

## **Indexing Arabic Names: The Basics**

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In looking at the indexes of books on Islamic studies and Middle East politics or history, I have sometimes found errors in the indexing of Arabic names. What strikes me is that the indexers seem to have a penchant for inverting any name they see, but in some cases Arabic names should not be inverted. Other Arabic names should be inverted, but the last element in a name is in fact part of a compound name that should not be split, or it is an honorific that should not be mistaken for a surname. Heather Hedden wrote an excellent article on indexing Arabic names<sup>1</sup> years ago, but there is still need for instruction on this subject. Thus the need for another article on how to index Arabic names.

### **Premodern and Modern Names**

The first rule in indexing Arabic names is to realize that premodern and modern names are handled differently. European-style names with an identifiable given name and a family name that passes down from generation to generation only appeared in Arab countries in the 19th and early 20th centuries, and at different times in different places (Hedden, p. C11). Even today, many people use their father's given name as a second name, rather than a family name. In Egypt (the country I am most familiar with) for example, on legal documents requiring four names, people use their given name, their father's name, their paternal grandfather's name, followed by either their great-grandfather's name or a family name. They do not use *bint* (daughter of) or *ibn/bin* (son of) as was done in the premodern era. In other contexts people might use only their own name and their father's name; or their own name and their grandfather's name; or their own name and the family name; or their own name, their father's name, and the family name. Many Egyptians are inconsistent in this and use different forms of their name in different contexts. In a modern book, however, I would expect to see people called consistently by the same names.

Premodern names often have various epithets and honorifics that may appear in different orders and may or may not be the entry point in an index.

In the following sections, the information on the definite article, what names not to split, etc. is true for both premodern and modern names. However, rules about inverting

names may not apply in non-Arab countries. Muslim Malaysians, for example, use Arabic names but their names are not inverted in cataloguing and in indexes.<sup>2</sup>

Another difficulty with Arabic names is that there is wide variation in spelling. Academic books covering the premodern era are usually less of a problem in this because they generally use a set system of transliteration. In modern names, there is more variation because individuals have their own way of spelling their name, which may be influenced by local pronunciation or the predominant colonial language. This should be less of a problem for an indexer than a copyeditor, but an indexer does need to recognize variations in the spelling of some words — especially the definite article, *Abu*, and *'Abd al-*. There may also be difficulties if an embedded index is created in the Word document before copyediting and the author has not been careful about spelling. I will not address spelling variations in detail here and will write names without diacritics. Heather Hedden has written about spelling variations in her article, and I have written about them in a series of blog posts on *An American Editor*<sup>3</sup>.

### **Diacritics, 'Ayn, and Hamza**

Along with variations in spelling, the indexer should keep an eye out for inadvertent variations in the use of diacritics and in transliterations of the letters *'ayn* and *hamza*.

Diacritics in Arabic transliteration usually consist of macrons over some vowels and dots under some consonants. Some transliteration systems use other diacritics. In any case, there are likely to be inconsistencies in the use of diacritics. If you know enough Arabic to recognize which form of the word is correct, enter the word as it should be in the index and tell your client to proofread carefully. I rarely mark individual cases of wrong spellings because there are usually many in a text. Obviously, if you do not know Arabic you will have to query which spelling is correct.

Even when diacritics are not used, many books show the letters *'ayn* and *hamza*, either as opening and closing single quotation marks, respectively, or as half circles opening to the right and left, respectively. Again, you are likely to find inconsistencies in these. If you know Arabic and are able to correct them in the index, do so; otherwise query the client. It is possible, of course, for an author to be consistent but wrong. When that has happened I index the word correctly and alert the client.

If your author uses single quotation marks for ‘*ayn* and *hamza*, turn off the Smart Quotes in both your indexing software and Word, and copy rather than type names into your indexing program. I suspect that half the problems with these letters stem from Word’s attempt to be helpful with Smart Quotes.

If you prefer to code these, I suggest using angle brackets opening in the same direction, that is, < for ‘ (opening quotation mark) for ‘*ayn*; and > for ’ (closing quotation mark) for *hamza*. However, if you are writing an embedded index, do not use angle brackets because Word reads these as commands to ignore text. In that case I use [3] for ‘*ayn* (ع) because it looks like a backwards 3, and [2] for *hamza* (ء) because it looks like a backwards 2, but you can use whatever is easy for you to remember. See my article in *The Indexer*<sup>4</sup> and my blog posts<sup>5</sup> for more.

