The *Muḥīṭ al-Muḥīṭ* Dictionary: The Transition from Classical to Modern Arabic Lexicography

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Abstract

This article discusses the contribution of the *Muḥīṭ al-Muḥīṭ* dictionary written by Buṭrus al-Bustānī, one of the leading figures of the *Nahḍa*, to the development of modern Arabic lexicography. This lexical endeavor is examined not only as part of a proto-national project, but as a pivotal moment in the development of modern Arabic lexical thought and in particular in al-Bustānī's vision.

Muḥīṭ al-Muḥīṭ constituted an important pedagogical step in transforming classical Arabic into "a living" language adapted to the needs of the Arab nation. However, although *Muḥīṭ al-Muḥīṭ* took the first crucial steps toward creating a modern Arabic lexical source, this dictionary mainly extends the age-old Arabic tradition of lexicography. It nevertheless paved the way to al-Bustānī's final work, the encyclopedia *Dā'irat al-maʿārif*, his most monumental effort and the cornerstone of al-Bustānī's modern lexical vision.

Key words: Buṭrus al-Bustānī, *Muḥīṭ al-Muḥīṭ*, Lexicography, Modern meanings, Classical entries

1. Introduction

By the end of the eighteenth century, Classical Arabic, the formal literary language, was only written by small numbers of the elite, whose output was limited to traditional Muslim writings. It was far removed from the language of the population at large, the overwhelming majority of whom were illiterate and spoke only colloquial Arabic, which was as distant from the literary language as dialects are today. Though Classical Arabic was the norm, it is clear from eighteenth century literary sources that very few authors possessed the required skills since there were many deviations from the norm—either straightforward errors or colloquialisms.[1]

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[1] NEWMAN 2013: 473.

Buṭrus al-Bustānī (1819-1883) was one of the most prominent figures of the Arabic *Nahḍa*[2] period (the awakening of Arabic literature, language and thought).[3] In his famous 1859 lecture, *Khuṭba fī ādāb al-ʿArab*, he notes:

> There is no doubt that there is a need to write a dictionary of the Arabic language and for all the fields that govern it [e.g., grammar, the lexicon, morphology, rhetoric etc.]. [This dictionary should be composed over the course of] one year in a simplified way for the Arab people. Their ability to acquire Western languages during this amount of time [i.e., one year] proves that they do not need to spend more than one year to learn the bases of the language they suckled from their mother's milk.[4]

It only took eleven years for this vision to take shape.[5] Al-Bustānī, like Fāris al-Shidyāq (died c. 1890) and Nāṣīf al-Yāzijī (1800-1871), all realized that understanding Arabic was a vital part of the awakening of the Arabic nation. He dedicated most of his life to this mission and became one of the leading intellectuals, writers, educators, journalists, linguists, lexicographers, translators, and encyclopedists.[6]

Al-Bustānī had more than one feather in his cap. From the 1840s onward he worked in Beirut and in Mount Lebanon with American missionaries where he was involved in translating the Bible into Arabic.[7] He also wrote several textbooks in mathematics and Arabic grammar. In the 1870s al-Bustānī became increasingly involved in journalism and founded several major Arabic newspapers and periodicals including *al-Jinān* (1870-1886). In his life-long efforts to revive the Arabic language, culture, and literature, he developed a style of expository prose capable of expressing modern thought simply and accurately.[8]

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2 For more recent studies on the *Nahḍa* period, see, e.g., the special issue of *Oriente Moderno* on *Nahḍa* Narratives, vol. 99 (2019): issue 1-2; Hanssen & Weiss 2016, Patel 2013, El-Ariss 2018, Hill 2020.

3 We prefer to translate the term *Nahḍa* as "awakening" in order to describe the period of the rebirth of Arabic literature, language and thought, partly under Western influence, since the second half of the 19th century and not the "renaissance" which refers implicitly to 16th century Europe and to the movement of return to the Greco-Roman past. By using "awakening" we avoid the "Euro-centrist" approach and use a term closer to the meaning of the Arabic word. See, for more details, TOMICHE 2012.

4 Al-BUSTĀNĪ 1990: 110.

5 In 1869, al-Bustānī also published an abridged version of *Muḥīṭ al-Muḥīṭ*. This dictionary, called *Quṭr al-Muḥīṭ*, was meant for use in schools in the region. On page 2, the author explains that he chose this title because the book should be "almost like a [representative] cross-section (*quṭr dāʾira*, lit., 'diameter')" through the wide "ocean" (*muḥīṭ*) of the discipline (*ṣināʿa*, sc. lexicography). – We would like to thank Prof. Stephan Guth for this remark and insight.

