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English

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

**Second session**

New York, 1 – 5 May 2023

**Item 4 (b) of the provisional agenda\***

**Reports: Divisions of the Group of Experts**

## **Report of the Romano-Hellenic Division**

Submitted by Romano-Hellenic Division \*\*

### Summary

During the two-year period from 2021 to 2022, the Romano-Hellenic Division of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names carried out the following activities:

(a) Organization of the third international scientific symposium on the theme “Permanence, transformation, substitution and oblivion of geographical names” in Naples in 2021;

(b) Organization of the cartographic travelling exhibition on the theme “Naples lands and sea: from ancient to contemporary toponymy”, in close cooperation with the Italian Geographic Military Institute;

(c) Accomplishment of a series of conferences on the standardization of geographical names, in cooperation with the Italian Alpine Club, various Italian geographical associations and Italian public bodies;

(d) Participation in two meetings of the Bureau and Division Chairs of the Group of Experts.

(e) Updating of the layout and content of the Division website.

For the two-year period from 2023 to 2024, the main actions of the Division will be aimed at stimulating its member countries to:

(a) Participate in the traditional toponymy symposium to be organized in Italy in September 2024;

(b) Contribute to enriching the content of the Division website;

(c) Carry out dissemination actions on the importance of geographical names for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, through cycles of lessons and conferences involving local toponymic authorities, map agencies, universities, schools and the public bodies concerned.

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\* GEGN.2/2023/1

\*\* Prepared by Andrea CANTILE – Chairman of the UNGEGN, Romano-Hellenic Division.

### ***3<sup>rd</sup> International Scientific Symposium (22<sup>nd</sup> - 24<sup>th</sup> September 2021)***

The traditional symposium organized in Italy every two years by the division was dedicated to the theme *Permanence, transformation, substitution and oblivion of geographical names*.

The event took place in Naples, at the Castel dell'Ovo, in a hybrid mode, in person and in a virtual way, thanks to the close cooperation with the Italian Military Geographic Institute (IGMI) and the Regional Council of Campania – Directorate General for the Government of the Territory, and under the auspices of Italian Association of Geographers, Italian Association of Geography Teachers, Italian Cartographic Association, Italian Centre for Historical and Geographical Studies, Italian Geographical Society and [Italian] Society of Geographical Studies. The Scientific committee of the symposium was composed by:

- Andrea Cantile, Chair of the UNGEGN's Romano-Hellenic Division, IGMI and University of Firenze (Italia);
- Simonetta Conti, University of Campania "Luigi Vanvitelli" (Italia);
- Monica Dumitrascu, Institute of Geography, Romanian Academy (Romania);
- Peter Jordan, Austrian Academy of Sciences, Co-Convenor of the ICA-IGU Joint Commission on Toponymy, University of the Free State in South Africa (Austria);
- Helen Kerfoot, Former Emeritus Scientist Natural Resources Canada, Honorary Chair of UNGEGN (Canada);
- Cosimo Palagiano, Emeritus of Sapienza - University of Rome, Accademia dei Lincei, Co-Convenor of the ICA-IGU Joint Commission on Toponymy (Italia);
- Domenico Proietti, University of Campania "Luigi Vanvitelli" (Italia);
- Annette C. Torensjö, Uppsala University, Convenor of the UNGEGN Working Group on Geographical Names as Cultural Heritage (Sverige).

The event was started with an introductory speech by Pierre Jaillard, Chairman of UNGEGN, followed by a welcome remarks by Helen Kerfoot, Honorary Chairperson of UNGEGN. Many experts, teachers and technicians of Italian public bodies participated in the symposium in person and in virtual mode, linking in from various parts of Italy, Europe, Middle East and North and Central America.

During these three days, the following contributions were presented:

- *Some thoughts on permanence, transformation, substitution and oblivion of geographical names in Italy*, by Andrea Cantile, Chair of UNGEGN's Romano-Hellenic Division (Italia);
- *The relevance of place names as intangible cultural heritage*, by Cosimo Palagiano, Emeritus professor at Sapienza University of Rome, National Partner of the Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, Member of Honor of the Italian Geographical Society (Italia);
- *State of the art in the IGMI and Veneto Region joint toponymic database project*, by Umberto Trivelloni, Dario Brentan, Andrea Semenzato, and Alessandra Amoroso, Veneto Region and Engineering Ingegneria Informatica S.p.A. (Italia);
- *In the footsteps of Cesare Battisti: an approach for collection and analysis of toponyms using historical maps and HGIS in Trentino, Italy (19th-21st centuries)*, by Elena Dai Prà, Nicola Gabellieri and Nicola Scanu University of Trento (Italia);
- *"A passi andanti" along the River Po: on the significance of cartographic and toponymic heritage (17th-19th centuries)*, by Lucia Masotti, University of Verona (Italia);
- *Island place names and historical cartography: Ponziane Islands*, by Arturo Gallia, University of Roma Tre (Italia);
- *Anti-mafia toponyms and odonyms in Italy: theoretical assumptions and research methodologies*, by Giuseppe Muti, University of Insubria, and Stefano Salvucci, ISTAT (Italia);
- *A matter of springs: Storga's eternal genius loci, from the Venetian dominion up to the present*, by Arianna Lorenzon, Ca' Foscari University of Venezia (Italia);

