

SEMESTRALE DI STUDI E RICERCHE
DI **GEOGRAFIA**

Semestrale di Studi e Ricerche di Geografia

- Roma, XXV, Fascicolo 2, luglio – dicembre 2013

- Gino De Vecchis.....7
- The joint IGU/ICA Commission/Working Group on
Toponymy. A short introduction
Peter Jordan11
- Features of toponyms forming of Alakol basin of Kazakhstan
*Particolarità della formazione dei toponimi del bacino del
lago Alakol del Kazakistan*
*Caractéristiques de la formation des toponymes de la piscine
du lac Alakol qui se trouve dans le sud-est du Kazakhstan*
Stanislav Yerdavletov, Abdreeva Sholpan, Aizholova Gulzhan17
- Naming methods of folk agricultural plot names in
Japanese villages: a connection between geography and
cognitive linguistics
*I metodi di denominazione di piccoli appezzamenti nei
villaggi rurali giapponesi: un collegamento tra la geografia e
la linguistica cognitiva*
*Méthode de nommage des noms folkloriques des parcelles
agricoles dans des villages japonais – connexion entre la
géographie et la linguistique cognitive*
Satoshi Imazato27
- Is *exonym* an appropriate term for names of features
beyond any sovereignty?
*Esonimo è un termine appropriato per i toponimi utilizza-
ti in contesti extraterritoriali?*
*Exonyme est-il un terme approprié pour les noms des car-
actéristiques au-delà de toute souveraineté?*
Peter Jordan.....41
- The Changing Toponymy: The Place Names and their Vitality
*I cambiamenti della toponimia. I nomi di luogo e la loro
vitalità*
*Les changements de noms de lieux: les noms des lieux et
leur vitalité*
Cosimo Palagiano 55

- Degrees of precision in toponyms containing compass points
Livelli di precisione in toponimi contenenti i punti cardinali
Degrés de précision en toponymes qui contiennent des points cardinaux et intercardinaux
Riemer Reinsma73

- Travelling through place-names. A Methodological approach for the development of a geo-atlas of toponyms
Viaggio attraverso toponimi. Un approccio metodologico per lo sviluppo di un geo-atlante dei toponimi
Voyage à travers les toponymes. Une approche méthodologique pour le développement d'un geo-atlas des toponymes
Silvia Siniscalchi91

- Standardisation of Place Names in Countries Influenced by the Chinese Writing System
Standardizzazione dei nomi delle località nei Paesi influenzati dal sistema di scrittura cinese
Standardisation des Noms de Lieux dans les Pays influencés par le Système à écrire Caractère chinois
Hiroshi Tanabe, Kohei Watanabe115

- A study of the toponyms of places and areas in relation to the physical characteristics of the terrain of the province of Cuenca, Spain
I toponimi di luoghi e di aree in relazione alle caratteristiche fisiche del terreno della provincia di Cuenca, in Spagna.
Étude des toponymes en rapport à la nature du sol. Le cas de l'expression de "bourbier", "marais" dans la province de Cuenca (Espagne)
Emilio Nieto Ballester, José A. Rodríguez Esteban, Pilar Lacasta Reoyo123

GEOFRAME

a cura di Marco Maggioli

- Roma: visione o pre-visione sinottica?
Sandra Leonardi141

DIARIO

a cura di Riccardo Morri

- **I Bisogni Educativi Speciali. Verso una Geografia inclusiva**
Angela Caruso147
- **La Sicilia nell'assetto dello spazio euromediterraneo**
Liberata Nicoletti151
- **La Dichiarazione di Roma sull'educazione geografica in Europa. Una road map per la geografia**
Cristiano Giorda155
- **Rome Declaration on Geographical Education in Europe. IV EUGEO Congress 2013**157

LO SCAFFALE

a cura di Riccardo Morri

- C. LOMBARDI-DIOP AND C. ROMEO (a cura di), *Postcolonial Italy. Challenging National Homogeneity* (R. Noel Welch)161
- P. BONORA (a cura di), *Atlante del consumo di suolo, per un progetto di città metropolitana* (A. Mengozzi).....163
- **The Authors**
Gli autori
Les auteurs165

The Changing Toponymy: The Place Names and their Vitality

*Cosimo Palagiano**

1. Introduction

Cities names are given for many grounds. The ancient name generally dates from an historical event, or it is coined for a natural characteristics, for the name of an explorer, for a cultural or legendary matter, for the name of a founder, for the name of a prince, for a word in local language, for the name of a saint. In Antarctic the Queen Maud Land was named after the Norwegian queen Maud of Wales, wife of the king Haakon VII of Norway. In Antarctic the Mary Byrd Land was originally applied by Admiral Byrd in 1929, in honour of his wife.

The aim of this research is both historical and geographical. But I can take in consideration only a few names, giving same examples, in both historical events and geographical distribution.

Slight changes due to little linguistic and transcription differences are not considered.

My research begins from the Greek history, omitting the most ancient events because of the doubt about the news' accuracy. The cities foundations began in the western Mediterranean basin during the second Greek colonisation in 8th and 5th century BC. Many cities of Europa and Asia were founded by Alexander the Great during his military campaigns.

2. The cities of the Asia Minor and Magna Graecia and Sicily

The cities of the Minor Asia and Magna Graecia and Sicily changed their names only for little linguistic adaptations, except Byzantium, Alexandretta and Trebisonda.

Byzantium (Greek: Βυζάντιον) was founded by Greek colonists from Megara in 657 BC.

