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S-23 Working Group

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STANDARDS, DEFINITIONS AND RULES OF PROCEDURE IN TOPONYMY.

OBSERVATIONS ON WRITING, GRAMMAR AND TRANSLATION OF TOPONYMS.

Proposed by France

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The preparation of a concise document on standards, definitions and rules of procedure in toponymy was proposed by the representative of the National Toponymy Commission (CNT – France) to the S-23 Working Group at the Meeting held in Monaco on 1st June 2009.

The aim of this document is to present the necessary tools to deal with toponymic cases encountered in the updating of this reference publication “Limits of Oceans and Seas”, in French “Limites des mers et des océans”, International Hydrographic Organization Special Publication 23, the 3rd edition of which dates back to 1953. It should be noted that this summary document is the result of a technical analysis.

IHO’s publication S-23 is a document which sets, mainly for the use of hydrographic services, the limits of seas and oceans, so that agreed names be used on charts and in notices to mariners and, more generally, in nautical documents. The updating of the publication must meet the many demands from diverse and numerous users who have expressed the urgent need to have a new updated edition. It may be noted that neither the limits nor the toponyms in this publication have any legal or political significance. The aim of this study, whilst remaining within its domain of toponymic competence and bearing in mind the final objective of the S-23, is to analyse the standards and usages of toponyms in order to publish a new edition of S-23.

It is not an easy task to present toponyms from all over the world, in only one publication in a consistent way due to the diversity of languages, text, origins, history and culture. This is why it is a good idea to:

- proceed with an analysis of existing documents and tools in force at the IHO, as regards toponyms;
- then compare the general tendencies adopted by other reference bodies in toponymy;
- extract the relevant rules that could be applied to handling toponyms in general and also individually.
- submit reasonable, relevant and open technical observations to the expert members of the working group.

I. TOPONYMY STANDARDS, DEFINITIONS AND RULES OF PROCEDURE

In a general way, toponymic research consists of reviewing and evaluating geographical names used in publications, on maps and nautical charts. The use and meaning of the toponyms and their oral or written use must be meticulously examined, especially if we are confronted with more than one language. More particularly in this case, we must also consider the aim and the languages of the authority who lists these names and who arbitrates in the decision making. The S-23 Publication, in its English and French versions, divides up the seas and oceans which are the maritime zones following on from the land.

A. TOOL ANALYSIS : IHO M-4

As regards the handling of toponymic data, the IHO policy follows the rules defined in section B-500 – Text: Language, Numbers, Names, Type Styles (edited by decision N°23 in 1982, new format 2005, revised in 2008) of the M-4 publication - Regulations of the IHO for International (INT) Charts and Chart Specifications of the IHO (Monaco, April 2009)¹

1. DEFINITIONS AND TERMINOLOGY

Firstly some comments on the IHO definitions and terminology.

1) Preliminary work concerning definitions and terminology

This chapter offers a common work base with a list of technical terms used in toponymy along with the meaning given to these terms. This list constitutes a glossary which is particularly short but sufficient to undertake standardization work of geographical names concerning maritime zones. Most of the proposed terms and their meaning are generally consistent with those of the UN Terminology glossary². We only intend to make the following comments:

Toponym eg: *LONDON, SKAGERRAK, DEUTSCHE BUCHHT, ENGLISH CHANNEL*

Comments: A toponym is a proper noun which designates a place. It has two functions: to designate a place and to describe the nature of the place. It is a denomination in a given language, which appeared at some point in history, created by those who needed it. It carries a cultural memory. Many places do not come from any specific linguistic area or may concern several: eg: Southern Ocean, North Sea.

Generic term: eg: *CHANNEL, BANK, KLIFF*

Comments: an integral part of a toponym, it is a common noun from everyday vocabulary, the meaning of which is understood in the local language. In general, the generic term specifies the nature of the geographical feature concerned. The generic term offers the big advantage of allowing a better understanding of the meaning, forgotten or not, of toponyms which have remained in use. Special care should be given to the generic term: it is this term which is most likely to be translated; the translation principles are given here below.

