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"How toponymy can contribute to reach the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)"

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"How toponymy can contribute to reach the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)"

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The memory of the territory: toponyms as indicators of environmental resilience

Toponymy represents a strategic cultural and scientific heritage, as it reflects the historical stratification of interactions between human communities and their environment and preserves crucial information on the collective memory of territories. Place names are not merely geographic labels; they document socioecological processes, landscape transformations, anthropogenic practices, and historical events that have shaped environmental and cultural dynamics over time, constituting enduring evidence of the relationships between populations and their landscapes (Basso, 1996; Tuan, 1977). This contribution proposes an interdisciplinary methodological approach aimed at interpreting toponyms as indirect indicators of environmental resilience, integrating tools from geographic analysis, historical linguistics, cartography, environmental studies, and urban planning. By combining historical toponymic data, spatial surveys, and interpretative models of territorial analysis, the study demonstrates how the persistence, distribution, and stratification of place names can provide evidence of the adaptive capacity of socio-ecological systems and sustainable territorial management strategies (Conedera *et al*., 2007; Antrop, 2005).

The methodological framework is inherently multi-level, with a primary operational focus on the local–territorial dimension, within which toponymy has historically functioned as a knowledge device capable of guiding settlement transformations and structural policies. In such contexts, characterized by a strong interrelation between physical morphology, land use, and socio-economic practices, toponyms –derived from environmental, productive, and cultural components –have progressively influenced planning processes, shaping spatial organization and supporting the identification of resources and criticalities (Cosgrove, 1998; Olwig, 2002).

The research adopts an approach that considers the toponym as a point-based informational unit, subsequently expanding toward a systemic reading of the territory, in which the distribution, persistence, and stratification of place names acquire interpretative value in relation to the adaptive and resilient processes of socio-ecological systems. From this perspective, toponymy is understood not merely as a descriptive repertoire, but as a cognitive infrastructure capable of revealing the historical depth of interactions between communities and environment (Nash, 1999). The study highlights how the memory embedded in toponyms functions as a cognitive and identity device, reinforcing the sense of belonging and territorial awareness. The correlation between toponymic heritage and environmental variables also enables the identification of vulnerabilities and potential leverage points in territorial planning, suggesting that the conservation of historical place names can act as a tool for cultural and environmental governance (Fairclough *et al*., 2008). Furthermore, the analysis reveals how toponyms reflect traditional ecological knowledge and adaptive strategies to environmental changes, providing a bridge between historical memory and contemporary sustainability actions. In this sense, toponymy emerges as a scientific indicator of territorial resilience,

capable of informing urban design and environmental management through the integration of historical knowledge, spatial analysis, and participatory approaches.

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Stories of life and landscapes of memory: gender equality in the construction of territorial identity. The case of Umbria

Goal number 5 of the 2030 Agenda aims to achieve gender equality (United Nations, 2025). Among the targets to be achieved are the elimination of all forms of violence against women (5.2) and the guarantee of full and effective participation of women at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life (5.5). The growing sensitivity towards this issue has also found its way into toponymic matters (Belotti & Ercolini, 2019; D'Angiolillo, 2023; Latino, 2024). This paper, therefore, proposes an interdisciplinary analysis to investigate how collective memory is manifested in urban and territorial space. It studies the frequency of place names and street names linked to a corpus of names of men and women who have publicly assumed prominent roles in the fields of science, religion, literature and sport, becoming representative figures of national cultural identity. At the same time, the corpus is expanded with a list of female victims of gender-based violence and male and female victims of the mafia: their symbolic presence in place names can provide information on the public recognition of a phenomenon and on the civic commitment of the community. The study therefore analyses their geographical distribution across Umbria and the intended use of the names (streets, squares, schools, public buildings, parks). Thanks to cartographic survey tools and the use of toponymic databases, a comparison is made between the presence and absence of names in relation to local socio-demographic contexts.
The geographical analysis is then supplemented with a qualitative reflection of a political and social nature, questioning the reasons behind identity narratives, memory policies and public recognition practices. Finally, the data collected is compared with the previous toponymic nomenclature to highlight the local dynamics involved in the conservation of the territory and local cultural heritage. Preliminary results recognise that women still have great symbolic, emotional and educational value in the construction of urban space as a landscape of memory (Violi, 2014; Pollice, 2005; Grasso 1998), which is only occasionally accompanied by recognition of historical or institutional authority.

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On boundaries, practices, and settlements: notes on hagiotoponymy as a source for historical geography

For several decades, historical and anthropological scholarship has highlighted how forms of local religious devotion can be interpreted as bottom-up practices of territorialisation, emerging from vows, protective needs, or expressions of gratitude and frequently associated with local cults. Among these practices, the diffusion of hagiotoponyms represents a particularly significant phenomenon. This contribution offers a methodological reflection on the use of hagiotoponymy as a source for reconstructing past territorial practices, shifting the analytical focus from the history of religion toward historical geography. The proposed theoretical framework interprets local devotion as a form

of protection, understood as a cultural and symbolic response to conditions of risk, uncertainty, and resource management. From this perspective, hagiographic toponyms are approached not primarily as direct indicators of cultic diffusion, but as instruments of spatial marking and organisation that articulate territorial functions, productive arrangements, and forms of symbolic control over the landscape: for example, the presence of some saints' names could be associated with protection from disease in proximity to territorial boundaries, or of saints linked to specific practices (agricultural or mining) with productive contexts. The study adopts an exploratory, trans-scalar approach applied to the Italian context, encompassing multiple levels of analysis from the local to the national scale. This framework allows for the identification of both context-specific configurations and recurrent spatial patterns associated with particular functional and productive domains. Methodologically, the research is based on a geo-cartographic approach that integrates the analysis of contemporary toponymic geodatasets with primary and secondary sources, with the aim of detecting significant spatial correlations between specific hagiotoponyms and elements such as productive practices, territorial boundaries, and settlement structures. The results suggest that the spatial distribution of certain hagiotoponyms exhibits recurring patterns that point to an active role of sacred toponyms in the historical construction of territory, understood as a lived, practised, and symbolically regulated space shaped by local communities. By adopting a geo-historical perspective and exploring a field of local tangible and intangible cultural heritage that has so far been little studied, this contribution aims to pursue Target 11.4 of the SDGs, "Strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage." The speech concludes by emphasising the heuristic potential of hagiotoponymy – when properly contextualised and cross-referenced with other sources – as a tool for a historical geography of territorial practices, capable of complementing and enriching analyses of past productive, organisational, and spatial dynamics.

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The preservation of linguistic and biocultural heritage through toponymic standardization: the case of Slovenian place names in the Province of Udine in Italy

In 2024, the Autonomous Region of Friuli Venezia Giulia, through its Central Office for the Slovenian Language, launched a structured initiative to address the long-standing lack of uniformity in the public use of Slovenian geographical names within the historical settlement area of the Slovenian minority in Italy. To ensure scientific soundness and institutional neutrality, the Slovenian Research Institute (SLORI) was entrusted with establishing and coordinating a working group dedicated to the standardization of Slovenian toponyms in Italy. The working group brings together linguists, geographers, dialectologists, and representatives of local communities. In its initial phase, the activities focus on the Province of Udine, where the Slovenian minority has been historically present but where, due to complex historical, national, and political circumstances, many Slovenian place names were never officially established. This situation has long generated practical difficulties, recurrent disputes, and social discomfort, particularly in relation to road signage and the public visibility of geographical names.

To address these challenges, the Central Office compiled an extensive corpus of toponyms, which integrates administrative records, historical cartographic sources, toponymic dictionaries, scholarly publications, and results of research conducted in previous decades. The aim was to reconstruct the documented usage of Slovenian place names in a systematic and verifiable manner. Since its establishment, the working group has benefitted from new analytical perspectives through participation in a cross-border cooperation project and international conferences. Comparative

engagement with multilingual toponymic governance in neighbouring regions highlighted the importance of flexibility, negotiated decision-making, and sensitivity to local identities. As a result, the initiative progressively shifted from a purely normative approach toward a model that balances linguistic standardization with the recognition of local variation.
This perspective informed the adoption of a dual-list model, inspired by practices developed within the Friulian linguistic community. The model consists of a list of standardized Slovenian forms intended for official, administrative, and cartographic use, alongside a complementary list of simplified dialectal or locally grounded forms that reflect community traditions and everyday usage. This approach seeks to reconcile institutional needs with the preservation of biocultural heritage. Beyond its technical objectives, the initiative responds to an urgent cultural and societal need. Many rural areas where Slovenian toponyms originated are affected by depopulation and socio-economic decline, leading to the erosion of linguistic diversity and microtoponymy.
By promoting an evidence-based and community-sensitive approach to toponymic standardization, this initiative supports cultural and linguistic heritage preservation, as well as inclusive governance practices.

