



Geographical Names as Indicators of the Environment





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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRPERSON

Un Groupe d'experts au service des Nations Unies

Chers Collègues,

En juillet 2021, sur recommandation de notre Groupe d'experts, le Conseil économique et social de l'ONU (ECOSOC) a « reconnu que de nombreux éléments de normalisation des noms géographiques peuvent avoir un lien avec le milieu naturel », et il a « décidé que le Groupe d'experts examinerait les liens qui existent et ceux qui pourraient exister entre les noms géographiques et l'environnement », et en particulier « le rôle que les noms géographiques, les programmes nationaux en la matière et ses travaux jouent, ou pourraient jouer, dans la compréhension par l'être humain de son environnement et les effets qu'ils pourraient avoir sur ce dernier ».

La présente livraison de notre *Bulletin* semestriel apporte des contributions significatives à cette directive, autour d'un aspect particulier de ces « liens entre les noms géographiques et l'environnement ». Elle met bien en évidence que ces liens ne sont ni automatiques ni directs. Un nom de lieu procède de conditions initiales particulières, comme l'absence de nom préalable ou la prégnance de ce qu'il décrit ou de ce qu'il évoque. Sa pérennité dépend ensuite de sa résistance aux autres motivations que rencontre l'histoire du lieu.



Une toponymie ne peut donc constituer un inventaire scientifique de conditions environnementales — ou de quoi que ce soit d'autre, d'ailleurs. Elle enrichit en revanche un tel inventaire par le témoignage de toute une mémoire collective. Elle intègre ainsi des éléments techniques et politiques en une synthèse de valeur profondément humaine qui concerne tout naturellement les Nations Unies.

En leur sein, l'ECOSOC paraît effectivement s'y intéresser de plus en plus, outre sa décision rappelée ci-dessus. Il nous invite à de nombreuses réunions qui sont autant d'occasions de propager l'intérêt pour nos sujets. Il vient d'évaluer ses organes subsidiaires, et de souligner notamment notre coopération avec le Comité d'experts sur la gestion de l'information géospatiale à l'échelle mondiale (CENU-GIGM). Le plan stratégique et le programme de travail qu'il a approuvés mettent bien en valeur la richesse de nos perspectives et de nos activités, dont ils doivent rester les répertoires exhaustifs.

Que cela nous encourage à rester fidèles à l'esprit qui a présidé à la refonte du GENUNG et qui nous met plus expressément au service de l'intérêt commun des Nations Unies et de l'humanité !

Pierre Jaillard (France)
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An Expert Group at the service of the United Nations

Dear Colleagues,

In July 2021, on the recommendation of our Group of Experts, the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) "acknowledged that there are numerous elements of geographical names standardization with potential connections to the natural environment", and "decided that the Group of Experts should consider current and potential connections between geographical names and the environment", and in particular "the relationship that geographical names, national names programmes and the work of the Group of Experts has, or could have, with shaping human understanding of, and impact on, the environment".

This release of our biannual *Bulletin* makes significant contributions to this guideline, focusing on one particular aspect of these "connections of geographical names to the natural environment". It makes clear that these connections are neither automatic nor direct. A place name results from specific initial conditions, such as the absence of a prior name or the significance of what it describes or evokes. Its durability then depends on its resistance to other motivations encountered in the history of the place.

A toponymy cannot therefore constitute a scientific inventory of environmental conditions – or of anything else, by the way. On the other hand, it enriches such an inventory with the testimony of a whole collective memory. It thus integrates technical and political elements into a synthesis of deeply human value that naturally concerns the United Nations.

Within the United Nations, ECOSOC seems to be taking an increasing interest, in addition to its decision quoted above. It invites us to many meetings which are opportunities to spread interest in our issues. It has just reviewed its subsidiary bodies, and in particular highlighted our cooperation with the Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM). The Strategic Plan and the Programme of Work approved by the ECOSOC highlight the richness of our perspectives and activities, and should remain comprehensive records of these.

May this encourage us to remain faithful to the spirit in which UNGEKN was redesigned and which places us more explicitly at the service of the common interest of the United Nations and of mankind!

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Chair, UNGEKN

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MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARIAT

Geographical names as indicators of the environment

For the second time the Bulletin will feature the environment. “Geographical Names in an Urban Environment” was the featured theme in the last issue of the Bulletin. In this, the 63rd issue, the thematic focus is “*Geographical names as indicators of the environment*.” What is the environment, and what does this theme seek to address? The term environment has a range of definitions depending on the perspective being considered, it may be environmental, or humanitarian and its importance has been changing over time. The environment consists of atmosphere, hydrosphere, lithosphere and biosphere which provides all the resources for leading a comfortable life. The environment is affected by factors which may be natural, artificial, social, biological and psychological. Statisticians describe the environment as the totality of all external conditions affecting the life, development and survival of an organism¹. Given the broad meaning of environment, one can infer that an examination of geographical names as indicators of the environment can be explored from multiple perspectives of human interaction with the ecosystem.

The relevance of environment to geographical names standardization emanated from the need of the Group of Experts to align their work to the Sustainable Development Goals. At its 2021 session, the Group of Experts adopted Recommendation 2 which:

- Acknowledged that there are numerous elements of geographical names standardization with potential connections to the natural environment;
- Recognized that the work programme of the Group of Experts to date has not fully explored the relationship that geographical names, national names programmes and the work of the Group of Experts has, or could have, with shaping human understanding of, and impact on, the environment and;
- Decided that the Group of Experts should consider current and potential connections between geographical names and the environment and incorporate examples of relevant practices, research or working relationships in its operations and deliberations.

The Bulletin is being used to continue the discussion and research needed to be done in response to the Recommendation 2, as decided at the 2021 UNGEGN session. An exploration of the topic revealed that there is much to be done on exploring the relation of toponymy to the environment. Most articles found were centred on the fact that indigenous and original names

reflected the nature of the environment. This was confirmed by the nine articles received from Armenia, Australia, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Lithuania, New Zealand, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia and Spain. The contributions pointed out that geographical names are not only physical descriptors of the environment they also disclose environmental, historical, and cultural information.

With this collection of nine articles, there is now scope to review them in detail and identify main themes and possible areas for research regarding the sustainable development goals, in particular goal 13 Climate action, goal 14 life below water and goal 15 life on land. Invitation is extended to experts to indicate their wish and availability to contribute to advancing this work. Please send me a note at blake1@un.org.

Also included in this issue are contributions from the Divisions, Working Groups, Countries and a list of upcoming events. Under *UNEGN Strategic Plan and Programme of Work (SP&PoW) 2021-2029*, there are two articles which feature work being done towards the implementation of strategies one and three.

We wish to keep you informed on the work of the Group of Experts and to make this possible, please complete the following contact information form.

- [The UNGEGN contact information for national geographical names authorities](#)

The information collected from this form will be used to update the Group of Experts contact database. We thank all our contributors to this issue, and to Andreas Hadjiraftis of Cyprus for designing the front page.

Your comments on this issue and contribution to the next Bulletin, number 64, to be circulated in November 2022 under the theme “*Making geographical names data accessible*” are welcomed. Please circulate the bulletin among your colleagues and we hope you enjoy reading. Remember to tweet your geographical names activities @UNSD_GEGN. Please stay safe and healthy.

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¹ From OECD Glossary of Statistical Terms - <https://stats.oecd.org/glossary/detail.asp?ID=813>

IN MEMORIAM: Erfried HAACK

The Permanent Committee on Geographical Names (StAGN) mourns the death of its long-standing member Dr. habil. Erfried Haack, who passed away in Berlin on 19.12.2021.

Erfried Haack was born on 30.03.1929 in Loddin on the island of Usedom at the southern shore of the Baltic Sea. After completing primary school, he attended the teacher training college in Pasewalk from 1943. From 1947 to 1950, he completed his Abitur at the University of Greifswald and then studied biology and geography. He graduated with a degree in geography in 1955; just two years later he was awarded a doctorate. He completed his habilitation in 1964 with a thesis on "Geographical principles of cartographic design".

As a geographer, he remained connected to cartography throughout his professional life. From 1955 to 1990, he held leading positions in the Ministry of the Interior of the German Democratic Republic in the field of surveying and mapping administration.

Geographical names were not only a small part of his activity, but shaped his work. In 1959 the Commission for the Spelling of Geographical Names in Cartographic Products of the GDR was established, which he led for 30 years. The Commission had already published 1966 the "General Guideline



for the Spelling of Geographical Names of the German Democratic Republic" in a first edition, which was followed by nine more until 1989. In addition, he was very interested in international cooperation during his active period of service. Within the framework of the scientific-technical cooperation of the geodetic services of socialist countries, he was significantly involved in the conception and production of the famous world map (Karta Mira) at a scale of 1:2.500.000. His participation in the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographic Names (UNEGN) is also particularly noteworthy. From 1975 onwards as a representative of the GDR until 1990, he was a widely recognised and always helpful colleague. Among other things, Haack collaborated in the Toponymic Training Courses and was thus able to pass on his knowledge internationally. At the Third United Nations Conference on the Standardisation of Geographical Names (UNCSGN), held in Athens 1977, he acted as Vice-Chairman of Technical Committee IV, Writing Systems. In the Dutch- and German-speaking Division of UNEG, technical cooperation was very productive thanks to his continuous and energetic collaboration. Last but not least was Haack one of the pioneers of a national standardisation of geographic names and was able to present one of the earliest examples of Toponymic Guidelines, here for the GDR, in 1981. After the reunification of Germany he was a member of the StAGN until 2006 and remained interested in the current work of the committee as a corresponding member until his death.

With Erfried Haack, the StAGN and the UNEG loses a highly esteemed colleague and will keep him in grateful memory.

Andreas Dix

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SPECIAL FEATURE: Geographical Names as Indicators of the Environment

Geographical names of Armenia as a reflection of the environment

Geographical names and environment

The concept of geographical object is a complete, relatively stable formation with a certain geographical location, which has a natural or artificial origin.

In general, the system of toponyms of a separate area means a complex set of toponyms endowed with special features. The diversity of landscapes leads to the lack of unity of the geographical environment, which in turn is the basis for the description of different branches of economic activity, the location of the study area, as well as the peculiarities of the mentality of the people living here. Toponym describes a set of spatial representations of the usage of natural resources by the local population.

A cursory examination of the possible and existing connections of the environment shows that in the early period of civilization, the names of all the settlements (Oekonym) as a matter of fact, with some exceptions, were related to the environment.

During the further development of civilization, most of the settlements were named in honor of the leaders, later kings, deities, their masters or the specialization of the population (agriculture, crafts).

Since the establishment of Christianity, it has become widespread to name placenames after saints and monasteries. It can be said that the renaming of placenames is of a mass nature, as in the case of civil shocks (war, revolution, coup d'etat, etc.), as well as during the colonization of lands.

From our point of view, aforementioned reflects the same processes taking place in all parts of the Roman World (Europe, West Asia, North Africa). Armenia is not exception. The conclusion is that the longer the period of civilization development, the less are the placenames related to nature.

Historical overview

Armenian toponyms were formed over millennia and closely connected with the economic and cultural activities of both Armenians and the nations around us. This is evidenced by the numerous cartographic materials, taking into account that Armenia is represented in the first cartographic sources: the Babylonian map of the world (5th century BC), the atlas of Ptolemy (150s), the map of Pettinger (IV c.) and etc.

The territory of our country has been inhabited by humans since ancient times. The Lower Paleolithic, which is a sub-stage of prehistoric society, began in Armenia about 2 million years ago and ended about 100,000 years ago. In the Armenian Highlands, there are several open-air ancient sites, stations, cave-type

dwelling of this period (Gugark Stone Age Station - 1-8 million years and etc.).

The oldest state emerged in the territory of historical Armenia is the Kingdom of Van (Urartu) with capital Van (9th-6th centuries BC), followed by the Yervanduni Kingdom (6th century - end of 3rd century). The Artashesyan Kingdom (2nd century BC - 1st century AC), Arshakuni Kingdom (52nd AC - 428). During its long and arduous history, the country has become one of many conquerors (Assyrians, Babylonians, Alexander the Great, etc.).

In the Middle Ages, for about 1000 years, a number of state formations existed in the territory of the country (Bagratuni Armenia, Syunik Kingdom, Vaspurakan Kingdom, Zakaryan Kingdom, etc.) or the country was under the rule of foreigners (Persia, Byzantium), later the newly created Turkish state.

Due to the Russian-Turkish wars of the 18-19th centuries, the territory of Armenia was divided into Western (Turkish) and Eastern (Russian) parts. In 1918-1920 Eastern Armenia was proclaimed the Republic of Armenia, the Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic in 1920-1991, the Republic of Armenia in 1991.

Geographical names of Armenia and standardization

Being at the crossroads of historical developments, Armenia has repeatedly become a bone of contention between different countries. This circumstance often led to such distortions of the toponymic landscape of the country, which in turn led to the loss of the national image of the toponym, its historical, cultural and scientific value.

The placenames of the Republic of Armenia are frequently or may be associated with the perception and influence of people on the environment, as they are subject to frequent political change.

Due to the peculiarities of the Republic of Armenia, namely, by the morphological fragmentation of the area, with a certain isolation of the communities from each other, we get a variety of population dialects, types of activities, which, in turn, often lead to many versions of reading the same placenames.

It is interesting that the names of settlements related to handicrafts are a small part of the territory of the Republic of Armenia. Over time, many names have changed. As for agriculture, it is widespread in the landscape of toponyms of the Republic of Armenia.

The Republic of Armenia, as well as a number of states, has joined these works based on the relevant UN respective decisions related to certain standardization of geographical names.

The National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia adopted the Law on Geographical Names on November 23, 1999.



