WILEY

On the Names of Places in Geography

Author(s): William Ross King

Source: *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society of London*, Vol. 19, No. 2 (1874 - 1875), pp. 134-136

Published by: [Wiley](#) on behalf of [The Royal Geographical Society \(with the Institute of British Geographers\)](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1799816>

Accessed: 12/06/2014 22:09

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

Wiley and *The Royal Geographical Society (with the Institute of British Geographers)* are collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society of London*.

<http://www.jstor.org>

described in the paper was the ancient Ophir. A verse in one of the Psalms spoke of the Kings of Sheba and Arabia bringing gifts, which seemed to imply that Arabia, and not Africa, was pointed to. The Tongas were the only African race, of which he had ever heard, who had come to the conclusion that war was an abnormal state, and not to be encouraged. They really seemed to be far ahead of some of their European brethren in that respect.

ADDITIONAL NOTICES.

(Printed by order of Council.)

1. *International Congress of the Geographical Sciences.*

SINCE the publication of No. 1 of the present volume of the 'Proceedings,' in which (p. 59) were reprinted some of the circulars relating to the approaching meeting of the International Congress of Geography at Paris, the following letter, fixing the date of the meeting, and also of the Geographical Exhibition, has been received:—

"To the President of the Royal Geographical Society.

"Paris, 8th Jan. 1875.

"Numerous applications have reached us, requesting that the meeting of the International Congress of the Geographical Sciences may be delayed. The date, 31st March, has seemed too early and the season too little favourable for travelling. On the other hand, the Exhibition, which is associated with the Congress, having taken a wider extension, the selection of a building of larger dimensions than was originally fixed upon has become necessary.

"The Geographical Society of Paris has had recourse to the goodwill of the French Government, which has been good enough to place at their disposal the Palace of the Tuileries; the preparation of these galleries became, therefore, a new cause for delay.

"We have, in consequence, fixed the date of the opening of the Exhibition at the 15th July, 1875, and that of the meeting of the Congress at the 1st August.

"I have the honour, Mr. President, to beg that you will make known officially this decision to the Society whose labours you direct, and I hope this delay, in facilitating the co-operation of its members, will render our enterprise still more profitable to science.

"Veuillez agréer, &c.,

"Le Vice-Amiral, Président de la Société de Géographie,

"DE LA RONCIÈRE LE NOURY."

2. *On the Names of Places in Geography.* By Lieut-Col. WILLIAM ROSS KING.

THE subject of the following remarks being unlikely to prove *apropos* to any papers coming before the meetings of the current Session, I address them to you in the present form for the purpose of being laid before the Society's

Council, and trust that the very imperfect manner in which I have represented the matter may not prevent its receiving that consideration which it appears to me to deserve.

My object, in brief, is to plead for the preservation of the native names of places visited by travellers from this country, among whom the contrary has been more commonly the practice hitherto.

For generations past it has been a prevailing custom with founders of new settlements, as with discoverers of previously unknown ones, to repeat, from the poles to the tropics, the familiar and inappropriate names of British and Irish manufacturing and market towns, cathedral cities, hamlets, and counties; or to substitute the Saxon and Norman names of their own relatives and friends in lieu of the more characteristic, more convenient, and usually more pleasing native designations already borne by the places they thus endeavour to distinguish.

The questions that naturally suggest themselves are these :—Is not invention possible, where a new name is really required? and where native ones already exist, may they not be allowed to remain? (as Sir Samuel Baker has so happily allowed them).

Few persons have an idea of the extent to which the custom of repetition I allude to prevails. It would be tedious to enumerate even a tithe of the instances that might be adduced, but I may cursorily remark that the *Gazetteer* contains twenty Yorks, nine Gloucesters, eight Cambridges, seventeen Lincolns, and so on, either as towns or districts, scattered over the four quarters of the world. There are seven Londonderrys in North America, another in New South Wales, and another in Tierra del Fuego; a Stratford-on-Avon in Australia, an Aberdeen in British Columbia, and a Dundee in Patagonia! In Canada I found myself in a second London, on a river Thames, in a county Middlesex. In South Africa, after having crossed the Great Range River, I reached Smithfield (there are, by the way, nine Smithfields in North America alone). In Southern India a Badagha village on the Nilghiris, which I first visited as Jakatallah, has been christened Wellington, as an improvement; though there are already two Wellingtons in New South Wales, one in Western Australia, one in Van Diemen's Land, another near Hobart Town, one in New Zealand, two in Upper Canada, two in the United States, one in the Arctic Regions, and one in Patagonia, besides those in this country!

