

Toponymy and nissology: an approach to defining the Balearic Islands' geographical and cultural character

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ABSTRACT: The cultural identity of each of the larger islands that make up the Balearic archipelago is shown through the local geographical terminology and toponymy, which are results of the successive overlapping of languages and cultures brought to the islands by various peoples throughout history. By classifying and analyzing the toponymy and geographical terminology of the Balearic Islands, unique particularities can be found. There are differences between each of the islands, as well as with non-island territory, as a result of centuries of isolation. This same isolation has also led to the preservation of terminology and other linguistic aspects, and has created an endemic culture. The results of the records of terminology that contribute to the geographical and cultural characterization of the Balearic Islands are presented along with some keys to understanding the islands' idiosyncrasies.

<https://doi.org/10.24043/isj.15>

Keywords: Balearic Islands, cultural identity, ethnography, geographical terminology, nissology, toponymy

Nissology, geography, and toponymy

Despite the course of action begun by Moles (1982) and the opinion of McCall (1996) that the new millennium would be the one of island sciences, to Espínola & Cravidao (2014) who highlighted the contribution of geography to their expertise, nissology¹, or islandology, undoubtedly has a promising future. This is true not only because the world is full of islands (Baldacchino, 2006), but because of the valuable role that they play when considering any of the three lines of research suggested by King (2010). As geographers, we are convinced that an interdisciplinary approach must be taken to address island-based topics, and in line with the criteria proposed by Bonnemaïson (1990-1991) and the terminology by Depraetere (1990-1991), we value the contributions made by other branches of science, like economics, and especially, sociology, anthropology, and psychology. Very related to these last three, we believe that geographical surveying can be of great help in correctly understanding island phenomena, just as it is when it comes to understanding the mechanisms behind toponymy. It should be noted that, in this respect, the information that can be gathered from the name of a place can be analyzed from various perspectives: from its meaning,

¹ Of Greek origin: *nesos*, νησί (Vieira, 2010).

which can be clear or obscured (Radding & Western, 2010), to its physical state, or both, but which often do not coincide with one another. This inconsistency itself can tell us something about subjective perceptions, which could be the subject for studies pertaining to some of the aforementioned sciences. Personal perceptions of reality perfectly couple with toponymy, as the names that are tied to places are the result of either individual or collective perceptions. Thus, to the intrinsic perception associated with place names, we must also consider the perception of islanders with respect to their reality of living on an island, which affects multiple aspects of toponymy, including the obvious geographic and economic ones, but also cultural, sociological, anthropological, and linguistic aspects. Thus, Nash (2015) rightly proposes the concept of toponymic ethnography, where cultural and ecological contexts get entangled with the study of the toponymy of the islands and the relationship between names, and the characterization of the landscape becomes a topic of interest for future research. In fact, this has been addressed in a study of the island of Minorca (Ordinas & Binimelis, 2013).

Baleares: the islands and their microcosms

The Balearic Islands, and their isolation, have created a phenomenon that goes beyond just their geographical state, and is found in other scientifically relevant aspects. The important contributions made by naturalists on their exploratory journeys must not be forgotten. They travelled to remote and exotic islands, where they discovered new and endemic species that were uniquely conserved or had distinctly evolved due to their isolation, and put islands on the forefront of natural sciences (King, 1993). However, the nissological study of human behavior and island idiosyncrasies have not been given the same level recognition, comparatively. This is probably due to the complex nature of such lines of research. But islanders are, to greater or lesser extents, conscious of the particular characteristics and differences between their cultures compared to those of other islands, and especially with mainland cultures. Although it might be cliché (Guy de Forestier, 1995), some traces of the island character could be attributed to the indigenous inhabitants of the Balearic Islands who were: reserved, individualistic, socially introverted, and initially suspicious of non-islanders and everything coming from outside of the island in general. The historical threat of invasion by outsiders along with the constant danger of attacks by pirates and corsairs² was probably woven into the DNA that made up the attitudes of islanders.

