

MELA Basic Reference Outline Series

Number 2

GUIDE TO GRAF'S GESCHICHTE DER CHRISTLICHEN ARABISCHEN LITERATUR

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Graf, Georg. *Geschichte der christlichen arabischen Literatur*. Città del Vaticano, Bibliotheca Apostolica Vaticana, 1944–1953. 5 v.

I. Organization of the publication.

Each volume, except vol. 5, begins with an introduction, a detailed table of contents for the volume, and a summary table of contents of names and topics appearing in the volume arranged alphabetically. The alphabetical listing of manuscripts and the published catalogs in which they are found, as well as a list of abbreviations of works which are cited in the text, appears in every volume. Additions and corrections follow the text. (n.b., the additions and corrections for vol. 1 are in an appendix at the end of vol. 2.)

Volumes 1–3 include introductory sections covering historical and political events of the period treated in the respective volumes. Overviews of Eastern Church history precede the bio-bibliographical sections. The volumes follow a chronological order. Since the nature of the contents differs from volume to volume and is not arranged consistently across the volumes, a description of each volume is given below.

Vol. 1. “Translations” deals with works which pre-date the appearance of an Arabic Christian literature (i.e., works written originally in Arabic). It includes translations of the Bible (Old and New Testaments); lectionaries; apocrypha and pseudepigraphia; patristics translated from Greek, Syriac, and Coptic; hagiography; canonical literature; and liturgies. Translations are by native Arabic speakers as well as missionaries. While this volume has less importance as a bio-bibliographical source for Arabic authors, it is useful for identifying the history of translations into Arabic of the Bible and liturgies and as a guide to early Near Eastern Christian authors writing in languages other than Arabic.

Vol. 2. “Writers to the middle of the 15th century” covers authors arranged by sect: Part 1. Melchites; part 2. Maronites; part 3. Nestorians; part 4. Jacobites; part 5. Copts. There is an appendix which includes works which cannot be identified by sect, as well as hagiography, and apologetics and polemics. The bio-bibliographical section contains both religious and secular works.

Vol. 3. “Writers from the middle of the 15th century to the end of the 19th century” covers authors arranged by sect: Part 1. Melchites, who are further divided into Orthodox Melchites and Uniate Melchites; and part 2. Maronites.

Vol. 4. continues vol. 3 with part 3. Jacobites, Catholic Syrians, and Catholic Armenians; part 4. Nestorians and Chaldæans; part 5. Copts, who are further divided into Monophysites and Catholics; part 6. Roman Catholic missionary literature, schismatic controversies, and anonymous works; part 7. Protestant missionary literature; and part 8. Secular literature by 19th century eastern Christians (includes history, poetry, philology, journalism, and belles-lettres).

Vol. 5 is the index to volumes 1–4. It is comprised of two sections:

1. Name and subject index
2. Titles

There is a list of abbreviations, most of which refer to religious titles (e.g. bishop, priest, etc.) The Roman numerals II, III, and IV preceding the page numbers refer to volumes 2, 3, and 4. Page numbers not preceded by a Roman numeral refer to volume 1. Entries are in Roman alphabetical order, regardless of diacritics. The relational terms *abū* and *ibn* are spelled out in full. Articles are disregarded in the title index. The word *kitāb* is abbreviated as k. and is disregarded in indexing; there are, however, a few exceptions; *al-Kitāb al-Muqaddas* being the most obvious.

Within each volume are numbered bio-bibliographical entries. The entries may be for individual authors or for topics (usually genre headings). Less prolific or known writers are usually grouped under topical headings. Literary figures often are interspersed among the topical headings. Most authors have only one numbered entry, but significant figures may have two or more which cover various aspects of their life and works (e.g., Maximus Maḏlūm, Theodor Abū Qurra; Ḥunayn ibn Ishāq has one entry, but the School of

Ḥunayn has another). The entries follow the pattern found in works such as Brockelmann, Sezgin, and Storey. Entries begin with a brief biographical sketch, usually a short paragraph; birth and death dates or dates of activity; places, family background, religious offices, etc. Then follow the works by the author, including translations and edited works by other authors. Each work is given a number. A brief description of the work is followed by known manuscripts, and the catalogs in which they are cited, and published editions. There are numerous references, biographical and bibliographical, to other sources. Those authors who are listed under topical headings rather than having their own numbered entries, are treated in the same way, but in much briefer form.

