

# Cartographic Anonymity: Towards an Evaluation of Agrigan's Mute Map

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The history of the cartographic representation of Agrigan is the topic of this analysis. The maps of Agrigan from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> to the last quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century are shown to be strikingly parsimonious as to place naming. The almost total absence of place names is representative of the majority of the Gåni-Islands in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. The Agrigan situation is compared to that of the unsettled Peri-Antarctic Bouvet-Island. The rich toponomasticon of this Norwegian possession strongly suggests that Agrigan's map does not have to be devoid of place names. The possibilities for place-naming on Agrigan are described. Place names which were recorded in the 1950's are discussed. The role that place names play in the creation and preservation of a community's identity is emphasized.

Keywords: Agrigan, Bouvet-Øya, cartography, colonialism, place-naming

This paper is the sequel to our recent pilot study on the attested place names in the islands of the Northern Arc of the Northern Mariana Islands, except Pagan (Stolz & Levkovich, 2020).<sup>1</sup> To provide the necessary background information for the envisaged project of providing the Gåni -Islands with a culturally, historically, and linguistically informed atlas of their own, we recapitulate the gist of our prior investigation first. For a start, we address the particularly vexed question of how to classify the little that is there in terms of word material on the relevant maps.

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<sup>1</sup> The talk we delivered jointly with Ingo H. Warnke on the occasion of the 6<sup>th</sup> *Marianas History Conference* (20 February, 2021) was entitled *Places without names and names without places? On the blank maps of the Gåni Islands*. It summarized the ideas we expressed in written form already in Stolz & Levkovich (2020). Thanks to the many positive reactions of our audience, we are confident now that the project we have set our sights on makes sense not only to academia but also to the people of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. This is a strong incentive for us to continue with our research to pave the grounds for a future joint project in which we outsiders co-operate with culturally knowledgeable insiders. What is said in this paper marks the next step towards our (hopefully not too distant) goal.

## Introducing the Problem

The official contemporary maps of Anatahan, Sarigan, Guguan, Alamagan, Agrigan, Asuncion, Maug, and Uracas (dating back to the 1960's – 1980's) are devoid of identifiers of geographical objects (GEOBJ) other than, (a) the word *lava* on Agrigan's map; and (b) the triple attestation of *village* reported for Anatahan (handwritten addition to the map), Alamagan, and Agrigan. In stark contrast, except Aguigan, the islands to the south of Farallon de Medinilla (Saipan, Tinian, and Rota) are privileged insofar as they are represented by maps which are densely lettered. We provisionally introduce the term, *identifier*, for those expressions found on maps for which it is not immediately possible to decide whether we are dealing with a common noun or a proper name.<sup>2</sup> This is precisely the case with English *village* which could either be a common noun referring to any kind of small permanent settlement belonging to the ontological class of VILLAGES<sup>3</sup> or it could be the English translation of Chamorro *Songsong*, 'Village.'<sup>4</sup> In the latter case, there are again two possible interpretations; namely, either *songsong* functions as a common noun in analogy to English *village*, or it can be considered to be a genuine place name. Since the second largest settlement on Rota is also called *Songsong* without being the only village on the island, the proper-name status of the same expression on the maps of the above islands becomes ever more likely. What is more, its absence from the map of Sarigan notwithstanding, the field trip records of Johnson<sup>5</sup> (1957) provide evidence of the existence of a main settlement *Songsong* on Sarigan, too. According to internet sources, only *Songsong* on Rota is a genuine place name, whereas the other four cases

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<sup>2</sup> The class of identifiers covers both genuine place names as well as (toponymically employed) common nouns. Moreover, identifiers belong to the category of epikhartica' lit; i.e., *What is on paper*, which embraces all kinds of lettering on maps including expressions which do not properly fulfill toponymic functions (Stolz & Warnke, submitted).

<sup>3</sup> Small caps are used for conceptual categories and ontological classes.

<sup>4</sup> The English translations we provide for proper names are exclusively intended to make the internal structure of the proper name in the original language more transparent. No established parallel English place names are given.

<sup>5</sup> This publication is a very rare item, the only surviving issue of which we have located in the Australian National Library at Canberra. We ordered a scan of the book, which, at the time of finishing this paper, had not left Australia because of the suspension of the library service on account of the measures of the Australian government against COVID-19. Therefore, wherever we refer to this book, we rely on Scott Russell's detailed but unpublished excerpts from Johnson (1957). It cannot be ruled out that some of the ideas we express in Section 3 (A Fresh Look) need to be revised in a follow-up study in which we plan to cover all of those islands for which Johnson (1957) provided place names, namely Alamagan, Anatahan, Arigan, and Sarigan.

are presented as hybrid combinations of the island name and English *village*, namely *Agrihan*<sup>6</sup> *Village*, *Alamagan Village*, *Anatahan Village*, and *Sarigan Village* ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_populated\\_places\\_in\\_the\\_Northern\\_Mariana\\_Islands](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_populated_places_in_the_Northern_Mariana_Islands)). According to Johnson (1957), there were two settlements on Sarigan with *Partido*<sup>7</sup> being registered as secondary settlement. Interestingly, this place name is mentioned in the same source also for Alamagan so that it can be hypothesized that, in the Alamagan case, *Partido* also served to name a secondary settlement. For Agrigan, the existence of four settlements is assumed (Johnson, 1957). These cases and those of names of ontologically different GEOBJS on Agrigan will be addressed in Section 3.

The problems of determining the nature and coordinates of the GEOBJS for which a given place name was used notwithstanding, we learn from the close reading of Johnson (1957) that, in the 1950's, there were at least 19 place numbers on the islands of Anatahan, Sarigan, Alamagan, and Agrigan which never made it onto the official maps produced under the auspices of the US authorities. Note that wherever these maps host the English identifier *village*, Johnson (1957) still employed the Chamorro equivalent *songsong. Village* thus seems to have ousted *songsong* during the posterior years to Johnson's journey northwards. Since Johnson's activities in the Northern Arc were not primarily meant to involve the compilation of a place-name inventory, we daresay that many more place names were around when Johnson visited the Gani -Islands but he had no occasion to note them down. On account of these facts, we wonder whether the cartographers never came

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<sup>6</sup> *Agrihan* is an alternative place name to *Agrigan*. Except in direct quotes, we exclusively use the term *Agrigan* in this study.

<sup>7</sup> The Spanish origin of this place name is uncontroversial. Spanish *Partido* is the regular past participle of the transitive verb, *partir*, 'divide, separate, cut in pieces, split.' As a noun, *partido* is commonly used in Spanish with the meaning of (political) party; sports match.' In Rodriguez-Ponga's (1995, p. 521) dictionary of Chamorro words of Spanish origin, *partido* is registered only with the political reference. The word is not included in Topping, et al. (1973, p. 165) where *pattida* 'party (political), share, dividend, portion, part, ration' are given instead. The situation is similar in the case of Aguon et al. (2009, p. 315). None of the earlier dictionaries are helpful when it comes to identifying the motivation for the choice of place name. We cannot rule out the possibility that the use of *partido* reflects its administrative meaning in Spanish. According to the *Diccionario de la lengua espanola of the Real Academia Espanola*, one of the many meanings of this term corresponds to English 'municipality' (<https://dle.rae.es/partido?m-form>). To our minds, however, *Partido* indicated that a group of people moved (i.e., split/separated) from the primary settlement (*Songsong*) to found a secondary settlement.

to know that place names other than those referring to the island itself existed at all, or that the place names were omitted purposefully for whatever reason.

The official overview of the place names in the then U.N. Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (Bryan, 1971<sup>8</sup>) contains a plethora of historical alternative names for the islands under scrutiny, including French, German, Japanese, and Spanish versions. However, apart from the richly documented place names of Pagan, there is only a single place name which serves to identify a GEOBJ on one of the Gåni-Islands, namely *Agrihan Anchorage* [Japanese *Arigan*, (sic!) *Boyti* (cf. below), German *Agrigan Ankerplatz*] on Agrigan's southwestern coastline. What other place names there were never came to Bryan's notice and thus found no place in his survey. However, Lehne & Cabler (1972, 35) mention Mount Fritz as the name of the highest mountain of the Marianas (with a height of about 965 meters), situated on Agrigan. Other sources ([https:// volcano.si.edu/voleano.cfm?vn=284160](https://volcano.si.edu/voleano.cfm?vn=284160)) refer to the same GEOBJ (with different measurements as to its height) simply as *Agrihan*, i.e., island and volcanic mountain are namesakes. *Mount Fritz* is a good specimen of an ephemeral place name which never caught on, if it ever was anything more than fiction. It clearly commemorates the German colonial administrator ("Bezirksamtmann"), George Fritz, who was in charge of the Northern Marianas from 1899 to 1907. It is doubtful, however, that naming the mountain after him was his own initiative since the place-name construction does not follow the structural prerequisites of a normal German coining,<sup>9</sup> and the use of English *Mount* in lieu of its German equivalents<sup>10</sup> is incompatible with the nationalistic spirit of the colonial period in the German Empire of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Accordingly, Mount Fritz must be the invention of a probably English-speaking creative mind after the expulsion of the

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<sup>8</sup> *Agrihan* is an alternative place name to *Agrigan*. Except in direct quotes, we exclusively use the form *Agrigan* in this study.

<sup>9</sup> The German word order rules and those determining the order of head and modifier in compounds would require that the order of the two constituents of Mount Fritz is inverted to something like *\*Fritz-Mountain*.

<sup>10</sup> The usual patterns to which the German authorities resorted to create place names in the German colonies involve elements like *Berg* 'mountain,' *Hohe* 'height,' *Spitze* 'peak,' etc. A place name like *\*Fritz-Berg* would thus be perfectly in line with the colonial practice of place-naming in the German context (Stolz & Warnke, 2015).

Germans and probably also of the Japanese from Micronesia. Thus, the end of World War II marks the *terminus ante quem non* for proposing *Mount Fritz* as a place name for a GEOBJ on Agrigan.

What all these details suggest is that there are so many uncertainties as to the toponomasticon<sup>11</sup> of the bulk of the Gãni-islands that we know hardly anything for sure. In this sense and in this sense alone, the unlettered maps of these islands iconically reflect our present ignorance. In cartography, unlettered maps (aka mute maps, blank maps) are employed mainly for pedagogical purposes (Großer, 2001). The way Anatahan, Sarigan, Guguan, Alamagan, Agrigan, Asuncion, Maug, and Uracas are presented cartographically gives the impression of an unfinished task. As we know from Monmonier's (1996) work, it is possible to manipulate the map users minds with maps:

Naming can be a powerful weapon of the cartographic propagandist. Place-names, or toponyms [original italics], not only make anonymous locations significant elements of the cultural landscape but also offer strong suggestions about a region's character and ethnic allegiance. [S]killful propagandists have often altered map viewers' impressions of multi-ethnic cultural landscapes by suppressing the toponymic influence of one group and inflating that of another. (pp. 110-111).

Place names can be erased officially from maps for political reasons (Monmonier, 1996, p. 122). Alternatively, one may tacitly pass over unwelcome place names by way of never admitting them on the maps, in the first place. The maps of the above eight islands present them as instances of pristine islands in the sense of Nash (2013, p. 6-8), which are not invested with a history of their own, belong to no-one, and thus are there for the taking. Moreover, the almost complete absence of identifiers can also give rise to the idea that there simply is nothing worth naming in the first place; i.e.,

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<sup>11</sup> The *toponomasticon* is the complete set and system of place names employed for GEOBJs in a given territory.

islands like Agrigan are indirectly depicted as economically worthless.

