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Introduction to Modern Arabic

AN INTRODUCTION TO
MODERN ARABIC

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BY
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AND
R. BAYLY WINDER

PREFACE

Until a decade or so ago Arabic was taught almost exclusively to students on the graduate level and from books written by European scholars using technical expressions and Latin terms which, especially to an undergraduate, were forbidding. Now the English-speaking student has available to him a book designed to meet his particular needs as one encountering for the first time a language that is truly foreign—French, German, Latin, or any other language that he might have studied being members of the same family to which English belongs. The attempt embodies years of teaching experience and involves years of work on the part of the authors. The joint authorship represents a happy combination of one in whose blood Arabic flows and one who having "suffered...is able to succour them that are tempted." Far from claiming to be the "seal" (*khātam*) of all Arabic grammars, or challenging the validity of the biblical assertion that "of making many books there is no end"—though the writer could not have had grammars in mind—this *Introduction to Modern Arabic* hopes to simplify the intricacies and endear the niceties of the "tongue of the angels" (*lisān al-malā'ikah*) to the would-be Arabist. If it does, then all the efforts of the authors and, behind them, of the Department of Oriental Studies of Princeton, will not have been in vain.

<div align="right">

PHILIP K. HITTI

</div>

April 1, 1957

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this book is to introduce the student, particularly the student with relatively little experience in studying languages, to modern literary Arabic with concentration on the style employed in newspapers. The book does not pretend to cover all the fine points of the language or to be an advanced reference grammar. Further, we have not thought of it as a "teach-yourself" book though the experience of some users indicates that it may be satisfactory for that purpose.

Our approach centers on two themes. The first is to analyze the morphological and syntactical patterns of the language inductively after they have been used. Thus normal progression is from the specific to the general, although this has not in all cases seemed wise—notably in the introductory material and in the chapter on numbers. In general, no patterns or usages occur prior to the chapter which deals with them, and an attempt has been made to limit the amount of new material in any one chapter.

The second major point is an extremely careful control of vocabulary, which is the most difficult hurdle at almost every stage in learning literary Arabic. To this end every occurrence of every word was recorded and, when the first draft was completed, those words which were used less than four or five times were for the most part either eliminated or used more often. To assure high frequency, we checked the vocabulary with Moshe Brill's *The Basic Word List of the Arabic Daily Newspaper* (Jerusalem: The Hebrew University Press Association, 1940), although we did not follow it slavishly. We also adopted Brill's criteria for defining a vocabulary unit. The great majority of words used are of high frequency in the Brill count, though inevitably there are some common words which do not occur. The result is that the student who has gone through the book carefully has a small, selected, and compact vocabulary. The total number of words in the book is 1,013.

A typical chapter contains four sections. Section I consists of a text— with parallel translation—in which the new grammatical points to be exemplified, whether syntactical and/or morphological, are presented as well as new vocabulary. Section II consists of an analysis of these new points plus generalizations based on them. In some cases supplementary notes are also included. Usually, once a point is made, knowledge of it is thereafter assumed. Section III contains a second text, with parallel translation, in which the new points that the chapter deals with are again stressed, and new vocabulary is again introduced. Section IV consists of

isolated sentences in English and Arabic to be translated. These sentences are intended to make the student use the constructions exemplified in the chapter and to repeat some of the vocabulary units, without introducing new vocabulary. Exceptions to the practice of not introducing new patterns or usages prior to the chapter that deals with them were made in the case of simple maṣdars and proper names.

Two other points may clarify the use of the book. First, in the English translations, parentheses are used not only to enclose genuinely parenthetic material such as the literal meaning of a word, but also to indicate words which have no equivalent in the Arabic text but which are necessary in the English. Brackets show words which do not represent English usage but which do appear in the Arabic. Second, vowels and other signs are progressively omitted as follows: starting with Chapter XXVIII vowels before their lengtheners; with Chapter XXXI the fatḥah before tā' mar-būṭah and the waṣlah and sukūn of the definite article; with Chapter XXXII the shaddah on a "Sun letter" following the definite article; with Chapter XXXIII the vowels of prepositions and the conjunctions و, ...ف and أَوْ, and the vowels of maṣdars and participles except for the vowel which distinguishes between active and passive participles; with Chapter XXXIV fatḥah tanwīn when alif is present, vowels of the مَفْعُولُ, فَاعِلُ, and فَعِيلُ patterns, the shaddah on the yā' of nisbah, the final vowels of sound masculine plurals and of duals, the vowels of pronominal suffixes, the vowels of demonstrative and personal pronouns and of the relatives اَلَّذِي and اَلَّتِي, and all waṣlahs. In Chapter XXXV only the few vowels which seemed essential for clarity were used.

The content of the texts for the most part needs no comment; however, it might be worth observing that it is intended to impart some knowledge of the Middle East area and that it is largely political and in some cases deliberately nationalistic. It is also generally of a simple narrative type.

