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Literary Place Names of Skiathos. Georeferencing the Short Stories of Alexandros Papadiamantis

Keywords: landmarks; linguistic descriptions; local dialect; literature; cultural identity; cartographic documentation

Summary: Papadiamantis is a famous author providing detailed descriptions of his homeland in order to “carry” the reader to the landscapes of his short stories. Both the literary expressions that are based on the local dialect of Skiathos and the place names (toponyms) which refer to evident landmarks reflect the cultural identity of this small, yet significant island (Elytis Od., 1996). This work aims at the identification of the geographical context of texts in the short stories of Alexandros Papadiamantis and the main objectives during this attempt are: a) the preparation of data in order to georeference the short stories, b) the cartographic representation of the place names on a web map and c) the attribution of cartographic features with references to the short stories. It is expected that the results of this effort will facilitate the documentation and the promotion of the cultural heritage of Skiathos and moreover will be used as an initial reference for the combination of the environmental, social or historical aspects at the study of Papadiamantis’ work.

Introduction

Alexandros Papadiamantis is the author of an extended literary work that includes stories, poems, religious articles, letters, translations and other scripts that document many aspects of his era. An important part of those writings refers to the island and the people of Skiathos. This is done either directly by providing the exact landmarks and persons, or indirectly by using detailed descriptions for characteristic landscapes of the island and typical activities of its inhabitants. In both cases Papadiamantis’s literature is becoming a medium that transforms the reader into an external observer of Skiathos’s landscapes and its community. Additionally, the author is using the dialect of his homeland and the local place names. This is a supplementary level of information for the reader who henceforth is provided with a finest feature (idiom) of the island apart from the more evident ones (such as natural or cultural landmarks). This combination of facts for the landscapes, people’s activities and the local culture of Skiathos are documenting a wide range of geographic properties, which are turning the short stories of the famous author into valuable guides and the readers into prospective explorers. The place names that are mentioned at the short stories of Alexandros Papadiamantis are potential locations for referencing the literary space to real features and materials on the ground. Ground truth is the term used in various fields to refer to the absolute truth of something. More specifically, ground truth may refer to a process in which a data set is compared to what is there in reality (at the present time) in order to verify the contents of the data. In the context of Geographic Information Systems the “ground truth” is the actual location on earth (Pickles, 1995).

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Scholars have found that toponyms provide valuable insight into the historical geography of a particular region. In 1954 F. M. Powicke spoke of place name study that "uses, enriches and tests the discoveries of archaeology and history and the rules of the philologists". Toponyms not only illustrate ethnic settlement patterns, but they can also help identify discrete periods of immigration (Kaups, 1966; Kharusi and Salman, 2011; McDavid, 1958). Toponymists are responsible for the active preservation of their region’s culture through its toponymy. They typically ensure the ongoing development of a geographical names database and associated publications, for recording and disseminating authoritative hard-copy and digital toponymic data. This data may be disseminated in a wide variety of formats, including hard-copy topographic maps as well as digital formats such as geographic information systems and Google Maps (Wikipedia contributors, 2015). Georeferencing of texts, that is, the identification of the geographical context of texts is becoming popular in the web due to the high demand for geographical information (Sanderson and Kohler, 2004; Gouvêa et al, 2008).

