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**Geographical names as culture, heritage and identity (including indigenous,
minority and regional language names).**

Georgian Terms for Countries and Peoples *

Submitted by Georgia**

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Names of countries, or choronyms, are very different from other types of toponym. The difference is that all other toponyms, being names of settlements (œconyms) or names of natural sites such as mountains and rivers (oronyms and hydronyms, respectively), with few exceptions have identical names within a given language at a given period, and any deviations are purely phonetic in nature.

Choronyms are organically linked to ethnonyms, which are the names of the core inhabitants of any given country, and, like them, can be divided into two types: 1) **self-appellations**, i.e. names which a people has chosen to denote itself (*endonyms*) and 2) **names stemming from outside**, i.e. names chosen by other peoples, by close or distant neighbours (*exonyms*). Hence we have also a quantitative distinction between these groups: in every case, there are unique self-appellations, whereas other choronyms, like the corresponding ethnonyms, are found in whatever number is required for communication with other nations.

As examples of self-appellation we can cite any pair of proper nouns which consists of an ethnonym and choronym sharing the same root. In this paper we present Georgian geographical and ethnic names. Both the self-appellations and the names of foreign countries and peoples are examined.

As a *self-appellation* we cite the Georgian ethnonym **kartvelebi**, the plural of the self-appellation of Georgians (sing. **kartvel-**), together with its derived choronym **sakartvelo** ‘Georgia’. Here the Georgian word-forming affixes of purpose / destination **sa – o** combined with the ethno-choronymic root **kart-** indicate the origin of the core population of the country in question. West-European language terms for **Georgia** and the **Georgians** differ phonetically only by one or two letters, e.g. **Georgian, Géorgien** etc. in English, French, German, Italian etc. languages, so that each has a different pronunciation, very different only in the case of Spanish which replaces the post-alveolar **zh/j** with back fricative **x**, so that we get the root **xorx-**. The Russian exonym **Gruziya** and ethnonym **gruzin**, that is widely accepted, is a result of metathesis of the initial consonants of the ethnonym of oriental origin, **gürj-**, while the Armenian exonym for Georgians and Georgia have a very different make-up and, therefore, etymology: the ethnonym **vrats** (**-ats** is the Armenian genitive plural suffix, added to the root **iver-** (cf. the original term for Georgia in antiquity, **Iveria**) leading to the choronym **Vrastan** (= country of the Iberians; for the analogous oriental derivation cf.: Tatarstan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Daghestan...).

The second question is that of Georgian terms for the world around them and its inhabitants. Paradoxically, these terms reflect not only, and not so much, the countries and peoples they denote, as Georgian’s linguistic capabilities and ways of realising them. What we are referring to are actually the Georgian derivational means used exclusively for the names of countries, primarily those of Europe and Asia, with which Georgia has had more or less close links: the most obvious means is the suffix **-et** which, when added to basic ethnonyms, forms choronyms (**turk-i** ‘a Turk’ > **turk-et-i** ‘Tur-key; **somekh-i** ‘an Armenian’ > **somkh-et-i** ‘Armenia’, etc.); much more rarely we have the circum-fix **sa – et** (**saberdsn-et-i** ‘Greece’ < **berdzen-i** ‘a Greek’). Sometimes we find the reverse: from basic choronyms we form ethnonyms by using special suffixes, notably **-el** (e.g. **ukraina** ‘the Ukraine’ > **ukrain-el-i** ‘a Ukrainian’; similarly, **lat’via** ‘Latvia’ > **lat’vi-el-i** ‘a Latvian’, etc.) In other cases, however, Georgian is content to borrow, mainly the choronymic suffix **-ia** (**italia** ‘Italy’).

All these formations are dictated by the function of affixes typical for Georgian, where they form ethnonyms from Georgia’s regions (**ach’ara** ‘Ach’aria’ > **ach’ar-el-i** ‘an Acharian’), or, con-

versely form choronyms from ethnonyms (**tushi** ‘a Tush’ > **tsheti** ‘Tushetia’). The well-developed system of proper derivational affixes proves that there are inbuilt rich traditions for regulating interonomastic relations