Authority control of Arabic personal names from the Classical period at the Bibliotheca Alexandrina

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to the MELCOM International 27th annual conference in Alexandria May 23-25, 2005

(revised version: January 2006)

ABSTRACT

This paper is intended to illustrate the Bibliotheca Alexandrina methods of authorizing Arabic old names and creating Bi-Script Arabic Roman authority file using the VTLS/VIRTUA LIS as a first step towards cooperative projects with union catalogues and authority files. The significant need of mutually accepted standards for exchange of Arabic script Name authority records is also examined with proposed models of cooperation.

INTRODUCTION

Each online Arabic catalogue consulted uses its own methods of authorizing old Arabic names although they use the same descriptive rules. For example, there are various reference sources and methodologies used for authorizing old Arabic names which lead to various forms used for the same name in each catalogue. Thus, these differences in recording the same old Arabic name in each Arabic online catalogue may stand as a barrier for cooperation in an Arabic script union catalogue and authority file. However, the problem is once a library has defined and used a method for authorizing and entering names in their catalogue it is entirely impractical to abandon this method and turn to another defined method for authorizing and entering names, due to the enormity of the task of reauthorizing and re-entering all the names in its catalogue again.

To solve this problem the BA has implemented a methodology of authorizing old Arabic names by recording all the forms used in the four main reference sources most commonly used by Arabic script libraries. This includes the exact replication of references and methodology used by the Library of Congress in LCRI and applied in NACO on OCLC, but in Arabic script.

The BA practice is to conform to one main reference source and methodology for entering the established Arabic script name heading, to record the rest of the forms in Arabic script within the other three reference sources as unused forms, and recording the transliterated form into Roman script according to the LC and OCLC in linking fields (Tag 7xx in marc 21).

The goal of the BA is to implement an Arabic Script Union Catalogue and Authority File by establishing something similar to NACO in Arabic script, which may be called ANACO, Arabic Name Authority Cooperation. This will allow an option for exchanging Arabic script name authority headings where Arabic script online libraries will have the advantage of keeping their local methodologies and practices, meanwhile conforming to one methodology under cooperation of the ANACO.

Authorization & Documentation Classical Authors

A Classical author is one who was active prior to the 20th century. Any author who died before 1900 or about 1318 Hijri (Islamic Calendar) is treated as a classical author.

Authors whose lives have spanned the 19^{th} and 20^{th} centuries may be treated as Modern authors if it is determined that they were primarily active during the 20^{th} century.

ELEMENTS OF OLD ARABIC NAMES

The authorization process of old Arabic names needs to distinguish between their elements. Elements of old Arabic names are PATRONYMIC, ISM (given name), LAQAB (descriptive epithet), KUNYAH (appellation), KHITAB (honorific name), NISBAH (attribution). For instance, the philosopher and physician Ibn Sina (Avicenna) has a given name of al-Husayn, a patronymic name of Ibn Sīna, a descriptive epithet of al-Shaykh al-Raʿīs, an appellation of Abu Alī, and an attribution of al-Bukhārī.

1. PATRONYMIC

A PATRONYMIC is a compound with *Ibn* (son) as the first word. For example, *Ibn Hazm*, an Islamic theologian or *Ibn al-Muqaffa'*, an author and writer of miscellaneous works in Arabic literature.

2. ISM - Given Name

Some old Arabic names are well known by their ISM (given name) in direct order. For example, *Mālik ibn Anas*, a theologian and linguist. Note that *Mohammed* and *Ahmed* are the most popular ISMs (given names) in the Arabic language.

3. LAQAB - Descriptive Epithet

A LAQAB is typically a word or an expression applied to an eminent figure describing an actual or attributed quality, or based on the family name or a certain situation. For example, the famous linguist Qutrub (a worm that appears only at night) was given this epithet as he constantly visited his professor at night to ask him about matters that occupied his mind and could not leave them until the morning. An epithet may be an honorary title such as al-Shaykh (a sheikh) or al-Ra'-is, it could be given to someone who is specialized in a certain field of knowledge such as al- $Mantiq\bar{\imath}$ (logician), or has a particular profession like al- $Zajj\bar{a}j$ (glass maker)

4. KUNYAH - Appellation

It is a distinction imparted on outstanding figures to honor them, and it is usually associated with the name of a person. For example, the Arabs designate one who is called 'Ali as $\$E\grave{I}OHasan$, and one who is called Ya ' $q\bar{u}b$ as $\$E\grave{I}-Y\bar{u}suf$. KUNYAH is typically a compound with $\$E\grave{I}$ as the first word.