Cultural Association “Skiathos” is a collective effort towards the preservation and the promotion of the island’s identity. Its members are running several projects focusing on environmental, cultural and social issues. In this project the maintenance and the renovation of several monuments of Skiathos as cultural landmarks is attempted (Cultural Association “Skiathos”, 2014). Since 2012 the members of Cultural Association “Skiathos” have initiated a project for the marking of several locations with metallic plates indicating their place names. The purpose of this marking is to preserve the traditional toponyms which are still in use by the local community. As a result 46 marking plates have been placed for 38 place names (Cultural Association “Skiathos”, 2012). All the marking plates are hand made and their decoration was based on patterns from the local textile art (Figure 1). Those patterns have been retrieved from the study of Rigas for “Skiathos’ Popular Culture” (1970). Many of those marked places are mentioned in the short stories of Papadiamantis and a preliminary objective was to set up marking plates next to each location in order to demonstrate their original place name, as part of the island’s cultural heritage. The cartographic representation of these locations came as a consequence for their documentation, which was then accompanied by their photographs. The result was an initial interactive map on the website of Cultural Association “Skiathos” (2013) combining the positions and the photographs of about 50 marking plates (most of them within the limits of Skiathos town). The idea of enriching the content of that map with the rest of the place names and moreover of relating those to Papadiamantis’s short stories followed next.
The aim of this work is to identify the geographical context of texts in the short stories of Alexandros Papadiamantis. The main objectives during this attempt are: a) the preparation of data in order to georeference the short stories, b) the cartographic representation of the place names on a web map and c) the attribution of cartographic features with references to the short stories.

The Dataset

Triantafyllopoulos presents 246 place names for the island of Skiathos in his special edition for Papadiamantis titled “All” (Papadiamantis, 1998). This edition consists of five volumes including the corpus of the famous author. All the place names are listed at a separate annex in volume 5 (Papadiamantis, 1998: 504). They are presented in alphabetical order, including all the variations of the place names and the references to the relevant volumes and pages where one may further read.

The geographic region in which each place name exists is defined with an abbreviation (“Σκ.” for Skiathos), facilitating a primary spatial filtering. A supplementary annex is provided in the study of Triantafyllopoulos (Papadiamantis, 1998: 516) that lists the titles of the short stories with the volume and the pages where each one is printed. The combination of the two annexes allows to name which place name is present in which short story and the exact page of reference for each one.
Database Preparation

Initially the annexes have been used to create two tables, one for the place names (Table 1) and another for the short stories (Table 2). Table 1 has three columns: i) the place names (ANNEX_PLACENAME, as a text field), ii) the alternative place names (ALT_PLACENAME, as a text field) and iii) the references (in line, separated by commas) to the volumes and pages (ANNEX_VOL_PAGE, as a text field) at which each record appears.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ANNEX_PLACENAME</th>
<th>ALT_PLACENAME</th>
<th>ANNEX_VOL_PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Αγγαλιανού, της – το ρέμα, Παναγίας</td>
<td>Ευαγγελισμού Κοινόβιον</td>
<td>3:503, 4:272, 4:419, 4:420, 4:528, 5,208</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Αναγκιά, κανόνι της, του Κάστρου</td>
<td>Κανόνι</td>
<td>3:656, 4:467-8, 4:470, 4:472-4, 4:494, 4:504</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Κανόνι της Αναγκιάς</td>
<td>Αναγκιά</td>
<td>3:656, 3:658, 4:467</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Abstract from the table for the place names. The 3 records demonstrate the content’s structure (ANNEX_PLACENAME – for the referred place name, ALT_PLACENAMES – for the alternative names, ANNEX_VOL_PAGE – for the volume and pages).

The rows of this table contain the 246 place names for the island of Skiathos (including all the variations of each one as identical records) and operate as a digital version of the annex of the place names. Table 2 includes four columns: i) the title of each short story (STORY, as a text field), ii) the volume (VOL, as a numeric field) of “Papadiamantis’ All” (1998) where the short story is printed and iii) two more columns (PAGE_FROM and PAGE_TO, as numeric fields) for the first and the last page of each short story. This is more like a table of contents for the short stories that are related to Skiathos and has been used in order to check and correct the referrals from the annex of the place names to the annex of short stories. In this table 4 poems, 2 religious articles and 2 obituaries that are related with the place names of the island have also been included. Table 2 accommodates 113 records.