Fortunately the map of Africa has hitherto escaped in a remarkable manner; but her turn appears to be approaching, as she comes more and more under our "civilizing influences." A Newcastle is already established inland, and Cheetham Hill near Kilimandjaro. Webb's River is substituted for the liquid sounding Lualaba, and we are threatened with Ballyhaggerty in lieu of Gouna, the beautiful native name of a village near Bagamoyo! Are these names to be inserted in charts of the nineteenth century? In most savage or uncivilized countries, as we are pleased to call them, the names of places have some meaning connected with their nature, or position, or history, and are therefore more appropriate than any other, and often also, as in the instances just quoted, far more euphonious than our own.

The late Lord Seaton, when in North America as Sir John Colborne, showed his appreciation of this in changing York, in Upper Canada, back again to its original name of Toronto ("a place of assembly"), so called by the Indians as having been a rendezvous of their chiefs in council.

I do not argue that it would be advisable or convenient to carry out similar changes to any extent, and it may seem at first sight very difficult to control independent travellers and settlers naming places after their own fancy; but I believe that the practice continues mainly because it has been a practice heretofore, and if the Geographical Society would discourage it in those who travel under their auspices, and use their influence with our Consuls and

Government Agents abroad, to obtain among emigrants or settlers the retention of native names, or the adoption of distinctive new ones, these unmeaning and confusing repetitions would gradually cease. And if the past cannot be undone, the maps of the few as yet unexplored regions that remain to be completed, may in time be filled in with names in their own languages and dialects; names which should be as distinctive and characteristic of each country as the races and tribes which inhabit it.

3. *Journal of Lieutenant V. L. Cameron, R.N., Commander of the Livingstone East Coast Aid Expedition.*

FROM UNYANYEMBE TO UJILI.*

November 11th, 1873.—BROKE up from Kwi-hara. Got off with a portion of stores to Mekwemdwe, a small village about $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles w.s.w. of Kwi-hara. Great difficulty with pagazi. Pitched tent in village. Felt parting with Dillon much. He and Murphy also started for the coast. Country cultivated; but in fact left for three or four years without crops, and brushwood growing. Small rocky hills scattered about.

12th.—Busy re-stowing and re-reducing personals. Some stores came out, but too close to Kwi-hara for the pagazi to keep together.

13th.—First thing went into Kwi-hara. Called on Kisisa and Elwale. Got advice as to roads, &c., and got some more stores out. On return to camp, found Murphy come for medicine for Dillon, who is worse.

14th and 15th.—Busy with loads. Got all out. News from Dillon: better.

16th.—Went on to Itumioi w. by N. 3 miles. Camped in village. Getting stores out. Country the same.

17th, 18th, and 19th.—Getting stores out. Still too close to Kwi-hara. Send on to-morrow morning all available pagazi to Kisisa, next village. Eight loads still at Mekwemdwe. Received a present of three ostriches from Kisisa: rather like a white elephant. Grand dance in village in honour of a preparation for sending a caravan to the coast. Arabs send news that they are going out every day. This waiting tries me sorely in temper. The masika is beginning. Thunder-storms and showers at night. Days oppressively hot. Thermometer in good shade, 88° to 90° .

20th.—Pagazi coming in, though slowly.

[Delayed here all the rest of the month, and up to December 29th.]

December 29th.—Off at 7 A.M. Wonderful to relate, got away without any bother with pagazi. Marched first s. 1.25, then s.w. 2; and then some Wanyamwezi at a small boma told Asmani there was a shorter road, and so he left the path, and a nice mess he made of it. We went s., s.w., s.s.e., e.n.e., e.s.e., s.s.w., s.e., and e.n.e., raining hard, path greasy and slippery, and marshy spot, up to one's knees. I don't think he quite knows now where he has been, or where he is. We got in here about 1.30, and Bombay was not up with the last lot till about 2.30. I feel very tired, as it is my first long walk, and felt stiff this morning.

30th.—Halted for food, and I am too stiff to walk; partly tired, partly a cold from the wet of the two last days. A good chance for drying gear. B.P. 12.336, 20.595, and 05 = 206, gives 3154. 3473 height above sea.

The Arabs are doing nothing against Mirambo, there being a dispute as to who is to take charge; the man who came up with the reinforcements, or Ziwele and Kisisa. The two latter talk of going to the coast. Sat up for

* Vide 'Proceedings,' vol. xviii. p. 469.