The small size of the islands, especially compared to the mainland, has other special yet logical implications. Island space is overvalued because it is perceived as a scarce resource (McCall, 1994). Products coming from the islands are thus considered by the inhabitants of the Balearic Islands to be of unquestionably higher quality. Along the same line, the historical difficulties associated with communication necessitated an autarkical society on one hand and crop and livestock varieties that could adapt to the geographical conditions (climate, soil, etc.) on the other. On top of all this, as McCall (1994) and King (2010) pointed out, migration also plays a role, however it is considered. Facing the clear boundaries of the islands, in times of imbalance between the population and resources, emigrations took place which lead to social and personal tragedy because the islands' people were very tied to the lands and because distances seemed greater and communication was difficult due to isolation. On other occasions, immigrant flows had consequences that were equal to their magnitude. As per their nature, the islands have certain

² During a long period of time, before tourism and when communication systems were not well developed, islands like Majorca were large enough that the coast was not visible, and it seemed far enough away that some islanders died without ever seeing the sea.

obvious limits to what they can bear. On top of this, non-natives bring with them different languages and cultures, which produce an imbalance that leads to diglossic societies and has repercussions on toponymy, mainly via the appearance of new place-names and the adaptation of old ones into the new language. Furthermore, considering the introduction of an originally urban group of people (tourists) or any people who are unconnected to the traditional land uses where they settle (Ordinas & Binimelis, 2002), new place names reveal their origins (Nash, 2015). This gives way to a clear dichotomy³ between the traditional toponymy and that which is introduced suddenly via signs and billboards. It is one of the obvious differences that separate islanders from the outsiders, or “forasteros.”⁴ It is thus important to delve deeper into the different perceptions of islanders and mainlanders, or rather the islanders’ self-perception as being different (Nash, 2015) with respect to geographical sizes and distances, which on the islands are deformed and enlarged. This prompts the perception of a unique system of longitudinal measurements that is not applicable to the outside world despite the introduction of the metric system, as it could lead to a phobia of islands in visitors who feel trapped⁵ on islands (Espínola & Cravidao, 2014). Something similar happens when considering time. The fourth dimension dilates, making islanders steadfast practitioners of the “slow movement.”⁶ The island perception is marked by its ethnocentrism which recognizes one simple and absolute division between the island and the rest of the world. Majorcans, specifically consider Majorca and “Outside of Majorca” as the two unique states of the world. Such a vision does not necessarily imply a perception of self-isolation, but rather a biased view that has little interest in the outside world. This ethnocentric point of view is paradoxical in its claim that the center of the world (cosmos) is on the island (microcosm). Such desire has appeared historically in different groups of people and cultures – and curiously, frequently on islands – although in the case of Majorca, the argument over who should enjoy such a privilege has had a greater influence in four municipalities (Sineu, Sencelles, Inca, and Costitx), creating amusing legends and anecdotes⁷. The classic self-referencing of Majorca as “sa Roqueta” (Catalan for “The Little Rock,” with both emotional and dimensional connotations) provides more evidence for the ethnocentric self-perception.

The limited availability, and even scarcity, of resources on the islands, along with the fear of outside invasion has led to an element of secrecy with respect to information about the geographical location of valued resources and even its corresponding toponymy. In line with McCall’s (1994) fourth assertion, this mainly corresponds to Balearic hunting grounds, mushroom breeding grounds, ancient hiding places for contraband, and fishing grounds. A study of Majorcan thalassonyms (maritime toponymy) (Lucas & Ordinas, 2013) confirmed that the methods for locating and creating place-names is the same in Majorca as in other distant places (Forman, 1967;

³ A separate consideration is that of the dichotomy between the official and popular toponymy, which can be quite unorthodox.

⁴ This is a term used in the Balearic Islands for Spaniards coming from the Iberian Peninsula. Its use is widespread and originates from the immigration that took place from the 1970s onwards with the onset of mass tourism. This period is also known as the “tourism boom.”

⁵ On the opposite end of the spectrum are those who perceive the island as a free and uninhibited place, far from mainland control and/or the metropolis as a point of origin. A large part of the success of the hippy movement in Ibiza, and its rule-breaking evolution, is probably due to this perception.

⁶ Slow movement is a cultural movement towards slowing the pace of life, and Majorca is known as the “Island of Calm.”

⁷ One such legend is that of the “Earth’s axle” which tells of an enormous axle under the church bell tower in Sineu (one of the towns which claims to be the centre of Majorca) upon which the earth turns. Every year, at midnight on December 31st, the town mayor, the parish priest, and an altar boy descend into the depths of the earth to grease it with oil to ensure that the planet continues to rotate in the coming year.