Descriptive term eg: *LILLE, ROTE*

¹ http://www.iho.shom.fr/publicat/free/files/M4_v3.006_2009.pdf

² <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/glossary.pdf>

Comments: The descriptive term being an adjective belongs to the category of specific terms and this concept is only generally useful in the translation phases. The UNGEGN Glossary makes no reference to the descriptive function of the specific term.

Specific term eg : ENGLISH, LILLE, FISKE, HASLAR, ROTE

Comments: part of a toponym which completes the generic term(s) of the toponym to identify the geographical feature in a particular way. The specific term can be an adjective alone, a noun complement or even a sentence; Eg: Celtic Sea, Chaussée de Pierres-Noires.

Simple toponym eg: LONDON, THE SOLENT, CASQUETS, **Composed Toponym** eg: ENGLISH CHANNEL, LILLE FISKEBANK, ROTE KLIFF.

Comments: This describes the structure of the toponym. A simple toponym is a name made up of a word either with or without an article. A composed toponym includes several distinct or joined terms of which a generic, with or without an article. A simple or composed toponym is always a proper noun indicating a place, the linguistic origin of which should always be taken into account – this notion refers to the language in which the toponym is known to be expressed. A simple toponym or not may, or may not, have a meaning in its own language or in another: at the origin there was always a meaning in a certain dialect, whether it be local, no longer spoken, or other. Sometimes the name can be very different from one language to another, notably depending on different cultural heritage, and the name of a geographical feature in a given language cannot be decided by countries where no-one speaks this language.

Original form of a toponym eg: LONDON, ORKNEY ISLANDS, KØBENHAVN

Comments: on the territory or in the territorial sea of a given country, it is the local form of a toponym in the language of the inhabitants of that country. The UN Group of Experts calls this an *endonym*.

Exonym eg: ATLANTIC OCEAN, COPENHAGEN, LONDRES, ILES ORCADES.

Comments: the UN Group of Experts, who has difficulty in defining an exonym, presents it as a name, belonging to a given language which is not spoken in the place it designates, but it is “the name of a place where the language of the name is not spoken”³. An exonym is always created by usage and has its own form also sanctioned by usage. It is a particular name that a language, other than that of the place, created possibly from the local original form by transforming it phonetically and graphically.

Transliteration: eg: SARONIKOS KOLPOS, BERINGOVO MORE

Comments: the transliteration rules proposed by the IHO are those followed by the international community, which are the systems recommended by international standards organizations, i.e. UNGEGN, the Stanag and ISO. The transliteration systems, which are conventions, are required to be able to read local forms other than those stemming from the Latin alphabet. **Romanization** is a transliteration to Latin characters. The S-23 document is available in the two official languages of the IHO, in Latin characters.

The toponyms obtained by transliteration are not normally intended to replace the exonyms; transliteration assists the understanding of toponyms which are written in non-Latin alphabets. An example for the specific term: DAMASCUS English exonym and DAMAS French exonym which differ

³ http://fig-st-die.education.fr/actes_2008/jaillard/article.html

from *DIMASHQ* in Arabic (via transliteration using the amended Beirut system - Version A). Example for the generic term: *CHOTT*, French generic term of Arabic origin and *SHATT*, same generic term in Romanized Arabic.

2) Languages: general rules.

National language; official language

Comments: it is important to properly distinguish between these two concepts. According to the UNGEGN Glossary, a language is official when it has legal status within a legally constituted community, such as a State or part of a State, and used as the official government language. The official language may be chosen or not from amongst the national (or regional) languages of the country. There may be one or several official languages, e.g. French and English in Canada.

The language is national (or regional) if it is widely and commonly spoken and that this is the situation for all or part of a country. It may or may not have the status of an official language, e.g. Swahili is only a national language of the Democratic Republic of Congo.

A toponym belongs to the language in which its link with a given geographical place is understood. The language of a toponym is the language in which the toponym, at least its generic part, has a meaning. In general, it is the context which decides the meaning to give to this part.

Glossaries.

Comments: The knowledge of toponymic terminology contributes to the standardization of geographical names. Nautical charts include a partial index giving generic terms when they are likely to be translated and are considered necessary for the comprehension of the chart. It appears that the Standard M-4 does not include a general glossary, but the supplement in French to INT-1⁴ of the M-4 standard includes a chapter on common equivalent words in English and in French for abbreviations- which could serve as a repertory for generic terms -, as well as the Hydrographic Dictionary (S-32)⁵

E.g. Let us take the example of the *rade* de Saint-Malo, which in English is the *Gulf of Saint-Malo*. However, the *golfe* of Saint-Malo is not a known toponym in France. The English equivalent given in INT-1 of “rade” is *Roads, Roadstead* where as in this case, it is *Natural harbour* which would have been helpful for the translation.

