



**UNITED NATIONS GROUP OF EXPERTS ON GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES**  
**Romano-Hellenic Division**

International Scientific Symposium  
**“Toponyms as a means of expressing identification, location, possession, belonging,  
division, and respect for peoples’ cultures”**

**ABSTRACTS**

**11<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2024**

***Introduction***

**Andrea Cantile (Chair of UNGEGN’s Romano-Hellenic Division - Italia)**

***Identification, location, possession, belonging, division, and respect for peoples’ cultures: many aspects to consider for a toponymic ethics***

In addition to the practical functions of identification and localization, which primarily address the daily needs of social life by eliminating any ambiguity in indicating a specific part of the Earth, toponyms have the power to transform a space into a place. More precisely, they initiate the transformation of a space into a place, lived in and/or frequented by one or more groups of people. This transformation imbues the place with increasing meaning as knowledge grows and experiences accumulate. In such places, individuals develop a sense of belonging, establish emotional connections, and build what we call “identity.”

Although this term is sometimes overused today, there is no doubt that there is a relationship between places and individuals in the formation of self-awareness, personal history, distinctive traits, and a sense of belonging to both a social group and the place itself.

However, the term “identity” can be problematic when it implies belonging and possession. This can lead to extreme nostalgic feelings among natives, sometimes resulting in the irrational glorification of the past. It can also lead to the spread of clichés that gratuitously attribute identity characteristics to places and entire social groups based solely on banal preconceived stereotypes. Additionally, the use of names linked to colonialism, slavery, or those that express derogatory, belittling, contemptuous, dishonoring, offensive, injurious, defamatory, or scurrilous adjectives can be harmful.

The multifaceted nature of place names, with their historical, cultural, and moral significance, thus takes on particular relevance in the moral field. They can become agents of values and disvalues, precisely because they express identification, location, possession, belonging, division, and respect for people’s cultures.

All this underscores the need to consider the power of place names and to develop a toponymic ethical code. This code should incorporate the recommendations of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names, as well as the experiences of countries that have already undertaken similar initiatives. The goal is to equip public institutions with the onomaturgical authority to exercise this function with inclusiveness and respect for people’s cultures.

*First session chaired by Elena Dai Prà (Chair of IGU Commission on Toponymy jointly with the International Cartographic Association - University of Trento - Italia)*

**Pierre Jaillard (Chair of UNGEGN - France)**

*Exchanges of geographical names among lexical borrowings*

Place names belong to the languages that use them, but within those languages they are more specifically proper names. While many linguistic observations about transfers between languages apply without difficulty to proper names, their semantic peculiarities lead us to recognise some particular tendencies in the way they are transferred from one language to another.

More specifically, the translation of proper names from one language to another in the form of exonyms or calques appears to be as relevant as the translation of words of the common language on the cognitive level, because we think spontaneously in our own linguistic reference frame, and even more relevant on the semantic level, in the absence of any risk of discrepancy between the referents of the corresponding names in different languages. On the other hand, in the absence of an obvious translation, the psychological tendency to identify the name with the thing leads us to conceive borrowing as a scrupulous respect for the local written form, right down to the diacritical marks.

Unfortunately, the current resolutions of the UNGEGN do not fully conform to this ideal scheme. They certainly converge perfectly with it on the way in which foreign names should be borrowed (1967/I/10). They appear to allow at least partial calques, or can and must be interpreted in this way (1977/III/19). On the other hand, they continue to express opposition in principle to exonyms, even though it is understandable that this opposition is now restricted to "international use" (1972/II/31) and to "exonyms giving rise to international problems" (1982/IV/20).

**Helen Kerfoot (Honorary Chair of UNGEGN - Canada)**

*Some thoughts on geographical names as source of conflicts*

The work of UNGEGN is based on agreement and consensus, with national geographical names authorities aiming for collaboration before decision-making. However, not every toponym is acceptable to all involved and some are the subject of dispute and conflict.

Disagreements are not limited by time or space, but in this paper, I will focus on those that are relatively recent and illustrate conflict within a country, as well as a few that are international in nature. I put these ideas forward not as a finished thesis, but rather to trigger others to research the subject.

Even at a local level, emotions may flare up over the written form of names: their spelling; their punctuation; their suitability to a region's tourism, etc. On a wider and more significant level, the "Black Lives Matter" movement in North America, and in Canada "Truth and Reconciliation" with regard to Indigenous peoples have brought to public attention geographical names – particularly of streets, parks and buildings – that are particularly upsetting and unacceptable to groups who have been wronged. With consultation, some such names have been changed and new ones assigned; at the same time this has brought into public discussion the concern of trying to "change history".

Toponyms in conflict within a country can result for a number of reasons, for example: terminology that today is considered derogatory or pejorative to certain groups; names that carry some sort of stigma; names used in local/regional languages versus those in the national language(s); names

resulting from colonialism; names imposed by explorers with no regard to the local population or language; names imposed by illegal occupation ... and so on.

Internationally, names conflict is certainly familiar to us in cases of land areas (for example, Cyprus, Falkland Islands and North Macedonia) and for some international waters. Moreover, insensitive use of exonyms may also be a source of conflict.

Can these types of conflicts over geographical names be resolved amicably? Building inclusivity and collaboration to address an issue may be a start, but some conflicts are emotional and deep-rooted, and likely to continue well into the future.

**Simonetta Conti and Domenico Proietti (University of Campania “Luigi Vanvitelli” - Italia)**

***‘With feet on the ground’: toponymy as an object and research tool between geography and linguistics***

The naming of parts, physical features or settlements in an area by means of proper names (toponyms, hydronyms, oronyms, etc.) or terms representing its morphology is certainly one of the decisive acts/moments in the anthropization process of a territory, as result of which we can speak ‘landscape’ (“paesaggio”) as a cultural heritage/good (Costituzione italiana, articles 9, 117, 134, 136, 142). Within this, the acts of naming through which, with the consent of a community, toponyms or terms describing physical features of the territory are themselves a cultural, intangible heritage (Cantile 2016; “inoggettuale”, Cirese 2022), to be known and safeguarded (Camiz ed. 2016; Conti 2018) in its multiple dimensions and values (historical, historical-archaeological, linguistic and, obviously, historical-geographical). In 1975, Osvaldo Baldacci observed: “The common or dialectal geographical term expresses a ‘reflected landscape’, in the sense that its presence, its insistence, its survival, qualify the salient aspects of the territory and measure its human participation”.

Because of this plurality of functions and meanings, toponymy has been the subject, particularly in Italy (where it is largely the result of historical sedimentation over three millennia), of a very rich series of repertories that from the 15th century (Flavio Biondo’s *Italia illustrata*) to the various preunification states reach the 20th century with the *Indice generale della Carta d’Italia del TCI* (1916), (1916), with data from the General Population Censuses from 1951 to 2011 carried out by ISTAT, with the *Dizionario degli etnici e dei toponimi italiani* (1981) by Teresa Cappello and Carlo Tagliavini and with the *Dizionario di toponomastica* (1990), edited by Giuliano Gasca Queirazza and other linguists. Among them, Giovanni Battista Pellegrini, of whom, in addition to his research on Etruscan, Italic and Venetian toponymy, it is worth mentioning the *Toponomastica italiana* (1990), with a rich bibliography. An overview of linguistic studies on Italian toponymy can be found in Rohlf’s 1972, to be updated with Marcato 2011.

Among the contributions of geographers should be mentioned since the eighties of the 19th century Bartolomeo Malfatti (1878) Olinto Marinelli and Cesare Battisti and (1899), Gabriele Grasso (1900), Giuseppe Ricchieri (1901), Piero Gribaudi (1902-1903) and many others. After the Great War, the topic and the problem of toponymy moved from geographical-physical and anthropic themes, especially to geopolitical ones, with the *Prontuari dei nomi locali dell’Alto Adige* by Ettore Tolomei and other former unredeemed territories. During the Second World War, Osvaldo Baldacci remembered Cesare Battisti. After the seventies, a large group of geographers again turned to the

problem and toponymy studies. These include Laura Cassi, Vincenzo Aversano, Gabriella Arena, Gino De Vecchis, Simonetta Conti, Elena dai Prà and Massimo Rossi.

**Cosimo Palagiano (Emeritus Sapienza - University of Roma and Academy of Lincei - Italia)**  
***The renewed attention to Toponymy by Italian scholars***

The renewed attention to Toponymy by Italian scholars dates back to the mid-2000s, when it was organized at the Italian Geographical Society a meeting with some eminent geographers and linguistics to verify the opportunity to establish a group of Italian scholars dealing the toponymy from the geographical point of view, and on the same occasion the birth of the Italian Association of Toponymy was proposed, but such attempt did not yield the desired outcome.