The law defines the works of naming and renaming the geographical names, which are an important part of the historical and cultural heritage of our people, their registration, preservation and use.

For this purpose, the Government of the Republic of Armenia established a specialized commission for geographical names. It is necessary to state that the geographical names of the Republic of Armenia are protected by the state.

Geographical names and etymology of settlements in Armenia

Below are the names of a number of settlements in Armenia and their etymology:

- **Ագարակաձոր / Agarakadzor** - The name of the settlement is based on ագարակ farm and ձոր gorge words.
- **Ակնալիճ / Aknalich** - The name of the settlement is based on ալունք source and լիճ lake words (named after of the lake Metsamor old Aknalich)
- **Աղավնաձոր / Aghavnadzor** - The name of the settlement is based on աղավնի pigeon and ձոր gorge words
- **Աղնջաձոր / Aghnjadzor** - The name of the settlement is based on եղիճ nettle and ձոր gorge words.
- **Այգեհովիտ / Aygehovit** - The name of the settlement is based on այգի garden and հովիտ valley words.
- **Այգեձոր / Aygedzor** - The name of the settlement is based on այգի garden and ձոր gorge words.
- **Այրք / Ayrk** - The name indicates the presence in the vicinity of the settlement of numerous այր widows, caves.
- **Անտառամեջ / Antaramej** - The name of the settlement is based on անտառ forest word and մեջ inside.
- **Անտառամուտ / Antaramut** - The name of the settlement is based on անտառ forest and մուտք entry words.
- **Արագածավան / Aragatsavan** - The name of the settlement is based on Արագած Aragats (mountain) and ավան borough words.
- **Արագածոտն / Aragatsotn** - The name of the settlement is based on Արագած Aragats mountain and ոտն base words.

- **Արագյուղ / Aragyugh** - The name of the settlement is based on Արա Ara mountain and գյուղ village words.
- **Արարատ / Ararat** - Named after of the Արարատ Ararat mountain in Armenian Highlands:
- **Արաքս / Arax** - Named after of the Արաքս Arax river in Armenian Highlands:
- **Բերդ / Berd²** - The name of the settlement is based on the Armenian version բերդ (berd) of the name of fortress, which is Tslik Amram Fortress located here.
- **Բյուրական / Byurakan** - The name of the settlement is based on բյուր innumerable and ալունք source words.
- **Գեղասար / Geghasar** - The name of the settlement is based on գեղեցիկ beautiful (adjective) and սար mountain words.
- **Գետաշեն / Getashen** - The name of the settlement is based on գետ river and շեն place words.
- **Գետարգել / Getargel** - The name of the settlement is based on գետ river and արգելք barrier words.
- **Գորիս / Goris³** - The name of the settlement is based on the Indo-European words Ժայռ g'ūōr (it means rock) and ինել ēs(it means be), which overall meaning of the words is "a rocky place".
- **Դաշտաքար / Dashtakar** - The name of the settlement is based on դաշտ field and քար stone words.
- **Եղեգնաձոր / Yeghegnadzor** - The name of the settlement is based on եղի reed and ձոր gorge words.
- **Զանգեզուր / Zangezur⁴** - The name of the region is based on զանգ bell and զուր feckless words.
- **Զովասար / Zovasar** - The name of the settlement is based on զով breezy (adjective) and սար mountain words.
- **Զույգաղբյուր / Zuygaghbyur** - The name of the settlement is based on զույգ couple and աղբյուր spring words.
- **Թթուջուր / Ttujur** - The name of the settlement is based on թթու acidic and ջուր water words.
- **Իծաքար / Itsakar** - The name of the settlement is based on այծ goat and քար stone words.
- **Լեռնագոգ / Lernagog** - The name of the settlement is based on լեռ mountain and գոգավորություն trough words.

² City in the northern part of the Republic of Armenia, in the Tavush marz, as part of the Kust province of the Artsakh World. Formerly known as Berdgyugh, Berdagyugh, Volorut and Shlorut

³ City in the south-eastern part of the RA, in the Syunik marz, as part of the Haband province of the Syunik World. Formerly known as Gorayq, Kyores, Zangezur, Dzagedzor, Goru and other names. The settlement existed since the ancient times, people have settled here since the Stone Age. The earliest mention of the name Goris comes from the Urartian period, King Rusa I left an inscription in the 8th century BC., where among the 23 countries he conquered was the country of Guria, which is most likely Goris. There was the border stone with the Aramaic inscription of King Artashes I (BC. 189-160).

⁴ Historical region in the south-eastern part of the Republic of Armenia (now Syunik region), in the eastern foothills of the Zangezur mountain

range, which was historically included in the Syunik World of the Kingdom of Greater Armenia, as evidenced by the inscriptions of King Artashes I (BC. 189-160). There are several theories as to the origin of the name Zangezur:

- According to tradition, the name is based on the phrase "bell of power", which means "powerful bell". There was a monastery located about 2 km from Goris, in which there was a powerful bell, through which the population was informed about the danger.
- It is more probable that the name "Zangezur" is connected with the name of Dzagedzor fortress, which has changed over time and converted to its current form.



- **Լճաշեն / Lchashen** - The name of the settlement is based on լիճ lake and շեն place words.
- **Խորձոր / Khordzor** - The name of the settlement is based on խոր deep and ձոր gorge words.
- **Ծաղկաձոր / Tsaghkadzor** - The name of the settlement is based on ծաղիկ flower and ձոր gorge words.
- **Ծովագյուղ / Tsovaghyugh** - The name of the settlement is based on ծով sea and գյուղ village words.
- **Կաթնաղբյուր / Katnaghbyur** - The name of the settlement is based on կաթ milk and աղբյուր spring words.
- **Կապան / Kapan** - The name of Kapan is an equivalent synonym of the word լեռնանցք pass.
- **Կաքավաձոր / Kakavadzor** - The name of the settlement is based on կաքավ partridge and ձոր gorge words.
- **Կրասար / Krasar** - The name of the settlement is based on կիր lime and սար mountain words.
- **Հացավան / Hatsavan** - The name of the settlement is based on հաց bread and ավան borough words.
- **Ձորագլուխ / Dzoraglukh** - The name of the settlement is based on ձոր gorge and գլուխ head words.
- **Ձորակալ / Dzorakap** - The name of the settlement is based on ձոր gorge and կալ link words.
- **Ճամբարակ / Chambarak**⁵ The meaning of the name is փոքր ճամբար little camp.
- **Մեղրաձոր / Meghradzor** - The name of the settlement is based on մեղր honey and ձոր gorge words.
- **Նոյեմբերյան / Noyemberian** – It was called Barana or Parana meaning սպարանք palace and since 1937 it was called the Noyemberian (city of November).
- **Նռնաձոր / Nrnadzor** - The name of the settlement is based on նռն pomegranate and ձոր gorge words.
- **Շամբ / Shamb** - The name is synonym for ճահնուտ swamp or եղեգնուտ reed words.
- **Շիկահող / Shikahogh** - The name of the settlement is based on շեկ blonde and հող soil words.
- **Ոսկեպար / Voskepar**⁶ - The name of the village is based on ոսկի gold and պար dance words.
- **Պաղաղբյուր / Paghaghbyur** - The name of the settlement is based on պաղ cold and աղբյուր spring words.
- **Պառավաքար / Paravakar** - The name of the settlement is based on պառավ old woman and քար stone words.
- **Ջրառատ / Jrrat** - The name of the settlement is based on ջուր water and առատ abundant words.
- **Վանաձոր / Vanadzor** - The name of the settlement is based on վանք monastery and ձոր gorge words.
- **Վարդահովիտ / Vardahovit** - The name of the settlement is based on վարդ rose and հովիտ valley words.
- **Վարդենիս / Vardenis**⁷ The name of the settlement is based on վարդ rose and Arabic: صانع (from the names of the north wind) words.
- **Ցամաքասար / Tsamakasar** - The name of the settlement is based on ցամաք dry and սար mountain words.
- **Ուղեձոր / Ughedzor** - The name of the settlement is based on ուղի way and ձոր gorge words.
- **Քարագլուխ / Karaglukh** - The name of the settlement is based on քար stone and գլուխ head words.

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⁵ City in the north-eastern part of Armenia, in the Gegharkunik marz. Formerly it was part of the Sotk province of the Syunik World of the Kingdom of Greater Armenia. Today's city was formed by the union of three settlements: Krasnoselsk, Verin Chambarak and Nerkin Chambarak. In 1785, Russian Molokan sectarians were relocated here from the Russian states of Samara and Saratov, who named the settlement Mikhaylovka, later Krasnoye Selo, Krasnoselsk, Karmir, and Chambarak in 1992

⁶ Village in the north-eastern part of Armenia (now Tavush marz). It was included in the Great Kuenq province of the Artsakh World of Greater Armenia. According to historical evidence, the settlement was founded in the 6th-7th centuries, as evidenced by the numerous monuments preserved in the adjacent areas of the village. The settlement was formerly known by the names of Voskepat and Voskeparisp. As for the current name Voskepar, it can be confirmed that

the name is described by the antiquity of centuries, maybe "millennia", it symbolizes fertility and abundance. The Turks who settled here since the 19th century named the village by the distorted forms of the Armenian Voskepar: Akhsibara, Aksipara, Askipara, etc.

⁷ City in the north-eastern part of the RA, in the Gegharkunik marz. It is one of the ancient settlements in the Armenian World, which is a part of the Sotk county of the Syunik Province of Greater Armenia. According to the tradition, the settlement was founded by Gegham, a representative of Hayk Nahapet dynasty, and was named Geghamabak. In the 9th century, lord Vasak Gabur of Syunik renovated the former fortress and renamed it Vasakashen. In the 16th-18th centuries the settlement was named Voskeshen.

Generic terms, feature types and the environment - Australia

One of the usual functions of a toponym, aside from enabling communication, is to characterise the nature of a place. We expect common topographic features, such as rivers, lakes, and mountains, to usually be partly identified by the generic element of the toponym and for those generics to be well known and widely recognised. This means that toponyms, even if the specific component is unrelated to the environment or derives from a language where meaning is not widely understood, can be useful indicators when they include generic terms. Some regions have unusual or unique environments and hence generic terms for landscape features that are unique to them. To support UNGEgn's interest in exploring the relationship between toponyms and the environment, we looked at some of the terms used in Australia and offer initial thoughts on how they may give an indication of the environment itself, and of our relationship to the land.

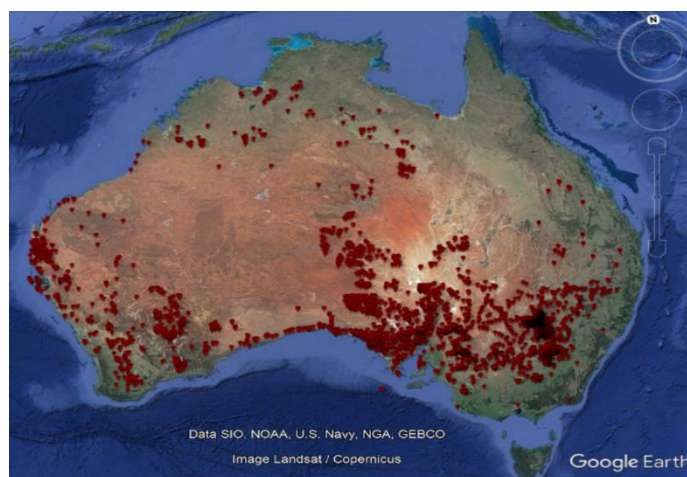
When the British occupied the continent from the end of the eighteenth century, they needed some new terms to describe and categorise the unfamiliar Australian landscape. Except for populated places, the naming system they introduced usually followed the practice of specific plus generic. In some cases, a standard English feature term was redefined and re-used to suit the different landscape. In other cases, words from Indigenous languages were imported into the Australian English toponymic vocabulary.

Australia has the benefit of both a standard catalogue of generic terms that have been used in toponyms (maintained with academic rigour by the Australian National Placenames Survey), as well as a catalogue of named feature types (maintained for data categorisation purposes by the Australia and New Zealand Working Group on Place Names). Recording and standardising the definitions of region-specific generic terms is an important responsibility for naming authorities. An understanding of the connections between geographical names and the environment they represent is not only a valuable cultural resource and decision-making tool for forming new names: it enables a better understanding of the environment in which toponyms have been bestowed and allows for more accurate categorisation of records.

Independent of any other data, a standalone toponym can indicate the presence and significance of a single topographic feature, or collectively they could be mapped by generic term or place type to indicate basic geomorphology across a region. Many terms allude to other environmental factors, for example the location of anchorages and the likely direction of prevailing storms, or the presence of wetlands and particular vegetation types, although the usefulness of these concepts requires further study.

A common generic in Australian toponymy that is an example of understanding the meaning shift from its British origins, is one that also demonstrates the importance of securing a more permanent supply of water than the unaltered

landscape allows: *tank*, which in Australia (in addition to the widely understood concept of a large metal or plastic container) also means 'an artificial water storage site made by digging a hole in the ground, often with the excavated soil used as the retaining wall'.



Mapping the location of toponyms categorised as tanks on a Google Earth basemap shows general alignment with the drier parts of the country.

Credit ICSM Composite Gazetteer of Australia, Qld Place Names Database, and Google Earth.

Australian generics unique to the environment, though, are most often seen in terms imported from Indigenous languages. There are at least 17 Indigenous words that have been incorporated in Australian toponyms as generic elements. The most familiar is probably *billabong*, 'a waterhole in a stream or in an anabranch, which is replenished only in times of flood'. Its use is widespread, with at least 150 entries in the Composite Gazetteer of Australia (CGA). Interestingly, it has replaced a British English word of similar meaning, oxbow.

