

ARTICLES

SLOVENIAN GEOGRAPHY AND GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES

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ABSTRACT

Slovenian geography and geographical names

Slovenian geographers have dealt with geographical names for a long time. Their several centuries of activity can be divided into several phases. In the early phase this topic was addressed by politicians, missionaries, and polymaths. Then in the mid-nineteenth century, with the national awakening, the first educated Slovenian geographers came to the forefront together with linguists. After this, all leading Slovenian geographers were involved in this topic to various extents, among whom Anton Melik and Ivan Gams stand out. In the past two decades a leading role has been assumed by certain younger geographers, who seek to integrate Slovenian toponymy within modern global trends in the use of geographical names. In doing so, we are relying on United Nations resolutions and taking part in the work of the UNGEGN not only in working groups, but also at the regional level as part of the East Central and South-East Europe Division.

KEY WORDS

geography, geographical names, exonyms, standardization, UNGEGN, Slovenia

IZVLEČEK

Slovenska geografija in zemljepisna imena

Slovenski geografi se že dolgo srečujemo z zemljepisnimi imeni. Večstoletno aktivno obdobje lahko razčlenimo v več faz. V zgodnji so to tematiko pokrivali politiki, misijonarji in polihistorji, z narodnim preporodom sredi 19. stoletja pa so v prvi plan skupaj z jezikoslovci stopili prvi slovenski geografski izobraženci. Potem so se z njo različno intenzivno ukvarjali vsi vodilni slovenski geografi, pri čemer lahko izpostavimo Antona Melika in Ivana Gamsa. V zadnjih dveh desetletjih smo vodilno vlogo prevzeli nekateri predstavniki nove generacije, ki si slovensko toponimiko prizadevamo vpeti v sodobne svetovne težnje rabe zemljepisnih imen. Pri tem se opiramo na resolucije Združenih narodov in se vključujemo v delo UNGEGN-a (Skupine izvedencev Združenih narodov za zemljepisna imena), tako v delovnih skupinah kot na regionalni ravni v okviru Vzhodnosrednjeevropskega in jugovzhodnoevropskega jezikovno-zemljepisnega oddelka.

KLJUČNE BESEDE

geografija, zemljepisna imena, eksonimi, standardizacija, UNGEGN, Slovenija

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1 Researchers, polymaths, and early maps

The first Slovenians encountered foreign geographical names in an authentic environment because they participated in discovering parts of the world previously unknown to Europeans. In the sixteenth century, Baron Sigismund von Herberstein (Žiga Herberstein; 1486–1566) from Vipava revealed Russia, and his work *Rerum Moscoviticarum commentarii* (Notes on Muscovite Affairs) contained the first detailed maps of the European part of Russia, titled *Moscovia* (Muscovy; Korošec 1978, 49–51; Longyka 1999, 457). Centuries later, the missionary Frederic Baraga (1797–1868) worked in the Great Lakes area of North America, and his younger colleague Ignatius Knoblecher (Ignacij Knoblehar; 1819–1858) participated in discovering the upper course of the Nile.

Two maps of Carniola and its wider surroundings had already appeared by the late sixteenth century: a 1573 map by Abraham Ortelius and a 1589 map by Gerardus Mercator (see Longyka 1999). Like other early maps of Slovenian territory, their cartographic value is not especially good. This is especially the case for the geographical names, which in most cases are non-Slovenian and imprecisely located, making it difficult to compare them with their actual locations today.

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, familiarity with the form and characteristics of Slovenian territory was greatly improved thanks to the efforts of individuals motivated by love for their immediate homeland and affiliation to the province they lived in. Until the mid-nineteenth century, the study of onomastics had no ethnic connotations, neither Slovenian nor German. Toponymy was uncharted territory and so every detailed contribution to local studies and natural science was welcome.

In the second half of the seventeenth century, Slovenians benefitted from the contributions of the polymath Johann Weichard Valvasor (Janez Vajkard Valvasor; 1641–1693). His local histories of Carniola and Carinthia, and even more so his monumental work *Die Ehre deß Hertzogthums Crain* (The Glory of the Duchy of Carniola, 1689), created a treasury of inestimable value. His works were the first detailed sources for Slovenian geographical names. He also planned to produce a large map of Carniola, but was unable to achieve this before his death. His estate included a modest 1 : 500,000 illustration of Carniola (Longyka 1999, 461–464). Even though the place names on it are written in German, many of them reveal their Slovenian origin. Valvasor's approximately 1 : 75,000 map of White Carniola titled *Der Culpstram in Crain* (The Kolpa River in Carniola), which appeared in volume three of *The Glory of the Duchy of Carniola*, is considerably richer in Slovenian geographical names (Longyka 1999, 464–465).

