

When did Bratislava become Bratislava? — A Reflection on the Name of a City in the Borderlands (Part II)

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Introduction

In the first part of this article¹ we investigated the complicated history of the names of the present-day capital city of Slovakia and the origin of its present name, Bratislava. In the second part, we intend to discuss when, where, by whom, and with what kind of procedure and what kind of argumentation did Bratislava become the official name at the beginning of 1919. By examining newspaper articles, official documents and publications in chronological order, we will try to reconstruct this important process which, in my opinion, has not been sufficiently studied.

I. What did contemporary newspapers say?

First let us investigate the articles in the contemporary Slovak and

¹ NAGAYO, Susumu: A Reflection on the Names of a City in the Borderlands – Pressburg/Pozsony/Prešporok/Bratislava (I). In: IEDA, Osamu (ed.): *Transboundary Symbiosis over the Danube. EU integration between Slovakia and Hungary from a local border perspective*. Sapporo 2014, pp. 1-16.

Czech newspapers, how they called the city and how informed it.

As is commonly known, on October 22, 1918, the newspaper of the Czech agrarian party, *Venkov* [The Village] reported that: “As the Swiss newspaper reports, the American Slovaks decided that Prešpurk will become the future capital city of liberated Slovakia and will be renamed in honor of (the President of the United States, Thomas Woodrow) Wilson Wilsonovo město [Wislon’s City]”.²

Four days later (October 26) in the same newspaper we find a remarkable column by Marie Laudová³ entitled “Wilsonovo město”. In this column the author criticizes the negative reaction of Magyar newspapers to the proposed renaming of the city to Wilsonovo město, based on Saint Štěpán [István]’s “Admonitions to his son Imerich [Emeric]” where the Hungarian king in the 10th-11th century emphasized “tolerance of other tribes” in his kingdom.

As regards the historical names of the city, the author writes: “Old Slavs named the city Břetislava (underline – S. N., later as well), Germans who conquered the city called it Breciburk, Magyars who defeated the Germans here named it Pozsóny, and Slovaks, the direct descendants of Slavic inhabitants of this region, call it Požůň or Prešpork”.⁴

At the end of the column, which was published just two days before the proclamation of the Independent Czechoslovak state in Prague, the author concluded: “However, the people in Prešpurk

² *Venkov*, October 22, 1918, no. 245, Prague. Also see: HORVÁTH, Vladimír; RÁKOŠ, Elemír; WATZKA, Jozef (ed.): *Bratislava, hlavné mesto Slovenska. Pripojenie Bratislavy k Československej republike roku 1918-1919. Dokumenty* [Bratislava, the Capital City of Slovakia. Incorporation of Bratislava to the Czechoslovak Republic in 1918-1919. Documents]. Bratislava 1977, (later for short: *Dokumenty*, Bratislava 1977) p. 80. In this valuable collection of documents we also read a related article in the German newspaper *Pressburger Zeitung* of October 24, 1918 (*Ibid.*, p. 80). There is also a similar article in the newspaper *Ranní Lidové noviny* [Morning Peoples News], October 23, 1918, Brno.

³ Marie Laudová (1869-1931), Czech actress, later a journalist and a professor at the Prague Conservatory.

⁴ *Venkov*, October 26, 1918, Prague.

even after one thousand years of Magyarization have a pure Slovak character. The closeness to Vienna, which called Prešpurk “our suburb”, means that there are many Germans among the citizens. Here only the officials and the youth, who are forced to learn Magyar in the schools, have a Magyar character. When Prešpurk is renamed, as American Slovaks propose, to Wilsonovo město, the old injustice will disappear, together with the old name and the melodious Slavic language will sound freely in the place where it was pursued, pressured, crushed and tortured for more than one thousand years ...”⁵ Needless to say, these were typical nationalistic discourses at the time.

Other remarkable articles with more insightful perspectives on the city were found in the organ of the Social Democratic Party of the Hungarian kingdom *Robotnícke noviny* [The Workers Newspaper] which was published in this city. On November 28, 1918, we read the article “Československá republika” [The Czechoslovak Republic] which begins: “The old ideals are coming true. The large city of the Moravian Empire [i. e. Great Moravia – S. N.], Bratislava, is no longer Prešporok and – what is more important – is no longer Pozsony. It is becoming Wilsonovo Mesto and this is very significant”.⁶ In the next issue (December 5, 1918) in the article “Pre naše Slovensko” [For Our Slovakia], the author, Ant. Machát⁷, wrote about the city that “a great future is awaiting Prešporok. Not only economically, but also culturally. It is certain that soon after the conclusion of the peace treaty (in Paris), when this city is definitely incorporated into the Czechoslovak Republic, unseen changes will take place here”.⁸ Further on the author lists the possible positive effects: a move here of new department stores, industrial and transportation factories; establishment of tourism; making the city the center of Slovak culture, with the optimistic phrase “Hungarian Slovakia (sic) might become a second Switzerland”.

5 *Ibid.*

6 *Robotnícke noviny*, November 28, 1918, no. 48, Prešporok.

7 Antonín Machát (1880-1967), Czech publisher, journalist and politician of the Social Democratic Party in Vienna.

8 *Ibid.*, December 5, 1918, no. 49, Prešporok.

In conclusion, the author writes that “we expect competent officials and the national corporations to send here the best powers, who will eagerly work together with local activists, in order to incorporate the widest stratum of the subordinated Slovak people into the social and cultural life of our young Czechoslovak Republic”.⁹

Among newspaper articles which we examined on this subject, the most interesting one is the one published in *Slovenský denník* [The Slovak Dairy] on January 1, 1919, on the day of the military occupation of the city by the Czechoslovak Legion titled “Bratislava” (! – S. N.). Citing as its motto the poem by Juraj Zvestoň Bulla with the impressive refrain “Bratislava, Bratislava”¹⁰, an anonymous author starts the article in a pathetic tone: “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”.¹¹

Then the author makes an interesting remark about the name Wilsonovo město: “On the maps of the Czechoslovak state published now in Prague, our Bratislava is named “Wilsonovo Mesto”. According to Prague’s newspapers, they did it, because American Slovaks wanted to do so. But this is a mistake made by Prague’s newspapers, for we found out that neither the Slovak League in America, nor any other organizations of American Slovaks asked for such a thing. *Pražský denník* [The Prague Dairy] which first brought this news, approved this (nominological) change because Prešporok has only the German name (i. e. Pressburg). However, they did not know a beautiful Slovak name (i. e. Bratislava) which is even consecrated by tradition. We will not forget it, and let us restore it officially on the day when Prešporok is occupied”.¹²

Then the author discusses the pros and cons of locating the capital city of Slovakia in this city. The author is aware of the

9 *Ibid.*

10 See NAGAYO, Susumu: A Reflection on the Names of a City in the Borderlands (I), pp. 14-16.

11 *Slovenský denník*, January 1, 1919, no. 1, Ružomberok.

