A namescape of the British Antarctic Territory

Jan Tent

The article gives a conspectus of the names of places in the British Antarctic Territory. The analysis discusses the main types of naming and identifies ways in which the names of the territory reflect unusual patterns.

*

1. Introduction

The toponyms of Antarctica rarely feature in publications on toponymy, two exceptions being Alberts's (1995) *Geographic Names of the Antarctic*, and Sullivan and Pearn's (2012) article on medical place-names in Antarctica. This is surprising given that the continent covers more than 13.5 million km^2. The British Antarctic Territory (BAT) forms the largest and most southerly of the United Kingdom's fourteen Overseas Territories. Given the UK has an interest in such a significant portion of the continent (i.e. 1.7 million km^2 or 12.5% of its total area),[1] it seems appropriate that a survey of its toponyms be undertaken. Place-names are an important symbolic resource that provide insights into the belief and value systems of the name-givers, as well as the political and social circumstances at the time of naming. In many regions of the world, they also reveal the chronology and circumstances of exploration and settlement. Antarctica is a good example of these.

2. Some background

Antarctica is a *de facto* condominium, governed internationally through the Antarctic Treaty System. In 1959, twelve countries signed the Antarctic Treaty, with thirty-eight others having signed it since. Among the original signatories of the Treaty were Argentina, Australia, Chile, France, New Zealand, Norway and the United Kingdom, all with territorial claims, some of which overlap. Figure 1 shows these claims.

---

[1] The total area of the UK is 242,495 km^2.

Other countries participating as members of the Antarctic Treaty also have a territorial stake; however, the provisions of the Treaty do not allow them to make their claims while it is in force. They include:
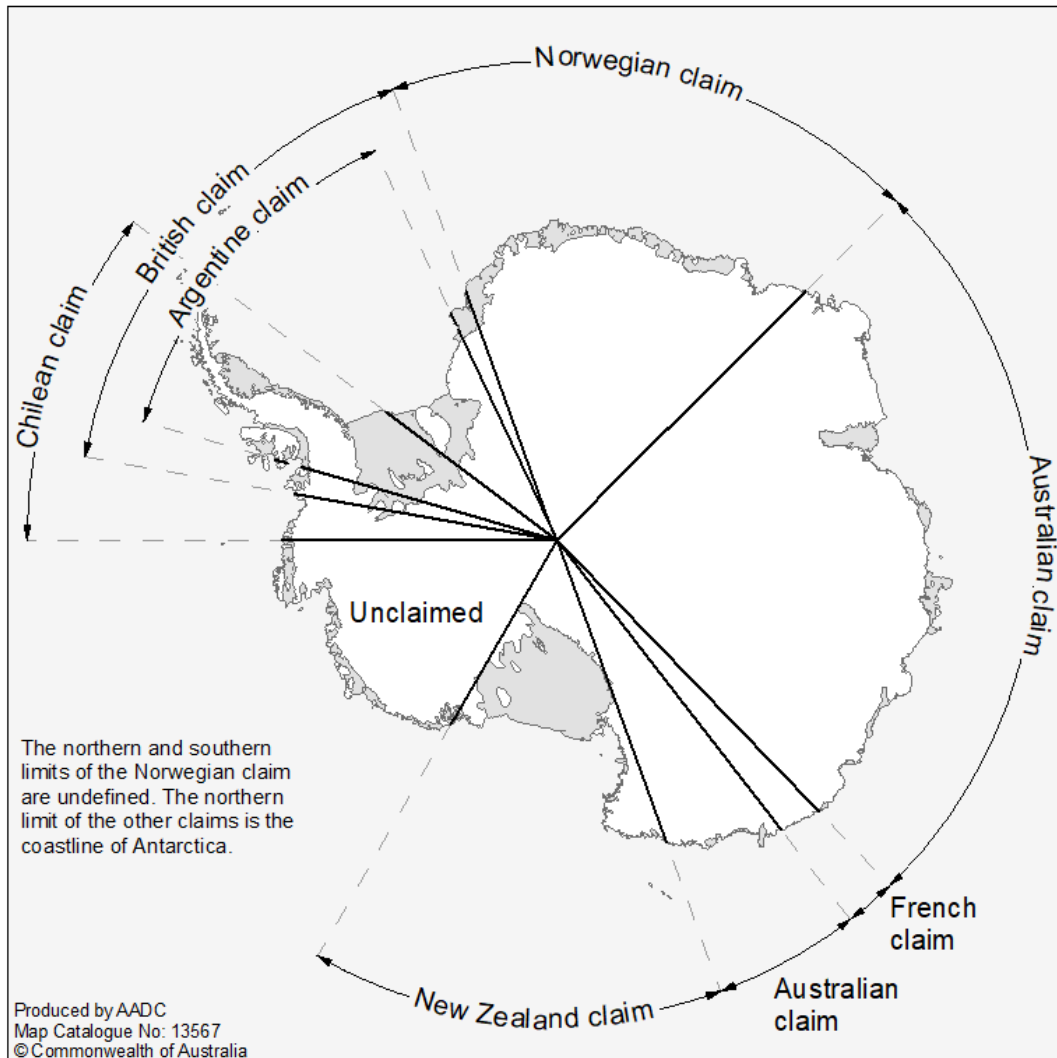

Figure 1. International Antarctic Territorial Claims
Source: Australian Antarctic Data Centre https://data.aad.gov.au.

- Brazil has a designated 'zone of interest', but it is not an actual claim
- Peru has formally reserved its right to make a claim
- Russia inherited the Soviet Union's right to claim territory under the original Antarctic Treaty
- South Africa has formally reserved its right to make a claim, and
- the United States has reserved its right to make a claim in the original Antarctic Treaty.

Toponymically, Antarctica is like no other region in the world. It is similar to the islands of Tristan da Cunha, St Helena, Ascension, Île

Amsterdam, the Juan Fernández Islands, Norfolk, and Pitcairn, in that these were all uninhabited prior to being explored and occupied between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries. However, Antarctica differs from these in three significant ways:

- No single language is currently spoken in Antarctica. There is no official language. On the aforementioned islands English, French, Spanish, and the creoles Norf'k and Pitkern, are now the local languages
- Antarctica is administered via the Antarctic Treaty, whilst the aforementioned islands are territories of Britain, France, Chile, and Australia
- In all likelihood, Antarctica has one of the best and most comprehensive records of the origins and meanings of its toponyms of any region in the world.