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Hydronymic evidence of human-water interaction: water supply and driving force in the small Terzolle Valley (Tuscany)

This case study is geographically circumscribed to the Terzolle stream valley, located to the north-west of the city of Florence, between Fiesole and Monte Morello. The survey addresses the spatial distribution of hydronyms and, more generally, of all toponyms related to the presence of water, within this limited drainage basin, drawn from historical cartographic sources produced between the 16th and the 20th centuries, complemented by additional archival documentation.
To understand the long-term relationships between local communities and the limited amount of water in this area, a preliminary set of hydronymic data was created, with reference to streams, ditches, canals, springs, basins, fountains, weirs, later extended to watermills, water regulation structures and other infrastructure associated with water management.
The systematic collection of hydronyms and toponyms has revealed, in particular, the existence of an ancient network of artificial channels (*gore*) and an aqueduct, which were closely linked both to the development of water-powered mills within the valley and to the provisioning of drinking water to the nearby city of Florence.
On the basis of archive documents and historical maps, this contribution proposed a dating hypothesis for these infrastructures, examined their connections with the surrounding agricultural landscape and local wheat production, the systems of water abstraction and distribution, and the multifaceted uses of water for energy, agricultural, and alimentary purposes.
In conclusion, this research has highlighted, even in the limited context of a small valley like that of the Terzolle stream, the importance of wisely exploiting water resources (SDG 12 – Responsible consumption and production). Despite the limited amount of available water, local communities have made it possible to preserve a renowned Florentine landscape; they have provided the factory with a source of “clean energy” (SDG 7 – Affordable and clean energy) and have ensured the water supply to part of the city of Florence (SGD 11 – Sustainable cities and communities).

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Italians and the "Cold Coasts", or: a story about cultural inclusiveness and the appropriateness of toponymic standardisation

What is the evolution of toponymy in a region that is, at the same time, in the early stages of its physical exploration, and undergoing the transition from *res nullius* to becoming part of a Kingdom? What lessons can be learned in the search for a virtuous balance between cultural inclusiveness and toponymic standardisation? An interesting set of examples can be found in the geographical history of the Arctic Archipelago of Svalbard, which came under Norwegian sovereignty in 1925 after centuries of political indefiniteness. Visited for centuries by explorers and by agents eager to secure access to the islands' natural resources, the region developed a complex and varied toponymy, visually representing the diachronic layering of presences and symbolic meanings.
Adventurers, hunters, fishermen, and scientists scattered the islands with names and references drawn from their own cultures. When Norway took over the process of mapping and toponym assignment as part of its territorial consolidation of Svalbard, a national Commission was appointed to establish placename definition: in its work, it had to deal with a plethora of names that had been variously given and used by different entities. In those years, however, the islands were still being explored and understood in their physical and geographical nature; a process to which several Italians contributed. Associated names ended up being included in toponyms (*Nobilefjellet, Alpiniøya, Kapp Laura, Viglieriberget...*).
The way Norway managed these assignments reflected both its broader policy approach and the respect that the nation showed towards the process of discovery itself. To this day, several important chapters of Italian Arctic exploration are remembered in the placenames that were accepted as part of the geographic nomenclature of Svalbard. In this sense, the Archipelago – a century after becoming part of the Kingdom of Norway – is conserved as, among other things, a symbolic "time capsule" of a phase in which humankind pushed forward the boundaries of the ecumene: its toponymy carefully records the complexity and multifaceted nature of this evolution, while a well-developed standardisation system provides a stable reference framework towards disambiguation and cultural dissemination. In the authors' opinion, this contribution aligns with several goals of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In particular, it addresses SDG 11.4 by highlighting toponymy as a form of cultural heritage that preserves the historical stratification of human presence in Svalbard; SDG 16.7 by examining the processes of toponymic standardisation as instances of institutional decision-making balancing authority and inclusiveness; SDG 4.7 by promoting awareness of cultural diversity, knowledge of exploration history, and the construction of geographical knowledge.

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Toponymy, linguistic rights and community sustainability: legal perspectives

Geographical names fall within the scope of linguistic rights, which are increasingly evolving and gaining recognition within the United Nations framework. United Nations bodies regard claims for bilingual toponymy or for the use of minority languages in place names as legitimate, on the basis of the UN «Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities» 1992, although such claims cannot be enforced as absolute legal obligations.

The 2003 UNESCO "Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage acknowledges" that traditional place names constitute an integral part of collective memory. Moreover, the erasure of traditional names may be criticized as a form of cultural assimilation. Further progress could be achieved through the recognition by the United Nations of the Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights - drafted in 1996 by civil society organizations - and its adaptation to the contemporary digital and information environment. The topics indicated will be addressed in the direction of Goals no. 4, 10, 11 for the achievement of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

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Romanization and orthography: standardisation, cultural heritage and the Sustainable Development Goals

The paper discusses the development and implementation of writing systems and romanization systems and considers how these can either support or undermine cultural heritage. Drawing on examples including the use of Inuktitut syllabics in Canada, romanization reforms in the Republic of Korea and imposed systems across Central and South Asia, the paper looks at the development of orthographies and romanization systems and their contribution to the preservation of cultural heritage and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The paper suggests that participatory and culturally sensitive approaches to developing and implementing writing systems can enhance sustainable development by supporting national and minority languages, respecting existing literacy practices and fostering greater public engagement. It also considers the relationship between cultural heritage and the use of romanization systems. Drawing on the author's work developing Terms of Reference for the UNGEGN Working Group on Romanization Systems, the paper proposes that romanization systems should be mindful not only of technical accuracy but also cultural integrity and looks at how this might be realised in practice. The contribution of standardised writing systems and romanization to the Sustainable Development Goals – for instance, SDGs 4 and 8 on education and economic development, and SDG 11.4 on protecting cultural and natural heritage - is also considered, highlighting how culturally respectful systems can more effectively support progress towards these goals.

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Unlocking the interpretive power of toponymy. A long-term Cartography Seminar to reconnect with place names and foster sustainable citizenship

This paper presents a didactic approach to toponymy based on the experience of the Cartography Seminar developed within the courses of Historical Geography and Geography Teaching at Sapienza University of Rome. The seminar draws on the geo-cartographic heritage of the Museum of Geography of Rome, particularly the historical map collection of the Italian Geographic Military Institute (IGMI), and promotes a hands-on approach to cartographic representation and toponymic inquiry. Using maps as primary analytical tools, students engage in participatory analysis of selected toponyms to move beyond the merely descriptive function of cartography. To challenge the conception of maps as neutral devices for spatial localization, toponymic analysis is conducted

through a diachronic perspective, drawing on different series of IGMI maps and integrating multiple documentary sources. Depending on the available materials, the seminar examines case studies ranging from the Alpine arc to the Roman suburban area, passing through the Apennines and minor islands. These cases illustrate the complexity of place naming as a cultural legacy of territorialization processes. Examples include glaciers and snowfields, which in specific cases are destined to persist only as relict toponyms due to progressive ice melting, and human settlements affected by persistent public misperceptions, particularly regarding the relationship between heritage narratives and resident communities. The methodology highlights both the limitations and heuristic potential of state cartography, which remains largely marginal in educational practices and, when addressed, is often confined to a purely locational dimension. Moreover, this subject is a field to enhance real interdisciplinarities teaching practices, both with literature and historical teachers. Analyzing toponymy as a cultural device enables students to critically interrogate cartographic sources and recognize place names as active elements in constructing geographical knowledge. From this perspective, the study of toponymy contributes to the objectives of Quality Education (SDG 4) and Sustainable Cities and Communities (SDG 11) by enhancing the capacity to understand territories as historically and culturally stratified spaces. Consistent with the principles outlined in the International Charter on Geographical Education, the approach fosters critical engagement with place names and maps, supporting informed understandings of human settlement, landscape transformation, and environmental change. These interpretive competencies are essential for promoting conscious territorial management, sustainable relationships between communities and their environments, and the development of active, responsible citizenship.

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Toponymy, art and memory: artistic practices as tools for the sustainable reinterpretation of place

Toponymy constitutes a fundamental device in the construction of collective memory and place identity, contributing to the definition of which narratives are made visible in public space and which, conversely, remain marginalised. From this perspective, geographical names are not merely spatial indicators, but cultural and political instruments that reflect and reproduce power relations, shaping the ways in which communities relate to territory. This paper analyses the role of contemporary artistic and cartographic practices as forms of critical toponymy, capable of questioning and re-signifying the processes through which places are named. In particular, it examines concrete cases of counter-mapping and critical spatial practices, such as those developed by Counter Cartographies Collective and the projects collected in This Is Not an Atlas, which render visible marginalised geographies and alternative narratives. These are complemented by initiatives aimed at analysing and rebalancing representation in urban space, such as Mapping Diversity and the activities of Toponomastica femminile, which highlight and challenge gender disparities in the naming of streets and public places.

The paper also considers artistic practices that symbolically intervene in the relationship between memory, territory and naming, as in the work of Kader Attia, whose practice addresses colonial legacies and processes of historical erasure inscribed in urban space, and Francis Alÿs, who, through situated actions and narratives, questions spatial boundaries and symbolic constructions of place. Although these interventions do not necessarily result in official renaming processes, they operate as critical devices that make visible the political and cultural implications of toponyms. Through these cases, the paper demonstrates how artistic and cartographic practices can concretely contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda of the Nazioni Unite. In particular, they support

the development of more inclusive and aware cities and communities (SDG 11), promote greater gender equality in public space representation (SDG 5), and contribute to the reduction of inequalities through the recognition of plural memories and marginalised subjectivities (SDG 10). Finally, the paper argues that art and counter-mapping practices, operating as forms of mediation between knowledge systems, communities and territory, can complement institutional toponymic policies, transforming place names into active instruments of cultural responsibility, inclusion and sustainability.