12 *Ibid.*

negative arguments: the peripheral location of the city, the distance from Central Slovakia, and especially from Eastern Slovakia; the lack of Slovak surroundings in its South and West; closeness to Vienna and the danger of the German influence (the city has 30 000 German inhabitants); its location along the state border on the Danube; and lastly, almost all houses in the city are in the hands of foreigners, especially of Germans, so Slovaks would only be tenants highly dependent on foreigners in everyday life.

Furthermore the author lists the positive aspects of the city: “First of all its greatness, imposingness, many sufficient public buildings, the harbor on the Danube, big commercial and industrial movements, and above all the great future which is awaiting Bratislava”.¹³ The author emphasizes the positive aspects of this city with more than 80 000 inhabitants and concludes: “It is clear that Prešporok will become in every way the most significant and biggest city in Slovakia. It will grow. It will be a big city with us (i. e. Slovaks) or without us. We might calculate that already not within weeks but within days Bratislava will fall under our power. There our glory fell and the heathen hordes raged, in those days it (the city) will stand up. May it be beneficial to the whole (Slovak) nation!”.¹⁴

As we mentioned above, *Robotnícke noviny* was published in this city which was under the control of the Magyar government even after the proclamation of the Czechoslovak state on October 28, 1918. The above cited article “Pre naše Slovensko” was published on December 5. From the December 12, 1918 issue the subtitle of the newspaper “The Slovak Organ of the Social Democratic Party of the Hungary” was changed to “The Newspaper of the Slovak Social Democratic Party in the Czechoslovak Republic” still under Magyar rule.

After the occupation of the city by the Czechoslovak Legion on January 1, 1919, which was reported in the leading article of January 3 “Prešporok v rukách Československých!” [Prešporok

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ *Ibid.* It seems that the next to the last sentence paraphrased J. Z. Bulla’s 1860 poem. See note no. 18 of this article.

in Czechoslovak Hands!], the name Bratislava began to be found here and there.¹⁵ The arrival of the Ministry Plenipotentiary for the Administration of Slovakia (later for short: the Ministry of Slovakia) appeared in the article “Nazpät (sic) do slovenskej Bratislavy” [Back to Slovak Bratislava] on February 4, where the city was still called Prešporok (Bratislava is used only three times including the title). In the issue of February 8, the place of publication was changed from Prešporok to Bratislava. In this issue the main article “Slovenská vláda v Bratislave” [The Slovak Government in Bratislava] gives a detailed description of the arrival of the Ministry of Slovakia and of the positive reaction of the Slovak Social Democrats to this event. In this article the name Prešporok is already replaced by Bratislava.

The newspaper *Slovenský denník* was founded on November 9, 1918, after the formation of the Czechoslovak state, in the city of Ružomberok (in northern Slovakia) as the organ of the Slovenská národná rada [The Slovak National Council]. Except for the above cited article on January 1, 1919 titled “Bratislava”, we notice in this newspaper expressions like “naša Bratislava (Prešporok)” [our Bratislava (Prešporok)] (December 28, 1918), “úzky pás územia južne od Bratislavy (Prešporok)” [the narrow strip of territory south of Bratislava (Prešporok)] (December 29, 1918), “V Bratislave je pokoj” [All is quiet in Bratislava] (January 11, 1919). In the last article there is the sentence “Bratislava will be the capital city of the Slovak part of the Czechoslovak state”. At the beginning of February the editorial office of the newspaper relocated (probably together with the Ministry of Slovakia) to this city. In the issue of February 15, which was published after several days’ suspension¹⁶, the name Bratislava was

15 For example, an article “Život v Bratislave” [Life in Bratislava], January 10, 1919, no. 3; “Bratislava nesmrteľná” [Bratislava Immortal], January 14, 1919, no. 4.

16 A foreword to the issue of February 15, 1919 announced: “Our relocation to Bratislava, several day’s strike in the local printing houses and difficulties connected with it, prolonged our announced suspension for a few days. We ask our readers and all supporters to accompany us to the new place with the same favour as before in Ružomberok. In Bratislava, February 14. Editorial office and distribution department of *Slovenský denník*”.

found everywhere.

It is significant that in the newspaper *Slovenské ľudové noviny* [The Slovak People's Newspaper] published since 1910 as a weekly in this city, Ferdiš Juriga, one of the representative Slovak politicians at the time, cited repeatedly in his articles the poem with the refrain "Bratislava, Bratislava". According to my investigation, he cited the poem for the first time in the article "Deň vzkriesenia!" [The Day of Resurrection!] on October 25, 1918, even before the proclamation of the independent Czechoslovak state (October 28).¹⁷ In this emotional article F. Juriga, among others, cited the poem in two songs. The first song is J. Z. Bulla's original version of 1860 and the second one is its adaptation by an anonymous author¹⁸. F. Juriga suggested in another