From the point of view of *Critical Toponymies* – the approach which evaluates place names critically by way of applying ideas of decolonization and postcolonial theory in a linguistically informed way (Vuolteenaho & Berg, 2009, 7–9) – the absence of identifiers from the maps of the Gåni-Islands, be they proper names or common nouns, is not only a case of unconscious neglect but also a more or less deliberate attempt on the part of an external power to silence the voices of the local communities which could otherwise manifest themselves in the shape of place names ideally connecting GEOBJs to a given culture – a connection which potentially entails issues in the domain of property rights (Johnson, 1969). It is not necessary to fully subscribe to this interpretation to understand that the time is ripe to finish the above cartographic task as long as it is still possible to retrieve the necessary information from those who possess it, namely the former inhabitants of the islands under inspection.

In what follows, we will put flesh on these ideas by way of focusing on Agrigan and its toponomasticon. We showcase Agrigan and its settlement history (Section 2) because we consider it to be representative of all Gåni-Islands whose maps have hitherto remained unlettered. To prove that the situation in the Northern Arc of the Mariana Islands is exceptional in global perspective, the Agrigan facts are compared to those which result from the toponomastic analysis of Bouvet-Island (henceforth Norwegian: Bouvet-Øya) in the South Atlantic (Section 3). In Section 4, we discuss the implications of our findings in relation to the discipline of place-name studies (aka toponomastics) and what the results might mean for the community of Northern Mariana Islanders. The conclusions are drawn in Section 5 where we also outline a possible follow-up to this study designed to answer the questions which arise from the discussion in Section 2–4. The theory and methodology on which we rely form part of the research program *Comparative Colonial Toponomastics (CoCoTOP)*, as outlined in Stolz & Warnke (2018). The principles will be disclosed, when necessary, in the

course of the subsequent discussion. For all cartographic matters, our reference is Imhof (1972). As to the science of names – onomastics – we will have ample occasion to refer inter alia to contributions to Hough’s (2016) handbook. Further references are given at the appropriate places. Many pieces of evidence that we need to support our line of argumentation do not stem from conventionally printed sources but have been extracted from a variety of internet resources, the reliability of which cannot always be determined exactly.<sup>12</sup> There is thus a certain margin for error.

### **Agrigan’s Historical Cartography and Demography**

The Gāni-Island of our choice is Agrigan for two reasons.<sup>13</sup> On the one hand, with some 47 km<sup>2</sup> it is the second largest landmass in the Northern Arc after Pagan; which, however, is not eligible for this study because of its relatively well-documented toponomasticon. Agrigan’s size is big enough to provide sufficient space for place-naming. On the other hand, we not only know from the introduction that at least in the 1950’s there were several villages on the islands; but we also have a dozen place names for which the GEOBJS and coordinates on Agrigan still need to be identified.

Like probably all of the islands in the Northern Arc, Agrigan was inhabited prior to the arrival of the Spaniards (Rogers, 1995, 47). In the aftermath of the Spanish conquest and the enforced resettlement of the inhabitants of the northerly islands on Guam, Agrigan – like its sister islands – remained uninhabited until the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. We assume that whatever pre-conquest place names had existed (like *Sumarrago* on Agrigan) did not survive in the collective memory of the subjugated Chamorros until people were allowed again to set foot on the depopulated islands. Similarly, early Spanish place names (like *San León*

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<sup>12</sup> We have not consulted maps of the Spanish era which lie dormant in the archives. Their evaluation is a task that needs to be tackled in the next phase of our project. The same holds for other archival documents to which we had no access at the time of writing this paper. It cannot be ruled out that similar unpublished sources exist for the German and Japanese periods. To determine the quantity and quality of these potential sources, a separate in-depth study is called for.

<sup>13</sup> We lack any personal experience with Agrigan. What we argue in this paper in relation to the island is exclusively based on the extant literature and other second-hand sources.

on Agrigan) fell into oblivion when the population was deported for good at the turn of the 18<sup>th</sup> century (Stolz and Levkovyeh, 2020, p. 127). In the beginning of the resettlement process, the new inhabitants were Carolinian from central Micronesia; i.e., immigrants who had no knowledge about the prior Chamorro toponomasticon of the islands they went to. In other words, the toponomastic history of the majority of the Gni-islands was discontinued and had to start anew and from scratch when the days of the Spanish rule over the islands were counted already.

As late as the 1870's plantations were established also on Agrigan so that the workforce had to be housed there at least temporarily. For 1856, Hardach (1990, pp. 23-24) calculates 21 mostly Carolinian seasonal workers on Agrigan who would return to Saipan or Guam at the end of the season. In the report on his journey to the islands north of Saipan, Fritz (1902, p. 110) mentions the existence of a workers' settlement of fifteen huts near the Southwestern shore. The author does not provide a name for the settlement but summarizes the contents of a conversation with the local village elder ("Dorfschulze") and thus indirectly shows that the island boasted an internal administrative organization. Lehne & Gäbler (1972, p. 36) assume a population of 32-37 for Agrigan from 1900 to 1902, which at that time was the second largest population in the Northern Arc according to Fitzner (1903, p. 153). For 1900, Fitzner (1901, p. 86) assumes that 20 Chamorros and 17 Carolinians lived on the island. Another piece of evidence of human presence on Agrigan at the end of the German colonial regime is the following quote from Stern (1978) who, on the basis of a contemporary Japanese source, describes the volcanic eruption which caused the evacuation of a village in the Southeast of Agrigan:

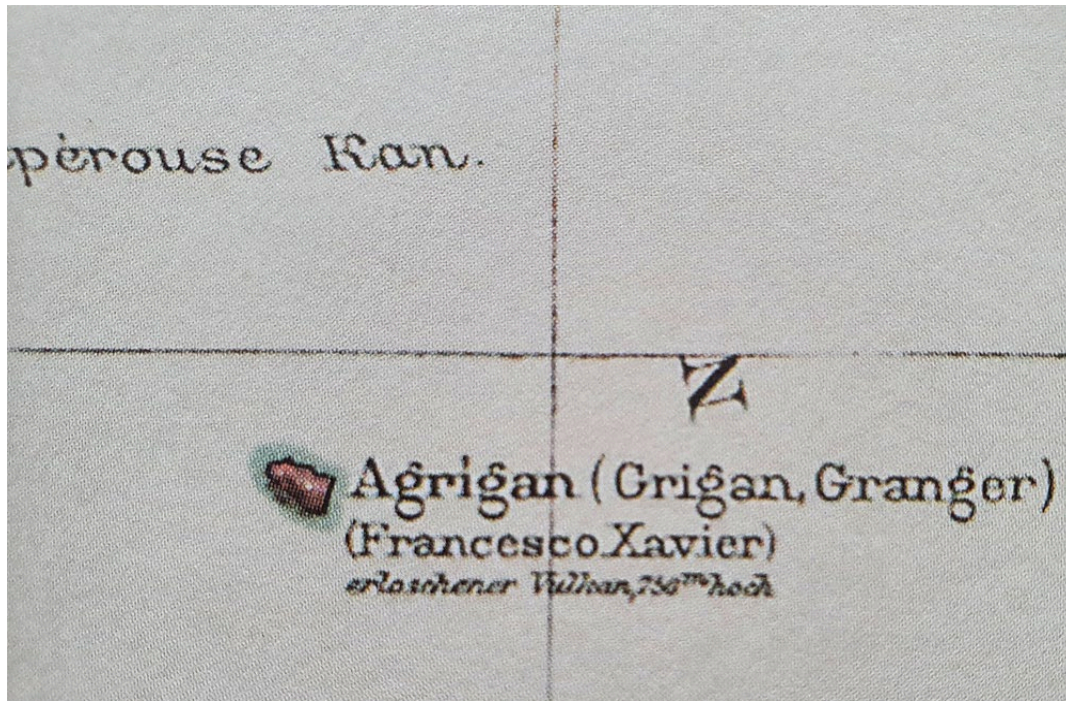
The eruption began early in the morning of April 9, 1917, with a strong detonation followed by a column of black smoke. The eruption continued for 2 days, covering the village with deposits of ash and lapilli up to 3 meters thick. Blocks as large as a cubic meter were thrown from the caldera to the villages on the southern coast, 5 km away (p. 51).



The quote tells us two things: To begin, the author's wording suggests that there were several villages in the southern part of Agrigan at that time. This can be taken as indirect support for Johnson (1957) who postulated the existence of four villages forty years later. Secondly, for none of these villages are any place names given. However, if there were several settlements which were located at a distance of several kilometers from each other, it is sensible to assume that people distinguished the villages by name to prevent misunderstanding. Along this line of reasoning, *songsong* as a place name would be possible only once in the toponomasticon. The other villages must have borne distinct names of their own.

The fifteen years of German rule over the Marianas (1899-1914) have not left tangible traces in the local toponomasticon. At the end of the German period, in contrast to the abundance of German colonial place names (e.g., in Deutsch-Neuguinea – the northwest of today's Papua New Guinea; Muhlhausler, 2001, pp. 256-258) the map of Micronesia bore practically no evidence of the prior German presence. For the island under inspection, the already mentioned *Agrihan Ankerplatz* (with German *Ankerplatz* 'anchorage') is unique for two reasons: (a) it is the sole example of an identifier which involves a German component and (b) there is no other identifier for GEOBJS on Agrigan as of 1914. Map 1 shows how little was known by the Germans about the topography of Agrigan. There is only the island name *Agrihan* with three alternative names – *Grigan*, *Granger*, and *Francesco Xavier* – in brackets. In smaller script the information is added that there is a dormant and anonymous volcano with a height of 750 meters.

Given the small number of Germans who lived in the Marianas, which never exceeded sixteen residents (Hardach, 1990, pp. 101-102) - none of whom settled permanently outside of Saipan - the shortage of German colonial place names is hardly surprising. However, Agrigan was the home of groups of Chamorros and Carolinians. Hardach (1990, p. 106) reports that an unspecified number of Japanese counted among the inhabitants of the northerly islands, including Agrigan. Our sources keep



Map 1. German map of Agrigan (Sprigade & Moisel, 1909).

silent about the place names the members of these different ethnic groups might have used to refer to GEOBJS on Agrigan. However, this silence must not be taken as evidence of the non-existence of Chamorro and/or Carolinian and/or Japanese place names at the beginning of the Japanese League of Nations Mandate over Micronesia in 1919/20.