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What can be learned from the toponymy in Ottoman-ruled Croatia: preliminary insights

The objective of this presentation is to show that a radical, long-term socio-political transformation of an area does not necessarily result in toponymic changes, thereby preserving the native linguistic heritage. As an example, the toponymy of Croatia under Ottoman rule in the 16th century is examined, with emphasis on the region of Slavonia. Approximately half of today's Croatia was under Ottoman rule between the early 16th and late 17th centuries, including Slavonia, Banovina, Kordun, the eastern parts of Lika, and the Dalmatia inland. The arrival of Ottoman rule, marked by the complete disappearance of the previous elite and changes in social structure, initially caused significant demographic and economic losses. Later, the population was significantly restored, and the economy revived. The Ottoman authorities in Croatia enabled the mass immigration of linguistically related populations with new religious and cultural characteristics. However, the pre-Ottoman native population still accounted for a large share of the population.
The following methods were used: a) analysis of detailed tax registers; b) categorization; c) illustrative method. Analysis of registers identified three types of toponymic treatment in the territory of Ottoman Croatia: a) preservation of existing pre-Ottoman toponyms; b) adaptation through partial translation of toponyms; c) naming of new settlements and other smaller geographical features. Two key factors of the (non)change of toponymy are highlighted: a) demographic characteristics of the native and immigrant population (the intensity of the change of toponymy depends on the share and linguistic composition of the immigrant population); b) the absence of an Ottoman policy of naming geographical features (resulted in a tolerant attitude of the Ottoman administration towards the existing toponymy).
It is believed that this analysis of toponymy in Ottoman Croatia could serve as a basis for further comparative research on the aforementioned Ottoman naming practices and those in other countries under Ottoman rule, as well as on the (re)naming practices of other empires and regimes in the territory of Croatia.
To conclude, retaining pre-Ottoman toponyms preserved the linguistic heritage and identity of the pre-Ottoman population (contribution to SDG 11). By respecting existing toponyms, the Ottomans demonstrated administrative practicality, thereby facilitating coexistence between the local population and the Ottomans (SDG 16). Knowledge of the toponymy of Ottoman Croatia can support the development of historical, cultural, and spatial literacy and encourage learning from the native landscape (SDG 4).

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Orally transmitted toponymy as biocultural heritage: insights from the Atlante toponomastico del Piemonte Montano

The paper aims to highlight the role of orally transmitted toponymy as a resource for the safeguarding of cultural and biocultural heritage, in line with the objectives of the United Nations 2030 Agenda, drawing on the experience of the Atlante Toponomastico del Piemonte Montano (ATPM), a research project of the Department of Humanities at the University of Turin, Italy (www.atpmtoponimi.it). For over forty years, the ATPM has documented orally transmitted place names in areas characterised by marked linguistic complexity, where, alongside Italian, historical minority varieties (Occitan, Francoprovençal and Walser) coexist with Gallo-Italic varieties, all of which are today often threatened by processes of marginalisation, depopulation and profound territorial transformations. Through the presentation of selected case studies, the paper shows how orally transmitted place names - often absent from or altered in official cartography - provide a representation of space grounded in local practices and in the community-based perception of the territory. In line with SDG 11 – Sustainable Cities and Communities, the documentation of microtoponymy emerges as a tool for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage and for strengthening local communities' awareness of their linguistic and territorial heritage, thereby helping to counteract the effects of toponymic standardisation and the abandonment of traditional agricultural and pastoral practices. A further line of discussion concerns the value of place names as archives of local ecological knowledge and as indicators of the biocultural dimension of landscapes. Numerous toponyms collected within the ATPM refer to vegetation, fauna, landforms and agropastoral practices, offering a historical reading of the relationships between human communities and ecosystems. From this perspective, the contribution is situated within SDG 15 – Life on Land, highlighting how orally transmitted toponymy can contribute to the understanding and valorisation of historical forms of sustainable resource management that have largely fallen out of use but remain legible through linguistic heritage. Finally, the paper outlines the safeguarding and valorisation strategies developed within the ATPM, particularly through the digitalisation and georeferencing of data and the participatory design of toponymic hiking routes in collaboration with local communities. These tools foster new modes of transmission and engagement with the linguistic and cultural heritage of mountain municipalities, reinforcing collective awareness of the value of place names as a resource for more resilient communities and for a more balanced relationship between populations and environments, in accordance with the principles of the 2030 Agenda.

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From icons to towns. Anthroponymic municipal renaming in Post-Unification Italy as a marker of territorial identity

The renaming of settlements in Italy is a historically ongoing process that has been perpetuated over centuries. Since the establishment of the Kingdom of Italy in 1861, such toponymic changes were requested and granted with increasing intensity and interest, within the context of a newly formed nation whose shared identity was yet to be constructed. This phenomenon is therefore widely widespread - at times employed as a political instrument - progressively institutionalised through administrative and regulatory acts. Among them, a particularly distinctive category is represented by the naming of Italian municipalities to include a direct reference to an individual or a family that has left a mark on territorial identity. From Italian Unification to the present day, more than one hundred municipal names fall within this category. Examples include Castiglione, which in 1863 became Castiglione dei Pepoli; Saline di Barletta, which in 1879 evolved in Margherita di Savoia; Castagneto

Marittimo, renamed Castagneto Carducci in 1907. Although this phenomenon has been widely perpetuated, it has received limited scholarly attention in toponymic, geographical and geohistorical studies, and has not been adequately conceptualised. These place names arguably elude univocal definitions: they are neither original eponymous toponyms nor mere administrative variants, but rather configurations that can be interpreted as elements of territorial and collective memory patrimonialisation. Based on national ISTAT data, the research proposes the creation and analysis of a geodatabase encompassing all commemorative municipal renamings (including current, dissolved or merged municipalities) implemented across Italy, with the aim of identifying their spatial distribution, recognising chronological patterns, defining territorial contexts of higher concentration, and classifying the types of individuals involved according to both their role and gender. This analytical framework enables an examination of the implicit and explicit purposes of toponymic renaming, which oscillates between commemoration, identity legitimation, the construction of public memory, and strategies of territorial recognisability, while also offering insights and proposals for future initiatives aimed at valorising local memory. In this sense, toponymic changes are considered as a component of intangible cultural heritage, capable of activating practices of historical knowledge and patrimonialisation of territories. From this perspective, commemorative toponymy becomes a valuable tool for reflecting on the relationship between memory, place and community, engaging with the objectives of the UN 2030 Agenda, particularly those concerning the safeguarding of cultural heritage (SDG 11, target 11.4 "Protect the world's cultural and natural heritage"), education, and the development of aware communities (SDG 4, target 4.7 "Education for sustainable development and global citizenship"). The contribution thus seeks to encourage a rethinking of the role of place names as active cultural resources rather than as mere administrative labels.

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The geohistorical trail "Barili and the Cinque Ville". An ongoing project to preserve memory through place names

Geo-historical research conducted in the L'Aquila area (Abruzzo, Italy) particularly on a mountainous area situated between the middle Aterno Valley and the mountain range that separates it from the Fucino basin, covers a variety of topics, including the continuity of settlement in inland Apennine regions, historical place-naming, local identity, resource use, historical seismology, environmental risks and climate change. Characterised by a retrospective approach (from antiquity to the present day) and the use of integrated sources (chronicles, maps, descriptions and travel literature), these studies have reconstructed the interweaving of territorial, settlement and infrastructural patterns, as well as the fabric of enduring socio-economic relationships, on various scales. Medieval sources recount the history of Barili Castle, a fortified site dating back to the 10th century and located on the southeastern edge of the l'Aquila countryside. Several neighbouring settlements around it formed the so-called "Cinque Ville" (Barili, Fonteavignone, Casentino, Tussillo and Sant'Eusanio). This union was driven by the desire to control the territory, which is situated at varying altitudes and crossed by an ancient trade route, as well as to exploit the pastures and limited local agricultural resources. The instability of the 15th century and devastating earthquakes led to the definitive abandonment of Barili itself, though not its villas, which still exist today and preserve the memory of their shared identity, even symbolically.

Based on the aforementioned research, a project has been developed to create a new geo-historical trail, "Barili and the Cinque Ville", to be integrated into the Sirente Velino Regional Nature Park's network of walking routes. By promoting slow and mindful tourism, the trail will stimulate the local revival of traditional knowledge and natural vocations, representing an opportunity for economic

development. A further phase of the project involves conducting a field survey aimed at documenting the local place names preserved in the memories of older people and sharing these through the development of a deployable HGIS. This initiative is intended to foster collaboration between local communities and institutions, on both social and scientific levels, as well as encouraging reflection on the value of historical place names as living memories, heuristic indicators and blueprints of identity that should be preserved and passed on during a period of critical rural depopulation and the rapid degradation of the relationship between humans and nature.
The project aims to provide cultural tools to support the achievement of certain SDGs of the UN 2030 Agenda: 4: Promoting intergenerational knowledge exchange regarding local history, as reflected in place names (particularly microtoponymy). 8: Presenting an economic opportunity for a mountain area at risk of depopulation. 11: Demonstrating the historical resilience of local communities in the face of environmental risks. 12: Encouraging responsible consumption and production among local economic operators and tourists.