Parallely, at the Italian Geographic Military Institute, a renewed impetus was given to the activities of the Permanent Commission for the revision of the toponymy in the Map of Italy and the Romano-Hellenic Division of UNGEGN, which resumed its periodic meetings and the participation in the international sessions and conferences for the standardisation of geographical names.

In 2007 I once again addressed the problem of the opportunity to set up a group of scholars to deal with toponymy from a geographical point of view on the occasion of the UNGEGN Session in Vienna. On that occasion, a valuable support came from both Helen Kerfoot chair of UNGEGN and Georg Gartner, current chair of the International Cartographic Association (ICA).

The first step toward the establishment of an International Toponymy Commission led by IGU was begun at Rome, when during the ICSU Conference of 4-8 October 2010, Ron Abler President of IGU, Michael Meadows of the IGU Steering Committee, Giuliano Bellezza, president of the Home of Geography and myself had an informal meeting to establishing the programmatic lines of a future IGU Toponymy Commission jointly with ICA, which is the current name of the Commission. During the Regional Geographical Conference of Santiago de Chile in late November 2011 a provisional programme was proposed for establishing a Commission on Toponymy between IGU and ICA.

The official institution of the IGU Commission (Jointly with ICA) on Toponymy with Steering Committee and members and programme was officially approved during the International Geographical Congress of Cologne in 2012. Furthermore the Commission has research centers all over the world, such as in Brazil and South Africa which in turn organize very important conference and meeting with particular specificity.

During the last years relationships with the UNGEGN and its Romano-Hellenic Division are very intense and fruitful. The joint commitment carried out in recent years has led to the birth of a series of events which have brought to the attention of scholars the urgent need to revitalize studies in the field of toponymy.

It is right to remember:

- The workshop on “Place-names changes” held in 2014 at the Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei in Rome;
- The first international scientific symposiums held in Florence in 2015, on “Place name as intangible cultural heritage”;
- The second international scientific symposiums held in Venice in 2018, on “Toponymy and Cartography between History and Geography”;

- The third international scientific symposiums held in Naples in 2021, on the “Permanence, transformation, substitution and oblivion of geographical names”.

And other event like:

- The Geographical Names Day organized in Florence in 2017, with a very large participation of scholars and all the Italian scientific geography associations;
- The itinerant historical-cartographic exhibitions and the conference and lectures organized in some Italian university;
- And, last but not least, the courses for municipal and regional technicians involved in toponymy.

In recent time, the trend of the Italian studies on Toponymy have reached such a level of attention that they have determined during the last few months:

- The organization of a new conference at the Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei on “Literary, polar and extraterrestrial place names”;
- The fourth international scientific symposium of Romano-Hellenic Division;
- The birth of a research group within the Association of Italian Geographers, which is the body that brings together all Italian academic geographers;
- The organization of a further international conference on toponymy by the Italian Center for Historical-Geographical Studies and the University of Salerno, scheduled for next December.

All these activities and events demonstrate the increased attention of Italian institutions and scholars towards the topic of toponymy and give rise to hope for new progress in this field.

### **Giuseppe Muti (University of Insubria - Italia)**

#### ***In the name of peace. Toponymy, conflict, peace making and peace building processes***

Toponymy and the formal and informal processes of naming space can trigger different forms of conflictuality, just as they can play a key role in peacemaking and peacebuilding processes, from the national to the local scale.

Place naming can be chosen or imposed and, even when it is not commemorative in nature, it plays a fundamental role in conveying some collective memories at the expense of others, spatialising the identity representations of different political and social groups.

Memories engraved in space, moreover, can 'remember' the wrongs suffered or can 'forget' the prevarications perpetrated, in such a way as to produce, from time to time, geographies of justice or injustice capable of influencing the social and political relations of the present and the future.

Drawing on several concrete cases recently studied by the members of the (newly formed) Working Group on Toponymy of the Association of Italian Geographers, the contribution intends to reflect on the relationship between toponymy, conflictuality and processes of peace making and consolidation, dwelling both on the importance of toponymy policies in multilingual and contested spaces and on the divisive or inclusive, but never neutral, dimension of the practices of naming space at different geographical scales.

12<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2024

*Second session chaired by Catherine Cheetham (Permanent Committee on Geographical Names - United Kingdom)*

**Andrea Cantile, Gabriele Ciacci, and Claudio Rocchini (Commission for Italian official toponymy - Italian Geographic Military Institute - Italia)**

***The first version of new Italian National Toponymic Database (INTDB 1.0)***

The paper will illustrate the characteristics and contents of the new Italian National Toponymic Database (INTDB 1.0) in its first, provisional version.

The presentation will start with a brief reminder of the first Italian toponymic database, called “DBTopo25K”, achieved by the Italian Geographic Military Institute (IGMI), the criteria that regulated its standardization from an orthographic point of view and the increase in the number of toponyms, thank to the first project started in 2017 in cooperation with the Region of Veneto.

Subsequently, the contribution will illustrate the contents of the new INTDB 1.0, with information about the sources, the data structure, the geodetic reference system and the geometries that regulate the punctual, linear, and areal positioning of all toponyms, as well as the complex theme of their temporal versioning, their classification based on predefined classes of geographic objects, and the numerical consistency overall.

Particular attention will also be paid to the enforcement of the standards indicated by the INSPIRE Data Specification on Geographical Names – Technical Guidelines (D2.8.I.3, 17 April 2014), to the type of license that characterizes the use of the data, and to their free transferability and interoperability.

At the end, the next implementation objectives of the new contents and the dynamic revision procedure of the DB entries will also be illustrated, through the contribution of local and territorial authorities and some brief examples of database queries will be shown.

**Paolo Benetton, Francesco di Pedè, and Gianpiero Zaffi Borgetti (Revenue Agency, Italian Institute for Statistics, Institute for Finance and Local Economy and National Ass. of Italian Municipalities - Italia)**

***House numbers and street names’ national registry (ANNCSU)***

The House numbers and street names’ national registry (ANNCSU), developed by Istat and the Revenue Agency pursuant to Decree-Law October 18, 2012, n. 179 and the subsequent implementing DPCM, is a computerized archive, dynamically maintained and certified by Italian municipalities. In accordance with the Population Registry Regulation (DPR May 30, 1989, n.223) and the INSPIRE directive (2007/2/EC of March 14, 2007) on addresses, it contains for each municipality the list of circulation areas and the respective civic numbers, as well as their coordinates, if provided by the municipality that owns the data.

This archive aims to create a central reference database for municipal street directories and address books to be used by public administrations and the entire country. In addition to the Revenue Agency and Istat, the actors involved are Italian municipalities, which hold the onomastic data according to the Population Registry Regulation.

The activities of constituting the ANNCSU began in 2010 thanks to a specific agreement between the Agency and Istat, using the Agency's IT infrastructure called the Portal for Municipalities, already used by Italian municipalities for the use of cadastral data. The organizational model adopted, which is still valid, allowed for the completion of the agreed activities before the start of the "15th census of population and housing" and enabled the digitization, coding, and standardization of municipal street directories, which were often paper-based until that time.

With the circular 17/05/2022 sent by Istat to all Italian municipalities, the activity of transferring data to ANNCSU by the municipalities was initiated, as provided by art. 6 of the aforementioned DPCM. ANNCSU is activated for each municipality upon completion of the data transfer activity, and data that had been closed for over a decade in a virtual drawer, previously accessible only to the municipality, the Agency, and Istat, are made available within the gradually implemented consultation services.

The contents and services of ANNCSU are agreed by Istat and the Agency, with input from ANCI within a specifically established permanent Technical Working Group.

Since its activation, ANNCSU data have been used exclusively by municipalities for their institutional activities and constitute, according to art. 4 of the DPCM, the national reference for municipal street directories and address books.

The transfer of data to ANNCSU is not the end point but the first essential step marking the start of the Archive as a national reference infrastructure. It is now necessary to verify and improve the quality of the data, promote the georeferencing of civic numbers through regulatory proposals, ensure the constant updating of the Archive to prevent obsolescence, and above all, facilitate the effective and easy use of ANNCSU data by municipalities and other national databases of interest, such as the National Resident Population Registry (ANPR). A crucial step will undoubtedly be the activation of "open data" services provided by the Implementing Regulation (EU) 2023/138, which includes addresses among the "*high-value datasets*" due to their significant benefits for society, the environment and the economy.