### **The Definite Article *al-* and Its Variants**

The definite article is usually spelled *al-* in transliteration, but in modern names it might be spelled *el-* (especially in Egypt), and it is often spelled *ul-* in compound names. In speech the *l* of the article is assimilated into the sounds represented by *d, ḍ, dh, l, n, r, s, sh, t, ṭ, th, z, ẓ* (the Arabic letters د, ذ, ض, ل, ن, ر, س, ش, ط, ت, ظ, ز). Most styles do not show the assimilation except in transliteration of poetry or prayers, where pronunciation is important, but some people spell their names to show the assimilation, and you might find it in religious texts. You have to recognize that these variations are the definite article and treat them as you do *al-*.

While the definite article is usually lowercased in academic works, it may be capitalized by some individuals and organizations in their names. It might be attached with a hyphen or written as a separate word. Examples of this are the media company Al Jazeera (sorted under J) and al Mohtaraf design studio (sorted under M).

In some styles, the definite article is used only the first time on personal names and is dropped on subsequent mention. This is the usual style in newspapers and should be familiar to indexers and readers. For example Bashar al-Assad and Assad are easily recognized as being the same person. If your author uses the article on the first mention and drops it on subsequent mention, index it with the article, which is the correct name. If the article and the name are written as one word, then treat the article as part of the name rather than an article. For example, the Egyptian diplomat Mohamed ElBaradei spells his name as one word and is

indexed under E. However his sister, I am told, spells the surname with a hyphen and is indexed under B.

When the article comes at the beginning of a main entry, Chicago style (16.75) moves the article to the end, but some publishers keep it in its place and ignore it in sorting. Ask your client or see how the references are alphabetized and do the same.

The vowel of the article might be elided after a long vowel — such as in the name *Abu*. The elision might be shown by writing the word and the *l* of the article as one word — *Abul* (or *Aboul* in some spellings) — or the elided vowel might be shown with an apostrophe. If this is the style your author uses, make sure that you have an apostrophe and not an opening quotation mark before the *l*. Some styles do not write an apostrophe with the elision.

When the second element of a name begins with the article, ignore the article in sorting — including *'l* or *l* used instead of the full article. If the index has a lot of names beginning with the same element such as *'Abd*, *Abu*, or *Ibn*, it is best to sort word by word. This is especially important when you have a mix of premodern and modern names.

<b>Examples of wrong and correct sorting with the article</b>			
<b>Wrong sorting</b>	<b>Correct sorting</b>	<b>Wrong sorting</b>	<b>Correct sorting</b>
Ibn al-Athir	Ibn al-Athir	Dar al-Ayyam li-l-Sahafa	Dar al-Ayyam li-l-Sahafa
Ibn al-Haytham	Ibn Hanbal	Dar al-Fann al-Hadith	Dar Badran
Ibn al-Nafis	Ibn al-Haytham	Dar al-Ma'arif	Dar al-Fann al-Hadith
Ibn Hanbal	Ibn Ishaq	Dar al-Mustaqbal al-'Arabi	Dar al-Ma'arif
Ibn Ishaq	Ibn Khaldun	Dar Badran	Dar Merit
Ibn Khaldun	Ibn al-Nafis	Dar Merit	Dar al-Mustaqbal al-'Arabi

### ***Āl* or *Al* and *Bā* or *Ba***

*Āl* means ‘clan’ or ‘dynasty.’ In modern Arabic script it is written آل with a tilde-like mark over the *alif*; in Qur’anic script it may appear as آلء. In Arabic script it is written as a separate word, not attached to the following word as the definite article is, and the letter *l* is not assimilated in pronunciation. *Āl* is never suppressed in sorting or moved to the end. It is usually capitalized in English. It is primarily found in royal names, which are never inverted,

and in names of clans. Another example is the Iranian novelist Jalal Al-e Ahmad. The *Al* is the borrowed Arabic word for “family”, so he is indexed as Al-e Ahmad, Jalal.