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Reconstructing territory through toponymy: the Enlightenment project of the Camino Real between Andújar and Mestanza (Eighteenth century)

Toponymy constitutes a fundamental tool for the historical analysis of territory, as it enables the identification of spatial continuities and the reconstruction of planning and communication projects which, although never implemented, have left traces in both the landscape and collective memory. This paper addresses the reconstruction of the route of an Enlightenment-era project aimed at creating a new section of the Camino Real between Andalusia and La Mancha, with a planned alignment between Andújar and Mestanza, crossing the eastern Sierra Morena and envisaging the foundation of several newly established settlements. The project is situated within the broader context of Bourbon policies of repopulation, improvement of transport infrastructure, and territorial articulation developed during the second half of the eighteenth century, immediately prior to the official establishment of the new settlements of Sierra Morena and Andalusia in 1767. Although priority was ultimately given to other strategic routes -such as those through Puerto del Rey, Barranco Hondo, or Despeñaperros- alternative alignments were also considered, later dismissed and subsequently relegated to historiographical neglect. This research seeks to identify and locate the places, sites, and settlements envisaged in these projects through a multiscalar toponymic analysis integrating historical sources and territorial evidence. The methodology is structured in four stages: (1) critical review of archival documentation and historical cartography, with particular attention to the diachronic variability of place names; (2) development of a standardised toponymic database systematising variants, probable locations, and their historical context; (3) spatial analysis using Geographic Information Systems (GIS), aimed at modelling hypothetical routes and assessing physical constraints such as relief, hydrography, and accessibility; and (4) empirical validation through fieldwork. This final stage incorporates high-precision georeferencing, low-altitude drone surveys for microtopographic analysis and the detection of potential road structures, as well as non-invasive archaeological surveys. The integration of these techniques enables the verification of correspondences between historical toponyms and the present-day landscape, as well as the identification of material evidence supporting the planning of these routes. From an applied perspective, the results align with Sustainable Development Goal 11 (Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable) of the UN 2030 Agenda, particularly with regard to the protection and enhancement of cultural heritage and historic landscapes. Toponymy is thus consolidated as a strategic resource for integrating historical research, heritage management, and

sustainable spatial planning, contributing to the strengthening of local identity and the promotion of more inclusive, resilient, and sustainable models of rural development.

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Geographical names on early nautical charts of the Adriatic Sea

Early cartographic sources are of crucial importance for the study of geographical names. As media of communication with considerable disseminative potential, maps contributed significantly to the use and stabilisation of geographical names in spatial orientation and linguistic communication. In this respect, nautical charts were of particular importance for the naming of geographical features within the narrow coastal zone and on islands. Their toponymic systems were closely linked to maritime practice, in which, alongside the identification of terrestrial navigation landmarks, special attention had to be paid to navigational safety. Consequently, the recording of geographical names was determined primarily by functional importance rather than by size or other quantitative characteristics of the named feature (such as ports, islands, capes, or reefs). Based on an analysis of several dozen manuscript and printed nautical charts of the Adriatic Sea dating from the fourteenth to the nineteenth century, the study identifies a gradual increase in the number of recorded toponyms, as well as the predominance of a Romance linguistic component – largely mediated through Venetian nautical cartography – up to the period of systematic hydrographic surveys at the beginning of the nineteenth century. These surveys document a rich layer of microtoponyms of diverse linguistic origin (Italian, Croatian, Albanian, and Greek), which could be cartographically represented on larger-scale charts.
In this regard, the *Carta di cabottaggio del Mare Adriatico*, published between 1822 and 1824 by the Military Geographical Institute in Milan, represents a turning point. It was based on the first comprehensive survey of the Adriatic Sea, carried out during the allied campaign of the Austrian, British, and Neapolitan navies in 1818 and 1819. The geographical names recorded on early nautical charts of the Adriatic Sea provide clear evidence of long-standing cultural and economic contacts and interactions. The Adriatic emerges as a maritime space that unites a nationally, linguistically, politically, and economically fragmented region into a complex composite, which from a maritime perspective must be viewed as an indivisible whole and as one of the most dynamic areas of the Mediterranean.
In this context, the study also contributes to the concept of sustainable development by highlighting the importance of preserving toponymic heritage as an integral part of cultural identity and intangible maritime heritage. Furthermore, a better understanding of historical naming practices supports contemporary coastal and maritime management, promoting culturally informed and sustainable use of marine and coastal spaces in line with the principles of the SDGs.

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Multilingual place names and sustainable governance in Friuli Venezia Giulia

The paper examines how multilingual place names in the Friuli Venezia Giulia (FVG) region (Northeastern Italy) function as a key interface between competing demands for toponymic

standardization, the protection of minority language rights and the pursuit of selected Sustainable Development Goals, in particular inclusive communities and the preservation of cultural heritage. It adopts a sociolinguistic and policy-oriented perspective, assuming that place names are not merely referential labels but also powerful symbolic resources in the construction and negotiation of collective identities. The paper first outlines the complex linguistic and legal landscape of FVG, where Italian, Friulian, Slovene, German and Venetan varieties coexist under differentiated regimes of recognition and protection. It discusses how national and regional legislation on historical linguistic minorities and on toponymy structures the visibility and official status of multilingual place names, while simultaneously generating areas of ambiguity and conflict. Building on several case studies, the paper shows that distinct standardization strategies – privileging supra-local norms, foregrounding local variants, or "restoring" allegedly original monolingual forms – can elicit sharply diverging reactions, ranging from pride and identification to contestation, semiotic vandalism and intra-community tensions. These dynamics are interpreted against the background of international guidance on the collection and use of local names and underscore the need for participatory procedures in toponymic planning. In dialogue with the 2030 Agenda, the contribution argues that well-designed multilingual toponymic policies can concretely support SDG 11 (sustainable cities and communities) and SDG 16 (inclusive and accountable institutions) by enhancing social cohesion, institutional legitimacy and the public salience of minoritized languages. Conversely, top-down, weakly contextualized standardization risks reinforcing territorial and symbolic inequalities.

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Lavis, Mezzocorona, Mezzolombardo, Roveré della Luna, Nave San Felice, Nave San Rocco: Trentino settlement names and their relationship with water

A wide alluvial plain north of Trento, traversed by the Adige and Noce rivers and bordered to the southeast by the Avisio stream, hosts a group of settlements, some of which later developed into administrative municipalities: Lavis, Mezzolombardo, Mezzocorona, Roveré della Luna, Nave San Rocco, and San Michele all'Adige. With the exception of Mezzolombardo, all are located on the right bank of the Adige and on the left bank of the Noce. Despite the apparent heterogeneity of their toponyms, these settlements share a common and enduring relationship with water. Drawing on vernacular forms recorded in the *Dizionario toponomastico trentino* and on early documentary attestations preserved in the *Dizionario toponomastico trentino storico*, this paper reconstructs the toponymic histories of Trentino settlements that originated and developed along major watercourses. The most direct correspondence between hydronym and settlement name is found in Lavis, whose name reflects one of the many popular forms of the Avisio stream, known as *la Vèisc* in Val di Fassa, *la Vés* or *Avés* in Val di Fiemme, and *la Vis*, *Lavis* or *Avis* in Val di Cembra. The hydronym derives from a Celtic form *ABISIO* or *APISIO*, meaning 'watercourse', itself traceable to the Indo-European root *AB*, *AP* 'river, water'.

The settlement name developed from the hydronym, with the initial *L*, now fully integrated into Italian usage, corresponding to a fused definite article. North of Lavis lies the plain now known as *Piana Rotaliana*, historically also referred to as *Piana di Mez*. The base *Mez* underlies the names of Mezzocorona and Mezzolombardo, separated by the Noce stream but both situated on the right bank of the Adige. Contrary to a widespread folk interpretation, the element *Mezzo* does not denote a position 'in between' two rivers; rather, as demonstrated by numerous early toponymic sources, it derives from Late Latin *MEZES*, meaning 'marshy place'. For centuries, the combined flooding of the Adige and the Noce transformed this area into an extensive wetland. The qualifying elements

lombardo in Mezzolombardo and *corona* in Mezzocorona were introduced during the Middle Ages in order to distinguish the two settlements. The former remained under the episcopal authority of Trento and thus within the Italian (*Lombard*) linguistic sphere, whereas the latter, located beneath a rocky outcrop known as *corona*, came under the control of Count Meinhard of Tyrol and was consequently also referred to as *Mezzo tedesco*. The sequence of these denominations is documented not only in the *Dizionario toponomastico trentino storico* but also in historical cartography, which is equally informative with regard to the toponym Roveré della Luna. As clearly shown in historical maps, this name derives partly from the oak (*róver* or *róro* in dialect) and partly from the crescent-shaped island formed by a bend in the Adige at the site of the settlement.
Finally, two settlements both known in dialect as *la Nave* - Nave San Rocco and Nave San Felice - are located opposite each other on the two banks of the Adige, the former on the right bank and the latter, a hamlet of the municipality of Lavis, on the left. The toponym *Nave*, attested from the fourteenth century onwards, denotes a ferry or pontoon bridge used for river crossing; historical maps provide detailed representations of the boats employed for this purpose. This illustration is situated within the framework of the *Sustainable Cities and Communities* (SDG 11) and *Life on Land* (SDG 15) objectives, highlighting how the study of toponyms can contribute to demonstrating that, over the centuries, human communities have been able to make use of the land for their survival, meeting their needs without compromising essential resources such as water.