**Camilla Giantomasso, and Bruno Di Stefano (Sapienza - University of Roma, and University of Roma Tre) - Italia**

***The politics of naming between aesthetics of power and identity construction: the case-study of the Quartiere Africano of Rome***

According to the most recent literature on the cultural politics of naming, toponyms and street names play an important role as "agent of memory", as they re-define a public geography of events that strengthens both sense of belonging and identity bonds among citizens. Nevertheless, this form of heritage is never accidental. Indeed, it is the result of a broader process of identity-building planned by an elite group and often reluctantly endured by the population.

Developing from such awareness, our presentation aims to investigate the toponyms of the Quartiere Africano in Rome, a district established in the northeastern area of the capital in the very first decades of the Twentieth Century. To do so, we will consider the vast array of street names that were selected by the Fascist Regime to celebrate its "imperial" ambition as well as the colonial past of the Kingdom of Italy, from the early geographical exploration of the late nineteenth century to the overseas conquests that preceded the Second World War. Through field work, the paper relates

colonial heritage to identity perception, investigating to what extent and to what degree elements of awareness and knowledge are sedimented within the territory.

**Anna Rosa Candura, Luca Fois, and Emanuele Poli (Universities of Pavia, Modena and Reggio - Italia)**

***For a toponymy of Somaliland: cartographic premises***

Assuming that language is a fundamental portion of a population's identity, to underline the identity of Somaliland, it is essential to study its toponymic issues.

As is known, currently, Africa is not "in the news" (Albanese, Alfieri, Lambruschi, 2021) as far as cultural issues are concerned. In particular, Africa is one of the least studied regions of the Planet in relation to the Italian language (Siebetcheu, 2021), and its cartographic image has been often tainted by errors and incompleteness (Madau, Mariotti, 2004, p. 64).

Furthermore, to analyse the toponymy of Somaliland, there are at least two other obstacles to overcome. The first is the geopolitical identity of this "non-State", which makes, for example, the condition of the Laas Geel site (and its precise definition) especially critical; formally, Laas Geel cannot be protected at a supra-national level by organizations such as UNESCO. The second is the linguistic stratification (Somali, Arab, Latin, Portuguese, English, French and Italian) that for centuries affected this portion of the Horn of Africa, comprised the final written codification imposed by Siyyad Barre's government in 1972, that adopted the Latin writing system (Renders, 2012, pp. XVII-XVIII, passim).

Due to these linguistic vicissitudes, identifying, using, writing and citing a toponym always involves the risk of incurring errors or inaccuracies. Moreover, when using the Somali language, transliteration problems overlap with others of phonetic transcription (Mukhtar, 2003).

Against this backdrop, the paper will focus on some case studies aiming to understand whether it is possible to propose an effective toponymic investigation method.

**Girolamo Lombardo (Former Director of Landscape Units of Sicilian Region - Italia)**

***The toponymy of the ancient Sicilian road system***

Based on cadastral & topographic maps (IGM 1:25.000) of the first half of the 20th century, 688 decrees establishing public ownership of historic royal roads & other archival sources, the research aims at recovering the original toponyms of this very fine-grained historic road system, traveled by men & good, with persistence & "invariants", due to archaic, rural and pastoral customs: a most worthy infrastructural heritage.

**Cosimo Palagiano (Emeritus Sapienza - University of Roma and Academy of Lincei - Italia)**

***Central Places and their Changes in the History of Cartography***

Until now toponymic and cartographic studies have only considered individual places in their history and the reasons for their foundation.

The name, its changes, exonyms and endonyms and the political power expressed have been also investigated.



More recently research has been done on the cloning of names far from their original places. In short only the single place name and the place itself are considering, without taking into account the network of interests and relationships between places and territory. Just as the individual history can be reconstructed on the place names themselves, it should also be possible to consider the changes over time of this system of interests and relationships, which gradually become more complex from time to time.

The networks of central places vary over time and according to rules of the administrations.

The present study should have the ambition to investigate the history of some of these networks by researching them in the cartography. In this case the greatest attention could be paid to:

- 1) Morphology of territory;
- 2) Limits of administrative districts (dioceses, historical regions, reins, districts etc.);
- 3) Communications routes and services;
- 4) Inhabited places and their classification based on the number of inhabitants subject to taxes (fuochi);
- 5) Distance from the sea;
- 6) Islands and their relationships with the continent.

A splendid example is the Tabula Peutingeriana, where the communication routes and the inhabited places are marked, with the city of Rome stands out with great graphic evidence.

Where possible, the central place method of Walter Christaller (1933) and Eliseo Bonetti (1964) and the territorial systems of spatial iterations (e.g. William Reilly's model, from the 30s) could be applied.

This could help in searching for lost and forgotten locations, once the functions of such as networks has been discovered.

We can list, as far as Italy is concerned, several examples relating to the Duchy of Milan, the Republic of Florence, the Kingdom of Naples, the Papal State, and their long historical events and changes.

An example of a planned network should be represented by the Pontine Plain.

A research this demands the collection of data from numerous written, archeological and cartographic sources.

Consequently a research as this can be carry out through the collaboration of many skills – historians, archeologists, mathematicians, economists, cartographers – as well as geographers.

For my part – in addition to presenting the problem, which is of great importance and interest – I will provide only a few examples in the final text.

### **Domenico Proietti (University of Campania “Luigi Vanvitelli” - Italia)**

#### ***“Di qua dal Faro”: toponymic and onomastic reflections of the organization of the territory in the Norman and Swabian ages in Southern Italy***

The object of the communication is the study of the reflections of the territorial organisation on the toponymy and onomastics of mainland southern Italy ('di qua dal Faro') during the Norman and Swabian ages. Under the reign of Roger II (1130-1154), was created the office of the *Duana baronum*, with headquarters in Salerno and the task of managing the royal and state-property lands, except for the fiefs of Calabria and Sicily. The main instrument of this office (later integrated into the Swabian administration) was the compilation and updating of the *Catalogus baronum*

(1150-1152, rewritten and updated in 1166 and 1175), a register of the land seignories held by feudal lords of the Kingdom with the determination of their military obligations. Incorporated under the reign of Frederick II (1239-1240), it was copied and added to the Angevin registers. Published in a critical edition by E. Jamison in 1972, it was enriched in 1984 by an extensive commentary by E. Cuozzo. Scarcely explored from a historical-linguistic point of view, it is an important source to reconstruct, on the basis of the toponymic and onomastic documentation, the settlement and territorial administration methods of the conquerors compared to previous dominations (Normans vs. Lombards, Swabians vs. Normans), and the socio-cultural processes of definition and identification of the new ruling aristocracies.

The research, with reference to the classical studies of L.-R. Ménager (1975-1981) and more recent contributions (Varvaro 1997), will focus on Norman-era documents written in the county of Aversa, later principality of Capua-Aversa (published in Gallo 1926 and in Bova 1996) and on the data relating to the Abruzzi-Molise counties and to the duchy of Apulia in the *Catalogus baronum*.

### **Arturo Gallia and Mirko Castaldi (University of Roma Tre - Italia)**

#### ***Adriano Balbi and the Naming of the World. The relationship between geography and cartography in the construction of a scientific geographical lexicon (first half of the 19th century)***

In the first half of the 19th century Adriano Balbi (1782-1848) was one of the greatest geographers in Italy and Europe. His scientific output was extremely vast and, despite the slow pace of publishing, was constantly being updated. He tried to keep up with new discoveries of 'unknown and unexplored' territories, which were gradually brought to the headlines and available to the scientific community. His work influenced that of other geographers and cartographers, who used it as a source, among them Dufour and Marzolla. Evangelista Azzi (1793-1848), a cartographer and military topographer who moved in the first half of the 19th century in the Duchies of Parma, produced cartography dedicated to school education. A work of great value was his world map in two Emisferi (1838), conceived as an enormous wall map (2 x 4 metres) that summarised the geographical, historical and ethnographic knowledge of the time, on a par with an encyclopaedic work. For the collection of data, he relied on contemporary geographical and cartographic works, including those of Adriano Balbi, with whom he managed to weave a close epistolary relationship. The 'master of geography' understood the importance of a cartographic restitution of his works and supported the Parmesan in his work, transferring numerous notions to him. Among these was the one related to seas and oceans, which in the Hemispheres are named as they appear in the works of the Venetian geographer. Specifically, the Mappamondo is the first map in which the definition of 'open Mediterraneans' along the American coasts appears, a definition conceived by Adriano Balbi, based on the insights of French naturalist Charles A. Walckenaer.

The primary objective of the presentation is to show the synthesis between the studies of historical geography and historical cartography on marine spaces, showing a case of direct transposition from text to map of geographical knowledge, also through the use of toponymy. The naming of places and their 'crystallisation' through cartography was part of the vast process of cultural domination of the world and, especially as far as Balbi was concerned, affirmed its role in the cultural scientific debate that was developing among European geographers at the time. The case study allows us to understand the dialogue between geographers and cartographers in conveying a narrative of

geographical knowledge, in affirming specific designations, overcoming the vision of a descriptive geography in favour of the recognition of a complex network fervid with ideas and methodological theoretical proposals often hidden in the shadow of the national processes that characterised the 19th century.