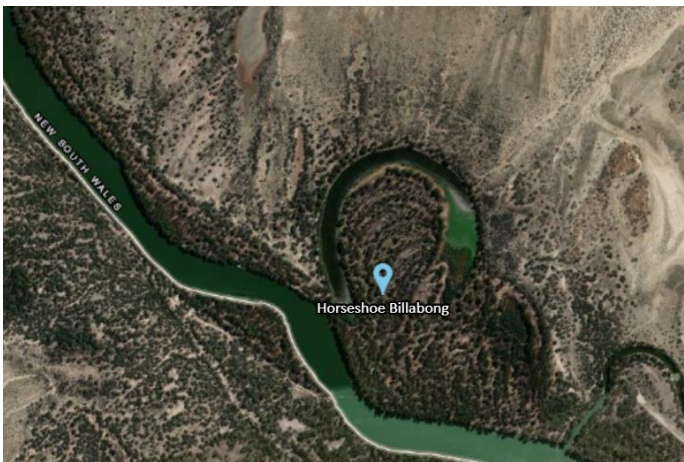
Less well known, but frequently used in Western Australia, is another term that relates to the availability of water in a dry country: *gnamma hole*: 'A natural hole in a rock in which rainwater collects'. There are 46 toponyms reported in the CGA that have the generic element Gnamma Hole(s), in addition fourteen use Gnamma or Gnamma Hole as the specific element (e.g. 'Gnamma Creek', 'Gnamma Hole Hill'). Here we see an example of localised influence of indigenous languages: "gnamma" comes from the Noongar language of southwest western Australia. On the eastern side of the continent there are instances of *cowal*: 'a small swampy hollow in red-soil country', and *warrambool*: 'a waterhole or overflow channel', both deriving from the Gamilaraay language of that area. Not every Indigenous-derived generic relates to inland water: also on the eastern side of the continent we find a term from the



Dharug language, used for a common coastal feature - *bombora*: 'A submerged reef or rock which produces a wave or dangerous current above it'. The term is widely known within Australia although only used in seven official toponyms. Its hypocoristic form *bommie* is much more common, both as a noun and as part of unofficial toponyms, especially within the surfing and diving communities.



A billabong on Towong Hill Station in Victoria.
Credit Jan Tent



Horseshoe Billabong in NSW.
Credit ICSM Composite Gazetteer of Australia

These are but preliminary thoughts as UNGEGN begins to explore this new theme. The motivations and evolution of toponymic practices is nuanced and there will be individual anomalies in the use of generic terms, as well as occasional variation in how toponyms are categorised by physical feature type. However, it seems there is opportunity for the toponymic record to offer at least a preliminary indicator into environmental and geomorphological features, and into the environmental conditions important to groups of people through time. For this, the ongoing work of both the academic community and government names authorities in maintaining catalogues of generic terms as well as physical feature types is essential.

Thanks to David Blair and Jan Tent of the Australian National Placename Survey for their insight and research assistance.

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Speleonyms and the natural environment: examples from Bulgaria

Speleonyms: meaning and usage

The geographical names referring to the names of underground topographical objects like caves and other subterranean cavities are known as speleonyms (from the Greek ‘spelaion’ – ‘cave’ and ‘onoma’ – ‘name’). Used by people for ages, the variety of today’s speleonyms may refer to a location, a source of danger, a shelter and even a myth or a legend.

Throughout the years, speleologists, ethnologists and linguists have compiled similar speleonym classifications (Tranteev, 1962, Todorov, 2002, Belnejska-Georgieva, 2016). Usually, a classification features the relation between the speleonym and the natural environment in one of the following ways:

1. General speleonyms: The Cave, The Cavern, The Grotto, The Hollow, The Hole, The Cavity, The Tunnel, The Den, The Abyss, The Pit, The Gap, etc. Such names are used when the subterranean cavity in question is the only one in the vicinity.
2. Speleonyms expressing a relation to another well-known near-by topographical object: The Mound, The Rock, The Vortex, etc.
3. Speleonyms referring to a specific property of the cave like:
 - the shape, size, depth or other inner morphology of the cave itself;
 - the number or shape of the entrances;
 - the intensity of the darkness or the amount/brightness of the penetrating light;
 - the cave’s inner air temperature;
 - a specific or unusual phenomena occurring at the cave entrance or in the cave;
 - the presence or absence of water or ice around the entrance or inside the cave;
 - the presence or colour of certain formations and sediments in the cave.

The word(s) behind the name

In general, a speleonym should be transliterated as its translation is rarely straightforward as it might seem by looking at the examples given above. In addition to the various synonyms like ‘cavern’, ‘grotto’, ‘pit’ or ‘hole’ of the main term ‘cave’, a speleonym often reflects the variations of the word due to local language dialects (Belnejska-Georgieva, 2016). Thus, ‘peshtera’ (‘cave’) is commonly replaced by ‘peshter’, ‘pech’, ‘peshta’, ‘yame’, ‘maara’, or ‘andak’. The last two words are in fact of Turkish origin. Such a speleonym hints not only of the area of the cave’s location (a geographical name of Turkish origin often points to the Rodopi mountain and south-southeast Bulgaria, which are closer to Turkey), but echoes a specific historical

period of the country: five centuries of Ottoman slavery (1396-1878).

Sometimes, the speleonym might be misleading. A good example is the cave called Snow White (Snezhanka) located in the Rodopi mountains near the town of Peshtera. Despite the obvious relation to the famous fairy tale princess, the cave initially got its name because of the pearly white mineral formations inside it (Tranteev, 1962). Only later did the human imagination see the resemblance between these shapes and Snow White and her companions.



Inside Snezhanka (photo by Vlado Ionchev, 2005)

Pluralism in speleonyms

It is not uncommon for a cave to end up with two (and even more) names. The reason behind this pluralism is simple: some caves have been ‘discovered’ more than once. As a topographical feature, the cave is usually very well known by the local people. It can, however, be re-discovered by the speleologists and filed in the national database with a different name (Todorov, 2002). Often the change in the name for caves like Temnata Dupka (The Dark Hole) seeks to provide uniqueness based on its location: Karlukovska Temna (near the village of Karlukovo), Lakatnishka Temna (near the village of Lakatnik), Kalotinska Temna (near the village of Kalotina), etc. In rare cases the new name could differ significantly. Examples of such cases could be found below.

Famous caves in Bulgaria

The Whistler (Duhlata)

This cave is known as the longest cave in the country: 18 200m in length. It is created by the complex underground currents of the Struma River. The cave’s name originates from the specific whistling sound made by the wind while passing through its entrance.



Inside Duhlata (photo by Ivailo Chichev, 2010)

The Bubbler (Klokotnik, Ahorlakimeto, Harlog)/The Devil's Throat (Dyavolskoto garlo)

The cave is formed by the collapse of the Trigrad River bed. As a result, the cascade of 18 waterfalls moulds the interior. The sound of the rushing water is so deafening that it could be heard at the cave's entrance. The latter was used to name the cave 'Klokotnik' (The Bubbler). Even older names of the cave are 'Ahorlakimeto' and 'Harlog'; both words are used with the same meaning.

The cave, however, is more famous with its alternative name: The Devil's Throat. One explanation for its origin is the shape of the entrance and the passage behind it that resemble a devil's head with an open mouth and a smooth throat to walk into. The 'smoothness' of the 'throat' is supported by the fact that there are no stalactites or stalagmites in the cave due to its young age. Another version of the name's origin is based on the human perception that 'what goes in, never comes back out'. It refers to the many failed attempts to chart the underground path of the water, one of which had cost two human lives.



Inside Klokotnik (photo by Evgeni Dimitrov, 2005)

The Glacial cave (Ledenika)

This cave's name refers to the accumulation of significant amount of ice in the entrance area during the winter season.



Inside Ledenika (photo by Tencho Kirchev, 2006)

The Passage (Prohodna)/ The Eyes (Oknata)/The Eyes of God (Ochite na Boga)

This cave is formed by the river Iskar passing through the karst field in the Quaternary period. The cave is a 265 m long tunnel, which accounts for the original name of the cave: Prohodna (The Passage). The denudation and erosion processes resulting from the seepage water has formed two openings (The Eyes - Oknata) in its roof. In a sunny bright day, the light beaming down in the cave's dusk resembles the gaze of God giving another alternative name of the cave: The Eyes of God.



Inside Klokotnik (photo by Georgi Valkov, 2009)



Inside Prohodna (photo by Tencho Kirchev, 2006)



The Eyes of God – Prohodna (photo by Yavor Aleksiev, 2012)

Conclusion

Reading the paragraphs above, one might wonder which cave name should be used and how it should be interpreted. The answer, however, depends on the inquirer's point of view. A tourist would use the more unusual name, in hope that it is unique. The locals would remember it as their ancestors did. A folklorist would be more interested in the legend and the name that goes with it. As a researcher, involved with geographical names, I consider all names valuable and I will strive to preserve them. How about you?

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Agency

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source of all photos: <http://caves.4at.info/> (Accessed on 23.04.2022)

Geographical Names of Cyprus as Indicators for the Environment

Introduction

Sustainable development represents the transition from today's society to a more environmentally friendly one. With the world facing a potential climate crisis - water shortages, drought, hunger, extreme weather - sustainable development goals are to ensure a commitment and **balance between three pillars: (a) economic growth, (b) preservation of the environment, and (c) social well-being.** Geographical names play an important role, as they relate to and they support all three pillars.

In 1987, the United Nations Brundtland Commission¹ defined sustainability as *"meeting the needs of the present, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs"*.

Environmental criteria include the protection of sites, wildlife and flora; the selective sorting and management of waste; water, energy consumption and natural resources management, the management of pollution, transport, the impact linked to the number of tourists, the raising of customer consciousness, the architecture best suited to the environment and the climate, and the restoration of sites.

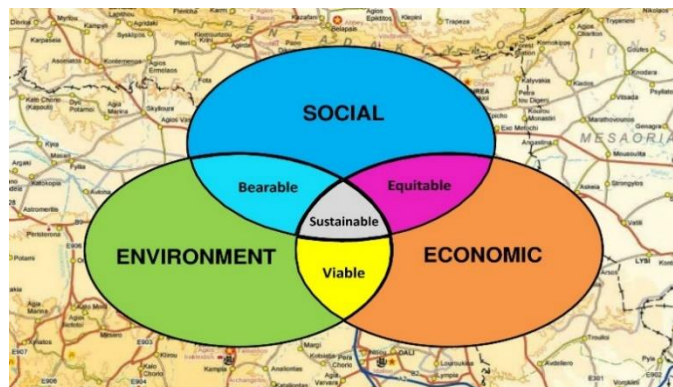
Environmental monitoring concerns the assessment of environmental conditions and trends, supports policy development and its implementation, and develops information for reporting to national policymakers, international forums and the public.

Studies that use geographical names to help identify locations of natural disasters, specific environmental conditions, or flora and fauna distributions are interesting in and of themselves. When such studies are then used to help guide planning, development, or environmental decisions today to help mitigate the potential impacts of future environmental conditions, we are seeing directly the benefits and hence some good arguments for investment in geographical names programs².

A healthy environment is the foundation of all human activities on earth and is a must for sustainable economy and equitable society.

Modifying the environment to fit the needs of society is causing severe effects. Some human activities that cause damage to the environment on a global scale include population growth, overconsumption, overexploitation, pollution, and deforestation. Some of the problems, including global warming and biodiversity loss, have been proposed as representing catastrophic risks to the survival of the human species.

There is a strong connection between cultural and biological diversity at a global scale, especially in the linguistic domain, but



Sustainable Development and Geographical Names
Balance between economic growth, preservation of the environment, and social well-being

less is known at regional scales. Indicators of such reciprocity are found in the linguistic expression of natural elements, and their representation in the landscape through toponymy.

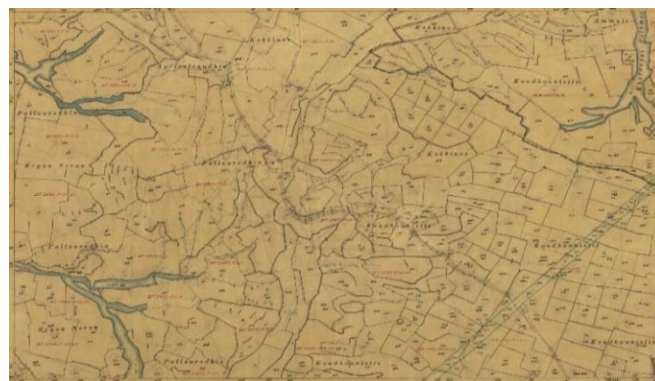
Micro-toponyms relating to environment

Cyprus went through several periods in history, which had an influence on the population, the language, the religion, the customs, and the culture. Geographical names are a significant part of cultural heritage, and as such, they have been affected significantly by each period

in history. Geographical names, in several cases, reveal a significant part of the history of the place they refer to.

The countryside in Cyprus is blessed with natural and artificial beauty with a rich historical heritage. The natural environment of Cyprus is complemented by a wealth of geographical names which unveil the historical uniqueness which relate in a very successful manner people and nature.

All geographical names and toponyms of Cyprus are included in digital gazetteers. These gazetteers were derived from the official large scale cadastral map series of the Department of Lands and Surveys, and other relevant maps and registers. The Complete Gazetteer of Cyprus is currently available on the website of the Permanent Committee for the Standardization of Geographical Names of Cyprus (www.geonoma.gov.cy).