During the Japanese period, massive migration from Japan (not the least from Okinawa) affected the Marianas where the autochthonous population was outnumbered by the immigrants on some of the larger islands (Peattie, 1988, pp. 160-161). The former Japanese presence was still visible a quarter of a century after the end of World War II when Bryan (1971) offered a plethora of Japanese place names for GEOBJS, not only on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota, but also for Pagan – the four islands with the highest concentration of Japanese immigrants and military personnel. In 1935, when the demography of these islands clearly showed the rapid growth of the Japanese group, there were only two Japanese in a population of 88 on Agrigan. During the German period, the foreign colonizers exerted no effective control over the northerly islands whereas during the thirty years of Japanese rule, the grip of the ruling

power on the islands must have been much firmer so that it is likely that also Agrigan was charted for legal, fiscal, administrative, and military purposes. Otsuka (2018, p. 334) argues that place names were not an important factor in the assimilatory politics of imperial Japan. Otsuka's study focuses on island names but takes no account of the naming of GEOBJS on Japanese controlled Micronesian islands. Otsuka (2018, p. 501) provides the Japanese place name Agurigan-shima, 'Agrigan Island', for Agrigan (cf. below). According to Peattie (1988, p. 173), the introduction of properly Japanese place names in Micronesia depended on the presence of larger groups of Japanese settlers. Since Agrigan attracted only a small number of Japanese individuals, this condition is not met.

Yoo & Steckel (2016) report that:

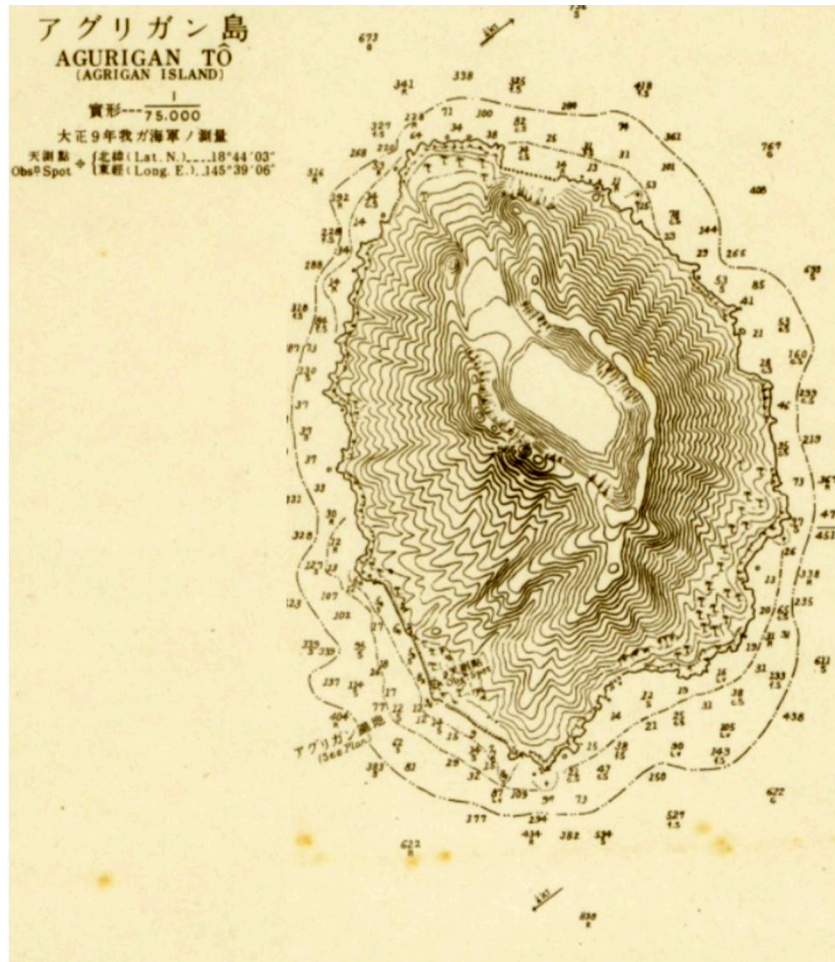
[i]n Micronesia, the Japanese colonial government first identified the boundaries between public lands and private lands from 1923 to 1937. Then Japan identified owners and boundaries of private lands and made land registers in the Northern Mariana Islands from 1937 to 1939 and in Palau from 1939 to 1941 (p. 628).

The existence of a land registry suggests that the islands were charted meticulously, including their toponomasticon. According to Miller (2016)<sup>14</sup>, the bulk of the Japanese maps of the mandated territories in Micronesia were secret military maps (*Gaihōzu* maps), most of which were systematically destroyed in 1945 on orders of the Japanese High Command (Kobayashi, 2012, p. 25).<sup>15</sup> Those maps which have escaped destruction are archived at the University of Tohoku. The archive also hosts a map of Agrigan (Tohoku University Library, 2005), which is our Map 2.

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<sup>14</sup> The edited volume dedicated to the history of Japanese cartography (Wigen et al., 2016) hosts several articles which focus on the colonial empire of Japan without, however, scrutinizing the situation on the mandated territories of Micronesia. It seems to us that there still is a chapter to write before Japan's cartography can be claimed to be described sufficiently in historical perspective.

<sup>15</sup> According to Kobayashi (2012, p. 3), the category of *gaihozu* originally referred to maps of foreign (i.e., non-Japanese) countries and was not intended as secret.

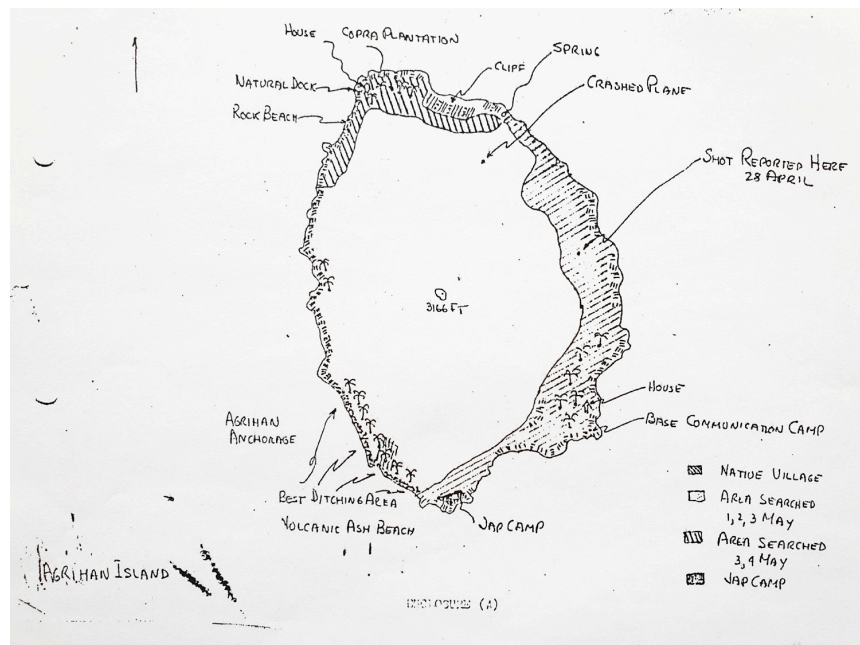


Map 2. Japanese map of Agrigan (Tohoku University Library, 2005).

Map 2 was produced in 1944 (Showa 19), but reflects the results of two cartographic explorations dating back to 1923 (Taisho 12), and 1932 (Shōwa 7). On this map, Agrigan is named *Agurigan-tô*, 'Agrigan Island', with *tô* ('island') in lieu of the synonymous *shima* (cf. above). Map 2 has bilingual lettering because the two cases of text in Japanese script (*agurigan buōchi*, 'Agrigan Anchorage', and *ten soku ten* 'astronomical observation spot'), are accompanied by English expressions, namely the identifier, *Obs. Spot = Observation Spot*, and the bracketed instructions: *See Plan*. English is also used in the map names, for the sea depth and further meteorological information. Whether these

English elements and the reference to an unidentified plan are evidence of the existence of an earlier unknown American or British map which was simply adopted by the Japanese, as was practiced with European maps in other parts of the Japanese Empire, cannot be determined in this study (Kobayashi, 2012, p. 24-25). No place names are given on Map 2.

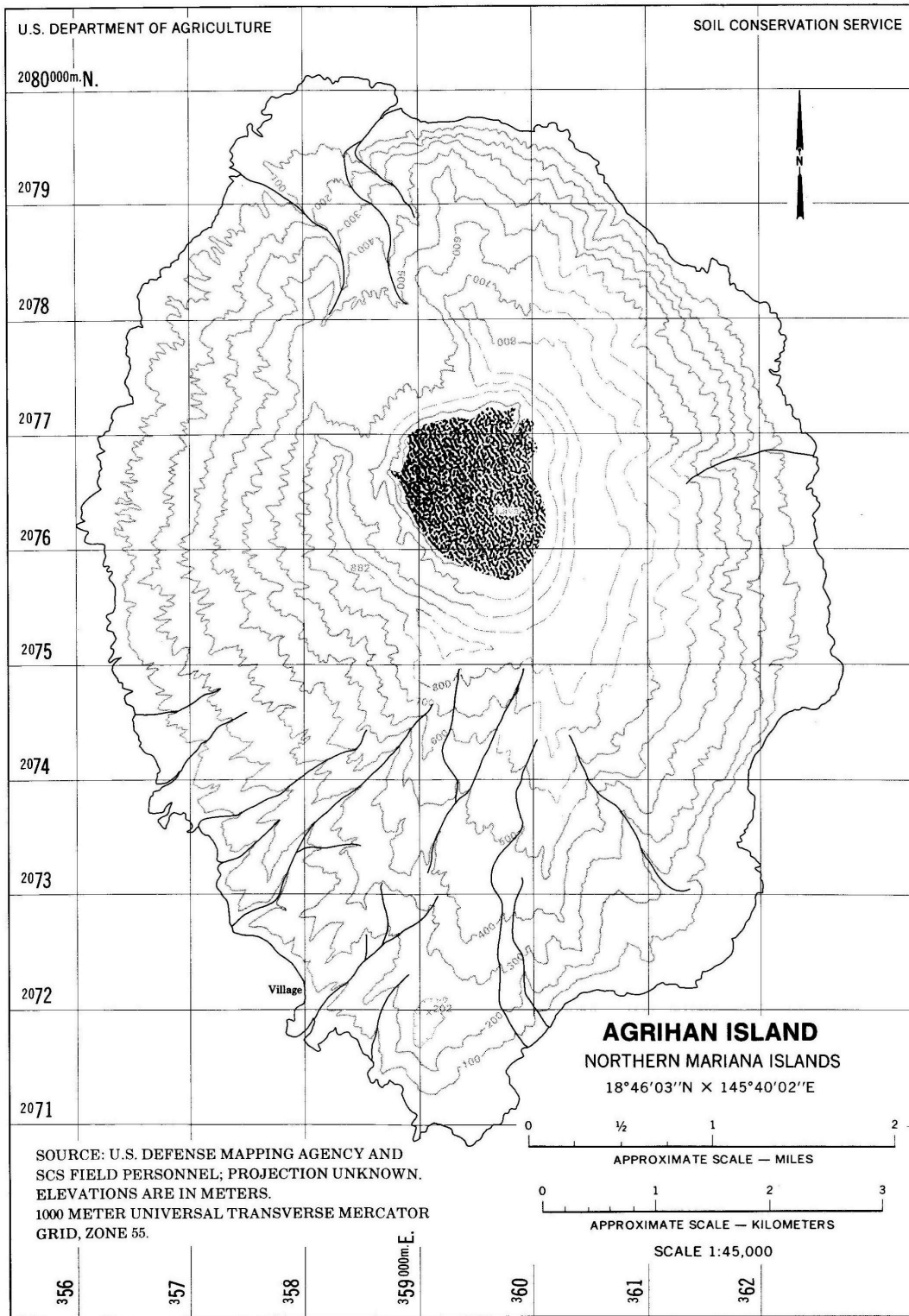
In the absence of further Japanese maps featuring Agrigan during the Mandate period, we have to make do with the U.S. Navy secret report on the *Agrihan Island Search and Rescue Expedition* of 7 May, 1945 (McAfee, 1945). This report is interesting for various reasons. In several paragraphs, the author mentions the native village and its inhabitants. Since the definite article is used, it can be assumed that there was only one village at that time. This village was located at 300 yards from *Agrihan Anchorage*. In contrast to the anchorage, the village is never identified by name – the usual reference being to the native village. Furthermore, a map of Agrigan accompanies the report which we reproduce as Map 3.



