IJMES Translation and Transliteration guide

Notes on Translation

1) Translations must be provided for all foreign-language terms and phrases (including book, article, film or song titles) that appear in the main body of the article, unless their meanings are widely known in English or they are cognate words whose meaning can be discerned with reasonable ease by English readers. Note: IJMES considers French a foreign language.

2) Translations of foreign-language book, journal, article, film or song titles in footnotes may be provided at the author's discretion but are not required by IJMES. If translations are included, they should appear in parentheses following the title in the original language, with no italics and outside any quotation marks. Do not use a translation as the title.

3) Translations should be composed artfully in clear, polished, idiomatic English. Unless the original text was written awkwardly according to the style conventions of the language in which it was written, it is not a skillful translation to put it in awkward English style, even if it is more "direct." If you are deliberately attempting to translate linguistic infelicities present in the original text, use "[sic]" or an explanatory note in the text or an endnote to make that clear.

Transliteration

IJMES is considered a leader in the field of Middle East studies for its transliteration standards and asks all authors to adhere to them carefully. Correct transliterations are the responsibility of the author. Please review the guidelines below and the appropriate transliteration chart before submitting any material with transliterated text to IJMES.

For Arabic and Persian, use the [IJMES Transliteration Chart](PDF) (PDF). For Ottoman Turkish, use the *IJMES* Transliteration Chart or modern Turkish orthography consistently. For other languages, use the Library of Congress Transliteration Chart.

General Transliteration Guidelines

1) If an English term exists for a word, use it.

2) All technical terms from languages written in non-Latin alphabets must be italicized and fully transliterated with diacritical marks (macrons and dots), e.g., ʿ*ashā*ʾ. A technical term is defined as a word for which there is no English equivalent and that is not found in Merriam–Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, or a multi-word phrase, excluding names and titles as detailed in #4 below. Diacritical marks, as well as the letters ʿ*ayn* and *hamza,* should be inserted using a Unicode font (see below for Jaghbub Uni).

3) Words found in Merriam–Webster's should be spelled as they appear there and not treated as technical terms. They should have no diacritics, nor should they be italicized—for example, mufti, jihad, shaykh. See the [IJMES Word List](#) (PDF) for exceptions that preserve *ʿayn* and *hamza,* for example, Qurʾan, shariʿa, ʿulamaʾ, and Kaʿba.

4) Diacritics should not be added to personal names, place names, names of political parties and organizations, or titles of books and articles. These words should be spelled in accordance with the IJMES transliteration system but without diacritics. However, *ʿayn* and *hamza* should be preserved in all these cases (except for initial *hamza,* which is dropped). Do not italicize transliterated proper names, including titles of organizations, and do follow English capitalization rules: for example, al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun. Use italics for titles of books and journals only.

5) Arabic or other non-English names of prominent political or cultural figures are spelled according to the IJMES transliteration system, but without diacritics. IJMES follows "accepted English spellings" for names of prominent figures, historical or contemporary, e.g., Gamal Abdel Nasser, Faten Hamama, Ruhollah Khomeini, Benazir Bhutto, Maimonides.

6) Place names with accepted English spellings should be spelled in accordance with English norms, for example, Baalbek, Damascus, Riyadh, Iraq. This rule applies to cities of publication in citations. See the [IJMES Word List](#) for preferences among common spellings.

7) Follow English capitalization rules for transliterated titles. Capitalize all major terms, but not articles, prefixes, coordinating conjunctions, or prepositions (even when joined to pronouns). Use italics to indicate a book, newspaper, or periodical. Do NOT include diacritical marks but do preserve *ʿayn* and *hamza*. For example: *Faysal al-Tafriqa bayn al-Islam wa-l-Zandaqa; al-Nur al-Safirʿan Akhbar al-Qarn al-ʿAshir*.

8) Avoid Anglicized plurals on fully transliterated words if possible: for example, *fuqahāʾ* not *faqīh*s. Exceptions may be made if there is a good reason for it, such as when comparing numbered quantities or currencies. Anglicized plurals may be used on words that are found in Merriam-Webster's and thus not fully transliterated, e.g., muftis.

9) When in doubt, follow the spelling of the term in the script of the original language, not its oral pronunciation. There are only a few exceptions (e.g., *iḍāfa* constructions), which are detailed on this page.

10) For colloquial transliterations, refer to an English-colloquial dictionary for that language. Use a consistent colloquial transliteration system, preferably one that is as close as possible to the IJMES system.

Detailed Transliteration Guidelines

• The Arabic *tāʾ marbūṭa* is rendered *a* not *ah*. In Persian it is *ih*. In Arabic *iḍāfa* constructions, it is rendered *at*: for example, *thawrat 14 Tammūz*. The Persian izafat is rendered *-i*: for example, *vilāyat-i faqīh*.

• The nisba ending is rendered *-iyya* in Arabic (e.g., *Miṣriyya*) and *-iyyih* in Persian.

• Inseparable prepositions, conjunctions, and other prefixes are connected with what follows by a hyphen: bi-, wa-, li-, la-. Example: *fī al-ʿIrāq wa-Miṣr*. (Note: the preposition *fī* is not an inseparable prefix in the Arabic script and thus is not treated as one by IJMES.)

• Ellision. When one of the above prepositions or conjunctions is followed by *al*, the *a* will elide, forming a contraction rendered as wa-l-, bi-l-, li-l-, and la-l-. Example: *fī Miṣr wa-l-ʿIrāq*.

• Initial hamza is always dropped.

• The definite article (e.g., the Arabic al-) is lowercase everywhere, except when the first word of a sentence or an endnote. (Note: IJMES no longer capitalizes "al-" when the first word of a title unless it is the start of a sentence or endnote.)

• When an Arabic name is shortened to just the surname, the al- is retained. For example, Hasan al-Banna becomes al-Banna. Connectors in names—such as bin, ben, abu, etc.—are lowercase only when preceded by a name, e.g., Ali ibn Abi Talib, Abu Ammar, Ibn Khaldun, Bint al-Shati.

• Persian must be transliterated using the IJMES system, not that of the *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, so *i* and *u* must be used, not *e* and *o*.

• Just as modern Turkish no longer uses hatted vowels (â), IJMES does not either.

• See the **IJMES Transliteration Chart** (PDF) for a character-by-character map of our transliteration system.

• For specifics and exceptions, see the evolving **IJMES Word List** (PDF).

Webster's Collegiate Dictionary IJMES and Cambridge University Press use Webster's Collegiate Dictionary to determine whether a foreign-language word has an accepted English spelling. Except for words included in the IJMES Word List (above), any word that appears in Webster's should be spelled as it appears there, without italicization or diacritical marks. Words that are neither in Webster's nor the IJMES Word List are considered "technical terms" and must be transliterated, with diacritics, according to the IJMES Transliteration Guide and Transliteration Chart above, except in cases outlined in the Transliteration Guide (titles, names, etc).

Jaghbub Uni Font Any Unicode font may be used in submissions with transliterated text. IJMES prefers either recent versions of Times New Roman (which are Unicode-compliant), or Jaghbub Uni, which is based on Times New Roman. Jaghbub Uni may be downloaded for free through the link above. Once the font is downloaded, it must be installed on your system. For font installation instructions, see the Microsoft website for Windows, or the Jaghbub Uni site (link above) for Macintosh. Once installed, the transliteration symbols can

be inserted in MS Word by selecting "Insert--Symbol" while Jaghbub Uni is selected as the font. From the Symbol popup window, shortcut keys can be set up (e.g., "alt-s" for "s" with a dot underneath) so that you do not need to use Insert--Symbol each subsequent time.