Sample Cadastral Map from early 1930s,
which includes, among other information, several micro-toponyms

All cadastral maps of Cyprus have been digitized and all information was categorized and stored in digital relational databases³ and Geographical Information Systems (GIS). Based on these databases, it is possible today, with the help of modern GIS technologies, to run complex queries using geographical names, identify areas with specific characteristics, and produce

thematic maps of variable content, according to specific requirements.

The following examples of micro-toponyms show indicative relations between place names and the environment:

Cyprus suffered, from old times until today, of significant drought and forest/bush fires, which influence significantly the environment.

The appearance of the word “xero”, meaning dry (no water) is found in many micro-toponyms:

- (a) Xeropotamos – meaning dry river
- (b) Xerolivadon – dry meadow
- (c) Xerokoilada – dry valley
- (d) Xerovounia – dry mountains
- (e) Xeropigi – dry spring
- (f) Xerolakkos – dry well
- (g) Xerokipos – dry garden
- (h) Xerolimni – dry lake
- (i) Xeropervola – dry fields
- (j) Xerovrysi – dry faucet

The word “titsiro”, meaning naked/bare is found in several micro-toponyms:

- (a) Titsirolimni – bare lake
- (b) Titsirokremnoi – bare cliffs
- (c) Titsirolaona – bare pit between mountains or hills
- (d) Titsiromoutti – bare peak
- (e) Titsirovounos – bare mountain

The word “gerimo”, meaning deserted, is found in some micro-toponyms:

- (a) Gerimies – deserted areas
- (b) Gerimopervoli – desert field

The word “merras”, from Turkish “merra”, meaning pasture:

- (a) Merras tis Agias Irinis – Pasture of Saint Irini
- (b) Merras ton dyo potamon – Pasture of two rivers
- (c) Merras tou Ypsona – Pasture of Ypsonas village
- (d) Merras tis Pallouras – Pasture of Palloura (Zizyphus lotus)
- (e) Merras tis Vatyli – Pasture of Vatyli village

The word “kremmos”, meaning steep slope which is almost vertical:

- (a) Kremmos tou Alamanou – Steep slope of Alamanou
- (b) Kremmos tis Keryneias – Steep slope of Keryneia
- (c) Kremmos tou Ai Giorgi – Steep Slope of Saint George
- (d) Kremmoi tou Ai Pifani – Steep slopes of Saint Epifanios

The word “leivadia”, meaning meadows:

- (a) Leivadia tou giatrou – Doctor’s meadows
- (b) Leivadia tou Fragkou – Fragko’s meadows
- (c) Leivadi tou Vounioti – Vounioti’s meadow

The word “kampos”, meaning open area / flat area / plain:

- (a) Kampos tis Agias Paraskevis – Flat area of Saint Paraskevi
- (b) Kampos tou Xerargaka – Flat area of dry stream
- (c) Kampos tou potamou – Flat river area
- (d) Kampos ton ampelion – Flat area of vineyards

The word “potamos”, meaning river:

- (a) Potamos tis limnis – Lake’s river
- (b) Potamos ton kyparission – Cypress tree river
- (c) Potamos tou arkosykou – Wild fig tree river



Indicative Micro-toponyms of Cyprus with Environmental Information

All of the above toponyms were selected electronically based on complex queries, including character strings, or combinations of character strings, that are included in micro-toponyms, which relate to environmental characteristics. It is evident, based on the above indicative examples, that geographical names in Cyprus reveal a wealth of information which prove the long history, and the cultural heritage of the country, and also they disclose valuable cultural, historical, and environmental information.

Epilogue:

Geographical names are an important part of our geographical and cultural environment. They identify geographical entities of different kinds and represent irreplaceable cultural and environmental values of vital significance to people’s sense of well-being and belonging.

Geographical names in Cyprus are therefore of major importance. Society must bear the responsibility for respecting geographical names heritage and assuring that place name planning and use are carried out in such a way as to ensure that the place names are preserved.

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Environmental Objects in the Map of Geographical Names (Lithuanian Case)

Introduction

Geographical names (GN) perform not only object naming function, but object referencing function also. GN are landmarks as geographic coordinates or address information is. Moreover, GN unlike an address or coordinates are semantically meaningful. It allows the user to take a closer look at the area.

The meaning of GN becomes obvious when we place data on the map. This presentation provides information about the map of GN of the territory of Lithuania (Lithuanian GN map).

Lithuanian GN map shows the names of environmental objects and follows the GN data theme implemented under the European Union directive INSPIRE as good practices. Environmental objects represent geographical and topographic features that can be classified to actual and historical features. The map represents the density of GN per unit of the area and detailed information about every of over 160,000 map objects.

The Lithuanian GN map is provided in Lithuanian Spatial Data Infrastructure (SDI) portal at www.geoportal.lt/vietovardziai/map.

Data used for creation of the map

The Lithuanian GN map was created using the Spatial Data Set of Geographic Place Names for the Republic of Lithuania (GV_DRLT). The GV_DRLT dataset is official and periodically updated. It was created in 2014 under the initiative of National Land Service under the Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Lithuania.

The GV_DRT dataset contains more than 160,000 environmental objects. In general, the GV_DRLT dataset represents landmark information, so in addition to traditional GN, the GV_DRLT data set contains address information, names of public transport stops, etc.

The GN information is summarized using statistical units at the overview scale range of Lithuanian GN map. The

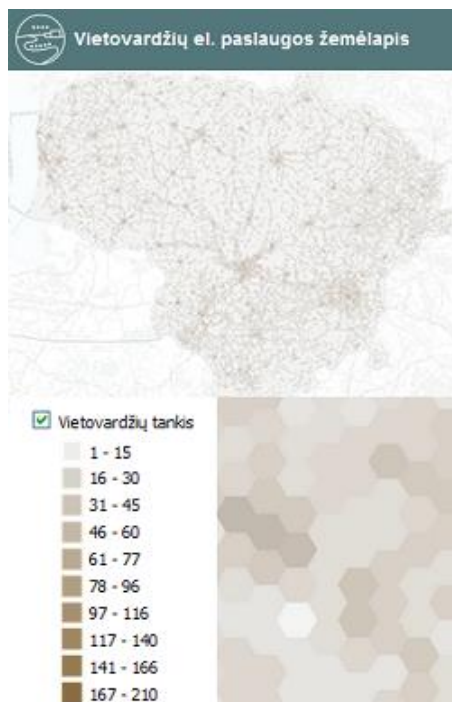


Fig. 1. The Lithuanian GN map representing the density of GN

more GN objects are in a statistical unit, the darker the color of the lattice (Fig. 1).

The GV_DRLT dataset is an output spatial data set and a result of geoprocessing of more than ten input data sets

(www.geoportal.lt/geoportal/en/web/gv_drlt_en/providers). The state cadastre of Georeference Base data of Lithuania at scale 1:10 000 distinguishes itself among the input data sets as its objects are used to graphically represent GV_DRLT objects and to indicate the name. The Database of Lithuanian names of places under the management of Lithuanian Language Institute is another important input data source used as the basis for relating linguistic information about the origin, formation, inflection of the GN to GV_DRLT objects.

Content of the map

The Lithuanian GN map differs from other similar maps, for example, the Map of the Place Name Register of Estonia,

because the user can overview not only the location of the environmental object, but also the boundaries of the object in the former map. The portrayal of Dysna plain is one of the examples (Fig. 2).



Fig. 2 Representation of boundaries of the object in Lithuanian GN map

In the GV_DRLT data set and Lithuanian GN map the environmental objects are classified using the GN data theme specification under the INSPIRE Directive as good practices: settlements, buildings, hydrography, transport network, land cover, protected areas, administrative units, relief, other (Fig. 3).



Fig. 3. Classification of map objects in Lithuanian GN

The Lithuanian GN map provides information on the status of GN. GN objects are classified to actual and historical. As in the INSPIRE Directive, in GV_DRLT data set and in the derived Lithuanian GN map, the actual GN are further classified as being official, standardized, and other.

The GN information from state registers and cadasters gets the attribute value of "official" in GV_DRLT data set. Destroyed and abandoned environment objects, the same as renamed features get an attribute value "historical" in GV_DRLT dataset. For example, there is a collection of over 1,500 settlements that became extinct during the period of 1940-1990 in Lithuania in GV_DRLT dataset. The documents of Presidium of the Supreme Council of the Lithuanian SSR in the 1970s are the primary source for GV_DRLT data. Information on the status of GN is provided in the map below (Fig. 4).



Fig. 4. Status of the GN objects in Lithuanian GN map

Alternative GN names applied to the official GN names of environmental objects are reported and placed on the Lithuanian GN map by the users of Lithuanian SDI.

Map usage examples

Lithuanian GN map can be used to solve several tasks.

For example, users can analyse how the GN density correlates with landscape fragmentation and cultural layer of the area in the map.



Fig. 5 The list of lakes with the name "Bevardis" in the search results and representation of Lake Bevardis in built-up areas in the map

Another example of map analysis is related to the search for nameless environmental objects in the territory of Lithuania. After performing a search using a text phrase in the map, it is possible to find the hydrographic objects in Lithuania with the official name "Bevardis" and to determine the number of objects with such a meaningless name (Fig. 5).

Summary

Lithuanian GN map represents environmental objects having a name. These are the objects that remember historical times. The analysis of GN allows to find out not only that Lithuania is a region of water streams, for example, Šušvė or Sartupis, but also to find out that is so special in these rivers that homestead residents noticed over the centuries.

The map was created using GV_DRLT dataset. The GV_DRLT dataset is an open, official, periodically updated spatial dataset that integrates information not only about environmental objects but also linguistic information about their names.

The map of Lithuanian place names is only one example of the results of the reuse of GV_DRLT dataset. In addition to the map, there is also a place name search service that can be integrated into external information systems.

Only the data that is analysed makes sense. Let's make the land speak to us through its names.

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Geographical names as indicators of the environment–New Zealand

Introduction

New Zealand's geographical naming culture and practice go back to when the first Polynesian ancestors arrived in the country some eight hundred or more years ago. This article shares some practices and examples applied in naming our landscape, giving us insights into their environmental characteristics and the associated socio-economic opportunities that emerge from naming.

Customary context

Māori use whakataukī (proverbs) to emphasise their relationships with land, their heritage and identity, for example:

- Ko te whenua te waiu mo nga uri whakatipu
The land will provide sustenance for future generations
- Te toto o te tangata, he kai; te oranga o te tangata, he whenua
While food provides the blood in our veins, our health is drawn from the land
- Whatungarongaro te tangata, toitū te whenua
People are lost (die), but the land will always remain.

The ability to identify places of cultural and historical significance is intrinsic to maintaining health and spiritual wellbeing of not only the physical environment but of tangata whenua (people of the land/place).

Strategic context

The connections between geographical names and our natural environment are especially relevant given global concerns for climate change and the UN 2030 agenda expectations to improve sustainable life, equality and wellbeing for all humanity. UNGEGN's Strategic Plan and Programme of Work 2021-2029 recognizes the UN's Sustainable Development Goals with challenges including climate and environmental degradation.

A strategic objective in Te Rautaki | Strategy 2020 2025 of the New Zealand Geographic Board Ngā Pou Taunaha o Aotearoa⁸ (the Board) is that 'We take account of the impact of climate change on places and their naming'. Geographical names contribute to preserving, educating, protecting and sustaining our immediate, national and global environments. Additionally, the Board is acutely aware of its role to contribute towards addressing the problems of indigenous (Māori) and customary knowledge and language loss such as restoring names officially as a way to achieve this.

The Expert Group is encouraged to reflect on geographical names and naming practices that have improved human understanding of the natural environment and/or seek to influence the level of human impact on the natural environment and tell the story of the connection.

⁸ Ngā Pou Taunaha o Aotearoa is a metaphorical phrase meaning 'The Memorial Markers of the Landscape'.

⁹ The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands is an intergovernmental treaty for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources:

Conservation

New Zealand examples include protected conservation areas that are designated or classified with a reserve status and named. The Board has a legislative part to play in naming these Crown protected areas. Several different pieces of legislation govern access to and protection of flora and fauna, water and airspace, and management arrangements:

- the Conservation Act 1987
- the Reserves Act 1977
- the Marine Reserves Act 1971
- the National Parks Act 1980.

New Zealand's article in UNGEGN Bulletin #59 makes the connection between the naming of Tongariro National Park (<https://gazetteer.linz.govt.nz/place/10234>), which is a World Heritage Site, and its gifting by Māori, noting that the sustainability theme applies equally to environmental and cultural knowledge, as well as language revitalisation.

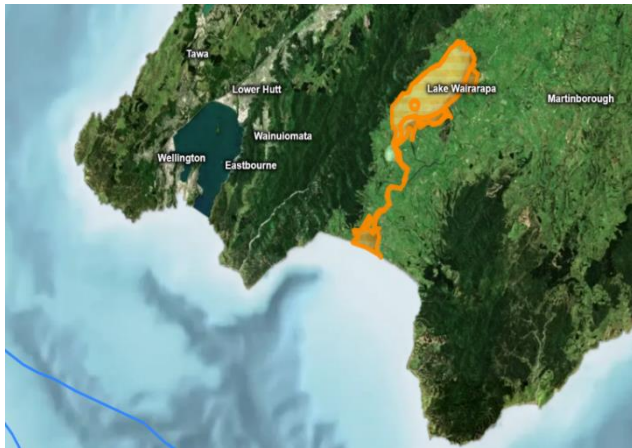
Wairarapa Moana Wetland <https://gazetteer.linz.govt.nz/place/59458>

This is an internationally protected Ramsar Wetland⁹ designated in 2020 because its unique biodiversity and fragile ecosystems warranted greater protection and recognition. Its traditional name was confirmed by the local tribal authority, Ngāti Kahungunu ki Wairarapa Tāmaki Nui-ā-Rua. An ancestor, Haunui-a-nanaia, named the lake Wai (water) rarapa (glistening eyes). Moana refers to the size of the water body. The connection between the geographical name and its preservation status tells a story that will endure for the benefit and enjoyment of future generations.