**Tika Dwi Saputri, Harry Ferdiansyah, and Yohanes Seffan Handana (Geospatial Information Agency - Indonesia)**

***The Evolution of the Mountain Names in the West Java Province Based on Cartographic Sources***

The study delves into the historical and cultural progression of mountain names in West Java Province, Indonesia, a region famous for its series of active and dormant volcanoes.

Starting from the period of Dutch colonization to the present day, mapping practices were heavily influenced by Dutch culture, impacting language, spelling, and toponymy.

Following Indonesia's independence, adjustments were made to reflect Bahasa as the national language and accommodate local languages. The objective of this research is to investigate the alterations that have occurred over time, specifically focusing on modifications in spelling and the introduction of new names. These changes will be analyzed by examining a series of maps that represent various historical periods. By studying these maps, a comprehensive understanding of the evolution of mountain names can be gained. The findings offer insights into the region's rich history and cultural heritage, emphasizing the dynamic nature of toponymy in response to societal changes.

**Mandana Kolahdouz Mohammadi (Payam-e Noor University, Teheran - Iran)**

***Navigating Corpus-Driven Approach Toward Decoding Village and Town names of East and West Azerbaijan***

Patterns of place names, or toponyms, weave across Iran's vast landscapes, whispering tales of the country's complex and rich past.

These names are potent symbols of identification, possession, belonging, and even division that go beyond simple geographic location. This study explores the world of Iranian toponyms, illuminating how they serve as cultural heritage markers, defining national identity, and promoting a sense of place-based identification.

This study explores the functions of place names in Iran and highlights the historical splits within the Iranian social fabric and the continuing power of toponyms to bridge the past and present by analyzing the intricate relationship between language, history, and cultural dynamics. To this end, the author using a corpus-driven approach analyzed a list of cities, towns, and villages in East and West Azerbaijan provinces and investigated their linguistic pattern and elements. This indicates how place names function as symbols of identification, location, ownership, belonging, and historical memory in addition to being geographical identifiers. This approach to toponymy can foster intercultural understanding and preserve Iran's unique cultural traditions.

### *Third session chaired by Andreas Hadjiraftis (President of the Permanent Committee for the Standardization of Geographical Names of Cyprus - Kipros)*

**Stefano Piastra (University of Bologna - Italia)**

#### ***Cloning a placename: the toponym 'Shanghai' in Italy***

The period of the so-called 'Old Shanghai', encompassed between the Treaty of Nanjing (1842) and the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945), was a stage during which this urban area was characterized by cosmopolitanism and an impressive economic growth in a quasi-colonial environment, instituted in East Asia after the First Opium War (1839-1842).

The 'reverse of the medal' of this situation, as underlined by many authors and travellers of that time, was inequality: luxury quarters for the upper class (Chinese and foreigners), located in Shanghai's International Settlement and French Concession under the regime of extra-territoriality; social and urban decay for lower and working class (Chinese mostly), in particular in Shanghai's Old City.

In brief, the 'Old Shanghai' was raised into an ambivalent myth: a mercantilist and hedonist city ('The city for sale', 'The Paris of the East'), and/or a decadent city ('The sin city', 'The whore of the East', 'The opium city', 'The paradise for adventurers').

These images of the 'Old Shanghai' were spread worldwide by writers and journalists.

During the so-called 'Nanjing Decade' (1927-1937), Nationalist China led by Chiang Kai-shek and Fascist Italy had a political convergence, Galeazzo Ciano (Mussolini's son in law) was appointed as Consul General in Shanghai (1930-1933) (where he lived together with Edda, Mussolini's daughter), and the ties between the two countries were improved.

By extension, in this phase also the myth of the 'Old Shanghai' (mainly, in the negative sense above) spread in Italy: the placename 'Shanghai' (frequently spelled as 'Sciangai', ignoring the process of romanization of the Chinese characters, following the Italian pronunciation and adopting the policy of the Fascist regime regarding the 'Italiannes' of the toponyms) was cloned, and became the newly invented, often informal, placename for slums or very poor quarters built by Fascism in the suburbs of cities and towns (Rome, Leghorn, Bolzano, but also Santa Sofia, a small town in Romagna region, Northern Italy).

Such a high need of new urban districts has to be linked to the huge internal migrations, mainly directed from the countryside to the cities, which characterized Italy in those years.

After the fall of Fascism, during the afterwar and before the inset of the Italian economic miracle, 'Shanghai'/'Sciangai' experienced a new trajectory as cloned placename.

From one side, because of its dissemination in the country, the toponym was now attested even in the dictionaries of Italian language (A. Panzini, *Dizionario moderno*, Hoepli, Milan, 1950: «Sciangai: quartiere lurido dove alligna la malavita» [«Sciangai: dirty quarter where the organized crime is based»], quoting also the homonymous quarter in Leghorn).

From the other side, the placename continued to identify in Italy, as in the past, poor quarters or blocks (it was the case of 'Sciangai', Genoa, 'Sciangai', Crotone, or 'Sciangai', Marina di Grosseto), but often through the filter of the hope of a social redemption in the next future. There was even a novel with such a political perspective, set in Tor Marancia/Sciangai (Rome): Ugo Zatterin, *Rivolta a Sciangai* [Uprising in Shanghai], Arnoldo Mondadori, Milan, 1952, later translated also in English (*Revolt of the sinners*, Appleton Century, New York, 1955). To confirm the new prominence of the slums of Tor Marancia/Sciangai (Rome) in the national debate, also in

connection with the movement of the Italian neorealism, in the 1950s the Italian newspaper “L’Unità”, funded by the Italian Communist Party, made a journalistic investigation on this settlement; Luce Institute (Rome) conserves a social protest photo reportage focused on the same place.

Most important, in the 1950s, in Italy, a denomination of ‘Shanghai’/‘Sciangai’ for a given place as synonym of social or urban decay had become anachronistic. In fact, after 1949 China had turned into a People’s Republic under the guide of Mao Zedong. Shanghainese opium dens and brothels had been completely closed, creating a new image of Shanghai as the ‘Redeemed City’, purged by Communism, opposed to the decadent ‘Old Shanghai’.

However, for several years after 1949 this new deal of Shanghai was almost ignored in Italy (a country without formal diplomatic relations with PRC until 1970), and the use of the toponymic metaphor analyzed above, taken from an urban environment now no more existing, was conserved. Only with the inset of the Italian economic miracle, starting from the early 1960s, the tradition of denominating poor quarters as ‘Sciangai’ disappeared.

Currently, the divergence of the trajectories between Shanghai, PRC (the most populated and one of the wealthiest cities in the world) and the several Shanghais/Sciangais cloned in Italy in the 20th century (now restored or regenerated, but just quarters or blocks) is impressive: the awareness of the historical and cultural reasons of this toponymic cloning, connected to the former social and urban decay of the ‘Pearl of the East’, is declining, or already absent, also among the Italian residents of those places.

The process of cloning, in Italy during the 20th century, the placename ‘Shanghai’ for indicating a poor and marginal newly built quarter, was not unique: after WWII and Korean War, on the basis of symmetrical clichés of that historical conjuncture regarding the Far East (poverty, high density, social decay), it is attested the similar use of the denomination ‘Corea’ [Korea] for new suburban areas planned for public housing (e.g. in Leghorn or in Milan district).

### **Annamaria Bartolini and Giovanni De Santis (University of Perugia - Italia)**

#### ***From Italy to America: the Franciscan legacy in toponymy***

With 349,940 presences, Americans represent the largest share of tourists (14.5% of foreigners, 5.09% of the total flow) who visited Assisi in 2023 ([www.regioneumbria.it](http://www.regioneumbria.it)). The bond between the two realities is rooted in a distant past that was consolidated in 1969 with the twinning of the Umbrian town with the American city of San Francisco.

Actually, the spiritual influence of the patron saint of Italy, through the missions that spread from his preaching, has facilitated the cloning of a series of toponyms over time: these, linked to his cult or that of saints close to him, have so far been studied from a historical-religious perspective (Geiger, 1942; Treutlein, 1973; Aronberg Lavin, 2014). The present contribution, however, aims to examine the issue from a geographical perspective. Starting from the mapping of Franciscan place names in the Americas and in the world, it aims to identify the environmental reasons, for health or geomorphological reasons, which contributed to the constitution of the various centres.