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Uninhabited but named: safeguarding the oral microtoponymy of Zannone Island as endangered bio-cultural heritage

Zannone, the northernmost island of the Ponziane Archipelago (Italy), presents a unique toponymic paradox. Since 1979, it has been part of the Circeo National Park and remains uninhabited, lacking a stable community to preserve its local names in situ. Consequently, the island's toponymic memory is "allochthonous" surviving almost exclusively in the oral tradition of fishermen and seafarers from the neighboring island of Ponza. This paper explores the critical dissonance between the "official" cartographic representation of Zannone and its fragile oral microtoponymy. Historical and institutional maps (Italian Geographic Military Institute, cadastral) often offer a simplified or erroneous landscape, sometimes mistaking landing sites for rocks (e.g., the "Varo" confusion) or misinterpreting names due to linguistic interference. In contrast, the oral layer preserves a rich, descriptive map detailing morphological features, natural resources (e.g., Calcara, Peschiera), and historical traces (the Cistercian monastery ruins).
Drawing on historical cartography and recent field studies, this contribution highlights the urgent issue of transmission. Without residents, the intergenerational transfer of Zannone's place names is severing as traditional maritime activities decline. This loss is not merely linguistic but environmental: names like Scoglio del Mariuolo (potentially referencing the monk seal) or Cala delle Salpe encode vital information about past biodiversity and resource exploitation. In alignment with the UN 2030 Agenda, particularly SDG 11.4 (Protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage) and SDG 15 (Life on Land), this study argues that mapping Zannone's oral microtoponymy is essential. Transforming this intangible heritage into recorded knowledge is a necessary strategy to reconstruct the historical human-environment relationship of a protected area, preventing the definitive silence of an island that speaks only through the memory of others.

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How toponymy in Cyprus can contribute to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Toponymy, the study of place names, plays a significant yet often underappreciated role in sustainable development. In Cyprus, a country with a rich historical, cultural, and linguistic landscape, toponymy can contribute meaningfully to the achievement of several United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by supporting cultural preservation, environmental awareness, social cohesion, and sustainable planning. Toponymy contributes directly to SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) by safeguarding intangible cultural heritage and reinforcing a sense of place. Cypriot place names reflect centuries of historical continuity and diverse cultural influences, including Greek, Turkish, Latin, Maronite, Armenian, English, and Ottoman elements. Preserving traditional toponyms in both urban and rural areas strengthens local identity and community resilience. Furthermore, many toponyms encode environmental and spatial knowledge, such as references to water sources, landforms, or vegetation, which can inform sustainable urban planning, risk reduction, and responsible tourism development. Toponymy also supports SDG 4 (Quality Education) by offering interdisciplinary learning opportunities across geography, history, linguistics, and environmental studies. Integrating toponymic studies into educational curricula enhances awareness of local heritage, and promotes cultural diversity and critical thinking among students. In addition, toponymy contributes to SDG 13 (Climate Action) and SDG 15 (Life on Land) through the preservation of historical environmental knowledge. Place names that reference past ecosystems, agricultural practices, or natural features provide valuable insights into long-term environmental change. This information can assist policymakers and researchers in biodiversity conservation, sustainable land management, and climate adaptation strategies. Within the divided socio-political context of Cyprus, toponymy has particular relevance for SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions). Place names are closely tied to identity and collective memory, and inclusive recognition of authoritative Greek, Turkish, and other toponyms can promote mutual respect and dialogue. Participatory and transparent approaches to toponymic standardization strengthen institutional trust, support inclusive governance, and contribute to peacebuilding and social cohesion. Moreover, accurate and standardized toponymy enhances SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure) by improving mapping, spatial data systems, navigation, emergency response, and infrastructure planning. In conclusion, toponymy in Cyprus is more than a cultural artifact. It is a strategic resource for sustainable development. By integrating toponymic knowledge into education, environmental management, spatial planning, and reconciliation initiatives, Cyprus can advance inclusive, resilient, and sustainable communities. Recognizing and respecting the island's diverse place-name heritage is therefore both a cultural responsibility and a practical contribution to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

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Historical place names and rural heritage: evidence of the repopulation of the Sierra Sur and the Sierra Mágina (Jaén, Spain) in the 16th century

During the reign of Emperor Charles V, a resettlement programme was carried out in the southernpart of the Kingdom of Jaén, between the Sierra Sur and the Sierra Mágina. The aim was to establish new settlements along the former border with the Muslim Kingdom of Granada. This 16th-century

repopulation was organised around place names derived from medieval and even ancient features, such as castles, villages and settlements, as well as rivers and other geographical features. This paper will analyse the role of historical place-naming in this repopulation process. Through the systematic study of archival documentation and historical cartography, the ProCaCi project at the University of Jaén has identified the place names used for the establishment of these new settlements, as well as those relating to failed settlements. These settlements have also been located within the current territory, enabling a precise correspondence to be established between historical sources and the contemporary landscape. The project contributes to the recovery and promotion of place names that have fallen into disuse, acknowledging their status as part of the region's rural and intangible heritage. In this sense, the project aligns with three of the Sustainable Development Goals: SDG 11 (cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable), SDG 4 (quality education, in terms of disseminating historical knowledge) and SDG 15 (life on land, in terms of fostering a sustainable relationship between landscape, memory and territory).

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The problem of gender asymmetry in street naming

A dominant trend of our time strives to compensate for the mostly blatant asymmetry between traffic areas named after men and women. This asymmetry can be explained historically and is due to the fact that until not so long ago women very rarely held public positions. But if women were exceptionally prominent public figures such as the Austrian regent Maria Theresia or the English Queen Victoria, there was (and still is) no shortage of squares, streets, parks, bridges, train stations and railway lines named after them. This trend also reveals the usual commemorative naming dilemma: If only new traffic areas or traffic areas in the outskirts of a city would be named after women, who are already numerous today in public and prominent positions, and not also one or the other prominent in the center of a city, the cause would be of little use. Another gender gap would arise – the quantitative difference would only be replaced by a qualitative one. It is also a fact that all renaming causes costs and is not pleasant for the inhabitants of a street, since they have to change their addresses, disseminate the new one, etc. Scientific evidence also shows that place-name changes cause at least for some time the parallel use of the new and the old name: the old name continues to be used by insiders and older people, the new one by outsiders and younger persons only acquainted with the name they see on the street plate. This may lead to the conclusion that it would be better to avoid all kinds of commemorative naming and not to open up a new competition between naming after women and men. If a human being deserves to be commemorated, he or she is better served by memorials or commemorative plates at the place of birth, place of work or death. The paper will thus highlight the problems of commemorative place naming with a focus on the gender gap.

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Toponymic palimpsests: a shift in standardisation models for Slovene endonyms in Friuli Venezia Giulia

Slovene endonyms in Friuli Venezia Giulia exhibit considerable variation along a continuum between a standardised form of the name and a simplified written representation of the same dialectal name. Such nominal binomials, shaped by historical circumstances, are more frequent in the traditional Slovene settlement area of the former Province of Udine, where they appear on public signage and in local media. In contrast, in the provinces of Gorizia and Trieste historically established standardised names prevail, a situation that appears to be influenced primarily by the model of name standardisation in the kin-state, namely the Republic of Slovenia. Since in this area standardisation was never fully implemented - despite certain attempts in the twentieth century - and since neither the Slovene community, nor the regional authorities, nor the state initiated a process that would have rendered these names official, the Central Office for the Slovene Language operating within the Autonomous Region of Friuli Venezia Giulia has launched a project aimed at finalising a list of place names and standardising them accordingly. The dichotomy described above gives rise to a methodological dilemma. The aim of this paper is to establish a theoretical framework for a contemporary model of standardisation that would allow for the justification of different types of written forms of Slovene place names across the three former provinces falling under the legal framework for the protection of the Slovene minority (Law 38/2001). The current approach to resolving the linear and binary representation of onomastic material through the categories of endonym conforming to the literary norm versus simplified dialectal name appears expedient to reframe through the productive metaphor of the palimpsest of the toponymic linguistic landscape (Mangena 2023). Such a shift in perspective, and the resulting dehierarchisation, may make it possible to preserve the identity function carried by established dialectal Slovene endonyms in the Province of Udine, while at the same time addressing the needs of a segment of Slovene civil society that strives for cultural unification of the Slovene space. Drawing on discussions with representatives of civil society conducted within two focus groups (one held in August 2023 and a second planned for March 2026), the paper seeks to demonstrate that this approach could actively sustain the plurality of regional voices, while neutralising a potentially conflictual social situation. The argument in favour of preserving the palimpsestic coexistence of toponymic variants, as opposed to a linear, normativising model of name standardisation, will also be supported by a material-based analysis of a recent archival discovery and by a corpus analysis of minority-language printed media.

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Naming patterns in the Algerian educational space from a gender equality perspective: a toponymic-sociological approach

The naming of educational institutions constitutes a symbolic practice with cultural, pedagogical, and social dimensions. It goes beyond a merely identificatory function to play a central role in shaping collective representations, constructing social memory, and embedding values within public space. In this context, this paper examines the naming patterns adopted in Algerian educational institutions – primary schools, middle schools, secondary schools, and universities – from a gender equality perspective, with particular attention to the presence or absence of female names within the educational toponymic landscape.

