



Joint ICA/IGU Commission on toponymy



NEWSLETTER

Ljubljana, December 2023

Dear Distinguished Colleagues!



I have the honor of chairing the Joint ICA/IGU Commission on Toponymy on behalf of the International Cartographic Association. I would like to thank my predecessor, the geographer Peter Jordan, who nominated me, and the delegates that elected me at the ICA General Assembly in Cape Town. I would also like to thank Peter Jordan for his past involvement in the work of this and other commissions and working groups, in which he has been or continues to be very active. I am also a geographer; I am employed at the Anton Melik Geographical Institute of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts

Research Center, where my work mainly focuses on issues related to geographical names. There will be no major changes in the activities of the commission. However, I have decided to publish a newsletter for members at least once a year, in which I will present past events our commission has participated in, planned events, new publications involving geographical names, and other interesting facts in this field. Please let me know if you are planning an event or have published a book or article on geographical names and would like to share it with the members of the commission. I would also like to encourage you to think about joint research projects. Some initiatives in this area have already been taken or are under way, mainly in the form of articles and books. However, I have the impression that there are also several untapped opportunities in calls for proposals. In Europe, several programs allow the submission of projects at both the European level (e.g., Interreg or COST, cross-border programs, bilateral programs, and others) and beyond. Calls for proposals from national research agencies should not be forgotten. In Slovenia, a call for proposals for research projects has just been launched, and our agency has signed contracts with research agencies in Austria, Poland, Switzerland, Flanders, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Luxembourg, and Hungary. This allows researchers to apply for research projects together with colleagues from other countries. I am not very familiar with project programs in other countries and continents, but they certainly exist. I would consider it a great success if we were able to apply for at least one joint research project in the next four years.

If you have any ideas and would like to collaborate in this area, please do not hesitate to contact me. I would also like to hear from you about the congresses you are planning, your publications, reports on past events, and other interesting news in toponymic research.

I look forward to working with you!
With best regards from Slovenia,

Matjaž Geršič



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Recent events

31st International Cartographic Conference (ICC) Cape Town, South Africa, 13-18 August 2023

At this biannual conference of the International Cartographic Association (ICA) the Joint ICA/IGU Commission on Toponymy organized two sessions:

Session 10D: Toponymy (Chair: Peter Jordan)

- Jordan, Peter (Austria): Reasons for the emergence of exonyms
- Barbosa Diniz, Viviane et al. (all Brazil): Compatibilization of geographical names used in the Brazilian official mapping
- Sui, Zhaoxu; Fish, Carolyn (both USA): Endonyms and exonyms: How map purpose, data source, and map language impact place naming on maps

Session 22F: Toponymy (Chair: Peter Jordan)

- Alonso, Bárbara; Sahagún Luis, Irene (both Spain): Exonyms in Spanish. Criteria and usage in cartography
- Yano, Keiji et al. (all Japan): Development of a Japanese 'GIS place-name dictionary' as a basis for interdisciplinary research



Figure 1: Cape Town International Convention Centre (photo Maciej Zych)

In the ICA General Assembly Peter Jordan's terms of office as the Commission Chair from ICA side ended according to ICA statutes and Matjaž Geršič (Slovenia) was elected his successor for a term of four years. Also the Joint ICA/IGU Commission on Toponymy was continued for four more years – besides the ICA Commission on Art and Cartography as the only one

out of 28 commissions with the votes of all delegates. The General Assembly elected Georg Gartner (Austria) new ICA President and re-elected Thomas Schulz (Switzerland) ICA General Secretary. The rest of the ICA Executive Committee received a new composition.

