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English

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**United Nations Group of Experts on  
Geographical Names**

**Second session**

New York, 3 to 7 May 2021

**Item 5 (a) of the provisional agenda \***

**Cooperation and liaison with other organizations, International organizations**

**Report of the Joint ICA/IGU Commission on Toponymy**

Submitted by the Liaison Officer for the International Cartographic Association \*\*

Summary:

The report highlights the activities that the Joint International Cartographic Association (ICA)/International Geographical Union (IGU) Commission on Toponymy has pursued since the 2019 session of the “new” United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names, held in New York from 29 April to 3 May 2019, and contains its programme for 2021. The Commission was established in 2011 under the patronage of the then Chair of the Group of Experts, Helen Kerfoot the then President of ICA, Georg Gartner, and the then President of IGU, Ron Abler, to foster toponymic research in geography and cartography complementary to that of the Group of Experts, with its focus on standardization, and the International Council of Onomastic Sciences, with its focus on linguistics. That goal was to be pursued by organizing events as part of international conferences and by holding separate symposiums on specific topics, mostly in cooperation with local institutions.

The Commission currently has 163 full and corresponding members from 46 countries on all continents. Before the 2019 session of the Group of Experts, the Commission hosted or co-hosted 19 events as part conferences and symposiums. Between the 2019 and 2021 sessions, the following events, described in the full report, were held:

(a) Pre-conference symposium to the International Cartographic Conference on national names boards, held in Tokyo on 11 and 12 July 2019;

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\* GEGN.2/2021/1

\*\* The full report was prepared by Peter JORDAN (Austria), Austrian Academy of Sciences, ICA Liaison Officer, ICA Chair, Joint ICA/IGU Commission on Toponymy

(b) Twenty-ninth International Cartographic Conference, session of the Commission held in Tokyo, from 15 to 20 July 2019;

(c) Fifth International Symposium on Place Names on the topic “Recognition, regulation, revitalisation: place names and indigenous languages”, held in Clarens, South Africa, from 18 to 20 September 2019, in cooperation with the University of the Free State;

(d) GeoNames symposium on place names and migration, held in Vienna from 6 to 8 November 2019, in cooperation with the Dutch- and German-speaking Division of the Group of Experts, the Austrian Board on Geographical Names, the Austrian Federal Office of Metrology and Surveying and the Austrian geographical society.

During the period under review, the following papers presented at events organized or co-organized by the Commission were published:

(a) Chrismi-Rinda Loth, ed., *Recognition, Regulation, Revitalisation: Place Names and Indigenous Languages – Proceedings of the Fifth International Symposium on Place Names* (Bloemfontein, South Africa, 2020);

(b) Allison Dollimore and Peter Jordan, eds., *Place Names and Migration: Proceedings of the Symposium in Vienna*, 6–8 November 2019 (Hamburg, Germany, 2021).

# Report of the Joint ICA/IGU Commission on Toponymy

## 1 The Commission's foundation, mission, and development up to 2019

The Commission was established in 2011 under the patronage of the contemporary chairs of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN), Helen KERFOOT, the International Cartographic Association (ICA), Georg GARTNER, and the International Geographical Union (IGU), Ron ABLER, with the aim to foster toponymic research in geography and cartography complementary to UNGEGN with its focus on standardization and the International Council of Onomastic Sciences (ICOS) with its focus on linguistics. This goal was to be achieved by organising sessions in the framework of international conferences as well as by separate symposia on specific topics, mostly in cooperation with local institutions.

Until 2019 the Commission organized or co-organized sessions in the framework of conferences and symposia on the following topics:

- Place names as markers and ingredients of space-related identity (Cologne [Köln] 2012)
- Geographical names (Kyoto [Kyōto] 2013)
- Historical maps, atlas maps, and toponymy (Leipzig 2013)
- Place names in cartography (Dresden 2013)
- Toponymy (Rome [Roma] 2013)
- Geographical aspects of place names (Krakow [Kraków] 2014)
- Place-name changes (Rome [Roma] 2014)
- Place names and education (Moscow [Moskva] 2015)
- Atlases, toponymy and the history of cartography (Rio de Janeiro 2015)
- Place names on maps (Rio de Janeiro 2015)
- The role of place names in geographical education (Budapest 2015)
- Place names, diversity and heritage (Clarens, South Africa, 2015)
- Place names as social constructs (Beijing 2016)
- Toponymy (Rio de Janeiro 2017)
- Charting the Cosmos of Cartography: History – Names – Atlases (Washington, D.C. 2017)
- Place-name changes, toponymic fieldwork, metaphoric use of place names; place names as cultural heritage, indigenous and minority names; name-placement on maps, names on ancient maps and for planetary features (Washington D.C. 2017)
- Critical Toponymy – Place names in political, historical, and commercial landscapes (Windhoek 2017)
- Use of place names in public space (Moscow [Moskva] 2018)
- Place names as means of structuring geographical space (Quebec 2018)