The content of both tables has been filed in a MySQL database on a web server of Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. This database is used for the management of the content of personal web pages using Wordpress (2003). Each place name (that is, record of the field ANNEX_PLACENAME in Table 1), is the title of each new post. Meanwhile, the short stories (field STORY) from Table 2 have been introduced as post tags. As a result, every place name has been stored as a post and every title of short story as a tag. One or more tags (title of short story) are assigned to each post (place name), that is short stories (tags) are related to several place names (posts) and vice versa.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STORY</th>
<th>VOL</th>
<th>PAGE_FROM</th>
<th>PAGE_TO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Σημαδιακός, ο</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Έρωτας στα χιόνια</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Φόνισσα, η</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>417</td>
<td>520</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Abstract from the table for the short stories demonstrating the content’s structure (STORY – for the title of the short story, VOL – for the volume, PAGE_FROM – for the first page of story, PAGE_TO – for the last page of story).

In order to relate all alternative place names to unique locations, it was decided to add a new field (TITLE_NAME, as a text field) in Table 1. This field assigns a unique name to each location.
Taking into account that some places have multiple names, there remain 202 unique locations for Skiathos. This results in an index of 202 titles for the locations of the place names. Thus place names that refer to the same location share a common title. Those titles are used to name the locations on the map.

**Georeferencing**

To georeference means to associate something with locations in physical space. The term is commonly used in the geographic information systems field to describe the process of associating the content of a map with spatial locations. Georeferencing may be applied to any kind of object or structure that can be related to a geographical location, such as points of interest (Hackeloër et al, 2014). In order to georeference the locations of the place names, the Geo Mashup plugin has been used (Kuhn, 2005). A location is assigned to each post and the relevant title is given to each location. The new table which is then created contains, i) one field for a unique key (ID, as numeric field), ii) a second for a title (SAVED_NAME, as a text field with identical values to the one given in the field TITLE_NAME of Table 1) and iii) a pair of fields for the geographic coordinates (LAT and LNG, as numeric fields) for each location (Table 3). Each record of Table 3 may be assigned to more than one place names. Table 1 and Table 3 are joined with the fields TITLE_NAME and SAVED_NAME respectively. As some of the place names have not been located, Table 3 has 152 records.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ID</th>
<th>SAVED_NAME</th>
<th>LAT</th>
<th>LNG</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>Βαγγελίστρα</td>
<td>39.1903305</td>
<td>23.4804764</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53</td>
<td>Κάστρο</td>
<td>39.2096138</td>
<td>23.4604034</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57</td>
<td>Κεχριά</td>
<td>39.1867332</td>
<td>23.4548664</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3. The records of the three mostly used place names demonstrate the content’s structure (ID – as a key field, SAVED_NAME – as a title for the location, LAT and LNG – for the latitude and the longitude in decimal degrees).

**Cartographic Representation**

The records of Table 3 are plotted on a web map using the Google API (2014). The Geo Mashup plugin is used to plot all posts with locations on a web map. The available providers of the base map to be used are Google, Open layers or Leaflet. The settings that are being used for the cartographic representations of the place names are as follows: Map provider [Google v3]; Map Width [640 px]; Map Height [480 px]; Map Control [Pan/Zoom]; Default Map Type [Roadmap]; Default Zoom Level [auto]; Cluster Markers Until Zoom Level [15].

**Web map**

The map is displayed including the shortcode [geo_mashup_map] in the source code of a web page (GeoMUp, 2015). Pan and Zoom functions are available through the web page, allowing the user to navigate on the map (Figure 2). An overview map is available at the lower right area of the map, which may be closed. The option of selecting as base map between Map and Satellite is provided by the buttons at the upper right area of the map. Locations are displayed as pinpoints. Those that are assigned to more than one place names are displayed with a different symbol. For smaller scales (lower zoom levels) clustering of the pinpoints is applied. Zoom in or out affects...
the clustering of the pinpoints on the map. A spatial filter is applied on the maps’ content, based on the selected view. Rolling over the pinpoints the name of each location (SAVED_NAME from Table 3) is displayed. By using the shortcode [geo_mashup_visible_posts_list] the web page displays a list of the place names within the selected view of the map.