6 For further information on al-Bustānī's life see ZACHS 2018, ZACHS & DROR 2019.

7 ISSA 2017: 465-484.

8 Al-BUSTĀNĪ 1990: 110, ABU-MANNEH 1980, ZACHS 2018, BESHARA 2014, SHEEHI 2000, ḤŪRĪ 1995.

There is a general consensus in scholarly work[9] that al-Bustānī was mainly motivated by his vision to create a proto-national Syrian Arabic secular nation. This was primarily prompted by the sectarian conflicts in Arab-Syrian society he witnessed during his lifetime. One key event that affected him profoundly was the civil war of 1860 in Mount Lebanon and in Damascus. To achieve his vision, al-Bustānī called for the revival of Arabic language and culture, since, as Bou Ali points out, "language is the mirror of the nation" and "in the nineteenth century, the debates on language and the philosophy of language take a turn towards correction and pedagogy." According to Bou Ali, al-Bustānī's dictionary *Muḥīṭ al-Muḥīṭ* "was compiled and published for the purpose of making the language easily attainable for students and teachers so that they could use it to achieve their aims in the fastest way."[10] Nevertheless, there is no exhaustive study exploring how *Muḥīṭ al-Muḥīṭ* achieved this goal.

This article focuses on the contribution of *Muḥīṭ al-Muḥīṭ* to the development of modern Arabic lexicography. It examines al-Bustānī's work not only as part of a proto-national project, but as a crucial link in the development of Modern Arabic lexical thought in general and al-Bustānī's vision in particular. *Muḥīṭ al-Muḥīṭ* was an important pedagogical phase in transforming the classical Arabic language into a "living" language adapted to the needs of the Arab nation. It was one of the important donations to the transition from the classical Arabic lexical heritage to modern usage. *Muḥīṭ al-Muḥīṭ* paved the way for the encyclopedia *Dāʾirat al-maʿārif*, his monumental final work and the cornerstone of al-Bustānī's modern lexical vision. Al-Bustānī died in 1883 while writing the Encyclopedia's sixth volume. It then became a family project, and his son Salīm edited two other volumes. After Salīm's death, two of his younger sons, Nasīb and Najīb (1862-1919), along with another member of the family, Sulaymān al-Bustānī (1856-1892), continued work on the Encyclopedia. Eleven volumes were eventually written but the encyclopedia was never completed.

In a recent article on al-Bustānī's lexical and grammatical contribution,[11] we showed that while he was conservative in terms of grammar, he was innovative in terms of the lexicon. We demonstrated that in his encyclopedia he redefined classical Arabic words and introduced modern lexical items. He accomplished this by extending their meaning via historical, psychological, sociological, scientific and religious explanations. This lexical achievement is likely to have required a preparatory stage. We suggest that the project of *Muḥīṭ al-Muḥīṭ* was one such stage assisting in the transformation from classical to modern Arabic. A close examination of this dictionary suggests that it remains a classical dictionary that imitates classical dictionaries such as *Lisān al-ʿArab* with two fundamental differences. The first is the omission or reduction of typical features characterizing classical Arabic lexicography, such as citing Qurʾānic verses and poetic verses as examples. The second involves incorporating briefly imodern meanings.

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9 Zachs 2005: 155-173, Sheehi 1998, Beshara 2014, Bou Ali 2012: 35-36.

10 Bou Ali 2012: 35, 42.

11 See Zachs and Dror 2019.

2. Classical Lexicography before the Naḥḍa

To better understand the contribution of *Muḥīṭ al-Muḥīṭ* in the transition to modern lexicography this section provides a short overview of the origins and the development of Arabic lexicography in the Arab world, including the main paradigmatic models found in Arabic lexical works.

Arabic lexicography is a home-grown product which exhibits distinctive features. Native philologists employ various models of presentation and organization.[12] Dictionary arrangement was a key issue in the evolution of Arabic medieval lexicography. One of the main lexicographers was al-Khalīl Ibn Aḥmad (d. circa 175H/791CE).[13] Al-Khalīl entitled his lexicon *Kitāb al-ʿayn* (the Book of the letter *ʿayn*), named after the letter of the alphabet with which the work starts. He used a system that had no parallel in the Arabic philological tradition called the anagrammatical method that follows the phonetic order of the alphabet; i.e., based on the point of articulation of the consonant phonemes.[14] The anagrammatical method has the advantage of taking all the possible permutations of a root into account. For example, for the common tri-consonantal Arabic root *r-k-b*, permutation of these three radicals can theoretically produce six forms: *rkb, rbk, brk, bkr, krb, kbr.*[15]

