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Antarctic and Sub-Antartic Place-Names

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CURRENT SOURCES OF ANTARCTIC AND SUB-ANTARCTIC PLACE-NAMES

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Many authors have difficulty in deciding on correct place-names in the Antarctic Treaty area, south of latitude 60°S, or in the wider area of interest to the Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research (SCAR), defined as lying south of the Antarctic Convergence with the addition of certain sub-Antarctic islands (Fig 1). The publication of place-names in at least 17 different languages and three different scripts has given wide scope for the proliferation of synonyms.

Among the 13 signatories to the Antarctic Treaty, seven countries have territorial claims in the area (Fig 1), and there are political and linguistic considerations that preclude a unified system of place-names south of latitude 60°S. Five of these countries, Australia, France, New Zealand, Norway and the United Kingdom, mutually recognize each other's Antarctic claims. In so much as the Republic of South Africa inherited the international obligations of the Union, the Republic also recognizes these claims. According to a decision reached at the 1871 International Geographical Congress (Arousseau, 1957), recognition of sovereignty implies mutual acceptance of place-names in the forms approved by the respective sovereign countries that use the Roman alphabet. This almost universally accepted rule is of reduced significance in the Antarctic. Of the other seven countries, Argentina and Chile dispute the British claim (so that there are three countries claiming sovereignty over the Antarctic Peninsula), and Belgium, Japan, Poland, the United States and the USSR do not recognize any territorial claims.

In Argentina, Australia, Chile, France, Japan, New Zealand, Norway, the United Kingdom and the United States, official bodies decide on place-names and (except in Norway) publish gazetteers, which are amended and updated from time to time. These bodies have developed their own policies on such matters as selection of names and transliteration. In none of the other four countries (Belgium, Poland, South Africa and the USSR) is there a known official body or a single authority responsible for Antarctic place-names, so that in these countries there may be a proliferation of names published in gazetteers, maps and charts of the Antarctic which may differ from those approved by the country claiming sovereignty over that territory.

In the area of SCAR interest north of latitude 60°S, apart from the Anglo-Argentine dispute over South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands, sovereignty over the sub-Antarctic islands is recognized, and by convention all countries with the Roman alphabet should use place-names in the forms approved by the appropriate sovereign country.

For the convenience of authors and editors this note sets out for each Antarctic Treaty country the official authority responsible for place-names, where such exists, and where there is none the most useful sources of names. The main relevant publications are listed in the bibliography. It will be seen that the United States is the only country to publish a gazetteer (with supplements) for the whole of Antarctica. Roberts (1964) compiled a list of gazetteers and since then the number of place-names in the United States gazetteer has risen from about 5 000 to 11 500—a measure of the progress made in exploration and mapping, and of the need for an updated list of toponymic sources.

Argentina

The *Departamento Seguridad Náutica, Servicio de Hidrografía Naval* of the Armada Argentina, Buenos Aires, and the *Instituto Geográfico Militar*, Buenos Aires are the two organizations with responsibilities for place-names in the Antarctic. The main sources of information are the sailing directions and gazetteer published by the former organization, which in 1975 took over the task of unifying the place-names, with decisions made by the *Comisión de Coordinación Geográfica*. New place-names are promulgated in *Avisos a los navegantes*. Reference should also be made to aeronautical charts published by the *Instituto Geográfico Militar*.