Nash, 2015). From a linguistic point of view, the Balearic Islands show clear toponymic differences with respect to non-island territories. Their historical isolation has been the cause of various dialects and subdialects with different linguistic aspects (maintaining the article derived from the Latin “*ipse*” on the islands – which became *es*, *sa*, and *ses* [*es Vermell*, *sa Mola*, *ses Males Roques*] – even in the face of the evolution of the derived “*ille*” in mainland Catalan – which became *el*, *la*, and *les* [*el Fumat*, *la Mola*, *Les Orelles de l’Ase*]) and terminology that has been fossilized in their toponymy and endemic culture. Furthermore, there is a tradition on Majorca of conserving, throughout centuries and generations, the indicative toponyms given to large rural properties (*possessions*), which generally come from the family names⁸ of ancient owners. This bears a certain resemblance to the situation described by Nash (2015) on the island of Norfolk. Similarly, the names of actual houses survive their owners, and on the Pityusic Islands (Ibiza, Formentera, S’Espalmador, and other small surrounding islets), as a consequence of their disperse populations, it is particularly common to assign place names to houses based on the anthroponym⁹ of its current or historical owner (Ordinas, 1994). Such toponyms highlight the anthropological endogamy of these islands, and they are preceded by a particular and abbreviated designation as a house.¹⁰

The insular personality on the Balearic Islands as seen through its toponymy and geographical terminology

The Balearic Islands are situated in the central western part of the Mediterranean Sea. They are an archipelago made up of five major islands (Majorca, Minorca, Ibiza, Formentera, and Cabrera) and more than 150 small islands and islets, covering a total of 4,968.38 km² with a 1.428 km of coastline. The islands of Majorca, Minorca, Cabrera, and sa Dragonera, along with their adjacent islets, form the subset that was historically considered to be the Balearic Islands (or the Gymnesian Islands), while Ibiza, Formentera, and the surrounding islets made up the Pityusic Islands.

The strategic location of the Balearic Islands has created a culture that is the result of the successive superimposition of outside cultures (Talayotic¹¹, Greek, Carthaginian, Roman, Muslim, Catalan, Spanish, and finally Anglo-Saxon and Germanic, due to the process of globalization that has been and is being driven by tourism and immigration). The languages and religions of the various people that have passed through the archipelago throughout history have left their footprint, to greater or lesser extents, on the islands’ toponymy, which allows us to define their respective chronological strata.

In the first half of the 1990s, the largest compilation of Balearic toponymy was prepared thanks to the creation of the Topographic Map of the Balearic Islands (*Mapa Topogràfic Balear*; MTB) at a 1:5,000 scale. This project was responsible for gathering over 50,000 toponyms. We

⁸ Preceded by a fossilized designation “*Son*” which originally meant “which belongs to,” but which, over time, slowly lost its meaning, until today, when its meaning is generally unknown. Examples include: *Son Albertí*, *Son Ordines*, *Son Sastre*, etc.

⁹ Name of a person, surname, or nickname, which on the islands was given to name a house, for example *Can Pere* (Peter’s house), *Ca na Punxa* (Spike’s house), *Cas Forner* (the Forners’ house), *Ca sa Beata* (the holy woman’s house), *Cas Alemanys* (the Germans’ house), *Ca ses Bieles* (Biels’ house), *Cal Dimoni* (the Devil’s house), *Ca la Gata* (the drunk’s house), *Cals Reis* (the Kings’ house), *Ca les Ramones* (the Ramons’ house).

¹⁰ *Can*, *Cas*, or *Cal* if the name is masculine; *Ca na*, *Ca sa*, or *Ca la* if the name is feminine, followed by the anthroponym (name, surname, or nickname). “*Can*” means “house of” and it is followed by a pronoun article (*en*, *na*) or singular variations *es* or *sa* and *el* or *la*.

