

Appendix 2

Using an Arabic-English Dictionary

For the further study of Qur'anic Arabic and of other written Arabic you will need to have a good Arabic-English dictionary and know how to use it.

The most thorough Arabic-English dictionary on the Qur'an is *A Dictionary and Glossary of the Koran* by John Penrice which was published in 1873.

The most widely available and the best Arabic-English dictionary is *The Hans Wehr Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic*, first published in 1961. Although it deals with modern Arabic, it can be used for words in the Qur'an as well.

To be able to use both these dictionaries properly, you will need to know something of the grammar and structure of Arabic. This textbook, *Access to Qur'anic Arabic*, should provide you with this basic knowledge.

In these dictionaries, words are listed in Arabic alphabetical order according to the letters of the root word.

To look up any word, first ask yourself what are the root letters of the word. Most words normally have three root letters. It should be fairly easy now to know that the root word of *مساجد* is *سجد*, for example.

However, it is sometimes difficult to find out what the root letters of a word are especially with words derived from weak verbs - i.e. words having *أ*, *و* or *ي* as root letters. For example, the root letters of *مؤمن* are *أ*, *م* and *ن*.

More difficult is a word like *تضع* - *you put*, the root letters of which are *و*, *ض* and *ع*. Still more difficult is a word like *قو* - *save*, the root letters of which are *و*, *ق* and *ي*. Such words can only be mastered with reading practice and frequent use of the Arabic dictionary.

An Entry from The Penrice Dictionary and Glossary of the Koran

For the vowel on the middle root letter of the present of the Form I or root word, Penrice gives the letters *a*, *i* and *o* for the fat-hah, kasrah and dammah respectively.

The abbreviation *aor.* stands for *aorist* which is an old term for the present tense.

2nd. declension refers to words which do not take tanwin and which has a final fat-hah in the indefinite for both the accusative and genitive

The Derived Forms of the verb are listed under the root word. Roman numerals I - X are used. Penrice gives the Arabic of each Derived Form together with the Roman numeral.

The active participle and the passive participle (where they occur in the Qur'an) are given with each Form.

عَلِمَ aor. i. and o. To mark, sign; and *عَلِمَ* aor. a. To know (with acc. and *فِي*, also with *أَنْ*); to distinguish (with acc. and *وَمِنْ*); to be learned or knowing; For the difference between *عَلِمَ* and *عَرَفَ* see *عَرَفَ* n.a. Science, knowledge, learning, art; *عَلِمَ لِلسَّاعَةِ* 43 v. 61, "A sign or means of knowing the last hour." *عَلِمَ* A sign; Plur. *أَعْلَامٌ* Long mountains. *عَالِمٌ* part. act. One who knows, or is wise. *عَلَامَةٌ* A sign, mark. *عَالِمِينَ* oblique plur. of *عَالِمٌ* A world; The worlds spoken of in the Koran are taken to mean the three species of rational creatures, viz. men, genii, and angels. *عَلِيمٌ* Learned, knowing, wise; Plur. *عُلَمَاءٌ* (2nd declension). *عَلِيمٌ* Very learned, wise or knowing. *أَعْلَمُ* (2nd declension) comp. form, More or most wise or knowing (with *بِ*). *مَعْلُومٌ* part. pass. Known, predetermined. — *عَلَّمَ* II. To teach (with *بِ*, or with double acc., or with acc. and *وَمِنْ* or *بِ*). *مُعَلَّمٌ* part. pass. Taught, instructed. — *أَعْلَمَ* IV. To make known. — *تَعَلَّمَ* V. To learn (with acc. or with *وَمِنْ*).

The Hans Wehr Dictionary

The Arabic is printed without vowels and the exact pronunciation of a word is indicated by transliteration. Long vowels are indicated by a bar over the a, i and u.

First read the Introduction in the Dictionary carefully, for transliteration styles, abbreviations used and the significance of Roman numerals in particular.

Words are listed according to the root word.

The single letter a, i or u after an entry tells you what vowel goes with the second root letter of the present tense. In the case of *kataba* it is 'u' which stands for a dammah. The present tense of *كتب* is therefore *يكتبُ*. The verbal noun(s) of the root word is given in brackets.

Roman numerals I to X are used for the Derived Forms. But the Arabic for each Form is not written out. It is important therefore to know the set pattern for each Derived Form. For example, if you want to find the meaning of *اكتتب*,

you will need to know that this is the derived Form VIII of *كتب*. The active and passive participles and the verbal noun of each Form are listed separately and not under the Derived Form, as in Penrice.

An entry from The Hans Wehr Dictionary of Modern Literary Arabic

1. The first entry is the root word. The English infinitive 'to write' is used for the root word *كتب* which really means

'he wrote'. The English infinitive is also used for each Derived Form.

2. The 'u' shows that the present tense of *يكتب* is *يكتبُ*.

3. Verbal nouns of the root word are given in brackets.

4. *يكتب* is used in the sense of 'to prescribe' in the Qur'an. A word may have a variety of meanings. The precise meaning of a word must be determined by the context in which it is used.

5. The Roman numerals indicate the various Derived Forms of the verb which are derived from the root. Forms III and VIII occur in the Qur'an.

6. Plurals are given with the singular.

7. This phrase occurs in the Qur'an.

(The column on the right is only part of the entry under *kataba* in the Hans Wehr Dictionary.)

كتب *kataba u* (*kalb*, *كتابة* *kitāba*, *كتبة* *kitba*, *كتبة* *kitāba*)
to write, pen, write down, put down in writing, note down, inscribe, enter, record, book, register (♫ s.th.); to compose, draw up, indite, draft (♫ s.th.); to bequeath, make over by will (♫ s.th. to s.o.); to prescribe (♫ s.th. to s.o.); to foreordain, destine (♫ or ♫ s.th. to s.o.; of God); pass. *kutiba* to be fated, be foreordained, be destined (♫ to s.o.) | *كتب على نفسه أن* to be firmly resolved to ..., make it one's duty to ...; *كتب عنه* to write from s.o.'s dictation; *كتب كتابه* (*kitābahū*) to draw up the marriage contract for s.o., marry s.o. (♫ to) II to make (♫ s.o.) write (♫ s.th.); to form or deploy in squadrons (♫ troops) III to keep up a correspondence, exchange letters, correspond (♫ with s.o.) IV to dictate (♫ s.o. to s.o. s.th.), make (♫ s.o.) write (♫ s.th.) VI to write to each other, exchange letters, keep up a correspondence VII to subscribe VIII to write (♫ s.th.); to copy (♫ s.th.), make a copy (♫ of s.th.); to enter one's name; to subscribe (♫ for); to contribute, subscribe (♫ ب money to); to be entered, be recorded, be registered X to ask (♫ s.o.) to write (♫ s.th.); to dictate (♫ s.o. to s.o. s.th.), make (♫ s.o.) write (♫ s.th.); to have a copy made (♫ by s.o.)

كتاب *kitāb* pt. *كتب* *kutub* piece of writing, record, paper; letter, note, message; document, deed; contract (esp. marriage contract); book; *الكتاب* the Koran; the Bible | *أهل الكتاب* *ahl al-k.* the people of the Book, the adherents of a revealed religion, the *kitabīs*, i.e., Christians and Jews; *كتاب الزواج* *k. az-zawāj* marriage contract; *كتاب الطلاق* *k. at-ṭalāq* bill of divorce; *كتاب تعليمي* (*ta'limī*) textbook; *كتاب الاعتماد* *credentials* (*dipl.*); *دار الكتب* library

كتب *kutubī* pl. *-ya* bookseller, book-dealer