Papers presented at events organized or co-organized by the Commission have up to 2019 been published in the following books and journal issues:

Semestrare di Studi e Ricerche di Geografia, XXV, 2, Roma 2013: Special issue including toponymy papers presented at the IGU Regional Conference Kyoto, Japan, 4-9 August 2013 (<http://www.semestrare-geografia.org/index.php/sdg/issue/view/3>).

Nomina Africana, Journal of the Names Society of Southern Africa, 30, 1, 2016: special issue containing 10 papers presented at the Symposium “Place names, diversity and heritage”, Clarens, Free State, South Africa, 17-18 September 2015.

- MOSER J. (ed.) (2016), Joint Commission Seminar on Historical Maps, Atlases and Toponymy (= forum IfL, 30). Leipzig, Leibniz-Institut für Länderkunde.
- JORDAN P., WOODMAN P. (eds.) (2016), Place-Name Changes. Proceedings of the Symposium in Rome, 17-18 November 2014 (= Name & Place, 5). Hamburg, Verlag Dr. Kovač.
- DA ROCHA BÉRENGER RESENDE A.C., JENEY J. (eds.) (2017), Symposium on Atlases, Toponymy and the History of Cartography. Proceedings of the ICC 2015 Pre-Conference Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 20-21 August 2015. Sine loco [Rio de Janeiro], ICA International Cartographic Association.
- DEMHRDT I., JORDAN P., LOSANG E. (eds.) (2018), Charting the Cosmos of Cartography: History – Names – Atlases (= The Cartographic Journal, 55, 2018, 2). London, The British Cartographic Society – Taylor & Francis.

## 2 Period 2019-2020 and current state

### 2.1 Membership

As a joint venture of ICA and IGU the Commission is headed by a chair from the ICA side (currently Peter JORDAN, Austria), a chair from the IGU side (currently Cosimo PALAGIANO, Italy) and a common vice-chair (currently Paulo DE MENEZES, Brazil) as well as a steering board comprising the chairs and five additional members from different countries.

#### Full (steering board) members:

CHOO, Sungjae (Republic of Korea) sjchoo@khu.ac.kr  
FERLAND, Yaïves (Canada) yaives.ferland@scg.ulaval.ac  
JORDAN, Peter (Austria, ICA chair) peter.jordan@oeaw.ac.at  
MENEZES, Paulo de (Brazil, common vice-chair) [pmenezes@acd.ufrj.br](mailto:pmenezes@acd.ufrj.br)  
ORMELING, Ferjan (Netherlands) f.ormeling@geo.uu.nl  
PALAGIANO, Cosimo (Italy, IGU chair) cosimo.palagiano@uniroma1.it  
RAPER, Peter (South Africa) raperpe2@gmail.com  
WATANABE, Kohei (Japan) [kw10004@cam.ac.uk](mailto:kw10004@cam.ac.uk)

In addition, as of 10 January 2021, the Commission has 155 corresponding members from 48 countries and all continents, so in total 8+155 = 163 full and corresponding members. Countries and regions by members: Italy 20, Republic of Korea 17, South Africa 12, Canada 6, Hungary 6, Romania 6, Japan 5, Netherlands 5, Poland 5, United Kingdom 5, USA 5, Botswana 4, Brazil 4, China 4, Spain 4, Algeria 3, Austria 3, Czechia 3, Lesotho 3, Taiwan 3, Zimbabwe 3, Argentina 2, Croatia 2, Egypt 2, France 2, India 2, Israel 2, Kazakhstan 2, Morocco 2, Slovenia 2, Tunisia 2, Australia 1, Belgium 1, Columbia 1, Indonesia 1, Jamaica 1, Moldova 1, New Zealand 1, Nigeria 1, Norway 1, Pakistan 1, Russian Federation 1, Saudi Arabia 1, Slovakia 1, Suriname 1, Sweden 1, Switzerland 1, Turkey 1.