If the question of basic definitions and the meaning of the generic term is important for the translation, translation itself is important to deal with sensitive cases. It would appear useful for hydrographic services to draw up, alongside S-32 and INT1, a toponymic glossary which lists the generic terms of local toponyms which appear in nautical documents. Each term would be associated with the IHO languages and its local language, and followed by its definition.

2. TOPONYM: GENERAL RULES

Let us now examine more closely the chapter “Toponyms” devoted to “international considerations”. It describes the process which leads to handling toponyms by the following recommendations:

⁴ http://iho.shom.fr/publicat/free/files/INT1_FR_Ed.4.pdf

⁵ <http://www.iho.shom.fr/publicat/free/files/S-32-FR.pdf>; <http://www.iho.shom.fr/publicat/free/files/S-32-eng.pdf>

“B-552.1 **General**. In general agreed international forms are to be used for the names of topographic features of continental or international extent and the names of oceans, seas, arms of the sea and major gulfs. If such forms do not exist, the form in common maritime use by the publisher nation is to be used. A second version, in another language, may be added if the publisher nation considers it useful to do so”

And it is added:

“B-552.2 **Continental shelf**. in international waters off coasts, covering approximately the continental shelf and continental slope, the form to be adopted is the international form if this exists (see notably the relevant publications; IHO Special publication S-23 ‘Limits of Oceans and Seas’ and IHO Periodical Publication P-4: ‘Catalogue of International Hydrographic Organization Publications’). Failing this the form will be that determined by the adjoining state under the ‘linguistic influence’ of which the area of shelf or slope in question is agreed by adjoining states to lie: the common maritime use of that state, as indicated on its published charts, should be followed. In the absence of such international agreement, the forms of the publisher nation may be used; these forms should also be used for features straddling linguistic boundaries.

As for generic terms it says:

“B-552.3 **Generic terms**: ... the forms of toponyms in international waters, whether coastwise or not, should be modified if necessary so that their generic terms conform with the agreed official terminology (glossaries of terms produced by the IHO, by the UN group of Experts, etc.). However, such modification should not be made where there are strong traditional reasons against it.

Traditional toponyms should be retained in their historic forms, and the above rule is strictly applicable only to toponyms of relatively recent origin.

However, paragraph B-510-2 stipulates that if a nation charts an area in which the original toponymy is not in that nation’s own language, it may add an exonym to the original form, or other alternative from its own language, if it considers that a toponym is not obvious and that a glossary, if provided, does not cover the case; and this according to a type style different from the initial one.

Countries must ensure that the toponymy used at different chart scales and in hydrographic publications is consistent.

Hence, the IHO⁶ is equipped to settle these pending toponymic issues. In fact these tools favour cultural and technical criteria and charting practice; they pave the way for study possibilities (notably on common usage – special guide for choosing names-, identifying the known significance of places, on the cultural background of toponyms, on the structure of the toponym...) which precedes the identification of the best toponymic choice and the best writing. The standardization measures concern the generic and specific terms of names and an opinion may be made on the language, the graphics and syntax of the toponym. We also evaluate the choice of the terms which describe the name feature under consideration. All this makes for a better quality of the language.

⁶ Application in France within SHOM through instruction n° 851 SHOM/EM modified n°6 Conception, confection, presentation of maritime charts (CCPCM) of the SHOM edition 1984 corrected in 1989, in revision process, Chapter 5 « Letters and toponymy » and its annex C « Toponymy of nautical documents » updated with correction n° 3 diffused in February 1992.

B. THE UNITED NATIONS GROUP OF EXPERTS AND THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCES ON GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES.