¹¹ The name given to the prehistoric culture that existed in the Balearic Islands.

had the opportunity to direct the arduous task that had to be undertaken by geographers and other specialists regarding the toponymy of the archipelago. The results (around 100,000 total place-names) allowed us to double the amount of Balearic toponyms that were previously available. Nonetheless, with the passage of time, this cultural heritage is being reduced, as is the number of people with knowledge of specific toponymic designations. Table 1 shows the results obtained for each one of the islands:

Table 1: MTP toponym count and distribution

	MAJORCA	MINORCA	IBIZA	FORMENTERA	TOTAL
Toponyms	35,418	6,549	6,979	1,083	50,029
Density (per km ²)	11.0	9.3	12.9	13.2	11.0

The classification and analysis of this significant source of toponymic information, as the result of the largest and most recent compilation of such data, allowed us to compile the terminological vocabulary of Balearic geography (Ordinas, 2001), a field of study presented by Carl Sauer (1956) within the study of cultural geography. The different meanings associated with these terms (polysemy) are important as they serve as an indicator of different toponymic and cultural personalities. As the result of years and years of isolation, an analysis of more than one hundred polysemous toponymic terms from the Balearic Islands required an understanding of the islands' geographical and cultural contexts in order to be able to identify particular meanings within each territory.

The case of the Balearic Islands confirms that polysemy occurs in small territories and in languages with reduced geographic reach. Isolation is a factor when it comes to explaining the increased number of cases of polysemy when compared to mainland territories. The decreased mobility of ancient societies also plays a role, as contemporary societies are influenced by globalization which leads to a greater level of uniformity in languages and less polysemy. Thus, in the example of the Balearic Islands, we find that the orographic terms, used for identifying orography, can also be found in underwater morphology, where maritime (and even costal) features are identified using parallel terminology (e.g., *morro* (headland), *cap* (head), *punta* (point), *munt* (mount), etc.).

From the ratio of terms (970) and meanings (1,175), we can calculate a polysemy index of 1.2 (i.e., 1.2 different meanings or connotations for each term). A detailed analysis shows that the majority of terms (83%) have one meaning, while 13% have two geographical meanings, 2.6% have three, and 0.8% have four or more meanings.

The unique set of geographical meanings relative to a territory is a significant characteristic of its cultural personality. Basically, three elements come together to define a country: the people, the territory, and the language. The meanings, which are not necessarily exclusive, but which are frequent in toponymy also serve to characterize a place. Therefore, the territorial characterization of the terminology should also include the most repeated meanings. When accounting for the meanings of each term in its geographical area (one or more islands), and considering the island as the smallest territorial unit, we obtain the following results (Table 2). They show that 63.2% of the meanings extend beyond the reduced territorial limits that we set up, compared to the other 36.7% that can be considered uniquely Balearic.

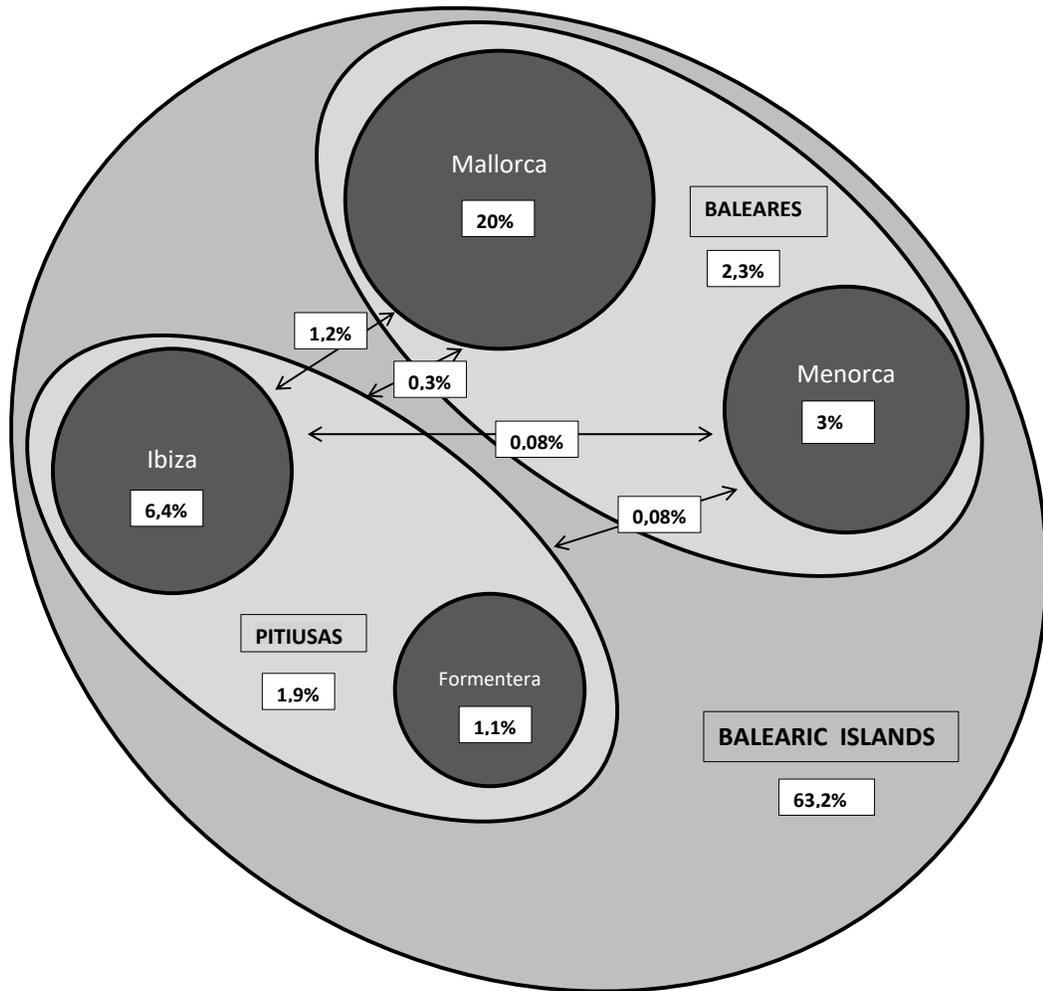
Table 2: Number of different meanings per geographic area.

