



The Department of Anthropology presents:

Indigenous Place Names on the Continent of Islands

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Toponyms (or Place Names) – as one of the major classes of proper names – form a separate category of the lexicon of a language. Their grammatical status is often different from that of other nominal words, along criteria such as morphology, syntax, phonology, translation, orthography and context. The special treatment of proper names is a result of their semantic content and pragmatic application: they are specially created to identify locations individually.

Place Names in the Caribbean reflect the region's turbulent history, as well as the variety of ethnic groups that inhabit it today; however, a substantial portion of them consists of indigenous, pre-Columbian place names. A better understanding of those indigenous toponyms can help us shed more light on early historical processes in the Caribbean and learn more about the indigenous languages that were spoken in the region.

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