The study, in particular, considering the link with the Italian toponymic tradition, focuses on the missions whose names were transferred to the cities that arose in parallel. The toponym of the Assisian hamlet of Santa Maria degli Angeli was adopted as the original name for the Californian ‘Los Angeles’ and was later cloned in Chile and the Argentinean provinces of Catamarca and

Buenos Aires. The Abruzzo municipality of Capistrano, birthplace of the Franciscan Saint John, is still twinned with San Juan Capistrano in California, but the toponym of San Juan de Capistrano can still be found in Spain (Nerja) and Venezuela, while that of San Juan Capistrano can be found in Mexico and on various roads in Latin America. Nor should we forget the link with the Franciscan cult, which is evident in the preservation of the toponym 'Santa Clara' in California, Peru (district of Ate), Argentina (province of Jujuy) and Cuba, and in the recovery of the toponym 'Nuestra Señora de Loreto' in the urban planning of Buenos Aires and the Argentine cities of Córdoba and Garupá. Finally, at the end of the work, an attempt will be made to identify any other elements, such as religious or civil festivals or folkloric events, which still serve to strengthen relations between the various Italian and foreign communities.

**Brahim Atoui (Former Vice-Chair of UNGEGN - Al Jazā'ir)**

***Toponym as title deed in Algerian pre-colonial societies***

Pre-colonial Algerian agrarian societies did not have written title deeds for the properties they owned. The plots of land were identified with the different names of the owners or tribes. The names of the owners or tribes were thus recognized, as well as the ownership, use, usufruct and enjoyment of such properties.

By extension these lands were called by the same names as people and tribes, giving rise to toponyms that are still in use today.

It was only with colonization that these lands were titled and registered.

This article will examine place names and their role, not only as property titles, for pre-colonial Algerian societies, but also their relationship to the occupation of Algerian agrarian space.

**Junio Valerio Tirone (University of Trento - Italia) and Ileana Schiavelli (Aeronautical Geotopographic Information Center - Italia)**

***Regulatory processes and systematization of toponymy in Italian territories of Africa in the 1930s***

This study aims to systematize the analysis operated by the responsible offices of the complex Toponymy of Italian colonies in Africa (Somalia, Eritrea, and Libya) operated in the 1930s through the study of the documents preserved in the archive of the Ministry of Italian Africa (Central State Archives in Rome) and the analysis of historical cartography preserved in the Teulié Military School in Milano.

The primary purpose of this research is to shed light on non-regulated toponymy in the early 1930s and the subsequent attempts to regulate it. At the beginning of the Italian colonization, due to linguistic differences, the names of places were meticulously transliterated as they sounded from local languages into Italian, trying to preserve the original names.

Initially, the main reference for the occupied territories' toponymy was the Italian "Law for the road names" proclaimed in 1927, although it was frequently disregarded. Indeed, it is proven by the reports of the public officials, which depict a chaotic management conducted by different offices. Among the others, the correspondence of Italo Balbo provides significant insights into this period.

Since 1937, urban and geographical toponyms, as well as odonyms, have been involved in great changes, thanks to the promulgation of specific laws applied at first to place names in Libya and later in East Africa. These laws had the purpose of standardizing the procedures to denominate or modify the original names of places, objects, geographical areas, monuments, squares, streets, and settlements. Furthermore, these laws would establish who is responsible for making decisions and about toponymy, regarding that each different public office received many change proposals (from private society, investors, returnees' families). There are so many proofs of toponymy change proposal made by returnees' families to name streets or squares after veterans, and there are just as many answers from several offices with different jurisdictions, proving the lack of standardization in local toponymy legislation.

The attempt to connect archival sources and cartographic products, which nowadays are separate, seeks to provide an overview on the complex processes of territorial appropriation and control also through the toponymic tool, through the simultaneous analysis of written documents and historical cartographic products.

**Serena Lo Monaco and Emanuela Zammarchi (Graduating students at University of Firenze - Italia)**

***The White gold of Prato and the hydronyms of the “gore” (ancient artificial canal system)***

The plain of Prato, located at the centre of the Florence-Prato-Pistoia basin at the foot of Mount Albano and the Apennines, is framed by the Bisenzio and Ombrone rivers and characterized by a gently sloping terrain. The area where the city of Prato stands today has been subject to territorial modifications for water reclamation and drainage since ancient times.

During the Medieval period, Prato experienced significant economic and demographic growth due to the exploitation of water from the Bisenzio river. The water canalization into a network of gore, flowing from northeast to southwest and powering a series of mills, primarily contributed to the wealth of this area, so that these canals as a system were referred to as ‘The White gold of Prato’.

The research aims to highlight a distinguishing trait of the gore of Prato, namely the history of their hydronyms, which appear to be multiple and variable over space and time. Preliminary historiographical and cartographical analyses have indicated that each gora was associated with numerous hydronyms. This study seeks to elucidate the reasons behind this phenomenon. Specifically, it aims to identify the factors that influenced the naming of these canalizations and the exact historical moments when these names were assigned, thereby uncovering the dynamics behind this unique plurality of micro-toponyms.

Analyzing the historical dynamics behind the creation of the gore system, which was consolidated during the Middle Ages yet traces back to Etruscan and Roman times, this research delineates the genesis, transformation, decline and eventual oblivion of this infrastructure, illustrating its various functions over the centuries.

The methodology involves comparing local historiography, archaeological findings, cartographic records, and archival resources. It begins by comparing the layout of the gore network from the 1900s with the Roman *centuriatio* network, highlighting overlaps or deviations in their respective trajectories.

Subsequently, the study analyzes cartographic resources to compile an inventory of the various hydronyms associated with each gora, organized by spatial and temporal criteria. Key resources

consulted include the 16th-century *Piante di Popoli e Strade dei Capitani di Parte Guelfa*, 17th and 18th-century *cabrei*, the Leopoldo cadaster, as well as topographic and IGM maps from the 19th and 20th centuries.

Finally, the research seeks to explain the origins of these hydronyms by consulting a unique local historiographic resource, the *Statuto dell'Arte dei padroni dei mulini sulla riva destra del fiume Bisenzio* (1296). This statute plays a central role in providing information regarding the naming of the *gore* of Prato, as it contains several rules ensuring a considerate and correct use of the *gore*.

### **Catherine Cheetham (Permanent Committee on Geographical Names - United Kingdom)** ***Toponymy in the United Kingdom***

This paper looks at the standardisation of geographical names in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, both for names domestically, within the UK, and internationally, i.e. foreign names.

Though there is no single national names authority in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, there are thorough practices ensuring accuracy and currency of geographical names. For Great Britain, the geographical names as portrayed on products of the Ordnance Survey of Great Britain are recognized as being authoritative. Ordnance Survey Northern Ireland performs a similar function in Northern Ireland. The paper outlines the function of Ordnance Survey as the national mapping agency and its role with regard to the toponymy of the United Kingdom.

The paper also looks at the UK's body dedicated to advising on geographical names for places and features outside the United Kingdom. The Permanent Committee on Geographical Names gathers information on names standardised by foreign national authorities to inform the UK Government of appropriate names for use on its products.

The paper looks at some of the challenges of this work, underpinned with the importance of a standard approach to the collection and use of geographical names.

#### *Ordnance Survey*

Ordnance Survey (OS) (Ordnance Survey | See A Better Place) is the national mapping agency of Great Britain and as such is responsible for collecting geographical names information for national maps and geographical databases of England, Scotland and Wales.

#### *Names Policy*

The collection of consistent, definitive and authoritative descriptive annotations and proper names/postal numbers of buildings, places and features forms part of Ordnance Survey's public task. Ordnance Survey's Names Policy is published and maintained on the organisation's website.

Ordnance Survey is guided primarily by local usage and custom. It makes enquiries and consults appropriate authorities to establish, with as much authority as possible, the most suitable name, form, and spelling for all places. Sometimes more than one name is in use at the local level for a single feature and, in cases where the use of two names is sufficiently prevalent locally, it may be necessary to record and/or portray both. The final decision on the recording and publication of any name rests with Ordnance Survey. Having done this for over 200 years, Ordnance Survey has effectively become the *de facto* authority for geographical names in Great Britain although the use of the internet, along with crowdsourcing and other mapping applications, may be changing this very slowly.



Names are usually captured in English although there are occasions when it is appropriate to capture names in another language. The Welsh Language Act 1993, the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 and the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005 give these languages special recognition under UK, Welsh and Scottish law. Where these languages are in common use (Welsh throughout Wales and Gaelic within the Outer Hebrides and Highlands), Ordnance Survey will apply dual names to features when both names are accepted and in local use. There needs to be evidence of active use of all names. Ordnance Survey will not record translations of English names into alternative languages, or vice-versa, in the absence of such evidence. It is worth noting that there are many examples where a name is only shown in Welsh or Gaelic as this is the accepted name. For further information about how this policy is applied to Welsh and Gaelic names see the Gaelic Names Policy and Welsh Names Policy.