I have found the word *Bā* or *Ba* in Yemeni names and it has a similar meaning. It may or may not be hyphenated. Do not split it from the following name and do not suppress it in sorting.

### ***Ibn, bin, ben, b. and bint, bt.***

*Ibn* and its variations mean “son of”; *bint* and the abbreviated *bt.* mean “daughter of.” When you find these between names they are usually lowercased and you should ignore them in sorting. (When they come at the beginning is another case and is discussed below.) In premodern names you might get a string of names like Iman bint Yusuf ibn Ahmad (Iman daughter of Yusuf son of Ahmad) or Mustafa ibn Hisham ibn ‘Amr (Mustafa son of Hisham son of ‘Amr). Simple premodern names such as these — that is, without honorifics or epithets — should be indexed as you see them, without inverting. In modern names, such strings are usually only seen in names of royalty, which are never inverted.

The variations in *ibn* may be grammatical or stylistic. One publisher I often work for uses *bin* for Gulf royalty, *ben* for names from North Africa (where it is the usual spelling), and *ibn* for other names. Other publishers might consistently use *b.* This is another reason to ignore these words in sorting.

*Bin* and *Ben* might be part of a family name, in which case it should be capitalized in English. Do not ignore it in sorting and do not split it from the following name. Examples are Osama Bin Laden and Bin Laden Group. Bin Laden is the family name. Osama is not Osama son of Laden. He is indexed as ‘Bin Laden, Osama’. Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, the former president of Tunisia, has the family name Ben Ali and is indexed as ‘Ben Ali, Zine El Abidine’.

### **Compound Names that Cannot Be Split**

Arabic has a lot of compound names that are identifiable by one of their elements. I present here the most common ones. Do not split these. That is, do not invert; do not move only one element and not the whole thing. The identifiable compounds are based on the genitive construction (*idafa*) and usually, but not always, the second element begins with the definite article *al-*, which should be ignored in sorting.

### ***Ibn* + [something]**

When *Ibn* (son of) comes at the beginning of a name rather than between two names, it is capitalized in English. There are many medieval personalities who are known simply as *Ibn* + [something]. The “something” might be the name of a father or ancestor, or the whole name might be a nickname. For example, nickname of the fifteenth-century Egyptian hadith scholar Ibn Hajar al-‘Asqalani means ‘son of stone’; *al-‘Asqalani* indicates that the family originated in ‘Asqalan some generations before him. He is indexed as ‘Ibn Hajar al-‘Asqalani’, sorted on I.

Here are some other names of this type — alphabetized as they should be, with the *al-* ignored: Ibn al-‘Arabi (also known as Ibn ‘Arabi without the definite article), Ibn Battuta, Ibn al-Hajib, Ibn al-Hajj, Ibn Hazm, Ibn Khaldun, Ibn Taghribirdi, and Ibn Taymiyyah.

### ***Bint* + [something]**

*Bint* (daughter of) is the feminine counterpart of *Ibn* and can occur as the first element of a compound name that is not split. *Bint al-Shati’* (literally Daughter of the Riverbank), the pen name of Aisha Abd al-Rahman, is indexed as written, without a comma and sorted under B.

### ***Abu* + [something]**

*Abu* + [something] (literally father of [something]) forms a type of nickname known as a *kunya*. The ‘something’ is usually the name of the man’s eldest son, but the *kunya* might be used to indicate a trait. In the medieval period people were addressed by their *kunya* and might be known primarily by it instead of their real name.

This form of name is still used in some Arab cultures today and may appear as a surname, nickname, or pen name. Like other compound names, it is not split and if there is an article on the second element, it is ignored in sorting. Thus the Egyptian writer, poet, and historian Muhammad Farid Abu Hadid (1893–1967) is indexed as ‘Abu Hadid, Muhammad Farid’. The Palestinian Abu Nidal is indexed as written, possibly with a gloss of his real name (Sabri Khalil al-Banna), possibly with an entry at al-Banna, Sabri Khalil (sorted under B) with a *see* reference to Abu Nidal.

Note that if *Abu* is preceded by *ibn* or *bint*, it becomes *Abi* (or *Abī*), and the entire sequence of *ibn/bint Abi* + [Something] should not be split.