2 The national awakening

The first detailed map covering all of Slovenian territory with a rather large number of geographical names was *Ducatus Carnioliae Tabula Chorographica* (Chorographic Map of the Duchy of Carniola) at a scale of approximately 1 : 100,000. It was published in the mid-eighteenth century in twelve sheets by the priest Joannes Dismas Florianschitsch de Grienfeld (Janez Dizma Florjančič; 1744). Because the names on the margins of the individual sheets are written out in full, it is possible to bind it into an atlas.

In his four-part work *Oryctographia carniolica oder Physikalische Erdbeschreibung des Herzogthums Krain, Istrien und zum Theil der benachbarten Länder* (A Physical Geographical Description of the Duchy of Carniola, Istria, and Parts of Neighboring Lands, 1778–1789), the French natural historian Balthasar Hacquet included maps at scales of approximately 1 : 360,000 and 1 : 500,000 (Bohinec 1925, 2; Longyka 1999, 470–473; Gašperič 2007). These were the first geological maps of Slovenian territory and they contained almost exclusively Slovenian geographical names; for example, *Goreinsku* 'Upper Carniola', *Bleid* 'Bled', *Kroppa* 'Kropa', *Vishnagora* 'Višnja Gora', and *Postoina* 'Postojna'. Only a few names are bilingual, such as *Celautz oder Klagenfurt* 'Celovec or Klagenfurt', or German, such as *Marburg* 'Maribor'.

The cadastral and military survey of the entire Habsburg Monarchy also produced precise 1 : 2,880 cadastral maps for Slovenian territory as well as detailed 1 : 28,000 and 1 : 75,000 military maps (Longyka 1999,

474). Both the cadastral and military maps – the latter were long top secret and were not issued with their accompanying toponymic descriptions until the end of the twentieth century, when a seven-volume facsimile version was produced under the editorship of the historian Vincenc Rajšp (1995–2002) – are an inexhaustible source for the study of geographical names. At the order of Emperor Joseph II, the names were transcribed into the »language of the land,« which makes it possible to compare them with the names on the maps by Floriantschitsch and Hacquet.

The Idrija native Heinrich Freyer (1802–1866), a geologist and mineralogist, and also the curator of the Ljubljana Provincial Museum, published a large 1 : 113,500 map of the Duchy of Carniola in sixteen sheets (Bohinec 1925, 6; Longyka 1999, 476–477). The map is titled in German as *Special-Karte des Herzogthums Krain* (Detailed Map of the Duchy of Carniola), but the naming of places is mostly in Slovenian and German names are added only in parentheses; here and there Slovenian doublets are also given in parentheses. The map also has a bilingual list of Carniolan places and castles, comprising 3,220 alphabetically arranged names of settlements and hamlets. In 1844 an excellent German map of Carniola was also published, titled *Karte von Herzogthume Krain* (Map of the Duchy of Carniola), prepared by Gottfried Loschan, an officer in the 17th Ljubljana infantry regiment (Longyka 1999, 477–479).

During the period before 1848, educated Slovenian geographers also largely used German. Due to the limited conditions in their native province, where there was hardly any call to apply their achievements, educated Slovenians were mainly directed to Vienna and Prague, where they could apply their potential and satisfy their creative urges, primarily in the service of the empire. A somewhat later representative of this period was Blasius Kozenn (Blaž Kocen; 1821–1871), a leading Austrian cartographer. While he was establishing himself he was aided by the fact that German cartography had not taken any real interest in the Austrian Empire. His school atlas was reprinted hundred-four times, although it never appeared in a Slovenian edition. Among Kozenn's many other maps there are none in Slovenian, although from the perspective of Slovenian toponymy his 1861 map of the Alpine countries is important. He drew the Slovenian ethnic border on this map, and in the lower right corner he also gave a list of Slovenian place names, but not Czech or Polish, for example (Bohinec 1925, 8; Bratec Mrvar et al. 2011).

3 After the spring of nations

The watershed year of 1848 awakened and strengthened the consciousness of European ethnic groups, including the Slovenians, and so they started to publish cartographic products and professional volumes that had been unthinkable until then; these presented and described the territories inhabited by individual ethnic groups in great detail. Societies and professional organizations were founded, and they took an organized approach to establishing the role of individual languages. The central role in Slovenia was played by the Slovenian Society (*Slovenska matica* or *Matica Slovenska*).