The appendices, indices, and vocabularies are largely self-explanatory. The paradigms, in contrast to those found in most books, are complete in the active voice. Their arrangement, it is hoped, will aid the student

to observe the variations among different classes of verbs with greater ease than is possible in the traditional layout. Appendix II, "Verbs and Their Prepositions," fulfills, we think, a long-felt need and draws together information otherwise available only in dictionaries or the "breasts of men."

Some liberties of various sorts have been taken and may require explanation. The English translations are frequently stilted and unidiomatic because of a desire to stay relatively close to the Arabic. The aim here has been pedagogical not literary. On the Arabic side liberties have also been taken, e.g. listing فَعْلَانُ as فَعْلَانٌ (Chapter XI, section II, note B), and there are various conscious omissions which the expert will detect, especially some accusatives such as the مَفْعُولٌ مَعَهُ, the مُسْتَثْنَى, and the مَا التَّعَجُّبِ. One other observation is that the limitation placed upon us by the gradual presentation of grammatical points made the style of the texts embodying those points, especially in the first part of the book, sound somewhat rigid and not as smooth and natural as we would have liked.

The list of those who have helped us is a long one. First place on it goes to Professor Philip K. Hitti of Princeton, who originally proposed to us the idea of writing the book (it represents in fact, to a considerable extent, a crystallization of teaching methods developed by him during his long and distinguished academic career at Princeton); who sustained and encouraged us with his characteristic friendliness and interest over the long period of time we have engaged in the undertaking; who looked over almost every chapter (and detected numerous slips we had missed) before it went to press; and who only rebelled when a student assistant, in our absence, unduly pestered him with queries about obscure verb forms for the paradigms. Others who gave of their time and thought were Professor H. A. R. Gibb of Harvard, who advised us on the problem of accent; Professor Wilfred C. Smith of McGill, who supplied us with our rule for the chair which hamzah takes in the middle of a word; Professor Samuel Atkins of Princeton, who read critically Chapter VII and advised on other points; and Messrs. Stanford Shaw, John Joseph, Fadlou Shehadeh, Oleg Grabar, Caesar Farah, Richard Debs, John

Williams, George Scanlon, and Nicholas Heer—all of whom made contributions of various types. Naturally, none of these gentlemen bears the slightest responsibility for anything in the book. Another group to whom we are most grateful are those somewhat intrepid gentlemen who agreed to use the preliminary, xerographed version of the book—sight unseen—in their teaching, for our benefit. These include: Professors Kenneth Cragg, S. D. Goitein, Meyer Bravmann, F. R. C. Bagley and Mr. Majed Sa'id. From them, as well as from our own students, have come many valuable suggestions. We are also particularly grateful to the compositors of the Cambridge University Press and to the publisher, Princeton University Press, for their co-operation and skill in completing a most exacting task. Finally, we wish to thank the Department of Oriental Studies of Princeton University, under the chairmanship of Professor T. Cuyler Young, for making possible the publication of this book.

To our wives we owe a debt of gratitude far beyond that which authors normally owe. Due to unusual circumstances we had to work—over a five year period—almost wholly at night and away from our homes. We asked too much, but they gave freely.

Princeton, New Jersey
October, 1956

F. J. Z.
R. B. W.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

AN INTRODUCTION TO
MODERN ARABIC

THE ALPHABET: TRANSLITERATION AND PRONUNCIATION. THE NUMERALS

I. The Arabic alphabet consists of twenty-eight characters, written from right to left. All twenty-eight characters represent consonants. In addition there are vowel signs and various other orthographic signs.

The consonants, as they appear when standing alone, are as follows:

NAME OF LETTER	SYMBOL	TRANSLITERATION
hamzah[1]	ء	'
bā'	ب	b
tā'	ت	t
thā'	ث	th
jīm	ج	j
ḥā'	ح	ḥ
khā'	خ	kh
dāl	د	d
dhāl	ذ	dh
rā'	ر	r
zā' *or* zāy	ز	z
sīn	س	s
shīn	ش	sh
ṣād	ص	ṣ
ḍād	ض	ḍ
ṭā'	ط	ṭ
ẓā'	ظ	ẓ
'ayn	ع	'
ghayn	غ	gh
fā'	ف	f
qāf	ق	q
kāf	ك	k
lām	ل	l
mīm	م	m
nūn	ن	n
hā'	ه	h
wāw	و	w
yā'	ي	y

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[1] Many grammars give *alif* (ا) as the first letter in the alphabet. In reality alif is only a "chair" on top of which the hamzah "sits" thus أ, and as such has no phonetic

3

II. The pronunciation of the consonants is as follows:[2]

ء : The hamźah represents a glottal stop produced by completely closing the vocal chords and then by suddenly separating them. The sound is frequently made in English at the beginning of a word with an initial vowel, particularly if emphasized, e.g. *absolutely essential!* It is the same sound that is heard at the beginning of the second syllable in the Scotch pronunciation of *bottle.*

ب : Bā' represents the same sound as does English *b.*

ت : Tā' represents almost the same sound as does English *t,* but the tongue does not, as in English *t,* come into contact with the gum behind the upper teeth but with the upper teeth themselves. The *t* of *eighth* is perhaps most like tā'.