GEOGRAPHIC AREA	No. OF MEANINGS
Majorca	235
Minorca	36
Balearics (Majorca and Minorca)	28
Ibiza	76
Formentera	13
Pityusics (Ibiza and Formentera)	23
Minorca and Ibiza	1
Minorca and Pityusics	1
Majorca and Ibiza	15
Majorca and Pityusics	4
Balearic Islands as a whole	743
TOTAL	1,175

Toponymy and geographical terminology in Majorca

Due to its size (72.6% of all Balearic territory), it is difficult to find characteristics in Majorca that specifically differentiate it from the other islands. The cultural identity of each of the larger islands in the Balearic archipelago is shaped by looking into the “mirror” that reflects the centrality of Majorca. In this way there are differences between all of the other islands. Minorca and Ibiza are defined by their differences with or similarities to Majorca. Thus, it is problematic to define this “cosmos” in which, from the other smaller islands, nothing seems to be lacking and everything seems to be there. The endemic geographical vocabulary of Majorca consists of 235 terms, that is to say, 20% of the total (Figure 1) and 54.3% of those that are specifically Balearic.

Figure 1: Territorial distribution (%) of toponymic terminology in the Balearic Islands.



Toponymy and geographical terminology in Minorca

The transformation of the Minorcan countryside has led to the progressive loss of rural populations and has resulted in the complete abandonment of some agricultural holdings, called *llocs* in Minorca. Farmers from the island, excellent sources of toponymic information, have disappeared, and along with them an important percentage of micro-toponyms (which we calculated to be around 25%¹²). From analyzing Minorcan place names and frequencies, we found that there was a clear relationship between the names and land characteristics that they identified. The low levels of urbanization and lack of urbanization in rural areas, compared to the rest of the Balearic Islands, are reflected in Minorca's toponymy (Ordinas & Binimelis, 2013), in which the most frequent terms refer to physical aspects of the landscape. The many geomorphological references offer a glimpse into the impact that the topography has on vegetation, which is sparse, or on hydrography, which is marked by the climate, and therefore is relatively poor.

¹² We calculated this percentage based on the field work carried in 1990 which collected toponyms for 1:5,000 scale maps.

Two factors explain the majority of orographic terminology: insularity, which is the origin of a significant number of toponyms as the relatively small island has 285.7 km of coastline; and the irregularity of the land, which is a result of the erosion that has taken place in the islands two different regions – the northern half which is predominately made up of plains (*plans*: *Pla Verd* – Green Plain) and slopes (*costers*: *Costers des Coloms* – Pigeons’ Slopes), and the southern half which is marked by gorges (*barranc*, *Barranc d’Algendar* – Algendar Gorge) and valleys (*Canals*: *Canal Salat* – Salt Valley). Another difference which is expressed in the toponymy is the scarcity of positive relief in the interior of the island with a low presence of terms like *puig* (peak), *pujol* (hill), and *serra* (mountain range).

