

of markets and festivals: first, the change of social and economic conditions; and second, the attempt to ensure supply for inhabitants with a market net.

Nowadays sporting events are the places where unofficial names are created and used. It is fans who use them when encouraging sport teams: for example, there *Zvolenčania* are called *Bryndziari*, meaning bryndza-people (bryndza is a Slovak sheep-milk cheese).

Other places that helped to sustain these unofficial names are schools, work environments and also everyday travelling by bus or train. Nowadays many children travel to schools, but they do not use any bynames.

V. Classification of By-names

All bynames are restricted to oral communication, but since their meaning is not clear and explicit, one would consider them meaningless. To be able to decode its meaning, one must be a member of the particular cultural and historical society to which these bynames are connected.

Before analysing bynames, we had to get as much information as possible about the causes that gave them birth. In our paper, these were divided into the following subgroups:

1. First, bynames of an *identifying* character. These served to signify certain places, and the names were frequently used in everyday communication. Furthermore, they gained equal position with the official names.

2. Second, bynames of a *mocking* character. These were mostly used during fights and arguments and hardly ever in everyday communication. People addressed with these names were rather ashamed and embarrassed to be called so. What usually gave rise to them was some funny or ridiculous event. Only a small minority of them was related to some historical point.

As far as by-names of a mocking character are concerned, one would usually start narrating a story that ends up in assigning a mocking byname for a certain person, and then this name would be implemented for the whole group to which the person belonged.

The narrations usually finish with words like: “and since then, they are called ..., because ...”. The topics of these narrations can be either universal or specific, for example like the famous story of how inhabitants of one village cooked a goulash from a dog. These comic stories about the motivation for bynames are very popular, and many people believe that they really happened.

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A Fairytale about a Jester and a King

“The king is coming tomorrow,” the vassals whispered as they strew about tulip, daffodil and violet petals.

“The king is coming tomorrow,” the mercenaries chanted monotonously instead of a song.

Yes, the king is to come tomorrow. Which king? Well, our king – the king of this country and the king of our fairy-tale. An absolutely ordinary king – as kings usually are: fat, stupid, proud and indifferent. But this particular king had made a fatal mistake: he travelled to the kingdom of the Philosopher King – a humanist. But he made an even greater mistake when he returned from that country to his own, which is the country of our tale.

The king’s carriage, drawn by eight steeds over whirling, faded petals – long live the king! – with gilded wheels which jingled on the stone cobbles, stopped in the middle of the court.

“Long live the king!” At that moment twenty mercenaries stamped with their right foot and marched toward him with arms presented to honour him.

“The king is here to enter into history,” proclaimed the monarch as soon as he quit the carriage.

“We have lagged behind,” he shouted, “but on everything we shall catch up.” A jester stepped out after the king and, like a living shadow, pranced along behind the king’s heels.

“They are writing a book there about everything their king does, and it is the most important thing,” said the King. “You two,” he stopped in front of motionless castle guards, “I promote you to the post of scribes. You have until tomorrow evening to learn to write. You will be responsible for the Book of Royal History – Write it down.”

“Most important is to gain the nation’s heart,” the monarch speculated aloud when the bedroom door closed. “If the nation grows fond of you,” the king winked at the jester confidentially, “they

will compose songs about you, fabricate legends. Then children's children, the children of their children will recite them with respect in history lessons."

"Great things are not born from one day to the next," claimed the king later, when the first years were over and his reforms were yet but on paper. Trained soldiers began working. In the gloomy scriptorium they anxiously filled pages, line after line, in the *Book of Royal History: Cradle of Heroic Deeds* – so announced the gilded headline in the title of the book. A page:

"In the morning of the second day of the third month in the twentieth year of his majesty's reign, the king woke and arose at ten. From the very morning, even while he was dressing, the monarch showed remarkable enthusiasm for the cultural improvement of the uneducated class. He warmly and patiently explained the developmental principles of the humanistic determining factor for the conditions of transmission to the maid-servants who dressed him.

"King's breakfast, second day, third month, twentieth year of his majesty's reign: Starter –almond pie with raisins, bottle of champagne. Main course – suckling pig in butter stuffed with figs, pineapple, peaches and a jar of Tokay. It is worth mentioning – the document continues – that the king, between the starter and the main course, slowly stopped chewing and – being deep in thought – stared out at the pastures bejewelled with the castle swine.

"'Their utility is directly proportional to their weight,' he said after while, speaking only half aloud to the serviette a sentence that has since commanded the admiration of the greatest scholars of the king's philosophy. (The quotation is also recorded in Book of King's Quotations, along with a detailed analysis.)"

Simply said, in the document there is noted everything that demonstrates the king's character in all its complexity.

"We work for our nation, which means we have to keep pace with the times," the king said one morning on the terrace of the castle tower.

"And that means to copy everything that is done in the country of the Philosopher King – a humanist," added the jester, dodging the slap. He was the king's conscience. It is known from history that not even the best monarchs were able to get rid of their conscience entirely.

"Shut up, imp!" he yelled. "I am the king and you are the jester. Think of that, what it means. Look, there is a church down there, the church has a tower, and towers are obsolete. What shall a clever king do? Well, so what shall he do?" He showed his teeth triumphantly to the jester. "You, jerk, it is clear," he continued without a pause. "Listen, tomorrow we demolish the tower. Towers express backwardness. They toll too tirelessly and every Sunday rudely interrupt my nap. In the humanist's country they have the whole town built up with chimneys. A step forward means to add a beautiful chimney to the church instead of the tower."