17 It is worth remarking that six days earlier, on October 19, 1918, Ferdiš Juriga as an elected member of the Hungarian Diet in Budapest, delivered a speech. Surprisingly we find in his historical speech a quotation of the poem with the refrain "Bratislava, Bratislava" in Slovak (!). The contents of his speech of October 19 are similar to the newspaper article on October 25. For the Slovak translation see: Posledná reč slovenského poslanca Ferdiša Jurigu na rozlúčku s maďarským parlamentom [The last farewell speech of the Slovak representative Ferdiš Juriga to the Hungarian Parliament], in: MEDVECKÝ, K. A.: *Slovenský prevrat* [The Slovak Revolution]. Volume IV, Trnava 1931, p. 46. A Magyar original is found in: Országgyűlési Dokumentumok. 1861-1990. Keresés a dokumentumokban: 826. országos ülés 1918 október 19-én, szombaton. pp. 345-357. [The Parliamentary Documents. 1861-1990. Search in documents: the 826-th National Meeting of October 19, 1918, on Saturday, pp. 345-357.]: <http://www3.arcanum.hu/onap/opt/a110616.htm?v=pdf&a=spec:start> Also in: Ferdinand, Juriga: Poslanecká reč (19. X. 1918) [The Speech in the Parliament on October 19, 1918]. Literárny archív Slovenskej národnej knižnice (Martin), Signatúra: 94 T 26, p. 11. See also: HOLEC, R.: Ferdinand Juriga ako poslanec v uhorskom parlamente (1906-1918) [Ferdinand Juriga as a representative in the Hungarian Parliament (1906-1918)], in: PEKŇÍK M. (red.): *Ferdinand Juriga, ľudový smer slovenskej politiky* [Ferdinand Juriga, The People's Direction in Slovak Politics]. Bratislava 2009, pp. 103-135.

18 The first song is as follows: Bratislava, Bratislava/ Tu* zapadla Slávo
sláva/ Tu* pohanské hordy sa vztekaly/ Slávsku** chasu dorúbaly. [Bratislava,
Bratislava/ Here the glory of the Slavs fell/ Here the heathen hordes raged/ and cut
down the Slavic youth]. (* in Bulla's 1860 original: Tam, ** ibid. : Slavskú.) It is

source that he himself wrote the words of the second song.¹⁹

Later, the quotation of the poem is repeated by F. Juriga in the articles “Sväté slová!” [The Holy Words!] on November 15, 1918; “Nový život” [The New Life] on January 9, 1919²⁰, and “Osvobodenie duše” [The Liberation of the Spirit] on January 16, 1919²¹. F. Juriga in these cases cited only the second adaptation (without the first original version of J. Z. Bulla). From the issue of March 7 (or February 28), 1919, the place of publication of *Slovenské ľudové noviny* was changed from Prešporok to Bratislava.

In the newspaper *Sloboda* [Freedom] published in the city of

significant that F. Juriga in his article characterized this first song which J. Z. Bulla published in 1860 as “our time-honored song”. The words of the second song are: Bratislava, Bratislava/ Tu zasvitne naša sláva;/ Keď slovenské hroby sa otvoria/ Nový život nám utvoria. [Bratislava, Bratislava/ Here our glory will dawn;/ When the Slovak graves open/ create for us a new life]. (I quote the translation of P. Bugge with several modifications). See, BUGGE, Peter: The Making of a Slovak City: The Czechoslovak Renaming of Pressburg/Pozsony/Prešporok, 1918-19. In.: *Austrian History Yearbook*, volume 35 (2004), p. 209.

19 “(F. Juriga) in his speeches repeats frequently his favorite poem which was written still in Pest (a part of Budapest)”. JURIGA, F.: *Blahozvest' kriesenia slovenského národa a slovenskej krajiny* [The Good News of the Resurrection of the Slovak Nation and the Slovak Region]. Trnava 1934, part one, p. 181. In his autobiography, written in the third person, we find a quotation of the poem with the refrain “Bratislava, Bratislava” five times (!): part one; pp. 150, 167, 181, 186: part two; p. 45. Most of them are apparently rewritten from his articles in *Slovenské ľudové noviny*. In this autobiography we also read his speech in the Hungarian Parliament on October 19, 1918, in a different version. See part two, pp. 29-80.

20 After the quotation of the poem F. Juriga added “Everything will be concentrated in our Bratislava and the whole of Slovakia will be governed by its own administration, language and (historical) right”.

21 Before the quotation F. Juriga wrote: “Bratislava – our Jerusalem revived, our Bethlehem – old Devín revived. Let us restore here a metropolis of the primate of St. Method, the work of St. Cyril, from the part of the Esztergom archbishopric which devolves to us. Here will be the autonomous seat of the Catholic Church with the Slovak official language, which answers directly to the Holy Father”.

Skalica (in western Slovakia) on February 8, 1919, the leading article “Prešporské slávnosti” [The Ceremony in Prešporok] describes in detail the occurrences during the arrival of the ministry to the city. It is noteworthy that in this article, besides the name Prešporok, the name Bratislava is used twice. We find it in the expression “The same Bratislava, beside which was the grave of Slovak freedom, became after one thousand years the true head of Slovakia”²². This expression suggests that Slovak society memorized and remembered the name Bratislava in connection with J. Z. Bulla’s 1860 poem, cited above (see note no. 18).

After one month, on March 8, 1919 in the same newspaper we read the leading article “Výtržnosti v Bratislave” [Disturbances in Bratislava]²³ where the incident on February 12 in the city was reported. In this article the name Prešporok has disappeared and instead Bratislava is used constantly (in other articles, too).

II. When did Bratislava officially become Bratislava?

Now let us discuss the official renaming process. There are several documents in publications and in archives that are directly related to the renaming process. First we confirm the related official documents.

In *Dokumenty*, Bratislava, 1977, we find the following seven documents:

22 “Prešporské slávnosti” [The Ceremony in Prešporok], *Sloboda* [Freedom], Skalica, February 8, 1919. The second use of the name Bratislava is found in the speech of the Czech statesman, vice-chairman of the Czechoslovak National Assembly, František Udržal, “this day is a historic moment and Bratislava has great significance due to its geographical location”. Dr. Dušan Škvarna (Professor at the Faculty of Arts at Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica) kindly called my attention to this newspaper in Slovenská národná knižnica [The Slovak National Library] in Martin on September, 2012. I thank him for his advice.

23 “Výtržnosti v Bratislave” [Disturbances in Bratislava], *Sloboda*, Skalica, March 8, 1919.