The study is guided by a central question : to what extent do the names of educational institutions in Algeria reflect the principle of gender balance, and what sociological and cultural meanings underlie the predominance of male names or the limited visibility of female ones? To address this question, the paper adopts an interdisciplinary approach that brings together toponymy, sociology, and symbolic discourse analysis, supported by field data and official documents. The analysis is based on a sample of educational institution names from several Algerian provinces, classified according to

gender-related criteria (male/female personal names, neutral names, and names with religious, historical, or spatial references).
The study also examines the historical and cultural backgrounds informing these naming choices and relates them to the broader social and political contexts in which they emerged. Preliminary findings reveal a clear imbalance in gender representation, with a strong predominance of male names and a limited, selective presence of female names, often confined to specific historical figures or revolutionary symbols. This situation reflects the persistence of traditional symbolic patterns in naming practices, despite legal and social transformations aimed at promoting women's status in Algerian society.

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The evolution of Albania's toponymy in the last one hundred years as a case study

This paper focusses on the analyse of the impact of toponymic policies in the last one hundred years in Albania through the research of their geographical, historical and linguistic framework.
The toponymic inventory in Albania shows a variety of layers, which reflects the history of the land and its people. After the definitive consolidation of the Albanian national state in the 1920es the question of the toponymy, being strongly associated in the Zeitgeist to the concept of the autochthony, acquired a considerable national and political importance. Following the outcome of the Second World War the toponymy as well had to reflect the radical changes which took place in the country. The political change in the early 1990s brought about again implications in the toponymy. Consequently, three important moments can be identified in the evolution of Albania's toponymy during this period:
In the 1930es the Albanian government turned its attention to the question of the place names in Albania, in the wake of similar policies which were conducted in the neighbouring countries aiming to nationalize the toponymy after the creation on the nation-states in the Balkans. In 1938 a law was approved, which foresaw the substitution of nearly 50 per cent of the settlements' names. Due to the huge efforts required for its implementation, the subsequent chaos it would have brought about in the administrative activity and the outburst of the Second World War, its application failed.
After 1945 a more consequent policy was conducted. The substitution of existing place names regarded rural toponyms of foreign origin, hagionyms and other toponyms related to the religious domain, but also names of former landlords (from Ottoman times) used as toponyms or other originally pejorative place names. They were substituted by new ones, considered more appropriate, extracted from local toponymy, appellatives and proper names with national and ideological connotation, or ameliorative appellatives. A special commission attached to the Presidency of the Republic was appointed in 1983 to tackle this task.
The toponymy was again concerned following the political change in the early 1990s. This time few former place names were restored by request of the residents, involving only the local administrative level.
The evolution of a sample of the main odonyms of Tirana during the same period will also be considered in addition to the above-mentioned topics.
Toponymy can promote values related to well being (SDG 3 2030), quality education (SDG 4 2030), gender equality (SDG 5 2030) and peace, justice, strong institutions (SDG 16 2030). As far as historical toponymy is concerned, some related trends can be traced in the above-mentioned historical periods. The toponymic policies of the interwar period (1920-1939) can be related to the SDG 3 (well being, as devised by that time) and SDG 4 (quality education). The radical developments of 1945-1990 aimed also at well being (SDG 3) and quality education (SDG 4), but also at gender equality

(SDG 5) and peace and justice (SDG 16), as understood according to the ideological viewpoint in socialist Eastern Europe. After 1990 the toponymic policies still concern mainly the topics of 1945-1990, but with no longer ideological connotations, as well as the SDG 11 (Sustainable cities and communities).

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From place names to sustainability: the role of touristic toponymy dictionaries in achieving the SDGs (a case study of Tlemcen, Algeria)

Place names constitute a fundamental component of cultural landscapes, encapsulating historical memory, environmental knowledge, and socio-cultural practices. Within this framework, touristic toponymy dictionaries emerge as strategic tools capable of bridging linguistic documentation, cultural heritage preservation, and sustainable development policies. This paper explores the role of touristic toponymy dictionaries in contributing to the achievement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with particular emphasis on sustainable cultural tourism and bio-cultural heritage preservation. Adopting an interdisciplinary approach that combines toponymy, cultural geography, and sustainability studies, the research examines how systematically documented place names can enhance the interpretation and valorization of tourist destinations.

Touristic toponymy dictionaries are not merely repositories of geographical names; they provide semantic, historical, and environmental explanations that allow places to be understood as meaningful cultural texts rather than neutral spatial entities. In this sense, they contribute to raising environmental awareness, reinforcing local identity, and promoting responsible tourism practices aligned with SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) and SDG 15 (Life on Land). The current study proposes a case study of Tlemcen a city northwestern Algeria characterized by a rich concentration of historical, natural, and cultural toponyms reflecting centuries of interaction between human societies and their environment. Through selected examples of natural, historical, and cultural place names, this paper illustrates how toponymic meanings reveal ecological features, collective memory, and traditional knowledge embedded in the landscape.

The analysis demonstrates that integrating such toponymic data into touristic dictionaries and cultural mediation tools can support sustainable tourism development, protect intangible heritage, and encourage community-based economic activities. Ultimately, this paper argues that touristic toponymy dictionaries can function as effective instruments for sustainable development by transforming place names into vectors of cultural transmission, environmental awareness, and inclusive tourism planning. By linking linguistic heritage with development strategies, toponymy contributes not only to the preservation of the past but also to the construction of more sustainable and culturally grounded futures.

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Place names to read the World. Giacomo Gastaldi's toponymic tables as tools of mediation between past and present

The proposed contribution focuses on the comparative toponymic tables compiled by Giacomo Gastaldi in the second half of the sixteenth century. The Piedmontese cartographer produced tables

featuring “ancient and modern names,” which relate in different ways to the maps from which they derive their information. In the case of the First and Second Parts of Asia, the lists of toponyms were printed separately several years after the engraving of the maps (1559 and 1561), while their respective tables are dated 1564. For the Third Part of Asia, however, the dating is unified (1562), as the toponymic table was directly integrated into the printed map. The comparison between ancient and modern Asian toponyms does not constitute an isolated antiquarian exercise. Even today, it remains a cultural necessity and an exercise in applied memory of great depth and foresight, as well as a technical requirement for cartography. Gastaldi’s interest in the verification and alignment of place names appears as part of a broader editorial and scholarly project, likely connected to his collaboration with Pietro Andrea Mattioli on the 1548 Venetian edition of Ptolemy’s *Geographia*. Within a few years, this concern materialized in additional works, including *I nomi latini tratti dall’antico greco & i volgari…* (1560) and the *Disegno della geografia moderna di tutta la parte dell’Africa* (1564), where, as in the Third Part of Asia, the table is incorporated directly into the map. This paper proposes to interpret these tables as mediating tools between the classical scholarly tradition and the rapid expansion of contemporary geographical knowledge.

The coexistence of diachronically layered denominations reflects not only philological rigor but also the need to make cartographic information intelligible to a wider audience. In this sense, the tables function as instruments of knowledge accessibility, enabling users to recognize places across temporal and linguistic variations. From this perspective, Gastaldi’s work can be connected to selected principles underlying the Sustainable Development Goals. In particular, it relates to SDG 4, through the dissemination and clarification of complex knowledge, and to SDG 16, as the standardization and stabilization of geographical nomenclature contribute to the consolidation of shared spatial references—essential elements for administrative coherence, governance, and the strengthening of institutions. Furthermore, the collaborative dimension of Gastaldi’s activity highlights the importance of intellectual networks in the production and circulation of knowledge, in line with SDG 17.

Gastaldi’s philological practice may be understood as a foundational contribution to the development of shared and reliable systems of knowledge, anticipating issues that remain central to contemporary debates on toponymy, naming practices, and the relationship between names and the organization of space.

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Public naming of the Zadar cityscape

Street and square names (hodonyms) primarily serve an orientational function in the life and spatial organization of cities; however, due to their omnipresence in the urban landscape, they also constitute an important medium of communication. Their content reflects the intersection of officially sanctioned interpretations of the culture and history of a given space and the power relations within the community. In this way, cognitive and/or affective relationships are established with objects in space, whereby the material environment becomes imbued with symbolic meaning. The built, or anthropogenic, landscape contains layers of information about the value systems, preferences, beliefs, fears, and truths of its creators. Street nomenclature, owing to its primary orientational function, belongs to the domain of ordinary residents, yet it simultaneously possesses the power to convey messages in a subtle and continuous manner.