The city was damaged in 196 AD and rebuilt by Septimius Severus. The Roman Emperor Constantine I, in 330 AD, refounded it as an imperial residence inspired by Rome itself (The *secunda Roma*). After his death

* Rome, Professor Emeritus, Sapienza Università di Roma, Italy.

the city was called Constantinople (Greek Κωνσταντινούπολις). On May 29, 1453, the city became the capital of the Ottoman Empire, with the name of Istanbul.

Alexandretta (Ἀλεξανδρέττα) was named in honour of Alexander the Great. The city was later renamed *al-'Iskandarūn* during the Islamic Caliphate and then *İskenderun* after the Ottoman conquest. The English name *Scanderoon* or *Scandaroon* is a corruption of the Turkish name.

The other city founded by Greeks on the coasts of Black Sea is *Trebisonda*, which was founded as Τραπεζοῦς (*Trapezous*) by Milesian traders (in 756 BC). This city changed the name only for linguistic adjustment, perhaps thanks to its permanent commercial function. In fact the name in Greek recalls the trade from τράπεζα, bank.

3. The cities founded by Greeks

The cities founded by Greeks, which changed their names are:

- *Halicarnassus*, that was famous for the Mausoleum of Mausolus, one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. The city was called Halicarnassus of Caria in ancient times. The name Bodrum derives from *Petronium*, named from the Hospitaller Castle of St. Peter. The site was formerly known as Halicarnassus (Ancient Greek: Ἀλικαρνασός, Turkish: *Halikarnas*).
- *Constanța*. This city was known as *Tomis* (Greek: Κωνσταντία or Κωνσταντία, *Konstantia*, Bulgarian: Кюстенджа or Констанца, Turkish: *Köstence*). *Tomis* (also called Tomi) was a Greek colony, founded around 600 BC. The name can be derived from Greek Τομή, meaning cutting, section. In 29 BC the Romans called the region *Limes Scythicus*. Tomis was later called Constantiana in honour of Constantia, the half-sister of Constantine the Great (274-337). The earliest known usage of this name was “Κωνσταντία” (“Constantia”) in 950.

4. The cities founded by Alexander the Great

An enormous contribution to city foundations in Asia Minor and Asia is due to Alexander the Great, who during his military campaigns founded (or seems to have founded) many cities, which were named after his name. We can list them in the following three groups:

- (i) Some cities maintained the name of Alexander with little linguistic variations;

- (ii) Many cities changed its name;
- (iii) Some cities cannot be certainly findable.

Under those of the first group we have to consider:

Alexandria was founded in 331 BC by Alexander the Great. It became an important centre of the Hellenistic civilization and remained the capital of Hellenistic and Roman and Byzantine Egypt for almost one thousand years until the Muslim conquest of Egypt in AD 641.

Hellenistic Alexandria was best known for the Lighthouse of Alexandria (*Pharos*), one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World; its Great Library (the largest in the ancient world; now replaced by a modern one with international contribution); and the Necropolis, one of the Seven Wonders of the Middle Ages. Ongoing maritime archaeology is revealing details of Alexandria before the arrival of Alexander, when a city named *Rhacotis*.

Alessandretta. The city was named *Alexandretta* (Ἀλεξανδρέττα) in honour of Alexander the Great.

Among the cities of the second group, I can mention:

Kandahar or *Qandahar*, known in older literature as *Candahar*. Alexander the Great founded the city now known as *Old Kandahar* in the 4th century BC and called it Ἀλεξάνδρεια Ἀραχωσίας (Alexandria of Arachosia)¹.

Jhelum. The name of the city is derived from the words Jal (pure water) and Ham (snow), as the river that flows through the river originates in the Himalayas. Jhelum's earliest name was Vitasta².

Uch or *Uch Sharif Urdu* (Greek: Ἀλεξάνδρεια ἐν Ἰνδῷ ποταμῷ). It is believed that in 325 BCE Alexander the Great founded a city called Alexandria on the Indus at the site of the last confluence of Punjab rivers with the Indus.

Herāt dates back to ancient times, but its exact age remains unknown. During the period of the Achaemenid Empire (ca. 550-330 BC), the surrounding district was known as *Haraiva*.

At the time of Alexander the Great in 330 BC, Aria was obviously an important district. Geographer Strabo writes that the Seleucids later gave

¹ Some scholars believe that the name "Kandahar" may be a transliteration of "Is [kandar]", the local version of the name Alexander, after Alexander the Great who founded the city in 330 BC and named it Alexandria (Hill, 2009, pp. 517-518). This derivation, as that from Gondophares, was characterised as "philologiquement impossible" by Bernard, 1974 and 1980, pp. 49-62.

² Shahbaz, s.d., p. 92.

the area south of the Hindu Kush to the Mauryas after a treaty.

Bagram, founded as *Alexandria on the Caucasus* and known in medieval times as *Kapisa*, is a small town and seat in Bagram District in Parwan Province of Afghanistan, about 60 kilometers north of the capital Kabul. It is the site of an ancient city located at the junction of the Ghorband and Panjshir Valley, near today's city of Charikar, Afghanistan.

This historical town was a key passage from Ancient India along the Silk Road.

In the mid 500s BC, Cyrus the Great of the Persian Achaemenid Dynasty destroyed the city as part of his campaign against the Saka nomads in the region. The town, however, was soon rebuilt by his successor Darius I.

In the 320s BC, Alexander the Great conquered the city and established a fortified colony named *Alexandria of the Caucasus*. The new town had brick walls reinforced with towers at the angles. The central street was bordered with shops and workshops.