Map 3. Agrigan in 1945. (McAfee, 1945, p. 7).

Map 3 is hand-drawn and involves a number of identifiers. Besides the island names, Agrihan Island and Agrihan Anchorage, all other identifiers are common nouns or noun phrases. The site of the native village is marked graphically but the village remains anonymous since no place name is given. The map was meant as orientation for a military action on an unfamiliar island. This practical purpose explains why proper names do not show up on Map 3. At the same time, the presence of identifiers like volcanic ash beach, spring, cliff, copra plantation, natural dock, and rock beach is indicative of the presence of topographically salient GEOBJS which are potential targets for place-naming, meaning: The island's surface and coast display a differentiated structure whose components could be distinguished by way of individualizing them toponymically. The different GEOBJS thus were accessible to human perception as individual topographic entities.

The demographic statistics in Bryan (1971) suggest that in 1945 all inhabitants left Agrigan so that the population was down to zero. With 94 inhabitants, the demographic development peaked in 1967 only to diminish in subsequent years to 64 in 1969 and 56 in 1970. What happened after the evacuation of the islanders in 1990 is not entirely clear to the authors. Attempts at resettling Agrigan were undertaken in 2000 (with six inhabitants) and, after an interval of depopulation in 2010 following the evacuation of four remaining inhabitants on Agrigan, reported in the Pacific Islands Report of 22 September, 2009 (<https://www.pireport.org/articles/2009/09/22/evacuation-slows-northern-marianas>), and again in 2015 when nine individuals were reported to live in one of the original four villages (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Agrihan>). No matter how changeful Agrigan's settlement history has been, especially during the last three decades, we conclude that human presence on the island was never suspended for long or for good. Guampedia (consulted last on 7 August, 2021) claims that, "the principal islands, together with Anatahan, Alamagan, and Agrihan, are



Map 4. Agrigan in 1986 (U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1986).

inhabited.”([https://www.guampedia.com/micronesia-portal/#Commonwealth\\_of\\_the\\_Northern\\_Marianas\\_CNMI](https://www.guampedia.com/micronesia-portal/#Commonwealth_of_the_Northern_Marianas_CNMI))

The official U.S. Map of Agrigan (Map 4) appeared in print in 1986; i.e., exactly in the period of relatively strong human presence on the island before the evacuation in 1990. The 40-year interval between Maps 3 and 4 does not coincide with progress in the cartographic representation of Agrigan in terms of the number of identifiers on the maps. Where there still were about a dozen identifiers on Map 3, Map 4 lacks any evidence of identifiers except the singular occurrence of *village* (without accompanying a circle) in the Southeast corner of the island. In a way, we witness a step backwards because the more recent Map 4 conveys much less information than the older Map 3. Apart from the differences in the amount of lettering on the two maps, what we additionally observe is that the purely topographic representation of Agrigan on Map 4 is superior to that on Map 3 (but not better than that of Map 2). We take the higher degree of topographic precision of Map 4 to mean that it pictures more GEOBJS and thus more candidates for place-naming. In Section 3, we use comparative evidence from an island situated in a distant sector on the globe to show that Agrigan’s map does not have to remain as uninformative as it looks presently.

### **Two Islands Compared**

Superficially, the absence of identifiers in general, and place names in particular, from Agrigan’s official map seems easy to explain. For the last 140 years, the population was never particularly numerous and the demography was characterized by a considerable degree of fluctuation. In addition to the small size of the population, human presence on the island was interrupted repeatedly, either because seasonal workers stayed only for limited periods of time or because the inhabitants were evacuated on account of war or natural catastrophes. After each



evacuation, the island lacked inhabitants for a number of years. We do not know whether the attempts at resettling the island always and exclusively involved former inhabitants of Agrigan. Moreover, we are ignorant as to the handing down of toponomastic knowledge from one generation of Agrigan islanders to the other. The picture is further diversified by two factors. At least at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Chamorros and Carolinians formed almost equally numerous groups of inhabitants. Did they share a common toponomasticon for Agrigan? The (rapid) succession of Spanish, German, Japanese, and US American administrations might partly be responsible too for hampering the establishment of a stable toponomasticon. Accordingly, chances are that several short-lived sets of place names supplanted each other with every resettlement.

We doubt that this supposedly logical reasoning closes the case for us. We emphasize that even under the conditions sketched in the foregoing paragraph, Agrigan's map need not be unlettered. None of the above criteria precludes the possibility of place-naming. To prove our point, we first take a closer look at a different island – Bouvet-Øya – which boasts a relatively rich toponomasticon, although the conditions for place-naming are much worse than those in the case of Agrigan. The insights we gain from this short case study are used for a re-reading of Agrigan's map in the section following our Bouvet-Øya discussion.

**Bouvet-Øya.** To make the most of the different historical and environmental differences that distinguish Agrigan from its partner in comparison, we have chosen Bouvet-Øya – a geographically very isolated island in the South Atlantic. The island was discovered by the Frenchman Jean-Baptiste Bouvet de Lozier in 1739. During the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, British, American, and more regularly - Norwegian whalers - used to stop by. Since 1930, the island has been a Norwegian possession – annexed already in 1928 by royal decree to counter imminent British and German claims to the island (Headland, 2009, p. 285). With 49 km<sup>2</sup>, it is approximately the same size as Agrigan. Except for the hibernation

of an expedition in the 1970's, the island has never experienced an extended period of human presence because the climatic conditions are unfavorable for permanent settlement. Nine-tenths of the landmass is covered by glaciers. The vegetation is limited. The steep coastline renders access extremely difficult (Sømme 2007).

Map 5 is a cartographic representation of Bouvet-Øya as of 1985.<sup>16</sup> What strikes the eye immediately is the amount of lettering on this map. According to the official count of the *Norsk Polar Institut* (<https://placenames.npolar.no/?sort=beginLifespanVersion&area=Bouvetøya>), there are 59 official place names to which another 92 historical place names can be added. It is important to note that all of the 151 items belong to the class of *place names* since no other type of identifier is represented on Map V. The bulk of the place names (made official in the 1980's) involve elements taken from Nynorsk, the second official language of Norway beside the dominant Bokmål (Faarlund et al., 2012, pp. 1–3). Since the island is uninhabitable, settlement names do not form part of Bouvet-Øya's toponomasticon. In contrast, members of other classes of GEOBJs, as a rule, are named. This applies for instance to the numerous small islands and rocks which surround Bouvet-Øya, such as *Skarven* 'Cormorant'<sup>17</sup> – a rock off the north-western shore of the island. In the remainder of this section, we exclusively discuss toponomastic data related to the main island of Bouvet-Øya because Agrigan boasts no satellite islands.

To our minds, investigating the toponomasticon of Bouvet-Øya can be instructive for the toponomastic development of Agrigan in the future.

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<sup>16</sup> The maps of the island under scrutiny have experienced changes over time, as a comparison of Map 5 with that of Baker (1967, p. 75) reveals. This means that the success of the cartography of Bouvet-Øya depends on the progress that the exploration of the less accessible parts of the island is making.

<sup>17</sup> The vast majority of the Norwegian place names on Bouvet-Øya bear the suffixed definite article: Singular *-en* (common gender), *-a* (feminine), *-et* (neuter) and plural *-ne* (common gender), *-a* (neuter) (Faarlund et al., 2012, p. 173). Thus, used as a common noun, *skarven* would be definite and require to be translated as 'the cormorant' into English. For the Norwegian place names to be discussed in this paper, we provide English translations without definite article.



of these uncertain cases, we suggest possible interpretations in the endnotes. Boldface highlights those constituents of place names which are identical with a personal name.

1. Place names on Map V (Bouvet-Øya, main island)

- a. BAY (vik: 'bay'): *Bollevika* 'Dumpling Bay';
- b. BEACHES (kyst 'coast', *strand* 'beach', *terrasse* 'terrace'):  
***Esmarchkysten*** 'Esmarch Coast', ***Morgenstiernekysten***  
'Morgenstierne Coast'<sup>18</sup>, ***Mowinckelkysten*** 'Mowinckel Coast',  
*Selstranda* 'Seal Beach', *Sjæelefantstranda* 'Sea Elephant Beach',  
*Smalstranda* 'Narrow Beach', *Svartstranda* 'Black Beach', ***Victoria***  
***Terrasse*** 'Victoria Terrace', ***Vogtkysten*** 'Vogt Coast',  
*Westwindstranda* 'Westwind Beach';
- c. CAPES (*kapp* 'cape', *odde* 'point', *støtte* 'pillar'): ***Catoodden***<sup>19</sup> 'Cato Point', *Kapp Circoncision* 'Cape Circoncision', ***Gjest Baardenstøtta*** 'Gjest Baarden Statue', *Kapp Fie* 'Cape Sophie', ***Kapp Lollo*** 'Cape Lollo', *Kapp Meteor* 'Cape Meteor', *Kapp Valdivia* 'Cape Valdivia', *Norvegiaodden* 'Norvegia Point', ***Ole Høllandstøtta*** 'Ole Hølland Statue', *Selodden* 'Seal Point';
- d. CLIFFS (*kolle* 'hill', *stup* 'jump'): *Eimstupet* 'Vapour Fjell', *Mokollen* 'Heather Hill';
- e. GLACIERS (*bre* 'glacier', *is* 'ice'): ***Aargaardbreen*** 'Aargaard Glacier', ***Christensenbreen*** 'Christensen Glacier', ***Engelbrechtbreen***<sup>20</sup> 'Engelbrecht Glacier', ***Horntvedtbreen*** 'Horntvedt Glacier',

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<sup>24</sup> We assume that this section of the coastline was named in honour of Wilhelm Thorleif Munthe Morgenstierne (1887–1963), a famous Norwegian diplomat.

<sup>19</sup> This place name was probably meant to commemorate the Norwegian mathematician, chemist, and physician Cato Maximilian Guldberg (1836–1902).

<sup>20</sup> We assume that the name of the glacier *Engelbrechtsbreen* contains the second name of Roald Engelbrecht Gravning Amundsen (1872–1928), the Norwegian explorer who reached the South Pole in 1911.