Since none of the above-mentioned islands or Antarctica were previously occupied, no autochthonous place-names existed—all toponyms were introduced. Nash (2011: 9) employs a useful term to describe the place-naming of such regions, viz. 'pristine place-naming', which 'refers to island case studies that were linguistically pristine prior to inhabitation, i.e. they were "linguistically uninhabited" islands prior to European colonisation.'. Nash borrows the term from Ross (1958: 333), who coined the expression 'to refer to toponyms that—if, and only if, we are cognisant of the actual act of its creation', i.e. their origins are transparent. Thus, the toponyms of Antarctica are by and large 'pristine' because for the majority their origins are known and are recorded in gazetteers or explorers' and expeditioners' journals. This is certainly true for the toponyms of the BAT.

British involvement with Antarctica dates back to James Cook's second Pacific voyage (1772–75) in his search for *Terra Australis*, when he made the first recorded crossing of the Antarctic Circle on 17 January 1773. The South Shetland Islands were the first part of the Territory to be discovered by William Smith in February 1819. The continental Antarctic landmass was not sighted until 1820 by British and Russian expeditions. In February 1832, the explorer John Biscoe claimed the Antarctic Peninsula for Britain.

The UK's formal claim to Antarctica dates back to 1908 and is the oldest formal territorial claim on the continent. The UK's permanent presence in Antarctica began with Operation Tabarin during World War II, after which its bases were staffed by the Falkland Islands Dependencies Survey (FIDS) which subsequently became the British Antarctic Survey

(BAS) in 1962. The BAT was officially established by a Statutory Instrument—the British Antarctic Territory Order in Council 1962/400—which constituted the Territory as:

> all islands and territories whatsoever between the 20th degree of west longitude and 80th degree of west longitude which are situated south of the 60th parallel of south latitude, which includes the South Shetland Islands, South Orkney Islands and the Antarctic Peninsula with a sector of the continent extending to the South Pole. (Government of the British Antarctic Territory)

The BAT is administered by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, with its place-naming being administered by the Antarctic Place-names Committee (APC, <https://apc.antarctica.ac.uk>), which also maintains the British Antarctic Gazetteer (BAG), containing more than 5,000 toponyms.

The name *Antarctica* is the Romanised form of the Greek compound ἀνταρκτική (*antarktiké*), the feminine form of ἀνταρκτικός (*antarktikós*), meaning 'opposite to the Arctic' or 'opposite to the north'. It was first used as the southernmost continent's name in the 1890s by the Scottish cartographer John George Bartholomew. However, prior to its acquiring its present denotation, the name was used for locations that could be defined as 'opposite to the north', for example, *France Antarctique*, the short-lived French colony established in Brazil in the sixteenth century.

3. Methodology

The 5,159 gazetted toponyms of the BAT were analysed by assigning, wherever possible, a 'toponym type' to each. This was done on the basis of the narrative that accompanies each toponym in the BAG. The narratives usually disclose the origin of the toponym; however, where no such information is provided, Fred G. Alberts, the American toponymist and former secretary of the US Advisory Committee on Antarctic Names (1949–80), in his 1995 work often supplied it, and this was then used. Many of the BAG narratives seem to be derived from Alberts, or vice versa, since the wording in both is often identical. Nevertheless, the largely transparent nature of the toponyms themselves, and their resulting classification, suggest there is no substantial reason to suppose the name origins are inaccurate. Even if some are, the substantial number of toponyms classified should eliminate significant biases in the results due to inaccuracies.

Ultimately, there were 52 (1.0%) of the toponyms where no interpretation for their origin could be made, the vast majority being named in the nineteenth century by whalers and sealers who did not keep details of the whys and wherefores of their naming. These toponyms were excluded from the final analysis, thus leaving 5,107 analysable toponyms.

A modified version of the 2020 revised Australian National Placenames Survey (ANPS) toponym typology (Blair and Tent 2020) was used to assign toponym types to BAT's toponyms (see Table 1). This toponym typology is especially useful in that it was designed for the Australian and New Zealand contexts, which have much in common with that of Antarctica in that they share a similar European occupation and concomitant place-name bestowal.

The ANPS typology is based upon the principle that the naming of a geographic feature is the result of a three-stage process. The first stage is the 'motivation' for naming a place, which is 'to distinguish' it from other places. In other words, the naming process is a contrastive one. This principle was expressed by Locke (1690: Book III, ch. 3, §5) when he argued humans have 'an occasion to mark particularity' in communication, in other words, to differentiate:

> What things have proper names, and why. Besides persons, countries also, cities, rivers, mountains, and other the like distinctions of place have usually found peculiar names, and that for the same reason; they being such as men have often an occasion to mark particularly, and, as it were, set before others in their discourses with them. And I doubt not but, if we had reason to mention particular horses as often as we have to mention particular men, we should have proper names for the one, as familiar as for the other, and Bucephalus would be a word as much in use as Alexander. And therefore we see that, amongst jockeys, horses have their proper names to be known and distinguished by, as commonly as their servants: because, amongst them, there is often occasion to mention this or that particular horse when he is out of sight.

Stewart (1954: 86) echoed this in his seminal article 'A classification of placenames', where his classificatory system was based 'upon the proposition that all place-names arise from a single motivation, that is, the desire to distinguish and to separate a particular place from places in general.'

The second stage in the naming process, the 'intention' of the naming, can be seen to ask the questions: 'Is it to commemorate something or someone?', or 'Is it to foreground a physical characteristic of the feature?', or 'Is it to reflect my [the namer's] feelings at the time of the naming?', or 'Is it a combination of more than one of these intentions?' The third stage of the naming is the actual 'expression' (or linguistic form) of the 'intention', and asks: 'What kind of name should be used?' 'An eponym?', 'A descriptive word or phrase?', or 'An invented, new name that seems pleasingly appropriate to the place?', or the like. Blair and Tent (2020) do not claim the three phases represent any conscious psychological or linguistic processes of the namer when a feature is being named. They merely seek to present a system for toponymists to use when classifying place-names according to their type, that is, according to the way in which they express the 'intention' of the naming.