Ai-Khanoum or *Ay Khanum* (lit. "Lady Moon" in Uzbek, possibly the historical *Alexandria on the Oxus*), was founded in the 4th century BC, by Alexander the Great and was one of the primary cities of the Greco-Bactrian kingdom. The city is located in Kunduz Province, northern Afghanistan, at the confluence of the Oxus river (today's Amu Darya) and the Kokcha river, and at the doorstep of the India.

Alinda was one of the richest cities of Caria. Alexander the Great was here in 334 BC for throwing Persians from Caria.

Spasinu Charax or *Charax Spasinu*, *Charax Pasinu*, *Charax Spasinou* (Ancient Greek: Σπασίνου Χάραξ), *Alexandria* (Greek: Ἀλεξάνδρεια), and *Antiochia in Susiana* (Greek: Ἀντιόχεια τῆς Σουσιανῆς) was an ancient port at the head of the Persian Gulf, and the capital of the ancient kingdom of Characene.

The name Charax, probably from Greek Χάραξ, literally means "palisaded fort", and was applied to several fortified Seleucid towns.

The exact location of Charax is unknown. According to Pliny the Elder:

«The town of Charax is situated in the innermost recess of the Persian Gulf, from which projects the country called Arabia Felix. It stands on an artificial elevation between the Tigris on the right and the Karūn on the left, at the point where these two rivers unite, and the site measures two [Roman] miles [3 km] in breadth. It was founded by Alexander the Great with colonists from city Durine... he ordered to call it Alexandria ... It was originally at a distance of 1¼ miles (2.0 km) from the coast, and had a harbour of its own, but when Juba [Juba II, c. 50 BCE – c. CE 24] published his work it was 50 miles (80 km) inland; its present distance from

the coast is stated by Arab envoys and our own traders who have come from the place to be 120 miles (190 km). There is no part of the world where earth carried down by rivers has encroached on the sea further or more rapidly...»³.

Three locations for Charax have been postulated.

- One possible site is a large mound known as Jabal Khuyabir or Naysan near the confluence of the Eulaios/Karkheh and the Tigris Rivers.
- Hayabir hill near Al-Qurna Iraq, located near the confluence of the Tigris and Euphrates.
- Another possibility is that the town was obliterated from the archeological record.

A history of the Charax can be distilled primarily from ancient text and numismatic sources.

The city was established by Alexander the great in 324 replacing a small Persian settlement Durine.

The city was rebuilt about 166 BC by order of Antiochus 6th who appointed Hyspaosines as satrap to over see the work.

Charax remained the capital of the small state for 282 years. The Romans under Trajan annexed the city in 116 AD. Characene independence was re-established 15 years latter under the rule of Mithridates, a son of the Parthian King Pacoros.

Charax continued, under the name *Maysan*, with Persian texts making various mention of governors through the fifth century and there is mention of a Nestorian Church here in the sixth century. The Charax mint appears to have continued through the Sassanid empire and into the Umayyad empire, minting coin as late as 715 AD⁴.

Charax was finally abandoned during the 9th century because of persistent flooding and a dramatic decrease in trade with the west.

The following third group of cities named Alexandria have an unknown location:

- Alexandria Asiana, in Iran;
- Alexandria Nicea, in India;
- Alexandria Troade, in Turchia.

³ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, Book VI, xxxi, pp. 138-140. Translation by W. H. S. Jones, Loeb Classical Library, London/Cambridge, Mass. (1961). «Charax, oppideum Persici sinus intimum, a quo Arabia Eudaemon cognominata excurrit, habitatur in colle manu facto inter confluentes dextra Tigrim, laeva Eulaeum, II p. laxitate. Conditum est primum ab Alexandro Magno, colonis ex urbe regia Durine...Alexandriam appellari iusserat...Prius fuit a litore stadiis X ... Tuba vero proderente I p.; nunca abesse a litore CXX legati Arabum nostrique negotiators, qui inde venerere, adfirmant. Nec ulla in parte plus aut celerius profecerere terrae fluminibus invectae...».

⁴ *Characene and Charax*, in Encyclopaedia Iranica.

5. The cities founded by Celts and Romans

The cities founded by Celts and Romans changed a little during the time. We have many examples of cities founded by Celts. The major of these are:

Beograd. The first Celtic name of Beograd, *Singidūn*, was named the first time in 279 BC. Roman changed the name in *Singidunum*. Since 824 and for some decades, under the Bulgarian rule of the Serbian territories Belograd was known as *Alba Bulgarica*.

The name Beograd (*Београд* = *white city*) was given by the Pope da John 8th but it was used for a short time. Bulgarians who ruled the city called it *Alba Græca*.

Hungarians named Beograd *Fehérvár*, *Nándoralba*, *Nándorfehérvár* e *Lándorfehérvár*, whilst Germans called it with the popular name of *Weissenburg*.

Lyons was founded by the lieutenant of Julius Cesar, Lucius Munatius Plancus, on the hill of Fourvière (*Forum Vetus*). He named the city *Lugdunum*, i.e. “fortress of the God Lúg”, the greatest deity of the Gauls. Lucius Munatius Plancus founded also Gaeta.

Bologna was named by the Etruscans Velzna or Felzna in 534 BC, when the city was founded. With a latinisation the Romans called the city Felsina⁵. The Romans renamed the city Bononia, perhaps on the basis of the celtic name which the Galli Boi gave to the city when conquered it in 358-54 BC. In Italian we use still the adjective “Felsineo” as a synonym of “Bolognese”.