- 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, no. 4342) (document number 132).²⁴
- 2) 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, no. 3304) (document number 151).²⁵
- 3) The Question of the Head of the Prešporok district, Samuel Zoch, addressed to the Minister of Slovakia, Vavro Šrobár, where he (Zoch) asks the official name of the city. (March 6, 1919, Bratislava, no. 926/1919) (document number 162).²⁶
- 4) 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) (document number 165).²⁷
- 5) 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, no. 4562) (document number 166).²⁸
- 6) An interpellation of a member of the town council, Alois Pichler, addressed to the head of the district, S. Zoch, asking for the reasons that had led him to rename the city to Bratislava. (March 17, 1919, Bratislava) (document number 167).²⁹

24 *Dokumenty*, Bratislava 1977, p. 273. Original: Národní archiv, Praha, Ministerstvo vnitra – stará registratura, kartón 586, 1919-1924. Oddělení spisovny 21, číslo 252, podčíslo 1.

25 *Ibid.*, p. 301. Original: Národní archiv, Praha, kartón 586, *ibid.*

26 *Ibid.*, p. 314. Original: Ministerstvo vnútra Slovenskej republiky (MV SR), Štátny archív v Bratislave. Značka: Župa bratislavská I, Prezidiálne spisy župana. Fascikel: 926/1919, č. krabice: 2.

27 *Ibid.*, p. 317. Original: Národní archiv, Praha, Presidium ministerské rady, 1918-1945. Inv. čís.: 2511, sign. 746, kartón 3335, Original, typescript.

28 *Ibid.*, p. 317. Original: Národní archiv, Praha, kartón 586, *op. cit.*

29 *Ibid.*, p. 318. Original: Archív hlavného mesta SR Bratislava; Bratislava, Mesto Bratislava, Zápisnica Muncipálneho výboru 1919, sign. 2 b 49, str. 22. Original, typescript.

7) 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]. (document number 174).³⁰

Additionally we found three related documents which are preserved in the Národní archiv [National Archive] in Prague-Chodovec:

a) 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, no. 2692).³¹

b) 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, no. 6452/1919).³²

c) 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, no. 9725/1919).³³

We also found the related references in the “Zápisnice a poznámky z porad ministra a referentov” [Minutes and notes from meetings of the Minister and officers] of the Ministry of Slovakia in the custody of Slovenský národný archív [The Slovak National Archive] in Bratislava.³⁴

If we summarize this data chronologically, we have the following outline.

It is probable that the direct cause of the renaming process of the city was the transfer of the Ministry of Slovakia on February 4, 1919, from the city of Žilina (in northern Slovakia) to Prešporok. According to the above-mentioned *Documents*, Bratislava, 1977, during the preparation of moving of the Ministry for the first time the name

30 *Ibid.*, p. 325. Original: *Úradné noviny Župy Prešporskej*, March 27, 1919, p. 67.

31 Národní archiv, Praha, kartón 586, op. cit.

32 *Ibid.*, draft.

33 *Ibid.*, draft.

34 Slovenský národný archív (SNA), Bratislava, Vavro Šrobár, osobný fond. Inv. č.: 607, číslo škatule: 9.

Bratislava appeared in official documents. It was an appeal of the head of the district S. Zoch on January 17, 1919 (document number 86), where he called to all the heads of district in Slovakia to send delegations to the official welcome ceremony of the Czechoslovak government which was planned in the city. In the beginning S. Zoch wrote, “The arrival of the Slovak government (i. e. the Ministry of Slovakia) to Bratislava, as the capital city of Slovakia, is fixed on February 4”.³⁵ Otherwise, S. Zoch in this text also uses the name Prešporok four times, including the signature at the end.

Danish historian Peter Bugge wrote in his article dealing with the renaming process of the city³⁶ that in the Czechoslovak National Assembly in Prague on January 28, 1919, the Slovak deputy Ferdiš Juriga, calling for the founding of a Slovak university in this city by reciting J. Z. Bulla’s 1860 poem, used the name Bratislava. Then P. Bugge adds: “Especially noteworthy was the status of the two forms Juriga used: Prešporok in the neutral, descriptive parts of his speech, and Bratislava in his references to both the battle of 907 and the future university”.³⁷

In the official document “Programm vtiahnutia československej vlády do Prešporoka” [Program of the Entrance of the Czechoslovak Government into Prešporok]³⁸ (according to its contents it was possibly written at the end of January 1919 – S. N.), in which the concrete

35 *Ibid.*, pp. 209-210. In *Dokumenty*, Bratislava 1977 they wrote in a footnote that “For the first time the name of city “Bratislava” is used”, p. 210. Original: MV SR, Štátny archív v Bratislave. Značka: ŽBI, Prez. spis. žup. Fascikel: 538/1919, č. krabice: 2. This appeal is typed on paper with the letterhead “Župan prešporkej župy a mesta Prešporok [Head of the Prešporok District and the City of Prešporok]”. It is possible that S. Zoch noticed that the letterhead ought to be changed, so he asked V. Šrobár about this on March 6. See notes no. 26 and 47 of this article.

36 BUGGE, op. cit., pp. 205-227.

37 *Ibid.*, p. 219.

38 Programm vtiahnutia československej vlády do Prešporoka [Program of the Entrance of the Czechoslovak Government into Prešporok]. SNA, Bratislava, Vavro Šrobár, osobný fond. Inv. č.: 594, číslo škatule: 8.

program of the ceremony of February 4-5 is announced, the city is still called Prešporok (three times including the title). P. Bugge made an interesting remark that V. Šrobár in his speech upon the government's arrival on February 4 did not once mention the city by name.³⁹

In the Minutes and notes from meetings of the Ministry of Slovakia⁴⁰ (according to my investigation) the name Bratislava appeared for the first time in the minutes of the meeting on January 10, 1919, which was held still in Žilina. We read in it that “the Minister (i. e. V. Šrobár) (said): Arrival to Bratislava was fixed on January 26 (illegible – S. N.) or February 2”. In the minutes of January 28 we again find the following record: “The Minister (V. Šrobár) opened the meeting and read some telegrams, among them a telegram from the head of (Prešporok) district Zoch, in which he (Zoch) asks about orators who gave a speech in the people's assembly organized on the occasion of the entrance of the government into Bratislava”.

