

Twenty-third session
Vienna, 28 March – 4 April 2006

Item 8 of the Provisional Agenda

Activities relating to the Working Group on Toponymic
Data Files and Gazetteers

Standard Lebanese geographic names romanization rules*

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Gazetteers

Standard Lebanese geographic names

Romanization rules

Presented by:

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Abstract:

- ◆ Unification of geographical names in Lebanon and in the world is important due to its historic, religious, social and intellectual value.
- ◆ As the name of a person is important to identify and differentiate a person. So is the geographic name. In addition, as the name of a person includes the surname, family name, so does the geographical name include the name of the area, district or country it falls into due to the presence of similar names in on area or one country.

Beit el din



Outline

- ◆ Origin of Lebanese geographical names.
- ◆ Concept of naming the Lebanese geographic locations
- ◆ Contemporary Lebanese names
- ◆ *Bayrūt* paper 1971
- ◆ Berlin paper 2002
- ◆ Writing geographic names
- ◆ Romanization rules.
- ◆ Sample map
- ◆ Conclusion

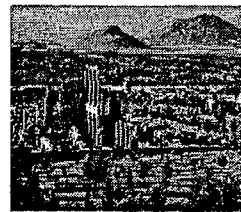
Origin of Lebanese geographical names:

- ✦ *Semitic people*
- ✦ *Ammourites*
- ✦ *Kanaanites*
- ✦ *Phoenicians*
- ✦ *Aramite*
- ✦ *Salouquite*
- ✦ *Arabs*

Concept of naming Lebanese geographic locations:

✦ The naming of the Lebanese geographic areas by the people that inhabited was influenced by:

- ◆ Geographic descriptions (Bterrām)
- ◆ Religious idols (Baalbeck)
- ◆ Affiliation to persons or conquerors (Afsadiq)
- ◆ Special incidents (Al-Hadath)
- ◆ Certain plant or animal (Hay Al-Jemmayze)



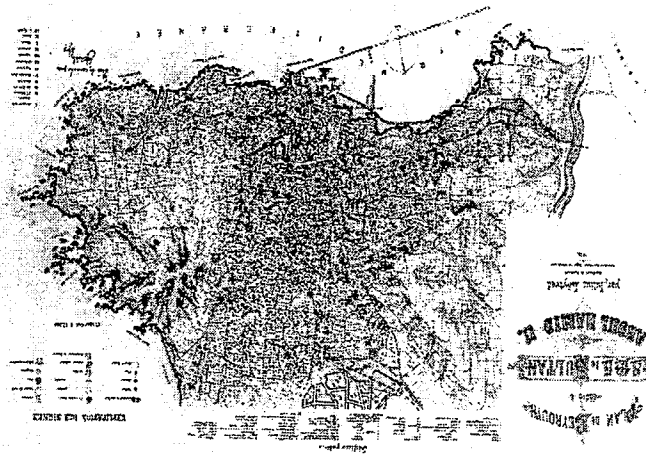
Contemporary Lebanese Names:

✦ The geographic Lebanese names have not changed drastically since the Ottoman Empire, but some names have evolved and been modified or became dual, one *Arabic*, and the other *Aramic, Syriac, Hebrew, Greek, or Roman*. These names came on the few coastal and Mount Lebanon Ottoman maps, or the two emirates established under the protocol of 1860, which was modified in 1864.

✦ we mention the map of Beirut drawn by the vice consul of Denmark in 1876 at a scale of 1:12200, which is the only one left from the Ottoman era.

✦ During the French mandate the Bureau Topographique du Levant affiliated to the French army issued 27 maps of Lebanon at a scale of 1:50.000, between the years 1926 and 1945