![Image](image_url)

Figure 2. The web page with the map of place names (GeoMUp, 2015). Locations are displayed with red pinpoints. The number in the red circles indicates the number of clustered locations.

Next to the map is an overview of the titles of the short stories and an index of the four volumes of "Papadiamantis’s All". With the selection of a title, a list of the related place names for this short story is displayed. Alternatively, the user may see the number of place names per volume. With the selection of the volume, a list of the containing place names is displayed, while the clicking of the relative map link results in displaying on the map just the place names from the selected volume. Additionally, one may use the search tool of the web page to look for keywords for the place names or the short stories.

**Attribution of Cartographic Features**

Table 1 has been further processed prior the configuration of each post’s content (that is, data to be displayed for each place name). One more field (KIND) has been added, describing the kind of landmark (if any) that each place name refers to (e.g. beach, church, fountain, island, mountain etc). Sequentially, the content of each post has been produced by the combination of the following four fields: i) [KIND], ii) [TITLE_NAME], that is, a common name for all place names that refer to the same location, iii) [ALT_PLACENAME] (if any) and iv) [ANNEX_VOL_PAGE]. For the sake of homogeneity, a common format has been applied to all posts.
Referrals

The shortcode [geo_mashup_show_on_map_link] has been included in the source code of each post in order to target the locations of the place names on the map. This link becomes visible only for such posts (that is, place names) with a geographic reference (that is, with a defined location). Over the map, when a user clicks on a displayed location (pinpoint), all related place names are presented as a list in a pop-up balloon (Figure 3). Each place name is accompanied by a list of referrals to the related volumes and pages.

From the pop-up balloon the user may select a place name and read the content of the relative post. When one or more geo-tagged photographs or files are included in the post, they are displayed on the map as well.

Conclusions

Most of the plates that have already been placed (26) are within the limits of the main village and the rest (12) mark characteristic locations at more remote areas of the island. Almost one third (15) of those plates mark streams, currents, old drills and springs. About half (20) of the names on the marking plates are mentioned in Papadiamantis’s work. As a consequence, just few of the literary place names have been marked with plates (corresponding to the 10% of the locations). Although it could be an objective for the members or the authorities of the local community, such a perspective is beyond the limits of a voluntary based project. On the other hand, setting the marking plates has encouraged or reinforced the wish for the preservation and the promotions of some referred cultural landmarks. Since 2013, the surrounding area of six fountains has been cleaned up while two of them have been restored. Additionally, two
traditionally paved tracks, “Μεγάλο Καλντερίμι” (Cultural Association “Skiathos”, 2013a) within the borders of the village and another one (Cultural Association “Skiathos”, 2013b) which has been used to connect the old village “Κάστρο” with the port of Skiathos have been proposed to be protected as monuments of the local cultural heritage. The parts of the paved tracks that had been mapped, prior to the application for their protection, have also been included, as linear features, in the map “Toponyms of Skiathos” (Google Maps, 2013). Those parts pass through the locations “Πρού”, “Τρεις Σταυροί”, “Κρύο Πηγάδι” and “Μαμούς”, which are all mentioned as place names in Papadiamantitis’s work. An achievement of the Cultural Association “Skiathos” towards the preservation and the promotion of the local cultural heritage was the registration of the cemetery “Μνημούρια” in the Association of Significant Cemeteries in Europe (ASCE, 2014), after its characterization as a historical place (Ministry of Culture, 2013). A major clean up action has followed at the surrounding area and the collaboration with the General Directorate for Restorations of the Ministry of Culture has been engaged to route the conservation of the cemetery (Cultural Association “Skiathos”, 2015).