However, as Haywood points out "we may suspect that, once having got the idea, al-Khalīl could not get away from it...".[16] What escaped Haywood is the fact al-Khalīl's approach was epistemological: he could not start with *alif*, because it was a *ḥarf muʿtall*; i.e., a letter-segment subject to phonological transformation. More generally, he needed to constitute an inventory of letter-segments that would formthe backbone of his future dictionary on solid ground, through direct observation.[17]

The mathematical method elaborated by al-Khalīl resulted in the first dictionary attempting to cover the entire lexicon of the language.[18] It also paved the way for the huge subsequent development of medieval Arabic comprehensive dictionaries.

The anagrammatical model implemented by al-Khalīl in *Kitāb al-ʿayn* had numerous admirers among later lexicographers. Though Ibn Durayd adopted the system employed by al-Khalīl in his *Kitāb al-Jamhara*, he followed the conventional rather than the phonetic order in the internal arrangement of the entries. His arrangement was *kh+d, kh+dh, kh+r*, and so on, since the combination of *kh* with any of the letters that precede it in the conventional order would have been more acceptable.[19] According to Ibn Durayd this conventional order was more pleasing to the heart, and pleasanter to the ears.[20]

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12 SANNI 1992: 142.

13 SANNI 1992: 145.

14 SANNI 1992: 146.

15 JAMIU 2014: 60. For more on the arrangement system of *Kitāb al-ʿayn*, see SOLOMON 2000: 24-36, SOLOMON 2013: 522-526, DICHY 2019: 124.

16 HAYWOOD 1960: 38.

17 SANNI 1992: 150.

18 DICHY 2019: 124.

19 SANNI 1992: 150, SOLOMON 2003: 533-534, DICHY 2019: 126.

20 SANNI 1992: 149-150, DARWISH 1955: 31-47.

The rhyme arrangement constitutes another important development in Arabic lexicography. In this arrangement, words are ordered according to the last radical and the consonants are arranged in an order determined to some extent by the mode of articulation.[21] This arrangement began to dominate as of the mid-fourteenth century. Paradoxically, however, al-Khalīl's model, in spite of its inherent complexities, continued to be used, and its popularity was not significantly challenged until the full adoption of the rhyme arrangement in lexicographical efforts.[22]

Among the prominent lexicographers who chose the rhyme system was al-Fārābī (d. 339H/951CE); however, he applied this arrangement in a less than systematic fashion. The credit for the systematic use of the rhyme order goes to al-Fārābī's nephew, al-Jawharī (d. 393H/1003CE). In his *Tāj al-lugha wa-ṣiḥāḥ al-ʿarabiyya*, he arranged the entries according to the last letter of the root form, and, in contrast to al-Khalīl, roots not in use are ignored.[23]

Ibn Manẓūr (d. 711H/1311CE), the author of *Lisān al-ʿArab*, was perhaps the most out-standing heir to al-Jawharī's success in the field. However, modern dictionary arrangement was first introduced by the great scholar al-Zamakhsharī, who accurately implemented a modern alphabetical arrangement in his book entitled *Asās al-balāgha* "The Fundamentals of Eloquence".[24]

The basic difference between what we call a dictionary and medieval Arabic lexica has to do with the fact that the former was mainly developed in the post-Gutenberg era, and that the latter were disseminated via a combination of oral and manuscript transmission.[25] Nineteenth and twentieth century dictionaries underwent radical changes as a result of the influence of European civilization on nineteenth century Arabic dictionaries. The availability of better printing presses, the evolution of new scholarly techniques in authorship, as well as the greater breadth of intellectual vision enhanced the presentation and organization of materials in contemporary Arabic lexica. In this respect al-Bustānī's dictionary *Muḥīṭ al-Muḥīṭ* was strikingly innovative.[26] According to Solomon, the major features of al-Bustānī's dictionary are:

(1) Abandonment of al-Khalīl's phonetic model.
(2) Abandonment of al-Khalīl's anagrammatical method.
(3) Abandonment of al-Jawharī's rhyme model.
(4) Adoption of the traditional alphabetical order.
(5) Inclusion of all *al-Muḥīṭ* by al-Fīrūzābādī[27]

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[21] HANKS 2013: 508-509.

[22] SANNI 1992: 152, JAMIU 2014: 62.

