

The Glossarium Graeco-Arabicum

(Proposal for the Jahrestagung der Digital Humanities im deutschsprachigen Raum)

Applicants:

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The Project

From the eighth to the tenth century A. D., Greek scientific and philosophical works were translated to large extent into Arabic. This activity resulted in the incorporation and reorganization of the classical heritage in the new civilization which, using Arabic, spread with Islam.¹ The object of project Glossarium Graeco-Arabicum is to make readily available to scholars the direct information which the Graeco-Arabic translations contain for several areas of research. The *Glossarium Graeco-Arabicum* is hosted by the Ruhr-Universität Bochum, starting with DFG funds in 1994, and was continued within the ERC project "Greek into Arabic - Philosophical Concepts and Linguistic Bridges" since 2010.²

Digital Resources

The database *Glossarium Græco-Arabicum* makes available the files of a lexical project, intended to open up the lexicon of the mediæval Arabic translations from the Greek.³ It contains images of ca. 80,000 filecards which have not yet been published in the analytical reference dictionary A Greek and Arabic Lexicon,⁴ and comprises Arabic roots from the letter *jîm* to the end of the Arabic alphabet. The database provides search facilities for Greek words, Arabic words and roots, as well as the authors and titles of the source texts. It is thus a possible basis for generating entries in Greek-Arabic dictionaries. To extend the effectiveness of the database, it is intended to link the data with the Perseus Digital Library and other online resources as well.

Technical Aspects

The coexistence of several alphabetic systems within one web application brings to light a number of phenomena and issues, as competing encoding systems, concurring writing

¹ <http://www.ruhr-uni-bochum.de/rubin/rubin-fruehjahr-2012/pdf/beitrag2.pdf> (2013-08-27)

² <http://www.greekintoarabic.eu/> (2013-08-27)

³ <http://www.ruhr-uni-bochum.de/imperia/md/content/orient/glossarium-graeco-arabicum.pdf> (2013-08-27)

⁴ A Greek and Arabic Lexicon, Leiden: Brill, 1992ff.

directions, and characters of very different and individual types. Difficulties usually do not occur in single alphabet environments, but when more than one writing systems are used parallelly in the same context, some seemingly trivial problems arise again. This concerns the representation of research contents in the database (backend), the resulting website and its input methods (researcher backend), and public access and search methods as well (researcher frontend). While Unicode seems to be the universal solution, there are still some issues that require complicated workarounds, or result in disadvantages for the user otherwise.