In the minutes of February 5 which was held the day after the arrival of the Ministry to the city, and also in the next minutes (not dated, probably February 6 or 7), as the place where it was held, Prešporok is still recorded. From the minutes of February 8, however, we read as such a place already the name Bratislava. It seems that the most decisive minutes are those of February 14, where the statement of Minister V. Šrobár (“Let the definitive naming of the city be Bratislava”) is recorded.⁴¹

39 BUGGE, op. cit., p. 220.

40 Zápisnice a poznámky z porád ministra a referentov [Minutes and notes from meetings of the Minister and officers]. SNA, Bratislava, Vavro Šrobár, osobný fond. Inv. č.: 607, číslo škatule: 9.

41 Slovak original: “Ministr. Definitívne pojmenovanie mesta nech je Bratislava”, XXXV. zápisnica, Bratislava 14/II 1919. SNA (Bratislava), Vavro Šrobár, osobný fond. Inv. č.: 607. The original is handwritten. Several newspaper articles at the time confirm the minister's statement: *Pražské noviny* [The Prague News] on February 16, 1919: “The government decided that the official name of Prešpurk is Bratislava”, “Slovakia: At yesterday's governmental meeting which was held under the chairmanship of Minister Šrobár, it was decided that the official name of Prešpurk will be Bratislava”. Národní archiv,

Meanwhile in Prague, probably having no direct coordination with what was going on in Prešporok/Bratislava, on February 10, 1919, the Ministry of National Defense asked the Presidium about “the correct name of the city of Prešpurk”. The request reads: “Different names of the city of Prešpurk (Wilsonov, Wilsonovo město, Bratislav) which are found here and there require a decision as to which name has to be used officially. The Ministry of National Defense requests such a decision and quick notice of it”.⁴² In response, on February 14 the Presidium forwarded the request to the Ministry of the Interior with the message “to offer their opinion about the question of the Ministry of National Defense as soon as possible and, if an appropriate measure has been taken, to send us a report about it”.⁴³

The Presidium, however, probably did not wait for the opinion of the Ministry of the Interior⁴⁴ and on February 22, 1919, sent to the same Ministry a notice with the following statement: “The Ministerial Council on February 19, 1919 decided that the name “Bratislav” will be used officially for the city of Prešpurk. Please inform all the ministries for the purpose of future reference and the understandings of subordinate offices. This circular will be sent to the Ministry of the Interior as the supplement to our notice of February 14, 1919 no.

Praha, kartón 586, op. cit.; *Slovenský denník* on February 18, 1919: “Bratislava. It is semiofficially informed that at yesterday’s governmental meeting under the chairmanship of the Minister Plenipotentiary Šrobár, it was decided that the official name of Prešporok will be Bratislava”; *Sloboda* on March 8, 1919: “Bratislava, February 14. At today’s governmental meeting under the chairmanship of the Minister Plenipotentiary Šrobár, it was decided that the official name of Prešporok will be Bratislava”.

⁴² *Dokumenty*, Bratislava 1977, p. 273. Original: Národní archiv, Praha, kartón 586, op. cit.

⁴³ Národní archiv, Praha, kartón 586, ibid.

⁴⁴ See the notice of the Ministry of the Foreign Affairs addressed to the Ministry of the Interior on the matter of “Bratislava, the official name of the city” on September 9, 1922: “The Presidium sent this request (of the Ministry of the National Defense) to the Ministry of the Interior for their opinion, however, (the Presidium) did not wait for the answer ...”. Národní archiv, Praha, kartón 586, ibid.

2692”.⁴⁵ According to the last sentence, both documents of February 14 (no. 2692) and 22 (no. 3304) might have been sent to the Ministry of the Interior together. The draft of the notices on March 3 addressed to the political local administrations in Prague (Bohemia) and Brno (Moravia) and the local government in Opava (Silesia) says that “the Ministerial Council on February 19, 1919, decided that the name “Bratislav” will be used officially to indicate the city of Prešpurk. XX [sic] asks to subordinate offices to respect this”.⁴⁶

The decision of the Ministerial Council in Prague (i. e. Bratislav) was made probably without direct coordination with the choice of the Ministry of Slovakia (i. e. Bratislava). The difference in the official name of the same city was soon noticed. On March 6 the head of Prešporok district, S. Zoch, asked Minister V. Šrobár about the official name of the city: “Please let me know whether the name Bratislava has already been officially codified because I need to know which name to use when ordering official stamps and letter papers [with the city letterhead]”.⁴⁷ In spite of the private tone the letter had an official character. Apparently based on the question of S. Zoch, on March 13, Minister V. Šrobár sent to the Presidium a request with the following contents in a strong tone: “On the bases of our information, the administration of the post and telegraphs for Slovakia in Bratislava received the decree of the Ministry Council, according to which the name Bratislav has to be used officially instead of the correct and historical [name] Bratislava. In the meeting of the governmental officers [the name] Bratislava has been accepted as the official name for Prešpurk already one month ago (perhaps this suggests the meeting on February 14 – S. N.). Therefore I ask that this name (i. e. Bratislava) be used everywhere and, in places where different

45 *Dokumenty*, Bratislava 1977, p. 301. Original: Národní archiv, Praha, kartón 586, *ibid*. In the original after the word “Bratislav” someone added with a pencil the letter “a”.

46 Národní archiv, Praha, kartón 586, *ibid*.

47 *Op. cit.*, p. 314. MV SR, Štátny archív v Bratislave. Značka: Župa bratislavská I, *op. cit*.

instructions has been given, to cancel them”.⁴⁸

It is worth remarking that the Presidium in Prague reacted to Šrobár’s “claim” almost immediately, sending on March 16 (just three days later) to the Ministry of the Interior the following notice: “It is informed that in our circular on February 22, 1919, no. 3304, with regard to the new naming of the city of Prešpurk, Bratislava should be used (instead of Bratislav). We request that this name (Bratislava) be used everywhere and, in places where different instructions has been given, to cancel them”.⁴⁹ The Ministerial Council apparently did not worry about their former decision on February 19 (i. e. Bratislav) and accepted Šrobár’s “claim” without any opposition, even using Šrobár’s expression in the last sentence of their notice without alteration.

