

# Planetary Cartography: Current Activity and New Ideas

The idea of including a new direction in ICA cartographic research, towards the mapping of planetary bodies, was raised by Russian cartographers at the seventeenth International Cartographic Conference (ICC) held in Barcelona in 1995. Members from Germany, USA and Canada supported the proposal. A working group was formed and a full Commission on Planetary Cartography was approved during the 1999 Ottawa conference.

## Limited Activities

One of its major goals is the harmonisation of international planetary cartographic efforts. This does not mean a “homogenisation” of planetary maps, where everything looks the same, but rather the fostering of free interchange of ideas and information amongst all national efforts in-corporating some aspects of planetary cartography, along with free access to planetary cartography information within all nations. A biennial survey of resources and needs re-lating to planetary map-ping activity was first carried out in 1996. Analysis has shown that many countries would like to contribute to such activity. However, governmental activity is limited, and the private sector is busy with terrestrial mapping.

## Multilingual Maps

The intention of the Commission was to initiate and lead efforts towards a series of multilingual planetary maps. The names on these were to be given in Latin, but other information was to be printed in different languages. Further ideas were to compile a Glossary of Planetary Cartography, and to develop GIS with various planetary databases. These three activities still form the basis of the Commission’s work, taking place within a framework of international co-operation and with active support from ICA. Multilingual maps for the Moon, Mars, Venus and Mercury, each in five languages (English, German, French, Spanish and Russian) have been published. Other countries have joined this project, and further publication of these multilingual maps in Hungarian, Polish, Czech, Bulgarian and Croatian has been undertaken in Hungary, with the close co-operation of specialists in those countries. The future development of these maps will also cover mapping of other Solar System bodies, such as Phobos and Deimos (moons of Mars) and the moons of more distant planets.

## Proposed Textbook

The first version of a multilingual glossary of planetary cartography terms was discussed at the twenty-second ICC in 2005, as was construction of a Specialised Planetary Cartography database, led initially by Commission members in Russia, Germany, Canada and Hungary. This will contribute to an electronic version of the Atlas of Terrestrial Planets and Their Moons (paper copy published in 1992) and to a wider GIS named the Electronic Solar System (ESS). Future work may also address the role of planetary cartography in development of the geography of extraterrestrial territories: compiling and printing of a proposed textbook entitled Geography of Extraterrestrial Territories is considered an output of this activity.