5. KHITAB - Honorific Name

It is an honorific compound of which the last part is typically al- $D\bar{\imath}n$. For example, the two Sufi orders and Islamic mysticism leaders lbn al-' $Arab\bar{\imath}$ and 'Abd al- $Q\bar{a}dir$ al- $J\bar{\imath}l\bar{a}n\bar{\imath}$ both share the same KHITAB of $OXK \cap DOD\bar{\imath}n$.

6. NISBAH - Attribution

It is a proper adjective ending in "ī" indicating origin, birthplace, homeland or residence or other kinds of attributions. For instance, *al-Khuwārizmī* is an attribution to *Khuwarizm*, which is a place in central Asia. Nonetheless, a person is not to be attributed to a place unless he was born or has spent a considerable time there.

CHOICE OF THE ENTRY ELEMENT

Since some of the old Arabic scholars are known by either their names in direct order, their appellations, their epithets, or attributions, the authorization problem lies in the choice of which element of the old Arabic name (Ism-Given Name, Kunyah-Appellation, Laqab-Epithet, Nisbah-Attribution) should be considered the *entry element*. The *entry element* is the first part of the name used in the author index, within the catalog, to group all the works of this author under one unique part of his name.

The BA catalogers consult reference sources for authorizing the classical Arabic authors as stated in AACR2r (22.22B1). The choice of the *entry element* should be uniform and based upon the name by which the person is clearly most commonly known. This necessitates using and conforming to an authority list which ensures name uniformity and solidarity to avoid user catalog/shelf failure to find the works of the same old Arabic scholar if his works are not put together under one unique entry. The BA catalogers determine the *entry element* from a printed authority list that has marc 21 source code "*Maaq*"

REFERENCE SOURCES USED

Maaq is the abbreviation for "Madākhil al-asmā' al-'Arabīyah al-qadīmah", or "Entries of old Arabic names," by Dr. Sha'bān Khalīfah. Currently, this is the authority list used by the

BA. This authority list specifies which part of the name is to be considered the *entry element* for most of the old Arabic scholars.

Construction of Names in Maag

1. The Best Known Element

In *Maaq*, the choice of the *entry element* is uniform and based upon the name by which the person is most commonly known according to the name that appears most frequently in reference sources, giving preference to old biographical references that were done in the same time period. *Maaq* includes a bibliography of all the reference sources used (vol. 1 p. 25-42).

2. Full Form of a Name

The best known element or combination of elements are placed first as the *entry element*, then a comma is inserted, and other elements of the name are given in the following order: *Khitab, Kunyah, Ism, Patronymic, and any other element*. Full form of the classical name is used in *Maaq*, even if the author's name is well-known and short like that of *Suyūtī*. This is done since it cannot be predicted what the library users will search with, either *Suyūtī* only or *Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūtī*, or *Jalāl al-Suyūtī*. Creating many cross-references for all the forms of an author's name is a very time consuming process. The BA catalog users can search with *Suyūtī* alone, or a combination of the classical author name, through the heading (Keyword) search.

3. Dates

The +LMUāte is used for recording the dates of birth and death for personal Arabic names from the classical period (not the 0^-O —Gāte).

4. Article Al-

The article Al- is not omitted from the name *entry element* in Maaq as Al- is considered a part of the name. For example, an author may be called Hasan and another author's name may be Al- Hasan.

CLASSICAL NAME VERIFICATIONS

The BA catalogers may consult other references to solve some authority problems:

Case 1

- Author is not found in *Maaq*;
- o Entry element seems inappropriate or inaccurate;
- o Misspelling of authors names;
- o There are spelling variations for the same person;
- o The same person appears in different *entry elements*;

o The same person appears with wrong or different dates.

References used

- 1. Mu'jam al-Mu'alifin (Index of Authors) by Umar Ridā Kahālah
- 2. Al-'Alām (Luminaries) by Khayr al-Dīn al-Ziriklī

The "Biographies" above are used in constructing a heading. Both sources are cited in the authority record. Also "see" cross-references are created from the incorrect form of names to the correct form.

Case 2

Insufficient or no biographical information in the item in hand and similar Names in Maaq, example: Only finding the surname "Kuwārizmī" in the item being cataloged and there are many authors having the surname "Kuwārizmī" in *Maaq*.