The Commission held also a business meeting chaired by Peter Jordan with a report on



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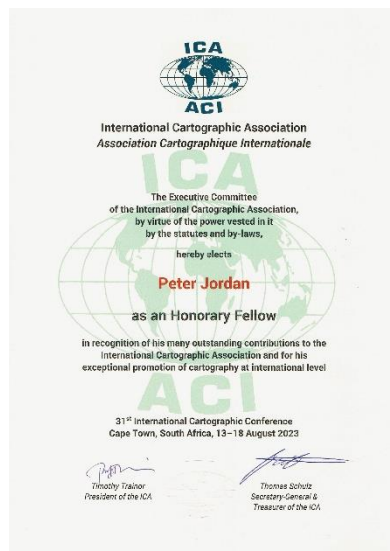


Commission activities since the last ICC in 2021 and a preview on activities in the rest of 2023 and in 2024. Besides the change of Chairs from ICA side it was also reported that Matjaž Geršič will succeed Peter Jordan also as ICA Liaison Officer with the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN) and that the change of the Commission Chair from IGU side (Cosimo Palagiano, Italy) is due at the IGU General Assembly in Dublin, August 2024. Simultaneously in 2024, also the rest of the Steering Board, which exists according to IGU regulations, will be exchanged due to the fact

that all Steering Board members have already served for the maximum of twelve years. Candidates for succession are Andrea Cantile, Italy (Chair from IGU side), Beatriz Cristina Pereira de Souza Pinto, Brazil, (Common Vice-Chair) as well as Patrik

Tátrai, Hungary, Theodorus Du Plessis, South Africa, Joan Tort Donada, Spain, Adriana Vescovo, Argentina, Maciej Zych, Poland, as additional Steering Board members.

In the closing ceremony besides Derek Clarke (Head of the ICC Cape Town local organizing team and outgoing member of the ICA Executive Committee) and posthumously Lynn Usery (for his scientific achievements) Peter Jordan received in recognition of his leadership of the ICA Commission on Atlases from 2007 to 2015 and of the Joint ICA/IGU Commission on Toponymy from 2017 to 2023 as well as his scientific work the ICA Honorary Fellowship. Cynthia Brewer, USA, was awarded the prestigious Carl Mannerfelt Gold Medal for her outstanding scientific contributions to cartography.



Peter Jordan



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9th EUGEO Congress Barcelona, Spain, 4-9 September 2023

EUGEO is the Association of Geographical Societies in Europe. The aim of EUGEO is to represent its members at the European level and to coordinate and initiate joint activities of the members to advance research and education on the Geography of Europe and to promote the scientific discipline, the school subject and the professional practice of Geography in Europe. EUGEO has members from 27 countries. EUGEO also functions as a network and a forum for strengthening the position and operations of its member organisations, in particular for activities with a European dimension. EUGEO organises a Geography Night every year and a Congress every two years. The next EUGEO Congress will take place in Vienna in September 2025. EUGEO will also be active at the International Geographical Union Congress in Dublin in 2024.

Two sections have been set up in Barcelona in the field of geographical names:

Minority place-name standardization in Europe (Chair: Peter Jordan)



Figure 2: Peter Jordan chairing the session (photo Matjaž Geršič).

- Borisova, Bilyana, Stamenkov, Ivaylo, Koulov, Boian: Geographic names of ethno-linguistic minority origin in Bulgaria: regulation and approaches
- Jordan, Peter: Minority place-name standardization. A comparison of regulations and approaches in Europe
- Siwek, Tadeusz: Polish minority place names in public space of Czechia
- Tsitselikis, Konstantinos: Linguistic minorities in Greece. Unfinished arrangements
- Vandermotten, Christian: In the country of surrealism and language conflicts, there are officially no minorities!
- Petrulevich, Alexandra: Reassembling the Seventeenth-

century Swedish Place-name Policies

- Geršič, Matjaž, Perko, Drago: Minority place-name standardization in Slovenia
- Jeney, János: The Effects of the Lack of Standardisation of Hungarian Toponyms in Slavonia
- Rautio Helander, Kaisa: Standardization and recognition in law of Sámi and Kven place names in Norway