Lake Wairarapa. Photo acknowledgement: Christopher Stephens

<https://www.doc.govt.nz/about-us/international-agreements/ramsar-convention-on-wetlands/>



Wairarapa Moana Wetland. Source: NZ Gazetteer, <https://gazetteer.linz.govt.nz/>, screenshot April 2022, Crown copyright

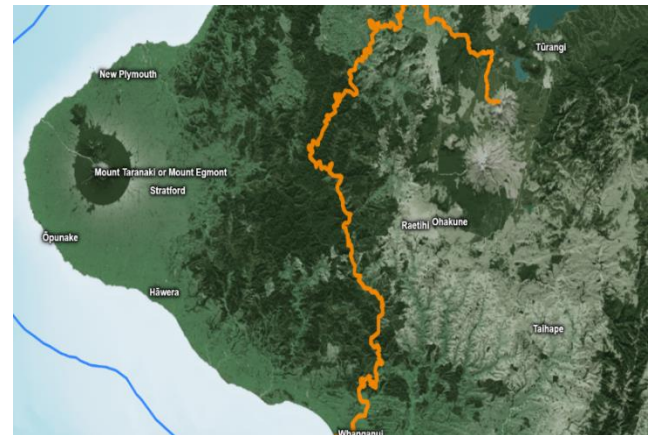


Whanganui River. Photo acknowledgement: Christopher Stephens

Whanganui River <https://gazetteer.linz.govt.nz/place/7008>

Through an historical grievance settled in 2017 under the Treaty of Waitangi between the Crown and the Whanganui iwi (tribal group), a new legal framework was established for the Whanganui River (Whanganui meaning the long wait). The expression ‘Te Awa Tupua’ (the river as a whole), is the spiritual and physical entity that supports and sustains the life and natural resources within the river and the wellbeing of its people. It will have its own legal personality with all the corresponding rights, duties and liabilities of a legal person. Decision makers under the primary legislation affecting Whanganui River must recognise and provide for the legal status of Te Awa Tupua. Its essence is captured in four values:

- Ko te Awa te mātāpuna o te ora (The River is the source of spiritual and physical sustenance)
Te Awa Tupua is a spiritual and physical entity that supports and sustains both the life and natural resources within the Whanganui River and the health and wellbeing of the iwi, hapū (subtribe) and other communities of the River.
- E rere kau mai te Awa nui mai te Kahui Maunga ki Tangaroa (The great River flows from the mountains to the sea)
Te Awa Tupua is an indivisible and living whole from the mountains to the sea, incorporating the Whanganui River and all of its physical and metaphysical elements.
- Ko au te Awa, ko te Awa ko au (I am the River and the River is me)
The iwi and hapū of the Whanganui River have an inalienable interconnection with, and responsibility to, Te Awa Tupua and its health and wellbeing.
- Ngā manga iti, ngā manga nui e honohono kau ana, ka tupu hei Awa Tupua (The small and large streams that flow into one another and form one River)
Te Awa Tupua is a singular entity composed of many elements and communities, working collaboratively to the common purpose of the health and wellbeing of Te Awa Tupua.



Whanganui River. Source: NZ Gazetteer, <https://gazetteer.linz.govt.nz/>, screenshot April 2022, Crown copyright

Auckland: Tāmaki Makaurau, Tāmaki Herenga Waka, Tāmaki Kainga Ika me Ngā Wheua Katoa <https://gazetteer.linz.govt.nz/place/15829>

New Zealand’s largest city, Auckland, is known by customary names of an era that extends back many hundreds of years. Each tell different stories, and each are indicators of the environment and the potential of people within them. Tāmaki Makaurau or Tāmaki of 100 Lovers refers to the richness of the region’s resources, in large part because of its geography, the volcanic soils, the lush forests teeming with birdlife and associated foods and its proximity to two coastlines. Then in pre-contact times, as now, it is no surprise that people flocked to the isthmus as a place that was highly desired. Tāmaki Herenga Waka, Tāmaki where canoes were tied, referred to another aspect of its desirability, as many came from near and far for trade and economic expansion. Tāmaki Kainga Ika me Ngā Wheua Katoa, Tāmaki where fish were so succulent that bones and all were consumed, was suggestive of the richness of the fish life of the two harbours and seas.

These stories are intimately tied to the identity of the Indigenous peoples who have lived in Tāmaki for generations. The giving of food to visitors and not least, the sharing of lands and resources with the new colonial authorities is renowned. Tāmaki has generated models of gifting and sharing and shows what is possible for community-local government partnership to flourish, for tourism to thrive, for education and the region to prosper.



Native kauri forest in Auckland. Photo acknowledgement: Christopher Stephens



Auckland. Source: NZ Gazetteer, <https://gazetteer.linz.govt.nz/>, screenshot April 2022, Crown copyright

Summary

Beyond these examples there are many other geographical names, both historical and contemporary, and Māori and non-Māori, that indicate their environments, such as:

- physical descriptors, for example difficulty, colour, shape, weather, composition such as [Granite Harbour](#)
- events, such as battles, ceremonies, discoveries, encounters, activities such as [Te Wharepouri Mark](#)
- qualifiers, for example left, north, low, long, wide such as [Mokiiti / Little Moggy Island](#)
- geographic terms and their hierarchy/size, for example creek/stream/river, col/pass/saddle, hill/knoll/summit/peak/mountain such as [Musterers Col](#)

- resources, such as abundant food sources or natural materials such as [Trumpeter Point](#)
- routes, such as those communicating destinations and the geographical names guiding the way such as [Otago Central Rail Trail](#)

Therefore, many geographical names provide indicators of the environment for resources, protection, and sustainability. They can also indicate what the landscape looked like before human overlay changed the natural state. Those names may help us identify areas that could revert to their natural state and restore the balance of nature to help combat the environmental challenges we now face globally. Equally they might also help us find places and areas offering alternative solutions (for example wind farms, hydroelectricity, energy conversion from gravity, solar power, desalination for pure water, etc) to meet our human needs balanced with sustainability and preservation.

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References:

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https://unstats.un.org/unsd/uneg n/sessions/2nd_session_2021/documents/GE GN.2_2021_CRP125_7_Geographic al-names-and-the-environment.pdf

Statement by New Zealand on Agenda Item 7, UNEG N 2nd Session:

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The Board's Te Rautaki | Strategy 2020-2025:

<https://www.linz.govt.nz/file/21892/download?token=grD4XLkV>

Whanganui Iwi (Whanganui River) Deed of Settlement Summary:

<https://www.govt.nz/browse/history-culture-and-heritage/treaty-settlements/find-a-treaty-settlement/whanganui-iwi/whanganui-iwi-whanganui-river-deed-of-settlement-summary/>

Geographical Names of the Russian Federation as Indicators of the Natural Environment

Geographical names are valuable heritage of the spiritual culture of humankind. They are passed down from generation to generation and for centuries and thousand years preserve the memory of the people about their past. The informational potential of the geographical names is great and diverse.

The legal basis of activity in the field of *assignment* and renaming of geographical objects of the Russian Federation is regulated by the Federal Law of 18 December 1997 "On Names of Geographical Objects". One of the criteria for determining the name of a geographical object is the reflection of the most characteristic features of a geographical object and the area in which this geographical object is located.

For *Federal Service for State Registration, Cadastre and Cartography* (Rosreestr) it is common to receive proposals for expertise regarding the assignment or renaming of geographical objects, where the names proposed for assignment are related to the natural environment both at present and in ancient times.

An example of such geographical object is the *Sulak Canyon* (Сулакский каньон) located on the territory of the Republic of Dagestan (see photos). It is one of the deepest in the world, its depth reaches 1920 m, and its length is 53 km. The canyon is located in the valley of the Sulak River and is one of the most famous and visited natural attractions of Dagestan. The name of the canyon is based on the name of the Sulak River, the river bed of which runs through the canyon. The national form of writing in the Avar language is "Сулахъ къварилъги", which in translation into Russian means "water in a narrow gorge". Naming the canyon will allow its name to be used in reference, educational, cartographic materials, and regulatory documents. It will serve as a landmark of the Republic of Dagestan.

The cultural heritage of the peoples of the Russian Federation, in terms of the revival of lost natural toponyms, can be traced in the following names, which are assigned to geographical objects by the decisions of the Government of the Russian Federation.

Names of the Voronezh region:

The name of *Staraya Melovaya* settlement (Старая Меловая, in English: *Related to old chalk*) was given because of the presence in this area of steep chalk slopes of valleys and gullies characteristic of the south of the central chernozem regions of Russia. The word "old" is added to emphasize the age of the village.

The name of the village *Perevolochnoe* (Переволочное, in English: *Place for dragging*) has long historical roots. In 1803, a settlement was formed at the fork of two gorges. Families from other farms began to move here, and since the newly arriving people dragged their belongings, the amusing name



Sulak Canyon
Photo credit: Anastasia Zvereva (Rosreestr)



Sulak Canyon
Photo credit: Anastasia Zvereva (Rosreestr)



Sulak Canyon

Photo credit: Anastasia Zvereva (Rosreestr)

"Perevolochnoe" was fixed for the settlement. The name *Perevolochnoe* is formed from the word "волок" (*volok*, in English: *portage*), which means overland, a section of waterway that falls on land, where it is convenient to drag things (Dictionary of Folk Geographical Terms, E.M. Murzaev, 1999).

The name of the village *Dolinovsky* (Долиновский, in English: *Belonging to valley*) comes from the word "долина" (*dolina*, in English: *valley*), since the village is located in the valley of the Panika River.

The village *Kalacheyevsky* (Калачеевский) is located on the Kalach Uplands (the left bank of the Don River, between the Bityug and Khoper Rivers), the name of the settlement *Stepnoy* (Стенной, in English: *Belonging to a plain*) characterizes its location in the natural zone of the steppes.

Names of the Zabaykalsky Territory:

The village *Verkhny Kunkur* (Верхний Кункур, in English: *Upper Kunkur*). The name "Kunkur" (Кункур) means in the Buryat language "hollow, trench", the national form of writing the name *Verkhny Kunkur* is Дээдэ ХҮнхэр.

The village *Zarechny Chelutai* (Заречный Челутай, in English: *Chelutai over the river*) is located 0.6 km from the

village of *Chelutai*, across the Tsagan-Chelutai River. The name *Chelutai* means in the Buryat language "stone", the national form of writing the name *Zarechny Chelutai* is Баруун Шулуутай.

Names of geographical objects located within the territorial waters of the Russian Federation:

Skala Arochnaya (скала Арочная, in English: *Arch Rock*), located off the coast of Urup Island, within the territorial sea of the Russian Federation is a natural feature in the shape of an arch.

Skala Morskych Lvov (Скала Морских Львов, in English: *Sea Lions Rock*) is located south of Urup Island, within the territorial sea of the Russian Federation. Currently, this rock is a habitat for marine animals.

Ostrov Plavnik Bezimanny (Остров Плавник Безымянный, in English: *Fin Unnamed Island*) is an island located in the southwestern part of the bay of the Brave Shchukin Bay, within the territorial sea of the Russian Federation. The name *Plavnik* ("fin") reflects the characteristic shape of the island, similar to the shape of the upper fin of marine fish.

Skala Pologaya (Скала Пологая, in English: *Flat Rock*) is located south of the island of Urup within the territorial sea of the Russian Federation. The name *Pologaya* ("flat") is a characteristic of the configuration (shape) of the rock.

Toponymy using the native language of the indigenous population serves as one of the most important manifestations of national identity, ensures historical continuity, preservation of the cultural tradition of the people. Having analyzed a small layer of geographical names associated with the natural environment, established over a short period by the Government, we can say that the geographical names given by the relevant features are extremely common in the Russian Federation, they are very diverse in their physical, geographical, and other characteristics.

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The Significance of Place Names in the Distribution of Wildlife and their Benefits in the Reintroduction Process – Saudi Arabia

Preface:

The natural Fauna and Flora in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) belong to communities that were originally derived from African, Asiatic and European sources, but have evolved in the Arabian Peninsula over a long period of time. It is highly probable that some of the animal species that inhabited Arabia are of African origin, such as the striped hyena (*Hyena hyena*) that lives in rough mountainous areas, and the Arabian Oryx (*Oryx leucoryx*) that roams the open steppes; the Arabian Panther (*Panthera pardus*) that inhabits rough mountainous areas; and monkeys (*Papio hamadryas*) that exists in southwestern Arabia. However, long isolation period has generated a set of sub-species that are now particular to Arabia, having been acclimatized to its environmental conditions. Other animals that had existed but now extinct we find the lion (*Felis leo*), the leopard (*Acinonyx jubatus*), both of African origin.