The greatest credit for spatially presenting ethnic Slovenian territory goes to the Kočevje German Peter Kosler (also Kozler; 1824–1879), who was educated as a lawyer but went on to study geography and cartography in Italy (Bohinec 1925, 10). He was a cofounder of the Vienna Slovenian Assembly (*Slovenski zbor v Beču*), a society dedicated to the goal of uniting all areas where Slovenians lived into an administrative unit called United Slovenia (*Zedinjena Slovenija*), which also created a need for the cartographic presentation of this territory.

Kosler had already collected Slovenian place names by 1848. Based on the anticipated scale of about 1 : 600,000, it was necessary to collect about 5,000 names. His only aid was Freyer's map, which had covered only Carniola. Parts of Kosler's map were ready the same year, but the finished map (Kozler 1853; Figure 1) was confiscated in 1854 by court order by the bureaucracy of Minister of the Interior Alexander von Bach because Kosler drew the boundaries of his United Slovenia far into Carinthia, into Istria, and even into Hungary (Bohinec 1925, 12). Permission for a new edition was granted only in 1861. As a supplement to the map, Kosler wrote his *Kratek slovenski zemljopis* (Concise Slovenian



Figure 1: Detail from Kosler's map (1853).

Geography; Kozler 1854), to which he added a gazetteer of Slovenian and German names of settlements.

Slovenianized foreign geographical names started to appear in school textbooks in the first half of the nineteenth century. The first one to present a large number of these systematically was Janez Jesenko, whose regional geography textbook (1865) gave the Slovenian names of the continents and major seas; for the individual continents he provided the names of the major peninsulas, capes, and countries or the best-known regions, and for the major seas the names of smaller adjacent seas and major bays. He also named the main islands and most important straits. For each continent he named the major lakes and rivers, mountain ranges, major peaks, and major lowlands. All of the major European cities and the largest cities on each continent are also given in tabular format.

Jesenko's selection of several hundred geographical names was surely an important model for the lawyer and linguist Matej Cigale (1819–1889) in the preparation of his *Atlant* (1869–1877). One of the most important achievements of this first Slovenian world atlas was the use of Slovenian geographical names on the maps because Cigale Slovenianized over 4,000 foreign geographical names (Kladnik 2005; Figure 2). Despite its exceptional importance for the development of Slovenian, *Atlant* was not appropriately valued later on and it was almost completely forgotten. A few years ago the Anton Melik Geographical Institute of the Scientific Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts reissued a facsimile edition of the atlas (Atlant 2005). The facsimile edition of the original maps was accompanied by a publication with articles about Cigale and the significance of *Atlant*, as well as a newly prepared index of names.

Quite some time passed until the publication of the next Slovenian-language atlas (Rutar and Orožen 1899). The editing of the names in Vinzenz von Haardt's atlas and on his wall map of Austria-Hungary was first undertaken by Simon Rutar (1851–1903), a geographer and historian from the Littoral, although the relevant ministry did not approve his 1896 work due to the phonetic transcription of the geographical names. Because Rutar did not want to change this, the atlas and the wall map were published a few years later in a further reworking by Fran Orožen (1853–1912). In addition to the wall maps of the Earth's hemispheres, Europe, Austria-Hungary, and Palestine, Orožen also adapted a 1 : 130,000 map of Carniola and the Littoral. He also created the first globe with Slovenian labels, with a scale of 1 : 50,000,000 (Bohinec 1925, 17).

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, the Slovenian Society wished to supplement the book series *Slovenska zemlja* (Slovenian Land) with a large map of Slovenian ethnic territory, and so by 1876 it started the organized collection of Slovenian place names, which stretched out over several decades (Kranjec 1964). While preparing the map, they organized a special network of field informants whom the compilers of the map turned to with additional inquiries regarding names that were unreliable or questionable for any reason. The linguist Maks Pleteršnik (1840–1923) played an outstanding role in standardizing the forms of names following the historical-etymological principle. Because of professional disagreements, technical and financial problems, the outbreak of the First World War, the abolition of the Slovenian Society, and other factors (Šivic-Dular 2003, 27), the 1 : 200,000 map in four sheets was not published until 1921 (Figure 3). A year later, Rikard Svetlič's companion booklet *Kazalo krajev na Zemljevidu slovenskega ozemlja* (Index of Places on the Map of Slovenian Ethnic Territory) was also published.