The United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN), a body whose role is to encourage the best standardization of the majority of geographical names through concerting toponymic authorities worldwide, has recognized that, in general, problems concerning ambiguity or lack of coherence appear when:

- a) Local practice is not in line with the written form of the name;
- b) Maps or nautical charts use names or written forms which stray away from those that exist in local usage or local dialect;
- c) Maps or nautical charts apply to a topographical feature a name other than the one which is applied locally, or apply the name differently to the local way;
- d) Maps or nautical charts do not contain the same name, as regards its written form or application.

These points have encouraged the production of working documents on standardizing geographical names, one of which being the resolutions⁷.

1. INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

In 1972, the Second United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names defined the aims of international standardization of geographical names in Resolution II/31: "International standardization of geographical names is that activity aiming at the maximum possible uniformity in the form of every geographical name on the earth and of topographical names on other bodies of the solar system by means of national standardization and/or international agreement, including the achievement of equivalences between different writing systems." The Conference "further recommends that, as far as possible, the standardized local names should be used in maps and charts which are intended for international use and also in all international publications in which geographical names do not appear in the running text, such as international time-tables or tables of international statistics. Where geographical names appear in the running text in international publications in a given language, exonyms may be used, but in such cases it is desirable that the standardized local geographical names should also appear in brackets."

It is all there: determine the written form (of a name). In an international publication in a given language, possibility of using exonyms, but indicating the local standardized geographical names would be both useful and beneficial.

From a preliminary examination of the IHO rules, we can say that they are in line with this resolution and that they recognize the diversity of the names, depending on the language used, given by whatever community to identical geographical features, whether they be exonyms or standardized local geographical names, transliterated if necessary.

The First Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names recognized the need to internationally standardize the names of oceanic or underwater topographical features in order to support safety of navigation and to facilitate the exchange of oceanographic scientific data.

⁷ <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/25th-GEGN-Docs/GEGN-25-8b.pdf>

Resolution I/8 on the handling of names of features which extend beyond a single sovereignty recognizes “that some features common to, or extending across the frontiers of two or more nations, have more than one name applied to them”, considers “that it is preferable that a common name or a common application be established, wherever practicable, in the interest of international standardization” and notes that “valuable initial steps have been taken towards standardization of both the nomenclature of hydrographic and undersea features and the geographical names of some of these features by the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC), the International Hydrographic Bureau (IHB), the International Association of Physical Oceanography (IAPO), and member nations “.

Considering the need for international standardization of the names of geographical features which are under the sovereignty of several countries or are common to at least two nations, Resolution III/20 rewords Resolution II/25: the Third Conference on Standardization of Geographical Names:

“1) Recommends that countries sharing a given geographical feature under different names should endeavour, as far as feasible, to reach agreement on fixing a single name for the feature concerned;

2) Further recommends that when countries sharing a given geographical feature do not succeed in agreeing on a common name, it should be a general rule of international cartography that the name used by each of the countries concerned will be accepted. A policy of accepting only one or some of such names while excluding the rest would be inconsistent in principle as well as inexpedient in practice. Only technical reasons may sometimes make it necessary, especially in the case of small scale maps, to dispense with the use of certain names belonging to one language or another.”

The two resolutions complete one another. We need to decide on a common name or a common application. The common application would be to give to this feature the toponyms of each of the countries concerned; but we could dispense with the use of certain toponyms belonging to one language or another that “only technical reasons may sometimes make it necessary”, a practice which is only acceptable for small scale charts. The last sentence of the second paragraph highlights technical considerations applicable to cartography and overlooks certain circumstances in which a place may be named. A place is generally named in the language of the inhabitants who need it, but may also be named by outsiders because they needed to name it as a whole. “... The language the most naturally associated with a geographic feature may not be a local language [but] the language of the geographer⁸” and that brings us to examine the field of exonymy and endonymy.

