EXPOSÉ
Last redacted: Sept 2021

KEYWORDS – A Vocabulary for the Study of the Arabic Literary Tradition[1]
KEYWORDS – A Vocabulary of Arabic Literary Heritage and Textual Cultures
cooperation envisioned: CeDiS/Grote & Seminar für Arabistik/Gruendler and team

KEYWORDS is a living online encyclopaedia (format: "Living Handbook") that consists of short articles (3-4 DIN A4 pages, 2000-3000 words) by researchers on central terms and themes related to the premodern Arabic literary tradition (8th to 18th centuries).
Acad. Curators/Editors: I. Toral, J. Stephan

Overall goal: Establish the KEYWORDS platform as central hub for academic exchange in Arabic Studies Mediaeval/Premodern era. Freie Universität Berlin = epicenter of network; thematically focused on Arabic, expandable to other fields of study, but always linking back to Arabic subjects; no further additional "working" languages are planned.

Publication date: a first sample (internal) shall be ready in July 2022. launch: early 2023.

Academic requirements: Every keyword entry shall address the use of a certain term *in* or *for* a particular text or a set of texts (or an author / a particular period).
Examples: *istiʿāra/metaphor* in Ibn Sīnāʾs poetic commentary;
                 adab/literature in *al-ʿIqd al-farīd*;
                 copyist/nāsikh in/concerning Kalīla wa-Dimna;
                 frame story/al-qiṣṣa al-iṭāriyya in/for *al-Wuzarāʾ al-sabaʿ*.

Articles shall include
(1) a short lexicographic/theoretical/historical contextualization of the keyword (0,5 pages)
(2) contexts to the given work/text (as to author, period...) etc., (0,5 pp)
(3) a description + analysis of occurrences of the term/concept, (1-2 pp)
(4) a general final statement on the term, (0,5 pp)
(5) a bibliography + further readings section (with links) (0,5 pp)

Language: The online platform will employ both Arabic and English as equal academic languages. This is an important feature to apply for additional funding as well as an explicit scholarly statement by Freie Universität Berlin/Arabistik for an enhanced exchange with the two *linguae francae* of academic research.[2] Some entries may temporarily remain in one language, although bilingualism is envisioned. In case of bilingual occurrence one entry will be the translation of the other.

Articles will be usually designed as overviews of a particular use of one term in (or for the study of) one work which shall especially enable and encourage young predoc and postdoc scholars to publish their readings, terminological analyses and contextualization of works they are studying closely.
For further details, see p.3: **More on the conceptual framework.**
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[1] JS: Inspiriert von Raymond Williams und seinen wunderbaren Keywords:
https://www.google.de/books/edition/Keywords/ciHZlYnF8iwC?hl=de&gbpv=0
[2] Originalbeiträge Arabisch sollen ins Englische übersetzt werden, später ggf. auch vice versa/noch klären.

1. Purpose
KEYWORDS shall be easy to handle, offering search tools: to find keywords, head words, authors, and works and shall offer links to other readings on KEYWORDS, also other open access online publications (if possible), and to other website/databases, e.g. Encyclopedia Iranica and other online encyclopedias. It offers…

1 …the opportunity for (young) **authors to publish research findings in a short form** and to share content on different subjects with colleagues in a rather short process. Each article will be DOI registered. Each article will be peer reviewed.

2 …the chance to **continuously update previously submitted entry** articles by both the curators and/or further authors.
Any renewed version may not have a translated counterpart, yet. Therefore, versions will always be updated with a date (under article headline / and in citation hint). Authors of articles and/or reviewers will be explicitly credited.

3 …to users it provides **information on core themes and terms** from the Arabic literary tradition and insights into recent areas of research **as well as links and bibliographies** for further readings. Ideally, bibliographies will be stored in Zotero to which OES has an interface.

2. Users (Zielgruppen)
The three main addressees of KEYWORDS are:
(1) **scholars** on the Arabic tradition and adjacent textual traditions who can use the encyclopedia as a reference work and the entries for their own research and teaching,
(2) **students** of Arabic, Islamic, and Middle Eastern Studies, as well as those on other (premodern) Middle Eastner philologies, who wish to have access to comprehensive, yet short pieces of information on particular terms, and
(3) the **broader academic community** (Literary theory et al.) which will get to know the Arabic tradition from a new angle and will be enabled – without turning to wikipedia – to quickly look up terms and themes of a general literary interest, specifically in cases of overlap with modern literary theory, usually applied on European literature within modern literary analysis or philology: e.g. *mouvance*, *copyist*, *narrator*, *frame narrative*... etc.