Another reason the ANPS typology was employed is that it was designed to be open-ended, in that toponym classes could be added or deleted according to need, or to reflect more accurately the nature of the toponyms of the region under scrutiny. Accordingly, toponym category 6.1.6 'Occupational groups' was added for the current study in order to cover toponyms named after such groups (e.g. carpenters, doggers, mechanics, and pilots). This category is unlike 2.2 'Occupation/Activity' in that it does *not* recognise an occupation or habitual activity associated with the feature, rather it acknowledges, in general, the occupational groups who made a significant contribution to Antarctic exploration and science, and who were not necessarily directly associated with the named feature. The definition for sub-category 6.3.2 'Named concrete entity' has also been extended to include the names of groups, organisations, institutions, and other entities given that various Antarctic features were named after these. Table 1 enumerates the toponym types allocated to the BAT's place-names. Examples of each are also provided.

Table 1. ANPS Toponym Typology (Blair and Tent 2020)
Example toponyms taken from the BAT.

1   Descriptive—using a name denoting an inherent characteristic of the feature.
1.1   Topographic—denoting the physical appearance of a feature either literally or metaphorically (e.g. Rusty Bluff < the colour of the rocks and from a rusty iron post found on the top of the bluff; Alamode Island < resemblance to a form of confection topped with ice cream; Beehive Hill < resemblance to a wicker beehive; Tombstone Hill < shape of rocks on the hilltop; Tadpole Island < its shape).

1.2 **Relational**—denoting a relationship between a feature and another feature nearby, either in time, space or dimensions (e.g. Back Bay < it lies on the east landward side of Stonington Island; Corner Cliffs < they mark the point where the line of exposed rock of East Alexander Island turns from a north-south to a north-east south-west trend; Elbow Peak < for its position on a bend on Berquist Ridge).

1.3 **Locational**—denoting the location or orientation of a feature (e.g. Boreal Point < for its northerly position on Joinville Island; Meridian Glacier < named descriptively from its meridional direction of flow; East Melchior Islands; Northeast Glacier < it lies north-east of the United States Antarctic Survey 'East Base' on Stonington Island; South Pole).

1.4 **Functional**—denoting the constructed or designated function of a feature (e.g. Landing Cove < because the cove provides a landing place for small boats; Magnet Hill < because of its use as a geomagnetic and topographic survey station by Falkland Islands Dependencies Survey in 1959; Target Hill < it provides a target on which to steer from the summit of the pass; Crossover Pass < because it provides an north-south sledge route across the range; Director Nunatak < because it provides a useful landmark for ground parties on the plateau).

2 **Associative**—using a name denoting something associated with the feature or its physical context.

2.1 **Environmental**—denoting something in the local environment or context which is seen with or associated with the feature (e.g. Rockpepper Bay < for the many off-shore rocks and islets in this bay; Fossil Bight < for the fossils found there; Asterozoan Buttress < for the fossil asterozoan impressions situated there; Coalseam Cliffs < for the coal seam found there; Alectoria Island < for the lichen Alectoria antarctica which is predominant on the island; Pageant Point < the site of a penguin rookery with its associated pageantry; Palaver Point < in reference to the noise at the penguin rookery on the point).

2.2 **Occupation/Activity**—denoting an occupation, habitual activity (either by humans or animals) or related artefact associated with the feature (e.g. Observation Bluff < daily sea-ice observations are made from this point; Fishtrap Cove < used for setting fish traps; Recovery Glacier < the recovery of the expedition's vehicles which repeatedly broke into bridged crevasses on this glacier during the early stages of the crossing of Antarctica; Relay Hills < both British Graham Land Expedition and later Falkland Islands Dependencies Survey sledging parties had to relay their loads through this area to the head of Prospect Glacier; Pantomime Point < for the behaviour observed in the penguin rookeries on the peninsula).

2.3 **Structure**—denoting a manufactured structure associated with the feature (e.g. Bothy Bay < for the crude stone hut (bothy), built by nineteenth-century sealers, on the bay; Waterpipe Beach < for an old pipe-line that leads down to this beach from Pumphouse Lake, also 2.3; Beacon Head < for an Argentine wooden beacon sited there and used as a reference point; Cairn Ridge < for the cairn erected on the summit in 1957).

3 Occurrent—using a name recording an event, incident, occasion or date when the feature was named.

3.1 Incident—recording an event or incident which led to the naming of the feature (e.g. Brandy Bay < following a discussion as to whether brandy should be used as treatment for a dog bite; Birdsend Bluff < for a rock fall from the bluff flattened a bird outside the tent of a Falkland Islands Dependencies Survey, party in May 1956; Touchdown Hills < so named because the pilot of the expedition's ski-equipped Otter aircraft, mistaking the snow-covered hills for clouds, struck the snow but bounded upwards undamaged; Compass Island < because of difficulties experienced there with compass bearings, at first thought to be due to local variation, but later proved to be due to substitution of iron for copper wire in an anorak hood).

3.2 Occasion—recognising a time or date when the feature was named (e.g. Cape Valentine < named on 14 February; Shrove Cove < named on February 7, Shrove Tuesday; Port Circumcision < was charted by French Antarctic Expedition (1908–10), on 01/01/1909—'Feast of the Circumcision'; Coronation Island < for the first land discovered since the coronation of George IV on 19/07/1821; Advent Island < for the landing made to fix its position on Advent Sunday, 1956; Conception Point < named on 08/12/1821—'Feast of the Immaculate Conception').

4 Evaluative—using a name reflecting the emotional reaction of the namer, or a strong connotation associated with the feature.

4.1 Commendatory—reflecting/propounding a positive response to the feature (e.g. Providence Cove < because on first arriving at the cove, it seemed to offer a providential site for a base; Useful Island < in contrast to Useless Island; Dream Island < for the island's natural features of a cave and, in summer, a small waterfall with patches of grass).