There is other evidence that indicate a history flourished with wildlife in Arabia, especially in the KSA. One finds rock inscriptions in many parts of KSA. They indicate that the environments of the KSA were once rich grasslands with diverse fauna. Some of these animals are now extinct, such as wild oxen (*Oxen*), and zebras or asses (*Equus hemippus hemippus*), while others still exist, such as the Arabian Oryx (*Oryx leucoryx*), ibex (*Capra ibex*), and wolves (*Canis lupus*). The Arabian Peninsula is also considered as an important home of the gazelle genus, five species of which have been identified in this area. One of the rare species of this genus lives exclusively in the KSA. i.e. the Farasan gazelle (*Gazella gazella farasani*). It is believed that the 'Afri gazelle (*Gazella dorcas saudia*) has become extinct, while reem gazelle (*Gazella subgutturosa*) still exists in the sandy desert of the Empty Quarter and Khunfah reservation, and the idmi gazelle (*Gazella gazella*) still survives among the rocky and mountainous parts of the central of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

The fate of wildlife:

All forms of wildlife in Arabia have been exposed to harsh conditions and to hunting which in some cases led to extinction, or to a sharp decrease in number to the verge of extinction for others. Of the big birds that have become extinct is the Arabian Ostrich (*Struthio camelus syriacus*). Also, many species of mammals had become extinct, such as the Asiatic lion (*Felis leo*), and the hunting leopard (*Acinonyx jubatus*) the last one existing in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia being killed in the early fifties of the twentieth century. The Arabia Oryx (*Oryx leucoryx*) has also

disappeared from its natural habitat, as well as the 'Afri gazelle (*Gazelle dorcas saudia*), while the Arabic panther (*Panthera pardus*) is on the verge of extinction.

Geographical names:

If the status of the present natural and human environments is easily accessible for a researcher to record events and conditions through direct observation and live report of what is available, dealing with past environmental conditions is a difficult task that needs an analysis of the legacy of those species that had inhabited those environments, whether human, plant, or an inanimate body. One of the most important legacies invented in this respect by human beings is geographical name. Geographical names, certainly, play an important role in the identification of ancient environmental conditions.

However, studying geographical names for such purposes can pose some problems such as:

1. It is difficult, if not impossible, to determine the exact date of the initial existence of the named item, whether it was an animal, plant, or a surface feature.
2. It is also challenging to decide on what some geographical names mean, e.g. 'Ar'ar (a name of a town), is it named after the 'Ar'ar plant (an Arabic name for *Juniperus* sp.) which, as botanists confirm, cannot grow there at all because of unsuitable environmental conditions; or is it after something else. Likewise, there is the name Ar Rail, is it after the well-known plant of rail, or a young gazelle?
3. It is hard to determine the limits of the zone indicated by the name. This arises from the doubt of the significance of such a name. Does it indicate the presence of the named object and its diffusion in the area, or was it named in commemoration of an event related to it. For example, when we consider a place in Nafud Qunaifidhah called "Khubaib Ar Rīm", the first question that comes to mind is, was the presence the reem gazelle so extensive in this area as to deserve this name? Or is it because of an incident associated with hunting of a single reem gazelle in this place? In which case, the name is celebrating the hunting event and does not illustrate wider distribution of an animal.
4. Geographical names change over time. Many old geographical names in the KSA have changed and have been replaced by new names with which many people, except some interested researchers, are familiar.



It is worth noting that most names are usually tied to a name of a person, an animal, a plant, or something else. The status of the present natural and human environments is readily accessible by researchers to record events and conditions through direct observation and live reporting. However, dealing with past environmental conditions is a much difficult task that needs analysis of the legacy of those species that once roamed that environment. In this respect one of the most important legacies created by human beings is geographical names. Geographical names, certainly, play an important role in the identification of ancient environmental conditions. Geographical names document species existence and areal extent, as well as depict the state and contents of such environments, and their relations with human activities, one can also know ancient climate that had prevailed within that environment as well as type of plants and water resources.

Conclusions:

A geographical name's location and its documentation are very important, especially in this age which is witnessing a noticeable decrease in the number of interested people. Fathers and grandfathers thoroughly knew everything pertaining to the desert land of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. They observed, described, and gave its geographical names and features.

As these given names still exist without change, I have tried to pinpoint past distribution of wildlife species using the location of geographical names, (See reference) beginning with those species that are extinct followed by those that still exist but with small numbers despite shrinkage in their former habitat. The study shows evidential benefits accruing from using geographical names for former distribution of natural fauna. This knowledge can contribute to the success in the process of their reintroduction.

I urge everyone to follow suit and write research on the benefits of geographical names in the knowledge of the natural environments and its constituents.

Source:

See the complete paper on this link:

<https://unstats.un.org/unsd/ungegn/sessions/2019-new-york-ungegn-1st-session/>

GEGN.2/2019/7, Significance of place names in the distribution of wildlife species and their benefits in the reintroduction process, under agenda item 13

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Volcanic activity and its connection with toponymy in Spain

Toponymy is dynamic; it is constantly changing for many different reasons. One of these reasons is volcanic phenomena, which provokes dramatic territorial changes.

In Spain, there are two differentiated volcanic areas. On the one hand, the peninsular region and some of its nearby islands, whose volcanic activity is associated with the contact between African and Eurasian lithospheric plates. On the other hand, the Islands region, whose volcanism is considered still active on all archipelago islands except for the island of La Gomera. Its volcanic activity origin is explained by the North Atlantic Ocean expansion and, according to the most accepted theory, due to an anomaly in the terrestrial mantle a hot spot has risen in the oceanic lithosphere. During the last 10,000 years, there have been eruptions both in the peninsular area, concretely in La Garrotxa (Girona), and in the Canary Islands. However, from the beginning of the Modern Age to today, eruptive events have been referenced only on those Islands.

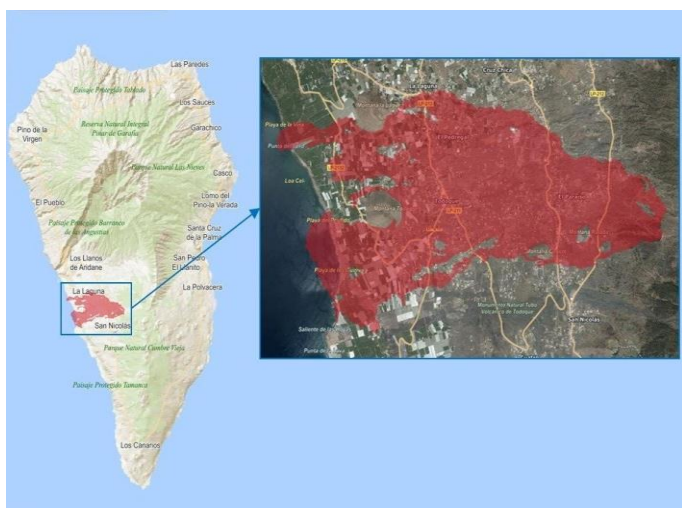
The last eruption in Spanish territory, which began the 19th of September 2021 on La and lasted 85 days, covered an area of almost 1,250 ha with lava in the municipalities of "El Paso", "Los Llanos de Aridane" and "Tazacorte". This event has drastically remodelled the landscape, burying population centres, scattered houses, and many other sites under lava flow. As well, the coastline has been reshaped, some beaches have disappeared, and new coastal areas have developed. Logically, the toponymy of all the affected area will reflect these changes, although this does not happen from one day to the next. In fact, the new volcano have no official name yet. At the commencement of the eruption, from media it was called "Cumbre Vieja" or "Cabeza de Vaca". Later, some institutions have proposed *guanchismos* —a linguistic particularity of the Canary Islands that attest to the ancient *Guanche* language— such as "Tacande", "Jedey" or "Tajogaite". This language included all spoken dialects by the Archipelago's inhabitants before the Spanish conquest in the fifteenth century. *Guanche* is a dead language, which fundamentally survives in the Canary Islands gazetteer, although almost nothing is known about its meanings. Ultimately, whether Hispanic or *Guanche* roots, people will determine the new volcano name, since the Cabildo de La Palma (Island Government) plans to open a citizen consultation in order to agree on its name.

Ten years before the latest eruption in La Palma, an underwater eruption took place about two kilometres south from El Hierro island. It began on October 10th 2011 and lasted 147 days. Once eruptive process ended, it did not cause a new piece of land above sea level. For that reason, the Instituto Hidrográfico de la Marina (Navy Hydrographic Institute of Spain) was responsible for representing on cartography the new submarine volcano, including its official name. In the Spanish official nautical cartography it appears as "Volcán Tagoro", but El Hierro island's inhabitants also know it as "Volcán de La Restinga", due to its proximity to "La Restinga" coastal town.



Southern coast of La Palma, before (top) and after (below) 1971 eruption

Towards the end of October, another eruption began on La Palma, which lasted 24 days and expanded the Island in its southern part. One of the results of that eruption was the volcano known today as "Volcán Teneguía". However, in its first days of life, other geographical name were considered to name it, such as "Volcán de San Evaristo", because San Evaristo is the patron saint of October 26, day when eruption began. Although, this name fell into forgetfulness soon, since at the beginning of the eruption Professor Fúster Casas informed the International Association of Volcanology and Chemistry of the Earth's Interior (IAVCEI) about the new "Teneguía" volcano. Today the Spanish Basic Gazetteer (SBG) contains four geographical names holding the name "Teneguía"; they are all in La Palma. One of them is the



Area affected by the latest eruption on La Palma Island

“Monumento Natural de los Volcanes de Teneguía” (Teneguía Volcanoes Natural Monument), which was declared in 1987 part of the Canary Islands Natural Spaces. Within this Natural Area, south of the “Volcán Teneguía”, “Malpaíses” spot is located, a site denomination that is derived from a widespread name in Canarian toponymy: *Malpaís* (coming from two Spanish words meaning *badlands*). From Hispanic origin, it exemplifies the invention of a new word by the first Spanish settlers, who faced a new reality: impracticable lava lands, where it was impossible to cultivate and hardly even walk. The SBG includes geographical names containing *Malpaís* or *Malpaíses* just in the Canary Islands; The island of La Gomera is the exception, since this type of landscape is not observed due to its volcanic inactivity.

Another name usually connected with volcanism is *Fajana*, of Portuguese origin. The Royal Spanish Academy defines it as follows: “flat terrain at slopes foot, commonly formed by materials detached from heights that dominate it”. That is why in many cases *Fajana* is associated to volcanic activity. There are 27 geographical names in the Spanish Basic Gazetteer (SBG) containing *Fajana* or some derivative such as *Fajaneta*, 20 of whom are located in the volcanic region of the Canary Archipelago, particularly in La Palma and Tenerife islands. Many

of these toponyms are found on the coast or close to it, naming coastal areas, spots, or population centres, but they can also be found in the islands' interior. The term is largely preserved thanks to the Canarian toponymy corpus, being considered an archaism in speech.



Malpaís (red dots) and Fajana (blue dots) locations on the Canary Islands

As it is exemplified in the cases briefly mentioned, volcanic phenomena are very significant in forming territories and its geographical names. That is the case of recent and dire eruption of La Palma, which will mean a geographical names adaptation in the affected region. The toponymy will gradually adjust to the new landscape as long as inhabitants will determine which names will disappear, will be reused or will be brand new. Afterwards, Public Administrations will collect the names and will proceed, when applicable, to their normalization and officialization in order to comply with linguistic and legal requirements.

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UNGEKN Strategic Plan and Programme of Work (SP&PoW) 2021-2029

Reviewing UNGEKN Publications: Implementing Strategy 3, item 2 (3-ii-2)

Strategy 3. Effective work programmes

Strategy 3 of the UNGEKN Strategic Plan and Programme of Work focuses on ways in which mandates of UNGEKN will be effectively and fully achieved. Its four objectives cover i. encouraging Member States' participation and promoting compatible standards and methods, ii. delivering products and policy guidance supporting coordinated activities, iii. ensuring UNGEKN's appropriate and efficient organizational structure, and iv. supporting exchange of good practices among Member States. These four objectives have twelve action items.



Action item 3-ii-2. Reviewing the current versions of UNGEKN publications

Action item 2 under objective ii of Strategy 3 (3-ii-2) is to “review the current versions of UNGEKN publications, establish a plan to revise or add to them, and implement it.” Responsibility for this item is ascribed to the Bureau, a number of working groups including Publicity and Funding (PF), Romanization Systems (RS), Geographical Names Data Management (GNDM), Toponymic Terminology (TT), and the coordinator for UNGEKN's List of Country Names.

Progress made so far for six [UNGEKN publications](#) is as follows:

1. *Glossary of Terms for the Standardization of Geographical Names* (2002, 2007 Addendum): work in progress by WG TT with relation to its online database
2. *Geographical names as vital keys for accessing information in our globalized and digital world* (2007): review in progress taking into consideration existing translations and future printing possibilities
3. *Manual for the National Standardization of Geographical Names* (2006): a collection of new texts being sought (*see the next section*)
4. *Technical Reference Manual for the National Standardization of Geographical Names* (2007): review in progress by WG GNDM and WG RS
5. *UNGEKN Brochure* (2001): review in progress taking into consideration existing translations and future printing possibilities
6. *Media Kit*: work nearing completion for its 12 items by WG PF, WG RS, WG GNDM, WG TT and the expanded Bureau

Call for contributions for a “new” Manual for the National Standardization of Geographical Names

Since its publication in 2006, this book has achieved its goal to assist in the various steps of standardizing geographical names (from field work to dissemination) and to help those looking to establish national names authorities and create sets of standards for consistent rendering of geographical names. It is composed of two parts; basic information on standardization, titled “Organization of a national programme for geographical names standardization” and authored by Donald J. Orth (10 chapters); and selected articles on aspects of geographical names standardization written by several experts (10 articles). This manual is available in the six UN languages.

With more than 15 years since its publication, those chapters and articles contained in this manual deserve archiving in a user-friendly format. However, it is evaluated to be necessary to collect new texts aligned with the current trends in geographical names standardization. The following topics are suggested:

- Names, languages, conversion through transliteration, transcription and translation
- Establishing a geographical names authority – mandates, types of organization, support staff, principles and procedures, legislation in various forms
- Toponymic guidelines – how they started, where we are, the way forward
- Field collection by surveyors and toponymists; public submissions; crowd sourcing
- Social and cultural values associated with toponyms; effects on standardization
- Introduction to basic terminology (e.g. what is an endonym vs. an exonym)
- Resolutions and recommendations for the standardization of geographical names – their functions
- Sustainable Development Goals and geographical names
- Some topical issues concerning geographical names (environment, inclusion, commercialization/commodification or branding, critical toponymy, commemoration and name changing, etc.)

