TOPONYMY THESAURUS:ITS CARTOGRAPHIC INTEGRATION IN A BILINGUAL REGION

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Toponymy is a cultural heritage which lodges the richness of a language used for defining the spatial relations man-environment. Cartography and toponymy are interrelated elements which come together to make up an informative document where names are like an identity of man-environment linkage.

In the year 2000 the Regional Government of Galicia decided to undertake, for the first time, the development of a Toponymy Thesaurus where every existing geographical name could be collected.

More than half a million place-names show and define spacial relations of the inhabitants of this northwester region of Spain. The fact of being a bilingual area (Galician/Spanish) as well as its orographical and sociocultural peculiarities transform this place into one of the richest one when talking about toponymy. The supremacy of Spanish language over the vernacular one (Galician) gave rise to certain problems in cartographic toponymy representation because the vernacular form had not been respected in its oral form and use, having changed its written form. This implied a morphological and semantic distorsion in any document where this name-place appeared. That's why we are trying to recover the originally used forms, which are easily recognized in their territory.

When there came the time to start this detailed account, the starting point was to respect the basic principles adopted by the United Nations Conference about the standarization of geographical names whose aim is to promote and apply the standarization of these names at a national an international scale.

The availability and use of new technology allow us to carry out an exhaustive work when collecting information for its future cartographic application. Not all the collected toponymy can be used in a cartographic way but it enriches the sphere of geographical cartographic names.

Several challenges appear when elaborating the toponymy *corpus* and its cartographical integration:

a)   Geographical codification. There are identified the geographical entities apart from those place-names which can not be considered in this way.

b)   To locate the geographical name. The orthophoto is used like cartographic base for its automatic introduction. The result is the visualization in the map of every selected name-place with its corresponding coordinates.

c)   Selection of geographical names. Elaboration of a field in the data base where the scale/s of the maps will be specified

d)   To define the toponymy following some "standardized" forms to establish   an official toponymy which will settle the written form of geographical names.

e)   To enrich the existing toponymy in maps. It's obvious the lack of toponymy in great scale maps, such as the 1:5.000, or in the ones used by public bodies for the management of territorial resources.

f)

The setting up of an unique computer data base with the whole toponymy of Galicia, will be very useful like a mandatory basic information and reference point, when elaborating the cartography of Galicia, and at the same time it will answer the growing information demand of different kinds of users in the spere of a democratic and bilingual society.