Then the Ministry of the Interior sent on March 28 to the local political administrations in Prague (Bohemia) and Brno (Moravia) and the Silesian local government in Opava the notice which read “on the bases of the additional notice of the Presidium on March 16, 1919, no. 4562, by the addition to our decree of March 3, 1919, no. 6452, regarding the new naming of the city of Prešpurk, it is informed that the name “Bratislava” (instead of “Bratislav”) shall be used officially for this city. XX [sic] requests that this name be used everywhere and, in places where different instructions has been given, to change them”.⁵⁰

To reconfirm the decision of the official name as Bratislava Minister V. Šrobár published in *Úradné noviny Župy Prešporskej* [The Official Bulletin of the Prešporok District] (March 27, 1919) the following notice “The Stabilization of the Name of Bratislava” with the date March 25, 1919. The notice in the form of the answer to Zoch’s question of March 6 said that “appealing to your letter no. 926/1919, I inform you that according to the decree of the Ministerial council of the

48 *Ibid.*, p. 317. Original: Národní archiv, Praha, kartón 3335, op. cit.

49 *Ibid.*, p. 317. Original: Národní archiv, Praha, kartón 586, op. cit.

50 Národní archiv, Praha, kartón 586, op. cit., draft, addition in handwriting, partly illegible.

Ministry Plenipotentiary for Slovakia, the name Bratislava is already officially stabilized”.⁵¹ At the end of the notice, in place of Minister V. Šrobár, governmental officer Dr. Ivanka⁵² signed it and in place of the head of the district S. Zoch, Dr. Galla⁵³ signed it with the comment that “I publish this Minister’s information for common knowledge”.

Dutch historian Pieter C. van Duin in his comprehensive monograph on the history of Social Democracy in this city, refers to this renaming process. Based mainly on German literature (*Pressburger Zeitung*), Duin wrote that after February 12, 1919, when an incident occurred between the German and Magyar citizens and the Czechoslovak Legion in the city, which caused the loss of human lives (8 persons were killed)⁵⁴, “the issue of renaming Pressburg came up for discussion as well. The government wanted to speed up the process of consolidating its hold on the city and announced it would issue a decree changing its official name to ‘Bratislava’”⁵⁵. According to Duin, by mid-February A. Pichler, the editor of the German newspaper *Pressburger Zeitung* and at the same time a member of the town council, submitted an interpellation to a council session in which he caricatured the argumentation for introducing the name Bratislava as a mystification.⁵⁶

51 *Op. cit.*, p. 325. Original: *op. cit.*, p. 67.

52 Milan Ivanka (1876-1950), Slovak politician and journalist. At that time he was a governmental officer for internal matters (for the matters of the state administration) in the Ministry of Slovakia.

53 Ivan Galla (1885-1955), real name Jan Halla, a poet of Slovak Modernism and politician. He was born in Moravia, wrote, however, in Slovak. At that time he worked in the Ministry of Slovakia.

54 About this controversial incident see C. van DUIN, Pieter: Vavro Šrobár, bratislavský štrajk vo februári 1919 a umenie propagandy [Vavro Šrobár, the strike in Bratislava on February 1919 and the art of propaganda], in: PEKNÍK M. (red.): *Dr. Vavro Šrobár, politik, publicista a národnoosvetový pracovník* [Dr. Vavro Šrobár, Politician, Publicist and Activist of National Enlightenment]. Bratislava 2012, pp. 344-374.

55 C. van DUIN, Pieter: *Central European Crossroads. Social Democracy and National Revolution in Bratislava (Pressburg), 1867-1921*. New York / Oxford 2009, p. 303.

56 *Ibid.*, p. 303.

Further Duin wrote that on March 14, 1919, the city was officially renamed Bratislava and added: “The new name ‘Bratislava’ was declared ‘untranslatable’ by the [Czechoslovak] government, which meant that in principle the old names ‘Pressburg’ and ‘Pozsony’ were no longer tolerated as equivalents in the public domain. (...) Moreover, the name ‘Pressburg’ and even ‘Pozsony’ was not consistently suppressed in practice and continued to be used alongside the new name ‘Bratislava’ on an unofficial level”.⁵⁷ In the notes of Duin’s monograph we read still more that “The issue of renaming Pressburg was extensively discussed again at the town council meeting on March 17”⁵⁸ and that “The PZ (*Pressburger Zeitung*), morning paper, March 22, 1919, confirmed that the Slovak ‘Ministerial Council’ in Bratislava had issued a ministerial decree that Pressburg was renamed ‘Bratislava’ as of March 14, 1919; it would seem therefore that the initiative came from Šrobár”.⁵⁹

Meanwhile P. Bugge fixes as the date of the official decision of the change of name to Bratislava March 16⁶⁰ and writes that “The new name (i. e. Bratislava) was then officially announced in the *Úradné noviny Župy Prešporskej* [Official newspaper of the Prešpurk (sic) district] on March 27, 1919”⁶¹. Slovak historian Ľubomír Lipták also mentions as the date of the official naming Bratislava to be March 27, 1919.⁶²

III. What do the official bulletins say?

The official bulletin of the district which announced laws, government ordinances and official notices was published weekly by the district

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 318.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 333. Also see *Dokumenty*, Bratislava 1977, p. 318.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 334.

⁶⁰ BUGGE, op. cit., p. 214.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 221.

⁶² LIPTÁK, Ľubomír: Bratislava as the Capital of Slovakia. Idem, *Changes of Changes. Society and Politics in Slovakia in the 20th Century*. Bratislava 2002, p. 95.

office in this city. Until the issue of February 6, 1919, it was published in Magyar with the title *Pozsonyvármegye Hivatalos Lapja* [The Official Bulletin of the Pozsony District]. Its place of publication and the place of signatures in the laws, government ordinances and official notices was Pozsony.

