UNITED NATIONS

Group of Experts on
Geographical Names
Fifteen Session
Geneva, 7-18 October 1991

WORKING PAPER

NO. 2

Agenda item 13

WORKING   GROUP   ON   TOPONYMIC   TERMINOLOGY

REPORT FOR THE PERIOD 1989 - 1991

Presented by Naftali Kadmon, Israel
Convenor

WORKING GROUP ON TOPONYMIC TERMINOLOGY

REPORT FOR THE PERIOD 1989 - 1991

Presented by
Naftali Kadmon, Convenor

Introduction

At the 14th Session of the UN Group of Experts on Geographical Names in May, 1989, a paper presented by Israel [1] referred to UN Glossary No. 330, "Technical Terminology employed in the Standardization of Geographical Names" [2], listing four topics which required attention. These were (i) uniformity of definitions in the different languages, (ii) precision of formulation, (iii) redundancy, and (iv) completeness. A paper by the East, Central and South-East-Europe Division [3] also touched upon some of these problems.

The Group of Experts therefore decided at the 14th Session to form a new Working Group to deal with terminology in the standardization of geographical names (see [4], p. 25). The following were named as members of the new Working Group: Ms. Kerfoot, Ms. Narhi, and Messrs. Ficor, Gonzales, Hornansky, Lapierre, Lewis, Payne, Raper and Sievers, with Mr. Kadmon as Convenor. Work was to be conducted on an English version, with translation to other languages at a later stage. After the initial meeting of the Working Group on Terminology (WGT) in May, 1989, the Convenor issued a first Report to members and asked them to tender their proposals for additions, deletions and corrections of terms and definitions, with 1 Nov, 1989 as first target date. This was later extended to 1 April, 1990, by which date a quite extensive body of material had been received. Most active had been the Dutch- and German-Speaking Division (DGSD). Some individual members of this Division supplied separate proposals, partly to the Convenor and in part to the Chairman of the DGSD. After correspondence between the former and the latter, these were later embodied in a formal and detailed proposal by the Division. At later dates further contributions were received from Canada, the United States and Czechoslovakia.

Processing

The entire material - the original Glossary 330 as well as the contributions mentioned above - was processed by the Convenor, the original Glossary and the DGSD material before, and the later contributions after the deadline of 1 April 1990.

Processing entailed two stages. The first concerned inclusion in the List of Terms, and required a preliminary decision on whether a term be recognized as an independent lexical entry, or appear under a different entry with a cross-reference - or else be deleted. At the second stage the actual definitions were formulated. This was the more demanding part of the work, since both precision of formulation and brevity had to be aimed at. Furthermore, definitions had to be as wide and inclusive as possible. One of the stumbling blocks of Glossary 330 was the reference of many definitions to western

languages and scripts only, disregarding e.g. syllabic and logographic scripts
or Semitic and East- and South-East Asian languages. This problem was addressed
by the Convenor in processing the definitions. In practice, work on both stages
outlined above proceeded simultaneously.

The Target Population

Several questions had to be given attention. The first concerned the target
population of the new Glossary. This appears to be composed chiefly of actual
and potential users of toponymic guidelines (the preparation and publication of
which by member states is strongly advocated by the UNGEGN). Further users would
be cartographers, editors of gazetteers, members of names authorities both
scientific and administrative, students of toponymy at all levels (whether at
courses on the standardization of geographical names or at universities); as
well as other users. The 'external' format of the new Glossary in its present
version was, therefore, kept quite traditional.

While on the topic of the target population it should be remarked that
widespread distribution and utilization of the Glossary should be aimed at, but
will depend very much on "marketing effort", a point which should be borne in
mind at the stage of publication.

Contents of the Glossary

Stemming from the envisaged target population was the choice of entries,
taking into account the not inconsiderable number of additions proposed by
members, e.g. by the U.S. in the field of data processing. However, terms
appearing in any general-purpose dictionary were mostly excluded (such as
language, sound, feature). But some others, though found in professional or
other thematic dictionaries, have been included for the convenience of the user.

In its present form, the Glossary comprises the following:

Total number of entries	328
of which: main entries	199
synonyms	29
cross-references	100.

One of the problems raised was that of cross-referencing. As a preliminary
aid, an index of main entries was prepared with the aid of the widely-used Lotus
1-2-3 (TM) software. A reproduction of this is appended to the present Report as
Appendix A. Cross-references within definitions have been retained. In the final
published form, the '(q.v.)' can be replaced by a less distractive symbolization
such as a different typeface (e.g. italics) for cross-referenced terms.