Any experts who would like to contribute to this “new” manual are asked to contact me, as Coordinator for Strategy 3. Other topics than those listed above are also welcomed.

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UNGEKN's Programme of Work, Strategy 1 – Technical expertise- first findings, challenges and obstacles for geographical names data management

1. Introduction

To respond to UN resolutions and UN data needs, the UNGEKN Working Group on Geographical Names Data Management (WG GNDM) addresses issues of geographical names data processing, including the creation, maintenance and outputs of geographical names data files (including gazetteer production) and aspects of geographical names data exchange formats and standards. Providing geographical names information within national and international spatial data infrastructures (SDIs) through web (gazetteer) services and multipurpose geographical names database solutions in the context of SDIs as well as the utilization of volunteered geographic information and crowd sourced data are becoming increasingly important to governments. Furthermore, the issue of appropriate definitions for gazetteers and data types and of general feature types/categories is relevant to the agenda of the WG GNDM.

The Strategic Plan and Programme of Work adopted at UNGEKN's 2nd Session in 2021, intends to guide the work of UNGEKN to achieve several aims. This Strategic Plan presents the vision, values and aims of UNGEKN, together with five strategies and their collective alignment to the relevant goals of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

This article will provide an overview on the tasks being done to implement 'Strategy 1 – Technical expertise', focusing on the first findings, the challenges faced and the obstacles encountered. It includes, amongst others, the delivery of technical expertise and advice to national authorities for geographical names standardization (including romanization). Furthermore, it promotes efficient and effective geographical names data and gazetteer management, as well as interoperability. The technical developments and sharing of good data management practices are crucial, comprising the identification of trends on developments and future direction for geographical names data management. Last but not least the use of innovative methods as well as of integrated approaches and technological advances are encouraged to achieve the aims of UNGEKN.

The article will conclude with an outlook and some requests for the upcoming activities in 2022/2023.

2. Activities according to the Programme of Work 2021-2029

The strategic plan and programme of work 2021– 2029 was adopted by UNGEKN at its session in May 2021. As an outcome of the session the Member States, Divisions and Working Groups were invited to begin implementation of the Programme of Work. The strategy on 'technical expertise' is the focus of the WG GNDM.



Screenshot taken from the UNGEKN website

The Strategy 1 – Technical expertise as shown in the figure is one of five strategies in the UNGEKN Strategic Plan and Programme of Work. It comprises the following objectives:

- Deliver technical expertise and advice to interested parties in Member States for geographical names standardization, including romanization and quality geographical names data and gazetteer management as well as interoperability;
- Develop, extend and share good data management practices of Member States; and
- Identify trends on developments and future direction for geographical names data management and encourage the use of innovative methods, integrated approaches and technological advances to further the aims of UNGEKN.

Ten action items are assigned to Strategy 1. It is worth noting that the Work Plan of the WG GNDM has been fully integrated into the new Programme of Work. Due to the complexity of the Work Plan and the high number of tasks, the cooperation between all Working Groups is crucial.



Moreover, some new tasks or more detailed explanations to the actions have been introduced, such as action 1-i-2. This action 1-i-2 is as follows: *Evaluate and assess exchange standards for geographical names information and for web services (gazetteer, feature and mapping) for the provision of geographical names information, comprising the review of Part II of the UNEG Technical Reference Manual*. In the implementation of this action the Working Group has compiled ideas for geographical names data modelling and transfer related standards, manuals, or guidelines. The compilation shall contribute and be the rationale for an updated structure for ‘Part two -Toponymic data transfer standards and formats’ of UNEG’s ‘Technical Reference Manual for the National Standardization of Geographical Names’. The outcome and findings may be published within UNEG’s webpage or its wiki structure. [Review and update in progress by WG GNND (status: 05/2022)].

Another interesting sub-action is 1-iii-8 ‘*Monitor the availability of free and easily-accessible authorized digital geographical names data as it is seen as a key-driver in encouraging the use of nationally standardized geographical names*.’ For this action some activities have also started.

The use of the Wiki has been agreed by the Working Group in order to discuss, start and monitor the actions. Each sub-action is coordinated by a ‘Caring colleague’ and executed by Task Teams which substantially contribute to the outputs and deliverables. If you are interested to contribute and to be informed about the sub-actions, please do not hesitate to contact the Convenor of the Working Group and visit the Wiki: <https://wiki.gdi-de.org/display/wgtdfg/Work+Program>.

3. Outlook and requests

A brief outlook and some requests for the Working Group Geographical Names Data Management for the upcoming months are as follows:

- One milestone will be the convening of the 3rd UNEG, 1 May – 5 May 2023, New York. We invite colleagues to share/submit ideas for Working/discussion papers related to Strategy 1. Your proposals are welcomed.
- Furthermore, ideas for Workshops (virtual ones) could be collected as well, related to sub-action 1-iii-9. It might be interesting for some of you that a Linked Open Data workshop will be arranged (virtually) in late 2022.
- Another idea for a webinar could be ‘Geographical names data fulfilling SDG requirements’
- The Working Group is also keen to continue the discussions about a ‘Global Feature classification’. You can find some preliminary ideas and information within the Working Group wiki: <https://wiki.gdi-de.org/display/wgtdfg/Topic+3+-+General+feature+types+and+categories>.

Pier-Giorgio Zaccheddu (Germany)

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FROM THE DIVISIONS

The Arab Division of Experts on Geographical Names and the Jordanian National Committee for Geographical Names

Introduction

In the past, present, and future, the significance of geographical names has motivated most countries in the world to employ extraordinary care and devote committees, or associations, to contribute in preserving geographical names for their value.



The Jordanian National Committee of geographical names

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan remains as an example of the first Arab country in this field. In 1984, the Cabinet sped to issue a decision to form a committee to review the geographical names. The Committee extended its work, developed and provided all ministries and foundations that deal with geographical names with information, through the National Committee of Experts on Geographical Names – as it is known today. The Committee is a part of the Royal Jordanian Geographic Centre, is chaired by the Director General of the Royal Jordanian Geographic Center and operates under the umbrella of The Arab Division of Experts on Geographical Names, which consists of Arab experts in Geographical Names assigned by their countries to collect, check, standardize and process names of places and natural landmarks in all Arab countries. It includes experts from the following 22 Arab countries members in this Division: Jordan, United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Tunisia, Algeria, Djibouti, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Sudan, Somalia, Iraq, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Egypt, Morocco, Mauritania, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Comoros Islands and Yemen.

Key Activities

- The Jordanian National Committee of geographical names held several meetings in which all ministries and government institutions drove the need to refer to the National Committee of Experts on Geographical Names in all regards to geographical names and adherence to the unified Arab Romanization system which was adopted and approved in New York in 2017.
- Within the periodic meetings, a draft gazetteer of geographical names for the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan was discussed, according to the approved foundations of character articulation, construction, and approved Romanization, and it is in the preparation stage for issuance.
- The Arab Division of Experts on Geographical Names/ the National Committee on Geographical Names held specialized courses in the geographical names of those concerned with geographical names in ministries and government institutions in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, and it is ready to hold courses for member states of the Arab Division of Geographical Names Experts.
- The Arab Division is currently preparing to hold a conference at the level of the Arab world in geographical names” (the Ninth Conference of Arab Experts in Geographical Names), which will be held in the Sultanate of Oman on December 12, 2022. On the sidelines of the conference, a meeting will be held for the Arab Division to discuss All developments related to the Arab Division.
- The Arab Division issues a magazine specialized in geographical names, "Geographical Names Magazine" periodically every six months, with the participation of specialists in geographical names, and the sixth issue of the magazine is being published.

Mu'ammr Kamel Haddadin (Jordan)

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Chairman of the Arab Division of Experts on Geographical Names
Chairman of the Jordanian National Committee of geographical names

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FROM THE WORKING GROUPS

How Toponymic Guidelines support the dissemination of standardized geographical names

Standardizing geographical names involves a lot of hard work, which includes creating the process of collecting and registering names and defining rules and regulations for the orthography of names, among other tasks. This work is usually done outside the spotlights. Of great importance is the need to have a good communication strategy, to make sure all the standardization work is accepted and applied within the government and by a broader audience of private companies and the general public. The Toponymic Guidelines as promoted by UNGEGN can help in this strategy, both nationally and internationally.

National standardization

When UNGEGN was founded in 1967, it was very much focused on finding common principles for dealing with geographical names. Since then, many conferences and sessions have delivered numerous United Nations resolutions and other concepts and practices in how to standardize geographical names. Although this international cooperation is very valuable, already in its first UN resolutions of 1967 UNGEGN recognized the fundamental importance of geographical names standardization at the national level.

Meanwhile, many countries have implemented the UN resolutions on national geographical names standardization. They have a standardization process in place, a national names authority supervising or executing this process, and an authoritative database of standardized geographical names that reflect the principles propagated by UNGEGN. Other countries are still developing a national standardization process or have yet to begin. Representatives of these countries can use UNGEGN as a platform to gain knowledge and insight on how to proceed in collecting and registering geographical names based on common standardization principles.

Implementation and dissemination

An important aspect of the standardization work, that often remains underexposed, but can be seen as a crucial ‘last step’ in the process, is implementation and dissemination. When there are authorized geographical names and a geographical names database is available, the crux is to make sure these names become commonly used.

Governments can do their part by making the use of authorized names mandatory within governmental communication, by placing road signs with the official geographical names, and by rendering these names on topographic maps. But this might not be enough to get private companies and the general public on board. Geographical name use is heavily influenced by what people see in web applications and sites such as Google Maps, OpenStreetMap and Wikipedia, in navigation software, in news media, in social media and other sources. On an international level, an even wider audience of governments, companies and individuals with various backgrounds are involved in making products and writing texts containing geographical names. The challenge is to make all these parties aware of the authoritative geographical names and the importance of using them.

Creation of Toponymic Guidelines

In 1977, the then UNGEGN chair, Josef Breu launched the idea that UN Member States should create a document containing ‘Toponymic Guidelines’, his objective was that ‘international cartography’ should use nationally standardized geographical names. At that time, geographical names were to be found in printed gazetteers, that required some time to be compiled, edited and published. An international document in a short structured format would be easier for member states to prepare and for map makers to use. These Toponymic Guidelines should ideally

Toponymic Guidelines is an important and useful tool in supporting the dissemination of all the national names standardization work

contain all essential information about the country’s national and minority languages with their legal status, writing system, spelling rules, pronunciation particularities and toponymic terminology; contact details of the names authority; and references to source material for standardized geographical names.

In 1982, the then UN Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names resolution recommended all member states “to publish and keep up-to-date toponymic guidelines for map and other editors which may enable cartographers of other countries to treat correctly all problems of cartographic toponymy of the countries that produced such guidelines, and which may be of help to all users in interpreting maps”. Forty countries have since published their Toponymic Guidelines, which has helped map makers around the world in their work to produce maps with authoritative geographical names.



Benefits

Not only cartographers benefit from the information contained in these documents, but also various private and government organizations with an international focus use Toponymic Guidelines to make sure they render a country's geographical names correctly. Even on a national level producers of maps, applications and other products can use Toponymic Guidelines, as the information is – unlike many extensive national guidelines – easily accessible, concise and easy to use.

Therefore, Toponymic Guidelines is an important and useful tool in supporting the dissemination of all the national names standardization work. At least as important as preparing and publishing Toponymic Guidelines, however, is keeping them up to date.

Updates

All kinds of data in the document can become outdated: the official languages and their legal status, the spelling rules of a language, the administrative division of a country, the toponymic terminology and abbreviations used on topographic maps, the contact details of the national names authority and the source material for authoritative names. It is advisable that member states regularly review their Toponymic Guidelines and provide an updated version of the document when necessary.

UNGEKN encourages countries in setting up Toponymic Guidelines, supports publication and is committed to their dissemination on an international level, along with raising awareness for the importance of using standardized names. If Member States themselves draw more attention to their Toponymic Guidelines on a national level, all the hard work done in standardizing geographical names will easily find its way to the general public.

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FROM THE COUNTRIES

Minority place-name standardization, a comparison of regulations and approaches in Europe

Related to the representation of minority geographical names in public space (on town signs, road signs etc.) and on maps exist various regulations in Europe. They differ by

- definition of the minority,
- feature categories included (populated places, natural features etc.),
- the administrative level where the decision is taken (national, province, district, commune level),
- the share of minority population necessary for taking advantage of the regulation,
- additional procedures necessary to effectuate the right on the name,
- the choice between standard language and dialect name versions,
- the kind of visual representation of the minority name,
- comprehensiveness of the fields where the minority name has (in addition to the majority name) to be used (only on town signs, also on maps, in all kinds of communication),
- the level of officiality of the minority name (as official as the majority name, supplementary official, just for information etc.)
- and by several others.

The book attempts to compare such regulations in the countries of Europe with autochthonous linguistic minorities on the background of ethnic and linguistic structures, historical and political developments, the political landscape, governance structures, and external relations. Is minority geographical name standardization part of the general standardization process or are there specific regulations? Is it a bottom-up or a top-down process and which administrative levels are involved? The book is also going to explain, to which extent these regulations satisfy linguistic minorities and help to facilitate the relations between majority and minority.