Today the adjective “felsineo” is still used.

Senigallia was founded in the 4th century B.C. by the Gallic tribe of the Senones and became the first Roman colony on the Adriatic shore. The Romans founded there a colony after their victory over the Senones (280 BC?): the attribute *Gallica* distinguishes it from *Saena* (Siena) in Tuscany.

Vibo Valentia. During its millenarian history, Vibo Valentia changed from time to time the name, according to different historic events:

- (i) *Veip* or *Veipone*, pre-hellenic settlement;
- (ii) *Hipponion* (in literary texts, but inhabitants used the name *Veiponion* then *Eiponion*): name of the Greek colony;
- (iii) *Vibo Valentia* during the Roman rule⁶;
- (iv) *Monteleone* from the Suevian period to the Fascism.

⁵ The name Felsina is recorded by Plinius, in *Nat. Hist.* III, 15 «intus coloniae Bononia, Felsina vocitata tum cum princeps Etruria esset». The place name Felsina is still in province of Siena (commune of Castelnuovo Berardenga), in a area where the Etruscan names are widespread (like Orvieto, Bolsena etc.).

⁶ Cicero quotes the inhabitants of Vibo Valentia: «Ipsis autem Valentinis ex tam Illustri Nobilique Municipio [...]» (*in Verrem actio secunda*).

6. Other cities in Europe

Wien. Perhaps the name comes from Vedunia, meaning “forest stream”. Then the name changed in Venia, Wienne and Wien. An other opinion is that the name comes from the Roman settlement of Celtic name Vindobona, which means “white base/bottom [land]”. The name became Vindovina, Vídeň and Wien. The English name *Vienna* is borrowed from the Italian name *Vienna*. In other languages the name of the city is: *Bécs* in Hungarian, *Be* in Bosnian, Croatian and Serbian and *Beç* in Ottoman Turkish. Perhaps the name has a different Slavonic origin, and originally referred to an Avar fort in the area. In Slovene, the city is called *Dunaj*, which in other Slavic languages means the Danube River, on which it is located.

Chemnitz; Upper Sorbian: *Kamjenica*, Czech: *Saská Kamenice*. The city was named from 1953 to 1990 *Karl-Marx-Stadt*.

Chemnitz is named after the river Chemnitz, a small tributary of the Zwickauer Mulde. The word “Chemnitz” is from the Sorbian language and means “stony brook”. It is named in Czech *Saská Kamenice*.

Wroclaw, in German is called *Breslau*, in Italian *Breslavia*; is known also by several alternative names.

Gdańsk. The city’s name is thought to originate from the Gdania River the former name of the Motława branch on which the city is situated. Gdańsk has had many different names throughout its history. The name of a settlement was recorded after St. Adalbert’s death in AD 997 as *urbs Gyddanyzc* and later was written as *Kdanzk* in 1148, *Gdanzc* in 1188, *Danceke* in 1228, *Gdańsk* in 1236, *Danzc* in 1263, *Danczk* in 1311, *Danczik* in 1399, *Danczig* in 1414, and *Gdańsk* in 1636. In English the usual pronunciation is /gəˈdænsk/ or /gəˈdɑːnsk/. The German name of the city is “Danzig”. Danzica in Italian. The city’s Latin name may be given as either *Gedania*, *Gedanum* or *Dantiscum*; the variety of Latin names reflects the mixed influence of the city’s Polish, German and Kashubian heritage. Other former spellings of the name include *Dantzig*, *Dantsic* and *Dantzie*.

The Romans founded many cities, but their names are generally unchanged.

The name *Paris* derives from the Gaulish of the Parisii. The city was called Lutetia Parisiorum, “Lutetia of the Parisii”), during the Roman era of the 1st to the 4th century AD, but during the reign of Julian the Apostate (360–363), the city was renamed Paris. It is believed that the name of the Parisii tribe comes from the Celtic Gallic word *parisio*, meaning “the working people” or “the craftsmen”.

Cologne. In 39 BC the tribe of the Ubi came to an agreement with the Roman authorities to settle on the left bank of the Rhine; the Roman settlement was named *Ara Ubiorum* or *Oppidum Ubiorum*. In 49 BC Agrippina minor, the wife of the emperor Claudius and daughter of Germanicus, asked that her native village became colonia. Then the village was called *Colonia Claudia*

Ara Agrippinensium («Claudius's colonia and Agrippina's altar») or simply, *Colonia Agrippina*⁷.

7. The cities of the Russian Empire, to Sovietic State and to Russian Republic

The major changes of the city names are due to the Russian Empire, to Sovietic state and to Russian Republic.

Saint Petersburg (Russian: Санкт-Петербург). In 1914 the name of the city was changed to *Petrograd* (Russian: Петроград), in 1924 to *Leningrad* (Russian: Ленинград), and in 1991, back to *Saint Petersburg*. In many Russian documents, the “Saint” (Санкт-) is usually omitted, leaving *Petersburg* (Петербург, *Peterburg*). Saint Petersburg was founded by the Tsar Peter the Great on May 27, 1703.

Volgograd (in Russian: Волгоград). From 1598 to 1925 its name was *Caricyn o Tsaritsyn* (in Russian: Царицын) and then *Stalingrad* (in Russian: Сталинград) from 1925 to 1961. In 1961 the city was named again Volgograd (“City of the Volga”), by order of Nikita Krusciov who provided for the de-Stalinization of the the Sovietic Union. There were many proposal to rename the city *Stalingrad* during the short administration in 1985 of the President Konstantin Chernenko. In this time the proposed name of the city is again Stalingrad, in honour of the heroic battle of the Second World War.