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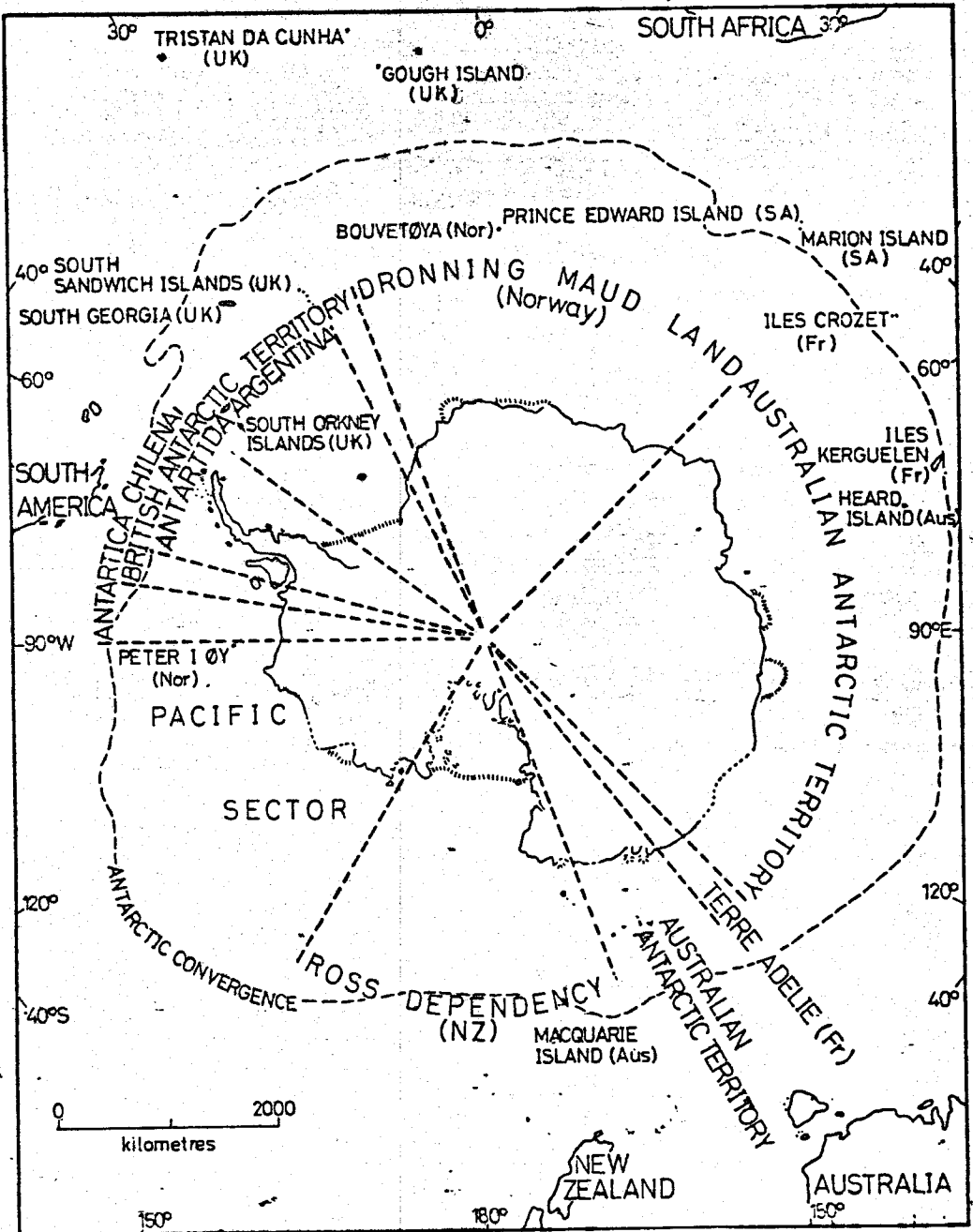


Fig 1. Antarctic Treaty area, including sub-Antarctic islands.

Australia

The *Gazetteer of the Australian Antarctic Territory* is published under the authority of the Antarctic Names Committee of Australia (ANCA), with its Secretariat in the Antarctic Division, Department of Science, Melbourne. Supplements are issued from time to time, pending revision of the *Gazetteer*. Within the same Secretariat, the Heard Island and McDonald Islands Names Committee of Australia is responsible for place-names on those islands, for which reference should be made to maps published by the Division of National Mapping, Department of National Development, Canberra. Macquarie Island place-names are approved by the Nomenclature Board of Tasmania, and reference should be made to the map also published by the Division of National Mapping.

Belgium

There is no official organization in Belgium responsible for Antarctic place-names. Maps at various scales have been published of parts of Dronning Maud Land by the Institut Géographique Militaire, Brussels, showing the majority of the place-names in French.

