1. CHOICES AND CONSTRAINTS - *H) ARTICLES AND DEFINITE/INDEFINITE FORMS*

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Should one say *Gambia* or *The Gambia*? Usually, one says the first. Likewise, one uses *Madina* (or the English exonym *Medina*) instead of *al-Madinah*, and *Riad* instead of *ar-Riyad*. In Arabic the definite article is al (assimilated to some consonants, like in ar-Riyad or as-Suwais)

In some languages, definite articles are post-positionally affixed to the word; Swedish *älven* means **the** river, as opposite to *älv*, which means (**a**) river. Although less obvious to the layman, here one also has to make a choice.

For the **Noordhoff** atlases, the editors have opted to represent the indefinite form, so *Klarälv* instead of Klarälven. The exception is the name *Lofoten* instead of *Lofot* for the group of Norwegian islands opposite Narvik known under the former exonym in Dutch and English-speaking areas.

Another exception is the use of the definite -øya instead of the indefinite -øy as a postpositional generic for Norwegian islands.

Example: Hinnøya, Flakstadøya.

On the other hand, for place names from the Roman alphabet area, the article would be included, if it constitutes part of the official form: *Le Havre, A Coruña/La Coruña, The Hague*.

For each country/language combination, both the rules and the exceptions in the internal toponymic guidelines would be listed.