

ICA/IGU Working Group/Commission on Toponymy

Activities of the new Joint ICA/IGU Working Group/Commission on Toponymy during the last two years 2012-2013

The Commission

For some years, during the sessions of the UNGEGN (United Nations of Groups of Experts on Geographical Names), several topics on toponymy have been discussed. In a prestigious venue like this some scholars, Cosimo Palagiano, Helen Kerfoot, Peter Jordan, Georg Gartner and others proposed to establish a Commission of Toponymy, which would study the Geographical names from the point of view both of geography and cartography.

The geographical names are the object of study of many bodies, the same UNGEGN, the ICOS (International Council of Onomastic Sciences) and many other conferences have been held in many countries on Geographic Names. During the 30th General Assembly of ICSU held in FAO Rome (27-30 September 2011 Ron Abler, Mike Meadows, Georg Gartner and Cosimo Palagiano agreed to establish a joint IGU Commission/ICA Working Group on Toponymy.

During the Regional Geographical Conference of Santiago de Chile (14-18 November 2011) Ron Abler, the President of the IGU, established that a Commission/Working Group on Toponymy that has been under discussion between ICA and IGU for some time is now formed after several preliminary meetings between interested members of both organizations. After reviewing the proposal submitted by IGU representative Cosimo Palagiano, the executive committee approved establishment of the body contingent upon the submission of an appropriate Steering Committee and on approval by the ICA, whose executive committee will consider the proposal in late November 2011.

New ICA President Georg Gartner is enthusiastic about the joint body. Palagiano was appointed the IGU Co-Chair of the new group; the ICA appointed the other co-chair Paulo Márcio Leal de Menezes. The joint group is sponsoring a paper session at the Santiago Regional Conference.

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Objectives

Mission

The joint IGU Commission/ICA WG on Toponymy would study the Geographical names from the point of view both of geography and cartography.

Some topics in which the IGU Commission/ICA WG on Toponymy is involved:

- Functions of place names on maps
- Rendering of place names on maps
- Names placement on maps
- Elaborating principles for creating new place names
- Place names as expression of time – or space-related identity
- Place name/feature relations
- Motives for place naming and administration (including feminine place names)
- Place names and transportation
- Place names in the cyber world
- Social dimensions of place names

other related **topics**:

- Uses of toponyms for school education
- Unofficial, aboriginal, vernacular, historical toponyms;
- Microtoponyms
- Dual or bilingual toponyms, exonyms.

In biennium 2012 - 2013, this new body set a number of activities. A brief report follows:

(I) During the **Regional Conference held in Cologne, Germany**, from 26 to - 30 August 2012 the topics discussed were:

(i) Place names as markers and ingredients of space-related identity (2 sections)

Presenters: Cosimo Palagiano | Sapienza Università di Roma | Roma | IT and

Peter Jordan | Austrian Academy of Sciences | Wien | AT

(ii) The Power of the Geographical Names

Presenter: Paulo Marcio Leal de Menezes | Federal University of Rio de Janeiro | Rio de Janeiro, RJ | BR

(iii) Place name, space and society – The role of place names in relating people and place

Presenter: Peter Jordan | Austrian Academy of Sciences | Wien | AT

(iv) Stone Age place names as markers and ingredients of space-related identity

Presenter: Peter Raper | University of the Free State | Pretoria | ZA

(v) Identitary construction under a socioconstructionist approach and the standardization of geographic names in Brazil

Presenter: Ana Cristina Resende | FIBGE | Rio de Janeiro, RJ | BR

(II) IGU Regional Conference, Kyoto, Japan, 4-9 August 2013:

Geographical Approaches to Toponymy were discussed with a total of 15 papers, in 4 sessions:

- (i) The changing Toponymy. The Place Names and their Vitality (Palagiano)
Travelling through the Place Names. Methodological Approach for the Development of a Geo-atlas of Toponyms (Siniscalchi)
Degrees of Precision in Toponyms Containing Wind Directions (Reinsma)
- (ii) Naming methods of Folk Agricultural Plot Names. A Connection between Geography and Cognitive Linguistics (Imazato)
Étude des toponymes en rapport à la nature du sol. Le cas de l'expression de « borbier », « marais » dans la province de Cuenca (Espagne)
Identification Villages Characteristics on Toponymy Method (Case Study : Musi Banyuasin Regency. South Sumatera Province. Indonesia) (Utama)
Features of Toponyms Forming of Alakol Basin of Kazakhstan (Aizholova)
- (iii) Islands in the Crosshairs. Media Representations of Territorial Disputes in Asia (Wilson)
Cataloguing Contested Terrain: How Libraries Identify Disputed Territories (Robinson)
The Spatial Politics of Street Naming in Taiwan (Huang)
- (iv) Is 'Exonym' an Appropriate Term for Names of Features beyond any Sovereignty? (Jordan)
Emotional Ties and the Name of a Sea: Results of a Preliminary Survey (Choo)
The Confucian Transformation of Toponyms and the Coexistence of Contested Toponyms in Korea (Kim)
Standardisation of Place Names in Countries Influenced By the Chinese Writing System (Tanabe)

The meeting, locally organized by Kohei Watanabe (Japan) was well-attended. The proceedings will be published in English as a monothematic issue of the scientific journal *Semestrare di Studi e Ricerche di Geografia* published at La Sapienza University in Rome [Roma].

(III) Seminar “Historical maps, atlas maps, and toponymy”, Leipzig, Germany, 21-23 August 2013: As a pre-conference event of ICC Dresden three ICA commissions/working groups, i.e. the ICA Commission on the History of Cartography (chair: Elri LIEBENBERG, South Africa), the ICA Commission on Atlases (chair: Peter JORDAN, Austria) and the ICA/IGU Working Group/Commission on Toponymy (chairs: Paulo DE MENEZES, Brazil and Cosimo PALAGIANO, Italy) in co-operation with the Leibniz Institute of Regional Research [Leibniz Institut für Länderkunde, IfL] Leipzig, met in the facilities of this registered participants and 17 papers presentations with many fruitful interdisciplinary discussions. The topics discussed in the 3 sessions were: (i) Place Names and Atlases (Chair: Peter JORDAN; Austria), (ii) Cartographic Place-Names Research (Chair: Paulo de MENEZES, Brazil), (iii) Place Names on old maps (Chair Elri LIEBENBERG, South Africa)

The proceedings will be published open access by the host institute as a volume of its book series “forum IfL”.

(IV) 26th International Cartographic Conference, Dresden, Germany, 26-30 August 2013: In two sessions organized by the Working Group/Commission in total six papers on toponymy were presented.

(V) EuGeo Congress, Rome, 5-7 September 2013: In a Panel on Toponyms organized by Cosimo PALAGIANO (Italy) five papers were presented. Four of the five papers will be published in the Journal “geografia”, Roma, EDIGEO.

Planned activities for the year 2014 comprise: (i) toponymic sessions in the framework of the next IGU Regional Geographic Conference in Cracow [Kraków], 18-22 August 2014:

Peter JORDAN, who proposed the following topics:

The thematic scope comprises topics such as:

(1) Principles for creating new place names: e.g. with commercial naming, street names, commemorative naming in general;

(2) Place names as expressions of time- or space-related identity: e.g. why do they have this function? What do they indicate? What do they mean for non-dominant groups? What does this mean for legal regulations? What is the meaning of the endonym/exonym divide in this context?

(3) Place name/feature relation: e.g. up to where has a name endonym status? Can sea names be endonyms?

(4) Motives for place naming: e.g. cultural background of the name-giving community? Synchronic and diachronic diversity of motives? What do place names tell us about name-giving communities? Transparent and opaque names. Motives of our times: commercialisation versus preservation of the cultural heritage. Place-names changes and their driving forces?

(5) Place names and administration: e.g. administrative competencies for place names? Street names as a case in point. Street naming in multilingual urban quarters. Naming when administrative units (municipalities, districts) are merged. Treatment of place names of non-dominant and

indigenous groups. Place-names boards and committees of all administrative levels and their responsibilities.

(6) Place names and transportation: e.g. Naming on road signposts, naming in the railway system, naming in air transportation.

(7) Place-name conflicts: e.g. what do place-name conflicts indicate? Backgrounds and reasons of current conflicts. Best practice in solving place-name conflicts.

and (ii) a workshop on place-names changes in Rome (Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei) in November 2014.

All persons interested are welcome. To be included on the mailing list, please contact the chairs or a steering board member.

For further information, see the website <http://www.igu-icatonymy.org> please.



*Founding fathers of the new commission -
_left_to_right_Cosimo_Palagiano,_Ron_Abler,_Paulo_de_Menezes._Peter_Jordan.*