In Russia Togliatti was founded, according the name of the known Italian communist political figure, because an Italian car factory was constructed there, but the name has been not changed. Togliatti o Tol’jatti (in Russian: Тольятти), known in Italy also with the name anche with the name Togliattigrad, founded in 1737 with the name of Stavropol’-na-Volge (Ставрополь-На-Волге), in 1964 took the present name in honour of, Palmiro Togliatti, at that moment secretary of the Italian Communist Party During the ’50s the filling of the dam of Kujbyšev completely destroyed the city, that was rebuilt elsewhere.

Ashgabat is the capital and largest city of Turkmenistan, a country in Central Asia. From 1919 until 1927, the city was renamed Poltoratsk after a local revolutionary. Before 1991, the city was usually spelled Ashkabad in English, a transliteration of the Russian form. Ashgabat is a relatively young city, growing out of a village of the same name established by Russian officers in 1881 after the Battle of Geok Tepe. It is not far from the site of Nisa, the ancient capital of the Parthian Empire.

Nizhny Novgorod (Russian: Нижний Новгород; colloquially shortened to *Nizhny*. From 1932 to 1990, it was known as *Gorky* (Горький) after the writer Maxim Gorky who was born there.

⁷ From *Ubii village to metropolis*, City of Cologne, retrieved 16 April 2011; *Facts and figures*, City of Cologne, retrieved 17 April 2011.

Dushanbe is the capital of Tajikistan. The city was renamed as *Stalinabad* between 1931 and 1961.

Donec'k (ucr. Доне́цьк, rus. Доне́цк, also *Donetsk*) was founded in 1869 by the Welsh businessman John Hughes, who constructed a steel industry and some coal mines close to Olexandrivka, a cosak village. The name of the city was *Juzovka* (Юзовка), a Russian version of *Hughesovka*. In 1924, the city changed the name in *Stalino*, for the big steel production (in Russian, *stal*). After the Second World War, the city was rebuilt. During the destalinisation due to Nikita Khrushčev in November 1961, all Soviet cities were again renamed. The city changed the name of *Stalino* into that of *Donec'k*.

Astana (Russian/Kazakh: Астана), formerly known as *Akmola* (Kazakh: Ақмола/*Aqmola*) until 1998, *Tselinograd* (Russian: Целиноград) until 1992 and *Akmolinsk* (Russian: Акмолинск) until 1961, has been the capital of Kazakhstan since 1997, and is the country's second largest city (after *Almaty*, the former capital).

Tashkent (also *Taşkent*; in Uzbek *Toshkent* o *Тошкент*; in Russian Таškent o *Таишкѐнт*) The city name changed many times: under the Chinese dynasty Han the city was named *Beitan*. Later it changed the name in *Chachkand*, *Tashkand* and then *Tashkent*. *Tashkent* was founded by Arabs in 750. In 1219 the city was destroyed by Genghis Khan, but it was rebuilt some years after. From 1809 to 1865 the city belonged to the Khanate of Kokand, and then to the Russian Empire. *Tashkent* means literally "Stone City".

During its long history, *Tashkent* changed the name and political and religious affiliations.

In pre-Islamic and early Islamic times, the town and the province were known as *Chach*. The *Shahnameh* of Ferdowsi also refers to the city as *Chach*. Later the town came to be known as *Chachkand/Chashkand*, meaning "Chach City".

In the early 8th century, the region was influenced by Islamic immigrants.

Under the Samanid dynasty (819–999), whose founder Saman Khuda of an Zoroastrian Sassanian Persian had converted to Islam, the city came to be known as *Binkath*. However, the Arabs retained the old name of *Chach* for the surrounding region, pronouncing it *al-Shash* instead.

The modern Turkic name of *Tashkent* (City of Stone) comes from Kara-Khanid rule in the 10th century. (*Tash* in Turkic languages means stone. *Kand*, *qand*, *kent*, *kad*, *kath*, *kud* – all meaning a city – are derived from the Persian/Sogdian *kanda*, meaning a town or a city. They are found in city names such as *Samarkand*, *Yarkand*, *Penjikent*, *Khujand* etc.). After the 16th century, the name evolved from *Chachkand/Chashkand* to *Tashkand*. The modern spelling of "Tashkent" reflects Russian orthography and 20th-century Soviet influence.

The city was destroyed by Genghis Khan in 1219, although the great conqueror had found that the *Khorezmshah* had already sacked the city

in 1214. Under the Timurids and subsequent Shaybanid dynasties the city revived, despite occasional attacks by the Uzbeks, Kazakhs, Persians, Mongols, Oirats.

Königsberg was the capital of Prussia from the Late Middle Ages until 1701 when the capital was moved to Berlin. During the period from 1701 until 1945 it was the regional capital of the Prussian (and from 1871, German) province of East Prussia. It was the easternmost large German city until it was captured by the Soviet Union and Allies near the end of World War II. In 1946 the rebuilt city was renamed *Kaliningrad* (Калининград).

The literal meaning of the town's name is 'King's Mountain'. In the local Low German dialect, spoken by many of its German inhabitants, the name was *Königsbarg*. Further names include Old Prussian: *Kunneggarbs*, *Knigsberg*, Lithuanian: *Karaliaučius*, Polish: *Królewiec*, and the modern Russian and current official name, *Kaliningrad*.

Königsberg was founded in 1255 on the site of the ancient Old Prussian settlement *Twangste* by the Teutonic Knights during the Northern Crusades, and was named in honour of King Ottokar II of Bohemia.