Chile

Two organizations in Chile have undertaken responsibilities for place-names in the Antarctic, namely, the Instituto Hidrográfico de la Armada (formerly Departamento de Navegación e Hidrografía de la Armada), Valparaiso, and the Instituto Geográfico Militar, Santiago. The main sources of information are the sailing directions, charts and gazetteer published by the former organization, which now has the task of unifying the place-names. New place-names are promulgated in *Noticias a los navegantes*. Reference should also be made to maps published by the Instituto Geográfico Militar.

France

The authority for Antarctic place-names is the Commission Territoriale de Toponymie appointed by the Territoire des Terres Australes et Antarctiques Françaises, Paris. The Commission has published a gazetteer of place-names for Iles Kerguelen, Iles Crozet, Ile Saint-Paul and Ile Amsterdam, but no gazetteer for Terre Adélie. For place-names in Terre Adélie reference should be made to the gazetteer issued by Expéditions Polaires Françaises, Paris, and to maps and charts at various scales published by the Institut Géographique National, Paris, and the Service Hydrographique de la Marine, Paris.

Japan

The Antarctic Place-names Committee of Japan advises the Director of the Polar Research Center, National Science Museum, Tokyo, on new place-names. Lists of new names approved are published from time to time in *Antarctic Record*, both in Japanese and in Roman script. The new names published to date refer to features in Australian Antarctic Territory and Dronning Maud Land.

New Zealand

The *Provisional Gazetteer of the Röss Dependency* is published under the authority of the New Zealand Antarctic Place-Names Committee of the New Zealand Geographic Board, with its Secretariat in the Department of Lands and Survey, Wellington. Supplements are issued from time to time, pending revision of the *Gazetteer*.

Norway

The official authority for place-names in Dronning Maud Land, Bouvetøya and Peter I Oy is the Norsk Polarinstitut, Oslo. Until a Norwegian gazetteer of Antarctic place-names is published the only official sources of place-names are the maps published by H. E. Hansen, Oslo, and the Norsk

Polarinstitut, together with one map published by the United Kingdom Directorate of Overseas Surveys and two maps issued by the United Kingdom Antarctic Place-names Committee, with names in Dronning Maud Land approved by the Norsk Polarinstitut. For place-names on Bouvetøya and Peter I Oy reference should be made to charts published by H. E. Hansen.

Poland

No information is available on Antarctic place-names policy for Poland, which acceded to the Antarctic Treaty in 1976 and became a Consultative Party in 1977.

South Africa

There is no official organization in South Africa responsible for Antarctic place-names. The Place-names Committee of the Department of Education, Arts and Science appears to have no responsibility for place-names outside the Union. Maps have been published of the South African National Antarctic Expedition (SANAE) area, Dronning Maud Land, by the Trigonometrical Survey, Mowbray, Cape Province, at the scale of 1 : 250 000, and of Bouvetøya by the Hydrographic Office, Mowbray, at the scale of 1 : 30 000. For place-names on Prince Edward Islands (Marion Island and Prince Edward Island) reference should be made to the chart published by the Hydrographic Office.

United Kingdom

The gazetteers of the British Antarctic Territory and of the Falkland Islands Dependencies, and supplements as these are required, are published under the authority of the Antarctic Place-Names Committee, with its Secretariat in the Polar Regions Section, South America Department, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, London. For place-names on Gough Island and Tristan da Cunha reference should be made to the maps published by the Directorate of Overseas Surveys, Overseas Development Administration, Tolworth, Surrey.

United States

The gazetteer of Antarctica is published under the authority of the Advisory Committee on Antarctica Names of the United States Board on Geographic Names, Department of the Interior, with its Secretariat in the Defense Topographic Mapping Center, Washington DC. It is the only gazetteer covering the whole of the Antarctic, and the only English language source of reference for place-names between longitudes 80°W and 150°W.

USSR

The *Atlas Antarkiki* [*Atlas of the Antarctic*] provides the main source of information on place-names, all of which were approved by the Mezhdovedomstvennaya Komissiya po Izucheniyu Antarktiki [Inter-Agency Commission on Antarctic Study]. At least four gazetteers of Russian place-names in the Antarctic are also available.

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