2. EXONYMY AND ENDONYMY

The Conferences on the Standardization of Geographical Names have demonstrated a certain willingness to do away with exonyms, or at least to reduce their use, or, in any case, to give priority to national names as opposed to exonyms. However, Resolution II/28 recognizes that “certain exonyms (conventional names, traditional names) form living and vital parts of languages”, and recommended that “national geographical names authorities prepare lists of exonyms currently employed, review them for possible deletions, and publish the results.” As for Resolution II/29, whilst noting that it is desirable to limit the use of exonyms, it recommends “that in those cases where exonyms are retained, the local official forms should be shown in addition as far as possible.” And Resolution II/35 recommends further “that, as far as possible, where these names are officially

⁸ All geographical names deserve to be protected CRP.2 <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/25th-GEGN-Docs/WP%20papers/CRP2-FRANCE%20GENUNG%20Exonymes%20et%20endonymes.pdf>

written in a non-Roman script for which a Romanization system has been agreed at the First or Second United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names, Romanized names in accordance with those systems should be included in the lists.” Recommendation IV/20 gives instructions for marking up charts by recommending “that exonyms giving rise to international problems should be used very sparingly and published in parenthesis with the nationally accepted standard name.”

Since the Resolution VIII/4, the international community has tended to recognize that exonyms have been increasing due to the fact that they are living elements of the language. The Resolution notes “that, notwithstanding the general goal of limiting the use of exonyms, in several countries there has been tendency to increase their number,”

The respect of all geographical names as a cultural heritage is highlighted in Resolution VIII/9 which considers “geographical names as part of a nation’s historical and cultural heritage”, and Resolution IX/4, concerning the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage adopted by UNESCO on 17 October 2003, considers that “toponyms are indeed part of the intangible cultural heritage”, encourages “the official bodies responsible for toponymy to prepare a programme to safeguard and develop that heritage”.

Therefore the United Nations Group of Experts agrees with the hydrographic community in recognizing at the last Conferences that the cultural diversity reflected by toponyms is a common heritage that is to be respected. A country may very well name a geographic feature differently from geographers. “... Exonyms appear like the means to endorse the introduction of foreign names into one’s own culture, not to appropriate these names but to consider them as enriching one’s culture⁹”

3. TRANSLITERATION

The document E/CONF.94/CRP.81¹⁰, updated by document W.P. 48¹¹, compiles the main systems developed by, and in force at, the United Nations, at ISO and in specialized bodies.

The recognized transliteration guidelines are applied by the IHO.

C. NATIONAL TOPONYMY COMMISSION [*La Commission Nationale de Toponymie (CNT)*]

The preparation of the French version of the S-23 will involve the French-speaking nations, and in this capacity, for France, it seems useful to lay down the rules which should be used. This task will be undertaken by SHOM in liaison with the “Commission nationale de toponymie (CNT)”, established by Decree No. 85-790 of 26 July 1985, which is the recognized French authority at the United Nations for toponymy. Indeed the role of the CNT is notably “to take care of specifications, standardization, coordination in the production and updating of toponymic data bases, **as well as the handling in French of foreign toponyms.**”

The CNT follows international recommendations and produced a recommendation on 15 November 2000 on the handling in French of foreign toponyms where the CNT recommends “to keep the existing French forms for all categories of names”, and only “in the absence of an agreed French exonym, to use the local form(s) currently in use”.

⁹ ibidem

¹⁰ <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/N0244990.pdf>

¹¹ <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/gegn22wp48.pdf>

In past work undertaken in France on the toponymy of seas and oceans¹², priority was given to the usage of the toponym for practical reasons, in particular for the benefit of international navigation using maritime routes which present an economic interest or zones which present a danger for navigation, and depending on the degree of importance of the natural feature. The adopted names were selected according to their existence on nautical charts or geographical maps, according to scale.

It seems desirable to apply the principles recommended by the CNT as far as the handling of foreign names in French is concerned and to follow SHOM's specific criteria which come from the IHO. Thus the handling of each toponym, supported by the consultation of charts and nautical documents and atlases, depends on the specific instructions given by SHOM, the existence of exonyms, the use of toponyms in their local form, transliterated if necessary according to recognized international systems, with the creation of a glossary of generic terms which may be referred to for a clear understanding of the toponyms.

The CNT is aware that some French names do not reflect the name given to certain maritime zones in other languages. These names are in effect peculiar to the French language, e.g. le pas de Calais, la mer des Antilles, la mer Noire.

II. REMARKS ON THE WRITING, GRAMMAR AND TRANSLATION OF TOPONYMS

Toponymy is tackled so as to be understood by all and must therefore be as close as possible to established usage. It is out of the question to systematically dialectize, anglicize or Frenchify the known name forms. However, translation may be necessary. Now, in terms of translation, the usage is liable to change. The generic term and the specific term are translated differently according to the point of view and the cultural approach of the speaker: all depends on the way in which the speaker, whether he is an outsider or not, considers the geographic feature with his own cultural input.