According to Clough et al (2004) the process of georeferencing text content automatically raises some ambiguities described as Reference Ambiguity (the same location may be referenced by many names), Referent Ambiguity (the same name may be used to reference different locations) and Referent Class Ambiguity (the same name may be used to reference different kinds of locations). Triantafyllopoulos resolves such ambiguities in his edition (Papadiamantitis, 1998). Although there are some cases where more than one place names are assigned to specific locations (e.g. “Βαγγέλιστρα”, “Κοινόβιον του Ευαγγελισμού” and “Μοναστήρι” refer to the same location, that is, the Monastery of Conception), this reference ambiguity is resolved by mentioning alongside the alternative place names. Another issue is that, occasionally, a name is used for more than one location (e.g. there are five churches of St John around the island). In such cases, either the index refers directly to the location of each place name (e.g. “στον Ασέληνο”, “στο Κάστρο”, “στον Πύργο”) or the relevant aggressive determination from the texts of Papadiamantitis is included (e.g. “ο Θεολόγος”, “ο Κρυφός”, “ο Πρόδρομος”). There are also a few place names that refer simultaneously to different kinds of locations (e.g. “Αλ-Λιας” refers to the church of St Elias, the area and the fountain by the church). The editor eliminates this Referent Class Ambiguity by naming in the index all kinds of location for each place name.

Several place names are mentioned in a single short story (an average of about 7 per story) while many of them are repetitively presented in various short stories. Murderess - “η Φόνισσα” (Papadiamantitis, 1983) introduces to the reader 70 place names, while “Βαρδιάνος στα Σπόρκα” 57 ones. Four more stories (“Στο Χριστό στο Κάστρο”, “Ρόδιν’ Ακρογιάλια”, “Στην Αγί-Αναστασά” και “Μαύρα Κούτσουρα”) present about 30 place names each. Counting the number of pages for each short story, it is calculated an average ratio of about 2 place names for each 3 pages of short stories. The place name that dominates in the short stories of Papadiamantitis is “Κάστρο” - Castle (old village) which is mentioned 24 times. A special mention (16 more times) is made of the main church of Christ - “Χριστός στο Κάστρο” within the borders of the old village. The second most frequently mentioned place name (22 times) is another church, “Κεχριά, dedicated to Virgin Mary. The monastery of “Ευαγγελισμού” is referred 18 times (including all the variations of location’s name). That is, the above three locations occupy about one third of the total number of references. For the remaining place names, the majority of them (about 40%) has just one reference, several ones (about 20%) are met twice while few of them (about 10%) three times.
The georeferencing of the place names has resulted in 152 known locations, meaning that 50 more locations has yet to be defined in order to complete their mapping. Almost half of them (24) have not been recognized (as they refer to unknown locations), while 1 place name ("Μιτζέλα") is probably a reference to a village at the nearby peninsula of Pelion (mainland). For the remaining 25 place names several kinds of ambiguities do not allow the assignment of a certain location. All above issues are expected to be resolved after a careful reading of the short stories focusing on cues for the positioning of the relevant place names.

The organization of the data set has been done in order to provide the relative information through a web page. Thus Table 1 and Table 2 perform as online indexes, taking advantage of the tools for the management of web content and the presentation of data as posts and tags. As a consequence, visitors of the web page may contribute by proposing supplementary data for each place name by using the optional function for the submission of comments on published posts. An extract of Table 3 has been incorporated in the initially published Google Map "Toponyms of Skiathos" (2013) as an additional layer and henceforth the locations of the place names are presented on the web page of Cultural Association “Skiathos” (2013) as well. Those with a special interest in Papadiamantis’s work may access the published Google Map which is expected to be used as an evaluation tool for the ground truthing of all place names. In conjunction, an ongoing project of the Cultural Association “Skiathos” is the attachment of photos as an additional attribute for each location. Photographic or video material from the past is expected for the documentation and the in-vitro presentation of the place names. The published Google Map allows the editing of the displayed positions and their attributes (for authorized users). The members of the local community are encouraged to participate in the improvement of the map and an open call for their contribution is displayed on the maps’ web page (GeoMUp, 2015).

Acknowledgements

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References


