The Digital Orientalist Keyboard Layouts

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ATTENTION: discrepancies exist between the Mac OSX and Microsoft Windows Arabic keyboard layouts. They are negligible and should become obvious upon usage. This document has been made using the Mac OSX layout. The Latin keyboard layout is only available for Mac OSX.

Introduction

This document explains how to install and use two keyboard lay-outs useful to all students, scholars and others interested in the Arabic and Persian language, whose primary language is a Western-European one. One will find that once installed, these layouts increase productivity tremendously. The Latin layout takes care of characters necessary for proper transliteration of Arabic words and accommodates all major transliteration systems. The Arabic layout allows the user to type Arabic in near-transliterary style, which is more intuitive for Orientalists.

Please note that Mac OS X Lion-users do not necessarily need to install the Latin keyboard-layout but only need to modify the regular English keyboard. However, the Latin keyboard-layout proofs to be faster and is therefore recommended.

Installation for Windows

- Run the Installer file
- On the taskbar, click on the language icon and select 'add keyboard'
- Look up and select the keyboard
- Delete other active Arabic keyboards

Installation for Mac OSX

Modifying the regular English keyboard

Put the *Keyboard-en.plist* file in the following folder:

/System/Library/Input Methods/PressAndHold.app/Contents/Resources

The computer will ask for permission and will ask what you want to do since a file with the same name already exists. Choose to replace the old file with the new one. You may need to log out and back in for changes to take effect.

Installation of the two keyboard layouts

1.   Find the following files (you may not see the extension of these files, depending on your system settings)
    a.   'Orientalist.Arabic.keylayout'
    b.   'Orientalist.Latin.keylayout'
    c.   'Orientalist.Arabic.icns'
    d.   'Orientalist.Latin.icns'
2.   Copy these files to the map 'Macintosh HD/Library/Keyboard Layouts'
3.   Log off and log in again, this is so the computer will recognize the new layouts.
4.   Go to 'System Settings/Language and Text/Input sources'
5.   Scroll down until you see 'Orientalists' Latin' and 'Orientalists' Arabic', check the boxes next to them.
6.   The layouts are now installed and ready to use. You may activate them by clicking on the flag in the right-top corner and selecting them from the drop-down box.

7.   Additionally, you may want to set up a key combination to switch between layouts:
8.   Go back to the menu 'System Settings/Language and Text/Input sources'
9.   Click on the button on the right saying 'key combinations'
10.   Click on Keyboard and Text.
11.   Check the box 'Select previous input source in menu'.
12.   Double click the current key combination and change it into what you like. I would suggest using ⌘+Q (⌘ and Q at the same time) as this is easy to reach with your thumb and middle finger of your left hand.
13.   Once set up, tap ⌘+Q, and notice the change in the top-right corner.

Orientalists' Latin

The modification to the standard English keyboard layout supports all major transliteration systems, among which are the ones created by:

a.   *Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft (= Arabica: Revue d'études arabes = DIN 31635)*

b.   *Library of Congress*

c.   *Encyclopedia of Islam (Leiden: Brill, 1st and 2nd edition)*

d.   *İslâm Ansiklopedisi (Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı)*

e.   *Encyclopædia Iranica (Columbia University)*

f.   *ISO 233-3 (International Standards Organisation, 1999)*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
q	‹	›	«	»	ʿ	ʾ			
e	ē	è	é	ê	ë	ʿ	ʻ	ė	ȩ
t	ṭ								
y	ỳ	ÿ							
u	ū	ù	ú	û	ü				
i	ī	ì	í	î	ï	ị			
o	ō	ò	ó	ô	ö	œ	ø	õ	
a	ā	à	á	â	ä	ʾ	ʼ	æ	ã
s	ṣ	š	ß	ś					
d	ḍ								
g	ġ	ğ	ḡ						
h	ḥ	ḫ	ẖ						
k	ḳ								
l	ł								
z	ẓ	ž	ź	ż					
c	ç	č	ć						

In general, the following rules are followed:

- For vowels, all strokes above the letter are under option 1, accent grave under 2, acute accent under 3, circumflex under 4, umlaut under 5.

- The ʿayn is made with 'e', under option 6 (ʿ) or 7 (').