ث : Thā' represents the same sound as does the unvoiced *th* of English *mouth* or *thing.*

ج : In literary Arabic, jīm represents the same sound as does the *j* of English *jam.* The most important variants are: in Egypt where the hard *g* of *gas* or *lag* predominates, and in Lebanon and other adjacent areas where it is the voiced correlative of *sh,* equivalent to the *ʒ* in *aʒure.*

ح : Ḥā' represents an unvoiced pharyngeal fricative formed further back and lower than khā' (خ; see below) and entirely without velar vibration. The back of the tongue is depressed to almost the same extent it is when a doctor examines the throat and depresses it artificially. The sound may be mastered by realizing that it is similar to a stage whisper, but formed farther back. It can be produced by whispering *ha* as loudly as possible.

خ : Khā' represents an unvoiced velar fricative, similar to the *ch* of German *ach.* The sound can be produced by pronouncing the syllables *ik, ak,* and *uk* in succession and noting the point of contact with the soft palate in each case, which, it will be found, recedes from front to back. If the student then causes the tongue to approach any of these *k*-positions, but, before contact occurs, forces breath through the narrowed orifice, khā' will result. The "scrape" which is essential to khā' is due to agitation of the velum by the breath forced through the narrow orifice.

value. However, in unvowelled texts alif only is written, hamzah being understood; and in reciting the alphabet, one says *alif, bā',* etc., not *hamźah, bā',* etc.

[2] These simplified descriptions of the sounds represented by Arabic consonants are largely based on the full treatment of the subject found in W. H. T. Gairdner, *The Phonetics of Arabic* (London: Oxford University Press, 1925).

 د : Dāl represents almost the same sound as does English *d*, but with the same reservations made for tā' (ت) above. The *d* of *width* is perhaps most like dāl.

ذ : Dhāl represents the same sound as does the voiced *th* of English *to mouth* or *this*.

ر : Rā' represents the rolled *r*, i.e. there are a rapid succession of taps by the tip of the tongue on the teeth ridge. Two taps are usually sufficient. It should be emphasized, however, that the unrolled *r*, in which the tip of the tongue is curved back toward the hard palate, as in western American *farm*, is to be avoided.

ز : Zā' represents the same sound as does English *z*.

س : Sīn represents the same sound as does English *s*.

ش: Shīn represents the same sound as does the English combination *sh*.

ص: Ṣād represents an "emphatic" velarized correlative of sīn (س). Ṣād is formed by placing the tip of the tongue in approximately the same position as for sīn and raising the back of the tongue toward the velum.

ض: Ḍād represents an "emphatic" velarized correlative of dāl (د), formed in the same way as is ṣād (ص).

ط : Ṭā' represents an "emphatic" velarized correlative of tā' (ت), formed in the same way as is ṣād.

ظ : Ẓā' properly represents an "emphatic" velarized correlative of dhāl (ذ), but in Egypt and Syria this sound is often replaced by that of the emphatic velarized correlative of zā' (ز).

ع : 'Ayn is a very difficult sound for the average Westerner to produce, and it is best mastered in connection with a native speaker. It is generally regarded that 'ayn is a voiced correlative of ḥā' (ح). This supposition is partially true, for if 'ayn is unvoiced, something close to ḥā' results. However, if the process is reversed, and ḥā' is voiced, it will be found that the general tenseness in the pharynx is greatly increased; there may be other physical modifications as well.

غ : Ghayn, a voiced velar fricative, is almost the voiced correlative of khā' (خ), but the correlation is not exact, for in ghayn there is no velar scrape. This sound, which is similar to the Parisian *r*, may be produced by pronouncing the *ch* of Scottish *loch* (without velar scrape) and then by voicing that fricative.

ف : Fā' represents the same sound as does English *f*.

ق : Qāf is a voiceless uvular stop which can be reproduced by taking the point of contact in the *ik*, *ak*, *uk* series (see above under khā' [خ]) one stage further back so that contact may be made at the

extremity of the velum. In various areas, especially the Persian Gulf, qāf is pronounced like the hard *g* in *gas*.

ك : Kāf represents the same sound as does English *k*.

ل : Essentially, lām represents the same sound as does English *l*. However, it is worth noting that lām is velarized in the word *Allāh* (unless preceded by an *i* vowel) and when it is influenced by velarized sounds such as ṣād (ص), ḍād (ض), and ṭā' (ط). In these cases lām is formed in the same way as is ṣād.

م : Mīm represents the same sound as does English *m*.

ن : Nūn represents the same sound as does English *n*.

ه : Hā' represents the same sound as does English *h*. It is only difficult in Arabic when final because it does not so occur in English. To master it in this position, say *aha* or *uhu*; gradually diminish the length of the second vowel; and finally eliminate it altogether.

و : Wāw represents the same sound as does the consonantal English *w*.