*Kraterisen* ‘Crater Ice’, *Posadowskybreen* ‘Posadowsky Glacier’,  
*Randbreen* ‘Brink Glacier’;

- f. LAKE (*bad* ,bath’): *Selbadet* ‘Seal’s Bath’;
- g. MOUNTAINS (*hall* ‘slope’, *hamar* ‘hammer’, *knaus* ‘rock’, *nut* ‘peak’,  
*rygg* ‘back, ridge’, *topp* ‘peak’): *Keisarryggen* ‘Kaiser’s Ridge’,  
*Lykketoppen* ‘Good Fortune Peak’, *Mosbytoppane* ‘Mosby Peaks’,  
*Moseryggen* ‘Moss Ridge’, *Nyknausen* ‘New Rock’, *Olavtoppen*<sup>21</sup>  
‘Olav Peak’, *Randtoppen* ‘Brink Peak’, *Rustadkollen* ‘Rustad Hill’,  
*Skoddenuten* ‘Fog Peak’, *Slakhallet* ‘Gentle Slope’, *Svarthamaren*  
‘Black Hammer’, *Wilhelmplatået* ‘Wilhelm Plateau’;
- h. PASSES (*port* ‘gate,’ *sund* ‘sound’): *Djevleporten* ‘Devil’s Gate’,  
*Mottesundet*<sup>22</sup> ‘Motte Sound’;
- i. SCREE (*ras* [plural *røs*] ‘scree’): *Nyrøsa* ‘New Scree’.

There are altogether 46 place names which distribute over nine classes of GEOBJs. With 23 place names, the GEOBJ-classes (a), (b), (c), and (h) cover 50% of the inventory in the place name list for Map V. What these classes have in common is their connection to maritime GEOBJs. The biggest turnout for a single ontological class is that of (g) MOUNTAINS with a dozen place names. The ontological class (e) GLACIERS contains seven cases. There is nothing comparable to glaciers on Agrigan but the bulk of the ontological classes found on Bouvet-Øya are also represented by GEOBJs on Agrigan. If it is possible to name members of these ontological classes on one island, nothing prevents people from also naming similar GEOBJs on the other island. We take up this issue again below when we take a “fresh look at Agrigan’s map.”

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<sup>21</sup> It is most likely that the highest mountain on Bouvet-Øya was baptized after King Olav V of Norway who ruled from 1957-1991.

<sup>22</sup> The constituent *Motte* can probably be connected to Norwegian *motte* ‘hill’ (an alternative form of *møtte* ‘hill’) which is also attested as place name *Motten* about 120 km to the west of Oslo in Norway.

In the remainder of this section, however, we address the patterns which come to the fore when we analyze the place names as to their formal properties and the connotations they invoke. This is necessary to unmask the basically colonial character of the toponomasticon of Bouvet-Øya – a property which bars the replication and adaptation of the Norwegian patterns in the case of Agrigan. In purely structural terms, the place names in (1.) display a binary structure, i.e. they have the shape of compounds which consist of two meaningful constituents. There are three different patterns. The internal structure of Pattern I involves adjectival attribution of a head noun as in *Nyrøsa* ‘New Scree’, *Slakhallet* ‘Gentle Slope’, *Smalstranda* ‘Narrow Beach’, *Svarthamaren* ‘Black Hammer’, *Svartstranda* ‘Black Beach’, with the adjectives *ny* ‘new’, *slak* ‘gentle’, *smal* ‘narrow’, and *svart* ‘black.’ The place names are descriptive in the sense that they highlight a particular (not always physical) feature of the GEOBJ. Patterns II–III are more interesting for the topic at hand. In these patterns, two nouns combine in a modifier-head construction. Two orders of modifier and head are realized, namely (a) HEAD > MODIFIER as in *Kapp Meteor* ‘Cape Meteor’ (i.e., Pattern II with five place names) and (b) MODIFIER > HEAD as in *Djevleporten* ‘Devil’s Gate’ (i.e., Pattern III with 36 cases). In what follows we focus on Patterns II–III.

Structurally, there is nothing remarkable about Pattern III because it conforms nicely to the morphological requirements of compounding in Norwegian (Faarlund et al., 2012, pp. 61–62). Pattern II falls outside the domain of word-formation. It is best described in terms of apposition (Faarlund et al., 2012, pp. 270–274). What makes them special is that the toponomasticon of Bouvet-Øya is dominated by these patterns whereas in Norway there is more competition between different toponymic patterns including numerous simplexes like the names of cities; e.g. *Hamar*, *Moss*, *Drammen*, *Horten*, *Halden*, etc. in the vicinity of the Norwegian capital Oslo. This pronounced preference for the binary place-name patterns is so widely common in colonial place-naming, as shown in Stolz & Warnke (2018, p. 28), that the authors postulate the *Canonical Colonial Toponym (CCT)*. What makes the CCT is by no means

its binary structure alone, but the mapping of the two constituents (stems or words) onto different meaning-related categories and discourse functions. The strong colonial tinge of the toponomasticon of Bouvet-Øya is striking because the nature of the island is such that there is nothing (and also nobody) to colonize in the first place.

The oldest place name on Bouvet-Øya is *Kapp Circoncision* (originally French *Cap de la Circoncision*) which commemorates the day of the first sighting of Bouvet-Øya by Jean-Baptiste Bouvet de Lozier on 1<sup>st</sup> January, 1739 (Delépine, 2007, p. 175). This place name is in line with the practice especially of the Catholic colonizer nations to name newly discovered places according to the religious calendar of their faith. However, the colonial character of many of the place names shown in list 1. *Place names on Map V*, can best be demonstrated on the basis of an analysis of those cases which involve a modifier which is itself a name. European colonizers have often used the names of ships to coin colonial toponyms as observed by Levkovych (2018, p. 202) for the Russian case. There are several examples of this practice in this list of place names. *Kapp Meteor* is named after the ship *Meteor* which visited Bouvet-Øya on occasion of the German Atlantic Expedition in 1926. *Kapp Valdivia* is named after the ship *Valdivia* which participated in the German expedition in 1898 (Sømme, 2007, p. 177). *Norvegiaodden* 'Norvegia Point' relates to the ship *Norvegia* which visited Bouvet-Øya repeatedly from 1927 onwards.

More important are place names which – like the above case of *Mount Fritz* – involve a personal name as constituent which honors a representative of the colonizer's culture, history, ruling dynasty, etc. (Stolz & Warnke, 2019). This practice can be found abundantly in the toponomasticons of all European colonizers (Stolz et al., 2016) although there are differences as to which GEOBJs are allowed to bear a name of this kind (Stolz et al., 2019). To keep the presentation within reasonable bounds, we only mention the uncontroversial cases for Bouvet-Øya in

the following paragraphs. Unclear cases are addressed in the notes to the list of place names on Map V.

The political class of Norwegians is represented by the following four cases:

1. ***Aargaardbreen*** 'Aargaard Glacier': Bjarne Aagaard (1873–1956) was a renowned Norwegian historian of the Arctic.
2. ***Esmarchkysten*** 'Esmarch Coast': August Esmarch worked in the Norwegian ministry of foreign affairs from 1922–1935.
3. ***Mowinckelkysten*** 'Mowinckel Coast': The shipowner Johan Ludwig Mowinckel (1870–1943) served three times as Prime Minister of Norway.
4. ***Vogtkysten*** 'Vogt Coast': Benjamin Vogt (1863–1947) was a Norwegian diplomat and politician.

There is a heavy dose of autoreferential place-naming in the sense that participants of the first expedition of the *Norvegia* and their family relations are commemorated:

1. ***Christensenbreen*** 'Christensen Glacier': The *Norvegia*-expedition was financed by the whaler Lars Christensen (Norman, 2007).
2. ***Horntvedtbreen*** 'Horntvedt Glacier': The captain of the *Norvegia* was Harald Horntvedt.
3. ***Kapp Fie*** 'Cape Sophie': *Kapp Fie* was named to honour Sophie Christensen called Fie, the daughter of Lars Christensen.



4. ***Mosbytoppane*** ‘Mosby Peaks’: The meteorologist Håkon Mosby participated in the 1927 expedition on the *Norvegia*.
5. ***Rustadkollen*** ‘Rustad Hill’: The biologist Ditlef Rustad participated in the 1927 expedition on the *Norvegia*.

Furthermore, two national heroes of Norway are also inscribed into the toponomasticon of the island: ***Gjest Baardenstøtta***, ‘Gjest Baarden Statue’, and ***Ole Høllandstøtta***, ‘Ole Hølland Statue’. Gjest Baarden and Ole Hølland were famous and popular criminals in 19<sup>th</sup> century Norway. They were held in high esteem also in Norwegian folklore (Ranie, 1937). The existence of a statue of Gjest Baarden in Sogndal (Norway) called *Gjest Baardenstøtta* (‘Gjest Baarden Statue’) needs to be mentioned. As far as we know there is no *Ole Høllandstøtta* ‘Ole Hølland Statue’ in Norway. We assume that one of the rock formations observed by the explorers reminded them of the statue dedicated to Gjest Baarden in their native Norway. The second rock formation resembled a statue and thus was baptized in analogy to the first GEOBJ after a similarly famous Robin-Hood-like character of the Norwegian national narrative.

In the case of ***Victoria Terrasse***, ‘Victoria Terrace’, the human reference is also indirect. The building complex, *Victoria Terrasse*, was built in Oslo, the Norwegian capital in the 1880’s. It seems that the place name on Bouvet-Øya owes its origin to the building complex which housed political offices and the police. The building complex was probably named after Victoria von Baden, princess of Sweden and Norway in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Beside these many associations with Norway, there are also place names that have a German connection. In addition to *Kapp Meteor* and *Kapp Valdivia* mentioned above, there is also ***Wilhelmplatået***, ‘Wilhelm Plateau’, which is named after the last German Emperor, Wilhelm II. As to ***Posadowskybreen*** ‘Posadowsky Glacier’, the honored personality is

Arthur von Posadowsky-Wehner, the minister of the interior of the German Empire and a political supporter of the German 1902 expedition. Both place names were introduced by participants of German expeditions to the (Peri-)Antarctic zone. The survival of these non-Norwegian place names into the present is remarkable insofar as they link the island to a potential rival colonizer who later on became a foe when German troops occupied Norway for four years during World War II. This experience has not affected the acceptability of the place names of German origin as integral parts of Bouvet-Øya's toponomasticon. In light of the wholesale erasure of German (-sounding) place names over a long period of time, the equally deserted<sup>23</sup> French insular possession Kerguelen (southern Indian Ocean) in 1915 (Delépin, 1973, p. 9), it is worth noting the Norwegian tolerance. The different reactions of Norway and France to the hostility on the part of Germany is indicative of the essentially political nature of colonial place-naming.

The use of personal names as constituents of place names is not completely unknown in the toponomasticon of Norway. However, it is strikingly infrequent. Of the 32 names of Norwegian urban centers only three (approximately 9%) conform to the pattern which otherwise is so common on Bouvet-Øya (approximately 39%). These are *Frederikstad*, *Kristiansund*, and *Kristiansand*, which commemorate the Danish-Norwegian kings, Frederik II, Christian IV, and Christian VI, respectively. The pattern is unattested for the naming of mountains. Amongst the many names of fjords, the pattern is attested more than once. It is telling, however, that it occurs only on Svalbard, the major Arctic island possession of Norway. There we find, for example, *Magdalenefjorden* (Biblical reference), *Dicksonfjorden* (named after Swedish Baron Oscar Dickson), and *Ekmanfjorden* (named after Johan Oscar Ekman, a Swedish business-man). The situation is similar in the case of the Norwegian island Jan Mayen in the North Atlantic (Stolz & Levkovych, 2020, pp. 128–129). This geographic restriction supports our hypothesis of the

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<sup>23</sup> Headland (2009, p. 20) argues that since 1951 Kerguelen has been occupied permanently when a scientific station was established at Port-aux-Français.

strong connection of the pattern to colonialism no matter that the Norwegian dependencies do not constitute typical cases of colonization. Qualitatively, the pattern is an option in the entire Norwegian sphere but quantitatively, the pattern is typical only of the dependent territories which do not form part of the Norwegian mainland.