- *Keltoi, Keltai and Galatians: a complex Celtic World in the ancient Greek sources*, by Marco Martin, International association Geography and Historiography in Antiquity (Italia);
- *Gela sive Philosophianis: two place names for a mansio, or a mansio for two places?* by Marco Sfacteria, University of Messina (Italia);
- *Letters from postmasters 1905-06: naming Canada's communities*, by Helen Kerfoot, Honorary Chair of UNGEGN (Canada);
- *Microtoponyms as a part of the cultural heritage and a challenge for standardization*, by Peter Jordan, Austrian Academy of Sciences, Co-Convenor of the ICA-IGU Joint Commission on Toponymy, University of the Free State in South Africa (Austria);
- *The evolution of geographical names within the long history of Cyprus*, by Andreas Hadjiraftis, President of Permanent Committee for the Standardization of Geographical Names of Cyprus. Chief Lands Officer, Department of Lands and Surveys, Ministry of Interior, Lefkosia (Kypros);
- *City-related affixes in naming patterns of Asian countries*, by Mandana Kolahdouz Mohammadi, Payame Noor University (Iran);
- *Angry river goddesses speak: river names, memory and national identity in Tess Onwueme's "Then she said it!"*, by Ayokunmi Oladele Ojebode, University of Nottingham (United Kingdom);
- *Landscape and place names. Traces from the Tuscan toponymic corpus*, by Laura Cassi, University of Firenze (Italia);
- *Toponymy and longue durée: Terra di Lavoro from late antiquity to the present day*, by Domenico Proietti, University of Campania "Luigi Vanvitelli" (Italia);
- *The toponyms in "Terra di Lavoro" province: continuity and changes from 1860 to today*, by Simonetta Conti, University of Campania "Luigi Vanvitelli" (Italia);
- *A short history of Napoli through the affirmation of its toponym in historical cartography*, by Silvia Siniscalchi, University of Salerno (Italia);
- *The Leonardian toponymy for the reconstruction of the historical landscape of Tuscany in the 16th century*, by Lucrezia Iacuzzi and Martina Simeone, Landscape planners (Italia);
- *Invented toponymy for invented lands. Place names and reclamation in the Emilia-Romagna sector of the Po River Delta (Northern Italy), 1920s-1960s*, by Stefano Piastra, University of Bologna (Italia);
- *Mapping the Walser toponymy in the western Italian Alps. State-of-the-art report and project proposals*, by Guido Lucarno, The Catholic University of the Sacred Heart – Milan (Italia);
- *Rewriting the territory. The use of toponymy in the dynamics of dominion, the Italian experience*, by Andrea Masturzo, Scholar of Italian colonial studies (Italia);
- *Mapping micro-toponymy in Alpine linguistic minorities languages. Historical GIS as a meeting point*, by Viviana Ferrario, University IUAV of Venice (Italia).

IGMI published the symposium proceedings, edited by Andrea Cantile and Helen Kerfoot.

### ***Cartographic travelling exhibition (2021-2022)***

On the occasion of the symposium, a historical-cartographic exhibition was also set up on the theme *Naples lands and sea: from ancient to contemporary toponymy*, curated by Andrea Cantile and Arturo Gallia (University of Roma Tre). Over thirty historical maps of the Neapolitan territory, both of the continental and island areas, offered a precious opportunity to see the dynamics of "Permanence, transformation, replacement and oblivion of geographical names" in these territories.

At the end of the Symposium, in consideration of the great appreciation for the proposed theme of the exhibition, the Neapolitan Section of the Italian Alpine Club has offered to the organizers to make the exhibition itinerary in other centers of the Campania Region. During 2022, the exhibition was set up at the Medici Castle of Ottaviano, at the State Archives in Naples and at Villa Arbusto in Lacco Ameno (Island of Ischia). The series of events ended in Procida, island elected Italian Capital of Culture in the same year.

### ***Series of conferences on the standardization of geographical names***

During the itinerary exhibitions a conference was always associated, held by the Chair of the RHD and focused on the importance of the standardization of geographical names, with the participation of local scholars, teachers and technicians.

The cooperation with the Italian Alpine Club and various Italian geographical associations and Campanian public bodies.

The collaboration was particularly fruitful and led the organizers to prepare a program of conferences also for the two-year period 2023-2024, targeting the main Italian universities.

### ***Meetings of UNGEGN Bureau and Division Chairs***

The Chair of RHD participated in the two “Meetings of UNGEGN Bureau and Division Chairs”, organized in November 19, 2021 and December 9, 2022, contributing its own presentation on the state of the art in RHD, attending the open discussions during the meetings, and sharing the documents prepared by the UNGEGN Bureau with members of the division.

The importance of this new type of meeting is crucial for monitoring the development of work within the divisions and for achieving specific UN objectives.

### ***Updating of the layout and contents of RHD’s web pages***

The web page of the Romano-Hellenic Division, hosted by the Italian Geographic Military Institute, was updated by inserting new contents and modifying the graphic aspect.

In particular, the new web pages contain:

- A description of the tasks and composition of the UNGEGN, with links to the its official website;
- A brief historical note on the creation of RHD;
- The list of member countries of the division, with some geographical information and points of contacts;
- The brochures published by the member countries of the division;
- The proceedings of symposiums organized by RHD, with related image galleries;
- The announcement of the next events scheduled for 2024 in Italy.

It is hoped that this new configuration of the division’s web page can be further enriched with the contribution of the other member countries, who are kindly invited to provide news of events, information on their respective toponymic authorities and to update references to contact points.

The web address of the division’s web page is:

[https://www.igmi.org/en/toponomastica/genung-1?set\\_language=en](https://www.igmi.org/en/toponomastica/genung-1?set_language=en).

### ***Next activities scheduled for the two-year period 2023-2024***

For the two-year period 2023-2024 the main actions of the RHD will be aimed at stimulating the member countries of the division to:

Participate in the traditional toponymy symposium that will be organized in Italy in September 2024;

Contribute to the enrichment of the contents of the Division’s website;

Carry out dissemination actions on the importance of geographical names for the achievement of the SDGs, through cycles of lessons and conferences involving local toponymic authorities, map agencies, universities, schools and the public bodies concerned.