ي : Yā' represents the same sound as does the consonantal English *y*.

NOTE: The form ة, called *tā' marbūṭah*, is a combination of the letter tā' (ت) and the letter hā' (ه). It only occurs at the end of words. When vocalized, it is pronounced as is tā'; when not vocalized it is pronounced as is hā'. (For use of this ending, see Chapter IX, section II, 2.)

III. The numerals are as follows:

٠	٩	٨	٧	٦	٥	٤	٣	٢	١
0	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1

In combination, however, they are arranged as in English, thus

١٩٤٨ = 1948,   ١٩٥٠ = 1950,   ١٩٥٥ = 1955.

EXERCISE

Identify the following:

ف . ع س ن م ل ك ي ط ح ز و ه د ج ب أ

ة غ ظ ض ذ خ ث ت ش ر ق ص

CHAPTER II

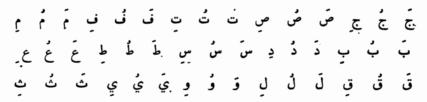## VOWELS AND LETTERS IN CONNECTED FORM

I. The vowels in Arabic are three: *a*, *u*, and *i*. The signs of these three vowels are respectively:

1. *Fatḥah*, a small diagonal stroke above a consonant, as in بَ [ba].

2. *Ḍammah*, a small waw (و) above a consonant, as in بُ [bu].

3. *Kasrah*, a small diagonal stroke under a consonant, as in بِ [bi].

    When hamzah bears kasrah, both hamzah and kasrah are written under alif (إ).

The pronunciation of the fatḥah is the same as that of the *a* in English *fat* or *add*.[1] The pronunciation of the ḍammah is similar to that of the *oo* in *boot*, but much shorter. The pronunciation of the kasrah is the same as that of the *i* in *admit* or *habit*.

In addition to the three vowel signs there is another sign called *sukūn* which indicates the absence of a vowel after a consonant. It consists of a small circle written above the consonant as بْ [b].

EXERCISE

Recite aloud:

إِ مُ مَ فِ فُ فَ ضَ صَ صُ صٌ صَ جِ جُ جَ

بَ بُ بِ دُ دَ دِ سَ سُ سِ طِ طُ طَ عَ عُ عِ

قَ قُ قِ لَ لُ لِ وَ وُ وِ يَ يُ يِ ثَ ثُ ثِ

[1] The sounds represented by the vowel signs are of course all influenced by those of surrounding consonants. It is to be especially noted that when the fatḥah is above one of the velarized consonants, ص, ض, ط, ظ, ق and above the ر, its sound tends to be that of the *a* in *sofa* or *abound*. In other cases, it tends to be that of the *e* in *end*. The question of vowel variations usually settles itself automatically because of the mechanics of proper consonant production. For a thorough treatment of the subject consult Gairdner, *op. cit.*, pp. 32–51.

7

زِ زُ زَ زِ حُ حَ حَ إ أُ أ ذِ ذُ ذَ ه هُ هَ نِ نُ نَ

خِ خُ خَ خِ رِ رُ رَ شِ شُ شَ غِ غَ غَ ظِ ظُ ظَ

كِ كُ كَ ضِ ضُ ضَ

II. Most of the consonants are written in slightly different forms according to whether they stand alone, or are joined to a following letter only (initial), or are joined to a following and a preceding letter (medial), or are joined to a preceding letter only (final). In addition the six letters و ز ر ذ د ا cannot be joined to following letters. The following chart shows these variations.

TERMINAL	MEDIAL	INITIAL	ALONE
ل...	ل...	ا	ا
ـب...	...ـبـ...	بـ...	ب
ـت...	...ـتـ...	تـ...	ت
ـث...	...ـثـ...	ثـ...	ث
ـج...	...ـجـ...	جـ...	ج
ـح...	...ـحـ...	حـ...	ح
ـخ...	...ـخـ...	خـ...	خ
ـد...	ـد...	د...	د
ـذ...	ـذ...	ذ...	ذ
ـر...	ـر...	ر...	ر
ـز...	ـز...	ز...	ز
ـس...	...ـسـ...	سـ...	س
ـش...	...ـشـ...	شـ...	ش
ـص...	...ـصـ...	صـ...	ص
ـض...	...ـضـ...	ضـ...	ض
ـط...	...ـطـ...	طـ...	ط
ـظ...	...ـظـ...	ظـ...	ظ
ـع...	...ـعـ...	عـ...	ع
ـغ...	...ـغـ...	غـ...	غ
ـف...	...ـفـ...	فـ...	ف
ـق...	...ـقـ...	قـ...	ق

TERMINAL	MEDIAL	INITIAL	ALONE
كـ...	...ـكـ...	...كـ	ك
لـ...	...ـلـ...	...لـ	ل
مـ...	...ـمـ...	...مـ	م
نـ...	...ـنـ...	...نـ	ن
ـهـ...	...ـهـ...	...هـ	ه
ـو...	ـو...	و	و
ـي...	...ـيـ...	...يـ	ي

When alif follows an initial or a medial ل, they are written thus لا, لا, respectively. Furthermore, the student must familiarize himself with a number of common ligatures, some of which appear in the Exercise.