While between the 13th and the 19th century the inhabitants spoke predominantly German, the multicultural city also had a profound influence on the Lithuanian and Polish cultures.

8. *The cities of North America*

The Dutch were the first European settlers to settle in the area and founded the cities of Fort Nassau, Fort Oranje and Nieuw Amsterdam. In 1660 the territory passed to England who renamed it from New Amsterdam to New York, in honor of the Duke of York, who would later become King James II. The territory was organized in a method that is still followed, dividing the state into 12 counties, each of which is divided into the city.

9. *The cities of India*

Varanasi also *Benares*, *Banaras* (*Banāras* or *Kashi* is a city on the banks of the Ganges (Ganga) in Uttar Pradesh. It is holiest of the seven sacred cities (*Sapta Puri*) in Hinduism and Jainism. Hindus believe that death at Varanasi brings salvation. It is one of the oldest continuously inhabited cities in the world and the oldest in India.

The name *Vārāṇasi* possibly originates from the names of the two rivers: Varuna, still flowing in Varanasi, and Asi, a small stream near Assi Ghat. According to legend, Varanasi was founded by the god Shiva⁸.

⁸ *Varanasi – Explore India Millennium Year* (Press release). Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, March 2007.

Varanasi was ceded to the Union of India on 15 October 1948. After the death of Dr. Vibhuti Narayan Singh in 2000, his son Anant Narayan Singh became the figurehead king, responsible for upholding the traditional duties of a Kashi Naresh.

Chennai (formerly, *Madras*) is the capital city of the Indian state of Tamil Nadu. It is a major commercial, cultural, economic and educational center in South India. The area around Chennai had been part of successive South Indian kingdoms through centuries.

The name *Chennai* is a shortened form of *Chennai pattanam*, the name of the town that grew around Fort St. George, which was built by the English in 1639.

The city's colonial name, *Madras*, is believed to have been derived from *Madraspattinam*, a fishing village north of Fort St. George. However, it is uncertain whether the name 'Madraspattinam' was in use before European influence.

After the British possession of the area in the 17th century, the two towns, *Madraspattinam* and *Chennapattinam*, were merged, and the British referred to the united town as *Madraspattinam*. The state government officially changed the name to *Chennai* in 1996, at a time when many Indian cities were being renamed. However, the name *Madras* continues to be occasionally used for the city, as well as for places named after the city, such as the University of Madras and The Indian Institute of Technology, Madras. In Madras there is the most relevant Theosophical Society around the world.

Bombay. The name "Mumbai" comes from *Mumba* o *Maha-Amba*, the name of the goddess Mumbadevi, and from *Aai*, that means mother in the marathi language. The traditional name "Bombay" derives from the 16th century, when the Portugueses called the city "Bombaim". The British in the 17th century, used the name "Bombay". During the British rule on India, the pronunciation "Mumbai" or "Mambai" was used in marathi and gujarati, whilst the form "Bambai" was used in Hindostan and Persian. On 4th May 1995, the government of Maharashtra approved the name "Mumbai", after many years of discussions.

Ahmedabad (or *Ahmadabad*; sometimes called with the old name of *Karnavati*, or *Amdavad* in a colloquial form of the language gujarati) is the chief town of the district of Ahmedabad.

The city was founded in the 15th by the sultan Ahmed Shah, on the river Sabarmati.

10. *The cities of China*

Guangzhou (known historically as *Canton* or *Kwangchow*) is the capital and largest city of the Guangdong province, People's Republic of China.

In 2008 Guangzhou was identified as a Beta World City by the global city index produced by the GaWC, the Globalization and World Cities Research Network.

Shenyang (pinyin: *Shěnyáng*), or *Mukden* (in Manchu), is the capital and largest city of Liaoning Province, as well as the largest city in Northeast China. Currently holding sub-provincial administrative status, the city was once known as *Shengjing* or *Fengtian Prefecture*. The city's name, *Shenyang*, literally meaning “to the Yang side of the Shen River” (in Chinese tradition, a river's north bank and a mountain's south slope are considered to be the “sunny” – or “Yang” – side), referring to the Hun River – used to be called “Shen River” – on the city's south side. In 1625, the Manchu leader Nurhaci captured Shenyang and moved his capital to the city, or *Simiyan hoton* as it is called in Manchu language. The official name was changed to *Shengjing* in Chinese, or *Mukden* in Manchu, in 1634. The name derives from the Manchu word, *mukdemi* meaning “to rise”, and this is reflected by its Chinese name, which means “rising capital”.

Guangzhou's earliest recorded name is Panyu, derived from two nearby mountains known as Pan and Yu in ancient times. Its recorded history begins with China's conquest of the area during the Qin Dynasty. Panyu expanded when it became capital of the Nanyue Kingdom in 206 BC; the territory of the Nanyue Kingdom included what is now Vietnam.

The Han Dynasty annexed the Nanyue Kingdom in 111 BC, and Panyu became a provincial capital and remains so today. In 226 AD, Panyu became the seat of Guang Prefecture. While originally referring to the prefecture alone, local citizens gradually adopted the custom of using the same name for their city.

Although Guangzhou replaced Panyu as the name of the walled city, Panyu was still the name of the surrounding area until the end of Qing Dynasty. Today, Panyu is a district of Guangzhou south of Haizhu District separated from the rest of the city by the Pearl River.

The Muslim Moroccan Traveler Ibn Battuta visited Guangzhou in the 14th century in his journey around the World. He described the manufacturing process of large ships in the city.