In particular, apart from agreed exonyms, the essential criterion for the translation of a term included in a toponym appears to be that it keeps (or not), in the eyes of the speaker, the meaning that it has in everyday language.

A. HANDLING OF THE INITIAL ARTICLE IN A SIMPLE TOPONYM

If the article is an integral part of the name, it is marked in capital letters and is not normally translated E.g. The Wash, Le Fromveur.

On the other hand, if the article is used in discursive usage, it appears in lower case and it is normally translated, e.g. la Manche (the Channel), le Kattegat. Thus French usage has incorporated some articles in the language, e.g. le Salvador.

In all cases the article can indicate the gender and number of the toponym.

B. TRANSLATION OF THE GENERIC TERM

¹² http://www.cnig.gouv.fr/Front/docs/cms/espaces-maritimes_123860208273764600.pdf

By the very definition of the term generic, the meaning that it has in every day language remains present in the toponym. However, its translation depends on the comprehension of this meaning by the speaker, as two specific cases illustrate:

1. Generic Term and Transliteration

The difference in alphabets marks a cultural distance which does not assist the speaker's comprehension of the meaning of the generic term.

The endonym Karskoye More transliterated becomes the exonym "mer de Kara" – Kara Sea: the generic term *more* is translated by "sea" and the specific "Kara" is the name of the river. Same procedure for the endonym *Krítiko Pélagos* transliterated; the translation transforms it into the exonym "mer de Crète" - "Sea of Crete". The process is the same for *Proliv Laperuza* where the translation of the Russian endonym becomes the exonym "La Pérouse Strait" ("détroit de La Pérouse").

But *Soya Kaikyō* often remains the Japanese toponym as the western world is more open to the perception of Russian words than that of Japanese words, which are more difficult to apprehend (kaikyō means "strait" but *Soya*?).

Another example of transliteration and translation: on chart 7519, the French version "Bab el Mandeb" comes from the Arabic *Bāb al Mandad*. *Bāb* means "gate" and also "strait". The association of the French generic term "détroit" would revert to saying "the strait of the strait". For this reason, the toponym "Bab el Mandeb" appears, and the two expressions "Grand Détroit" (Big Strait) and "Petit Détroit" (Little Strait) have been added to designate the two passages.

2. TRANSLATION OF THE GENERIC TERM IN CARTOGRAPHY

The technical constraints of cartography may also allow exceptions to the normal treatment of toponymy based on linguistic use.

Thus, at medium and large scales, the translation is hardly pertinent as these scales rarely concern an outsider.

Elsewhere, the Chinese toponym "Changjiangkou Beijiao" shows the problems of space that the translation of the generic term may involve. It seems that *Beijiao* means "north point" and *kou* "mouth"; a recommended translation for the discursive use could therefore be "north point of the mouth of the Changjiang".

C. HANDLING THE SPECIFIC TERM

The specific term, as opposed to the generic term, does not often have a semantic value on its own, and it is then only translated if an exonym is sanctioned by use. However, this general tendency also allows for exceptions, and the specific term may be translated, even in the absence of a specific exonym, when it has a certain descriptive value.

1. TRANSLATION OF THE SPECIFIC DESCRIPTIVE TERM

If the toponym includes a common noun word completed by an adjective (even of geographic origin), the two terms keep their meaning, and it is only their association which identifies the place in a particular way. The toponym is then likely to be translated in each of these terms, and usage has set the translation when the generic term is enhanced by a specific adjectival: *Mediterranean Sea* for la

mer Méditerranée, *Baltic Sea* for la mer Baltique, *Celtic Sea* for the mer Celtique; the specific adjectival has sometimes been understood as a geographical feature followed by a preposition which introduces a complement: *Irish Sea* for la mer d'Irlande, *Caribbean Sea* for la mer des Caraïbes (the exonymic equivalent of "la mer des Antilles", *Ligurian Sea* for "la mer de Ligurie". This handling is similar to that of toponyms whose specific feature has itself a translation (or an exonym), such as *North Sea* for la mer du Nord, *Balear Sea* for la mer des Baléares, *Alboran Sea* for la mer d'Alboran, etc. In these cases, the tendency to translate is so strong that a translation is made, even when the linguistic meaning of the specific is geographically opposed when translated: a Norwegian atlas translates the North Sea by *Nordsjøen* although this zone is situated south of its coasts.