Website: [www.igu-icatoponymy.org](http://www.igu-icatoponymy.org)

### 2.2 Meetings

- (1) ICC pre-conference workshop “Role and structure of national place-name boards”, Tokyo [Tōkyō], 15<sup>th</sup> July 2019

The coincidence of the facts that Japan is in the process of establishing a national place-name board and the 29<sup>th</sup> International Cartographic Conference (ICC) took place in Tokyo triggered the idea to present in a pre-conference workshop some examples of good practice in other countries to potential members of this board. This workshop was organized by Peter JORDAN and Kohei WATANABE and took place in the main ICC conference building Miraikan. It saw four examples presented: Poland's national place-name commissions (by Maciej ZYCH, Poland), the Korean Committee on Geographical Names (by Sungjae CHOO and Hyo Hyun SUNG, both Republic of Korea), the Austrian Board on Geographical Names and Germany's Permanent Committee on Geographical Names (both by Peter JORDAN, Austria). The papers as well as an intensive final debate with the predominantly Japanese audience may have conveyed some useful suggestions how to structure a future board of Japan.

**(2) 29<sup>th</sup> International Cartographic Conference (ICC), Tokyo [Tōkyō], Japan, 15-20 July 2019**

**Session 1: General approaches**, Chair: Peter JORDAN (Austrian Academy of Sciences)

WŁOSKOWICZ, Wojciech (Poland): Cartographers and geographers as toponym users, creators, and promoters. A linguistic perspective on cartographic and textual dissemination of geographical names

WATANABE, Kohei et al. (Japan): On the SCJ report "Challenges for the national standardisation of geographical names in Japan"

FERLAND, Yaïves; MOSTAFAVI, Mir A. (Canada): From Spatial to Platial Information Systems: For a Better Representation of the Sense of Place

**Session 2: Place names and identity**, Chair: Sungjae CHOO (Kyung Hee University Seoul)

ALASLI, Malak (Morocco): Toponyms' contribution to identity: The case study of Rabat (Morocco)

HUANG, Wenchuan (Taiwan): Memory and local Identity: the Persistence of Colonial-Era Street Names in Hong kong after 1997

BARTOS-ELEKES, Zsombor (Romania): Mapping the core and periphery applied to a choronym (the case of Székely Land)

APRIADSA, Albina et al. (Indonesia): Unveil the "Lost Toponyms" in the Northern Part of the Menoreh Mountains, Java, Indonesia

**Session 3: Place names and map design**, Chair: Cosimo PALAGIANO (Università di Sapienza)

BINIEK, Sébastien et al. (France): Fifty shades of Roboto: Text Design Choices and Categories in Multi-Scale Maps

SUGA, Masaki et al. (Japan): Multilingualization Experiment of Geographical Name Information Using Vector Tile Format

TINGHUA Ai, YINGZHE Lei (China): Point Label Placement on Hexagonal Map Grids

CAHYONO, Ari (Indonesia): Geographical names to support monitoring of the regional dynamic in Magelang, Central Java, Indonesia

**(3) 5<sup>th</sup> International Symposium on Place Names (ISPN) "Recognition, regulation, revitalisation: place names and indigenous languages", Clarens, South Africa, 18-20 September 2019** (see Fig. 1)

After four years the small town Clarens in South Africa, located in a fascinating scenery of table mountains near to Lesotho hosted again an event of the ISPN series organized by the Joint IGU/ICA Commission on Toponymy and the Unit for Language Facilitation and Empowerment at the University of the Free State (UFS). ISPN 2019 aimed to explore the link between the processes

of researching, maintaining, and restoring indigenous place names, and the preservation and promotion of the indigenous languages from which these place names originate.

The symposium was attended by about 30 linguists, geographers and cartographers from 10 mainly African and European countries, but also from Canada, and saw 20 paper presentations. Keynotes were presented by Peter JORDAN (Austria), who outlined current geographical and cartographic research directions in toponymy, and Charles PFUKWA (Zimbabwe), who highlighted the toponymy of the indigenous languages in his country and beyond. Peter E. RAPER (South Africa) very interestingly addressed Bushman influence on Early Cape names. Name changes and their political background with special reference to urban names was another major topic. Frédéric GIRAUT (Switzerland) presented the commendable initiative of an African neotponymy academic observatory network (<https://neotopo.hypotheses.org/category/african-neotponymy-observatory-in-network>). A final highlight of the symposium were papers on the use of place names in the South African sign language presented by Susan LOMBARD, Emily MATABANE and Theodorus DU PLESSIS (all South Africa). Sign languages describe prominent, widely known geographical features by the visual appearance of a landmark, e.g., Cape Town in South Africa by the Table Mountain, and smaller places by a sign for the first letter of their written name.