[23] DARWISH 1955: 82-88, 96, HAYWOOD 1960: 68-70, SANNI 1992: 153, SOLOMON 2013: 528-529.

[24] HAYWOOD 1960: 77, JAMIU 2014: 63, DICHY 2019: 128.

[25] DICHY 2019: 129.

[26] SANNI 1992: 161, DARWISH 1955: 153.

[27] Al-Fīrūzābādī (898-987H/1329-1415CE) wrote a huge lexicographical work *Qamūs al-muḥīṭ*. He used al-Jawharī's dictionary as the basis for his own work, but made certain changes; for example, he omitted many of the *shawāhid* "examples" to make it less bulky. See SOLOMON 2013: 535-536, HAYWOOD 1960: 83.

(6) Additions to *al-Muḥīṭ* from, for example, the sciences, arts, philosophy, and neologisms increased the size of the dictionary.
(7) Inclusion of the Hebrew and Syriac terms for the Arabic alphabetical letters.
(8) No separation of entries into weak and strong.
(9) No divisions into, for example, biradical, triradical.
(10) The *shawāhid* "examples" went beyond the classical period.[28]

Issa[29] states that "over the centuries, Arabic lexicography had operated under a solid myth of pure linguistic origins rooted in the terra prima of the Arabian Desert. Buṭrus al-Bustānī's *Muḥīṭ al-Muḥīṭ* is the earliest Arabic lexicon that breaks with this tradition."[30] *Muḥīṭ al-Muḥīṭ* nevertheless mainly extended the style of the age-old Arabic tradition of lexicography. This raises the question of why al-Bustānī wrote a dictionary that was basically classical with short modern interpretations.

We suggest that this was the only way that al-Bustānī could transform the classical language into a modern one. In the following section we discuss how the dictionary was constructed and the ways in which al-Bustānī aimed to revive the Arabic language.

The features of *Muḥīṭ al-Muḥīṭ* can be better understood when comparing the entries against four key sources: (1) *Dāʾirat al-maʿārif*; (2) *Lisān al-ʿArab*; (3) The modern dictionary *al-Munjid* by Père Louis Maʿlūf (1367H/1946CE), which first appeared in 1326H/1908CE along with a bio-bibliographical and literary supplement that was added in 1376H/1956CE, which remains the handiest lexicon of our time for the student of the language;[31] (4) the modern online dictionary *al-maʿānī* (www.almaany.com).

We refer to these four sources for comparison of the entries in *Muḥīṭ al-Muḥīṭ* with classical and modern dictionaries. *Lisān al-ʿArab* represents the classical medieval dictionaries, while *al-Munjid* and *al-Maʿānī* represent the modern dictionaries. As for *Dāʾirat al-maʿārif*, in a previous study (ZACHS & DROR 2019) we showed that in the lexical field al-Bustānī took a liberal and reformist approach to the lexicon that drew on both classical and Western sources. Comparing the entries of *Muḥīṭ al-Muḥīṭ* to these sources enables us to understand the approach adopted by al-Bustānī when writing his dictionary: Did he preserve only the classical meaning of the word, or did he combine both meanings (as shown in modern dictionaries), or did he perhaps choose to refer mostly to the modern meaning (as he did in his encyclopaedia)?

We compare and contrast four categories of entries: (1) religious terms; (2) fundamental concepts in the Nahḍa; (3) Technical terms; (4) miscellaneous. Each of which is subdivided into three features/categories which characterize al-Bustānī's work: (a) Classical entries preserving the content of classical dictionaries; (b) Classical entries in which modern

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28 SOLOMON 2013: 533.

29 ISSA 2017: 465.

30 ISSA 2017: 467.

31 SANNI 1992: 159. The advances in modern printing technology are apparent in this work. Apart from the illustrations provided for many objects (which are usually grouped by common features), the lead entries are printed in a larger font with a distinctive color. The derivatives appear in the same distinctive color and are arranged in a methodical and coherent order. The influence of European models is clearly visible.

meanings and references to other languages, religions and cultures are inserted;[32] (c) new, modern entries. This enables us to illustrate how al-Bustānī orchestrated the classical heritage and the religious heritage while planting the first seeds of modern usage/vocabulary.[33]

3. The Features of *Muḥīṭ al-Muḥīṭ*

3.1 Classical entries preserving the content of classical lexica

We start with the entry for *Qur'ān*.[34] Al-Bustānī begins the entry by defining the Qur'ān, and writes that for Muslims the book was sent from the heavens to the Prophet. Similar to Ibn Manẓūr,[35] al-Bustānī devotes the rest of the entry to the etymology of the word Qur'ān, saying that there is disagreement as to its origins:

(a) It is an underived proper noun, which specifically refers to *kalām Allāh* "God's words". Furthermore, there is no *hamza* in the word, so this noun is not derived from the root *qr'* (قرأ).