EXERCISE

Recite aloud:

حَبْ بُدْ تَمْ قَدْ بِطْ تَلْ كَمْ لَمْ قُمْ فَمْ ـ بِعْ كُلْ دَعْ رَبْ

ذَمْ أَخْ وَجْ قَطْ زِدْ قِسْ عَمْ غَمْ هَلْ حَلْ خَلْ دَنْ كَفْ

رَفْ رُحْ مُتْ فِرْ خُذْ ثُمْ نِذْ يَمْ سَمْ طِبْ شَمْ ظِلْ جَلْ

ضَبْ صَكْ هُمْ حَجْ لَكْ بِكِ

9

ACCENT AND SHADDAH

I. Words of two syllables are accented on the first syllable.

EXERCISE

Recite aloud:

إِسْم بَحْر عِلْم مِصْر دَرْس نَهْر قَصْر بَغْل كَسْر دَمْع لَحْم

حَجْم جَمْع تَمْر نَفْس طَبْع صِمْغ قُرْص فُرْس نِصْف قُدْس

سَمْك ضَعْف خُبْز ثَغْر نَمْر بَدْر تِبْن جِسْر ظَهْر بَعْد

شَحْم حَبْل خَمْر دَرْب وَعْد يُسْر قُطْر طَبْل ظَبْي زَهْر لَعْب

نَحْو عِنْد تَحْت أَب أَخ رَأْي

II. Three syllable words are accented on the first syllable unless the middle syllable is closed, in which case it receives the accent. A closed syllable may be defined as one which consists of a consonant, a short vowel, and a vowelless consonant; an open syllable, as one which consists of a consonant and a short vowel.

EXERCISE

Recite aloud.

قَتَلَ كَسَرَ لَعِبَ عَلِمَ فَهِمَ جَمَعَ دَرَسَ رَكِضَ حَلِمَ نَصِحَ

قَدِمَ ذَهَبَ رَكِبَ سَمِعَ عَمِلَ أَكَلَ شَرِبَ ظَلَمَ طَبَعَ ثِقَة صِلَة

غَفْلَة سَنَة كَتَبْتُ كَتَبْتَ كَتَبْتُم رَغِبَة نَكْتُب يَكْتُبْن عَمَل قَلَم

بَقَر شَجَر ذَنَب جَمَل حَمَل وَلَد حَجَر بَدَن كُتُب عُمَر حَلَب

عَجَب قَدَم فَرَس مُهْر وَطَن وَرَق عَدَد قُطْر عِلَب فِتَن ذِمَم

عِنَب قَلْعَة قَرْيَة عَلِمْتُم ضَرَبْت سَمِعْت دَرَسْن

III. When a consonant occurs twice without a vowel between, it is written only once and the sign ˝, called *shaddah*, is written above it, as in قَتَّلَ. Letters which have shaddah above them are commonly said to be doubled. However, there is not, as in French *cette table*, an implosion and explosion for each *t*. Rather, as in English *hot time*, there is only one closure; but the length of time between implosion and explosion is long, and in addition the implosion is slightly emphasized because the accent is on it.

EXERCISE

Recite aloud:

كَسَّر عَلَّم قَدَّم دَخَّن وَدَّع سَلَّم وَجَّه كَلَّم ظَنَّ قَلَّ عَدَّ وَدَّ

سَدَّ شَدَّ لَمَّ جَرَّد جَمَّع حَلَّ رَدَّ عِزَّة سِكَّة

LONG VOWELS AND DIPHTHONGS

I. The letters alif (ا), wāw (و), and yā' (ي) are known as weak (i.e. irregular) letters. In addition to the function of alif as a chair for the hamzah (ʾ) and to the function of wāw and yā' as consonants,[1] these three letters have the additional function of lengthening the vowels to which they respectively correspond, namely, fatḥah, ḍammah, and kasrah. Thus, دَارُ [dāru] as opposed to دَرُ [daru], نُورُ [nūru] as opposed to نُرُ [nuru], and نِيرُ [nīru] as opposed to نِرُ [niru]. When the weak letters are used as lengtheners, they do not bear any sign. However, from the point of view of accent a syllable consisting of a consonant, a vowel, and a lengthener is considered to be a closed syllable. (See Chapter III, section II.)

The pronunciation of the long vowels is as follows:

اـَ:   This combination represents the same sound as does the *a* of *acid* when none of the letters ظ ط ض ص ر or ق is in juxtaposition with it. When these consonants are juxtaposed, it represents the same sound as does the *a* of *father*. In both cases the sound is long.

وـُ:   This combination represents a sound similar to that of the *oo* in *boot*, but much longer. There is no diphthongization.

يـ: This combination represents a sound similar to that of the *ee* in *sleep*, though much longer. There is no diphthongization.

A final long vowel is shortened, however, before a pause or when it forms one syllable with the beginning of a succeeding word.

