

by Col. Ayabi

ARABIC GLOSSARY

Written in the Unified Arabic System

Important generic and other terms which appear at present  
on maps of Arab countries

|  |   |
|--|---|
| A <sup>ʿ</sup> Alī (plural of a <sup>ʿ</sup> lā) |   |
| Ābār (plural of bi <sup>ʿ</sup> r)               |   |
| ʿAbd   | man, servant                              |
| abū  | father of..., owner of ...                |
| Abyad  | white                                     |
| Aḥmar  | red                                       |
| Ahrām (plural of Haram)                          | pyramids                                  |
| ʿAyn (plural ʿUyūn)                              | source, spring                            |
| Akbar  | greatest                                  |
| Akhḡar   | green                                     |
| a <sup>ʿ</sup> lā                                | upper, high(er), highest                  |
| ʿĀli   | high                                      |
| Aqra <sup>ʿ</sup>                                | bald, denuded                             |
| Arḡ (plural Arāḡī)                               | land                                      |
| aswad  | black                                     |
| Aṣfar  | yellow                                    |
| Ashḡar   | blond                                     |
| Azraq  | blue, dim. Zrayq, fem. Zarqā <sup>ʿ</sup> |
| bāb  | gate                                      |
| bādiyah(-t)                                      | steppe, desert                            |
| baḡrī  | by the sea                                |
| baḡr   | sea, great lake, great river              |
| bahrah(-t)                                       | lake, swamp                               |
| ba <sup>ʿ</sup> id                               | far                                       |
| bandar   | port ...                                  |
| bani   | sons of ... plural of ibn                 |
| bin  | see ibn                                   |
| bi <sup>ʿ</sup> r                                | well, cistern                             |
| birkah(-t)                                       | lake, bay, marsh, basin                   |

|                                      |                                      |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| bū                                   | short for abū (father)               |
| buhayrat (dim. of baḥr)              | port                                 |
| burj                                 | town, fort                           |
| ḍahr                                 | hill, back plural ḍ'ḥūr, dim. ḍahrāt |
| Dār                                  | house dim. duwayr                    |
| dayr                                 | monastery                            |
| farsh                                | plateau (common meaning)             |
| Ghābah (plural Ghābat)               | forest                               |
| Gharb                                | west                                 |
| Ghurd                                | dune                                 |
| Ghadīr                               | waterhole                            |
| ḥadd                                 | peak                                 |
| ḥaḍabah(-t)                          | plateau                              |
| ḥamādah                              | stony desert                         |
| Ibn                                  | son, descendant                      |
| iqlīm                                | district, region                     |
| ʿIrq                                 | sand dunes                           |
| jabal (plural jibāl)                 | mountain                             |
| jāmi <sup>c</sup>                    | mosque                               |
| janūb                                | south                                |
| jisr                                 | bridge                               |
| jazīrah (-t)                         | island                               |
| jūn                                  | little bay                           |
| kabīr                                | great, big                           |
| kanisah                              | church                               |
| karm                                 | vineyard                             |
| kfar                                 | village, hamlet                      |
| khalā <sup>ʿ</sup>                   | empty land                           |
| khadrā <sup>ʿ</sup> (dim. of akhdar) | green                                |
| khalīj                               | gulf, bay                            |
| khashm                               | nose, cape, mouth                    |
| khirbah (-t)                         | ruin (plural kharāb, dim. khraybah)  |

|                         |                                    |
|-------------------------|------------------------------------|
| khawr                   | ravine, water-course, creek, inlet |
| kubrā                   | see akbar                          |
| kubrī                   | bridge                             |
| Mā'                     | water                              |
| madīnah (-t)            | town, city                         |
| maydān                  | square, open space                 |
| miḥaṭṭah (-t)           | railway station                    |
| Maghrib                 | western                            |
| majrā                   | waterway                           |
| Maghārah (-t)           | cave                               |
| mamarr                  | passage                            |
| manāqīr                 | hill plural of Minqār (beak)       |
| manzil (plural Manāzil) | camping place, home                |
| maqām                   | place, hallowed place              |
| maqta'                  | ford, quarry, ferry                |
| Mār                     | venerable, saint                   |
| marj (plural mrūj)      | meadow                             |
| marsā                   | anchorage, fort                    |
| maṣabb                  | river mouth                        |
| mashrac <sup>c</sup>    | watering place, crossroads         |
| mashriq                 | the east                           |
| masīl                   | water-course                       |
| masjid                  | mosque                             |
| maṣna <sup>c</sup>      | factory                            |
| maṭla <sup>c</sup>      | height, pass                       |
| mazār                   | tomb, shrine                       |
| mīnā'                   | port, anchorage                    |
| mawlāyā                 | noble                              |
| Milh,                   | salt                               |

|                            |                                 |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| ma <sup>c</sup> diyya (f)  | ferry                           |
| Maṭhanoh(-t)               | mill                            |
| mu <sup>c</sup> askar      | military camp                   |
| mudīriyyat                 | province                        |
| muḥāfaẓat                  | governate                       |
| munkhafāḍ                  | depression                      |
| murābit                    | saint's tomb                    |
| murr                       | bitter                          |
| mutawasiṭ                  | middle                          |
| muttaḥidah(-t)             | united                          |
| naba <sup>c</sup>          | spring                          |
| nabk                       | small dune                      |
| nafūd                      | sandy desert soil               |
| naḥiyah(-t)                | enviroñ, district               |
| nahr                       | river, stream                   |
| najm (plur. Nujūm)         | star                            |
| nakhl (plural nakhīl)      | date-palm                       |
| naqab                      | pass                            |
| naṣb                       | hill, mountain, elevation       |
| Qal <sup>c</sup> ah(-t)    | fortress                        |
| Qamar                      | moon                            |
| qanāh(-t) (plural qanāyāt) | canal                           |
| qasabah(-t)                | citadel                         |
| qaryah(-t)                 | village, diminutive qurayyāt    |
| Qaṣr                       | fort, castle                    |
| Qattārah(-t)               | well with only trickle of water |
| qiblah(-t)                 | towards Makkah(-t)              |
| ramlah(-t)                 | sand tract                      |
| rauḍah(-t)                 | meadow, garden                  |
| ra's                       | cape                            |

|                     |                          |
|---------------------|--------------------------|
| sabkḥah(-t)         | salt flats               |
| sadd                | dam                      |
| saghīr              | small                    |
| sāḥil               | coastal plain            |
| sahl                | plain                    |
| ṣahrā'              | desert                   |
| sa'id               | Upper Egypt, highland    |
| sarīr               | desert of small stones   |
| sayyidī             | my lord                  |
| sakḥrah(-t)         | stone                    |
| sha'ab              | road, ravine             |
| shams               | sun                      |
| shimāl              | north                    |
| sharm               | anchorage, bay           |
| sharq               | east                     |
| sharqī              | oriental, eastern        |
| shaṭṭ               | large river, bank, swamp |
| sinn                | tooth, summit            |
| sūq                 | market                   |
| sūr                 | rampart                  |
| tall (plural tulūl) | hill(s)                  |
| tayr                | bird                     |
| tur'ah(-t)          | canal                    |
| Umm                 | mother                   |
| wā'li               | valley                   |
| walad               | boy, descendant of       |
| zaytūn              | olive                    |