References used

- 1. Mu'jam al-Matbū'āt (Dictionary of Arabic Printed Books) by Yūsuf Iliān Sarkīs
- 2. Kashf al-Zunun by Katip Celebi

The above "Bio-bibliographies" have both author and title indexes. The catalogers can search the title of the work being cataloged in the title index and it will lead to the biography of the author. This will help in determining the exact author in Maaq. Both sources are cited in the authority record.

METHODS OF TRANSLITERATION "ROMANIZATION"

Romanization Form

The Romanized form of personal Arabic names in OCLC and LC are preferably used as a linking heading, to guarantee linking between the works in Arabic and Roman scripts of the same author.

Romanization Tools

- OCLC authority file;
- Library of Congress online authorities;
- Authors not found in OCLC or LC authority files are Romanized using the ALA/LC Romanization tables for Arabic.

Descriptive Rules

In recording old Arabic names we comply with:

- 1. AACR2 (revised 2002) chapter 22 Personal Names
- 2. Library of Congress rules interpretations
- 3. Marc 21 format
- 4. BA Arabic cataloguing policy

BA Arabic cataloguing policy for recording old Arabic names includes three practices that differ from AACR2 and LCRI. These practices are used to comply with the form of the old name in the Arabic authority list *Maaq*. These practices are well justified by the users needs.

BA Cataloging Policy Practice

1. In Arabic we use the *Hijri* date (Islamic Calendar) and not the terms of the Christian era *Milādī* date used in transliterated names.

Justification:

Arabic Heritage Researchers need to know in what century during the Islamic Empire the Arabic scholar lived to indicate his specific time period, Pre-Islamic, Early Islamic, Umayyad, Abbasid, etc. The BA does not add the 0LO—G ate in square brackets after recording the Hijri date because it can be easily estimated by using date converters either on the web, printed resources, or simply adding 580 years to the $Hijr\bar{\imath}$ date to get the approximate 0LO—G ate.

2. In Arabic we do not omit the article Al- from the *entry element* of the name as in transliteration.

Justification:

Arabic heritage researchers who are familiar with the Arabic language will find it inappropriate to leave out the article Al- from a name in Arabic script since it is considered a part of the name, not as in transliteration, because Al- appears to be a hyphenated prefix. For example, in transliteration Jahiz is used rather than al-Jahiz, but this is not applicable in the Arabic script language. However, we omit the Al- when using the name in Arabic script as shown in "cross references," while Cuttering the author's name or adding a suffix of three letters from his name after the class mark.

An investigation is made to designate the second indicator as non filling characters to allow the users to search with or without Al- to find the name. The policy of not omitting Al- is applied to names in Arabic script only. The Article Al- is omitted in recording Arabic names in Roman script conforming to the guidelines of LC authority files. This policy is applied for Arabic speakers who are not familiar with omitting Al- from names, therefore giving them the option to retrieve Arabic script authors with or without leaving the article in their search.

3. After the *entry element* the rest of the name is recorded with all its other elements (fuller form).

Justification:

In Arabic we use the fuller form, recording all the names, not just the most well known *entry element*, even if the name is short, like that of <u>Suyutī</u>, as no one can predict what the catalog users will search with, <u>Suyūtī</u>, <u>Jalal al-Din al-Suyūtī</u>, or <u>Jalal al-Suyūtī</u>. Once again, creating cross-references for all these forms is a very time consuming process.

Types of Authority Control

ORIGINAL AUTHORITIES

The BA catalogers use the authority control module provided by the BA library integrated system, VTLS to create original authority records for Arabic script personal names, corporate names, subject headings, series and uniform titles, according to the Marc 21 format for authority data.

Established (Used Form)

The form of a name in *Maaq* is used as the established heading in Tag 100.

Cross-Referencing

1. Romanization form

The Romanized form of Arabic personal names in OCLC and LC is preferable to be used as a related heading, to guarantee linking the works in Arabic and Roman scripts by the same.

2. LC/OCLC form

The BA records a name, as constructed in OCLC and LC authorities in Arabic script, as a "see from" cross reference, since *Maaq* is the authority tool for constructing classical author headings.

3. Cross-references created for other forms of a name

- o Direct order form if the name is established in inverted order
- o Inverted order form if the name is established in direct order
- o Pin names or any other forms

Citing reference sources of names

- Citations should be made for all the references used for authorizing classical names in which information is found about the name headings, including the item at hand.
- Main reference sources are used in the following precedence:
 - o Sha'bān Khalīfah (MAAQ)
 - o Ziriklī
 - Kahālah
 - o Brockelmann
- Notes may be added to give historical data, or to indicate to those names that couldn't be defined.
- A qualifier for some titles associated with names may be used to distinguish between unqualified names due to a lack of historical data.