4 Slovenians within Yugoslavia

The interwar years were a period when research in Slovenian geography flourished, and to a large extent it fulfilled its mission together with geography experts from the two other major ethnic groups comprising the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, later known as Yugoslavia. Analytical studies predominated, supported by what were still meager databases. The synthetic approach culminated

in Anton Melik's work geographically describing Slovenia (1935). After the Second World War, this was also followed by detailed regional geographical descriptions of individual parts of Slovenia (Melik 1954; 1957; 1959; 1960), containing an enormous amount of place-name material. Anton Melik was also the first to systematically draw attention to the difficulties of transcribing foreign place names, a problem viewed to have arisen after the First World War (Melik 1928).

Geographers also played a leading role in preparing the work *Krajevni leksikon Slovenije* (Lexicon of Slovenian Places), which appeared between 1968 and 1980 in four volumes under the editorship of Roman Savnik and contained many place names and other geographical names. These extensive volumes (*Krajevni leksikon Slovenije* 1968, 1971, 1976, 1980) are an inexhaustible resource for Slovenian geographical names, although they still have not been processed through a linguistic filter.

For a long time, Slovenians did not have a world atlas in their own language, aside from small school atlases, until at least 1972, when the publisher 'Mladinska knjiga' issued its *Veliki atlas sveta* (Great World Atlas). The two editors, Jakob Medved and Borut Ingolič, followed the resolutions of the United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names, perhaps somewhat too consistently, with regard to reducing the number of exonyms. Strictly following this principle in the 1970s and 1980s resulted in a serious disagreement between Slovenian geographers and linguists, who advocated linguistic autonomy. The disagreement between the geographers and linguists only abated with the »golden age« of Slovenian atlas material from the 1990s onwards, spurred on by Slovenian independence.

As far as the standardization of geographical names is concerned, for Slovenian toponymy it was an unfortunate circumstance that information from the centrally managed Yugoslav federation – which made possible participation at international conferences on geographical names where important decisions were adopted – was scant and slow in coming. Slovenian professionals did not have access to the original versions of the documents, but only to the reports by the representatives of the Yugoslav delegation. The saving grace was that the head of the delegation was a Slovenian, the geodesist Miroslav Peterca, who was also the administrative head of the Military Geographical Institute in Belgrade.

A conference on issues in the standardization of geographical names in Yugoslav languages was held in Sarajevo in 1984 (Gams 1984a; 1984b; Kunaver 1984). At the conference there were presentations on the need to harmonize standardization procedures among the Yugoslav federal and republic, or regional, committees for the standardization of toponyms. The first Yugoslav republic to establish such a body was Macedonia. The Slovenian Committee for the Standardization of Geographical Names was established at the proposal of the Slovenian Surveying and Mapping Authority with a resolution from the Executive Council of the Assembly of the Socialist Republic of Slovenia and by a decision of the head of the Executive Council in November 1986 (Kladnik 2006).

5 Independent Slovenia

In 1990 the Committee for the Standardization of Geographical Names was reappointed. Due to staffing changes and reorganization of the bodies participating in it, initially the committee did not operate for a few years, although the Slovenian government reappointed it in the fall of 1995. It was comprised of geographers, linguists, geodesists, cartographers, statisticians, and lawyers. Since 2001 it has had the status of a permanent working body of the Slovenian government. During the past decade, geographers have also been very active in it, indicated by the fact that its seat was transferred to the Anton Melik Geographical Institute of the Scientific Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts.

As part of the committee's work, we have standardized the Slovenian names of countries and their main appertaining territories (Perko 1996), as well as nearly 5,000 geographical names in Slovenia recorded on the 1 : 250,000 *Državna pregledna karta Republike Slovenije* (National Index Map of the Republic of Slovenia, 2008).