After one week of suspension, from the issue of February 20 onward, it was published with the Slovak title *Úradné noviny Župy Prešporskej* [The Official Bulletin of the Prešporok District] and additionally *Pozsonyvármegye Hivatalos Lapja*. From this issue, as the title shows, the same contents were printed bilingually, on the left half of the page in Slovak and on the right half in Magyar. The place of publication is printed as Prešporok and the place of signatures was in the Slovak version Prešporok, in the Magyar version Pozsony.

From the issue of March 6, in the Slovak version, the name Bratislav (on February 16, only once) and Bratislava (for the first time on February 16) began to appear. However, the name Prešporok was used simultaneously. From the issue of March 13 to April 10, in the signatures, the names Bratislava and Prešporok were used. There is even a case where in one document both names were used, for example, a document in the issue of March 13 (signed on March 8). In the issue of March 27, where, as we mentioned above, the decision of Minister V. Šrobár on the official name of Bratislava was published, we still find two documents with the signature of Prešporok.

On the whole, in the signatures of the Slovak part, the name Bratislava was used for the first time in the document of February 7 (its signer was Minister V. Šrobár) and the name Prešporok was used for the last time in the document of April 6 (its signer was vice-governor Dr. Galla). After the issue published on April 17, all names in the signatures were signed as Bratislava. However, the place of publication of the bulletin was still Prešporok. This suggests that the renaming process of the city from Prešporok to Bratislava at the official level did not occur at once, on one particular date. From the beginning of February until the beginning of April 1919 both names, Prešporok and Bratislava, were used.

It is a little strange that in another official bulletin titled “*Úradné noviny*” which began to be published on January 1, 1919, in Žilina, by Minister V. Šrobár (the Ministry of Slovakia), there is no mention of the renaming of Bratislava. The only thing we can notice in this bulletin is: 1) that, before the removal of the Ministry to this city, it was called Prešporok;⁶³ 2) that after Minister V. Šrobár moved, he started to sign his decrees “in Bratislava” (for the first time on February 7, 1919); 3) that the place of publication was changed from the issue of February 28, which was first published after the move to this city, from Prešporok to Bratislava.

We might conclude that the renaming process of the city to Bratislava had basically finished by the beginning of April. However, we have to notice a time lag in the case of the name of the district. Interestingly, in the issue of May 1 we read the title of a notice “*Úradná reč v župe prešporskej*” [Official language in the Prešporok District] with the signature “Bratislava, April 23, 1919, vice-governor Dr. Galla”. In the same issue there appears a document of April 25 with the words “Prešporok district”. Meanwhile a document of April 22 appears with the words “Bratislava district”.

From the issue of May 22, the Slovak part of the title of the bulletin was changed to *Úradné noviny Župy Bratislavskej* [The Official Bulletin of the Bratislava District] without an announcement of this renaming act. At the same time the place of publication also changed from Prešporok to Bratislava. The Magyar part of the title remained as it was⁶⁴. By this act the renaming process of the city in the official level was basically closed.⁶⁵

63 For example: “The Ministry of the Government of the Czechoslovak Republic for the Administration of Slovakia (i. e. the Ministry of Slovakia) with all its offices removes on February 4, 1919, from Žilina to Prešporok ...” (in News on January 8, 1919).

64 It happened on June of 1921 when the Magyar title *Pozsonyvármegye Hivatalos Lapja* changed to *Bratislavavármegye Hivatalos Lapja* (from the issue published on June 23, 1921).

65 “The continuation” of this issue from the second half of 1919 to 1924 will be discussed in part III of this article.

Instead of a Conclusion

On the basis of our investigation, we might make the following “provisional” conclusions.

As we saw above, in the Slovak newspapers the name Bratislava began to be mentioned as a “historical” name of Prešporok just before or after the proclamation of the independent Czechoslovak state on October 28, 1918. Since the occupation of the city by the Czechoslovak Legion on January 1, 1919, the name Bratislava was used more frequently and soon after the arrival of the Ministry of Slovakia to the city on February 4, the name Bratislava quickly replaced Prešporok. During February of 1919, the place of publication of the newspapers published in this city was changed from Prešporok to Bratislava.

As for the date of the official renaming to Bratislava we should consider the following: 1) February 14, 1919, when it was agreed to do so at the meeting of the Ministry of Slovakia held in this city; 2) March 14. Duin argues that on this day a ministerial decree that Pressburg was renamed ‘Bratislava’ had been issued. This information, however, has not been confirmed by official documents; 3) March 16 when the Presidium in Prague asked the Ministry of the Interior to use the name Bratislava instead of Bratislav; 4) March 25 or 27 when in *Úradné noviny Župy Prešporskej* Minister V. Šrobár reconfirmed that the name Bratislava was already codified officially (signed on March 25, published on March 27).

As regards Bratislav (notice its resemblance to one of Pavol Jozef Šafárik’s reconstructions of 1837 and with the well-known form in Czech, i. e. Břetislav), the Presidium in Prague, answering the request of the Minister of National Defense, decided in the meeting of February 19 to take it as the official name of the city (published on February 22). It seems that they did not choose this name (Bratislav) according to consultation with experts, they simply chose one of the alternatives which the Ministry of National Defense referred to (i. e. Wilsonov, Wilsonovo město, Bratislav). Owing to the “claim” of

Minister V. Šrobár on March 13, the name Bratislav was withdrawn by the notice of March 16. The Ministerial Council in Prague apparently did not worry about this subject.⁶⁶

We might assume that obviously the Slovak side took the initiative to rename the city to Bratislava and that in this process the head of Prešporok district S. Zoch, Minister V. Šrobár and the deputy F. Juriga played an important role. We might consider them as probable indicators of this process in the background of the consensus of the Slovak society about the name Bratislava.

V. Šrobár wrote about his activities of this period in his memoirs “*Oslobodené Slovensko. Pamäti z rokov 1918-1920*” [Liberated Slovakia. Memoires from the Years 1918-1920] in two volumes⁶⁷, in which, however, we could not find mentions about the renaming process of Bratislava.⁶⁸ We can only assume that he considered this process as a bagatelle not worth mentioning, or he thought it as a matter of course or he considered it as a delicate issue, about which it would be better to keep silent.