- The hamzah is made with 'a', also under option 6(ʾ) or 7 (').

- For consonants, the first option gives a dot below the letter (except for g: ġ), option 2 gives an inverted circumflex above the letter (except for h: ḫ).

- the letter 'q' functions as a joker: it gives brackets which one may use for Hadith and Quran citations.

The separate keyboard is capable of nearly the same. It is exactly like the standard US keyboard layout. However, with one of the following key combinations, one can type a special character useful for transliteration:

- ⌥+.
- ⌥+TAB
- ⌥+\

Pressing one of these three key combinations will make you enter *transliteration mode*. If followed by some keys it will produce a special character. In all other cases it does not do anything. The ⌥+TAB is recommended as it is a natural combination to press with left thumb + ring finger. The following illustration covers the keys that produce a special character:
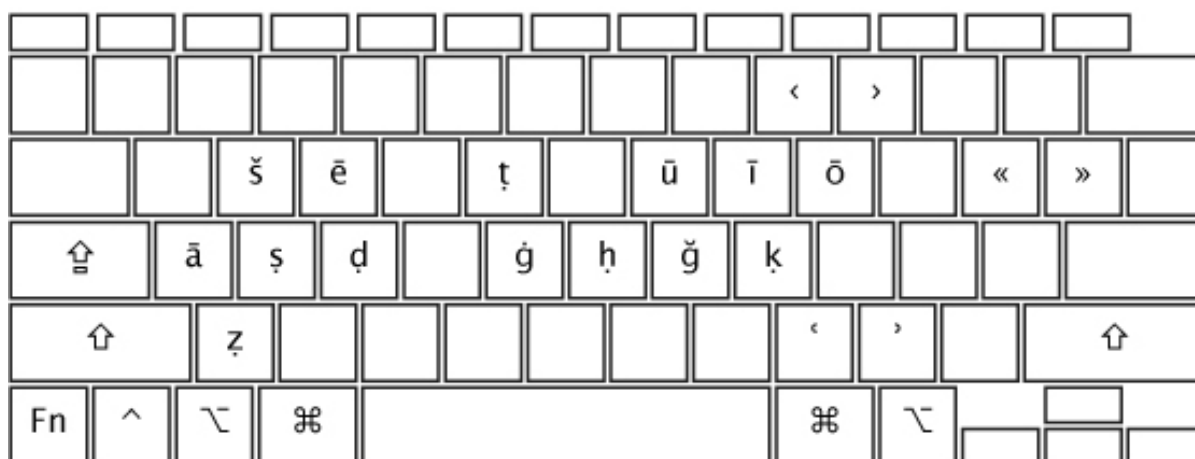

Figure 1: Latin keyboard in transliteration mode

As one can see, it is fairly easy to transliterate names like Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī using this layout. These key combinations are all chosen for a good reason. For example, to get š one has to press w after the one of the three key combinations. This is first of all because s is already taken to get ṣ. Next to that, in the Orientalists' Arabic layout, the w is used for ش, so there is consistency between the two keyboard layouts. This second reason is also the case for the other two characters, ġ and ğ. In the Orientalists' Arabic keyboard layout, the g is assigned to produce غ and the j is assigned to produce ج.

Additionally, with keys 9 and 0 one can produce ‹ and ›, and with keys [and] one can produce « and ». I use them myself to indicate citations from Hadith and Quran and I therefore included them.

Note: the normal key combinations (⌥+i, ⌥+u, ⌥+e, ⌥+`, ⌥+n) can still be used to produce useful characters such as î, ä, ú, è or õ. In fact, to get transliteration-specific characters you do exactly the same as with those key combinations; you first press the combination to enter the specific mode,