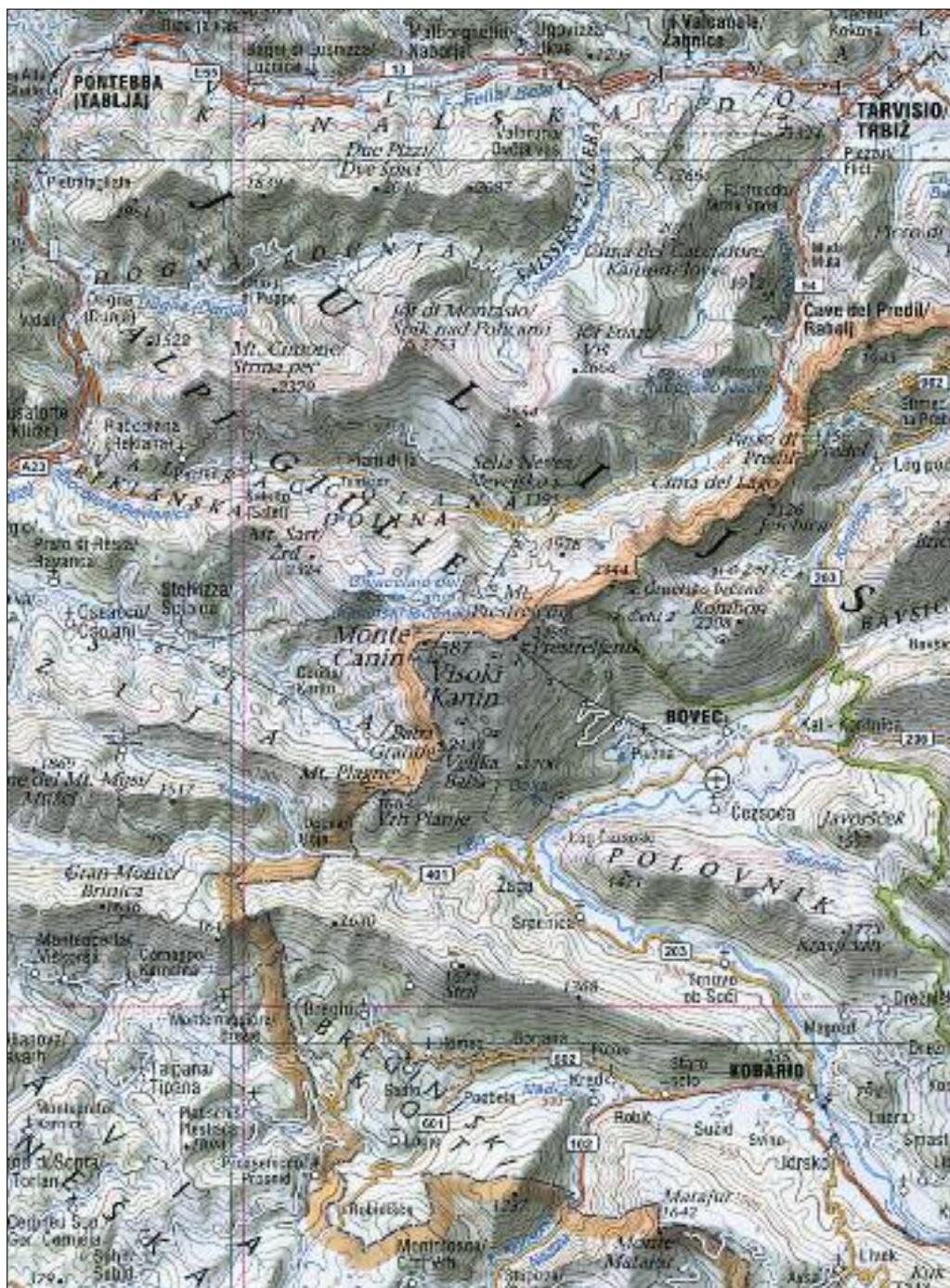


Figure 4: Detail from the National Index Map of the Republic of Slovenia (2008).

Slovenian independence increased the need for the spatial representation of new political realities. It was a fortunate turn of events that the development of computer science made the production of books cheaper, and the development of digital cartography enabled faster and cheaper publication of atlases. Publishers also commercially exploited the changeover to the 2000s with new publications. Geographers had a hand in almost all of these editions, and younger professionals unburdened by the disagreement between geographers and linguists dedicated themselves to the work of editing, translating, and dealing with toponyms.

These younger geographers were mainly responsible for editing geographical names in the preparation of atlases, and they started examining the Slovenianization of foreign geographical names from a variety of perspectives, including the tradition of names in Slovenian, the rules of the Slovenian normative guide, and the UN resolutions on exonyms, and so it is not surprising that in recent years their solutions for Slovenianizing geographical names have become considerably more similar in various publications, which is a good basis for standardizing these names.