Contents

- 1 Introduction** (Peter Jordan)
- 2 The concept fields of minorities/non-dominant groups, toponymy and place-name standardization** (Peter Jordan)
- 3 International standards in minority place-name standardization** (Peter Jordan)

4 *Minority place-name standardization by countries*

This is the focal chapter of the book. It proceeds country by country in alphabetical sequence within European cultural macro-regions. The grouping of countries by cultural macro-regions seems appropriate due to their relative cultural homogeneity as a result of similar historical development with an impact on settlement, language and political culture. This can help avoiding repetition when the historical, cultural, and political backgrounds of minority situations are described. The sequence of cultural macro-regions can still be modified in accordance with the final length of country sections and the potential division of the book into several volumes.

With every country section this same structure of subthemes is to be observed:

By country

- Ethnic and linguistic structure: Historical development and current state
- State formation
- Political system, administrative structures, governance
- Cultural characteristics (language, religion etc.)
- National and other space-related identities
- External relations
- Minority legislation with special regard to geographical names

By individual minority situations

- Who is the minority? (identity markers)
- Geographical and historical setting of the minority
- Settlement and cultural history of the minority region
- Minority life (education, organizations, cultural life, language, religion, media)
- Minority toponymy
- History and current state of minority place-name standardization
- Political and inter-cultural climate, satisfaction with existing regulations and standards

As the number of minority situations varies per country between one and at least ten, some country sections will be substantially longer than others. Also, the fact that not in all countries the same regulations apply to all minorities of a country, but need to be explained situation by situation may cause additional differences in the length of country sections.



4.1 Central Europe

- 4.1.1 Austria (Peter Jordan, *confirmed*)
- 4.1.2 Croatia (Ivana Crljenko, *confirmed*)
- 4.1.3 Czechia (Tadeusz Siwek, *confirmed*)
- 4.1.4 Estonia (Peeter Päll, *confirmed*)
- 4.1.5 Germany (Helge Paulig, *confirmed*)
- 4.1.6 Hungary (Gábor Mikešy & Attila Sasi, *confirmed*)
- 4.1.7 Latvia (Zane Cekula, *confirmed*)
- 4.1.8 Luxemburg (Sam Mersch, *confirmed*)
- 4.1.9 Lithuania (Rita Baranauskienė & Ilona Mickienė, *confirmed*)
- 4.1.10 Poland (Maciej Zych, *confirmed*)
- 4.1.11 Slovakia (Maria Kovačová)
- 4.1.12 Slovenia (Matjaž Geršič & Drago Perko, *confirmed*)
- 4.1.13 Switzerland (Alfred Gut et al., *confirmed*)

4.2 North Europe

- 4.2.1 Denmark (Peder Gammeltoft, *confirmed*)
- 4.2.2 Finland (Ulla Onkamo et al., *confirmed*)
- 4.2.3 Norway (Kaisa Rautio Helander, *confirmed*)
- 4.2.4 Sweden (Staffan Nyström, *confirmed*)

4.3 West Europe

- 4.3.1 Belgium (Christian Vandermotten, *confirmed*)
- 4.3.2 France (Pierre Jaillard, *confirmed*)
- 4.3.3 Ireland (N.N.)
- 4.3.4 Netherlands (Ferjan Ormeling, *confirmed*)
- 4.3.5 United Kingdom (Guy Puzey, *confirmed*)

4.4 South Europe

- 4.4.1 Italy (Igor Jelen et al., *confirmed*)
- 4.4.2 Portugal (António Bárbolo Alves & Anabela Leal de Barros, *confirmed*)
- 4.4.3 Spain (Joan Tort i Donada, *confirmed*)

4.5 Southeast Europe

- 4.5.1 Albania (Dhimiter Doka, *confirmed*)
- 4.5.2 Bosnia and Herzegovina (Rahman Nurković, *confirmed*)
- 4.5.3 Bulgaria (Anna Choleva-Dimitrova)
- 4.5.4 Greece (N.N.)
- 4.5.5 Kosovo (N.N.)
- 4.5.6 Moldova (Dorin Lozovanu, *confirmed*)
- 4.5.7 Montenegro (N.N.)
- 4.5.8 North Macedonia (N.N.)
- 4.5.9 Romania (Zsombor Bartos-Elekes, *confirmed*)
- 4.5.10 Serbia (Rade Goljović, *confirmed*)

4.6 East Europe

- 4.6.1 Belarus (Ihar L. Kapylou)
- 4.6.2 Russian Federation, European part (Andrej Herzen, Yuliana Gordova & Olga Herzen, *confirmed*)
- 4.6.3 Ukraine (Yaroslav Redkva, *confirmed*)

5 Comparative discussion of current situations (Peter Jordan)

This chapter will briefly outline the full range of regulations in Europe by comparing their major characteristics (also in a table and on a map) and try to find out, which kind of regulations are typical for certain minority situations, how they differ by

- the relative size of minority and majority,
- the relative serenity of minority and majority,
- the relative cultural prestige of minority and majority and their language,
- the relative economic status of minority and majority,
- earlier power relations (e.g., power inversion in history),
- historical events,
- the possibility of minorities to be suspected of irredentism, autonomism or regionalism,
- current governance structures (e.g., centralist versus federal),
- current levels of democracy,
- a.o.

It will then conclude with highlighting regulations that have contributed to calming down or preventing inter-cultural (minority/majority) conflict and others that have rather promoted such conflict. It will thus provide policy consultation and show ways for more adequate solutions.

6 The current situations compared with the early 1980s (Ferjan Ormeling)

A comparison will be drawn between the current regulations and their effects as presented in Chapter 4 and regulations and situations in the early 1980s. Changes in this period will be related to political and societal developments and events.

7 Conclusion (Peter Jordan)

Audience

The book addresses (political) and other human geographers as well as colleagues from related disciplines, but even more so administrators at all levels, most specifically in minority regions, as well as minority associations and organizations and their representatives. It can serve as a sound basis for discussions also in the Federal Union of European Nationalities (FUEN) representing the interests of European minorities including minority rights, among which the rights of being visible in the linguistic landscape and to have official geographical names are very important and symbolic.

Work plan

December 2021: Contract with Springer Publishers settled
by 31 December 2022: Delivery of all country sections (Chapter 4)

2023: Elaboration of chapters 1-3, 5-7; editorial work; peer-reviewing; technical book production

by 31 December 2023: Book published

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Activities in the Field of Standardization of Geographical Names in the Republic of Croatia in 2021

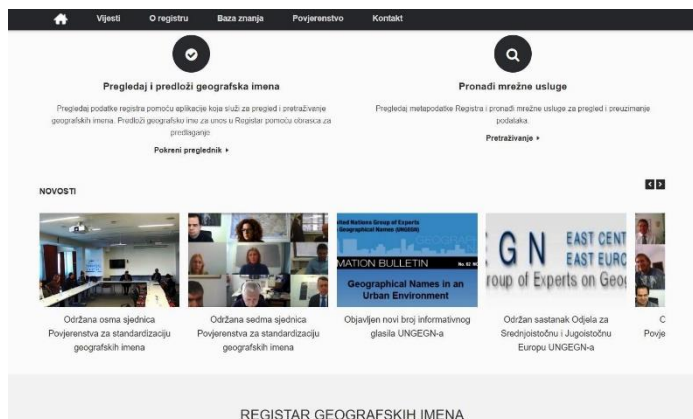
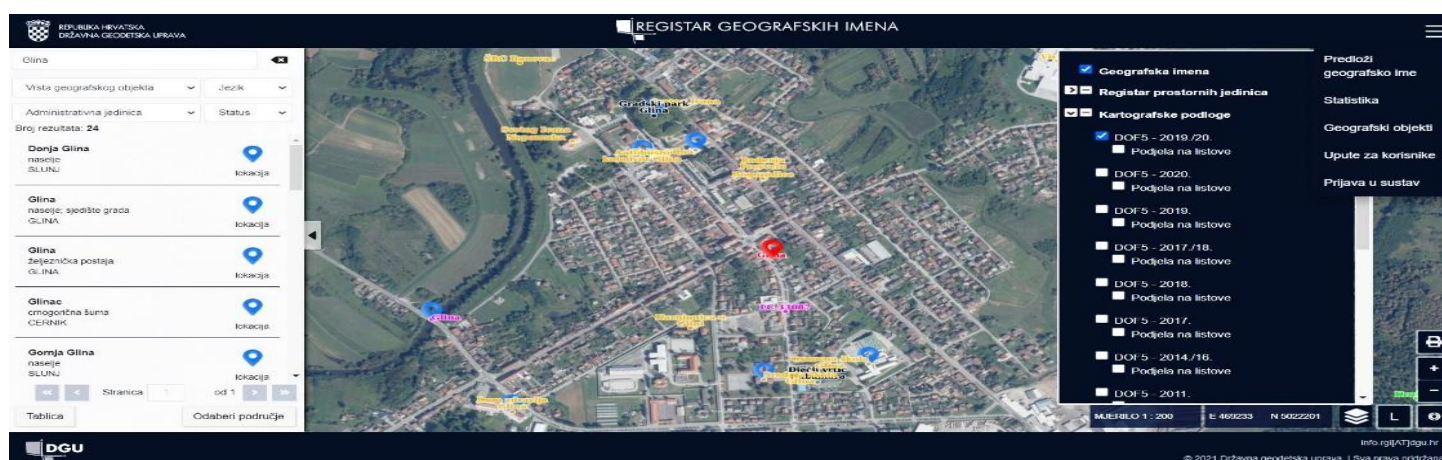
Introduction

This article will present activities in the field of standardization of geographical names in the Republic of Croatia, as member of UNEG East Central and South-East Europe Division - ECSEED, in 2021.

In the mentioned period, the Commission for the Standardization of Geographical Names adopted one technical document and worked continuously, through its working groups, on three strategic documents for the purpose of quality assurance of the Register of Geographical Names.

The Commission for Standardization of Geographical Names

The Commission for Standardization of Geographical Names ([URL1](#)), as a multidisciplinary and multi-institutional body, is composed of experts in the fields of geodesy, geography, linguistics, cartography, hydrography, history, culture, international relations, as well as science and education. The President of the Commission is PhD Damir Šantek, Director General of the State Geodetic Administration of the Republic of Croatia ([URL2](#)), as a representative of the central state



The functionality of the network application of the Register of Geographical Names was improved and website of the Register of Geographical Names was upgraded. At the end of 2021 activities (pilot project) on the revision of the records in the database of the Register of Geographical Names began.

Activities in the field of standardization of geographical names in 2021 were presented to the public through domestic and international conferences and professional meetings.

administration authority responsible for the Register of Geographical Names.

In 2021 the Commission held two sessions and consequently adopted one technical document (Methodology for revision of records in the database of the Register of Geographical Names - technical specifications). The mentioned technical specifications determine the structure of the scope of revision, preparatory activities and field research, the competence profile of the experts who conduct the revision of geographical names and the evaluation results of the revision.

Also, the working groups, as operational bodies of the Commission, in 2021 continuously worked on three strategic documents for the purpose of quality assurance of the Register of Geographical Names (Recommendations for standardization of geographical names in the Republic of Croatia – naming of transport infrastructure, Guidelines for writing geographical names on maps and in other publications and Methodology of acting in the standardization of geographical names in the database of the Register of Geographical Names).

The Commission actively participated in drafting the final regulation on the role of the Commission in the procedure of adopting the names of settlements, streets and squares in the Law on Settlements.



Also, the Commission continuously gives its expert opinions to the users / interested public, related to the suggestions for naming and / or changing the geographical names of geographical objects in the Republic of Croatia.

The information system of the Register of Geographical Names

The information system of the Register of Geographical Names consists of three basic parts: website dedicated to geographical names, database of geographical names and online application for managing the Register of Geographical Names. Dataset of geographical names is publicly available through network services and for that purpose there is a server for publishing different network services for view and download ([URL3](#)).

In 2021 the functionality of the online application ([URL4](#)) was improved. The application has been improved on a functional level, and work has been done on intuitiveness in its use. It offers the possibility to suggesting changes of the records in the database of the Register of Geographical Names itself by the public. Also, the online application is adapted for portable devices and online services for viewing and downloading data from the Register of Geographical Names database are available to public users.

At the end of 2021 activities (pilot project) on the revision of the records in the database of the Register of Geographical Names began.

All activities in the field of geographical names are available through website, which was improved in 2021. ([URL5](#)).

Domestic and international conferences and professional meetings

In order to spread awareness on the issue of geographical names, activities in the field of standardization of geographical names in 2021 were presented to the public through domestic and international conferences and professional meetings.

Members of the Commission for Standardization of Geographical Names and experts from the State Geodetic Administration of Republic of Croatia presented mentioned activities on domestic conferences “SDI Day 2021” ([URL6](#)) and “Women in Geodesy” ([URL7](#)) and international meeting “Place Names 2021” ([URL8](#)).

Also, Members of the Commission and experts from the State Geodetic Administration participated in two professional meetings of ECSEED and “2nd Session of the UNEG” ([URL9](#)).

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URL4 <https://rgi.dgu.hr/rgigis/>, 26 April 2022

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URL6 <https://www.nipp.hr/default.aspx?id=3451>, 26 April 2022

URL7 <http://www.hkoig.hr/assets/SIMPOZIJ-2021/HKOIG-Zbornik-2021.pdf>, 26 April 2022

URL8 <http://www.igu-icatoponymy.org/report-sixth-international-symposium-on-place-names-2021/>, 26 April 2022

URL9 https://unstats.un.org/unsd/uneggn/sessions/2nd_session_2021/, 26 April 2022



UPCOMING EVENTS



3 – 5 August 2022

Twelfth Session of the United Nations Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management
UNHQ, New York

10-14 October 2022

Second United Nations World Geospatial Information Congress
Hyderabad, India

12 December 2022

Ninth Conference of Arab Experts in Geographical Names
Muscat, Sultanate of Oman