Proposed New Terms in Geographical Distribution

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its southern side. At Umar Shah (36 miles west of Nushki) it was burying a row of tall willow trees, just as Mr. Cornish describes the sand burying date palms in Egypt. There is nothing of the sand-dune about the Registan. That is a great sea of sand, in which, on a clear day, hills—and high hills, too—stand up as islands. It moves slowly eastward and south-eastward, as I gathered. Westward of the Helmand, too, there extends for 100 miles or more a great sand desert. When camped at Kalah-i-fath, we heard of an ancient buried city where after rain the natives unearthed many coins. It was suggested that this city might be Pasargadæ. This great Registan, east and west of the reach of the Helmand from Kalah-i-bist to Rudbar, is still food for the explorer, when the Amir of Afghanistan withdraws his embargo on European travellers. In and around it much may be learnt, including a good deal about sand-dunes. Registan, I may add, means “land of sand,” or “great tract of sand.”

A. C. YATE, Major,
2nd Baluchis.

Proposed New Terms in Geographical Distribution.

Animals are not, in most cases, generally distributed over the Earth's surface, but are confined to certain definite localities, which are called their “specific areas.” Thus Africa south of the Atlas is the specific area of the giraffe and of the African elephant; they are found here and nowhere else. In the same way the sloths and anteaters are confined to tropical America, and the polar bear to the North Polar lands. Such animals may be called “*topo-politan*” (τόπος, *locus*, and πολιτης, *civis*) in contradistinction to those that are universally distributed, or “*cosmo-politan*.” As regards species, cosmopolitan animals are rare, but when we come to the higher groups, such as genera, families, and orders, there are many forms that may be called “cosmopolitan,” or, at any rate, “quasi-cosmopolitan.” The dog-genus (*Canis*) is a good example of quasi-cosmopolitan genus of mammals. Dogs of various species occur in almost all lands, from the poles to the equator—even in Australia, where the mammals are generally so peculiar, although dogs are absent in Madagascar and in the Pacific islands. In the class of birds, some species are almost cosmopolitan, such as the sanderling (*Calidris arenaria*) and the osprey (*Pandion haliaëtus*), but by far the greater number of birds are “topo-politan,” and in many cases are confined within very narrow limits.

The vast majority of natural groups of animals being “topo-politan,” *i.e.* restricted to more or less definite areas on the Earth's surface, it follows that these various areas are characterized by the presence of certain forms of animal life which do not occur elsewhere. These forms it is proposed to call “*Topomorphs*.” Thus the giraffe is a “*topomorph*” * of the Æthiopian region (Africa south of the Atlas); the sloths and anteaters are topomorphs of the neotropical region (South and Central America); the duck-bill and lyre-bird are topomorphs of Australia; and the kiwi (*Apteryx*) of New Zealand. On the other hand, in many cases the *absence* of certain forms of animal life in countries where they might be naturally expected to occur is a marked feature of certain parts of the world's surface. For example, bears (*Ursus*) and deer (*Cervus*) are altogether absent from the Æthiopian regions, and cats (*Felis*) from Australia, though these forms are widely distributed over other lands. It is proposed to designate such forms as “lipomorphs” † (λείπω,

* From τόπος, *locus*, and μορφή, *forma*.

† On a previous occasion (see *P.Z.S.*, 1882, p. 311), I have proposed to use “*lipo-type*” in this sense instead of “*lipomorph*.” But the latter term is better, because “type” and its combinations are generally used technically in zoology to indicate the particular specimen from which the original description or figure of a species has been taken.

deficio, and *μορφή*, *forma*) as regards the particular areas in which they are *not* found. Thus bears and deer are "lipomorphs" of Africa south of the Atlas, and cats (*Felis*) of Australia.

The three new terms which I propose to introduce into the study of the geographical distribution of animals are therefore—

1. "*Topo-politan*" to designate natural groups of limited geographical range (in contradistinction to "cosmopolitan").

2. "*Topomorph*" = a group of animals limited to a particular district and characteristic of it.

3. "*Lipomorph*" = a group which characterizes a particular district by its absence from it.

P. L. SCLATER, F.R.S.

MEETINGS OF THE ROYAL GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY, SESSION 1896-1897.

Eleventh Ordinary Meeting, May 10, 1897.—Sir CLEMENTS MARKHAM, K.C.B.,
President, in the Chair.

ELECTIONS.—*Lieutenant R. A. E. Benn (Indian Staff Corps); George Rowland Blades; Stanley Victor Coote; Horace Cox; John Eugene Dawson, J.P.; Captain Henry Richmond Gale, R.E.; Ernest W. Greg; Douglas Menzies Hall; Walter Shilling Hill; Lieutenant Robert Richard Hubbard, R.N.R.; Captain E. Le Mesurier; John Arthur Ludlow; G. B. Macpherson-Grant; George Jackson Poulton; Lieutenant Dudley G. Seagrim, R.A.; Daniel C. Stapleton; Henry Morris Upcher; Rev. William Vivian; Lieutenant F. C. Webb Ware (Indian Staff Corps).*

The PRESIDENT said: Before proceeding to the business of the evening, I must allude to the loss we have sustained by the death of Mr. Theodore Bent. He generally, during the last few years, made interesting excursions into unknown parts of Arabia and Africa, and afterwards read us in this room most interesting papers; and, judging from the very large audience he always had, I am sure that these papers were fully appreciated. He was a very accomplished man, both as an archæologist and as a geographer, a charming companion, and a true friend; perhaps it would not befit me to dwell upon some of his still higher qualities. You will remember that his wife, Mrs. Bent, always accompanied him in his journeys, and shared all his hardships and dangers. I am sure that all of us will feel the deepest sympathy for Mrs. Bent in her great bereavement.

The Paper read was:—

"Recent Journeys in Szechuan, Western China." By Mrs. Bishop.

Afternoon Technical Meeting, Wednesday, May 12, at 4.30 p.m.—Sir
CLEMENTS MARKHAM, K.C.B., President, in the Chair.

The Paper read was:—

"Variation and Dip of the Magnetic Needle." By Arthur W. Horsburgh.