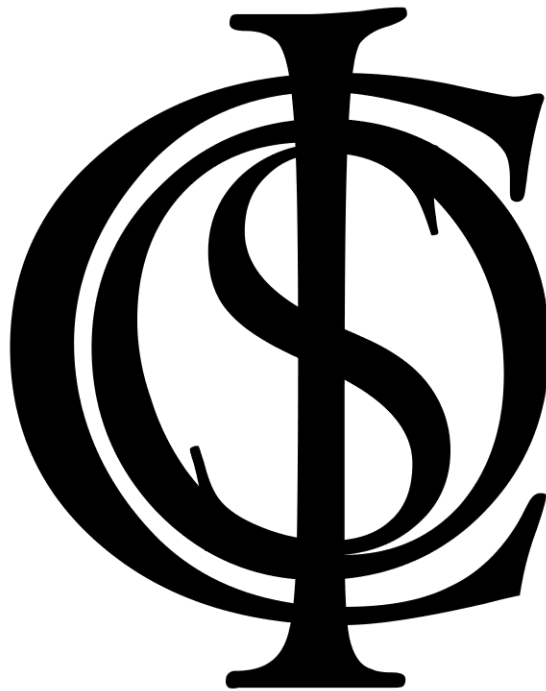


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Foreword

Onoma 58 (guest-editor Peter Jordan, Hermagor/Vienna [Wien], Austria) consists of twelve papers focusing on place names as a part of cultural heritage, presented at a conference in Lecce, Italy, in May 2021, organized by the International Geographical Union on “Heritage Geographies: Politics, Uses and Governance of the Past”.

That place names as a part of language reflect human culture goes almost without saying. Old place names having been in continuous use for centuries or even millennia are linguistic relics giving us glimpses of everyday life and the way of thinking of earlier generations. The papers give examples of how place names can reveal former land use and how they, often in a very precise way, reflect the diversity of the landscape. The importance of folk etymology, stories and myths associated with place names is also pointed out.

In many parts of the world different layers of cultures and languages are visible in the toponymy of a certain region. Through the ages official naming, especially on maps, have often ignored locally used names, be it name forms in a minority language or dialect forms, instead favouring name forms in the predominant language of the official state. Several papers emphasize the importance of preserving those locally used names, thus promoting linguistic minorities and their cultural heritage. Changing existing place names has also been used to strengthen national identity, for instance after the establishment of the independent kingdom of Greece in 1832, when almost 5,000 settlements with “non-Greek” names have been renamed to stress continuity and kinship with a glorious ancient national past.

The guest-editor of the volume Peter Jordan argues that exonyms, place names not used by the local community and differing from locally used endonyms, are parts of the cultural heritage and deserve to be kept in use, since they reflect external, political, cultural, and economic relations. The United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN) has passed several resolutions from the 1970s recommending the reduction of exonyms and the use of only one name for one feature. But, beginning in the 1980s, the respect for names used by minority groups rose, and later resolutions state geographical names as intangible cultural heritage. This statement does not, though, explicitly include exonyms as traditional and functional parts of every language, and a need for a formal reconciliation has been formulated.

The volume also includes a report, three non-thematic articles, and sixteen book reviews.

The Editorial Board thanks all those responsible for this volume, the guest-editor, the editor-in-chief, the editorial secretary, the peer reviewers, and the translators of the abstracts.

MATS WAHLBERG
Chair, Editorial Board, *Onoma*