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Exonyms**Exonyms as part of the cultural heritage****Summary****

Exonyms, in the sense of place names not used by the local community and differing from the respective endonym (as the place name used and accepted by the local community), are certainly a part of the cultural heritage insofar as they are elements of a language – and it is common sense to regard language as part of the cultural heritage.

However, calling exonyms a part of the cultural heritage can be further justified. They have been created by translation of the endonym, by its morphological or phonetic adaption to the receiver language or by defining a new word – all owing to the intensive relationship of the exonym-using community with the feature indicated by the exonym. A feature frequently referred to in a given community owing to its importance to that community is named by an exonym, given that the exonym – in orthography corresponding to the receiver language – is more easily pronounced and memorized. The pattern of exonyms used by a certain community thus reflects the network of its external political, cultural and economic relations, and a feature referred to by a high number of exonyms is obviously important for many external communities.

A second justification for classifying exonyms as part of the cultural heritage is that they link a community with its history. In historical treatises, places are always referred to by names in the community's own language. They may have been endonyms in older periods and only by change of political or demographic circumstances later have become exonyms, or have always been used as conventional names in a community's historiographic literature.

A third justification is that exonyms play an important role, not only in urban names, such as the specific component of street names, where they actually assume the status of endonyms, but also as specific components of ergonyms, such as names of dishes, pieces of music or plays. Examples are provided in the full report to illustrate those arguments.

* [GEGN.2/2021/1](#).

** The full report was prepared by the honorary Chair of the Austrian Board on Geographical Names, Peter Jordan (Austria). It will be available under document symbol GEGN.2/2021/73/CRP.73, in the language of submission only, at https://unstats.un.org/unsd/ungegn/sessions/2nd_session_2021/.