Its greatest advantage over other commemorative forms such as monuments, memorial centers, or museums is its ubiquity and lack of perceived sublimity. Contemporary indicators point to a lack of diversity in toponymy, particularly a pronounced gender bias in urban naming practices, whereby

women constitute only a small proportion of streets named after individuals (European Data Journalism Network, 2026). This paper examines the representation of women in the street nomenclature of Zadar, as well as women's participation in political decision-making processes related to street naming. The marginalization of women in Zadar's urban toponymy is the result of historical circumstances rooted in a patriarchal system in which men occupied dominant roles in politics, the military, religion, and culture, and were therefore more frequently commemorated in hodonymy.
A major challenge lies in significantly increasing the number of hodonyms associated with women, particularly given the disruption of an established linguistic landscape that has become embedded in collective and individual mental maps of urban space. Naming places, geographical features, and localities is a crucial component of constructing a community's spatial identity. Therefore, a change in naming policy is required one that prioritizes replacing existing names whose alteration would cause minimal functional disruption with new street and square names honoring prominent women from international, national, regional, and local history

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Toponymy as a tool for reconstructing Roman exploitation and settlement in Sierra Morena and the Guadalimar Basin (Republic-Early Empire)

The Sierra Morena region is historically defined by its metalliferous richness, which sustained intense mining from the Bronze Age through the Roman Republican period. As technical limitations eventually hindered extraction, a demographic shift occurred toward the piedmont and the Guadalimar River Valley (Jaén) during the early High Roman Empire. The primary objective of this research is to reconstruct the dynamics of Roman exploitation and settlement patterns in this transitional landscape by using toponymy as a key diagnostic tool.
By analysing how ancient names reflect land use and environmental interaction, this study provides a new framework for understanding historical territorial organization and its long-term evolution. The methodology integrates classical and advanced technological approaches: Toponymic and Epigraphic Analysis: A rigorous examination of primary sources, including Strabo's *Geography* and the regional corpus of the *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* (CIL). GIS-Based Spatial Analysis: A study of the physical relationships between archaeological sites and their environment, combining distances to communication routes, water sources, and environmental variables.
This multidisciplinary approach aligns with the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, specifically contributing to two key Sustainable Development Goals (SDG): SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities - Target 11.4): By identifying geo-historical landscapes fossilized in toponyms, this research provides essential data for the protection and safeguarding of cultural heritage, ensuring that historical settlement patterns inform modern resilient urban and rural planning. SDG 15 (Life on Land): The study promotes the conservation of historical landscapes and their biodiversity. Understanding the "fossilized" relationship between Roman exploitation and the environment supports policies for sustainable land management and the restoration of degraded territories by acknowledging their historical ecological identity.
This research demonstrates that toponymy is not merely a linguistic relic but a vital tool for the implementation of sustainable policies aimed at the conservation of both cultural and natural heritage in the Sierra Morena region.

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Good health and well-being in the city of Rome

Over time, Rome developed a vast system of charitable institutions to welcome and assist pilgrims, the poor, and emigrants, a memory which lives today thanks in part to toponymy and street names.
In the Middle Ages, *scholae* were widespread in Rome.
The various *scholae* that foreigners and citizens of other Italian cities established near the tomb of the Apostle remained famous in Rome. They consisted of buildings, hospitals, xenodochi, cemeteries, and churches, headquarters of national associations with religious purposes and to assist compatriots who came on pilgrimage to Rome. The Schola Saxonum, the Schola Teutonum, the Schola Graecorum, the Schola Florentinorum, Senensium, and others were thus for centuries almost colonies, with recognized privileges, that all the European peoples of the Middle Ages founded in Rome and often served as the precursors of institutions that still flourish today, created by foreigners to study the legacy of Italian culture and civilization.
An illuminated volume now preserved in the State Archives of Rome describes the charitable and healthcare works carried out by the Hospital of Santo Spirito in Sassia. The hospital is located in Borgo Santo Spirito and on Lungotevere in Sassia.
Many editions and commentaries on the *Liber Regulae* and its miniatures have been published. I list only a few in the bibliography. "Among the manuscripts kept in Archivio di Stato of Rome there is a miniated codex of thirteenth century on the rules of S. Spiritus Hospital in Rome... It gives a good information by means of text as well as fine illuminations of the xenodochia in the late Middle Age… It is clear that organization of a xenodochium was based on charitable works on behalf of the pilgrims, which came in Rome to pray by the S. Peter's tomb" (Palagiano, 1982, p. 243). "Meal-times for the poor were beaten by the sound of the bell… In this picture of medieval life we can remark the eminently religious purpose of health service, that was nothing but pure charity. Hospital represented a shelter for large crowd of poor and hungry persons" (Palagiano, 1982, p. 245). But what were the functions of a *xenodochium*? A *xenodochium* (from the Greek ξενοδοχεῖον xenodochèion, from ξένος xénos, "guest", and δοχεῖον dochèion, from δέχομαι dèchomai, "to receive, welcome") was a travel support structure in the Middle Ages, used as a free hospice for pilgrims and foreigners.
In this context, ancient institutions with a charitable function emerged, particularly in the Middle Ages.
The echo of these ancient institutions reverberates today in the activities of religious organizations which work in the areas of migrant reception. The memory of these charitable institutions testifies to the social commitment of the Church and religious brotherhoods in reducing poverty (SDG 1) and hunger (SDG 2) and in providing healthcare (SDG 3) to those most in need.

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Toponymy and the construction of contemporary identity: Frederick II of Prussia's settlements in the Warta River basin

This paper analyses the fundamental role of historical toponymy as a tool for fostering sustainable community identities, responding directly to the central theme of the '5th International Scientific Symposium of the Romano-Hellenic Division'. The research focuses on the internal colonisation projects of the mid-18th century promoted by Frederick II of Prussia in the Warta River basin, an area that is currently part of Poland. The study examines the transition from original German place names

to their contemporary Polish equivalents, positing that this geographical space offers a unique case study on how toponymic heritage survives administrative, linguistic, and border changes. Rather than viewing these settlements as mere vestiges of the past, this article analyses how the original toponyms reflected a sophisticated understanding of landscape management and the resilience of water resources in the 18th century. Through a comparative and cartographic analysis, the paper argues that the recognition of these 'toponymic layers' is essential for the preservation of biocultural heritage. In alignment with SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), it demonstrates that integrating the historical origin of these spaces into the current narrative does not diminish their present status; instead, it provides inhabitants with a 'true historical identity'. Furthermore, the presentation explores how the original names reflected the hydrological and agricultural realities of the 18th century, offering valuable lessons to inspire more sustainable human and environmental relationships today. By providing an interdisciplinary platform that unites history, geography, and cartography, this proposal offers a methodology for researchers and planners to use toponymy as a bridge of cultural continuity, fulfilling the objectives of the United Nations 2030 Agenda.

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Who gets a street? Gender equality, inclusive toponymy, and the politics of SDG 5

In the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, gender equality is positioned as a core prerequisite for inclusive and democratic societies. Goal 5 (SDG 5), which aims to eliminate gender-based discrimination and ensure women's full participation in public life, has been widely addressed through legal, economic, and social policy frameworks. This paper argues that toponymy, the naming of streets, squares, and public spaces, represents a critical yet still marginal terrain through which SDG 5 can be both advanced and re-interpreted, while also being shaped by the Agenda's framework. Urban toponymy provides a symbolic infrastructure in the urban space, structuring collective memory, recognition, and belonging. The persistent underrepresentation of women in place naming is not merely a question of symbolic omission but a spatial manifestation of gendered power relations. Across Europe, thanks to the proactive attitude of associations and civil society actors, numerous renaming campaigns, participatory naming practices, and the inclusion of marginalised female figures have already demonstrated that a more inclusive toponymy can serve as effective, grounded strategies for advancing SDG 5. All the same, these practices contribute to challenging androcentric urban narratives, enhance symbolic visibility, and foster gender-inclusive imaginings of urban space. The 2030 Agenda itself may actively shape the conditions under which toponymic change becomes politically legitimate and institutionally actionable. SDG 5, in dialogue with SDG 11 on inclusive and sustainable cities, offers a policy framework that enables municipalities to promote toponymic interventions as instruments of gender spatial justice rather than as isolated symbolic acts. In this perspective, the 2030 Agenda provides the discursive and regulatory infrastructure through which such practices gain resonance and legitimacy.

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Historical place names and urban sustainability: the urban nomenclature of La Carolina (Spain)

La Carolina, founded as a royal city in 1767 during the reign of Charles III and promoted by Superintendent Pablo de Olavide, was one of the main centres of the Colonisation Project developed under the Sierra Morena special privilege. In accordance with the provisions of this low, the dwellings in each colony could be scattered or grouped together, giving rise to towns or villages which, in practice, took the form of orthogonal urban layouts. These layouts were organized around a central square, where the most distinctive and representative buildings were located. Streets generally extended in a straight line from these squares towards the fields or plots of land. In the context of the new settlement government, it became necessary to establish an internal organization, which meant that many of the public roads were given names linked to important buildings, economic activities, natural resources or pre-existing place names. The aim of this work is to identify and locate place names, as well as changes in the names of streets and public spaces in the old town of La Carolina since its foundation in 1767, creating a historical gazetteer. To this end, ancient and modern place names will be identified through the analysis of archival sources, historical cartography and bibliography. In this way, the aim is to contribute to the fulfilment of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Among the Sustainable Development Goals to which this research may contribute, particular emphasis is placed on SDG 11, "Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable," given that La Carolina constitutes an early example of modern urban planning in Spain. The recovery of historical place names involves the documentation and preservation of intangible cultural heritage, insofar as the names of streets and squares act as elements of interpretation and museumisation of urban space. Likewise, the orthogonal layout and configuration of the squares were designed to promote socialisation and functional efficiency. This analysis highlights how the naming of urban spaces reinforces collective identity and belonging to the community, contributing to the identification, conservation, restoration and enhancement of historical and artistic heritage. Furthermore, this work can also contribute to SDG 15, 'Life on Land', as some roads retain names linked to natural resources, crops or geographical features. The study of historical place names reflects the biodiversity of the Sierra Morena prior to the profound transformations brought about by industrial processes, thus promoting greater identification of citizens with their natural environment.