In the same way, if the toponym includes a geographical name with an adjective, their association identifies the place in a particular way, but the adjective keeps its meaning and it is likely to be translated. Furthermore, the geographical name may have an exonym, which is then used in translation, e.g. the Russian transliterated endonym *Novaya Zemlya* translated by "Nouvelle-Zemble" becomes a French exonym.

2. PREPOSITION "DE" (or "OF" in English)

The preposition "de" (or "of" in English) is a tool-word which introduces a complement of a noun or object; it may indicate a direction. One writes "Canal Saint-Georges" by metonymic reference to the saint. If that had been in reference to a place called "Saint-Georges", then it would have been "Canal de Saint-Georges", and naturally the canal would not belong to Saint Georges: in this context, the preposition does not have a possessive character. Thus we write the Sea of Bismark, in reference to the archipel and not to the Prussian chancellor and we write the Dumont d'Urville Sea.

3. UPDATING THE SPECIFIC TERM

Laut Seram, Indonesian place-name for the "Sea of Seram" comes from the name of the island surrounded by the Seram Sea: *Pulau Seram* (pulau means "island" and laut "sea"). The updated version of the S-23 publication gives Seram Sea. Now the historic toponym is *Ceram Sea*, in French "mer de Céram". The progressive revision of the toponym becomes "mer de Seram", with the old form placed in brackets for the sake of the mariners. It is therefore possible to slowly introduce a usage.

D. THE CHALLENGES OF THE STANDARDIZATION OF TOPONYMS

A toponym and the place to which it refers are closely linked. In the same way, the study of the name of the geographical feature is indissociable from its practical application.

Also, its standardization¹³ can or must be based on certain criteria identified by the United Nations:

- a) The identification, the extent and the reliability of the use of the name;
- b) The toponymic evolutions of the geographic feature concerned, bearing in mind the origins of all the exonyms, of all the endonyms and all the forms;
- c) The languages in place and the cultural originality.
- d) The various options of standardization and their coherence.

¹³ http://unstats.un.org/unsd/publication/seriesm/seriesm_88f.pdf Chapter VIII

However, standardization of the toponyms will not prevent them from being translated into the language of the users. From now on standardization of toponyms must also take into account the translations which have been made of them. In this translation process, the generic term is often translated and notably:

Option 1

- When the specific term can also be translated, particularly when it is descriptive, e.g. la mer Méditerranée or Mediterranean Sea or *al Bahr al Mutawassit*;

Option 2

- When the specific term refers to another toponym, e.g. *le golfe de Gascogne* or Bay of Biscay.

Resolution II/31 recommends that “where geographical names appear in the running text in international publications in a given language, exonyms may be used, but in such cases it is desirable that the standardized local geographical names should also appear “ where these translation questions could be dealt with by the hydrographic services who could produce nomenclatures in considering the toponyms – each toponym would be translated into the IHO languages and in the local languages of the sovereign countries.

References:

- Limits of Oceans and Seas: *IHO* Special Publication S-23 (3rd Edition, 1953) (contains a list of toponyms).
- IHO Publication M-4: Chart Specifications of the IHO and Regulations for International (INT) Charts, Edition 3.006, April 2009, Section B-500
- IHO INT1: Symbols, Abbreviations and terms used on Nautical Charts (4th Edition – 2006)
- IHO Publication S-32: Hydrographic Dictionary, 5th Edition (contains a list of common words and expression in use in the domain of hydrography, and an index for the equivalent terms in English and in French).
- Resolutions adopted by the nine United Nations Conferences on the Standardization of Geographical Names (GENUNG) – document GEGN/25/8(b)
- Glossary of toponymic terminology of the GENUNG
- Manual for the National Standardization of Geographical Names of GENUNG (2007 – ST/ESA/STAT/SER.M/88
- Recommendation on the treatment in French of foreign toponyms of the National Commission of Toponymy – *Commission nationale de toponymie* (January and November 2004)
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