then you press another key to get the actual special character.
Of course this also works with Shift or Capslock. One will then get the following output:
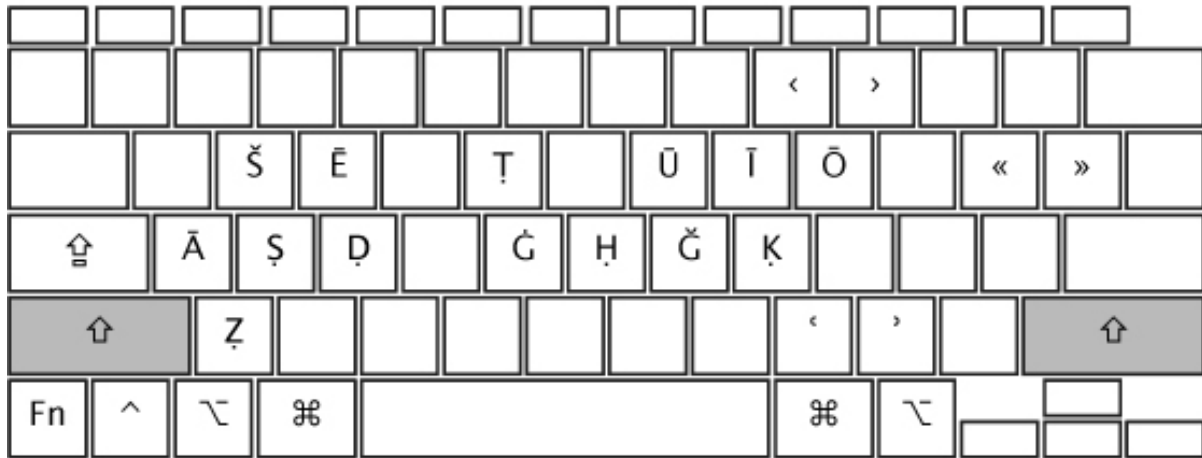

Figure 2: Latin keyboard in transliteration mode with Shift or Capslock on

This should be self-explanatory.

Orientalists' Arabic

For Orientalists, typing in Arabic script itself may be even more frustrating than transliterating. Standard keyboard layouts for Arabic feel unnatural and take a long time to master. Sure we may use websites like yamli.com to produce Arabic for us, but this is still tedious and in the end you will still not get full control over it, especially when you want to include vocalization. The Orientalists' Arabic keyboard layout is there to help you out. Once selected, you can type using the following layout:

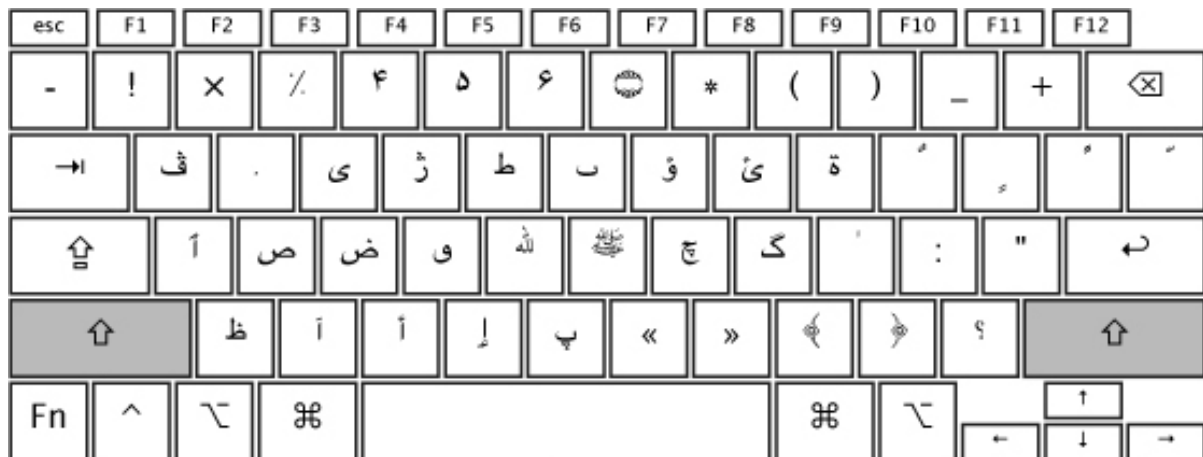

Figure 3: Arabic layout, standard

Figure 4: Arabic layout while holding Shift

Figure 5: Arabic layout while holding Capslock

Note: Capslock-mode is primarily meant to include Arabic numerals (i.e. 'normal' numerals)!

