

To: ALA/ALCTS/CaMMS Committee on Cataloging: Description and Access  
From: Adam Schiff  
Subject: Initial Articles in Place Names (RDA 16.2.2.3)

## Background

At the JSC meeting in November 2011, a proposal dealing with initial articles in the names of titles, persons, and corporate bodies was approved (6JSC/Chair/3/rev).

Omitted from the proposal was any discussion of initial articles in the names of places. RDA says nothing about this, but there is a Library of Congress Policy Statement for 16.2.2.3 that says:

Drop initial articles from the beginning of the first element of geographic names in Arabic and other languages employing the Arabic initial article. Similarly, drop Hebrew and Yiddish initial articles. Retain initial articles in other non-English geographic names when retention is supported by current gazetteers in the country's language. "Non-English" includes names in French, Spanish, etc., when these are used in the United States (e.g., "Los Angeles") or other English-speaking countries. Drop all other initial articles (e.g., drop "The" from "The Dalles").

Because initial articles occur in the names of places in many languages, RDA ought to have a similar instruction in chapter 16 as it does in chapters 6, 9, and 11. Below please find a proposal to revise 16.2.2.4 to include an instruction and an alternative instruction on initial articles in place names.

Also needed is an instruction to record as a variant name the form without the initial article if the initial article has been recorded as part of the preferred name, and to record as a variant name the form with an initial article if the initial article has not been recorded as part of the preferred name. Text of such an instruction is included below, to be inserted following 16.2.3.3; the current instructions 16.2.3.4–16.2.3.7 would have to be renumbered as 16.2.3.5–16.2.3.8.

This new instruction raised an issue that needs to be discussed. In general, instructions and examples in RDA assume that the main instruction is being followed, not any alternative. In this case, the first paragraph of the new 16.2.3.4 would apply when the main instruction to retain initial articles has been followed, but the second paragraph would apply when the alternative to omit the article has been followed. Is this a problem? Is there a need to explain what is happening?

Finally, "The Dalles" example currently in 16.2.3.7 should be relocated to the examples in the new instruction.

## 1. RDA 6.29.1.33

### Proposed revision:

#### 16.2.2.4 Recording the Preferred Name

Record the name of a place in the form most commonly found in gazetteers or other reference sources used in choosing the name, unless the instructions given under [16.2.2.8](#)–[16.2.2.13](#) indicate otherwise.

When recording the preferred name of a place, include an initial article if present.

EXAMPLE

The Dalles

Los Angeles

El Centro

Le Mans

al-Ghardaqah

Y Bala

#### Alternative

Omit an initial article (see appendix C) unless the name is to be accessed under the article.

EXAMPLE

Dalles

**not** The Dalles

Ghardaqah

**not** al-Ghardaqah

Bala

**not** Y Bala

[remainder of 16.2.2.4 unchanged]

### Clean copy:

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EXAMPLE  
 The Dalles  
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### **Alternative**

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EXAMPLE  
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 Bala  
**not** Y Bala

[remainder of 16.2.2.4 unchanged]

## 2. New Instruction at 16.2.3.4

### Proposed revision:

Insert the following instruction before the current 16.2.3.4 and renumber the current 16.2.3.4–16.2.3.7 as 16.2.3.5–16.2.3.8.

### **16.2.3.4**

### **Initial Articles**

If the name chosen as the preferred name of the place includes an initial article, record the name without the article as a variant name.

#### EXAMPLE

Dalles (Or.)

**Preferred form of name recorded as:** The Dalles (Or.)

If an initial article present in the name of the place has been omitted from the preferred name of the place, record the name with the initial article as a variant name.

#### EXAMPLE

The Dalles (Or.)

**Preferred form of name recorded as:** Dalles (Or.)

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**Preferred form of name recorded as:** The Dalles (Or.)

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EXAMPLE

The Dalles (Or.)

**Preferred form of name recorded as:** Dalles (Or.)

### 3. Additional Proposed Revision

Delete the following example from the **Other Variant Name** section in what is currently 16.2.3.7:

EXAMPLE

The Dalles (Or.)

**Preferred form of name recorded as:** Dalles (Or.)