### ***Umm* + [something]**

*Umm* + [something] (literally, mother of [something]) is the feminine form of the *kunya*. Like the masculine form, it may refer to a woman's eldest son, such as in the case of Umm Salama (mother of Salama), or it may indicate a trait. The given name Umm Kulthum (also spelled Kulsum or Kalsum) means 'one with chubby cheeks.' It was used as the stage name of the Egyptian singer Fatima Ibrahim el-Sayyid el-Batagi, who is indexed as Umm Kulthum. If the second element has the definite article, as in the case of Umm al-Qura ("mother of towns," a nickname for Mecca), the article is ignored in sorting.

### **‘Abd + [something]**

This compound, meaning 'servant of' or 'slave of', is one of the most common. The second element is usually, but not always, one of the names of God, and there is usually a definite article on the second element, which leads to various spellings in modern names. Sort word by word and ignore the definite article if it is not attached to the first element, in order to bring common spellings together:

‘Abdallah, Jamil  
‘Abd al-Hamid II  
‘Abd Rabbihi  
‘Abd al-Rahman III  
‘Abd al-Rahman, Sayyid  
‘Abd al-Samad, ‘Abd al-Qadir  
‘Abdel Ghani, Mahmoud  
Abdul-Jabbar, Kareem

The one exception to this, by convention, is the name of the Egyptian president Gamal ‘Abd al-Nasser, who is usually referred to in text as Nasser and indexed as Nasser, Gamal ‘Abd al-, rather than as ‘Abd al-Nasser, Gamal. If your author ignores this convention and refers to him as ‘Abd al-Nasser, index him as the author has him, but also put a *See* cross reference under Nasser.

It is, of course, common practice for an author to use only a surname on subsequent mention. However, twice I have caught an author using only the second element without ‘Abd, for example referring to Sayyid ‘Abd al-Rahman as al-Rahman rather than ‘Abd al-Rahman. Al-Rahman is a name of God and cannot be used for a human. If you come upon such a mistake in a book, index the name correctly with ‘Abd and tell the client to correct the text.

### **[Something] + al-Din**

Several compounds made of [something] + al-Din ([something] of the faith) are common names in modern Arabic, and many more such compounds serve as a form of honorific in medieval names. In modern names the *al-* might be spelled *ad-*, *ed-*, or *ud-* to show the assimilation of the letter *l*, and the article might be attached to the second word. Din might be spelled Deen or Dine. Common modern compounds are Nur al-Din, Saif al-Din, Salah al-Din, and Shams al-Din.

### **[Something] + Allah**

A few names, now primarily surnames, are formed with Allah as the second element: Farag Allah, Faraj Allah, Hasab Allah, Khair Allah.

### **Dhu (or Zu) + [something]**

Dhu or Zu is a combining word in a few names. The u is a long vowel here, so the vowel of the article elides in pronunciation and this might be shown in various spellings, or the names might be written as one word: Dhu ’l-Qarnayn, Dhu’l-Qarnayn, Dhu-l-Qarnayn, Dhul Qarnayn, Dhu al-Kifl, Dhul Kifl, Dhu al-Faqar, Zulfaqar.

### **Miscellaneous genitive compounds**

I have seen a number of names of prominent people misindexed. These names are also genitive constructions and should not be split.

Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq, a former president of Pakistan, appeared in one index as ‘ul-Haq, Zia’ with no sign of the first name. I could not access the text to see how the author had written the name, and I always see the surname hyphenated. This should be indexed as Zia-ul-Haq, Muhammad.

I mentioned earlier that the former president of Tunisia, Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, has Ben Ali as his surname. His given name is also a genitive-construction compound, which I have also seen used for other people with different spellings: Zine El Abidine, Zain al-Abidin, Zayn al-‘Abidin. These should not be split.

### **Honorifics and Titles**

In the medieval period, honorifics were widely used. They can appear first, last, or somewhere else in a string of names and titles. They can often be recognized by their genitive construction:<sup>6</sup>

[something] + al-Din

[something] + al-Dawla

[something] + al-Mulk

[something] + al-Dunya wal-Din

Other Arabic honorifics usually appear before the name. Some of the common ones are these: al-Sharif; Maulay or Maula; Sayyid (masculine) or Sayyida (feminine). The Wikipedia page ‘Category: Islamic honorifics’ lists others.