4.2 Condemnatory—reflecting/propounding a negative response to the feature (e.g. Devils Corrie < in reference to its numerous hanging glaciers and crevasses; Inept Cove < for its unsuitability as an anchorage; Stygian Cove < for its gloomy aspect caused by steep cliffs on the western side; Useless Island < in contrast to Useful Island; Foul Point < for the off-shore rocks; Gaunt Rocks < for their bleak appearance).

5 Copied—copying the name-form from another place or from another language.

5.1 Locational—using the name of a feature from another place, or celestial body (e.g. Rame Bluff < a locality close to Plymouth, Cornwall; Leith Cove < after Leith, Scotland, the home port of the whaling company of Messrs Salvesen and Co; Firth of Tay < after Firth of Tay, Scotland; North Foreland < North Foreland, Kent; Ablation Col + Ablation Lake + Ablation Point < nearby Ablation Valley; Georgian Cliff < named in association with Uranus Glacier, Uranus being known as The Georgian until about 1850; Haumea Glacier < a dwarf planet situated beyond situated Pluto; Mars Col < planet Mars).

5.2 Linguistic—using the name-form (or its calque) which the feature has in another language (e.g. Cape Well-met < *Vorgebirge der Guten Begegnung* 'Cape of the Good Meeting' to commemorate the reunion at this cape of a relief party under J. G. Andersson with the winter party under N. O. G. Nordenskjöld after 20 months of enforced separation; Scar Hills < named by the Swedish AE in 1903 and named descriptively *Schrammenhügel* 'scratches hills > Scar Hills'; Penca Hill < named *Cerro Penca*, probably descriptively, *penca* 'a fleshy leaf or joint of a plant').

6 Eponymous—using the name of a person or other named entity by using a proper name, title, or eponym substitute as a toponym.

6.1 Human—using the name of a person or of a group of people.

6.1.1 Namer—using the namer's own name as the toponym (e.g. Ferguson Channel < charted and named in 1913–14 by David Ferguson, Scottish geologist who made geological observations in the area; Borge Point < named by Capt. H. Borge in 1913–14 during his survey of Mikkelsen Harbour, Trinity Island; Weddell Islands < named by James Weddell, Master, RN, commanding the sealing brig Jane).

6.1.2 Notable person—using the name, initials, title, or occupational designation, of an eminent person, patron, official, noble, politician, scientist, inventor, composer etc. (e.g. Williamson Bluff < after Rev. William Williamson, English mathematician and lawyer, who made one of the earliest measurements of the surface flow of a glacier, in Switzerland in 1844; Queen Elizabeth Land; Nicol Crags < after William Nicol, Scottish natural philosopher who devised the Nicol prism and the preparation of thin rock sections for microscopy; Beethoven Peninsula; The Princess Royal Range < after HRH Princess Anne; Privateer Point + Corsair Bight < referring to Sir Francis Drake C16 explorer, naval captain and privateer or corsair).

6.1.3 Colleague—using the name or initials of a member of an expedition or survey involved in the discovery or naming of the feature (e.g. Lecointe Island < after Georges Lecointe, Second-in-command and surveyor of Belgian Antarctic Expedition, responsible for the first survey of Gerlache Strait; Leton Point < after Ralph Anthony Lenton, Falkland Islands Dependencies Survey radio operator, Base Leader, Deception Island, 1951–52, Deputy-Leader of the advance party, Shackleton, 1955–56, as station carpenter and radio operator on the trans-polar journey, 1956–58; Rils Nunantak < after Ronald I. Lewis-Smith, British Antarctic Survey plant biologist, first biologist to visit the site and to recognise the unique flora found there. Dr Lewis-Smith's initials, RILS, being well-known in the field of Antarctic botanical papers and publications).

6.1.4 Family member or friend—using the name of a family member or friend (e.g. Charlotte Bay < after the fiancée of Georges Lecointe (Lecointe Island, q.v.); Cape Mabel < after Mrs Mabel Pirie, wife of Dr J. H. Harvey Pirie, expedition medical officer; Phillipa Glacier < after Lady Philippa Scott, wife of Sir Peter Scott, conservationist, wildlife photographer and pioneer of Antarctic wildlife tourism).

6.1.5 Associated person—using the name of a person, or a group associated with the feature as, for example, a founder, builder, owner or local inhabitant, etc. (no examples found in BAG).

6.1.6 Occupational groups—using the name of an occupational group, expedition name, or national identity etc. (e.g. Hydrographers Cove; Doctors Icefall < for the doctors on the 1979 Polish Antarctic Expedition; Geologists Island; Ladies Icefall < for female members of the 1977–78 and 1978–79 expeditions to the nearby Polish Arctowski Station; Rare Range < for the 'Ronne Antarctic Research Expedition' of 1947–48).

6.2   Other animate entity—using the common or proper name of a non-human animate entity (e.g. Spartan Glacier < a dog team, called 'The Spartans', which was used on the first ascent of the glacier; Bills Gulch < a lead sledge dog that died there; Arthur Peak < one of the dogs used by the British Antarctic Survey in the 1980s and 1990s; Lumus Rock < one of the British Graham Land Expedition cats, which wintered in the Antarctic; Picts Peak < the 'Picts' dog-team).

6.3   Non-animate entity—using the proper name of a non-animate entity.

6.3.1 Notable abstract entity—using the name of a notable occasion, entity or concept, such as a battle, a political association, or other abstract category (e.g. Cape Juncal < the naval battle of Juncal, 8–9/02/1827; Mount Quilmes < the battle of Quilmes in 1826, in which the Argentine squadron under Almte G. Brown defeated the Spanish forces).

6.3.2 Named concrete entity—using the name or initials of a vessel, organisation, institution, company, etc., or of a class of a ship, train or plane, wind etc. associated with the feature (e.g. Wolseley Buttress < the 'Wolseley Tool and Motor Car Company' which designed the experimental motor sledges used on the British Antarctic Expedition; Hercules Inlet < the US LC-130 *Hercules* turbo-prop aircraft used extensively on the United States Antarctic Research Program for load carrying and photographic flights; Neptune Range < the P2V-2N *Neptune* aircraft; Mobiloil Inlet < a product of the 'Vacuum Oil Company of Australasia'; Chinook Pass < the *Chinook*, the warm dry wind on the E side of the Rocky Mountains; Shom Rock < for the French Hydrographic Office 'Service Hydrographique et Océanographique de la Marine').