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- Włoskowicz, Wojciech: Minority place-name standardization in Poland in the light of the General Theory of Name
- Ira, Vladimír: Minority Place-names in Public Spaces of Slovakia
- Tort Donada, Joan: Place names standardization in Catalonia (1921-2009). Considerations on the historical and current relevance of this process in the double context of Spain and Europe

Second session was not proposed by our commission, but by Přemysl Mácha and Katalin Reszegi

Navigating environmental uncertainty through language (Chair: Přemysl Mácha)

- Mersch, Sam: Place names and the rural ecological history of Luxembourg
- Mácha, Přemysl, Reszegi, Katalin et al.: Landscape Perception across European Languages
- Falkensteiner, Regina: Dwindling glaciers – the impact of climate change on geographical names in the Austrian Alps

Matjaž Geršič

7th International Symposium on Place Names (ISPN) Bloemfontein, South Africa, 26-29 September 2023



Figure 3: University of the Free State (photo Matjaž Geršič)

The Department of South African Sign Language and Deaf Studies (UFS) hosted the first dual 27th International Afrilex Conference / 7th International Symposium on Place Names (ISPN) on the Bloemfontein campus of the University of the Free State.

Afrilex 2023 was co-hosted with the African Association for Lexicography (Afrilex). The theme was 'Lexicography for inclusion', with the inclusion of sign languages in lexicography. With special attention to signed place names, the theme of ISPN 2023 was 'The presence



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of minority and indigenous languages in urban naming'. This biennial event is co-hosted by the Joint ICA/IGU Commission on Toponymy. Its goal is to cultivate toponymic (place name) research in Southern Africa in collaboration with international partners. A short history of the ISPN can be found here: <https://www.ufs.ac.za/conferences/conference/2021ispn/about-ispn/about>.

The international keynote speaker, Prof Myriam Vermeerbergen (KU Leuven, Belgium, and Stellenbosch University), provided an overview of lexicographic endeavours in sign languages, including toponymic considerations, in her speech 'Sign language lexicography: A snapshot of past, present and future approaches'. Prof Thapelo J Otlogetswe (University of Botswana), the Africa keynote speaker, also included a place-names aspect in his consideration of creating truly African dictionaries in his address, 'Making African dictionaries African'.



Figure 4: Group photo (photo Cosimo Palagiano)

Practicing experts in their respective fields presented the two pre-conference workshops. These events are aimed at providing practical guidance to the audience. Dirkie Ebersohn from the National Institute for the Deaf, South Africa, talked about 'Creating a bilingual Sign Language/English video glossary: The process at the National Institute for the Deaf (South Africa)'. From the Working Group on Geographical Names Data Management of UNGEGN, Pier-Giorgio Zaccheddu provided an overview



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on 'Geographical names data processing and management: Data processing, database management and production of geographical names information and gazetteers'.

Prof Mogomme Masoga, Dean of the Faculty of Humanities (UFS), opened the event at the welcoming cocktail function on 26 September. The event concluded with an excursion in an around Bloemfontein, conducted by Bush Junkies (<https://www.bushjunkies.co.za/>). The Academy for Multilingualism (UFS) generously sponsored the English/SASL interpreting services, provided by Kwarenge Language Solutions (<https://www.kwarenge.co.za/>).

Chrismi Loth

Literary, Polar, and Extraterrestrial Place Names Rome, Italy, 23-24 November 2023

Greeting addresses by:

Professor Roberto Antonelli, President of the Accademia Nazionale die Lincei,
Professor Michael Meadows, IGU President – video registration,
Professor Pierre Jaillard, UNGEGN Chair – video registration,
Professor Peter Jordan ICOS Vice President.