II. Using the publication.

The Index volume (v. 5) is recommended as the starting point for any search for a number of reasons. The arrangement within volumes and from volume to volume is more conducive to reading the work as a history. Many users are confused by the multiplicity of sects and how they relate to one another and usually do not know in which sect to place a given author. The presentation of topics are not consistent among the volumes and sections.

A transliteration chart is not to be found in any of the volumes. The user should remember that the transliteration scheme used derives from a German language perspective. Those familiar with Brockelmann's *GAL* and Sezgin's *GAS* will recognize a similar system. Although it is fairly easy to catch on to the scheme, the Arabic letters that might initially appear unfamiliar in romanization are:

ث	ṭ
ج	ǧ
ح	ḥ
ذ	ḏ
ش	š
ص	ṣ
ض	ḏ
ط	ṭ
ظ	ẓ
ع	ʿ
غ	ǧ
ق	q

A major problem with using *GCAL* is determining what linguistic form a name will take, rather than what element of a name will be used. Because of the large number of religious names (whether names given at birth or names taken at ordination) which are not of Arabic origin, it is important to note that some names may be entered in Greek or Latin forms. Graf's "rule" is that if a name is Greek or Latin, even when it is represented in Arabic with no or only slight changes in its consonants, the name is given in its most common Latin form as it appears in German works. Graf has relied on O. Bardenhewer's *Geschichte der altkirchlichen Literatur* in particular. This has been done in deference to the non-Arabists to whom this work has also been addressed. Graf's usual practice is to give the transliterated Arabic form in parenthesis—e.g., Joachim (Yuwakim). Latin and Greek names which have been changed into genuine Arabic names (e.g., Girgis for Georgius) are left as they are, especially if they have additional elements such as *abū* and *ibn*. They are transliterated from their Arabic forms, as are genuine Semitic names. The one exception, according to Graf, is names which parallel Latin names and which are "universally" known in church literature, such as the names of angels (e.g., Michael, Gabriel). These are rendered in the common Latin forms. However, this exception is not applied consistently. One finds entries using Michael, Miha'il, and Misil. The index usually gives cross references from one form to the other, but occasionally an author may appear under two forms of the name in the index.

III. Tips for using *GCAL*.

- Use the index as your starting point
- Be prepared to cross check Latin and Arabic name forms (e.g., Michael, Miha'il, etc.)
- Remember that only volumes 2–4 have vol. number designations in the index
- Disregard the word *kitāb* in the title index
- Be aware of the fact that Graf uses the historically correct term "Melchite" (Arabic *Malakīyah*) for both the Eastern (or "Greek" or Byzantine) Orthodox Church and the uniate communion which split from it. For authors writing after the 15th century, he distinguishes between the "Orthodox Melchites" (Arabic *al-Rūm al-Urthūdhuks/īyah*) and the "Uniate Melchites" (i.e., that portion of the sect which is in communion with the Church of Rome and which is more commonly known today as "Greek" Catholic or "Melchite"; Arabic *al-Rūm al-Kathūlik/īyah*).

IV. Additional notes.

GCAL is particularly recommended to catalogers as a means of avoiding the all too common error of classifying authors and their religious works in the wrong sect.

A related title, which supplements the entries on Maronites, is Michael Breydey. *Geschichte der syro-arabischen Literatur der Maroniten vom VII. bis XVI. Jahrhundert*. Oplanden, Westdeutscher Verlag, 1985.