(b) It is derived from the verb *qārana* "he connected, combined, associated," because the Suras and the verses are joined.

(c) It is derived from the word *qarā'in* "connections" (pl. of *qarīna*).

(d) In all three of the above, the letter *nūn* (in the word Qur'ān) belongs to the root. However, it is also possible that the root includes a *hamza*, such that the word Qur'ān has an Arabic origin, and is a verbal noun derived from the verb *qara'a* "he read". Thus, the Heavenly Book of the Holy Prophet is referred to as the Qur'ān because it can be read.

(e) Some say the word is an adjective based on the *fu'lān* pattern derived from the verbal noun *qar'*), which means "gathering".

All these interpretations can be found in classical dictionaries and in fact al-Bustānī simply repeats them all. Although in the entry for *Qur'ān* it is understandable why al-Bustānī would preserve the classical meaning it is surprising that even in the following entries, *qawm* and *waṭan*, which were critical to modern *Nahḍa* discourse, al-Bustānī only listed their classical meanings. The definition of *qawm* in *Muḥīṭ al-Muḥīṭ*[36] is based extensively on the definition found in *Lisān al-'Arab*.[37] Al-Bustānī starts by saying: *al-qawmu l-jamā'atu min-a l-rijāli wa-l-nisā'i ma'an wa-l-rijāli khāṣṣatan wa-tadkhuluhu l-nisā'u* "qawm is a group of men and women, especially of men, while women can also join the

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32 The features of classical lexicography mentioned in (2) are discussed by SOLOMON 2000: 23.

33 ISSA 2017 deals exclusively with the Biblical concepts that influenced al-Bustānī when writing his dictionary.

34 Al-BUSTĀNĪ 1987, II: 1680. We used the 1987 edition and not the original one. An online version of the original dictionary is almost unreadable.

35 IBN MANẒŪR 1994, V: 219.

36 Al-BUSTĀNĪ 1987, II: 1777.

37 IBN MANẒŪR 1994, V: 349.

group". This is the literal meaning of *qawm* but without its modern political concept (*al-umma al-sūriyya* or *al-umma al-ʿarabiyya*) which al-Bustānī defended in his calls for a modern nation in his journals, periodicals and lectures.

In the continuation of the entry, al-Bustānī presents issues concerning the word *qawm* as found in classical dictionaries. He refers to the syntactic agreement with the word *qawm*, that *qawm* can be regarded as feminine or masculine, thus making it possible to say *qāma l-qawmu* (verb in the masculine singular) or *qāmat-i l-qawmu* (verb in the feminine singular.). These agreement patterns apply to all collective nouns denoting humans which have no *ism waḥda*, i.e., *nomen unitatis* (a noun that indicates plurality and refers to a semantically-related individual), as for example *nafar* "a company of people" and *rahṭ* "people" or "tribe". He then mentions the expression *qawm al-rajul* which means the relatives of a man who have the same grandfather. If a man lives among strangers, he may refer to them metaphorically as *qawm*, because he lives close to them. Thus, in Q 36:20 it is said *yā-qawmi ttabiʿū l-mursalīna* "My people, follow the messengers".

Similarly, al-Bustānī's definition of the word *waṭan* again does not differ much from the classical one.[38] He relies on the basic meaning provided by Ibn Manẓūr, who defines this word as *al-manzil tuqīmu bihi wa-huwa mawṭinu l-insāni wa-maḥalluhu* "the place where you stay/live/reside, it is the home of a man and his place of residence".[39] Although al-Bustānī interprets *waṭan* as *al-waṭan manzilu iqāmati l-insāni wa-maqarruhu wulida bihi am lam yūlad* "*waṭan* the place where a person resides and his residence place, whether he was born there or not", he does not gave it the patriotic/political interpretation he used in 1860-1861 in *Nafīr Sūriyya* "The Clarion of Syria", the first political brochure published in Greater Syria.[40]

The fourth and final example is the root *jrd*.[41] There are 13 different interpretations, 12 of which repeat the meanings found in *Lisān al-ʿArab*.[42] These include:

(1) *jarada l-ʿūda* "he peeled the branch/the stalk" means *qashsharahu* "he peeled it". The first stem also occurs in the following contexts: *jarada zaydan min thawbihi* "to disrobe Zayd" means *ʿarrāhu* "he took Zayd's clothes off"; *jarada l-quṭna* means *ḥalajahu* "he ginned the cotton" (the machine that separates the cotton fibers from the seeds); *jarada l-sayfa* means *sallahu* "he pulled out the sword"; *jarada l-jarīdata* means *ramā bihā* "he threw the palm leaf"; *juridat-i l-arḍu* means *akala l-jarādu nabātahā* "the locust ate the plants."