If we focus on the number of terms, those that are orographic in nature show the greatest diversity, mainly due to the variety of costal formations compared to the lack of those further inland. The climate, the scarcity of water, and the effect that humans have had on the Minorcan landscape explain the weak representation of hydro- and phyto-toponymy. One of the unique things about the naming of large areas of vegetation in Minorca is the lack of the word *bosc* (forest), which contrasts with the abundant use of *marina* (shore: *Marina del Comte* – the Count’s shoreline) and its diminutive *marineta* (*Marineta de ses Alzines* – Holm Oak shore).

Similarly, the part of the landscape that has been affected by mankind has a relatively limited representation in terminology. The only notable use of this kind of toponymy can be found in terms like *tanca* (enclosure), *camí* (way/path), *Son* (property of), *pleta* (pasture), *hort* (garden), *bouer/bover* (cowshed), and *camp* (field). Following these terms are the aforementioned *Cas* (see footnote 9), its variants *Cal* and *Can* (as well as their respective feminine versions), and *lloc* (large farm with a farmhouse).

Enclosures (*tanca*, *tanques*) are quite numerous and the use of this toponymy is frequently preferred over the various orographic formations found within them. Not all of enclosures include these terms in their toponymy, and as such, many are identified as the pronoun article followed by a descriptive word (e.g., *na Mitjana* – the one in the middle, *na Prima* – the unfertile one, etc.). In each agricultural holding, it is common that the same toponyms be used to indicate different individual enclosures (e.g., *Tanca de s’Era* – the Cereals Enclosure, *Tanca des Bover* – the Cattle Enclosure, etc.) or sets of them (*Terres Noves* – New Lands, *Ull de Sol* – Eye of the Sun, etc.). Also, various enclosures frequently share a common group name, and then each enclosure has its own individual name (e.g., *sa Fura Gran* – the Big Polecat and *sa Fura Petita* – the Little Polecat make up *ses Fures* – the Polecats). Although appearing less frequently, the terms *pleta* (pasture) and *quintana* (corral) are included in this category, too.

Lloc is one of the most commonly seen terms in Minorca, although it is rarely used in toponymy (*Lloc Nou* – The New Farm, *Lloc des Pou* – The Farm of the Well, etc.). Hagio-toponyms are abundant (i.e., religious terminology: *Sant Antoni*, *Sant Bernat*, *Santa Clara*, *Stana Cecília*, etc.), as are terms with Arabic origins which managed to survive the Christian conquest of the islands (*Binialcalà*, *Biniarroí*, *Binimaimó*, *Binissaid*). There was an interesting phonetical inconsistency among those providing information for this study, namely in the pronunciation of the word *Sant* (meaning saint, and which precedes many religious toponyms and is allusive to saint’s names, which were imposed with the 18th century Christian conquests of the islands), and the possessive designation *Son*. Along with *lloc*, the term *estancia* (estate) is unique to Minorca.

Also of exclusively Minorcan toponymic nomenclature are the agricultural terms *sínia* (a vegetable garden or a small irrigated plot or property) and *hortal* (an orchard or vegetable garden surrounded by a stone wall). *Pont* (a typical Minorcan shed for livestock), *garita* (gatehouse), and *bouer* (cowshed), are some of the many toponyms related to cattle farming, and *eras* (threshing floor)

are omnipresent across the rural island. There are also many archaeo-toponyms (toponymy coming from archaeological sites), such as *talaia* (watchtower/lookout), *antigot* (megalithic wall close to other prehistoric buildings), *naveta* (megalithic building in the shape of an inverted ship), *taula* (a prehistoric, megalithic T-shaped stone monument, made from two large stones and typical of Minorcan Talayotic culture), and *clapper* (a dolmen known as a Talayot, or a mound of giant stones), all present in the same landscape.