Session Literature place names

R. Ambrosini, "What's in a (Place) Name?" Rivers, Islands and Seabords in Joseph Conrad's Geopolitical Fictions"

J. Tort-Donada, Names, landscape and literary construction in Josep Pla's "The Gray Notebook"

C. Giantomasso, Placenames and territorial delimitations. Ciociaria between history, narratives and fictional representations

G. Massara, Francis Bacon's New Atlantis

A. Ricci, The toponymy in the Sala della Cosmografia in Palazzo Farnese in Palazzo Farnese: historical and confessional meanings

A. D'Ascenzo, Imagining, exploring, naming. Toponymy from earthly myths to exogeographical realities

E. Dai Prà, Toponymyc crossing in the literary spaces

V. Pecorelli, Inclusive streetscapes: gender and toponymy

G. Modaffari, A journey to Sniderton and Marconia: how Antonio Snider Pellegrini built two imaginery cities, on for the ambitions of the French colonizers of Texas, and the other for activists in the unification of Italy



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G. Casagrande, Mapping and naming places across the ever-changing boundaries of oecumene

V. Valerio, Italian Geographers and place names of Oceania in the first decades of the 19th century

Session Polar place names

D. Michalec, Czech names of geographic objects in polar regions

Session extraterrestrial place names

P. Mácha, Stellar Cartography, Xenonathropology and Galactic Age of Humanity in Star Trek Proper Names

Students of 4C of the Liceo Galileo Ferraris of Rome, Lunar Craters Toponymy

Students of 4C of the Liceo Galileo Ferraris of Rome, Celestial bodies and their names: from mythology to the catalogues

C. Sigismondi, Francesco Bianchini and the Celidography of Venus

C. Sigismondi, The passages of the Sun at the meridian of Rome



Figure 5: Palazzo Corsini (photo Cosimo Palagiano)

The idea of organising a conference on such diverse topics but with a common thread was a challenge that could have ended in a flop, as some friends feared. The common thread is certainly the name of a real or imaginary, inhabited or uninhabited place or a geographical object such as a mountain, river, lake, sea, etc. The place can also refer to a geographical area or a region. The place can also refer to a geographical event or even an administrative or political area. And finally, it can refer to a celestial body, perhaps one of the nearest, such as our natural satellite,

for which cartography has existed for centuries. The history of cartography and voyages of discovery is full of place names that have been founded, returned or



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disappeared. But the meaning of the name of a place is also remarkable, which can change over time or shift from Europe to other continents. Today, the discussion is more in-depth and takes into account the reasons that led to the choice or change. Social issues have also begun to have an impact on place names, with traditional toponymy being contrasted with critical toponymy, starting with feminine toponymy. Although many of these concepts have been covered in the lectures and discussions here, they deserve to be explored in more depth. In particular, the names of celestial bodies and the reasons for these names were of particular importance at this conference. Finally, I would like to emphasise the presence of young students among the speakers, who justified their absence from school by their presence here. This Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei has been trying for some time to promote the commitment of young people to approach research, to try to retrace the scientific and sacrificial path that we have all taken. We are proud to be imitated and hopefully even overcome.

Cosimo Palagiano


Upcoming events

2024

28th International Congress of Onomastic Sciences

 19 - 23 August 2024

 University of Helsinki, Helsinki, Finland


 <https://www.helsinki.fi/en/conferences/28th-international-congress-onomastic-sciences>



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35th International Geographical Congress

 24 - 30 August 2024

 The Helix, Dublin City University (DCU), Dublin, Ireland

 <https://igc2024dublin.org/>

Bi- or multilingual place names as markers of national, regional and local space-related identity (proposed by Peter Jordan)


 Cloning the place names (proposed by Cosimo Palagiano)

 12 January 2024

European Cartographic Conference – EuroCarto 2024

 9 - 11 September 2024

 Technischen Universität Wien, Austria

 <https://eurocarto2024.org/>

 Toponymy



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2025

2025 session of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names


 28 April - 2 May 2025

 UNHQ, New York, USA


 <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/uneggn/>

8th International Symposium on Place Names (ISPN)

