The problem with Islamic filing is related to the complexity of non-Western words and names in their transliterated forms. There are two approaches to determine the entry element for an Islamic author: the Oriental practice, as adopted by Brockelmann; and the Western practice, as adopted by the Library of Congress. The four alternatives of filing are demonstrated by a comparison of the filing practice in the published catalogues of libraries with important Oriental collections. The filing rules offered are based on three principles: (1) file word-by-word, (2) hyphens separate words, while diacritical marks do not, and (3) every element, even a single letter, is treated as a word.

Until the beginning of the twentieth century Muslims generally were not in the habit of using family names, although there are certainly exceptions. 'A man would be known by his personal name, given at birth, supplemented by a second name given in childhood, or by his father's name. Surnames did exist, but were rare and not in common usage'. Only in countries like Turkey and Iran, where people were legally obliged to adopt surnames, can we be certain about the part of the name to be used as a main entry element. In the majority of cases for other Islamic countries a choice of entry must still be made. Two schemes are in common use at the moment: Brockelmann's, in which the first element of the name is used, and that of the Library of Congress, which uses that part of an author's name by which he is generally best known.

Apart from the two approaches to the choice of entry for an author's name, which is not the subject of this paper, there are at least four schemes of filing Islamic names and words in use in Islamic reference works and in the libraries with major holdings of Islamic material. A glance at Brockelmann's Geschichte der arabischen Literatur (GAL) and the published library catalogues...
of the following institutions demonstrates this diversity: Library catalogue of the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London; Dictionary catalog of the Oriental collection, New York Public Library Reference Department; Catalog of the Oriental Institute Library, University of Chicago; Union catalogue of Asian publications. The common feature in all these catalogues and the major bibliographical works in the field is that the filing is basically a word-by-word order. In addition, all these works follow the practice noted in the University of Chicago Catalog: 'Initial Arabic words prefixed by the article al or el (or assimilated forms) are filed by the next element of the word'. The rest of the entry is filed word-by-word with the following possible qualifications: (a) disregarding the article al, and bringing ibn to the head of the alphabet, as in the Library catalogue of the SOAS; (b) disregarding both the article and ibn in all cases; (c) disregarding the article in all cases, but giving the normal alphabetical value to ibn (d) treating every element, including izafat 'í as a full element in filing.

Since Islamic names generally appear to be more complex than their English counterparts, it is advisable to adopt a practical alphabetical filing arrangement even if it clashes with the grammatical peculiarities of the individual Islamic language. The rules offered below represent a simplified approach, which has the added merit of no exceptions. These rules are the product of experimentation with the University of Toronto public catalogue, and with the index to I. Goldziher's The Zahiris. They are basically an elaboration of the various forms in which Islamic names and words will be encountered. In summary, the filing procedure may be reduced to three principles: (1) file word-by-word, (2) hyphens separate words, while diacritical marks do not, and (3) every element, even a single letter, is treated as a word. While Persian practice might seem to demand an exception to rule 5, this is not feasible if the principle that 'hyphens divide words' is to be retained.

No mention has been made of general problems such as the filing order of identical forms, since these areas of discussion are more properly treated in books on the subject of filing and occasionally by individual library practice. Nor is it possible to supply examples for each conceivable case mentioned in M.D.A.'s article. For instance, it does not matter whether ibn (or Ibn) is spelled out or given in abbreviated form as 'b', the form actually used will determine the position in the alphabetical arrangement.

Rules

Since these rules are designed to overcome the differences between the individual Islamic languages (Arabic, Persian, Turkish and Urdu) the filing arrangement does not correspond in all cases with the practice followed in the respective language.

1. Filing is word-by-word according to the order of the Latin alphabet. No special treatment is accorded to the word ibn (unlike the practice in GAL and the Library catalogue of SOAS).

2. Diacritical marks above or below the letters (a, t, g, g, h, h, z, z, etc.) are disregarded. Turkish ı is filed like i. Turkish ğ and ğı are filed in the same way that the German equivalents would be filed.

3. When a suffix and the main root of a word are separated in transliteration by a single prime ('), they are filed as one word.

Kazim
Kazim Beg
Kazim Zadah
Kazimi
Kazim zadah

4. The aspirates ' and ' (sometimes transliterated as '), actually letters of the Arabic alphabet, are disregarded in filing. They do not serve to separate the word in which they occur.

The Indexer Vol. 9 No. 1 April 1974
5. The hyphen divides a word even if this is grammatically incorrect.

(a) Thus, the Persian izafat (-i or -e and its different forms -'i/-'e, -yi/-ye) and the Persian suffixes -ha, ra, etc. are considered as separate words.

Majlis-e-Armughan
Majlis-i Naiz-i Arshi
Majlis Ma'arif
Majlisi, Muhammad Baqir

(b) The Persian conjunction va when transliterated as 'u' and connected by a hyphen to the word following is considered a separate word.

Makhtutat-i Farsi u-Urdu

6. The Arabic article al- or el- (or the assimilated forms ad-, adh-, an-, ar-, as-, ash-, at-, ath-, az-, ad-, edh-, etc.), although joined by a hyphen to the word following, is disregarded at the beginning of an entry irrespective of whether it is capitalised or not. It should, in fact, always be printed in lower case letters even at the beginning of an entry. When it occurs anywhere after the first part of an entry al- and its various forms are treated as separate elements and given full consideration in filing. A clear distinction must be made between the Arabic article al- and the word Al (family, clan, or part of a proper name) which, depending on the context, might or might not be capitalised. In this usage the Al constitutes a filing element, unlike the article. Examples for the article al- and Al in initial position:

al-Akhtal
Al al-nabi
Al-i 'Osman
‘Ala’ al-Din Muhammad
Al-Alfain by Imam al-Hasan ben Yousif
‘Ali ibn Muhammad
al-Andalus
al-As'ilah al-fa'iqah
‘Asim, Necib
Bab al-Mandab
al-Badi' al-Zaman
Bah' al-Dawlah
Fakhr al-Din al-Razi
El-Habre
al-'Iqd al-farid
Khalid ibn al-Walid
ash-Shaf'i
Tabaristan

Examples of the article al- not in an initial position:

Dar, Ratan Nath
Dar, S.N.
Dar al-Bayan
Dar al-Kutub al-Zahiriya
Dar al-Kutub wa-al-Watha’iq al-Qawmiyah
Dar el-Salam
Dar-es-Salaam
Dar Fur see Darfur
Dar Kutub al-Aqwaf al-‘Ammah
Dar ul-elhan mecmu'asi
Dar-ul-Islam series
Dara Shikuh
Darfur