MELA Basic Reference Outline Series

Number 1

Brockelmann, Carl. *Geschichte der arabischen Litteratur,* **Zweite den Supplementbänden angepaßte Auflage. Leiden, E.J. Brill, 1943–49. 2 v. Supplementbänden. Leiden, 1937–42. 3 v.**

I. Organization of the publication.

  See the Inhaltsverzeichnis (Table of Contents) for each volume.

  Vol. I divides Arabic literature into two main periods:

  Book I: The Arabic national literature from the beginning until the downfall of the Umayyads.

    Further subdivided as follows:

    1. From the beginning until the appearance of Muhammad.

    2. Muhammad and his time.

    3. The Umayyad period.

  Book II: Islamic literature in Arabic, about 300 yr. period, further subdivided as follows:

    1. The classical period from ca. 750 to ca. 1000 (A.D.)

    2. The post-classical period from ca. 1010 to ca. 1258.

Within each of these periods, Brockelmann treats the literature according to subject: first belles lettres; then history; then religious writing: *hadith*, *fiqh*, Qur'an exegesis, mysticism; then astronomy, medicine; and finally encyclopaedias. Within each of the above categories, the authors and works cited are grouped geographically.

  Vol. II is organized slightly differently from Vol I. The periods treated are as follows:

  Book III: The decline of Islamic literature, as follows:

    1. From the period of Mongol rule until the conquest of Egypt by Sultan Selim in 1517.

    2. From 1517 to the Napoleonic expedition to Egypt in 1798.

    3. From 1798 to the present (i.e., ca. 1900).

Rather than dividing these periods into subject, and then into geographical area, as in Vol. I., this volume is grouped, within each of the periods, by geographic area, further divided by subject. The additions and corrections to both volumes appear at the end of Vol II. *N.B.*: Authors are only listed once, even though they may have written on a number of different topics.

Supplementbänden: Volume I supplements the first two books, contained in Vol. I of the original. It has an appendix of corrections and additions. Vol. II supplements book III, contained in Vol II of the original. It has an appendix of authors whose time and place cannot be ascertained, arranged alphabetically according to the European alphabet, within subjects, in the same order as given above for Vol. I.

Volume III of the supplement is devoted to modern Arabic literature to the outbreak of the Second World War, organized by country and then by literary form. Then comes the key to the whole work, the indices:

  1. author index

  2. title index

  3. European editor index

Finally, it contains the additions and corrections to Supplementbänden I–III. Each chapter or section of the GAL has a few introductory paragraphs, sometimes including bibliographical references.

Entries: Each entry consists of a short biographical sketch, usually a sentence or two, giving dates and place or origin and/or activity. Then a paragraph in smaller type which first provides biographical citations, then – identified by Arabic numerals, printed in italics, and separated by dashes – titles of the known works by this author. These citations include all known manuscript copies and the references to the appropriate catalogs, printed editions giving place of imprint, date of imprint, and editor, as well as citations to older bibliographical works in Arabic in which these works are cited. This latter citation may be the only record we have of a work which hasn't survived. In the supplements, the most important part of the author's name in each entry is given in italics.

N.B.: The page numbers given in the indices for the citations in the basic volumes(G I and G II) refer to the pagination of the 1898–1902 edition. These page numbers are printed in the margins of the 1937–1942 edition. [Where possible, both editions of the GAL should be available for reference, as some citations in the first ed. appear not to be repeated in the second ed.]

II. Using the GAL.
The most perplexing difficulty one encounters in using the GAL lies in the abbreviations, which are not adequately explained in any one place. The abbreviations for most of the works cited in the first two volumes will be found on pp. 3–6 of Vol. I, in this order: Biographical works, bibliographical works, and catalogs of mss. Unfortunately, Brockelmann does not always use the abbreviation or the first element of the entry when citing these works.

Supplementband I lists the abbreviations used for proper names on p. xvii. Thus, e.g., A. = Ahmad; ʿA. = ʿAli; ʿAl. = ʿAbdullah; ʿAr. = ʿAbdarrahman.
N.B.: the treatment of compound names with ʿAbd.

The system of romanization is explained on the following unnumbered page. Note well the difference from

the LC system of romanization, e.g., ḫ rather than kh. Each Supplementband repeats this information in the prefatory material.
Additional sources and the abbreviations used for them will be found on pp. 4–11 of Supplementband I.

The indices are difficult to use, and, unfortunately there are lacunae. Arrangement is according to the order of the European alphabet. Because of the multitude of ways of entering names:, Brockelmann encourages the reader, in the Foreword to Supplementband III, to look in as many entries as possible. Frequently, there are two entries for every name, one under the first name in direct order, and one under the last part of the name or the most commonly used part of the name. As stated above, this is printed in italics in the bodies of entries in the Supplementbänden. Title is usually the best access point. Once you have found a likely entry in the index, there is the problem of checking each citation. Knowing the plan of the book will save a lot of time, and allow you to eliminate unlikely citations; e.g., you would not seek a grammarian in the section devoted to historians.

Other important information about the index (see S. III, p. 503): Abū (a.) and Ibn (b.) and the article are not regarded in the alphabetical order. Note also the sequence for letters which are distinguished by diacritics: e.g., ḍ follows d; e and o are placed in sequence with a and u, respectively. The article at the beginning is indicated by –. G = Grundwerk, S = Suppl. and N = the Nachträge at the end of S. III.

Heavy type indicates the principal entry where an author is treated. Title index: Note that all prepositions except *bain* are ignored in the alphabetical order, as well as *kitāb,* except when it is an actual, and necessary, part of the title. *Risāla* not so ignored.

III. Strategy for using Brockelmann's GAL:

      1. Figure out how title or author will be romanized in Brockelmann's system.

      2. Check first under title.

      3. If no luck, try under author, but first figure out what elements will be abbreviated, if you know full name. If there are many possible entries and citations to be checked, and you know the date and provenance, figure out what part of the work it is likely to be cited in.

      4. If still no luck, try looking in the appropriate place in the GAL, after figuring out plan. Remember, authors are only listed once, requiring several searches for authors with wide interests.

      5. Once the citation you want is tracked down, use lists of abbreviations in G. I and S. I to figure out where you want to look next.

      6. Don't forget to consult all the additions and corrections: Nachträge in G. II, S. I and S. III. *N.B.*: The original 1902 ed. uses the Abjad alphabetical order in the index at the end of Vol. II.

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