More extensive general world atlases were published by various presses in 1991 (Cankarjeva založba), 1992 (DZS), 1997 (Mladinska knjiga), 2001 (Slovenska knjiga), 2003 (Mladinska knjiga), 2004 (Modita), 2005 (DZS), and 2008 (Mladinska knjiga). Only the years of publication of first editions are cited here; the majority of these have also been reprinted. They were also joined by school atlases because under the new market-oriented conditions every self-respecting publisher prided itself on producing its own school atlas (DZS 1998; Tehniška založba 2002; Mladinska knjiga 2002; Učila 2003).

At that time there also appeared a new one-volume edition of *Krajevni leksikon Slovenije* (Lexicon of Slovenian Places 1995) in which the geographical names were linguistically consolidated. This was also the first Slovenian geographical work of all to appear in an electronic version as well. The two-volume *Krajevni leksikon Slovencev v Italiji* (Lexicon of Slovene Places in Italy 1990; 1995) is also indispensable for Slovenian onomastics. The first volume, on the Trieste region, was co-edited by the geographer Milan Bufon.

After the independence of Slovenia in 1991, the opportunities for active international participation in dealing with geographical names improved significantly through the Committee for the Standardization of Geographical Names because Slovenians started independently taking part in the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN), both in the regional linguistic and geographical working group for the East Central and South-East Europe Division and in various working groups. They have been especially active in the Working Group on Exonyms, which was founded in 2002.

After publishing an influential paper (Orožen Adamič 2000), the first convener of the group was Milan Orožen Adamič, who in this role was also an intermediary in clarifying internationally disputed geographical names (Orožen Adamič 2004; Orožen Adamič and Kladnik 2010). At the first official conference of the working group in 2003 in Prague, two Slovenian papers were presented (Kladnik 2003; Orožen Adamič 2003). The fourth conference took place in 2005 in Ljubljana (Pipan 2005), where meetings of the regional linguistic and geographical working group for the East Central and South-East Europe Division were held in 1999 and 2001. At the tenth-anniversary meeting of the Working Group on Exonyms in 2010 in Tainach, Austrian Carinthia, a Slovenian paper was presented on the semantic differentiation between the concepts of endonym and exonym (Kladnik and Urbanc 2011).

Considerably more attention is also being dedicated to systematic studies. A presentation paper on geographical names and how they arise and are used was published (Peršolja 2003). Another result of these orientations was an article on changes in Slovenian place names, especially those named after saints (Urbanc and Gabrovec 2005). Several articles seek to shed light on the issue of exonyms and their creation (Kladnik 2007a; 2007d; 2009a; 2009b), and two volumes have also been published on this topic (Kladnik 2007b; 2007c).

Last but not least, mention must also be made of Slovenian geographers' efforts to preserve the internationally accepted name *Bay of Piran*, for which a few years ago the Croatians wished to introduce the newly coined name *Bay of Savudrija* (Kladnik and Pipan 2008; 2009).

6 Slovenian geographers and toponomastics

Only a few Slovenian geographers have actively dealt with toponomastics, which has nearly a century-long tradition in Slovenian geography. A pioneer in this area was Henrik Tuma (1925; 1929), who emphasized direct fieldwork and cooperation with the local people as a precondition for the proper transcription and use of geographical names, and who was also aware of the need for the closest possible interdisciplinary cooperation.

In more recent times, Anton Sore and Julij Titl have done the most detailed work with toponomastics. Sore dealt with place names, choronyms, and hydronyms in the Savinja-Sotla area of Slovenia (1993; 1994). Titl was even more thorough, with the results of his research producing three volumes. The first (1998) covers northwest Istria, the second (2000) covers the Koper Littoral (*Koprsko primorje*), or the Šavri- ni/Koper Hills, and the third (2006) covers the Karst area. One should also mention Borut Peršolja, who dealt with onomastic issues in the Kamnik-Savinja Alps (1998).

7 Conclusion

Geographical names continue to interest Slovenian geographers, although most only deal with them on the side because they specialize in other branches of geography. On the other hand, there are few other topics that can attract and engage so many geographers. It is interesting that these are representatives of a wide range of orientations because they include physical, social, and regional geographers. For some individuals, their interest in geographical names often increases as they get older because of increasing thematic specialization. The most systematic and organized treatment of geographical names is being carried out at the Anton Melik Geographical Institute of the Scientific Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts.

Unfortunately, no Slovenian university offers any kind of education, even at the elective level, on geographical names. Currently the University of Ljubljana's Faculty of Arts offers a graduate course in Slovenian onomastics in its Comparative Slavic Languages track. However, this is not exclusively dedicated to geographical names and primarily has a linguistic orientation.

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