Encyclopedia of Arabic Stylistic Devices (EASD)

Guidelines for Contributors

1. Introduction and Project Concept

Arabic-Islamic culture has always placed special value on language. Poetry enjoyed high social significance already in pre-Islamic times, and the Islamic sciences – such as Qur'anic exegesis, *ḥadīth* studies, and legal hermeneutics – are largely based on the interpretation of Arabic texts. For this reason, reflections on language, its functions, and its effects developed over the centuries in many different forms. These reflections first emerged in a variety of disciplines: grammar and lexicography, literary criticism, Qur'anic exegesis, legal theory, chancery practice, and logic. Only in the 13th/14th centuries did a systematic rhetorical theory, known as *ʿilm al-balāgha*, take shape. It brought together these earlier approaches and soon became the standard framework, widely taught in the Madrasa system of education.

Despite this historical importance, the study of Arabic rhetoric remains incomplete. For a long time, the paradigm of "decline" after the 12th century discouraged research, so that the centuries between 1100 and 1800 were often neglected. Even today, many surveys stop with the canonization of *ʿilm al-balāgha* in the 14th century, while later developments are addressed only selectively. The field of stylistics (*ʿilm al-badīʿ*) is particularly underexplored. While some studies focus on individual figures, they cover only a small fraction of the material and are usually limited to the early period. More general accounts tend to remain superficial, without addressing the historical changes in terminology, function, and usage. Later centuries are especially underrepresented, even though they saw the rise of new genres: commentaries and supercommentaries on the standard theory, specialized treatises, and the popular *badīʿiyyāt* poems devoted to stylistic devices.

This is where the present project begins. Its goal is to create an online encyclopedia in English that provides comprehensive yet accessible accounts of Arabic stylistic devices. Each entry will not only offer a definition but also trace the historical development of the device – from the earliest sources up to the 20th century, with particular attention to the post-1400 period. Examples from poetry, prose, and the Qur'an will be documented, cross-references to related figures and disciplines made visible, and major authors and works identified. In this way, the encyclopedia will go beyond short definitions and illuminate the historical depth of Arabic stylistics for the first time. Although the format is that of encyclopedia articles, the contributions are designed to represent a genuine advance in research, both in scope and in content.

2. Guidelines for Contributions

In order to ensure coherence and comparability across the encyclopedia, we ask contributors to follow a common structure and to take into account several key aspects in their articles.

Structure of Each Entry

Each stylistic device should be presented in the following format:

1. **Short definition**: A concise explanation of the figure, suitable as a stand-alone entry point.
2. **Summary version (3–5 pages)**: An accessible overview that highlights the main stages of the figure's historical development. The length may vary depending on the richness of the material.
3. **Extended version (no fixed limit)**: A detailed diachronic analysis that traces the figure's evolution across the centuries.
4. **Bibliography**: A list of relevant sources (Arabic works) and secondary studies.

Content and Focus

The core of each article should be a **diachronic perspective**: the figure is to be examined in its historical development, with attention to the following points:

- **Evolution over time**: How is the figure defined, employed, or transformed in different centuries?
- **Variations in definition**: How do authors' descriptions of the figure differ? What kinds of reformulations or reinterpretations occur?
- **Relation to other figures**: How is the figure distinguished from, or conflated with, related stylistic devices? Are different terms used for the same figure, and if so, how are they debated?
- **Use of examples (*shawāhid*)**: Which poetic, Qur'anic, or prose passages are cited to illustrate the figure? How do these examples relate to the definitions given?
- **Reception lines**: Can we identify intellectual genealogies, i.e. later authors drawing explicitly or implicitly on earlier treatments?
- **Interdisciplinary influences**: Are there connections with other fields of scholarship (Qur'anic exegesis, jurisprudence, theology) that shaped the conceptualization or use of the figure?

Historical Point of Departure

Each article should take as its starting point the standard theory of the 14th/15th century, for instance in the works of al-Qazwīnī or Ibn Ḥijja al-Ḥamawī. From there, contributors are encouraged to trace the figure's development both backwards (to earlier precursors) and forwards (to later transformations), thereby situating it within the broader history of Arabic rhetoric up to the modern period.

3. Citation and Transliteration Guidelines

Citation Style: All contributions should follow the Chicago Manual of Style (17th edition), using the Notes and Bibliography system. Sources should be cited in endnotes rather than footnotes, to ensure smooth readability in the online format. Full bibliographic information should be provided in a Bibliography at the end of the article. Please ensure consistency within each entry. The Author-Date system should not be used.

Transliteration: Arabic terms, author names, and titles should be transliterated according to the International Journal of Middle East Studies (IJMES) guidelines. Diacritical marks should be included to ensure accuracy, and contributors are encouraged to provide the original Arabic script for clarity where relevant. Please also observe the assimilation of the definite article with sun letters (e.g., *ash-shams* rather than *al-shams*).

Example:

- Author name: as-Sakkākī
- Term: *ʿilm al-badīʿ*
- Work title: *Khizānat al-adab*

4. Open Access and Licensing

All contributions will be published on the EASD website in Open Access under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0) license.

For any questions or clarifications regarding the preparation of your contribution, please do not hesitate to contact our Project Coordinator Andreas Knöll (andreas.knoell@uni-muenster.de).

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