(2) *al-jārūd* is formed from *fāʿūl*, which signifies intensiveness (*mubālagha*). For example, it is said *sanatun jārūdun ayy muqḥiṭatun* "a year of drought" and *tajrīd al-nabāt* "(lit.) the stripping of the plants", namely the plants are not blooming.

(3) *al-jārūdiyya* is a *shiite* sub-group named after Abū l-Jārūd Ziyād Ibn Abī Ziyād.

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[38] Al-Bustānī 1987, II: 2264.

[39] Ibn Manẓūr 1994, VI: 460.

[40] See for further details: Sheehi 1998: 87-99, Al-Bustānī 2019.

[41] Al-Bustānī 1987, I: 233-234.

[42] Ibn Manẓūr 1994, I: 401-402.

(4) *al-jarād* is *ḍarb min-a l-janādib* "a type of grasshopper"; morphologically, either a singular form or a collective noun, like *baqar*. In *al-Munjid*[43] it is defined as *duwaybba* "insects". There are different types of insects. They are different in size and shape. Some devastate the fields and trees so that they leave nothing behind.

(5) *al-jard* has various meanings: *al-farj* "gap, breach"; *al-baqiyya min-a l-māl* "the rest of the money"; *makān jard* means *lā nabāta fīhi* "no plants grow in this place". The same indications are mentioned in *al-Munjid*.

(6) *al-jardāʾ* is the feminine form of *ajrad*. It is said *arḍ jardāʾ* or *makān ajrad,* namely *lā nabāta fīhi* "without vegetation". The same meaning is mentioned in *al-Munjid*.

(7) *al-jarrād* means *jallāʾun āniyatu l-ṣufri*. In *al-munjid* it is defined as "vessels made of brass". Among the traders *al-jarrād* denotes a stranger who comes to the country/city/village to trade.

(8) Al-Bustānī mentions that the grammarian and Qurʾān reader al-Kisāʾī (H119-189/737-805CE) said *mā raʾaytuhu muḏ ajradayni wa-muḏ jarīdayni* "I didn't see him for two days or two months". The same definition can be found in *al-Munjid*.

(9) *jarīda* is used in the expression *ḍaraba fulānun quddāma fulānin jarīdatan*, namely *faʿala lahu faʿlatan ḥasanatan* "he did him a good deed". *jarīda* also denotes a palm leaf, or horses with no infantry, or the rest of the money (*al-baqiyya min-a l-māl*). It is also *ṣaḥīfa yuktabu ʿalayhā* "sheet to write on". *jarīda* is also a term used among tax collectors. It denotes a list in which the Sultan's property is registered.

It is clear that al-Bustānī does not mention the modern meaning of *jarīda*, a newspaper. By contrast, this is the first definition in the *Dāʾira* entry on *jarīda* in *Dāʾirat al-maʿārif*.[44]

Specifically, in the *Dāʾira*, entry al-Bustānī discusses the history of newspapers. For example, he mentions that in Ancient Rome, *acta diurna*, or government announcement bulletins, were produced. They were carved in metal or stone and posted in public places. He then mentions that in early modern Europe, increased cross-border interactions created a rising need for information which was met by concise handwritten newssheets. In 1556, the government of Venice first published the monthly *notizie scritte*, which cost one gazette, a small amount of money. In 1675 the first scientific journal was published. Daily newspapers first appeared in the nineteenth century although the first newspaper was published in 1709. It had only one page containing five sections, all translated from foreign newspapers. The weekly newspapers of London usually dealt with domestic affairs.

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43 Maʿlūf 1986: 86.