6.3.3 Expedition vessel—using the name of a vessel involved in the 'discovery' or naming of the feature (e.g. Cape Vostok < the Russian Antarctic Expedition sloop *Vostok*; Quest Channel < RN Hydrographic Survey Unit's survey motor boat *Quest*; Discovery Sound < *Discovery*, Discovery Investigations, 1925–39, during the 1927 expedition; Beaufoy Ridge < following survey by FIDS from Signy, 1948–49, named after the cutter *Beaufoy*; Biscoe Wharf < *RRS John Biscoe*, first ice strengthened supply and scientific research vessel of the British Antarctic Survey, 1956–199).

6.4   Literary and mythical entities—using the name of a figure or place from literature or mythology etc. (e.g. Holluschickie Bay < the large number of young seals observed near the mouth of the bay, the 'holluschickie' being the young seals in Rudyard Kipling's story 'The white seal' in *The Jungle Book*; Pelias Bluff < Pelias, in Greek mythology Jason's uncle who deprived him of his kingdom, but was later killed through the agency of Medea; Isengard Bluff < the home of the wizard Saruman in *The Lord of the Rings*).

7   Innovative—introducing a new linguistic form as a toponym.
7.1   Humour—using language play with humorous intent to create a new toponym (e.g. Maranga Island < north-western-most of the Anagram Islands, so named in anagrammatic association with the name of the islands; Bach Quartet < group of four offshore stacks; Boogie Island in association with Woogie Island; Dimaryp Peak < anagram of 'Pyramid', because the peak is very similar to and is frequently misidentified as the nearby The Pyramid; Moot Point < because, from 1909, it had remained a moot point whether access to the plateau above could be gained from this landing place).
7.2   Aptness—using an apposite name, creating a new linguistic form, or importing a word from another language to produce a toponym of pleasing sound, positive connotation or appropriate meaning (e.g. Tickle Channel < the Newfoundland and Labrador usage of 'tickle' referring to a narrow and difficult passage between two islands; Consort Islands + Envoy Rock + Embassy Islands + Courtier Islands + Consul Reef + Consort Islands + Jester Rock < in association with Emperor Island; Mackerel Island + Flounder Island + Trout Island + Salmon Island etc. members of the Fish Islands; Tail Island < for its position grouped with Egg Island, Eagle Island and Beak Island; Tu Rocks < three rocks rising above sea level, were charted incorrectly as two rocks and assonantly named).

4. Results and discussion

4.1   *Geographic features*

The BAT's 5,159 gazetted toponyms belong to 136 different geographic feature classes. Table 2 enumerates the most common of these features.[2]

Antarctica is rich in coastal islands and marine rocks, with these comprising 1,045 (20.3%) of the 5,159 named geographic features in the BAT. Next, we see glaciers and mountains categories which each comprise over 9% of geographic features. Glaciers can be grouped along with mountains in that they have their source on mountains; and if peaks, nunataks,[3] hills and ridges (all elevated features) are added to mountains and glaciers, they comprise 36.5% of all the BAT's named features.

---

[2] Features that number > 1% of the total are only represented and not classified. The BAG has 34 unclassified features; however, it was possible to classify 32 of these after consulting Alberts (1995).

[3] A 'nunatak' (from Inuit *nunataq* 'glacial island') is the summit or ridge of a mountain that protrudes from an ice field or glacier that otherwise covers most of the mountain or ridge.

Table 2. Most Common FEATURE Types.

FEATURE TYPE	Number	Percent
ISLAND(S)	708	13.7
GLACIER	490	9.5
POINT	478	9.3
MOUNTAIN(S)	469	9.1
PEAK	377	7.3
ROCK(S)	337	6.5
NUNATAK	282	5.5
BAY	159	3.1
CAPE	156	3.0
HILL(S)	143	2.8
COVE	138	2.7
RIDGE	122	2.4
PENINSULA	77	1.5
BLUFF	74	1.4
INLET	67	1.3
CLIFF(S)	65	1.3

4.2   *Toponym Types*

Table 3 enumerates the number of place-names per toponym type as outlined in Table 1. In all, 5,159 toponyms were found in the BAG and the latest additions to the BAT gazetteer (APC <https://apc.antarctica.ac.uk/gazetteers/latest-additions-bat/>). As noted above, for 52 (1.0%) no interpretation for their origin could be made. Nevertheless, most of them, 78.8% (approx. 41), appear to be 'Eponymous' (6.1 'Human') given their name forms; but without further evidence as to their origins, they cannot legitimately be included in the final tally of toponyms classified for this feature, which leaves 5,107 classifiable toponyms.

No toponyms of the category 6.1.5 'Associated person' exist in Antarctica because of the continent's 'linguistically pristine' status, with no native or permanent inhabitants.

The most striking statistic is the unusually high proportion of 'Eponymous' toponyms (67.83%). A cursory glance through any other national gazetteer will not show such a high proportion of these toponyms. Similarly, the number of 'Descriptive' toponyms (13.15%) is, in all likelihood, significantly lower than what would normally be encountered in other regions in the world. The numbers of all other BAT toponym types seem to be within the range of what can be normally expected elsewhere.