 September 2025

 Clarens, South Africa

 kongresETFB@ufs.ac.za

 Harmonising toponymic heritage: balancing standardisation and local diversity



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Publications

BOOKS



GEOGRAPHY AND DEMOGRAPHY
Political Geography

The Politics of Place Naming

Naming the World

Coordinated by
Frédéric Giraut
Myriam Houssay-Holzschuch

ISTE

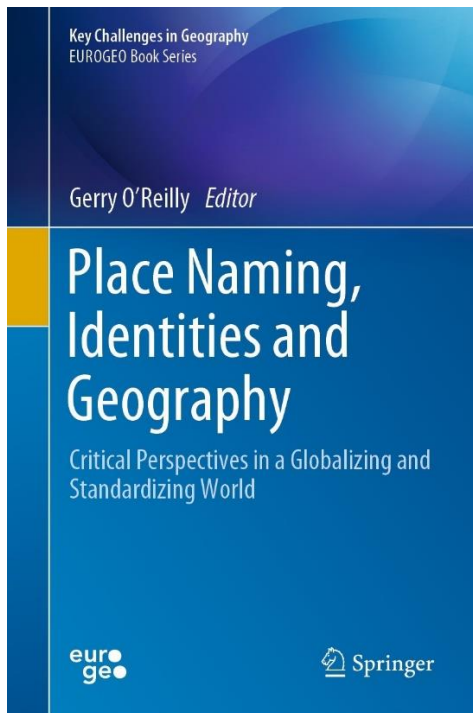
WILEY

Naming the places of the world is an essential human act of territorialization. As the subject of conflict or dispute, naming plays out in numerous ways that involve collective and individual relationships to space, whether functional or imaginary, as well as the identities related to them. Name traces also differ together with their inscription within landscapes and history. Names constitute a heritage, they bear witness, they mark places and thus contribute to the foundation of territories. Beyond place names, place naming reveals the functions and uses of names, but also the contradictory meanings that society bestows on them. With this framework in mind, that of critical toponymy, *The Politics of Place Naming* considers different points of view when studying place naming. These vary from linguistics to political and cultural geography, via history, anthropology, cartography, urban planning, digital humanities, subaltern studies and many other disciplines. This book honors this transversality by taking such studies into account in its examination of place naming.

[Frédéric Giraut](#), [Myriam Houssay Holzschuch](#) (editors)



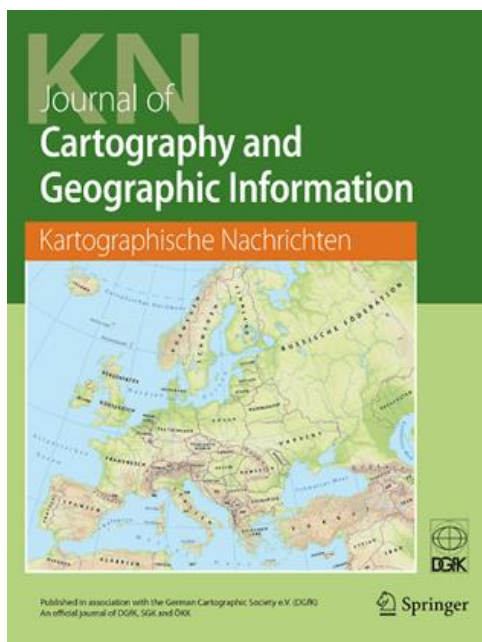
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A review of the book by Helen Kerfoot can be found here:

<https://shorturl.at/blpzX>

ARTICLES



Jordan, Peter 2023: Adequate Minority Place-Name Representation on Topographic Maps. KN - Journal of Cartography and Geographic Information. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s42489-023-00150-w>



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Other

The International Organization for Standardization (ISO) has informed us of changes to the “Country Codes Collection” database. Changes have been made in the following countries (at various levels, e.g. divisions, subdivisions, ...):

Indonesia
India
Korea (the Republic of)
Montenegro
Nepal
New Zealand
Philippines (the)
Poland

Unfortunately, as this is a paid database, I cannot share the changes with you, but I will inform you if you are responsible for monitoring these changes at the national level.