The above practice of place-naming was mostly applied in (previously) uninhabited external territories of the Norwegian kingdom. The Norwegians did not have to deal with an already established toponomasticon or a local population with its own traditions of place-naming. Bouvet-Øya – like all other Norwegian possessions in the polar zones – is a case of a pristine open space which could freely be segmented into parts by way of place-naming. The Agrigan case is different – and this difference calls for a different approach to place-naming.

### **A Fresh Look at Agrigan's map**

The foregoing section has taught us two lessons. First, Bouvet-Øya's toponomasticon clearly shows that GEOBJS can have names even in the absence of a permanent population. Secondly, the same toponomasticon reveals that a territory for which no prior place names existed may easily fall victim to colonial place-naming practices. In this section, we address both issues, starting with the potential that Agrigan's topography holds in store for future activities in the domain of place naming (i.e., the section: **Salient GEOBJS**). Subsequently, we discuss possible ways to avoid colonizing the island by way of applying inadequate methods of naming.

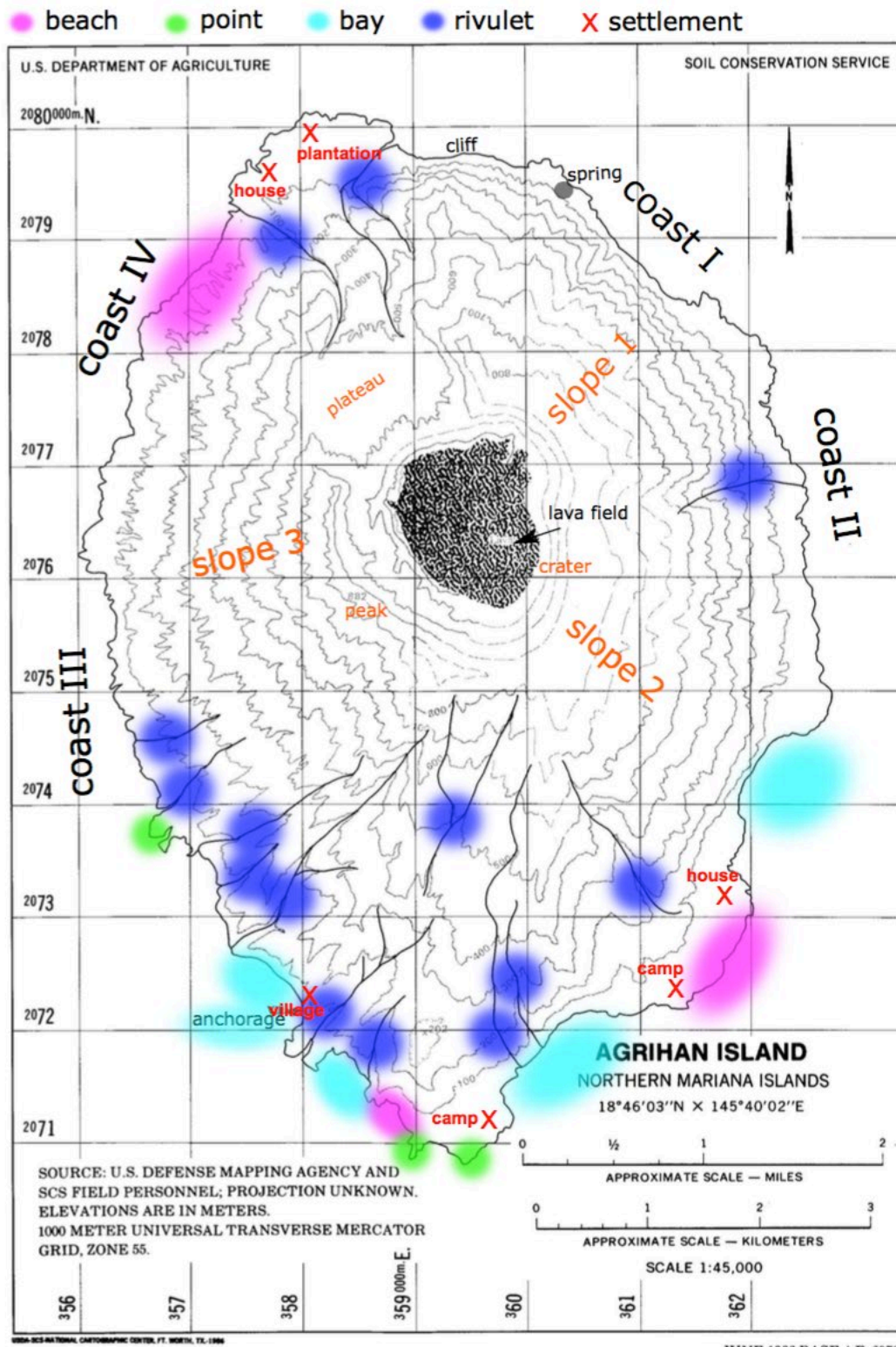
**Salient GEOBJS.** On the basis of Map 3 it is possible to identify a number of GEOBJS which might deserve to bear names. We take account of these cases on Map 6 which is a modified version of Map 4.

On Map 6 we mark out those GEOBJs which can be made out on Map 4. Our provisional count yields 44 salient GEOBJs including those represented by identifiers on Map 3. It is possible that we misjudge the topography of the island because of the quality of the cartographic representation. Even if we are mistaken in some of the cases, it is nevertheless evident that Agrigan can compete with Bouvet-Øya as to the richness of the topography.

These Agrigan GEOBJs (presumably) belong to several ontological classes. Five of these are shared with Bouvet-Øya. The shared categories are as follows:

1. BAYS for which we identify five different sites including the anchorage,
2. BEACHES (including sections of the coast-line) with seven GEOBJs,
3. CAPES with three points or promontories,
4. CLIFFS with a single GEOBJ,
5. MOUNTAINS with three slopes, a peak, a crater, and a plateau.

Furthermore, there are several controversial cases. On the one hand, problems arise with the interpretation of the thin curvy lines on Agrigan's map which start on the higher levels to reach the sea (in two cases the lines end abruptly at a distance from the shore). We face either the representation of crevices or rivulets. In the latter case, there would be 14 instances of stretches of running water (to which two tributaries have to be added). For the sake of the argument, we opt for this interpretation. These rivulets can be lumped together with the single case of standing water, viz. the spring identified on Map III. Since Bouvet-Øya also hosts a GEOBJ of this kind (i.e. the lake *Selbadet*, 'Seal's Bath'), both islands can be said to share a sixth ontological class, namely that of RUNNING/STANDING (SURFACE) WATER – in toponomastic parlance the place names used for GEOBJs of this class are called hydronyms (Strandberg, 2016, p. 105).



Map VI. GEOBJS on Agrigan.

Analogously, it is possible to unite Bouvet-Øya's category SCREE with Agrigan's category LAVA FIELD because in both cases the GEOBJ is the result of volcanic eruptions. Note, however, that except for *Nyrøsa*, none of the lava and scree fields on Bouvet-Øya bears a name (Baker, 1967, pp. 74–78). Given that the unification of SCREE and LAVA FIELD under a common umbrella category makes sense, the number of shared ontological classes rises to seven.

This leaves only three ontological classes which are unique to only one of two islands. As mentioned above, there is no equivalent of Bouvet-Øya's many glaciers on Agrigan so that the Norwegian island has the monopoly of GLACIERS. It also holds the monopoly for the ontological class of PASSES since Agrigan lacks offshore islands and thus no straits exist. In contrast, Agrigan differs from Bouvet-Øya in the sense that the island in the Northern Marianas alone gives evidence of the ontological class SETTLEMENTS. Map 3 features a village (also mentioned on Map 4), two houses, two camps, and a plantation.

Even if some of the GEOBJs for which Maps 3–4 provide identifiers have disappeared in the meantime, the general picture does not change much. Agrigan's topography is favorable to place-naming on a par with that of Bouvet-Øya. Since the latter island has induced people to coin numerous place names, there is no reason why Agrigan should not have the same effect - not the least because, in stark contrast to its Norwegian counter-part, not all of Agrigan's toponymy would have to be created out of nothing.

**Place-name candidatures.** The *Canonical Colonial Toponym* (CCT) is only infrequently attested in the Northern Marianas. There is the island name *Farallon de Medinilla*, 'Medinilla's Rock,' which is entirely Spanish. It involves the head *farallón* 'rock' and the prepositional phrase *de Medinilla* 'of Medinilla' as genitival attribute. The complement of the preposition *de* 'of' is a proper name, namely that of Don Jose de Medinilla y Pifeda who was the Spanish governor of the Marianas from 1812 to

1822. A more recent example is *Koblerville* on Saipan which arose on the former *Kobler Airfield* named in commemoration of US bomber pilot Lt. Wayne F. Kobler, who was killed in an air-raid in 1944 on Tinian. The pattern is thus known in the Northern Marianas but by no means the first option in place-naming. In both cases, the place names honor representatives of an external dominator. What is more, the internal structure of the two place names obeys the rules of Spanish and English, respectively. Thus, both *Farallon de Medinilla* and *Koblerville* are modelled on foreign patterns.<sup>24</sup>

A look at the Agrigan place names reported in Johnson (1957) suggests, however, that it is unnecessary to replicate these or other foreign patterns in order to redraw the map. In the section below, we list Johnson's finds in alphabetical order. We comment on each of the twelve place names subsequently.

**Place names on Agrigan according to Johnson (1957): *As Biha, As Mahalang, As Peligro, Chapanis, Goneg, Lancho Talo, Nonag, Pahong, Quiroga, Santa Cruz, Songsong, Talak Katan.*** From the earlier discussion of the comparative data in, we know that Bouvet-Øya's place names generally reflect the binary structure of the CCT. This is different in the Agrigan case. Only half of the place names for Agrigan consist of two words, namely *As Biha, As Mahalang, As Peligro, Lancho Talo, Santa Cruz,* and *Talak Katan.* Their binary structure can be taken for granted. However, the remaining six place names consist of only one word, namely *Chapanis, Goneg, Nonag, Pahong, Quiroga,* and *Songsong.* Moreover, none of these one-word place names is a compound. Each

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<sup>24</sup> The pattern [*Farallón de X*] is attested frequently in the Spanish-speaking world as, e.g. *Farallón de San Ignacio* 'San Ignacio's Rock', for a small island in the Gulf of California (Mexico). City names which involve the head, *-ville* (originally French *ville* 'town'), can be found for instance, in many states of the USA, as e.g. *Jacksonville* (Florida).

place name of this kind involves only one stem. Since a second stem is absent, the binary structure fails to apply. This means that the Agrigan toponomasticon as of 1957 was more diversified formally than its structurally rather monotonous Norwegian counter-part.