Table 3. Toponym categories: results.[4]

Toponym type	BAT Toponyms		
	Number of toponyms	Per-centages	Toponyms with extra classific-ations
1 Descriptive	**672**	**13.15**	
1.1 Topographic	556	82.73	3
1.2 Relational	33	4.91	—
1.3 Locational	50	7.44	—
1.4 Functional	33	4.91	2
2 Associative	**206**	**4.03**	
2.1 Environmental	155	75.24	2
2.2 Occupation/Activity	23	11.16	1
2.3 Structure	28	13.59	1
3 Occurrent	**94**	**1.84**	
3.1 Incident	77	81.91	2
3.2 Occasion	17	18.09	—
4 Evaluative	**45**	**0.88**	
4.1 Commendatory	15	33.33	1
4.2 Condemnatory	30	66.66	5
5 Copied	**536**	**10.49**	
5.1 Locational	415	77.43	3
5.2 Linguistic	121	22.57	7
6 Eponymous	**3464**	**67.83**	
6.1 human	3001	86.63	
6.1.1 Namer	*3*	*0.10*	—
6.1.2 Notable person	*1444*	*48.11*	1
6.1.3 Colleague	*1485*	*49.48*	—
6.1.4 Family member or friend	*50*	*1.67*	—
6.1.5 ~~Associated person~~	*—*	*—*	—
6.1.6 Occupational groups	*19*	*6.33*	—
6.2 Other animate entity	19	0.55	—
6.3 Non-animate entity	290	8.37	—

---

[4] The **bolded** percentages aligned to the left of the column indicate the percentage of the total number of toponyms categorised (i.e. 5,107); the percentages aligned in the centre of the column indicate the percentages within the first tier sub-categories of the main toponym categories; those aligned to the right of the column indicate the percentages within the second tier sub-categories.

6.3.1 Notable abstract entity	*4*	*0.01*	—
6.3.2 Named concrete entity	*100*	*34.48*	—
6.3.3 Expedition vessel	*186*	*64.14*	—
6.4 Literary, mythical & biblical entities / figures	154	4.45	—
7 Innovative	**90**	**1.76**	
7.1 Humour	9	10.00	2
7.2 Aptness	81	90.00	6
Total	**5107**		36

As Table 3 shows, named geographic features may have more than one toponym classification attributed to them. This is not a problem given the mutually exclusive nature of the toponym categories, and because, at times, name-givers may have had more than one intention when bestowing a name. This results in a single appellation, or a cluster of toponyms, having more than one intention encapsulated within them. Examples include:

- Cetus Hill, named after the constellation *Cetus* ('The Whale'), in association with similar named features in the area, and in reference to the whale-backed shape of the hill. Therefore the toponym is classified under 5.1 'Locational' and 1.1 'Topographic'.
- Maranga Island, the north-westernmost of the Anagram Islands, so named in anagrammatic association with the name of the islands. The island therefore is classified under 7.2 'Aptness' and 7.1 'Humour'.
- The neighbouring Romulus Glacier and Remus Glacier, named after the twin brothers by whom it is said Rome was founded in 753 BC. The glaciers are therefore classified under 6.4 'Literary figures' and 7.2 'Aptness'.

On occasion, a toponym may have more than two classifications. One such case is Woozle Hill, named after the imaginary animal in A. A. Milne's *Winnie-the-Pooh* which leaves tracks in the snow (in reality made by Pooh and Piglet who are unaware that they are walking in circles). As the hill was extensively used for ice observations, and as it can be approached from any direction, encircling tracks were often seen from its summit. Hence, the toponym may be classified under 2.1 'Environment', 2.2 'Occupation/Activity', and 6.4 'Literary'.

4.3 *Some specific comments on toponym types*
'Descriptive'
As noted, there are fewer 'Descriptive' toponyms in the BAT than would normally be expected in most other jurisdictions on earth. This is partially explained by Alberts (1995: ix):

> The Antarctic continent presents many nomenclature problems. Modern specialized tools were not available to the early explorers primarily responsible for initial activity in Antarctic naming, and the nature of Antarctica put great obstacles in their way. Prior to the advent of modern aerial photography and satellite imagery, the great size of the continent and its relative inaccessibility made it difficult to develop accurate concepts of the whole and the relationship of its parts. It has not been easy for explorers to describe and locate features unmistakably or to identify a feature reported previously by someone else. Many of the natural features in Antarctica are markedly similar in appearance; moreover, the appearance of a given feature may vary with the angle or the time of view. The extraordinary hazards of travel and frequent poor visibility have restricted observation. Practically all of the interior and much of the coast are masked with a cover of snow and ice through which protrude only the upper parts of mountains or mountain ranges. Although many glaciers are perfectly distinct, except perhaps at their sources, the relationship of ice masses to one another is commonly not obvious.

Alberts's analysis seems reasonable. That many of Antarctica's natural features are very similar in appearance (not to mention the other impediments to identifying them) may help to explain the relative dearth of 'Descriptive' names. Indeed, as many of the narratives that accompany toponyms in the BAG explain, a very large number of features were initially incorrectly identified.

The distribution of toponym types 1.1 'Topographic', 1.2 'Relative', 1.3 'Locational', and 1.4 'Functional' seems to be within the relative proportions found in jurisdictions such as Australia and New Zealand.

'Associative'
The 4% 'Associative' toponyms also seems reasonable and appears to be within the bounds of expectation, as do the proportions of its sub-categories. It is not surprising that three-quarters of these toponyms are 2.1

'Environmental', i.e. denoting something in the local environment or context which is seen with or associated with the feature. Given the nature of the climate and the environment, it is unsurprising that the sub-categories 2.2 'Occupation/Activity' and 2.3 'Structure' are few in number.

'Occurrent'
'Occurrent' toponyms are never plentiful in any region's nomenclature; therefore, the less than 2% of such toponyms in the BAT seems realistic. Incidents comprise more than 80% of this category, again, not surprising given the often hostile environment of the Antarctic.

One notable and not immediately obvious example is Brandy Bay, which was named following a discussion as to whether brandy should be used as treatment for a dog bite. This example shows that the background story to the bestowal of a toponym needs to be identified before a toponym category can be applied. Merely looking at the toponym's form will often lead to an incorrect labelling. It is only knowing the background to the naming of Brandy Bay that an understanding of the names Rum Cove and Whiskey Bay can be achieved. These were named in association with Brandy Bay, thus creating the theme of alcoholic spirits names along this stretch of coastline.

'Evaluative'
'Evaluative' toponyms tend to be rare in any jurisdiction, as they are in the BAT. However, its harsh environment may explain why 4.2 'Condemnatory' names are double the number of 4.1 'Commendatory' names.