EXERCISE

Recite aloud:

دَارُ نَارُ جَارُ فُولُ بُوقُ عُودُ دِينُ فِيلُ عِيدُ بُومُ بِيدُ كَارُ

حَالُ سُودُ نِيرُ الطُّورُ تِينُ بَابُ دَارِي جَارِي بُوقِي عُودِي دِينِي

عِيدِي فِينَا سِينَا .

---

[1] Wāw and yā' may also be chairs for hamzah under certain conditions; see Chapter V, section I.

طُورُ سِينَاً فِي مِصْرَ. بَابُ دَارِي عَالِي. بُوقِي مِنْ جَارِي.

خَالِي فِي دَارِي.

كَانَ قَامَ بَاعَ سِيرَةُ سَاعَةُ نَاقَةُ كِتَابُ كَاتِبُ قَتِيلُ قَاتِلُ

جَامِعُ سَلِيمُ سَالِمُ.

II. There are two diphthongs in Arabic represented by the combinations ـوْ and ـيْ transliterated respectively [aw] and [ay]. The sound represented by the former is similar to that of the *ow* in *fowl*. The sound represented by the latter is similar to that of the word *eye*. However, in literary Arabic diphthongs, the glide is carried all the way to the consonant positions of the *w* and *y* respectively. Diphthongs are closed syllables.

EXERCISE

Recite aloud:

قَوْلُ نَوْمُ بَيْعُ عَيْبُ صَوْمُ دَيْنُ مَوْتُ بَيْتُ لَوْمُ عَيْنُ زَيْنُ

بَيْرُوتُ صَوْتُ خَوْفُ رَيْبُ كُلَيْبُ لَيْلَةُ رَوْضَةُ بَيَّنَ بَيَّعَ قَوَّمَ

بَوَّبَ حَيَّرَ سَيَّرَ عَوَّدَ لَوَّعَ طَيَّرَ

CHAPTER V

HAMZAH AND THREE TYPES OF LONG ALIF

I. It has already been stated (Chapter I, footnote 1) that alif (ا) is used as a chair for hamzah. In addition, however, one of the other weak letters, yā' (ى, without dots) and wāw (و), may be the chair. Further, hamzah sometimes occurs without a chair and is then written either over the line connecting the letters on either side of it or by itself.

The rules governing the chair of the hamzah may be summarized as follows:

1. At the beginning of a word the chair is always alif.

2. In the middle of a word:

(a) If only one of the vowels — or ُ or ِ (or two identical vowels) is contiguous to the hamzah (i.e. precedes or is borne by it), the chair will be, respectively, ى or و or ا (e.g. يَسْأَلُ يُسْئِلُ سُؤُولُ سُؤُلُ).

(b) If two different vowels are contiguous to the hamzah, the vowel which determines the chair (in accordance with the correspondence given in I, 2a) is governed by the following order of preference: ِ — ُ — َ (e.g. سَئِمَ سُؤَالُ سُئِلَ; in the first example the contiguous vowels are ُ and ِ, the ِ takes preference, and therefore the chair is ى).

(c) If the hamzah is preceded by a long vowel and bears ِ, it has no chair (e.g. خَطِيئَة مُرُوءَة سَاءَلَ). If, however, the hamzah is preceded by a long vowel and bears — or ُ, the chair usually corresponds to the vowel the hamzah bears (e.g. سَائِلُ تَسَاؤُلُ).

3. At the end of a word:

(a) The preceding vowel determines the chair (in accordance with the correspondence given in I, 2 (a), e.g. فَتِئَ بَدَأَ دَفُؤَ).

(*b*) If there is no preceding short vowel (i.e. if there is sukūn or a long vowel), there is no chair (e.g. شَيْءٌ بَطِيءٌ).

EXERCISE

Copy the following, putting in the correct chair for the hamzah if one is necessary; join letters as required:

ءَكَلَ ءْخَذَ مَنْ ءَرَخَ فَعَلَ ءَكَّدَ ءِسْمُ ءُخْتُ سَءَلَ وَءَدَ رَءْسُ

يَسْءَلُ مُءْمِنُ سُءَالُ فُءَادُ لُءْمُ سُءِلَ رَءِيسُ بُءْرُ يَءِسَ

يَبْءُسُ تَسَاءَلَه خَاءِلُ نَشَءَ قَرَءَ مَلَءَ هَدَءَ دَفَءَ بَطَءَ فَتَءَ هَزَءَ

مَرَءَ يُنْشِءُ يُبْرِءُ جُزْءُ شَيْءُ ضَوْءُ بَطِيءُ جَرِيءُ بَرِيءُ سَمَاءُ جَزَاءُ

دُعَاءُ

II. If alif-hamzah-fatḥah is followed by a lengthening alif (i.e. أَا), then the hamzah and its vowel are dropped, one alif only is written, and above this alif is written the sign ˜, called *maddah*. The pronunciation is not changed. Similarly, if alif-hamzah-fatḥah is followed by a hamzah with sukūn above it (i.e. أَأْ), alif-maddah is written and the pronunciation is as in the previous case.