The symposium witnessed the density of toponymic issues in the southern part of Africa, but also the wealth of toponymic expertise available there.

**Fig. 1:** Symposium in Clarens 2019





**(4) Symposium “Place names and migration”, Vienna [Wien], 6-8 November 2019 (see Fig. 2)**

Migration is a global and all-time phenomenon. Ever since humankind exists, people were migrating – individually or in groups. Concerning place names people can migrate to rather scarcely named areas but also to areas that have a densely and well-established namescape. Especially in the latter case it is interesting to look on how people – often with a different linguistic and cultural background – deal with the situation. Very much depends also on the political background of migration: Does it occur in the context of conquest and colonization or is it not associated with political power? And how do host societies react to the naming practice of migrants?

These and other questions were in the focus of a symposium organized at the occasion of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Austrian Board of Geographical Names (AKO) by AKO, UNGEGN’s Dutch- and German-speaking Division (DGSD), the Joint ICA/IGU Commission on Toponymy, the Austrian Federal Office of Metrology and Surveying (BEV) and the Austrian Geographical Society (ÖGG) in the premises of BEV. 95 toponymists and guests from 19 countries and 5 continents saw 27 paper presentations, among them several current and former UNGEGN members like Sungjae CHOO, Peter JORDAN, Young-Hoon KIM, Ferjan ORMELING, and Cosimo PALAGIANO. The event was honoured by the presence of the former UNGEGN chair Helen KERFOOT as well as the current UNGEGN chair Pierre JAILLARD. Peter JORDAN had the pleasure to invite all participants for a social dinner at the occasion of his 70<sup>th</sup> birthday.

**Fig. 2:** Symposium in Vienna 2019



### **(5) Meetings planned for 2021 and later**

**IGU Conference on Heritage Geographies: Politics, Uses and Governance of the Past, Lecce (Italy), 26-28 May 2021.** Toponymic sessions on the topic “Place names as a part of the cultural heritage” with 16 papers.

**8<sup>th</sup> EuGeo Congress on the Geography of Europe, Prague (Czechia), 28 June – 1 July 2021.** Toponymic session “Minority place-name standardization – A comparison of regulations and approaches in Europe” with 8 papers. The congress is planned as a hybrid event.

**34<sup>th</sup> IGU International Geographical Congress, Istanbul (Turkey), 16-21 August 2021.** Toponymic sessions on the topic “Place names as indicators of human perception of space” with 20 papers. The Congress is planned as a virtual event.

**6<sup>th</sup> International Symposium on Place Names “Standardization and the wealth of place names – aspects of a delicate relationship”, Bloemfontein (South Africa), 29 September – 1 October 2021.** The symposium is planned as a hybrid event. Call for papers has ended.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Pan American International Symposium on Toponymy (2<sup>nd</sup> SIPAT), Rio de Janeiro (Brazil), 9-11 October 2021.** The symposium is planned as a virtual event. Abstracts due by 1 September 2021.

“**Atlases in Time – National and Regional Issues**”, conference at the occasion of 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Instituto Geográfico Nacional (IGN), **Madrid (Spain), April 2022**, in cooperation with the ICA Commission on Atlases. Abstracts for toponymic papers due by 31 January 2022.

### **2.3 Publications**

Proceedings of the two international symposia in 2019 co-organized by the Joint ICA/IGU Commission on Toponymy, i.e., 18-20 September in Clarens (South Africa) and 6-8 November in Vienna (Austria), appeared in 2020 and early in 2021. The proceedings of the Vienna symposium were jointly sponsored by IGU and ICA.

