be separated by slashes to distinguish them from exonym-endonym combinations.

If you stick to these rules there are only some ambiguous cases left which the editor has to decide. They mostly occur when new names emerge or when there are changes in a romanization system or official language. Often an editor has not enough knowledge of romanization or/and cannot find source material to

construct the correct romanized form. If there is no contradiction with other intentions the working group therefore often recommended the BGN/PCN system of the U.S. Board on Geographic Names. By means of the GEOnet Names Server (GNS) (<http://earth-info.nga.mil/gns/html/>) it is easy to find the correct form without transcribing it yourself.

The naming of seas

Of course the above mentioned rules apply also to the naming of seas. For this type of names there are some special aspects to observe:

- Seas are in most cases international objects which do not belong to one state. Therefore there cannot be an endonym for them but only exonyms.
- Most seas are large objects and therefore belong to a basic set of topographical knowledge of pupils and teachers. So changes of names should be handled very carefully because they would influence other educational material and also the habits of teaching.
- Austria has no long tradition as maritime nation. Therefore most names of seas have been passed on by other nations like the Dutch, German or British.

In my experience the names of seas have been very stable in the Austrian school atlases during the last decades. But of course this does not mean that nothing can be changed in the future. So I want to analyse some aspects which should be taken into account before a change could be made. I will now concentrate on the question of the name of the sea between Korea and Japan. It shall not be a general discussion of this problem but I will limit it to the case of Austrian school atlases.

When we name a sea or would like to change a name of a sea in our school atlases we should have in mind some important aspects to be in accordance with the needs and wishes of our users:

1. The formal aspect: As we have committed us to the above mentioned Recommendations we should observe them also for the names of seas. There is a special list in the publication which contains objects outside or in the area of more than one country. Here you find most names of seas. E.g. there is "Deutsche Bucht", „Finnischer Meerbusen“, „Golf von Honduras“, "Golf von Mexiko", „Golf von Panama“, „Irische See“, „Östlicher Koreagolf“,

„Ostchinesisches Meer“, „Persischer oder Arabischer Golf“, „Südchinesisches Meer“, „Westlicher Koreagolf“, „Golf von Thailand“ – to cite only those which have the name of an independent state as specific part of the name.

This list contains also the name “Japanisches Meer” which means that this is the name we should use in our atlases. If we take a formal approach we could leave the question here.

2. The historical aspect: As Hölzel atlases have been published for 160 years there is a long tradition of naming the seas. If you check the different editions you will see that especially the names of seas remain very stable. You can demonstrate this with the name “Japanisches Meer”. It is the same from the beginning till today.



Ill. 5: “Japanisches Meer” from the Kozenn atlas, 1870



Ill. 6: "Japanisches Meer" from the Kozenn atlas, 1911



Ill. 7: "Japanisches Meer" from the Kozenn atlas, 1952



Ill. 8: "Japanisches Meer" from the Kozenn atlas, 2006

3. The practical aspect: If possible the use of names in the school atlas should reflect the common use in mass media. It does not make sense to promote names which the pupil will not find in his later professional or private life. Of course there are many cases where the use of a name is very unstable in the media. Here sometimes school atlases are a means of standardization because also journalists may use them as source of information. In the past we often had to guess about the common use of names. Today we have a fairly good mean to help us – the WWW.

If you use Google for investigation you have to reduce your search to entries which deal with the names of the seas. For example there is a Chinese restaurant named "Ostmeer" in Vienna which leads to many counts. To get fair results I searched for the names "Japanisches Meer", "Ostmeer" and "Koreanisches Meer" together with its grammatical cases. Moreover I included only results where similar hits are omitted by Google automatically.

Tab. 1: "Japanisches Meer" vs. "Ostmeer", www.google.at, Search on April 2, 2007

	.at	.de	
Japanisches Meer	65	648	Including "Japanischen Meeres", "Japanischem Meer", "Japanische Meer"
Ostmeer	26	217	Excluding combinations with „Restaurant“, „Lokal“ or „Chinarestaurant“
Koreanisches Meer	0	7	Including "Koreanischen Meeres", "Koreanischem Meer", "Koreanische Meer"

As you can see there are preferences for "Japanisches Meer" in German texts on the web. But you can also conclude from this table that the German-speaking web community is aware that the naming of the sea is not clear and undisputed. Often both names are mentioned together. Many texts deal with the discussion about the dispute itself. The name "Koreanisches Meer" occurs only in a few texts.

You can try a similar search in the electronic archives of Austrian newspapers. Then you may get even clearer results: If you take "Die Presse", one of the high-quality newspapers, you get 21 entries for "Japanisches Meer" and only 2 for "Ostmeer" (and these are together with "Japanisches Meer").

If you use <http://wortschatz.uni-leipzig.de/> which is a very interesting source for name counts from German newspapers and other public information sources on a scientific basis you get 85 counts for "Japanisches Meer" (together with its flexions) and 6 for "Ostmeer".

4. The paedagogical aspect: A name should be spelled, pronounced, remembered and distinguished as easily as possible. Of course this can only be demanded for exonyms and maybe romanized endonyms. For other endonyms the correct spelling and pronunciation is the most important aspect.
The term "Ostmeer" has been suggested instead of "Japanisches Meer". But there may be a conflict with the term "Ostsee" which stands for in German for the English term "Baltic Sea". It may be difficult for pupils to distinguish these two names.
5. The technical aspect: Any change of a name in an atlas means technical and editorial work and therefore costs. In most cases a name has not only to be

changed on one map but on many. Also there may be necessary changes in textbooks and other additional material. Therefore an editor has to weigh carefully the advantages of a change against the costs.

6. The political aspect: In Austrian school atlases many names have changed during the last decades because of political reasons. There was a wave of changes of German names in Eastern Europe after the Second World War. Then followed changes of many names after the decolonization. In the 90s there were many changes of names after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. At the moment we observe changes in India. In Austria people, especially teachers, are sensible for such changes and in most cases ready to accept the will of nations to show their national identity. But most of these changes were concerned with place names. Names of seas are another matter. These names are not seen as belonging to one state because they are exonyms with a long tradition in Austria. So there would have to be very good arguments to convince people of a change. There has also to be a certain order of acceptance. First there must be the scientists, then the politicians and diplomats, next the media and at last a change can be made in educational material.

The process of naming in school atlases is a complex one. It is never finished but has to be reviewed continually. So maybe in some years we will observe other principles and discuss about new problems of names. But at last this is the general mission of a school atlas: to show as truly as possible the changing world and help the youth to find its way through it.