The two toponomasticons differ also with regards to the languages which contribute to them. In the case of Bouvet-Øya, all of the place names have a European background since they exclusively comprise elements which stem from Norwegian (Bokmål or Nynorsk) with the occasional addition of French or German material. Agrigan, however, gives evidence of a majority of elements which can be traced back to Austronesian languages. Only two of the place names in (2) look definitely Spanish and call for closer inspection.

Quiroga. This place name is a simplex, i.e. it does not conform to the CCT. It is especially intriguing because it (most probably) refers to Don José de Quiroga y Lozada who was responsible for the Spanish military conquest of the Mariana Islands where he served from 1679 to 1720 and left “an indelible negative imprint” in the history of the islands (Driver, 1992, p. 98). It is worth noting that the name of the person who was instrumental in the blood-stained subjugation of the Chamorro population is granted a place on Agrigan’s map, the island which held out particularly long in the struggle against the Spaniards.

Santa Cruz. Superficially, this place name can be mistaken for that of a Catholic parish like *San Roque* on Saipan, for instance. This was our interpretation of *Santa Cruz* (‘Holy Cross’) in Stolz & Levkovych (2020, p. 130). The place name *Santa Cruz* is attested in many parts of the former Spanish Colonial Empire such as *Santa Cruz* in California. However, in the light of the above case of *Quiroga*, it is more likely that we are facing again a historical reference to a military exponent of the Spanish forces of conquest, namely Philippine-born Captain Juan de Santa Cruz, a Pampango soldier



from Indang, Cavite (de Viana, 2005, p. 1). The Barrio Santa Cruz (Hagåtña, Guam) was the home of many Pampango soldiers and their descendants in the 18<sup>th</sup> century (Goetzfridt, 2011, p. 319).

Their formal properties notwithstanding, the two place names are in line with the CCT insofar as representatives of a former colonizer are commemorated. As to the connotations they invoke, *Quiroga* and *Santa Cruz* fit in with other place names of Spanish origin on Saipan which refer to the conquest. According to Cloud et al. (1956, p. 4), in 1694 Quiroga had subjugated the natives of Saipan in a series of bloody skirmishes from which, it is said by local elders, several of the present geographic names on Saipan are derived (*Matansa*, for massacre, and *Kalabera* for skeleton).

Two questions remain in connection to *Quiroga* and *Santa Cruz*. Given that the island remained deserted for most of the Spanish period, it is doubtful that the names were actually imposed by the Spanish colonial authorities to survive into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Since Maps 1-4 mention neither Quiroga nor Santa Cruz (nor any other place name for that matter), do we have to assume that they were introduced only after World War II? Who introduced the names, and when? In the light of the cases of colonial place names which survived decolonization in Africa (Stolz & Warnke, 2016), the belated commemoration of two colonial conquerors about half a century after Spain sold out its Micronesian possessions is especially remarkable, not the least with regards to the issue of community identity to be raised in Section 4. Owing to the temporary inaccessibility of Johnson (1957), the identification of the GEOBJs which are named after the Spanish conquerors poses the second problem. We assume that the names constitute a pair in the sense that they were used to name GEOBJs of the same ontological class. We assume

that the names were given to the crater and the nearby peak as the two most salient GEOBJs on the island.<sup>25</sup>

For the majority of the Agrigan place names noted above, it is possible to establish a direct or indirect Chamorro etymology albeit not always a straightforward one. In the introduction, we have already addressed the case of *Songsong* ‘Village’. On the basis of what we know about the location of a/the native village in the vicinity of the anchorage in the island’s southwestern sector, it can be safely assumed that *Songsong* is the name of Agrigan’s principal settlement. *Chapanis* ‘Japanese’ corresponds to Chamorro *Chapanes* and *Hapones* (Topping et al., 1975, p. 39), the former reflecting an English origin (*Japanese*) of the adjectival ethnonym because of the initial affricate and the latter pointing to Spanish (*japonés* ‘Japanese’) because of the initial fricative. This place name probably referred to the site of the Japanese camp identified on Map 3.

Chung (2020, p. 96) describes a typical morphosyntactic construction of Chamorro as follows:

*[A]s* combines with names of people to produce locative noun phrases that mean ‘at (the person’s) home’ or ‘at (the person’s) place’. Some of these locative noun phrases have been conventionalized as place names.

In these constructions, *as*, the definite oblique case marker of personal names, has become an integrated part of the place name. Whatever follows immediately after *as* must be the name of a person – be it a Christian name, a family name, a nickname, or a name-like form of address for family relations. Accordingly, *Biha*, *Mahalang*, and *Peligro* in *As Biha*, *As Mahalang*, and *As Peligro* must be personal names. As a

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<sup>25</sup> Interestingly, the cases of the (potential) mountain names Quiroga and Santa Cruz form a parallel to that of the probably only fictitious mountain name Mount Fritz mentioned above.

common noun, Spanish *peligro* means danger (= Chamorro *piligru*). As a proper name, *Peligro* is overwhelmingly attested in the Philippines (<https://forebears.io/surnames/peligro>) whereas we have not been able to find any evidence of it in the CNMI and Guam. We conclude that *As Peligro* ‘At Peligro’s Place’ refers to a location that was owned by, lived in by, or associated with an individual or groups of people of Philippine ancestry with the family name *Peligro*. The Philippine connection induces us to revise our own interpretation of *As Mahalang* in Stolz & Levkovych (2020, p. 130) where we assumed Chamorro *mahalang* ‘homesick’ to be involved in the formation of the place name. It is more plausible, however, to seek the origin of the proper name in the Philippines. In the province Negros Occidental (Visayas), there is a subdistrict going by the name of *Mahalang*. Personal names frequently “appear as inhabitant names or ethnonyms” (Lawson 2016, p. 173) in many personal naming systems worldwide. Therefore, it is very likely that *As Mahalang* ‘At Mahalang’s Place’ identifies the location which was associated with the presence of people with genealogical ties to the said subdistrict in the Philippines. As in the case of *Peligro*, our search for the proper name *Mahalang* in the Marianas was in vain. As to *As Biha*, the equation proper name *Biha* = Chamorro common noun *biha* ‘old lady’ (in Spanish *vieja* is the feminine form of ‘old’), is appealing to us although there is no Christian name or family name of this kind. *Biha* must therefore be a byname (Brylla, 2016). The place name can thus be interpreted as *As Biha* ‘At the place of a person called the Old Lady’.

In Johnson (1957), we find two further examples of Agrigan place names which involve two words, namely *Lanchon Talo* and *Talak Katan*. The analysis of the former poses no difficulties because its component parts can be directly identified as Chamorro lexemes. The place name *Lanchon Talo* has the shape of a binary noun phrase with the head noun *lancho* ‘farm’ and the attributive noun *talo* (= *talo*) ‘center, middle’. The two constituents of the construction are linked to each other by the enclitic linker *-n*. The reading of this place name is straightforward, namely *Lanchon Talo* ‘Middle Farm’. The farm’s name is suggestive of the

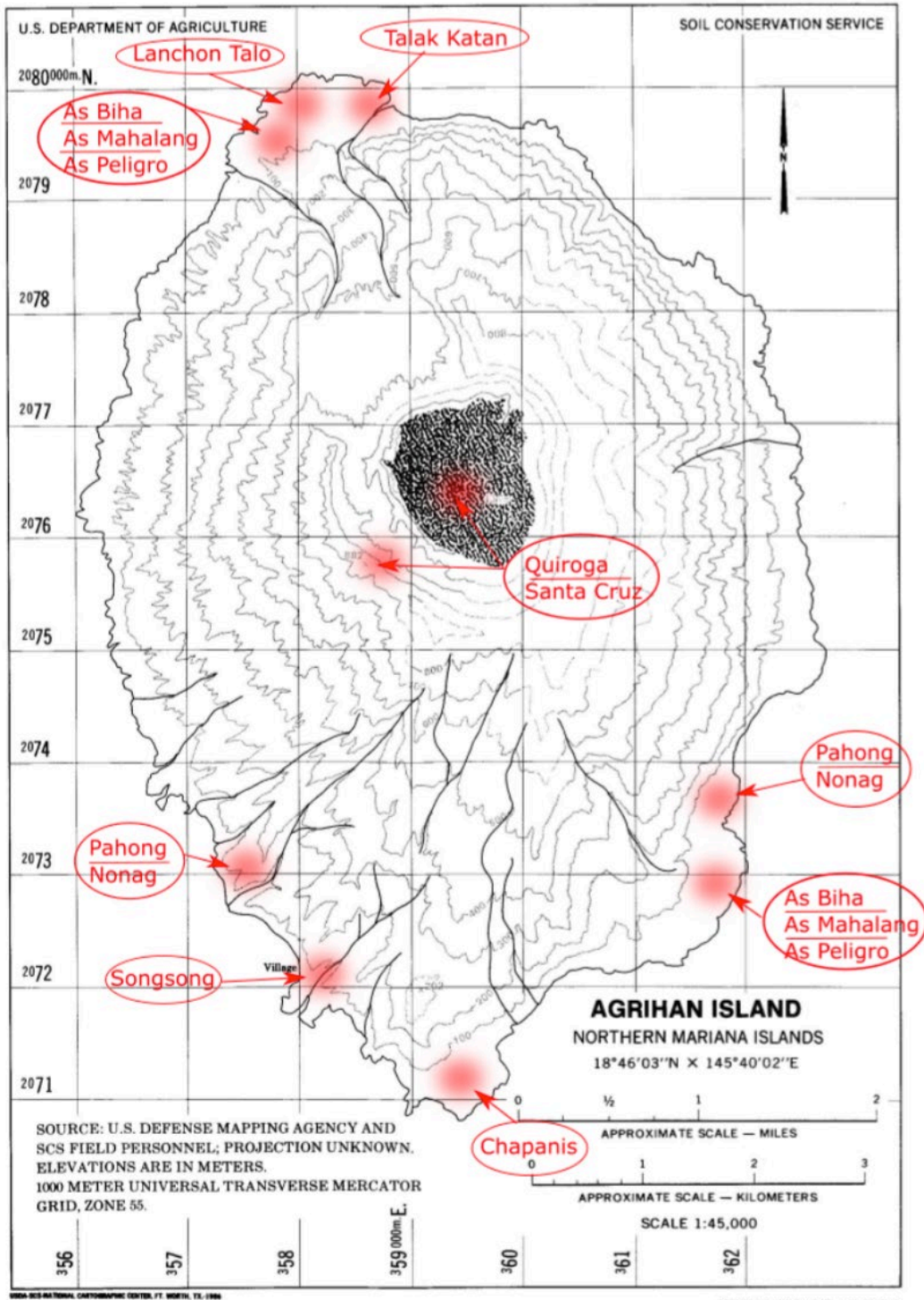
existence of at least two others farms between which *Lanchon Talo* was located. In contrast, *Talak Katan* is less transparent semantically. *Kåtтан* (= *katan*) is a directional noun in Chamorro the meaning of which differs across the islands (Chung, 2020, pp. 105–106). It means ‘east’ on Guam and Rota, but ‘north’ on Saipan. For the purpose of this paper, we stipulate that the directional meaning given to *kåtтан* on Agrigan corresponded to that of Saipan. More interpretative problems arise in connection with *Talak*. If orthographic <k> represents the glottal stop /ʔ/ one might think of Chamorro *tåla* ‘to dry, expose, make dry, spread out, hang up’ (Aguon et al., 2009, p. 361). In this case, *Talak Katan* could refer to a northerly location where people used to spread out things to make them dry. However, in earlier dictionaries of Chamorro, we find the entry (*a*)*talag* ‘look towards’ (Lopinot, 1910, p. 164; Von Preissig, 1918, p. 137; De Vera, 1932, p. 266) which is registered as *atalak* ‘having wide-open eyes’ in Aguon et al. (2009, p. 34). On account of the dictionaries of the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, we analyse *Talak Katan* as referring to a location from where it is possible to look out northwards.