In the end, there are 36 toponymic terms that are that are genuinely exclusive to Minorca (8.3% of the total terminology coming from Minorca, and 3% of the terminology of the Balearic Islands). There are only 28 terms shared between Majorca and Minorca (which were historically called the Balearics), and these represent 2.3% of the total terms used in the Balearic Islands and 6.4% of those considered to be unique to what are currently recognized as the Balearic Islands (Figure 1).

Toponymy and geographical terminology in the Pityusic Islands

Differences between the two main Pityusic Islands are almost unnoticeable. The limited physical area (82.08 km²) and the historically late occupation of Formentera has made it a cultural appendage of the nearby Ibiza. The main characteristics of the Pityusic toponymy is the large presence of dwelling designations (*Can*, *Cas*, and *Cal*) accompanied by an anthroponym. Moreu-Rey (1982) noted that the proportion of anthroponyms, or toponyms stemming from them, is extraordinary in all countries and in any era. He estimated that in some regions, the proportion of such designations could exceed 40 or 50% of all toponyms. The case of the Pityusic Islands is a clear example of this, as these estimations are exceeded, and there are two reasons for this: the first has to do with smallholdings and demographic growth where a kind of scattered settlement influenced the high number of toponyms related to house names, and the second has to do with the repetition of the same family names – a problem which was exacerbated by the tradition of repeating the same first names generation after generation – in such a way that it became difficult to distinguish between the numerous individuals with the same name.

The set of geographical terminology unique to the Pityusic Islands is made up of 23 terms which represent 1.9% of the total terminology found in these islands and (Figure 1) and 5.3% of uniquely Balearic terms.

Toponymy and geographical terminology in Ibiza

There are 76 terms which are exclusively Ibizan (6.4% of the Pityusic Islands' and 17.6% of the Balearic Islands' unique terminology) (Figure 1). The tally of toponyms can also provide a more complete vision of the characteristics of the Ibizan landscape.

The most common characteristic comes from the important presence of toponyms that begin with *Can* and its variants *Cas* and *Cal* (or respective feminine versions *Ca na*, *Ca sa*, and *Ca la*). The abundance of these terms contrasts with the lack of the designation *Son*. This matter is significant with respect to the way in which populations settled, how they were distributed, and how ownership was dealt with on the island: scattered populations and smallholdings reflect this in their toponyms. A small group of terms (*finca* [rural property with a house], *hisenda* [small farmer's house], *pallissa/païssa* [barn], and *casilla* [cabin/shed]) make up the terminology that suggests human influence.

The physical part of the landscape is limited to a few toponymic particularities related to orography and phyto-toponymy, although to a lesser extent. Regarding the former, the most notable

terms are: *canal* (narrow valley) and *coll* (mountain pass), for negative reliefs; *pla* (plain), *plana* (flat), and *parda* (slope), for plains and slopes; and *puig* (mountain), *pujol* (hill), *serra* (mountain range), *picatxo* (hummock [*picatxo* is also used to describe reefs and islets and is unique to the Pityusic Islands]), *picossa* (peak), and *talia* (lookout), for positive reliefs. *Talaia* is used to designate mountaintops that were used as watchtowers in ancient times, when the threat of invasion was constant (Castelló, 1963). Thus, it is no wonder that the highest point of the island (475 meters) is called *Talia de Sant Josep* or *sa Talaiassa*.

Although not especially abundant, the most notable phyto-toponym is *bosc* (forest), which here is equivalent to *pinar* (pine forest of *Pinus halepensis*), a term which, along with *alzinar* (holm oak, *Quercus ilex*, forest) does not appear in Ibizan toponymy. This feature is surprising, especially with regard to the term *pinar* – as the etymology of “Ibiza” comes from “island of the pines” – but not as much with the holm oak, which there is known as a *bellotera*.

Finally, as humans influenced the natural landscape, several terms appeared related to the exploitation of (mostly agricultural) resources: *feixa* (agricultural plot), *terç* (small agricultural plot responsible for one-third [*terç*] of the estate’s production), *rota* (fallow land), *tancó* (corral), and *trull* (thresher or press). The terms *quartó* (district) and *vénda* (a rural area with several widely dispersed properties and houses) are medieval terms related to the territorial and administrative divisions in Ibiza.