EXERCISE

Recite aloud:

آمَنَ آنَسَ آكَلَ آذَنَ قُرْآنُ الآمُ رَآهُ آخَرُ مِرْآةُ آبَارُ الآنَ

III. In a few words ا— is expressed by a short vertical stroke (in reality a miniature alif), known as "dagger" alif, written above the consonant instead of the fatḥah. The pronunciation is not changed.

EXERCISE

Recite aloud:

هٰذَا ذٰلِكَ لٰكِنْ لٰكِنَّ رَحْمٰنُ هٰؤُلَاءِ سَمٰوَاتُ إِبْرٰهِيمُ

15

IV. At the end of some words ‍ا— is expressed by ی—. This alif, in the form of yā' (without dots), is called *alif maqṣūrah*. Whenever, for inflectional reasons, an alif maqṣūrah ceases to be final, it returns to the regular form. Thus رمَی, but رَمَاهُ .

EXERCISE

Recite aloud:

فَتَى إِلَى عَلَى جَرَى أَلْقَى تَلَقَّى وُسْطَى كُبْرَى ذِكْرَى غَضْبَى

أَقْصَى أَدْنَى لَدَى أُخْرَى أَعْلَى عُظْمَى صُغْرَى

THE DEFINITE ARTICLE. SUN LETTERS. WAṢLAH. NŪNATION. ACCENT. MISCELLANEOUS

I. The definite article for all genders and numbers is ...اَلْ. It is prefixed to every noun that it limits. It does not affect the accentuation of the noun.

EXERCISE

Recite aloud:

اَلْفَقْرُ   اَلْغَدُ   اَلْعَيْنُ   اَلْخَمْرُ   اَلْحِبْرُ   اَلْجَبَلُ   اَلْبَيْتُ   بَيْتُ   اَلْأَبُ   أَبُ

اَلْفِيلُ   اَلْجَارُ   اَلْقَوْلُ   اَلْمُؤْمِنُ   اَلْيُسْرُ   اَلْوَلَدُ   اَلْهَمُّ   اَلْمَطَرُ   اَلْكُفْرُ   اَلْقَمَرُ

اَلْقَلْعَةُ   اَلْمُدَّةُ   اَلْهَمْزَةُ   اَلْخُبْزُ   اَلْقَصْرُ   اَلْعَدَدُ   اَلْفَرَسُ   اَلْكُتُبُ   اَلْبُوقُ

اَلْقَرْيَةُ   اَلْعِزَّةُ   اَلْغَفْلَةُ

II. The consonants are, on phonetic grounds, divided into "Sun letters" and "Moon letters."[1] The Sun letters are the dentals: ت ث د ذ ر ز س ش ص ض ط ظ ل and ن. The Moon letters are all the others.

When the definite article limits a word beginning with a Sun letter, the lām of the article, being itself a dental, is assimilated by the Sun letter, which is "doubled" in pronunciation. However, the lām is retained in writing without either vowel or sukūn. In addition shaddah is written over the initial Sun letter to show the assimilation. Thus اَلرَّجُلُ is pronounced *ar-rajulu*.

EXERCISE

Recite aloud:

اَلصَّدْرُ   اَلشَّمْسُ   اَلزَّمَنُ   اَلرَّبُّ   اَلذَّنْبُ   اَلدَّمُ   اَلثَّمَنُ - ثَمَنُ   اَلتَّمْرُ   تَمْرُ

---

[1] This terminology is based on the fact that the Arabic word for *sun* begins with a Sun letter and the Arabic word for *moon* begins with a Moon letter.

أَلضَّرْبُ لَلطَّعْمُ أَلظَّهْرُ أَللَّيْلُ أَلنَّوْمُ أَلنَّيِّرُ أَلنَّارُ أَلنُّورُ أَلتَّاجُ أَلطُّورُ

أَلدَّيْنُ أَلصَّوْمُ أَللَّيْلَةُ أَلنَّاقَةُ أَلسَّنَةُ أَلرَّوْضَةُ

III. In some cases initial hamzah is not an essential part of the word. In these cases, when the initial hamzah is preceded by another word, the hamzah and its vowel are dropped, the sign ـٮ, called *waṣlah*, is written in their place over the alif, and one elides from the last vowel of the preceding word directly to the letter following the waṣlah. If the preceding word does not end in a vowel, then one is given it in order to make elision possible. A hamzah which can change in this way is called *hamzat al-waṣl*.

The hamzah of the definite article is hamzat al-waṣl and is, therefore, elided. Thus عَبْدُ ٱلْمَلِك not عَبْدُ أَلْمَلَك.

If the first letter of the word which the definite article limits is a Sun letter, then one elides from the last vowel of the preceding word to the Sun letter. Thus عَبْدُ ٱلرَّحْمٰنِ not عَبْدُ أَلرَّحْمٰن.