([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:Islamic\\_honorifics](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:Islamic_honorifics))

In the Ottoman period, titles and honorifics go after the name. These are the more common ones: Pasha; Bey, Bay, Beg or Bek; Hanim; Efendi or Effendi; Aga or Agha. More are listed in Wikipedia under Ottoman titles. Strictly speaking these titles are Turkish, but they were used with Arabic names and, at least in Egypt, sometimes conferred on Europeans.

Some of these were still in use in Egypt up until the Free Officers Revolution of 1952. Do not mistake these for a surname. Sa‘d Zaghlul Pasha is indexed as ‘Zaghlul Pasha, Sa‘d’ or ‘Zaghlul, Sa‘d’. Fouad Kamal Bey is indexed as ‘Kamal Bey, Fouad’.

Titles of offices often come before a name, perhaps written with the definite article attached. Common offices are these: Amir or Emir (leader, commander or Prince); Amira (Princess); Ayatollah (a high-ranking Shiite religious authority); Imam (ranges from an Islamic ruler to a high-ranking scholar to a prayer leader in a local mosque); Malik (King); Malika (Queen); Mufti (a scholar who interprets Islamic law); Qadi (judge); Shaykh or Sheikh, including Shaykh al-Islam and Shaykh al-Azhar (an elder or religious leader).

Generally, do not use honorifics and titles as the entry point<sup>7</sup> although some medieval names with Qadi may be exceptions if the persons are well known by that name.

### **Names Looking Like Honorifics and Titles**

Some titles and honorifics have also become names. As a given name rather than a title, they are usually without the definite article *al-*.

al-Qadi (modern family name)

Imam (rare name)

(al-)Shaykh or (el-)Sheikh (name or family name)

(al-)Sharif or (al-)Sherif (name)

Malik / Malika (name)

Amir / Amira (name)

al-Sayyid (name)

How can you tell if these are names or titles? In a modern name, if one of these comes second or third, it is a name because titles come first. If it comes first, context will likely tell you if it is a name or a title. Titles, except for religious titles, are less likely in modern names. Is this an ordinary person, or a ruler or a religious authority? ‘Imam’ can be applied to a wide range of offices, including the prayer leader at a local mosque (similar to a minister), and is rare as a name. If online sources do not clarify the matter, ask the author.

### **Modern Names**

Modern Arabic names are relatively easy to index — once you remember which names to not split and can recognize honorifics at the end. Usually the context will tell you if a name is modern, and the form of modern names is usually simply two to four names without any form of *ibn* or *bint* between them. If there is a generational family name — more common in some countries than others — it will often, but not always, start with *al-* or *el-* and end with *i* (which may be written as *ī* or *y*).

If the name is a royal person, it is usually written with *bint* (only after the first name) or *bin* between names. Index royal names in the order given, with no inversion.

If the person is not royal, find the last element, ignoring titles, and move that to the front to be the entry point. If the last element is a compound name, move all of it. If *al-* is at

the beginning of the new first element (after inversion), either code it to be ignored or move it back to the end if that is what the style calls for.

Examples of indexing modern names	
Name	Indexed as
Aisha ‘Abd al-Rahman	‘Abd al-Rahman, Aisha
Nasr Abu Zayd	Abu Zayd, Nasr
Noura Ahmad Dawud	Dawud, Noura Ahmad
Kamal al-Din Hussein	Hussein, Kamal al-Din
Ali Moustafa Mosharafa	Mosharafa, Ali Moustafa
Mohamed Salah Eldin	Salah Eldin, Mohamed
‘Ali El-Helwani	El-Helwani, ‘Ali
El-Sayyid Amin	Amin, El-Sayyid (El-Sayyid is a name here)
Marwa Sa‘id El-Naggar	El-Naggar, Marwa Sa‘id

### Premodern Names

Some premodern names are simple. Especially in the early Islamic period, it is not unusual for someone to be called by just one or two elements, and many of the great scholars are known by a short form of their name:

Abu Huraira

Abu Bakr al-Siddiq

Anas ibn Malik

al-Bukhari

Ibn Khaldun

Ibn Taymiyya

al-Tabari

Umm Salama

Some premodern names might consist of a name followed by *bint* or *ibn* + the father’s name, and perhaps one or more *ibn* + [Something] to indicate the grandfather and great-grandfather. Simple names like this should be indexed as written, with no inversion:

Asmaa’ bint Yusuf ibn ‘Abd al-Rahim ibn Abi Bakr

Khalid ibn Suhayl ibn Mustafa

Other premodern names can be complex, especially in the medieval period, and the order of elements can vary.