The Portuguese were the first Europeans to arrive in Guangzhou by sea in 1514, establishing a monopoly on the external trade out of its harbour by 1517. They were later expelled from their settlements in Guangzhou (*Cantão* in Portuguese), but instead granted use of Macau as a trade base with the city in 1557. They would keep a near monopoly on foreign trade in the region until the arrival of the Dutch in the early 17th century.

It is believed that the romanisation “Canton” originated from the Portuguese *Cantão*, which was transcribed from Guangdong.

The Portuguese in Macau, the Spanish in Manila, Arabs from the Middle East and Muslims from India were already actively trading in the port by the 1690s, when the French and English began frequenting the port through

the Canton System.

Japanese troops occupied Guangzhou from October 12, 1938, to September 16, 1945, after violent bombings. In the city, the Imperial Japanese Army conducted bacteriological research unit 8604, a section of unit 731, where Japanese doctors experimented on human prisoners.

After the fall of the capital Nanjing in April 1949, the Nationalist government under the acting president Li Zongren relocated to Guangzhou.

Communist forces entered the city on October 14, 1949. This led the nationalists to blow up the Haizhu Bridge as the major link across the Pearl River and to the acting president's leaving for New York, whereas Chiang Kai-shek set up the capital for the Nationalist government in Chongqing again. The urban renewal projects of the new communist government improved the lives of some residents. New housing on the shores of the Pearl River provided homes for the poor boat people. Reforms by Deng Xiaoping, who came to power in the late 1970s, led to rapid economic growth due to the city's close proximity to Hong Kong and access to the Pearl River.

11. *The cities of Indochina*

Ho Chi Minh City, formerly named *Saigon*, is the largest city in Vietnam.

Under the name Saigon, it was the capital of the French colony of Cochinchina and later of the independent republic of South Vietnam from 1955–75. South Vietnam, as an anti-communist, capitalist republic, fought against the communist North Vietnamese and Viet Cong during the Vietnam War, with aid from the United States and countries including Australia, New Zealand and South Korea. Saigon fell when it was captured by the communists on 30 April 1975, ending the war with a Communist victory. Vietnam was then turned into a communist state with the South overtaken. On 2 July 1976, Saigon merged with the surrounding Gia Định Province and was officially renamed Ho Chi Minh City after Hồ Chí Minh (although the name *Sài Gòn* is still commonly used).

Sài Gòn may refer to the kapok (*bông gòn*) trees that are common around the city.

Former Emperor Bảo Đại made Saigon the capital of the State of Vietnam in 1949 with himself as head of state. In 1976, upon the establishment of the unified communist Socialist Republic of Vietnam, the city of Saigon (including Cholon), the province of Gia Định and two suburban districts of two other nearby provinces were combined to create Ho Chi Minh City in honor of the late Communist leader Hồ Chí Minh. The former name *Saigon* is still widely used by many Vietnamese, especially in informal contexts. Generally, the term *Saigon* refers only to the urban districts of Ho Chi Minh City.

12. *The cities of Africa*

Maputo, known as *Lourenço Marques* before independence, is the capital and largest city of Mozambique. It is known as the *City of Acacias* in reference to acacia trees commonly found along its avenues and the *Pearl of the Indian Ocean*. It was famous for the inscription “This is Portugal” on the walkway of its municipal building.

Lourenço Marques was named after the Portuguese navigator who, with António Caldeira, was sent in 1544 by the governor of Mozambique on a voyage of exploration. They explored the lower courses of the rivers emptying their waters into Delagoa Bay, notably the Espírito Santo.

The People’s Republic of Mozambique was proclaimed on 25 June 1975 in accordance with the Lusaka Accord signed in September 1974. After independence, the city’s name was changed (in February 1976) to Maputo. Maputo’s name reputedly has its origin in the Maputo River.

Polokwane, meaning “Place of Safety”, is a city in the Polokwane Local Municipality and the capital of the Limpopo province, South Africa. It is also often referred to by its former name, *Pietersburg*. Polokwane is a major urban centre, the biggest and most important north of Gauteng.

In the 1840s, Voortrekkers under the leadership of Andries Potgieter established Zoutpansbergdorp, a town 100 km to the north west. This settlement had to be abandoned because of clashes with the local tribes. They founded a new town in 1886 and named it Pietersburg in honour of Voortrekker leader Petrus Jacobus Joubert. The British built a concentration camp at Pietersburg during the Boer War to house almost 4,000 Boer women and children. The town officially became a city on April 23, 1992; on February 25, 2005, the government declared the official name of the city as Polokwane, a name that was generally in use by the speakers of Northern Sotho. The city was the site of the ANC national conference which saw Jacob Zuma take over as head of the party.

Kinshasa (formerly French *Léopoldville*, and Dutch *Leopoldstad*) is the capital and the largest city of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The city is located on the Congo River.

Kinshasa is the second largest city in Africa after Cairo. It is also the second largest “francophone” urban area in the world after Paris, French being the language of government, schools, newspapers, public services and high-end commerce in the city, while Lingala is used as a lingua franca in the street.

Residents of Kinshasa are known as *Kinois* (in French and sometimes in English) or Kinshasans (English).

The city was founded as a trading post by Henry Morton Stanley in 1881 and named Léopoldville in honor of King Leopold II of Belgium, who controlled the vast territory that is now the Democratic Republic of the Congo, not as a colony but as a private property.