"Honourable King," laughed the jester, "you can start baking bricks in the church at once."

"Shut up, shut up!" the king yelled. "I am the king and you are the jester. It means I know everything. I am allowed to do everything. I can manage everything. You know nothing. You are not allowed to do anything. You can do nothing."

The tower was demolished and a chimney was built up in its place. Believers revolted, gathered outside the church, angrily shouted and threw their strong peasant arms about.

"Come here, jester," the king called him, leaning over a stone banister among the flying angels.

"Look how they rejoice, how they call for my glory. I confirm from my own experience that there is no greater pleasure than to accept the thanksgiving of the simple folk," he said passionately.

The two scribes immediately chiselled down his statement on stone slates, as the notebook did not exist yet.

"Social welfare is our goal!" he called out joyfully. "Listen, jester, we will change everything completely. The people deserve more dignified living. We must not simply keep abreast of, but must overtake the times. All must be different. I will design a plan of the town. Everything must be the other way round. Our colleague – the humanist – has streets of only right angles, mutually connected and traversed. We will build the streets in circles, not to be touched and connected. Look! This is the most beautiful and the most other way round."

"Excuse me, your Honour," the jester objected, "but it looks more like a sport stadium than our town."

"You know nothing. You are not allowed to do anything. Shut up!" the king interrupted him.

"And the houses, look at them, how terrible they are. You can see nothing but roof tiles, shingles, straw. Who can look at it? We will

do it differently. Roofs will be on the walls. There will be a door and windows on the roof. Imagine what a wonderful view you will have out there. In the morning I will climb up to the tower and I will see directly through my vassals' windows. Behind the windows happy faces will smile at me, calling, 'Good morning, our king,' and I will benevolently wave with my gauntlet, 'Good morning, good morning.' – It is strange that this has not yet come into anybody's mind."

"It will rain a scant few times," the jester laughed, "and the town will be an area for bathing."

"Stop, you ogre. I am the king and you are the jester! Think over carefully what that means."

The streets were built in circles and the new houses had their doors and windows installed in the roofs and the roofs brought down on the walls. The poor vassals had to move into the mountain caves. Basilea Sophia – The Museum of the King's Wisdom – was the tallest building of the town. The Book of Royal History, The Book of the King's Quotations, the town plans sketched by the very hand of the monarch himself, small paintings and sculptural illustrations of scenes from the king's life were kept there.

The king was to attend the opening of this museum.

"It must be before the rainy season," the king's advisors thought; "otherwise all the halls will be flooded with water and we will be headless."

And so the ceremonial procession headed from the castle to the town.

"It seems to me that we are spinning in circles all the time," the king said hesitantly when they again began the first circle street for the twenty-ninth time.

"I confirm that Your Panjandrum is right, of course," the King's highest advisor remarked angrily.

"We will never reach the museum on these running trails," the jester added.

"Who made these streets up? What sniper, provocateur, conspirator?" The king was angry and looked remarkably like a ruffled goose. "The one who conceived this stupid road will give a full account of it in front of the royal court. Put it down!" – he said to the scribes, and he had a road built across all the circle streets directly to the museum.

When the road was finished and the crowd was standing near the walls of the museum, new difficulties arose.

"We will have to climb the ropes up there," the jester deduced. The counsellors nodded in silent agreement.

"Climb?" The king was horrified. "The ropes? What for?"

"Dignified Lord, the entrance is on the roof – in the event you do not happen to know about it."

"The door on the roof, the door on the roof, who has ever heard of it, such a stupid idea." The king began to beat his hand against his head. "The guilty one will be punished." He waved to the scribes with one hand, nursing his aching head with the other.

They then built a stairway to the roof. Music was played. The king feasted in the museum, the meal for this special occasion prepared by a conscientious cooking team a week in advance. After the simple celebration, the entourage returned to the castle.

"Come here, jester," waved the king when he was again in his favourite place in the tower.

"Look! Someone has entirely destroyed my town."

The road built directly to the museum across the tidy circles looked like a sword scar, and the wide stairway urged laughter.

"Who could have done it? Call the scribes; I issue a warrant for the idiot's apprehension."

"It is said that they have got him," said the jester, calming him down. "He is strolling about the castle and he does not have an inkling that we want to catch him."

"I call an emergency court. Now!"

The fanfare resounded in the towers and the king, burdened with a purple robe, betook himself to his throne to the courtroom.

"A verdict is clear," he claimed as soon as he sat down. "The one who has built the road must be drowned mercilessly. The one who has built the stairway must be burnt alive. Bring the guilty ones!"

A counsellor superior nodded and two mercenaries grasped the poor king and dragged him in front of the mirror.

"Here he is, your majesty," they laughed with the rude laughter of soldiers.

"I take everything back! I take everything back!" cried the frightened king. It all slowly became clear to him.

"There is no appeal to the king's order," the counsellors said unanimously. They could not wait for the moment when their king would finally be drowned.

"Wait," commanded the jester, whose words were gaining more and more authority, stopping them.

"The dignified king must be burnt and drowned. I suggest to set on

bonfire and then dousing it with water. That is the way to administer the punishment, and you, dignified monarch, will remain alive.”

“Shut up, jester,” said the king sternly. “Remember, I am the king and you are the jester. It means that I know everything and I can manage everything and you know nothing and cannot do anything. First drown, then burn,” he beckoned to the executioners.

That is the way it happened then. However, burning was not necessary, as there was no one who wanted to look for the king’s water-swollen, bloated body down in the riverbed.