the map of Beirut drawn by the vice consul
of Denmark in 1876

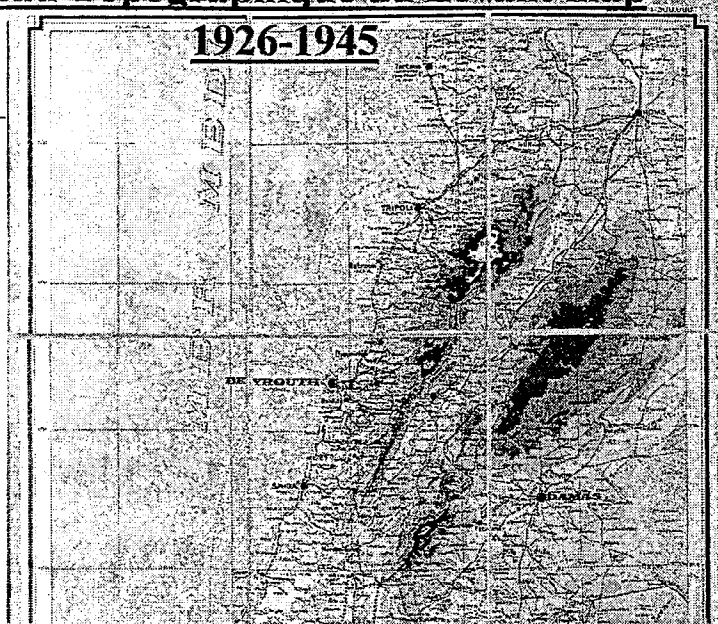


Ottoman map 1964



Bureau Topographique du Levant map

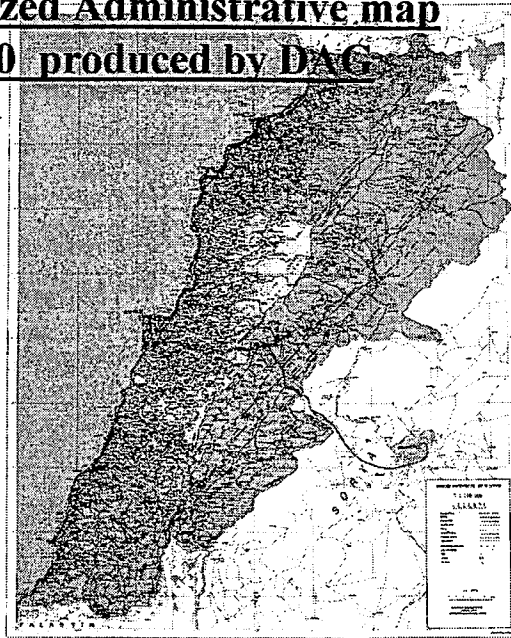
1926-1945



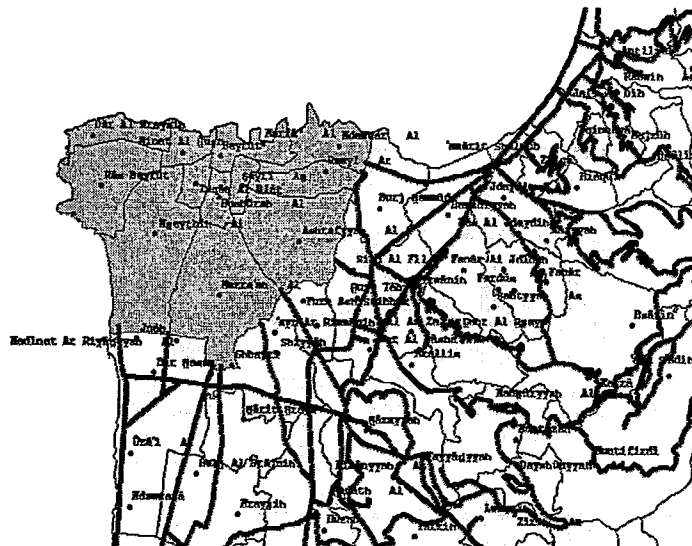
Contemporary Lebanese Names:

- ✧ In 1950, the Geographic unit of the Lebanese army updated these maps and added information to them.
- ✧ The maps of Lebanon on scale of 1:100,000 were produced between 1963 and 1974, and the 1:20,000 maps comprising 121 Arabic and French maps
- ✧ In the 90s, an attempt was made to update these maps, especially the 1:20,000 ones. The DAG started the update and digitization of the maps in 2000, and is expected to finish with them in 2006. The DAG also produces maps of the Lebanese cities at scale between 1:7,000 and 1:5,000.

Romanized Administrative map
1/200000 produced by DAG



Part of the Romanized Administrative map 1/200000
produced by DAG for the national GIS :



Bayrūt paper 1971:

Berlin Conference 2002:

- * A conference was held in for the *Bayrūt* Arab experts in the geographic naming in 1971 that produced a special order in which the Arabic geographic names must be written in Latin. This paper was named the *Bayrūt paper*, and was made official with the UN resolution II/8, and was published and used since. However, some Arab countries did not follow the rules and preferred to use their own rules, but the francophone ones, and among them Lebanon, used it for its compliance with the French way of writing.
- * Based on the seventh geographic UN conference held in 1998, the resolution 7 that urged all the Arab league countries to keep up the efforts of conducting conferences for the specialists in name writings to abide by the rules of 1972, due to the hardship faced in writing the names according to the 1972 rules. During the 8th conference convened in Berlin in July 2002, the Arab group presented amendments to the old rules guidelines, which in turn will be presented to the Arab league.

Writing Geographic names:

- * Based on the mentioned conference, a committee was established in Lebanon to unify the geographic names according to the new guidelines. The committee noticed that there is a lack in communication between the countries of the Arab group whom did not issue a unified guideline for the writing in all the involved countries and did not apply the contents of the paper presented in Berlin in 2002.

Based on the special rule set by the committee, a GAZETEER for the Lebanese cities and villages was established, that included the names of the cities and villages in their correct spelling in Arabic, alphabetically listed from the "hamza" to the "Y".

Romanization rules:

✱ **The Fifteen rules established by the national committee.**

- ◆ **First** : Names in Arabic are composed of one or several words
- ◆ **Second** : There are twenty nine letters in Arabic, starting with the (Hamza), and ending with (yā')
- ◆ **Third** : Diphthongs or. signs they assist the Arabic speaker in pronunciation
- ◆ **Fourth** : (Alif) has two aspects : silent and vocal .
- ◆ **Fifth** : Stretching letters
- ◆ **Sixth** : Solar and lunar letter
- ◆ **Seventh** : The (Hamza)
- ◆ **Eighth** : The stretch (Al Maddah)
- ◆ **Ninth** : The doubling التثنية
- ◆ **Tenth** : The letter (yā') in which the dots are omitted
- ◆ **Eleventh** : Initial definite articles and prepositions
- ◆ **Twelfth** : Words ending by (Tā')
- ◆ **Thirteenth** : Two-letter symbols (th, kh, dh, sh, and gh)
- ◆ **Fourteenth** : Endings and nunation.
- ◆ **Fifteen** : Foreign words rule.

Conclusion:

- ✱ **Approval of the Romanization rules set by the Lebanese committee mentioned above, by the countries of the Arab League and by the United Nations.**
- ✱ **Use of these rules to write geographic Arabic names on all topographic maps.**
- ✱ **Adoption of the new gazetteer of the Lebanese cities , towns and local areas.**
- ✱ **Proposal of a conference in Beirut to collect the results and work more on training courses .**
- ✱ **Encourage the Arab members to play an active role in working groups.**