Toponymy and geographical terminology in Formentera

We have already mentioned the understandable lack of differences between the two main Pityusic Islands. For this reason, Formentera – the smallest of the large Balearic Islands – is only responsible for three unique terms. And although this set might seem insignificant (1.1% of all terms and 3% of uniquely Balearic terminology) (Figure 1), it is much more meaningful when considering the physical area that Formentera occupies in the whole archipelago (1.6%). In absolute terms, the high number of designations indicating a house, and which are supplemented by anthroponyms, is noteworthy. The island’s small size increases their perceived abundance.

Balearic toponymy and geographical terminology

Finally, we will consider the set of geographical terminology that is specific to the Balearic Islands which includes those terms that can be found simultaneously in two or three islands (while not pertaining to a specific island group, as discussed above; i.e., Majorca and Ibiza, Majorca and the Pityusic Islands, Minorca and Ibiza, or Minorca and the Pityusic Islands). There are: 15 terms specific to Majorca and Ibiza (1.2% of the total and 3.4% of uniquely Balearic terminology); four terms specific to Majorca and the Pityusic Islands (0.3% of the total and 0.9% of uniquely Balearic terminology); one term specific to just Minorca and Ibiza, and another specific to the three smallest islands (Minorca, Ibiza, and Formentera). In total, we counted 432 terms (36.7%) which are specific only to the islands (at least one island), and 743 terms (63.2%) that we consider to be more general, i.e., not exclusive to any island or grouping of islands (Figure 1).

Conclusions

In the Balearic archipelago, each island is perceived as a microcosm, and despite being next to one another and without going into political-administrative matters, the larger islands (Majorca, Minorca, and Ibiza) show a high level of independence and a low level of connection. Moreover, ancient

rivalries exist between the islands – and in some cases between areas on the same island¹³ – which mainly revolve around the subjugation of the smaller islands (Minorca and Ibiza, which geographically are the outliers) by the larger islands (Majorca¹⁴) which is located in the center and has a centrist attitude. All of this is evidenced in the toponymy of each island, which is also adapted to each island's geographical features and reveals different dialects that are endemic relics of ancient eras.

The terminology stresses the conservative character of the islands and of the islanders in many ways. In each island, the geographical terminology has its own characteristics as there are singular different terms used on each island, even though the toponymy is at least somewhat in tune with an overall Balearic character. We have confirmed that the size of the islands also affects the level of toponymic variety, with larger islands using a greater variety of terms. There is a preference in smaller islands to note native family relations, reflected in the anthro-toponymy of properties and in the names of houses.

Logically, under the island context, coastal toponyms are abundant as the sea is a defining feature of the landscape and the culture. It is the source of more traditional resources (fish), and more recently, it has become the source for sun and beach tourism, thus completing the stages suggested by King (1993) for Mediterranean islands. This has led to, in coastal tourism areas in the Balearic archipelago, the appearance of a predominately Spanish and Anglo-Saxon neo-toponymy that has somewhat marginalized the traditional native Catalan language. These new toponyms, which have nothing to do with the pre-existing ones, have made it difficult to reinstate the use of formerly used place names.

The old toponyms have little or nothing to do with the new reality of the islands, and the emergence of new terminology is marking the decline in traditional toponymy¹⁵. In the interior parts of the islands, the transformation of the countryside has implied the progressive loss of the agricultural portion of the population and the loss of agricultural lands. Workers in these areas, who are very knowledgeable about its toponymy, have practically disappeared and with them a significant percentage of the even less known micro-toponyms.

It is clear that toponymy and the density of terms depends on a certain level of knowledge about a specific area. The areas in which we live are becoming more and more urban, or even interurban, and are being built up along transportation routes. We cannot forget that perspective is an important part of toponymy, and that it is dynamic. Toponymy evolves and changes along with mankind, societies, cultures, languages, and the land itself. Thus, we cannot be surprised by the increasing number of toponymic complexities in the island context.

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¹³ Of note in this context is the bipolarity in Minorca, driven by the two main cities Maó and Ciutadella, which have bifurcated the island.

¹⁴ The Latin etymology of the names of the islands, which was created when they were under Roman rule, is a reminder of this hierarchy: Majorca comes from *la mayor* which means “the larger one,” and Minorca comes from *la menor* which means “the smaller one.”

¹⁵ This movement is perfectly captured by the image of a farmer who indicated the toponyms of some ancient crop fields which are currently occupied by a golf course.

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