66 We find in the book by HANÁK, Jozef: *Obsadenie Bratislavy. 1918-1920. Kronika pamätných dní* [Occupation of Bratislava. 1918-1920. The Chronicle of Commemorative Days] (Bratislava 2004) the following interesting descriptions: “In Prague they constantly confused the name of the capital city of Slovakia. When names like Wilsonov, Wilsonovo, Wilsonovo mesto fell into oblivion, central offices and the government began to use Bratislav. After Šrobár’s attention they used temporarily the name Bratislava. However, suddenly someone invented Braslav - and then for a couple of days the name of Prešporok was written this way. Šrobár again had to call attention to the disagreeable incorrectness and on March 16 the Presidium of the government confirmed - probably with the final effect - the name Bratislava” (p. 148). Especially the description about the name Braslav is surprising. However, Hanák does not mention the source of this information.

67 ŠROBÁR, Vavro: *Oslobodené Slovensko. Pamäti z rokov 1918-1920* [Liberated Slovakia. Memoires from the Years 1918-1920]. First volume, Prague 1928; idem: *Oslobodené Slovensko. Pamäti z rokov 1918-1920*. Second volume, Bratislava 2004.

68 P. Bugge also remarks that “Šrobár himself never wrote anything about the motives behind the name change”. BUGGE, op. cit., p. 221.

As we clearly read from Šrobár's memoirs, his Ministry had at that time a lot of work, every day, in a tense atmosphere, and they had many concerns to which they had to react urgently (for example the incident in the city on February 12)⁶⁹. Undoubtedly they did not have even enough time to do the renaming act according to ordinary official procedure.⁷⁰ P. Bugge was correct when he wrote "Even in this case, decision making seems to have been improvised and kept within a very narrow circle. There was no discussion of the issue in parliament."⁷¹

Possibly they judged that the name Prešporok (or its variants) which is obviously the "mutilate" form of German "Pressburg" would not be enough to convince the victorious allied powers (Great Britain, France, USA, Italy, Japan and others) of the legitimacy of incorporating this city into the Czechoslovak Republic. They may also

69 About the activities of V. Šrobár at this time see, for example, Krajčovičová N.: Vavro Šrobár – prvý minister s plnou mocou pre správu Slovenska [Vavro Šrobár – the first Minister Plenipotentiary for Administration of Slovakia], in: PEKNÍK M. (red.): *Dr. Vavro Šrobár...*, Bratislava 2012, pp. 303-318.

70 About the ordinary procedure of the renaming act at that time, see the above cited notice of the Ministry of the Foreign Affairs addressed to the Ministry of the Interior on September 9, 1922: "At the time, when the above-mentioned decrees of the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Slovakia were published [i. e. on February-March of 1919], the Hungarian legislative law no IV of 1898 was still in force, according which, as for the change of the official name, the matter would be fixed by the Minister of the Interior after listening to the relevant municipality and its general assembly (although the municipality [of the city] was not listened to, however, they did not complain about the decree). According to [Hungarian] law, a municipality can have only one official name". Národní archiv, Praha, kartón 586, op. cit. One year later, on April 1920, Zákon o názvech měst, obcí, osad a ulic ... (č. 266, 14. dubna 1920) [the Act on the names of cities, villages, settlements and streets ... (no. 266, April 14, 1920)] was passed. It said: "This name [i. e. the official name] and also its later changes are set by the Minister of the Interior after listening to an expert consultative committee and paying attention to public interests." (§ 1.). *Sbírka zákonů a nařízení státu československého*. [The Collection of Laws and Orders of the Czechoslovak State], 1920. Praha 1920, p. 595.

71 BUGGE, op. cit., p. 221.

have wanted to convince (probably this motive might be stronger) the German and Magyar citizens of the city that it would remain under the jurisdiction of the Czechoslovak government in the future. In such a case it would be more persuasive to have “the correct and historical [name] Bratislava” (V. Šrobár).⁷²

In my opinion, at that time they did not choose the name Bratislava, as later philologists in various ways said, neither directly from P. J. Šafárik’s *Slovanské starožitnosti* [Slavic Antiquities] (in this case the name would not be Bratislava), nor from Ján Kollár’s *Slávy dcera* [The Daughter of Sláva] (then they would have chosen the Slovak equivalent of the Czech name Břetislava, which is Bretislava), nor from Ludovít Štúr’s precedent (as we saw in the first part of this article, in the second half of the 19th century in the literature of Štúr’s followers and Slovak national intellectuals the form Bratislava was not so widely accepted and if it was used, rather in the form Bretislava).

My hypothesis is that they chose the name Bratislava in 1919, mainly remembering J. Z. Bulla’s (and probably F. Juriga’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 of that time.

The renaming of the city to Bratislava at the beginning of 1919 is, in my opinion, an important symbolic issue. Related official

72 In the same period, in 1918-1919, several larger cities in southern Slovakia with a dominant Magyar majority (for example Ersekújvar/Nové Zámky, Komárom/Komárno, Losonc/Lučenec, Kassa/Košice etc.) were incorporated into the Czechoslovak Republic. Their Slovak names (on the right, Nové Zámky etc.) which were until that time only the “people’s” names became official ones (see the Decree of the Slovak National Council on place names of November 10, 1918. *Slovenský denník*, November 19, 1918, no. 9). However, we could not find other cases that even Slovak “people’s” name would be renamed to “the original Slovak name”, such as Prešporok to Bratislava.

documents, contemporary newspapers and journals, and memoirs of participants in later years on this subject might have been preserved. Until 2019 when we celebrate the centenary of the “incorporation” of the city into the Czechoslovak Republic, we look forward to the further development of the investigation. Based on a systematic study of official and private documents in archives and libraries, of newspapers and journals in Slovakia, the Czech Republic and neighboring countries, the renaming process will be more minutely clarified. And we, foreign researchers of Slovak studies, want to contribute to this important and interesting work.