The last three place names recorded by Johnson (1957) are one-word expressions. According to Aguon et al. (2009, p. 301), *nonnak* (i.e., *nonag*) is a ‘tree that grows along the seashore,’ about which De Vera (1932, p. 201) said that its wood was used for building boats. *Nonag* thus indicates the site where this kind of tree grew (perhaps abundantly). In Stolz & Levkovich (2020, p. 130), we still ignored this etymology. In the same publication, we also had a hard time finding a plausible explanation for the place name *Pahong*. On closer inspection, it turns out that *Pahong* is another reference to the local flora. It appears as *pahon*, ‘type of pandanus used to build fences’ in Lopinot (1910, p. 148); *pajon* or *pajoñg*, ‘local name for the knob-fruited screw-pine’ used for weaving mats (Von Preissig, 1918, p. 209); and *pahoñg*, ‘pandanus dubius’ in De Vera (1932, p. 214). *Pahong* thus indicates the site where this type of pandanus could be harvested. For the interpretation of *Goneg*, we originally assumed a very far-fetched Carolinian origin in Stolz & Levkovich (2020, p. 130). If we accept, however, that today’s word-final

glottal stop has developed from or was confused with an erstwhile velar stop /k/; which, in the early documents, was often represented orthographically as <g>, then it is possible to connect *Goneg* to *konne* 'catch, take, capture' (Aguon, et al., 2009, p. 230). *Goneg* probably identifies a location where something can be caught or is kept after capture.

The provisional outline of Agrigan's toponomasticon presented in our previous paper (Stolz & Levkovych, 2020) must be modified. The new insights we have gained render it unlikely that there was a substantial Carolinian component in the inventory of place names of the island in the 1950's. At the same time, it has come to the fore that beside the uncontroversial Chamorro place names there are also several cases that suggest a Philippine impact on the shaping of Agrigan's toponomasticon of the period in which Johnson visited the northerly islands. On the basis of the excerpts from Johnson's report, we reconstruct the location of the GEOBJS to which the place names in Johnson, 1957 (above) refer on Map 7.

For most of the GEOBJS, neither the coordinates nor their ontological class can be determined on this basis. We cannot place *Goneg* on Map 7. For *Pahong* and *Nonag*, two locations - either on the western or the eastern shore of the island - seem plausible since on Map 3 these sectors are marked with symbols for trees. For *As Biha*, *As Mahalang*, and *As Peligro*, we assume that they are the missing names of the three villages, besides *Songsong*. We take the identifier *house*, which occurs twice on Map 3 to mark possible sites of these villages; the location of the third village remains a riddle to us. Even in the case of *Quiroga* and *Santa Cruz* we lack the information to decide which of the names is associated with the crater or the peak. This means that Map 7 will certainly undergo substantial changes once the full text of Johnson (1957) is in our hands. The number of place names on Map 7 covers only a small part of the GEOBJS we have identified on Map 2. We cannot be sure that the anonymous GEOBJS had distinct names in the 1950's. This does not



preclude the possibility of naming them now. Map 5 has been shown to be inadequate because it withholds important information and thus distorts Agrigan's image. On the basis of the above findings, it is possible to extrapolate from the Agrigan case. We assume that what holds for the inadequacy of Agrigan's map is true at least also for the maps of Anatahan, Sarigan, and Alamagan.

### Potential Interpretations

What do we learn from Agrigan's historical cartography and demography, and the comparison of Agrigan with Bouvet-Øya, the Norwegian possession located in the South Atlantic? The absence of place names for GEOBJs of certain ontological classes from the early maps of Agrigan might not always be explicable with reference to the colonialist attitude of the foreign map-makers. For instance, Drummond (2016, pp. 115–116) argues that mountain names are generally late-comers in the history of toponomastics. Hydronyms, on the other hand, are considered to constitute the oldest layer of the toponomastics; e.g., in Europe (Strandberg, 2016, p. 106). As we have seen in Section 2 (regarding Agrigan's historical cartography and demography), and in section 3 (regarding a "fresh look at the Agrigan map), names for standing/running (surface) water fail to show up on the extant maps of Agrigan. Moreover, there is a striking difference between the behavior of cartographers in the case of Bouvet-Øya and that of Agrigan. The Norwegian island illustrates the phenomenon of *horror vacui*, 'fear of the void;' i.e., the explorers' or cartographers' unwillingness to allow for blank spots on the maps they draw.<sup>26</sup> Going by Map V, however, the opposite seems to apply; namely *horror nominum*, 'fear of names.' On Bouvet-Øya, there is no one around who could feel offended by the choice of place names. Even if Agrigan is currently uninhabited, there nevertheless are people who used to live there or who

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<sup>26</sup> It is worth noting that the principles laid down by the French Commission de Toponymie Territoriale explicitly instructed the toponomastician in charge of the Antarctic place names to respect blanks on the maps and to avoid filling the gaps systematically (Delépine, 1973, p. 3).

are the descendants of former inhabitants of the island. The members of these groups of people might take offense with the erasure of erstwhile place names from the map of the island to which they feel emotionally attached because, “[p]lace attachment theories posit that people form bonds with places” (Kostanski, 2016, p. 426). Kostanski’s hypothesis ties in with Alderman (2008), who assumes that:

...the construction of place identities is carried out through the pronunciation of geographical names as well as their *inscription into signs, documents, and maps*. [P]lace naming represents a means of claiming the landscape, materially and symbolically, and using its power to privilege one world view over another. [added italics] (p. 199)

What is skipped in this quote is the opposite of inscription; i.e., the banning of place names from maps and its effect on place identity. Kostanski (2016, p. 417) discusses the notion of place identity, which assumes a special person-place relationship which is symbolic and emotional at the same time. She claims that “toponymic identity, “...connects a population with their history” (Kostanski, 2016, p. 418). Place names are said to function as reference points for community identity:

This place identity is almost the glue which holds community groups together through a shared understanding of their collective past. [C]ommunities utilize toponyms as mnemonic devices for their collective identity (Kostanski, 2016, p. 421).

For as long as Agrigan’s map remains unlettered, the community of Agrigans and their associates are practically denied the possibility of developing a collective identity. In contrast to the formerly dominant idea that proper names generally lack meaning and are even non-connotational (Anderson, 2007, pp. 15–16), recent approaches to names agree that names bear a heavy load of connotations in terms of



associative and emotional meaning (Nyström, 2016, pp. 48–51). For Bouvet-Øya, the connotations are relatively clear since, simplifying the place names (which involve personal names) serves the purpose of national or even individual self-aggrandizement, even at the risk of becoming ridiculous.<sup>27</sup> In the case of Agrigan, there are no charted place names to invoke connotations in the first place. What triggers connotations, albeit of a different quality, is the absence of place names. No names, no history, no rights – this is a possible chain of associations.

Given the cultural and socio-psychological importance of place names, it is only logical that toponomasticians should pay attention also to the phenomenon of space escaping place-naming. Is it possible to systematize and evaluate cases like that of Agrigan to develop a theory of cartographic anonymity? It is up to the people of the Northern Marianas to decide whether it is worth the effort to try and remedy the present state of affairs. As cultural outsiders, we cannot be entirely sure that when we take issue with the mute map of Agrigan, we are imposing a Eurocentric point of view on the Marianas. It seems to be absolutely natural and a matter of course to us that maps should disclose as many names as possible for the GEOBJs of a given region. However, we are not in a position to sweepingly exclude the possibility that different cultural traditions might attribute much less importance to the full coverage and cartographic representation of a region which is familiar to the community. Topographic knowledge can be passed down from one generation to the next by word of mouth provided the members of the community have similar experience with the space in their cultural sphere.

## Conclusions

In the previous sections, we have presented facts from the history of Agrigan's representation on maps, all of which were produced by

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<sup>27</sup> Headland (2009, p. 283) mentions the frustrated Norwegian attempt to establish a permanent meteorological station on Bouvet-Øya in the course of which a depot hut was built and named *Villa Haapløs* 'Villa Hopeless' apparently in an attempt at toponomastic self-irony.

foreigners; and, at least in the beginning, to the exclusive benefit of foreigners. How the inhabitants of Agrigan practiced place-naming and orientation on the island was of no concern to the cartographers. The earliest evidence of (locally coined) place names stems from the 1950's, but had no consequences for later map-making. We have shown that uninhabitable islands elsewhere on the globe do not fare as badly as Agrigan. It is therefore no law of nature that a small island with a demographic history like Agrigan must make do with an unlettered map. If place names are indeed as important for a community's identity as claimed in the pertinent literature, then there are three options.

The first option is the retrospective stance, in the sense that an attempt could be made at reconstructing the toponomasticon of Agrigan as of a certain period. This can be achieved by way of asking former inhabitants of Agrigan, or their relatives, to share their knowledge about the place names with the project crew. If the goal is to go back in time as far as possible to exclude foreign influence on the toponomasticon to the exclusion of Spanish, English, Japanese, and other contributions from the outside, the task requires an academic approach according to the methodology of historical toponomastics (Coates, 2016). The reconstructive method may leave blanks on the map if neither the memory of the former inhabitants nor the philological tools yield results. The second option does not put that much emphasis on the past. As we have shown in Section 3.2, there are many GEOBJs on Agrigan which call for being named, probably even for the first time. This is a chance for interested groups to be creative, and actively shape the toponomasticon of the future. The example of Bouvet-Øya is indicative of how not to enrich the toponomasticon. There are local patterns of place-naming on the southerly islands which can serve as orientation for the creation of Agrigan's new place names. Both options should be independent of the above *horror vacui*. If certain GEOBJs are traditionally anonymous, there is no reason to violate this tradition. There is, of course, a third option; namely, that of consciously refraining from producing a lettered map, since this concept is alien to the local culture. The downside of this

decision would be that the crucial knowledge might get lost when memories fade away.

To forestall this loss of culturally sensitive knowledge, we advocate the creation of an atlas of the Gãni-Islands. This would not only contain an assemblage of maps of the islands as of now, but also accounts comprehensively for all place names associated with GEOBJs on the islands. It would add extensive historical and cultural information; and last but not least, it would include (in trilingual Chamorro-Carolinian-English, if possible) autobiographic sketches of people who have personal experience with the islands. Our own contribution to the atlas-to-be is limited to the purely linguistic and toponomastic domain. This still utopian project would cater to the needs of the community of Mariana islanders as well as to those of place-name studies and colonial linguistics. The logical next step toward the atlas would involve updating the *Fresh look at Agrigan's map* section in this article, and the inclusion of Agrigan's sister islands Alamagan, Anatahan, and Sarigan in a more detailed follow-up study.

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