3. Organizational framework
Technical requirements
(1) technical explanations/menu should also be offered in Arabic.
(2) Published entries will be text only, plus links to other interfaces, databases, ZOTERO etc.
(3) Approved users can register in order to comment on the entries (public) or submit own entries (internal message).
(4) Users also have their own page where they can save entries they want to read (bookmarks).
(5) Keyword entries shall be downloadable as pdfs.

KEYWORDS is technically based on **OES/Open Encyclopaedic System**, developed by CeDiS.
OES Website: https://www.open-encyclopedia-system.org/
>>*Compendium Heroicum*, Univ. Freiburg:
https://www.cedis.fu-berlin.de/newsletter/2018-nov/cedis_news3.html
https://www.compendium-heroicum.de/artikel/
>> Living Handbook of Narratology https://www.lhn.uni-hamburg.de

Editorial Board
The **Editorial Team** shall consist of ideally 5 persons: 1 curator/moderator, 1 curator/moderator/editor (English), 1 editor (Arabic), 1 web administrator (mostly technical part), 1 contact person (student assistant), contact for contributors and users.

On the technical side: definition of roles of administrators/curators + **moderators** (Who can upload and curate content?).

Board of Editors (5 persons), Peer Reviewed processing of all entries: to be defined still.
For this, the OES can be used.

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More on the conceptual framework
The concept of literature / the literary for this encyclopedia goes beyond the approach used in many projects on literary encylopedias which focus on classical authors, main works or particular periods of literary history.

Focus on key terms and themes that allow readers to **create multiple connections between texts, authors, periods, and regions** and also allow for new comparative perspectives, both within the Arabic tradition and between Arabic and other traditions.

Broaden the framework of definitions and conceptual approaches: We will refrain from a restrictive normative definition of literature along aesthetic or linguistic categories but aim to understand literature (*adab*) – comparable to the semantic field addressed by the premodern European term "literature" – as a concept of erudition, that involves linguistic notions and terms on text production, terms from practical philosophy and wisdom, aesthetic categories, as well as topics related to poetry and all sorts of story-telling and encylopedic writing, concerning both presumably fictional and factual narrative.
The KEYWORDS encyclopedia's maxime will be that literature cannot be universally defined by either modern or historicist categories, but shall be approached as a scholarly field that has to be made up of multiple notions and concepts of erudition, language, and textuality.
In addition to terms and topics from the Arabic tradition, KEYWORDS may also include analytical and hermeneutical concepts from contemporary literary scholarship.

Global perspective: Hence, KEYWORDS is not meant to reproduce an Arabic national philology of some sort. In contrast, the keywords approach shall help us engage with the Arabic classical heritage through new contexts and fresh perspectives. This aspect leads to the questions of defining the boundaries of our endeavour:

Periods: The encyclopaedia will mainly deal with the classical period, as this is so far known the main resource in Arabic for literary concepts and is well represented at the Freie Universität. However, KEYWORDS/keyword authors may also like to look at how concepts have travelled and developed throughout the later pre print age (12th to 18th centuries). The endpoint of our time span will be the early 19th century with the advent of mass printing enterprises, an intensified engagement with Western European literary forms, and the beginning of new literary institutions such as weekly magazines etc. Scholars working on the 8th to 18th century literary texts, are invited to contribute to KEYWORDS.

Languages: The language used in the *studied* source material will be *mainly Arabic*. However, especially for such material that had travelled through the Arabic or emerged in close connection to Arabic textual cultures, we also invite scholars on other linguistic traditions to contribute to KEYWORDS. These can be scholars of Syriac, Greek, Persian, Hebrew, Castilian, Ottoman Turkish a.s.o.

Outlook: KEYWORDS can, thus, also serve as a starting point for a more comprehensive online encyclopedia of North African and Middle Eastern linguistic traditions: Offering a panoramic view of research in the field of Non-European literary Studies.

KEYWORDS is also meant to be the basis for collected print publication, once a particular thematic focus is established OR a substantial number of contributions has been collected.