There are other languages used in Great Britain including Cornish and Lowland Scots that are recognised by the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages but, in the absence of any UK legislation, names in these languages are not recorded as official names in Ordnance Survey data. Additionally, there are many languages relating to more recent immigration that are widely spoken and in some areas, street sign boards have been installed including names used in these languages, but these are not recorded officially in the National Database.

#### *Products & Services*

Ordnance Survey makes several datasets available free of charge under the terms of the Government Open Data Licence, including OS Open Names. Introduced in 2015, OS Open Names contains over 870,000 named and numbered roads, nearly 44,000 settlements and over 1.6 million postcodes, all matched/mapped to the National Grid. The same data is available via the OS Names API (Application Programming Interface), a place, road and postcode verification tool that users can plug into a website or API free of charge.

#### *Ordnance Survey of Northern Ireland*

In Northern Ireland, Ordnance Survey of Northern Ireland (OSNI), which is a Directorate of Land & Property Services (LPS), is the official mapping organisation.

Pointer® is the authoritative address database for Northern Ireland, and is maintained by LPS, with input from Local Councils and the Royal Mail. It was created in 2002 and is the common standard address dataset for every property (addressable building) in Northern Ireland, though is not open data. Local councils can provide alternative language names (Gaelic or Ulster Scots) for street names. LPS holds approximately 550 alternative language street names within the OSNI Pointer address dataset, with the majority of these being in Gaelic.

Also of interest is the Placenames Northern Ireland website PlacenamesNI ([arcgis.com](http://arcgis.com)) which examines the history behind the placenames, and includes some 30,000 names in Northern Ireland. This database is now fully under the remit of Queens University Belfast and the project secured additional government funding in March 2023.

#### *Permanent Committee on Geographical Names (PCGN)*

The Permanent Committee on Geographical Names (PCGN) is the United Kingdom's authority on foreign geographical names. Recognising that geographical names can be complex and contentious, accompanied by political, cultural, or linguistic sensitivities, PCGN gathers information on names standardised by global national authorities, and uses this information to advise UK Government on the proper writing of geographical names for places and features outside the United Kingdom.

PCGN's approach is to reflect names used by the administering authority of each country, with the inclusion of other names as appropriate: in languages written in the Roman script, the name can be applied exactly as encountered, including any diacritical marks and in languages written in other scripts, the name should be romanized according to the appropriate BGN/PCGN system of romanization. PCGN has over 50 recommended systems of romanization, most reflecting nationally-used systems, for application on UK Government products.

### *Toponymic Guidelines*

As encouraged by UNGEGN, the United Kingdom produces a document entitled *Toponymic Guidelines for Map and Other Editors* addressing the use of place names in the United Kingdom. This is a digital document, and is updated as administrative or other changes are made. The up-to-date document (most recent updates, May 2024) is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/toponymic-guidelines>.

### **Rebekka Dossche and Carla Pampaloni (University of Genova - Italia)**

#### ***Enclaves without borders: the toponomastic case of Carrega Ligure (Piedmont, Italy)***

Place naming is a fundamental part in the socio-economic and political process of occupation and attribution of 'new' territories, but at the same time it is also an instrument for orientation and empowerment of local communities and their inhabitants. It is therefore interesting to have a look at those toponyms from a larger legislative-administrative, but also from a local perspective related with the formation of the community's identity.

This contribution wants to have a deeper look at toponyms as indicators of historical modifications or status quo in power-relations between local communities and (supra)local institutions. Moreover, it wants to grasp the transformations in land-use, especially for the participation in erasing the identity of local inhabitants by the "administrative" place naming practices driven by socio-economic and political events.

The elected case-study Carrega Ligure was historically part of the Ligurian Republic (Province of Novi Ligure), but became part of the province of Alessandria (Region of Piedmont) with the unification of Italy (1861). The administrative transition to Piedmont has never been excepted by the local communities; this discontent culminated in an official request for re-unification with the province of Genoa, whose territory was interested by the effects of the creation of "Grande Genova" in 1926.

The toponymy of the Municipality of Carrega Ligure offers the opportunity to reconstruct the formation process of a socio-cultural enclave. In particular, historical cartography, archival sources and the memory of the local community members make it possible to tell the resistance struggle of a mountain municipality against the randomness of history.

### **Annalisa D'Ascenzo (University of Roma Tre - Italia)**

#### ***Toponymy: traveling and naming from the Earth to the Cosmos***

The naming of places on Earth is a process of discovery and knowledge, of imagining and expanding geographical horizons, of orientation and localization, of appropriation and control.

The link between toponymy and the culture of the civilizations that have expressed it is very strong and studied, recalling meanings of identification and belonging. On our planet, the need and practice of naming have followed the desire to acquire knowledge and material interests, dreams, and wills to dominate. This has occurred historically through various successive naming phases that have entailed and imposed toponymic overwritings that refer to distant, opposing, and conflicting cultural and material processes and contexts. These are events and impulses that historical cartography and oedipic literature contain and present to us as precious multidimensional documents.

Today, studies focus on the meanings of place names and the historical-geographical processes of naming to reconstruct the underlying events, knowledge, and values that people recalled by naming places.

As we venture into the Cosmos, the frontier towards which mankind is pushing, we are confronted with intriguing questions. What processes led to the naming of the surfaces of celestial bodies, first seen from Earth, then observed from orbit, and eventually reached by human or robotic vehicles? How do these processes compare to the naming of places on Earth?

What can we learn from these celestial toponyms about the cultures and values of the civilizations that named them?

Taking up the title of the symposium, we ask: are exotoponyms a means of expressing identification, location, ownership, belonging, division, and respect for the cultures of peoples outside the Earth?

We do not yet have all the answers; we are spectators of a process in fieri, but as scholars, we can and must at least ask ourselves these and other questions in the light of what has already happened.

**Gianluca Casagrande (European University of Roma - Italia)**

***“Naming the first steps”: geographical remarks about outposts and the act of exploration at the extreme boundaries of human reach***

The human exploration of the Moon and Mars rekindles, in innovative ways but within a century-old framework, the theme of establishing outposts for testing human travel and settlements at the extreme boundaries of the ecumene, or even beyond. This process offers notable parallels to the technology-based human expansion in the Polar regions from the early modern era to the 20th century.

At the beginning of many territorialization processes, small initial outposts may be established, for different purposes, at the extreme boundaries of human reach. Outposts are often associated with the act of exploration, observation and mapping of the surroundings. These activities are naturally developed through the identification of relevant spaces and geographical objects, an identification that brings about the “construction of places” – both for the explorers and the explorers’ communities – through, among other events, the assignment of toponyms.

Early outposts may later become permanent centres of human presence and activity. In some cases, when their function is over, they are just abandoned; in others, they are kept as historical landmarks. Many sites, once established at the outer boundary of the ecumene in specific historical phases, remain to this day as testimonies of their era, sometimes even for centuries. Far more than the possible material traces, the cultural legacy of these outposts includes the fact that they were described, first by explorers, then by larger communities, not merely as spaces, but rather as places,

and associated with toponyms, in spite of being partially or totally unfavourable to human settlement.

Sometimes, place names are given after partial observation from far away, even before direct exploration takes place. When direct exploration finally occurs, a matrix of toponyms may be already in the area. Yet, unlike toponyms assigned by “remote sight”, those created in the act of direct exploration often bear reference to this circumstance: and such reference is, per se, a record that the exploration is pushing ahead the boundaries of human reach.

In the end, when the prodromic phases of a territorialisation process are over, what is left of the former outposts, along with the documentation (mapping, toponymy) associated with them, may crystallize, and become a precious historical testimony of how humans moved their first steps into new worlds, and of how their view was changed by that.

**13<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2024**

*Fourth session chaired by Domenico Proietti (University of Campania “Luigi Vanvitelli” - Italia)*

**Guido Lucarno (Catholic University of the Sacred Heart, Milano - Italia)**

***Complexity of toponymy in the Aosta Valley, between officiality and recovery of vernacular terms***

Complexity of toponymy in the Aosta Valley, between officiality and recovery of vernacular terms  
Toponymy in the Aosta Valley has seen different phases of valorisation and overlap of terms belonging to the historical, official and traditional linguistic heritage. In fact, the French toponymy in use since the Middle Ages and officially adopted during the government of the Duchy of Savoy, after the Unification of Italy began to suffer the influence of the growing overlap of the Italian language on the French. So it was completely replaced by Italian toponyms, very often imposed arbitrarily, at the end of the 1930s.