A name can consist of — in various orders — a *kunya* (Abu/Umm + [Something]); an *ism* (given name); a *nasab* consisting of a patronymic (bint/ibn + [Something]) or genealogic chain (bint/ibn + [Something] + ibn + [Something] + ibn + [Something]); a *nisba* which is a tribal designation (beginning with *al-* and ending in *-ī*); a *laqab* which is a nickname; a *laqab* which is an honorific. In later centuries, the *nisba* could designate a birthplace, residence, or ancestral home; a *madhhab* (school of law); a Sufi order (all usually beginning with *al-* and ending in *-ī*); or a profession (not following the pattern of beginning with *al-* and ending in *-ī*). A person might have more than one *laqab* or *nisba*.

Often a person is best known by something other than their given name (*ism*). This element, called a *shuhra*, might be the *kunya*, *nasab* (Ibn/Bint + [Something]), a *nisba* indicating a birthplace, residence, or ancestral home. The *shuhra* might not be one of the elements given in the person's name.

A modern author might identify the *shuhra* explicitly by writing something like this: 'X whose real name was Y' or 'Y who is better known as X.' Index the person with X as the entry point. You do not need a *see* cross-reference from the full or real name, but you should give the other elements of the name after the entry point.

Or the author might give a string of names and then use one of them on subsequent mention. That one is the *shuhra*, your entry point.

Premodern (and some modern) authors might refer to the same person by different elements of their name at different points in the text. For example, one fifteenth-century author presented the full name of a scholar who is often known simply by his *nisba* of al-Bukhari: Abu 'Abd Allah Muhammad ibn Isma'il ibn Ibrahim ibn al-Mughira ibn Bardizbah al-Ju'fi al-Bukhari.

The author then variously referred to him as Muhammad, Muhammad ibn Isma'il, Ibn Isma'il, Abu 'Abd Allah, al-Bukhari, and Imam al-Bukhari.

A modern writer might tell the reader al-Bukhari's full name, but would likely consistently refer to him as al-Bukhari after that. Indeed, al-Bukhari today is generally known by only that name (a *nisba* indicating his birthplace of Bukhara), and his other names might not appear. He could be indexed simply as al-Bukhari (his *shuhra*) in a modern text. However, in a modern index of the fifteenth-century text where he is called by various

names, the entry point would be al-Bukhari, followed by his *kunya*, *ism*, and the beginning of his *nasab* to show his father's name: al-Bukhari, Abu 'Abd Allah Muhammad ibn Isma'il. The entire genealogical chain is not needed to identify him in the index, but the other parts of his name that are used should be included.

Here is another example of an author giving a name in different forms. 'Abd al-Haqq al-Azdi al-Ishbili, also known as Ibn al-Kharrat', might also appear as 'Abd al-Haqq al-Ishbili' or simply as 'Ibn al-Kharrat.' The indexer has to recognize that these all refer to the same person — al-Azdi and al-Ishbili are both recognizable as *nisbas* with the usual form of beginning with *al-* and ending with *i* — which can be difficult if the indexer does not know any Arabic. In this case, 'also known as' signals the entry point. He is indexed as 'Ibn al-Kharrat, 'Abd al-Haqq al-Azdi al-Ishbili.' If the author uses 'Abd al-Haqq al-Ishbilii' on a page other than where he is first mentioned, the indexer might also have an entry 'Abd al-Haqq al-Ishbili' and double-post or have a 'see' cross-reference to 'Ibn al-Kharrat'.

The entry point should not be a *laqab* that is an honorific (see above for typical patterns to recognize) or a *nisba* that designates a *madhhab* (school of law) or Sufi order. The Wikipedia article 'Madhhab' lists the four major Sunni schools, the Shia schools, and others that are a small minority or that have died out. The Sufi orders are more numerous. The Wikipedia article 'List of Sufi Orders' or other online sources should be able to help the indexer recognize a *nisba* of these sorts so that it is not used as an entry point.