COPIED AUTHORITIES (DOWNLOADED)

The BA catalogers also download authority records from OCLC and LC online authorities for Roman script personal names, corporate names, Library of Congress subject headings, series and uniform titles. The BA catalogers consult *Les notices d'autorité de BN-OPALE PLUS* for authorizing French headings.

AUTHORITY CONTROL WEB REPORT

The library information system (LIS) engineers from the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) department, the BA system librarian, Gina Younis, and an advisor, Ms. Lena Isaksson, Systems Librarian at Göteborg University Library, Göteborg, SWEDEN, have developed a powerful web authority report used at the BA. This report helps to improve the old way of authority control through scanning the entire index, in order to clean it, by copying and merging duplicates or unused headings. This report is based on the authority messages that appear after saving the record which detects duplicates and new headings. The authority controllers can generate a report of duplicates or new unauthorized headings by any cataloger name or by period and thus ameliorating the effort of consistency and accuracy within the index among the BA catalogers

Recommended Possibilities for Exchanging Arabic Script Authorities

Consortium for Arabic Script Libraries

Since the key to sharing authority records successfully is maintaining a high level of uniformity, the assurance of predictability of what a user can expect to find as a heading facilitates research. Therefore, it is recommended to establish a consortium for Arabic script libraries which ensures that all cooperative partners adhere to the same authorization policy. The consortium of participating Arabic script online libraries will define a cooperation policy, resulting in a cooperative procedural manual, following the Library of Congress PCC (Program for Cooperative Cataloguing) guidelines giving detailed coverage to Arabic script cataloguing specialties.

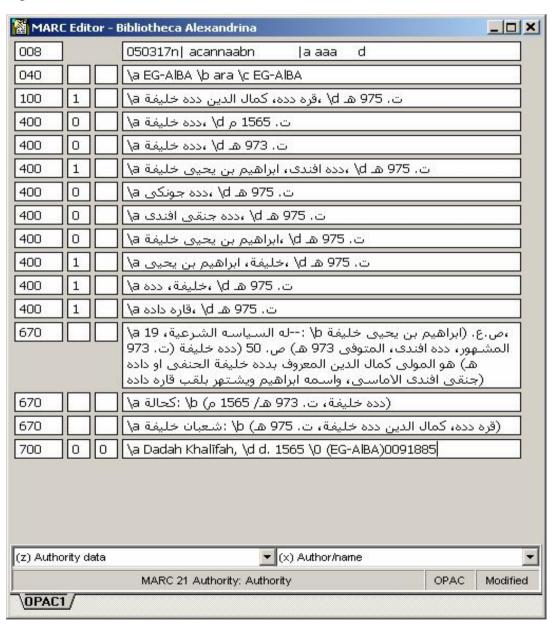
International Standardization for Arabic Script Cataloguing

Reaching "International Standardization" of Arabic script cataloguing practices, under the consortium's decisions, should be reflected in an international cataloguing standard. Standards such as AACR3 and MARC 21 formats or the LCRIs, which are generally applied to Arabic cataloguing in its broad sense, need to be provided with actual illustrations from Arabic script bibliographic and authority records, in the same manner that AACR2, LCRIs, and Marc 21 provide examples for western languages.

BA Proposed Models for Cooperation with Arabic Script Authority Records

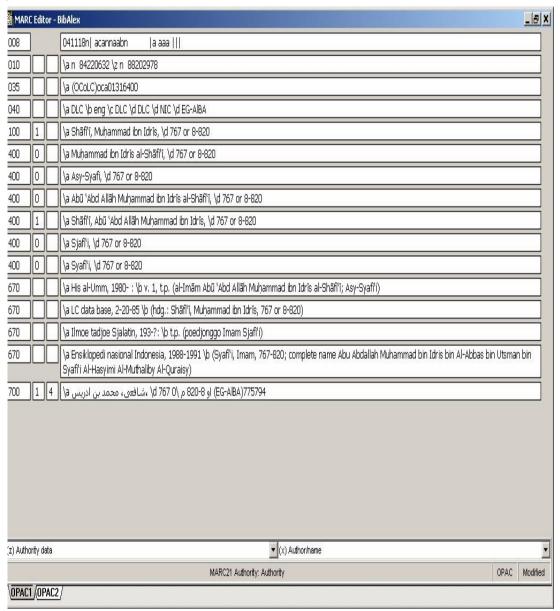
1. Full Arabic script name authority records with linking tag 700 for the established transliterated "Romanized" form of a name, as in LC/OCLC authority file. (See Fig. 1).