After the Second World War, the institution of regional autonomy was based on the alleged and not always justified cultural differentiation of the Franco-Provençal population. Italian toponymy has been suppressed almost everywhere, re-establishing the one in use before fascism. However, there are many linguistic problems that have arisen in the transcription of traditional place names, with a spelling that, although referring to the linguistic rules of French, is not always supported by a pronunciation that follows the phonetic rules. In many cases the local population itself has doubts about the exact pronunciation of toponyms that they do not use frequently. French therefore seems to have imposed itself in an artificial way, not because it was part of the toponymic cultural heritage pre-existing the post-unification Italianisation of the region, but as a political prerequisite to justify administrative autonomy and all its economic advantages. The situation is further complicated by the presence of the Walser language: it is still spoken in the Gressoney valley, while it is now extinct in the Val d'Ayas, where however linguistic as well as architectural relics of the past German-speaking colonization survive.

In the current regulatory framework, French has been artificially imposed in public administration and is even predominant in toponymy, despite it is spoken as a native language by a completely irrelevant fraction of the population. However, more recently there is an ongoing rediscovery and revaluation of the Franco-Provençal dialect with the addition of a new toponymy to the French one which reproduces the names of the vernacular tradition with innovative graphemes.

**Ettore Sarzotti, Dino Buffoni, Nicola Gabellieri and Federico Gestri (University of Trento - Italia)**

***From place names to environmental resources: analysis of the nineteenth-century toponyms of Alpine woodlands through the use of geohistorical sources and Historical GIS***

The value of toponymy as a source for the geo-history of territories and landscapes has long been highlighted by the geographical-historical research. Several scholars have shown how the creation, preservation, and modification of each place name can be linked to multiple geographical elements such as morphology, environmental resources, cultural and economic structures, and local knowledge. Despite the wide number of studies, the exact dynamics that have affected place names in relation to some landscape/environmental changes still need to be fully explored. This study aims to highlight the relationship between space naming and environmental resources, with specific reference to wooded areas, during the 19th century. The objective is to explore both the potential and the challenges of various geohistorical sources for the process of recovering and analyzing toponymy. The case study of Val di Fiemme, a mountainous area in Trentino (Italy) historically related to the exploitation of wooded and pastoral resources, is of great interest as it shows a persistent relationship between toponymy and wooded spaces. The area under consideration is a paradigmatic case in the Alpine context to explore these topics both because of the abundance of archival and cartographic sources preserved by the Magnificent Community and because of the centuries-old collective and communal management of its resources. Therefore, in this context, the results of an ongoing study on the wooded toponyms of the Fiemme territory are presented. For the construction of an adequate place names corpus multiple sources were used, including historical cartography and several textual documents. In order to effectively analyze the collected toponymic corpus, it was created a Historical GIS, connected to a geodataset containing a series of information related to each toponym and to the geometries associated with it. The information contained in the database was categorized referring to the toponymic glossary of Desinan and Dentesano from 2004. A division between macrotoponyms and microtoponyms was then carried out. Finally, the discrepancy, both quantitatively and qualitatively, between the place names found in archival documents and those present in historical cartography was analyzed. The work thus allows for a complex and articulated analysis of the toponymic corpus of Val di Fiemme in the 19th century, valorizing the centrality of textual and cartographic archival sources for the collection and classification of the local toponymy in rural alpine areas.

**Elena Dai Prà and Sebastiano Rossi (University of Trento - Italia)**

***Conquering the names: the use of toponymy as a symbol of territorial control in a multiethnic region. The case of Eastern Trentino during the Great War***

The Valsugana valley in eastern Trentino represented a secondary sector among the Italian-Austrian frontline of the First World War. From 1915 to November 1917 this area, including the Lagorai mountain chain, saw significant military engagement as the Italian army attacked to push towards Trento, attempting to break through the Austrian defensive line stationed on the ridges and occupying numerous locations both in the highlands and the valley floor.

One of the unique aspects of this sector was the multilingual nature of its geographical toponymic nomenclature: in this area, two main linguistic groups coexisted, and still do today.

The majority of the population spoke a dialect of Italian origin, derived from Venetian, while the other group, a minority confined for centuries in the upper Fersina Valley, used to speak the so-called "Mocheno", a Bavarian-origin language. Alongside these two linguistic groups, which had over time created a toponymy of the area, the Habsburg administration of the region also inserted its influence, expressing itself in standard German or, at times, in standard Italian.

The coexistence of different linguistic systems created a toponymic structure in which it was not uncommon for different names to be assigned to the same geographical feature. These divergences could sometimes be entirely unrelated, such as the peak "Sette Selle" ("Seven Saddles") in Italian "Schrumpitz" in Mocheno, and in the Habsburg maps. In other cases, they are more closely related, as in the example of the currently called Monte Croce ("Mount Cross"), known as "Cràiz" by the dialect speakers, as "Kraisviz" by the Mocheni, and marked on the official Habsburg maps with the literally translated "Kreuzspitze." The toponymic complexity that is still present in the area was even more evident in the last century, when in the summer of 1915 the Italian troops crossed the border, ascending the Valsugana and establishing positions at the foothills of the mountains where the sparse Austrian troops had entrenched themselves. The war in these areas dragged on until November 1917. The stable occupation of the valley and the highlands created a need for naming geographical features at both at microtoponymic scale - often referring to features that previously had no names - and at a larger spatial scale.

This contribution aims to explore how the Armies, composed of speakers from different linguistic backgrounds, navigated the complex toponymy of the Valsugana sector. It tries to investigate how they adopted, mispronounced, misinterpreted, and sometimes misunderstood the local names, and how these names were adapted or enriched to meet their operational needs.

This analysis focuses mainly on Western Valsugana, where dialectal speech, Mocheno, and German-origin toponyms coexisted, but will extend its analysis even on the Lagorai mountain chain, a long uninterrupted line of ridges from Mount Panarotta to Passo Rolle, which represented the main front line for the duration of the fighting in the area.

The starting point for this analysis is the historical cartography produced before and during the clashes. The analysis prioritizes the 1:25,000 scale maps produced by the both armies, for Italy by the IGM (Italian Military Geographic Institute) and for Austria by the Military Geographical Institute in Vienna. This scale allows for a direct comparison between the two sets of maps and provides sufficient detail to study the microtoponymy. In addition, this typology of cartography, often based on the result of pre-war reconnaissance, were frequently updated during the clashes not only with military indications - friendly and enemy positions, forts, bunkers - but also with toponymic indications and increments.

Furthermore to these, other scales were also investigated, both smaller, such as 1:75,000, or larger, such as 1:10,000 or even preparatory sketches made by soldiers on the field.

Alongside cartography, historiographical sources were also examined: the research operated by local historians, who meticulously analysed the events occurred on this peculiar battlefield, are a primary source to discover the toponymic evolution. Diaries, letters and memoirs written by soldiers and civilians during the war represent another pivotal element: they provide live evidence of the usage of toponyms among the different groups insisting on the territory.

Ultimately, the historical sources are compared with the modern cartography: the Trentino's CTR (Carta Tecnica Regionale) and the Dizionario toponomastico Trentino (Trentino toponymic dictionary) permitted to examine the transformations that have occurred over the course of a century, aiming to analyse how toponymy has changed and how the impact of the war on geographical naming has affected the present.

The analysis conducted with these sources primarily aims to understand how the different armies used, accepted, or rejected existing geographical names. The appropriation of toponyms was, in fact, not a secondary element in the context of a war fought for a multilingual region like Southern Tyrol: in a so-called "redenta" land, considered by the Italian state as a natural component of the kingdom and, moreover, inhabited mostly by an Italian-speaking society, the appropriation of names represented a necessary phase in territorial conquest.

Similarly, and conversely, the Austrian army sought to assert Trentino's belonging to the Habsburg crown with Germanic or Germanizing names. The complex interaction between the two linguistic and toponymic systems—whether officially adopted or remaining only in use, their persistence or disappearance—highlights the importance of toponymy in the context of military operations and territorial identity.