44 Al-Bustānī 1876-1883, VI: 441.

3.2 Classical entries in which modern meanings, references to other languages, religions and cultures are inserted

In the entry of the root *jhl*[45] again al-Bustānī preserves most of the information found in the classical dictionaries. Al-Bustānī begins the dictionary entry by referring to the verbs (in different patterns) derived from this root. Similar to all dictionaries he starts with the first stem: *jahilahu yajhaluhu jahlan wa-jahālatan ḍiddu ʿalimahu* "He ignored him [verb in the past tense], he will ignore him [verb in the future tense] and ignorance [verbal noun], [is the] opposite of he will know him." He then contextualizes this meaning by quoting a verse from the *Muʿallaqa* of ʿAmr Ibn Kulthūm (d. 39H/584CE): *a-lā lā yajhalan aḥadun ʿalaynā fa-najhala fawqa jahli l-jāhilīna* "Let no one feign ignorance, tackling us / Lest we feign greater ignorance, tackling him".[46] This verse suggests that no one should treat us unjustly (*lā yabghi aḥadun ʿalaynā*).

He then moves from the first stem to the sixth stem and mentions that *tajāhala* means to pretend not to know anything, whereas *istajhala* in the tenth stem means to consider someone ignorant, to attach no importance. The verb *istajhala* occurs in the following parable: *nazwa l-furāri stajhala l-furāra*. This parable is mentioned in both *Lisān al-ʿArab* and in *Muḥīṭ al-Muḥīṭ*; however, in contrast to Ibn Manẓūr,[47] al-Bustānī simplifies the meaning by saying that the *furār* is the calf of a wild cow, which when mature starts jumping. When someone is perceived as plunged in ignorance (or stupidity) he is said to imitate the *furār*, in other words jumps like one.

Al-Bustānī mentions another meaning of *istajhala* as found in the sentence *istajhala l-rīḥu l-ghuṣna*, where *istajhala* means that the wind tossed the branch. Al-Bustānī keeps the same order as *Lisān al-ʿArab* for nouns. However, he adds some new words and more simplified and more general interpretations which are not discussed by Ibn Manẓūr:

(1) *jāhil* "not knowing", "ignorant" and in the plural *juhl, juhul, juhhal, juhhāl, jahala* and *juhalāʾ*.

(2) *jāhiliyya*: While Ibn Manẓūr explicitly refers to the Pre-Islamic period, [characterized by] the "ignorance" of monotheism and the divine law, al-Bustānī defines this period as a state of ignorance, or more accurately one in which people ignore things that one has to know (*jahl mā lā budda min maʿrifatihi*). Thus idol worship is regarded a state of ignorance because people are ignorant of the belief in the existence of only one God.

Furthermore, in Q 5:50 it is said *a-fa-ḥukma l-jāhiliyyati yabghūna* "Is it then the judgment of the ignorant religion that they are seeking?" In this context both al-Bustānī and Ibn Manẓūr mention the construction *al-jāhiliyya al-jahlāʾ*, where the second noun (*al-jahlāʾ*) reinforces the first. Similar constructions are *al-layla al-laylāʾ* "dark night" or *al-dāhiya al-dahyāʾ* "disaster".

(3) *jahāla*: The opposite of *ʿilm* "knowledge" and *maʿrifa* "cognition".

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45 Al-Bustānī 1987, I: 309-310.

46 For the complete text translated by Maḥmūd ʿAbbās Masʿūd, see <http://www.wata.cc/forums/showthread.php?86185-ترجمة-معلقة-عمر-بن-كلثوم>.

47 Ibn Manẓūr 1994: I: 480.

(4) *jahl*: al-Bustānī distinguishes between two types of *jahl*: *al-jahl al-basīṭ* "simple ignorance", namely not having information about something, and thus being ignorant, and *al-jahl al-murakkab* "complex ignorance", or ignorance when someone believes something to be different than what it really is.

This is the only meaning which does not appear in the classical dictionaries. It is only mentioned briefly in *Muḥīṭ al-Muḥīṭ*, but is extended in the encyclopedia, where al-Bustānī distinguishes between two types just mentioned. The encyclopedic entry refers to the term "ignorance" vs. "knowledge" in philosophy. Al-Bustānī devotes considerable space to discussing the approaches of Blaise Pascal (d. 1623-1662)[48] and Jacques-Bénigne Lignel Bossuet (d. 1627/1704).[49]

In the dictionary entry in *Muḥīṭ al-Muḥīṭ*, al-Bustānī writes, again in line with classical dictionaries that *jahl* is also a figurative expression indicating *safah* "foolishness, stupidity " and *ʿiṣyān* "disobedience"; therefore it is said *man ʿaṣā llāha fa-huwa jāhilun ḥattā yanziʿa ʿan jahālatihi* "whoever disobeys God is an ignorant/fool until he will pull [himself] out of his ignorance".

(5) *jahūl*: has the same meaning of *jāhil*; it is said in Q 33:72 *innahu kāna ẓalūman jahūlan* "He has indeed been unjust and ignorant".