EXERCISE

Recite aloud:

إِسْمِي عُمَرُ. عَرَفَ ٱلرَّجُلُ ٱسْمِي. أَلْبَيْتُ لِأَبِي. دَخَلْتُ ٱلْبَيْتَ.

أُدْرُسْ دَرْسَكَ. أُكْتُبْ دَرْسَكَ وَأَدْرِسْهُ. جَاءَ ٱلْأُسْتَاذُ وَقَرَأَ ٱلْأَسْمَاءَ وَبَدَأَ ٱلدَّرْسَ.

IV. At the end of indefinite nouns and adjectives the three vowel signs are in most cases written double, thus ـٌ or ـٌ, ـً, and ـٍ. When this occurs, an *n* sound is added to that of the vowel and they are, therefore, pronounced *un*, *an*, and *in*, respectively. This ending is called *tanwīn* or *nūnation*. In addition, fatḥah tanwīn requires an alif (not pronounced) after it unless the word ends in tā' marbūṭah (ة) or hamzah (ء).[2]

A word may not simultaneously have both tanwīn and the definite article.

[2] An alif is required after hamzah if the letter preceding the hamzah is one which can be joined to a following letter, e.g. شَيْئًا. Note that in this case the hamzah is written over the connecting line.

EXERCISE

Recite aloud:

<div dir="rtl">

أَبُ ٱلْأَبِ. بَيْتُ ٱلْبَيْتِ. ضَرَبَ ٱلرَّجُلَ. ضَرَبَ رَجُلًا. ضَرَبَ ٱلْخَادِمَةَ.

ضَرَبَ خَادِمَةً. ذَهَبَ إِلَى ٱلْبَيْتِ. ذَهَبَ إِلَى بَيْتٍ. شَمْسُ شَمْسًا شَمْسٍ.

لَيْلَةُ لَيْلَةً لَيْلَةٍ. رَوْضَةُ رَوْضَةً رَوْضَةٍ. مَلِكُ مَلِكًا مَلِكٍ. جُزْءُ جُزْءً جُزْءٍ.

</div>

V. In words of four or more syllables the accent goes back to the first closed syllable, but never further than the third from the end. If there is no closed syllable, the accent is on the third from the end.

EXERCISE

Recite aloud:

<div dir="rtl">

خَيَّاطُونَ أَخْبَرْنَاكُمْ مَشُورَةٌ مُكَاتَبَةٌ مَدْرَسَةٌ مِصْرِيَّةٌ مُؤَرِّخٌ

خَشَبَةٌ إِنْفَعَلَ يَسْتَفْعِلُ كَاتِبَتَانِ دَقِيقَةٌ مَمْلُوكَةٌ فَاطِمَةُ قَبِيلَةٌ

</div>

VI. Sentence accentuation is best learned in connection with a native speaker.

There are no capital letters in Arabic, and proper names can, therefore, only be distinguished by the context.

Punctuation is a recent innovation and is for the most part rather chaotic in its use. In this book it is used sparingly. In general, marks of punctuation are a reversal of their form in English, i.e. a comma is written ، , a question mark ؟.

THE ARABIC LANGUAGE IN GENERAL

The beginning student of Arabic who has had no previous acquaintance with Semitic languages, will be impressed by the difference between the structure of Arabic and that of English or other Indo-European languages which he may know.[1] The most characteristic feature of the Arabic language is that the great majority of its words are built up from (or can be analyzed down into) roots each of which consists of three consonants or radicals. By using these radicals as a base and by varying the three vowels and adding prefixes, infixes, and suffixes, according to certain patterns, the actual words are produced. The tri-consonantal root is loosely equated with the third person masculine singular perfect of the verb which is the citation form. Thus the root *qtl*, which contains the idea of killing, is referred to as *qatala* although *qatala* actually means 'he killed.'

In general it may also be observed that Arabic like Latin is a synthetic, or inflectional, language rather than a language like English which is predominantly analytic. In simple terms this means that the syntactical relationship of nouns is indicated by case endings and that verbs are inflected by means of prefixes, infixes, and suffixes to indicate the various persons, numbers, genders, derived forms, moods, and tenses, in contrast to English where, for example, a separate word (noun or pronoun) is required to indicate the person.

Orthodox Arabic grammarians recognize only three parts of speech: verbs, nouns, and particles. The concept of a verb is the same in Arabic as in English; but adjectives, adverbs, and pronouns (in addition to nouns proper) are classified as nouns; particles include conjunctions, prepositions, and interjections. Although this system has a certain convenience once one has mastered Arabic, it tends to be confusing to a beginner and accordingly this book uses traditional English terminology for parts of speech. In general the transfer of grammatical terminology from one language (not to say language family) to another is likely to be misleading. The student must, therefore, be on his guard to catch the subtle changes of meaning which occur when an old term is applied to a new situation.

[1] The student is not necessarily expected to master this chapter on first reading. It is intended to serve as a basis for interpreting the details which will confront him as he proceeds in his study. It is hoped that by referring back to it he will obtain a fuller insight into the language.