Examples, Languages, Scripts

In dealing with the actual definitions — those in Glossary 330 as well as
those provided by other contributors — four matters of principle were addressed,
viz. precision, brevity, examples, and other languages and scripts. The first

two, already mentioned above, were treated together in the formulation of the definitions. In certain cases, brevity had to be sacrificed to clarity and precision.

The lack of examples had been a drawback in the past. Therefore, numerous examples have been included in the new Glossary where relevant and necessary.

Non-Roman scripts and non-European languages: The Convenor, as Editor, has introduced examples from the following languages and scripts:

Amharic, Arabic, Chinese, Danish, Dutch, English, French, German, Hebrew, IPA (International Phonetic Alphabet), Japanese Kanji and Kana, Polish, Persian (Farsi), Russian Cyrillic, Spanish.
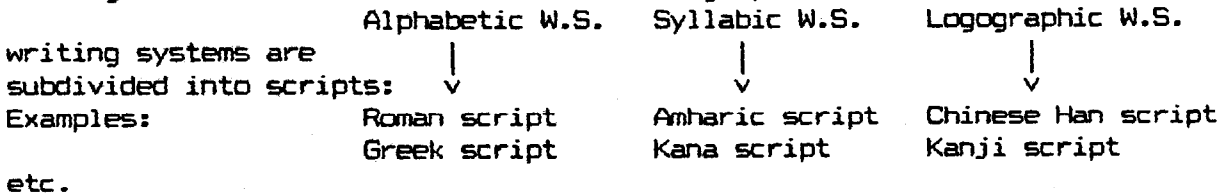
Some Specific Problems

Word order of composite entries. Such entries are listed as follows: (a) If composed of an adjective and a noun, main entry is by the latter and word order is reversed (Example: term, descriptive). A cross-reference is provided in most cases. (b) If composed of two nouns, normal word order is usually preserved (Example: data base), unless one of the nouns is predominant or bivalent in the toponymic context (Example: format, computer; in order to group this with other formats).

'Toponym' vs. 'Name'. Although 'toponym' is the correct term for the appellation of a topographic (including geographic; see below) feature, the word 'name' has been retained in most cases in the terms to be defined (Example: name, official). However, within the definitions, 'toponym' is used whenever a topographic name is specifically referred to.

Hierarchical differentiation. It is proposed to differentiate hierarchically between certain terms referring to writing systems (which, in the past, seem not to have been clearly distinguished) as follows:

Writing is subdivided into the three Writing Systems:

	Alphabetic W.S.	Syllabic W.S.	Logographic W.S.
writing systems are subdivided into scripts:	↓	↓	↓
Examples:	Roman script	Amharic script	Chinese Han script
	Greek script	Kana script	Kanji script

etc.

Names Transformation. There are, in principle, four methods of transformation of toponyms, but only three of these carried names in the past. By order of seniority, these are translation, transcription and transliteration ('conversion' designates the latter two). It is proposed to cover the fourth method by the term exonymization (and this appears in the Glossary draft). All four then come under the term 'transformation, names'.

Production of the Glossary Draft

In May, 1991, the draft of the Glossary, produced with the aid of an IBM-PC compatible word-processing system, was sent to the UNGEGN Secretariat in New York, for duplication and distribution to all members of the WGT. This was accompanied by a letter requesting the preparation of finalizing remarks for discussion at the Working Group meeting to be held in Geneva in September 1991.

Open Questions

A number of questions remain open.

(1) Is the distinction between 'topographic name' (toponym) and 'geographical name' really necessary? The classical Greek Γῆ designates not only the planet Earth but also ground, soil, land, in a general sense. The terms 'geographical name' and 'toponym' (including a name on any planet or natural satellite) would then be fully synonymized, and as a consequence, terminology (and the Glossary) would be somewhat streamlined.

(2) Is the distinction between 'topographic category' and 'class feature' necessary? Either term could describe both.

(3) Are terms such as potamonym, limonym, hypsonym useful so that they should be retained?

(4) What is a homonym? Are Monaco [di Bavaria] (=München) and Monaco [Principauté de] two homonyms, or is Monaco a homonym?

It is hoped that these, and some further questions, will be resolved by the WGT at its next meeting.

A disclaimer will be appropriate here. Notwithstanding the great amount of work which has gone into the new Glossary, mostly voluntary and spare-time, some errors will probably still be detected. Hopefully, these will be weeded out before publication.

Finally, the Convenor wishes to express his sincere thanks to all those who have taken part in the work of the WGT.