In 1965, Joseph-Désiré Mobutu initiated a policy of “Africanizing” the

names of people and places in the country. In 1966, Léopoldville was renamed *Kinshasa* for a village named Kinchassa that once stood near the site.

Lubumbashi (formerly French *Élisabethville*, or Dutch *Elisabethstad* in the southeastern part of Democratic Republic of the Congo), is the second largest city in the country, second only to the nation's capital Kinshasa. Lubumbashi is the mining capital of the Democratic.

The Belgians founded the city of *Élisabethville* (sometimes *Elizabethville*, both in French, or *Elisabethstad* in Dutch) in 1910, named in honour of their queen Elisabeth, wife to king Albert I. The location of the city was chosen by Vice-Governor-General Emile Wangermée, because of the proximity to the copper mine of *Etoile du Congo* and the copper ore smelting oven installed by Union Minière du Haut Katanga on the nearby Lubumbashi river.

13. *The cities of the reclaimed land of the former Pontine Marshes*

The fascist regime, in the reclaimed lands of the former Pontine Marshes, founded many towns and called almost all these cities with the names of the battles of the first world war. These cities did not change their names. The name of Sabaudia could be changed, because it refers to family of last Italian kings, who were compromised with the fascist regime. The name Littoria has been changed in Latina for its evident reference to the Fascism.

Latina was founded in 1932, on December 18th, with the name of Littoria and assumed its actual name in 1946, after the Second World War.

The *Terracina's* ancient name was Anxur when it was under the Volscians rule, as Pliny the Elder writes⁹. Under the Etruscan rule (700-600 BC) the name of the city was Tarrakina, then Tarracinae, Tarricina and finally Terracina. But Romans called it still Anxur.

The fascist regime founded other cities in Italy, as Carbonia and Fertilia in Sardinia, but most of them did not change their names, because of their economic and not political meanings. Of course the Villaggio Mussolini, inaugurated on 1928, 29th October, in 1930 called Mussolinia di Sardegna and since 1944 its name is Arborea, from the historical name of a Sardinian region, which derives from Latin *arborea* (scrub, wood).

The reference above are only some examples for a more thorough search, that I propose to carry out in the next future.

References

BERNARD P., *Un probleme de toponymie antique dans l'Asie Centrale: les noms anciens de Qandahar*, *Studia Iranica* 3, 1974 and *Afghanistan Quarterly*, 33, 1, 1980, pp. 49-62.

⁹ Plinius, *Naturalis Historia*, III, 59: «*lingua Volscorum Anxur dictum*».

- BERNARD P., *The Greek Kingdoms of Central Asia*, in HARMATTA J. (ed.), *History of civilizations of Central Asia, The development of sedentary and nomadic civilizations: 700 B.C. to A.D. 250., Volume II*, Paris, UNESCO Publishing, 1994.
- HILL J. E., *Through the Jade Gate to Rome: A Study of the Silk Routes during the Later Han Dynasty, 1st to 2nd centuries CE*. Charleston, South Carolina, BookSurge, 2009, pp. 517-518.
- LEE KNOWLTON M., *Turkmenistan*, Singapore, Marshall Cavendish, 2006, pp. 40-41.
- MINISTRY OF TOURISM, *Varanasi, Explore India Millennium Year*, Government of India, 2007.
- PLINY THE ELDER, *Natural History*, Book VI. xxxi. 138-140 (translation by JONES W. H. S., London/Cambridge, Mass., Loeb Classical Library, 1961).
- SHAHBAZ A. S., *Tareekh-e-Jhelum. History of Jhelum*, Jhelum, Book Corner, Main Bazar, 2003, (2nd ed.), p. 92.

Riassunto - I cambiamenti della toponimia. I nomi di luogo e la loro vitalità

Le città assumono un nome per diverse ragioni. Il nome antico si riferisce generalmente ad un avvenimento storico, o è coniato per caratteristiche naturali, per il nome di un esploratore, per un motivo culturale o leggendario, per il nome di un principe, per una parola in lingua locale, per il nome di un santo. In Antartide il nome della Terra della Regina Maud si riferisce al nome della moglie del re Haakon VII di Norvegia.

Il nome di luogo può rimanere inalterato per secoli, se ha una forza di identità o se il suo significato è dimenticato. I nomi che hanno un significato politico, sia per un personaggio che per una battaglia, possono cambiare, se la situazione politica cambia radicalmente. Ma il nome antico può essere utilizzato dagli abitanti della città. Lo stesso si verifica per i nomi delle strade e delle piazze della città. Ma questi nomi cambiano frequentemente.

Résumé - Les changements de noms de lieux: les noms des lieux et leur vitalité

Les changements de noms de lieux: les noms des lieux et leur vitalité.

Les noms des villes sont donnés pour de nombreuses raisons. L'ancien nom jusqu'ici généralement à partir d'un événement historique, ou il est inventé pour une des caractéristiques naturelles, le nom d'un explorateur, pour une question culturelle ou légendaire, le nom d'un fondateur, par le nom d'un prince, un mot dans la langue locale, le nom d'un saint. En Antarctique le Land de la Reine Maud est le nom de l'épouse du Roi Haakon VII de Norvège.

Le nom de lieu peut être inchangé depuis des siècles, si elles ont une grande force d'identité ou si leur signification est oubliée. Les noms qui ont une signification politique, à la fois d'un personnage ou une bataille peuvent être modifiés, si la situation politique fortement changements. Mais l'ancien nom de lieu peut être utilisé par les habitants de la ville. La même chose se produit pour les noms des rues et places de la ville. Mais ces noms changent fréquemment.