Figure 1



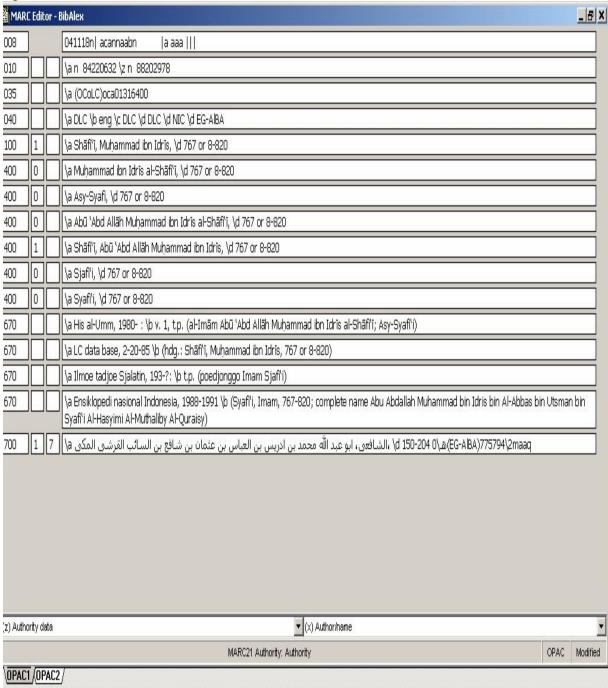
2. Full LC Roman script name authority record with linking tag 700 in Arabic script constructed as the form of name in LC/OCLC authority file (*see Figure 2*).

Figure 2



3. Full LC Roman script name authority record with linking tag 700 in Arabic Script constructed as the form of a name in *maaq*, the BA printed authority list (*see Figure 3*).

Figure 3



Conclusion

The challenge in establishing an Arabic union catalog lies mostly in the lack of specific tools designed for the use of the Arabic language. Most of the tools used today are translated works of western tools that have not gone through a systematic "Arabization" effort. For example, the general standard used for cataloging in a number of Arab countries is the "Anglo American Cataloging Rules." The use of standards related to bibliographic or authority records is neither spread nor standardized. The bibliographic records of non-Arabic material are generally purchased through foreign organizations while the cataloging of Arabic material is accomplished individually by each library.

In addition, the current level of implementation and the rules of interpretation do not appear to have any consistency. This is due to a lack of agreement or dictation by a national decision making committee and a shortage of general standardized interpretation. Uniformity problems cause the main difficulty when setting up a union catalog. If an Arabic union catalog is to be built, these tools must be comprehensively reviewed, updated, and adopted for the Arabic language use. It must also fall in the responsibility of a specific organization to guarantee a systematic review. The chosen organization will fulfill this role and act, as the Library of Congress and OCLC act, in terms of their ownership of the development of these tools.

Union catalogs are not only tools used to determine which libraries hold particular items. They provide a coherent view of the holdings of multiple libraries or library collections. They go beyond the normal functions of a single-collection catalog, not only bringing together works by the same author or about the same subject in response to user queries, but also by bringing multiple instances of the same work (perhaps described differently by different institutions) together for the user searching the database. They often offer uniform (or unifying) name and subject authorities as a means of furthering the basic catalog objectives of bringing together works of common authorship or subject; this can compensate for variations in cataloging practice among the participant collections. Also Union catalogs provide users with the ability to perform consistent searching of records from multiple institutions, in the sense that these records are indexed consistently (for example, there is uniformity in the choice of fields from the records used to construct the various search indices, and also uniformity in the way in which search keys such as keywords or personal names are extracted from these fields and normalized for indexing).

It was noted that Authority Control works best in a shared cataloging environment where copy cataloging is of critical importance. Otherwise, any library can merely have to set up its own standards for how it wish to establish names and other authorities and stay consistent with its methodology to achieve authority control in its own local catalog. However, any library want to consider about interaction with other catalogs or possible participation in union catalogs or shared bibliographic databases, or at the very least, exchanging of bibliographic or authority records via Z39.50, here becomes the need to define a mutually accepted standard for exchanging records.

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