'Copied'
Copied (or 'transferred') toponyms are reasonably common in newly 'discovered' regions, with explorers and settlers often intending to commemorate places from the homeland. This trend is not really echoed in Antarctica. Those that have been copied from the homeland mostly originate from Bulgarian expeditioners.

Interestingly, most of the 5.1 'Locational' copied toponyms in the BAT either come from neighbouring features or from much more distant celestial bodies. Given the Antarctic could be considered analogous to the 'New World', Africa, Australasia etc., and hence ripe for copying toponyms from the homeland, it is somewhat surprising so few toponyms from Britain appear in the BAT. However, often a location or region in a newly 'discovered' land reminded explorers and colonisers of home or some other region of the world, and so the name was copied. The BAT's

small number of such toponyms can perhaps be explained by the region's disparate topography contrasting with most other places known to explorers and expeditioners; hence Antarctica did not afford sufficient incentive to copy toponyms from elsewhere.

It must be noted that the example toponyms provided in Table 1 under sub-category 5.2 'Linguistic' have been classified thus even though in their original languages they might be classified under a different category. The reason for this classification is that such names are viewed from the perspective of the current BAT namescape (and what is found in the BAG). Blair and Tent (2020) consider these toponyms as 'imported' or 'introduced' into the BAT nomenclature by the APC. In other words, Blair and Tent would categorise the toponyms in the BAG (or any other contemporary gazetteer for that matter), according to the onomastic mechanism adopted by those who entered the toponyms in the BAG.

'Eponymous'

These toponyms stand out from all other toponym types in the BAT, comprising more than two-thirds (67.83%) of the Territory's place-names. The 6.1 'Human' toponyms are the most common (n = 3,001: 86.63%), with 6.1.3 'Colleague' comprising the majority of these (n = 1,485: 49.48%), closely followed by features named after a 'Notable person', 6.1.2 (n = 1,444: 48.11%).

Although Alberts (1995) looks at the toponyms of Antarctica from the perspective of the United States Board on Geographic Names (BGN), his reasoning for the application of names of individuals to geographic features may also be applied to such names in the BAT:

> Because Antarctica has no history of permanent settlement, and because the continent has been unveiled through the efforts of explorers, scientists, and others, the Board has found it practical to apply the names of such persons to Antarctic natural features. The requirements for naming features, coupled with the availability of names of deserving people, further justify this practice. It does not, however, preclude the use of other than personal names. (Alberts 1995: xii)

In addition, the APC's guidelines for the bestowal of personal names (<https://apc.antarctica.ac.uk/proposals/proposal-guidelines/>) upon features within the BAT states the following:

With rare exceptions, forenames and the use of more than one part of a hyphenated or dual, unhyphenated surname are unlikely to be approved, but will be reviewed on a case by case basis. The use of titles or the names of partners or pets is similarly not considered suitable. The APC will consider the naming of features after scientists and other personnel, who have contributed significantly to scientific understanding and/or life in the Antarctic, or who have made a major contribution to Antarctic matters. It will also consider the naming of features after other, significant individuals, including those involved in government and policy-making.

It is encouraging to see that eponymous naming after expedition personnel was very egalitarian, with features being named equally after expedition leaders, ships' captains, medical officers, scientists at one end of the professional hierarchy, and cooks, mechanics and other tradespeople at the other. Nonetheless, it is worth noting that the APC Guidelines are not always strictly adhered to, for instance, various geographic features have been named after a 'partner' (assuming it means 'spouse'). Examples include:

- Eland Mountains. 'Surveyed by FIDS-RARE in 1947–48; named after Lady Clifford, née Ivy Dorothy Eland (d. 1952), wife of Sir (Geoffrey) Miles Clifford (1897–1986), Governor and Commander-in-Chief of the Falkland Islands and Dependencies (1946–54), Vice-President, RGS (1956–62), Chairman, British National Committee on Antarctic Research (1964–78).'
- Philippa Glacier. 'Named after Lady Philippa Scott (1919–2010), conservationist, wildlife photographer and pioneer of Antarctic wildlife tourism. Wife of Sir Peter Scott (son of Robert Falcon Scott, Antarctic explorer).'

If the names of partners are to be excluded from the naming of features, then it is to be expected that the names of an expeditioner's, scientist's, or eminent person's children should also be rejected. However, this seems not to be the case, because the individual islands that comprise the Debenham Islands were named after Prof. Frank Debenham's six children during the British Graham Land Expedition (1934–37). Debenham (1883–1965) was a surveyor on the British Antarctic Expedition (1910–13), founder and first Director of the Scott Polar Research Institute (1925–46), Professor of Geography at Cambridge University (1930–49), and a member of British

Graham Land Expedition Advisory Committee. In all fairness, though, these names were bestowed prior to the establishment of the APC in 1945.

Although the dogs used by BAS in their dogsled teams are not 'pets', they could loosely be counted as such, given that certain features have been named after individually named dogs:

- Arthur Peak. 'Named after one of the dogs used by BAS in the 1980s and 1990s.'
- Biff Peak. 'Named after one of the dogs in the 'Admirals' team which was used by BAS in the 1980s and 1990s.'

Since these features were named in the 1980s and 1990s, the APC Guidelines seem to have been ignored, but this is quite understandable in view of the vital role these dogs played in the exploration of Antarctica.

'Innovative'
This category of toponym is rarely employed in any region or jurisdiction, including the BAT, which only has 1.76% of its toponyms in this category. Ninety percent of these come under the category 7.2 'Aptness', where neighbouring features were often named after a theme, e.g. Alphabet Channel which lies between Omega Island and Zeta Island. However, it is perhaps the toponyms with a humorous name that are of most interest in this category, e.g. Blow-me-down Bluff because of the windiness of the location (see Table 1 for further examples). This tongue-in-cheek naming reflects the good-humoured larrikin nature of Antarctic personnel, an obvious asset in such a harsh and isolated environment.