### **Follow the Author's Lead**

If you are indexing a work by a modern author, my advice is to follow the author's lead on what is the entry point. By their repeated usage or explicit writing ('better known as'), the author will usually signal which of several names a person is known as. If there is no such clue in the text but there are several names, drop off any honorifics that come as the first element and index the remaining names in the order given.

### **Summary**

Many of the difficulties with indexing Arabic names can be overcome by recognizing compound names that cannot be split and titles or honorifics that are not surnames or entry points. Once those are recognized, modern names are easy to index. Premodern names, on the other hand, might be simple or complex. If they are complex, authors might use different

forms of the name to refer to the same person, which can cause problems for the indexer. Or authors might use a *shuhra* — a part of the name or an epithet — which should be used as the entry point in the index. The indexer also has to recognize certain parts of the name — some forms of *laqab* (titles and honorifics) and some forms of *nisba* (descriptors referring to the person's school of jurisprudence or Sufi order) — that are not used as entry points.

The major points are summarized here:

- Sort word by word if there are many Arabic names in the index.
- Watch that *ayn* and *hamza* copy correctly.
- Watch for inconsistencies in diacritics.
- Ignore *al-* or move it to the end, depending on the publisher's style.
- Ignore *al-* on second elements.
- *Al* (clan/dynasty) is not *al-* and should not be ignored or separated from the following word. The same for *Ba*.
- Ignore *ibn, bin, ben, b., bint* when they come between names.
- Watch for *Bin* or *Ben* as part of name.
- Watch for names that cannot be split, the most common of which are these: *Ibn/Bint + [Something]*; *Abu/Umm + [Something]*; *'Abd + [Something]*; *[Something] + al-Din*; *[Something] + Allah*; *Dhu/Zu + [Something]*.
- Watch for honorifics or titles, either at the beginning or the end (in Ottoman usage). Do not use these as entry points.
- Do not invert names of royalty, whether modern or premodern.
- Invert modern names, ignoring honorifics and not splitting compound names.
- For simple premodern names, index in the order given.
- For complex premodern names, follow the author's lead to identify the *shuhra*, the name the person is known as.
- If there is no *shuhra*, index names in the order given, ignoring honorifics or titles at the beginning.

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<sup>1</sup> Heather Hedden, 'Arabic Names,' Centrepiece to *The Indexer* Vol. 25, No. 3, April 2007.

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- <sup>2</sup> IFLA Universal Bibliographic Control, *Names of Persons: National Usages for Entry in Catalogues*, 4th revised and enlarged edition (Munich: K. G. Saur, 1996). (<https://www.ifla.org/best-practice-for-national-bibliographic-agencies-in-a-digital-age/node/8097>)
- <sup>3</sup> Ælfwine Mischler, 'Romanized Arabic in English Texts — Part 1: Sources of Variation,' *An American Editor*, <https://americaneditor.wordpress.com/2017/11/20/romanized-arabic-in-english-texts-part-1-sources-of-variations/>
- <sup>4</sup> Ælfwine Mischler, 'Arabic terms in embedded book indexes,' *The Indexer*, Vol. 37, No. 2, June 2019.
- <sup>5</sup> Ælfwine Mischler, 'Indexes: Part 7 — Lessons Learned in Using DEXembed for the First Time,' *An American Editor*, (<https://americaneditor.wordpress.com/2018/12/24/indexes-part-7-experiences-in-using-dexembed-for-the-first-time/>);
- <sup>6</sup> A. F. L. Beeston, *Arabic Nomenclature: A Summary Guide for Beginners*, 1971. Downloaded from <http://www.lib.umich.edu/area/Near.East/BeestonNomen.pdf>
- <sup>7</sup> 'Arabic names' Downloaded from [https://www.ifla.org/files/assets/cataloguing/pubs/ifla\\_names\\_of\\_persons\\_arabic\\_2018.doc](https://www.ifla.org/files/assets/cataloguing/pubs/ifla_names_of_persons_arabic_2018.doc)