**Andrea Masturzo (Independent researcher PHD in Geography at University of Bergamo - Italia)**

***Cartography and toponymy in the dynamics of dominion, the case of Alto Adige-Südtirol***

“The intellectual appropriation of the territory requires that names be assigned to places and this process develops through the construction of geographical maps” (Casti, *L'ordine del mondo e la sua rappresentazione*, 1998, p. 11). In the dynamics of domination, the operation of nationalization of toponymy, carried out by the dominant state entity, was usually realized by cartography. It took the form of an assimilation, in various forms, of local toponymy to the language of the ruler. In other scenarios examined, such as the colonial Libyan one, the work of Italianisation of toponymy was carried out completely within the cartography processing phases. In the case of Alto Adige-Südtirol, this Italianisation of toponymy was realized by a scholar, Ettore Tolomei, foreign to the world of cartography. He preceded the creation of the official map of the Italian state of that region, giving rise to a work, *Il prontuario dei nomi locali dell'Alto Adige*, which constituted a vast repertoire of Italianised toponyms. In addition this work outlined the theoretical framework on which the operation of nationalization of toponymy took place. When the Italian Military Geographic Institute, immediately after the conquest, had to carry out the cartography of that region, it had to deal with a work of Italianisation of the toponymy that was already almost completely defined. Our work will try to reconstruct the dynamics with which the Italian Military Geographic Institute adopted this toponymy. In this framework, we will try to reconstruct the phases in which the cartography of the region developed and the problematic issues it had to face.

The following points will be explored in greater detail:

1. Despite the fact that Tolomei was a stranger to the world of cartography, maps played an important role in his main work. In fact, the first edition of the *Prontuario* started from the Austrian map, while the third edition of 1936 used the Italian topographic map. Maps had a dual role in this work: repertoire of toponyms; 2) geographical reference of the toponym. The

connection between the Prontuario and cartography was entrusted to the signature which was placed alongside the toponym and which allowed the toponym to be identified on the map.

2. Analysis of the development of state legislation on toponymy and its effects on cartography.
3. The development of cartographic works in the region was strongly based on the question of toponymy. Based on the analysis of the index of adjoining sheets of the IGMI Product Catalogs we will try to trace its development.
4. Finally, we will verify, starting from the cartographic archive documents (in particular the toponymy booklets for use of the topographers) and directly from the maps, whether the topographers directly assumed the toponym as present in the Prontuario or elaborated it critically.

**Peter Jordan (Austrian Academy of Sciences & University of the Free State [South Africa] - Austria)**

***Multicultural identity building supported by place names. The example of the Val Canale in the Northeast of Italy***

The Val Canale in Italy's northeastern corner was up to World War I a part of Austrian Carinthia with a mixed German-Slovenian population. When it was awarded to Italy in 1919, it was settled also by Italians and Friulians, who became after World War II not only the politically dominant groups, but also the numerical majority – also due to the emigration of Germans to a larger and Slovenes to a smaller extent. Up to the present day, the visual cultural landscape reminds nevertheless of the pre-WWI situation. In an integrating Europe with open borders a typical former border region like this takes advantage of its multiple cultural layers and styles itself a multicultural region at the crossroads of various influences not the least with the aim of attracting tourists and customers. This is, a.o., done by many cultural events organized by or highlighting the current linguistic minorities as well as by promoting the parallel use of the four languages including place names. The paper focuses on this latter aspect also asking the question to which extent multicultural identity building is supported by all fractions of the local society or rather a project of the elites and meets perhaps also some resistance.

**Gerardo Tolentino, Goran Floridan, and Laura Sgubin (Friuli-Venezia Giulia Autonomous Region - Italia)**

***The importance of preserving the toponymic heritage of historical linguistic minorities in Friuli Venezia Giulia***

In the last thirty years the Italian Autonomous region of Friuli Venezia Giulia approved three specific regional laws aimed at protecting and promoting its three recognized historical linguistic minorities (Slovenian, Friulian and German). Such regional laws are an implementation of the Italian national laws governing the matter. This paper will examine the current regulatory framework and its possible improvements considering the specific needs expressed by the minorities over the years.



**Matjaž Geršič (Chair of ICA Commission on Toponymy jointly with the International Geographical Union, Scientific Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Anton Melik Geographical Institute - Slovenija)**

***Italian geographical names in Slovenia - from roots to standardisation***

Italian place names have a very long tradition in the territory of present-day Slovenia. They are linked to various historical events in the region, from the expansion of the Roman state to Venetian rule and the Italian occupation between the two world wars. In between, the flow of roman speaking political entities was interrupted several times. The current situation is the result of all these historical events and concern for the rights of national minorities, which are enshrined in binding international legal instruments. Slovenia is an exemplary case in this area, because in recent years we have managed to standardise Italian names in Slovenia. The article will also deal with the violence against geographical names during the Italian occupation between the two wars and the Slovenian geographical names in Italy.

**Valentina Campesi (Graduating student at Catholic University of the Sacred Heart Milano - Italia)**

***Toponymy policies in alloglot towns of Calabria: Case studies of Guardia Piemontese, San Demetrio Corone, Bova, and Bova marina***

The primary objective of this study was to assess the implementation of Law 482/99 in Calabria, 25 years after its enactment, with a specific focus on toponymic policies, as they are key indicators of local administrative behavior toward linguistic minorities. The research centers on three case studies, each representing one of the region's officially recognized linguistic minorities: Guardia Piemontese (Occitans), San Demetrio Corone (Arbëreshë), and the combined area of Bova and Bova Marina (Grecanic speakers). These municipalities were selected for their representativeness, as they host the foundations that represent each linguistic community.

A qualitative investigation was conducted through semi-structured interviews across these municipalities, supplemented by extensive photographic documentation. The findings were compared to general toponymic policies in other alloglot towns across the Region. Data collection included a survey administered to all alloglot municipal administrations in Calabria, focusing on the use of Law 482/99 funds for toponymic projects. This approach provided a comprehensive perspective, capturing local dynamics within a broader context.

Initial analysis of regional data revealed that there is a general inconsistency in the exercise of the right to bilingual toponymy; among the 27 municipalities that have implemented bilingual signage projects, 11 have not completed the work, and only two cases involved the recovery of vernacular terms.

The case studies offer deeper insights into these dynamics. In Guardia Piemontese, the only area in southern Italy where Occitan is still spoken, the primary challenge has been the selection of an appropriate graphematic system for official recognition. This dilemma, shared by all alloglot communities in Calabria, stems from the fact that these languages, including Occitan, have been primarily transmitted orally. The ineffective operation of the linguistic minority foundations, meant to coordinate community policies, has exacerbated these issues.

In San Demetrio Corone, a municipality of Arbëreshë origin, there is confusion between the use of Arbërisht and Shqip in road signage, reflecting broader inconsistencies in toponymic practices within the community. The case of Bova and Bova Marina further illustrates internal conflicts within the Grecoan-speaking area, where differing approaches to language preservation have led to discord.

In conclusion, the research highlights several key findings: while most municipalities received funds from Law 482/99 for toponymic projects, nearly a third remain unfinished, and the approaches taken across all projects show significant variation. The lack of leadership, a shared vision, and sufficient funding, along with the absence of a scientific hub, have resulted in volatile toponymic policies that fail to adequately support linguistic minorities.

**Silvia Siniscalchi, Pierluigi De Felice, and Emiro Hernan Rodriguez Vargas (University of Salerno - Italia)**

***Toponymy as a Source for the Recovery and Enhancement of Territorial Identity: The Case of Aragonese Toponyms in the Province of Salerno***

According to established scientific literature (Aversano, 2007; Giraut, 2008; Holzchuch, 2008; AA.VV., 2009; Siniscalchi, 2009, 2014, 2021; Aversano-Siniscalchi, 2010; Tent, 2011, 2021; Blair, 2020), toponyms, when analyzed from a systemic perspective, reveal valuable information about the identity characteristics of a geographical space, both diachronically and synchronically. In particular, when examined from a multiscalar perspective and appropriately compared with suitable documentation, they can be considered "geographic indicators" (Cassi, Marcaccini, 1992) and "clues" (Aversano, 2006) for identifying the more or less persistent aspects of a territorial context's identity from environmental, functional, and historical-cultural viewpoints. In this perspective, they provide significant elements for the recovery and integration of the key aspects of a territory's geohistorical memory, preserving its cultural values in their durability and fluctuation.

Aware of the heuristic potential of toponymic sources, the authors, utilizing a proven qualitative-quantitative methodology (Siniscalchi, De Felice, Rodriguez, 2024), intend to reconstruct the territorialization processes of the Piana del Sele and Cilento regions based on toponyms derived from Aragonese cartographic sources. These two territorial areas in the province of Salerno are particularly significant, as the former has undergone epochal transformations following the Fascist-era land reclamation, while the latter, protected by UNESCO, still retains much of its environmental and cultural heritage. The two case studies represent an example of the potential recovery and enhancement of the identity and socio-cultural dimension derivable from toponymy, conveyable through a documented narration (storytelling) of the recent and remote territorialization processes of the areas in question.

The research objective, therefore, consists of the geohistorical reconstruction of the identity and cultural values inherent in the environmental frameworks of these regions, aimed at safeguarding their material and immaterial resources and sustainably managing the cultural heritage embedded in their landscape palimpsest.