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Toponymy and education in Italy. Textbooks, in-service training for teachers, national curriculum guidelines for geography in schools: a critical balance

The widespread lack of interest among younger Italian generations in toponymy and related topics has one of its roots in school teaching and didactics. A preliminary survey of about 20 textbooks for primary school adopted in the Italian national education system, published over the past 25 years ca., has in fact led to the observation that only a very small minority of them includes discussions regarding the origin and the evolution of the place names. In the absence of support from textbooks, few teachers choose to devote specific lessons to the subject. Moreover, the training of primary, middle and secondary school teachers itself is generally inadequate in this area: studycourses in Humanities and Education in Italian Academia usually prioritize other geographical contents. Opportunities for in-service training for teachers related to place names are also limited: one notable example at the national level was the training course Paesaggio e toponomastica (Landscape and Toponymy), held in the 2017-2018 school year under the aegis of the Alcide Cervi Institute, Emilio Sereni Library and Archive, based in Gattatico (Province of Reggio Emilia). The course consisted of lectures and workshops by Academic staff for teachers, as well as projects developed by the teachers in their own schools. In this critical situation, it is therefore clear that in Italy, in order to renew

attention to toponymic studies, it is essential to give them greater space across the various levels and stages of schooling, as well as in the training of primary, middle and secondary school teachers, in the broader context of Goal 4, Quality education, of the Sustainable Development Goals. A first contribution in this direction consists in the fact that, in 2024-2025, the Italian Ministry of Education (MIM) launched the process of updating the new national curriculum guidelines for the first cycle of education (primary and middle schools). On the basis of the suggestions of the geographers involved in the process, both the first draft of the document, released in March 2025, and the final version approved in November 2025, effective from the 2026-2027 school year, include, within the subject 'geography', a specific mention of the importance of toponymy education in schools.

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Vernacular neighbourhood names and residents' spatial structuring of the city: the case of Turin (Italy)

When urban toponymy is studied, attention is most often directed to hodonyms - the officially assigned names of streets, squares and other circulation spaces. Urban environments, however, are also structured through place names with varying degrees of formality referring to spatial entities of different scales. Among these, neighbourhood names constitute a particularly significant group of areal toponyms, as they play a key role in the internal organisation of large cities and are widely used by residents for orientation, everyday reference and the expression of social identity. This is especially evident in the case of vernacular neighbourhoods, which lack formal definition but are firmly embedded in everyday language and practice. Examining their perceived location, extent and boundaries provides insight into how residents imagine and cognitively structure urban space, offering a lens for debates on sustainable urban development and inclusive governance, as articulated in the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 11). Drawing on Kevin Lynch's seminal work on the image of the city and subsequent research on urban cognition and place naming, this study investigates vernacular neighbourhoods and their names in the city of Turin (Italy). Turin represents a suitable case, as its industrial development in the XX century and the resulting significant demographic growth transformed its urban structure.
These processes are reflected in contemporary patterns of neighbourhood naming, where historical denominations coexist with names emerging from more recent socio-spatial dynamics. Today, administratively recognised neighbourhoods coexist with multiple, partly overlapping configurations of neighbourhood space and a rich repertoire of names without formal status. To empirically document them, we conducted a large-scale online survey involving 758 participants. Respondents were shown geolocated images depicting urban landmarks and asked to identify the neighbourhood in which each one was situated. The survey generated over 18,000 responses, which were coded and analysed to address three research questions: (1) which neighbourhood names are most widely known and used; (2) how perceived neighbourhood extents relate to official administrative boundaries; (3) whether vernacular names reflect historical toponyms or recent urban transformations. The results identify more than 600 neighbourhood denominations and reveal frequent divergences between vernacular and formal boundaries, highlighting a fragmented yet meaningful mental map of the city. By foregrounding vernacular toponymy as a lens on urban space, this study aims to provide a resident-generated spatial knowledge that can inform urban governance and support more inclusive and sustainable planning frameworks.

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Algerian odonymy: between strengthening national identity and the challenges of modernization and socio-political changes

Street names (Odonymy) in Algerian cities serve as a profound reflection of the structural transformations undergone by the state and society, particularly in the post-independence era. This study aims to analyze the "transformative trajectory" of Algerian odonymy, beginning with the post-independence phase - which focused on the "nationalization of spatial memory" by replacing colonial legacy with revolutionary and historical names - leading to the contemporary reality shaped by rapid socio-political changes and urban expansion. The central research problem lies in monitoring the evolution of the "Odonym" from an identity symbol rooted in the past to a functional tool at the onset of the digitalization process. Focusing on Algiers as a model, the paper examines the strategic role of official bodies and research institutions in modernizing street naming practices. It highlights the state's efforts to accelerate the National Addressing Scheme to resolve "naming randomness" in new urban settlements by integrating these names into Geographic Information Systems (GIS). The study concludes that the evolution of odonymy in Algeria is not merely a linguistic shift, but a strategic reclamation of spatial sovereignty. It represents an endeavor to embed national identity within GIS frameworks, transforming collective memory into a functional digital infrastructure. Ultimately, the National Addressing System is presented as the cornerstone of sustainable development and a vital link for ensuring technical evolution, logistical efficiency, and future security.

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Toponymy as historical evidence of hydrogeological risk in Basilicata. An integrated approach combining the geo-historical dimension and satellite monitoring

This paper aims to explore the potential of toponymy as a tool for interpreting environmental dynamics and fostering sustainability education, focusing on the hydrographic context of the Basento and Bradano rivers in Basilicata. In a territory historically marked by geomorphological fragility, place names preserve a "fossil" memory of the conflicting and adaptive relationship between humans and the environment, offering indispensable interpretive keys for future protection and territorial planning. The study is situated at the operational intersection of two interconnected, ongoing research projects with a transdisciplinary scope: one which, through the use of radar satellite data and interferometric coverage (InSAR), monitors ground and infrastructure deformation, providing a diachronic overview of instabilities in the municipalities of the investigated area; the other which investigates the correlations between environmental fragility, depopulation, and geo-social fractures, aiming at the re-signification of at-risk places through participatory processes and the recovery of oral memory. The proposed methodological approach is geo-historical and involves the systematic analysis of toponyms derived from historical cartography and textual sources (expert reports, memoranda, archival technical literature), with particular attention to "geotoponyms" indicative of landslide or hydraulic phenomena. This intangible heritage will be integrated into a multilayer WebGIS environment overlapping two information layers: on one hand, the current and historical deformation scenario; on the other, the geolocalization of historical toponyms associated with hydrogeological instability. The ultimate aim is not only risk mitigation, but also fostering a new

‘dwelling’ awareness: recognizing in the place name a “warning” and a lesson from the past to build more resilient and sustainable human-environment relationships.

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Naming space: symbolic control in the territorialization process of Sub-Saharan Africa

Naming, i.e. assigning a name to a section of the Earth’s surface, is a cultural device through which, as part of the process of territorialization, a symbolic control over geographical space is established. Naming systems, which operate on different scales, enclose and convey different forms of descriptions, concepts, and legal/political statuses of the territories named. In the non-literate societies we have studied in sub-Saharan Africa for thirty years, territorial symbolism, in addition to its referential function, calls to mind multiple forms of knowledge. More particularly, territorial significance is fed both by magical and sacred beliefs and by knowledge based on empirical observation and concrete practices. These two types of knowledge differ widely according to their nature, the procedures by which they are formed, and the cultural values they embody. Nevertheless, the semantic interaction between mythical knowledge and technical knowledge is extremely rich. By blurring the distinction between mythos and techne, this semantic interaction seems to constitute an important cultural tool for building feelings of social security providing that it reinforces and stabilizes socio-geographic patterns, and more especially those which regulate access to space and natural resources. Similarly, cultural systems rooted in the soil reflect and sustain the intense social, economic and political changes that are affecting basic communities. In the area we have been looking at, the introduction and development of new cash crops such as cotton, the gradual establishment of State Institutions alongside the traditional ones, the growth of human mobility caused by climate change and recurrent droughts, the increasing flexibility and monetarization of the herding economy, are producing social relationships and forms of circulation of power absolutely unprecedented. The risks of social and environmental conflict are therefore enormous. The eclectic and plastic nature of territorial knowledge constitutes a strategic cultural resource for defining the frameworks of social legitimacy in a dynamic way, preventing direct conflict between the various stakeholders, and realizing processes of collective change which are neither imposed nor submitted to, but participated in.

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Toponymy, historical memory and political authority in the Kurdistan region of Iraq: policy implications for sustainable development

Toponymy is not a neutral cartographic practice but a powerful political instrument shaping historical memory, territorial legitimacy and governance. In the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), place names have been repeatedly reconfigured as part of broader strategies of state-building, identity construction and post-conflict territorial consolidation. Based on field observations conducted during two research visits to the region and an analysis of official cartographic and administrative sources, this paper examines recent toponymic changes in the KRI, with particular attention to areas of strategic and symbolic importance, such as the Mosul Dam zone. The study highlights how the replacement, modification or selective recognition of historical toponyms reflects competing narratives between

local communities, regional authorities and federal institutions. These practices directly affect the preservation of biocultural heritage (SDG 11), social inclusion and participatory governance (SDG 16), and the management of environmentally sensitive and infrastructure-critical areas. In the case of the Mosul Dam, toponymic policies intersect with issues of displacement, risk management and long-term sustainability, revealing how geographical names influence both public perception and policy implementation. By framing Kurdish toponymic practices within the UNGEGN guidelines and the 2030 Agenda, the paper argues that inclusive, transparent and historically informed toponymic policies can contribute to sustainable development by fostering social cohesion, protecting cultural diversity and supporting responsible territorial planning. The Kurdistan Region of Iraq offers a relevant case study for UNGEGN members and policymakers working in post-conflict and multi-ethnic contexts, where geographical names play a crucial role in reconciling memory, authority and sustainable futures.