The alphabet

Once you play around with the standard layout, you will notice it will feel quite natural. The following letters are equal for transliteration in Latin alphabet:

- a   ا
- b   ب
- d   د
- f   ف
- i   ي
- j   ج

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- k ك
- l ل
- m م
- n ن
- q ق
- r ر
- s س
- t ت
- u و
- z ز

Some other Arabic letters can be typed by using keys that are very close to proper transliteration in Latin alphabet:
- g غ (normally gh or ġ)
- h ح (normally ḥ)
- x خ (normally kh, but x is used in some older literature)

Emphatic letters can be typed by using Shift, in a way mirroring transliteration mode in the Orientalists' Latin layout:
- Shift+d ض
- Shift+s ص
- Shift+t ط
- Shift+z ظ

Some other Arabic letters can be typed by using a key for which the Latin letter somewhat resembles the Arabic letter:
- c ء
- e ع
- o ه
- v ذ
- w ش

There is one Arabic letter remaining:
- y ث (we could say: because of proximity to t)

Long vowels

They have already been explained:

-     a   ا
-     i   ي
-     u   و

Hamzas and Alifs

Hamzas on و and ي are easy to remember:

-     Shift+w   ؤ
-     Shift+i   ئ

Because of close proximity of the keys a, x, c and v, they have been assigned to various Arabic letters involving the alif. Also \ is used:

-     Shift+\\   ٱ   (with wasl)
-     Shift+a   أ   (with hamza)
-     Shift+x   آ   (with madda)
-     Shift+c   اً   (with tanwin)
-     Shift+v   إ   (with hamza below alif)

Letters used to end words

Two letters are commonly used at the end of words in Arabic:

-     Shift+e   ى   (Shift+i was already taken)
-     Shift+o   ة   (because o gives ه)

No diacritics (i.e. blank letters)

It is possible to insert Arabic letters without diacritics:

-     Shift+e   ى   (as explained above)
-     Shift+f   ڡ   (it is like ف)
-     Shift+y   ٮ   (it is like ب)
-     `   ـ   (works like an extension, i.e. بـــــسم الله الرحمٰن الرحيـــم)

Vocalization

The layout provides easy access to vocalization. The primary keys used are p, [, and], as in the order of nominative, genitive and accusative.

- p ‎بَ‎
- [‎بِ‎
-] ‎بٌ‎
- \ ‎بْ‎
- Shift+p ‎بً‎
- Shift+[‎بٍ‎
- Shift+] ‎بٌّ‎
- Shift+` ‎بّ‎ (shadda, technically not vocalization of course)
- Shift+l ‎بٰ‎ (dagger alif)
- Shift+x ‎آ‎ (madda)
- Shift+\ ‎ٱ‎ (wasl)

Numerals

The numeral keys give access to the Hindi numerals, as used in Arabic. If you would like to use Arabic numerals (i.e. the numerals used in Latin alphabet) you can press Capslock.

Typing Persian

The four letters exclusive to Persian can be reached by using Shift:

- Shift+b ‎پ‎
- Shift+j ‎چ‎
- Shift+k ‎گ‎
- Shift+r ‎ژ‎

The three numbers exclusive to Persian can be reached by using Shift:

- Shift+4 ‎۴‎
- Shift+5 ‎۵‎
- Shift+6 ‎۶‎

Some extras

Finally, there are some extra characters one may access through the keyboard layout:

- Shift+q ‎ڤ‎ (sometimes used for v in foreign names)
- Shift+g ‎الله‎ (though most text editors will automatically transform li-llāh into this ligature)
- Shift+h ‎ﷺ‎ (the famous ligature for ṣallá Allāh ʿalayhi wa-sallam, to be used after the name of Muḥammad, the prophet of Islām)

- Shift+,   ❦
- Shift+.   ❧   (to be used to indicate Qurʾānic citations)

Punctuation

Normal punctation can be used, all characters are orientated in the correct direction.

Example

And with this, it becomes no effort at all to type:

﴿بِـــــــسْمَ ٱللهِ ٱلرَّحْمٰنَ ٱلرَّحِيـــــمِ ٱلْحَمْدُ لله رَبِّ ٱلْعَالَمِيــن ٱلرَّحْمٰنِ ٱلرَّحِيمِ مَـــا لِكِ يِوْمِ ٱلدِّينِ﴾