4.4   *Some general comments on BAT place-naming*
It is common practice in many parts of the world to name a series of features, suburbs or streets according to a theme. This can be an aid to navigation. The Australian capital Canberra's suburbs and street names are generally named according to themes: pioneers, legislators, governors, Australian Indigenous words, explorers, defence personnel, etc. Street-names in many of the world's cities are also often clustered around a theme. In the Sydney suburb of North Epping, for example, street-names such as Durham, Norfolk, Devon, Bedford, York, Dorsett, Oxford, Sussex, Gloucester, Chester, Surrey, Derby, and Essex are found. Antarctica is no different, with many of the BAT's 'Eponymous' place-names being grouped according to a theme, such as composers, scientists, ship captains etc. Features named after celestial bodies are another common example of such themed names.

Many of the BAT toponyms were bestowed before the territory became British, with many of its names being conferred by French, American, Argentinian, Chilean, Russian, Norwegian, Spanish, Bulgarian, etc. nationals. It therefore cannot be claimed the BAT's toponyms reflect any overall British toponymic inclinations or fashions. In addition, many features were given a variety of names by successive expeditions from different nations. A fitting example is:

Bongrain Point
- 1908–10, *Cap Lainez* by French Antarctic Expedition, after M.L. Lainez; 1936, surveyed by British Graham Land Expedition (1934–37) who misapplied the FAE name to the north entrance point of the bay, now Lainez Point.
- 1947, *Punta Yungay* by Chilean Antarctic Expedition, after the Chilean town.
- 1948, resurveyed by Falkland Islands Dependencies Survey (1943–62) named *Cape Bongrain* after M. Bongrain.
- 1957, resurveyed by FIDS, renamed *Bongrain Point*; *Cabo Bongrain* (Chile).
- 1978, *Cabo Barracas*, by Argentine Antarctic Expedition after the river boat of the Argentine naval squadron, c.1810; 1991, *Punta Bongrain* (Argentina).

The renaming of features was often also due to inaccurate charting or identification, for example, Midas Island was first sighted by the Belgian Antarctic Expedition under Gerlache in 1898, and described as an island with two summits 'like the ears of an ass'. The island was then sketched by the British Antarctic Expedition in 1922, but incorrectly labelled *Cape Spring* or *Cape W. Spring*. In 1960 the APC gazetted the name Midas Island which was derived from BAE's original description. Midas was King of Phrygia, and was represented in Greek satyric drama with the ears of an ass.

Sometimes a current name is the result of a transcription or translation error. Three examples serve to illustrate this:

- Mensa Bay, from *Mesa Bay* 'Table Bay'
- Cove Rock, charted in 1937 and named descriptively *Cone Rock*
- Gull Rock, roughly charted by the Argentine Antarctic Expedition (1946–47), who named it *Islote Gaviotín* 'Tern Islet'; following survey by FIDS (1958–61) it was named Gull Rock, in error from the Spanish word *gaviota* 'gull'.

4.5 *A comparison of BAT and AAT place-naming*

Tent (2021) analysed the toponyms of the Australian Antarctic Territory (AAT). Table 4 shows that naming patterns of the two Territories are, perhaps unsurprisingly, very similar.

Table 4. A Comparison of the BAT and AAT Toponym Types.

Toponym type	BAT Percentage	AAT Percentage
1 Descriptive	13.15	9.7
2 Associative	4.01	4.0
3 Occurrent	1.84	2.2
4 Evaluative	0.88	0.66
5 Copied	10.5	14.9
6 Eponymous	67.84	67.8
7 Innovative	1.76	0.77
Total number of toponyms	5107	2868

5. **Envoi**

The namescape of the BAT reveals that it is quite unlike that of any other region in the world; much like the Australian Antarctic Territory, it has far more 'Eponymous' toponyms and far fewer 'Descriptive' toponyms.

Toponymy is a sub-branch of onomastics, which itself is a sub-branch of linguistics, the main objective of which is to disclose and describe patterns of human language behaviour. Language is, after all, purely patterned behaviour, and it is precisely the existence of these patterns (or inherent rules) that facilitate the learning of a language as well as the generation and comprehension of novel utterances and texts. Place-names are simply another manifestation of language behaviour, and hence, one of the aims in studying place-names is the exposition of such patterns in their formation and their labelling of the landscape.

As is often the case, humans nonetheless do not always act in predictable or systematic ways, and this also applies to linguistic performance and the act of place-naming. This occasionally results in a

lack of a pattern, or at least a lack of a discernible one. It is therefore essential that the linguist or toponymist does not succumb to apophenia (i.e. the tendency to mistakenly perceive patterns in, or connections and meaning between unrelated things). Fortunately, the BAT reveals a convincing and explicit naming pattern, which I have attempted to sketch above.

Jan Tent
jan.tent@anu.edu.au

References

Alberts, Fred G., ed. (1995), *Geographic Names of the Antarctic*, 2nd edn (Arlington, VA: National Science Foundation) <https://pubs.er.usgs.gov/publication/ 70039167>

Blair, David, and Jan Tent (2020), *Toponym Types: A Revised Typology of Placenaming*. ANPS Technical Paper No. 5 (South Turramurra: Placenames Australia, Inc.) <http://www.anps.org.au/upload/ ANPSTechPaper5.pdf>

Government of the British Antarctic Territory <https://britishantarcticterritory.org.uk> (accessed 28/06/2021)

Locke, John (1690), *An Essay Concerning Humane Understanding* (London: Thomas Basset)

Nash, Joshua (2011), 'Insular toponymies: pristine place-naming on Norfolk Island, South Pacific and Dudley Peninsula, Kangaroo Island, South Australia' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Adelaide)

Ross, Alan S. C. (1958), 'Notes on some "pristine" place-names of Pitcairn Island', in *Fifth International Congress of Toponymy and Anthroponymy: Proceedings and Transactions. Acta Salmanticensia: Filosofia y Letras, XI: 1–2*, ed. M. Cortés, A. G. Blanco and A. Tovar (Salamanca: Acta Salmanticensia), 333–37

Stewart, George R. (1954), 'A classification of place names', *Names* 2, 1–13

Tent, Jan (2021), *A Namescape of the Australian Antarctic Territory*, ANPS Occasional Paper No. 11 (South Turramurra: Placenames Australia) <www.anps.org.au/ upload/ANPSOccasionalPaper11.pdf>