Jerusalem, 15 May 1991

R E F E R E N C E S

[1] UNGEGN, 14th Session, May 1989, Working Paper No. 4.
[2] UN Document SR/CS/SER.F/330 Rev.2 of 12 July 1987.
[3] UNGEGN, 14th Session, May 1989, Working Paper No. 57.
[4] UN Document ESA/RT/C/GN/12 of 12 July 1989.

A P P E N D I X   'A'

UNITED NATIONS GROUP OF EXPERTS ON GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES
WORKING GROUP ON TERMINOLOGY
CONVENOR: NAFTALI KADMON, ISRAEL

GLOSSARY OF TOPONYMIC TERMINOLOGY

INDEX OF MAIN ENTRIES
(File: GLOSS5.WK1)

Item No.	Term	Item No.	Term
1	acronym	55	data base, digital, toponymic
2	address	56	data base management system (DBMS)
3	allograph	57	data dictionary
4	allomorph	58	data directory
5	allonym	59	data element
6	allonym, standardized	60	data field
7	allophone	61	data interchange, translingual
8	alphabet	62	data item
9	alphabet, conversion	63	data portability
11	alphabet, transcription	64	default value
12	alphabet, transliteration	67	designation
16	alphabetization	68	diacritic
17	alphanumeric	70	dialect
18	anthroponym	71	dictionary, geographical
19	article	74	diglossia
20	authority, names	75	diglossic
21	batch processing	76	digraph
22	biscriptual	77	diphthong
23	category, topographic	78	donor language
24	character	79	donor script
25	character, modified	81	element, generic
26	character, simplified	82	element, specific
27	character, variant	83	endonym
28	character, vowel	84	endonym, standardized
29	choronym	85	entity, topographic
30	class, feature	86	eponym
31	coded representation	87	exonym
33	community, linguistic	88	exonymization
34	community, speech	92	feature name
36	compound name	93	feature, cultural
41	consonant script	94	feature, extraterrestrial
42	context	95	feature, geographical
45	conversion table	96	feature, hydrographic
46	conversion, names	97	feature, natural
47	conversion, script	98	feature, physical
48	coordinates, geographical	99	feature, topographic
49	coordinates, rectangular	100	feature, undersea
50	coordinates, topographic	102	file, computer
51	creole	103	firmware
53	data	104	font
54	data base (also database), digital	105	format

106	format, computer	187	multilingual lettering
107	form, graphic	189	name
108	gazetteer, index	190	name, alternative
109	gazetteer, toponymic	191	name, approved
113	geographical entity	192	name, composite
117	glossary	194	name, conventional
118	grapheme	195	name, extraterrestrial
119	grapheme, vowel	196	name, geographical
121	guidelines, toponymic	197	name, historical
122	hardware	199	name, local
124	hodonym	200	name, lunar
125	homonym	201	name, official
127	hydronym	202	name, place (a) (b)
128	hyphenization	203	name, populated place
129	ideogram	204	name, proper
131	index, place names	205	name, standardized
133	inigenous name	213	noise, graphic
134	interactive	217	normalization
135	interface	218	noun, proper
136	international names rendition	219	odonym
138	IPA, International Phonetic Alphabet	221	onomastics
139	key, romanization	222	oronym
140	key, transcription	223	orthography
141	key, transliteration	224	phoneme
142	language, colloquial	225	phonemic
144	language, literary	226	phonetic, phonetical
145	language, national	227	phonetics
146	language, non-official	228	phonological
147	language, official	229	phonology
148	language, principal	231	pidgin
150	language, source	234	portability, data
151	language, standard	237	radical, radix
152	language, target	238	raster mode
153	language, vehicular	239	receiver language
154	letter	240	receiver script
155	letter, basic	241	record, computer
156	letter, consonant	242	region, linguistic
157	letter, special	243	retransliteration
158	letter, vowel	244	reversibility
159	lettering, map	245	romanization
161	lettering, multiscriptual	247	root
162	letters, basic	248	script
163	lexicon (a), (b)	250	script, alphabetic
164	lexicon, logographic	251	script, consonant
165	linguistic area	252	script, defective alphabetic
168	linguistics	254	script, ideographic
171	logogram	255	script, logographic
176	map script	257	script, original
177	map script, multilingual	259	script, source
178	map script, multiscriptual	260	script, syllabic
180	marker	261	script, target
181	menu, computer	262	segment
183	morpheme	263	sequence rules, alphabetic
184	morphological	264	sequence, alphabetic (a) (b)
185	morphology	267	software
186	mother tongue	271	speech