**Chrismi-Rinda LOTH (ed.) (2020), Recognition, regulation, revitalisation: place names and indigenous languages. Proceedings of the 5<sup>th</sup> International Symposium on Place Names 2019. Bloemfontein: Sun Bonani Scholar.**

RAPER, Peter R.: Bushman influence on early Cape place names

MÖLLER, Lucie A.: Translated toponymic texts: a key to language artefacts

NTULI, Sibusiso: Reflections on place names in indigenous languages

DE LANGE, Jani: The South African Geographical Names Council and the restoration of the South African NBICL

LIEBENBERG, Helena: Indigenous place names in VOC Cape documents

KHOTSO, Palesa; CHELE, ‘Mampoi: Attrition of indigenous place names among the Basotho: loss of history and culture

LOMBAARD, Susan: Place names in South Africa: the deaf way

HIEMÄE, Reet: Place names and epidemics: a case study of handling collective fear



- REINSMA, Riemer: Looking for the middle of nowhere: nicknames denoting imaginary remote locations and alluding to really existing ones
- ZHOU, Sindiso; LANDA Nhlanhla; TSHOTSHO, Baba: In conversation with the socio-economic and socio-political determinants of naming the place in Bulawayo's *We Need New Names*
- LUBBE, Johan: The role of politics, culture and linguistic factors in the naming and renaming of street and suburb names – a case study
- MAMVURA, Zvinashe: A gendered analysis of the European place-naming system in Salisbury, Rhodesia, c.1890 to 1980
- JORDAN, Peter: Current geographical research directions in toponymy

**Allison DOLLIMORE & Peter JORDAN (eds.) (2021), Place Names and Migration. Proceedings of the Symposium in Vienna, 6-8 November 2019 (= Name & Place, Vol. 9). Hamburg: Verlag Dr. Kovač.**

### **Section 1: The research field and trans-continental contacts**

- JORDAN, Peter (Vienna [Wien]): “Place names and migration” as a research field
- ORMELING, Ferjan (Amsterdam): Dutch names worldwide: the naming behaviour of Dutch explorers in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries
- LOUATI, Fatima (Tlemcen, Algeria); BOUHADJER, Souad (Saida, Algeria): A diachronic study of Phoenician place names in the Middle East and North Africa
- PALAGIANO, Cosimo; CAPUZZO, Ester (both Rome [Roma]): The transfer of place names from Italy to Latin America

### **Section 2: Extra-European situations**

- CHOO, Sungjae; YOON, Jihwan (both Seoul [Söul]): A case of the impelled migration before and during the Korean War
- LIŠČÁK, Vladimír (Prague [Praha]): Han immigration to Taiwan since the 17<sup>th</sup> century and changes in place names
- HUANG, Wenchuan (Taiwan): Street names embodying colonial legacy and spatial politics in Hong Kong
- KANG, Peter (Taipeh [Taipei]): Hokkien toponyms used by Hokkien immigrants in Batavia, Java: Cases from the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries
- MATTHEWS, Philip (Lower Hutt, New Zealand): The consequences of British colonization for geonames in New Zealand

### **Section 3: European situations**

- LUCARNO, Guido (Milan [Milano], Italy); BACHER, Valeria; BACHER, Annamaria (both Formazza, Italy): Toponymy of Walser immigration in the Italian Alps since the 13<sup>th</sup> century. A survey in the Formazza Valley
- POHL, Heinz-Dieter (Klagenfurt am Wörthersee, Austria): Slovenian place names in Carinthia and East Tyrol
- WŁOSKOWICZ, Wojciech (Cracow [Kraków], Poland): Migrations as the cause of diachronic toponymic layers in the Polish Beskids
- SASI, Attila; MIKESY, Gábor (both Budapest): The Pannonian Basin: at the crossroads of peoples
- MANU, Margareta Magda (Bucharest [București]): Ethnonyms used for and by Romanian migrant groups in Transylvania and their reflections in toponymy

FELECAN, Oliviu (Baia Mare & Cluj-Napoca, Romania): Romanian unofficial urban toponyms related to recent migration

MÁCHA, Přemysl (Brno, Czechia): Migrants and migration in the linguistic landscape of Brno, Czechia

CRLJENKO, Ivana (Zagreb): Traces of Croatian migrations in the toponymy of several European countries

HERZEN, Andrey (Moscow [Moskva]): The historical-geographical context of transferred toponyms

The Group of Experts is requested to:

- (1) Take note of the efforts made to spread the knowledge on geographical names and to foster geographical and cartographic research in toponymy.
- (2) Consider new topics and fields of toponymic research so far insufficiently cultivated and to be addressed by future projects of the Joint ICA/IGU Commission on Toponymy.
- (3) Consider how the Joint ICA/IGU Commission on Toponymy could enforce its support for UNGEGN's main task of place-name standardization.