(6) *jayhala*: "A wooden implement used to shovel coal"

(7) *majhal*: "unexplored territory"

(8) *majhala*: "what leads one to ignorance"

(9) *majhūl*: This noun is in the form of a passive participle which has two meanings. The lexical meaning is "unknown, anonymous". The term *majhūl* is also used by the transmitters of the Prophetic tradition to indicate an unknown transmitter. Another expression is *majhūl al-nasab*, signifying a man whose genealogy or origin is unknown. *majhūla* in the feminine singular form is typically used in the expression *nāqa majhūla*, namely a she-camel which has never been milked. *Majhūliyya* is also mentioned by al-Bustānī, as indicating "ignorance", and also refers to the *majhūliyya*, a group belonging to the *khawārij*. These are proponents of the doctrine that if someone knows God by at least some of His Names, he is to be considered as having knowledge of Him, and not as a totally ignorant person.

The next example is the entry for *b-s-ṭ*.[50] It shows the extent to which al-Bustānī relies on classical content. In this entry al-Bustānī mentions the following meanings:

(1) *basaṭa l-thawba wa-l-firāsha* "to unfold a cloth or a bed". This verb has the same meaning as the verb *nashara*. The second stem (*bassaṭahu*, i.e., *nashsharahu*) has the same meaning.

(2) *basuṭa l-rajulu* means *kāna munbasiṭan* "the person was cheerful, happy".

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48 For more on Pascal, see *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/pascal/#LifWor>.

49 Bossuet was a French bishop and theologian, renowned for his sermons and other addresses. Al-Bustānī states that according to Bossuet, knowledge is based on facts, information, making analogies between things, while *jahl* is the opposite.

50 Al-BUSTĀNĪ 1987, I: 93-94.

(3) *tabassaṭa fī l-bilādi* "he went throughout the country" means *sāra fīhā ṭūlan wa-ʿarḍan* "he crossed the length and breadth of the country".

(4) *absaṭa l-nāqata* means *tarakahā maʿa waladihā* "to leave the she-camel together with her calf".

The nouns include:

(5) *al-bāsiṭ* "the granter" is one of God's names because he provides the spark of life.

(6) *al-bisāṭ* means *al-arḍ l-wāsiʿa* "a wide land".

(7) *al-bisāṭ* is *mā busiṭa wa-ḍarbun min-a l-ṭanāfis* "a thing which is unrolled, a type of a velvet-lined carpet".

(8) *al-basāṭa* is the verbal noun of *basuṭa* which means *al-sajjāda* "a carpet, rug, prayer rug".

(9) *al-basṭ* denotes *al-ḥashīsha* "herb" in the Egyptian dialect.

(10) *al-busṭ* is a she-camel abandoned together with her calf.

(11) *al-basīṭ* may denote "a wide land", "a happy man or woman", and the name of a metrum in poetry.

In this entry al-Bustānī mentions the same verbs and nouns as in *Lisān al-ʿArab*, and in many cases repeats the same definition, or the same words used by Ibn Manẓūr.[51] However, the main difference between the two sources is the absence/abridging of three items found in *Lisān al-ʿArab*: (a) the first concerns poetic verses. While Ibn Manẓūr quotes at least eight poetic verses, al-Bustānī mentions no verses at all; (b) *ḥadīth* literature; for example when referring to the verb *yabsuṭu* Ibn Manẓūr mentions the following *ḥadīth*: *lā tabsuṭ dirāʿayka nbisāṭa l-kalbi* "don't spread your arms like a dog", in other words, don't spread your hands during prayer. This is not mentioned by al-Bustānī; (c) al-Bustānī does not refer to Arab lexicographers. For example, Ibn Manẓūr mentions a place called *busayṭa* (a diminutive form); he then mentions a poetic verse in which the feminine ending ة in *busayṭa* is dropped, while according to the lexicographer Ibn Sīda (398-458H/1007-1066CE) the apocopate form is also acceptable *ʿalā lughati man qāla yā ḥāri*, by analogy to those people who say *yā ḥāri* instead of *yā ḥārithatu* "O, Ḥārith".

Al-Bustānī also mentions the nouns *al-bisāṭ* "a type of a velvet-lined carpet" and *al-basāṭa* "a carpet, rug, prayer rug" in *Muḥīṭ al-Muḥīṭ*. However, in his encyclopedia[52] he only uses the modern term "carpet", although he reviews its history from the Middle Ages onward. He draws on European sources, not Arabic classical writing as he does in *Muḥīṭ al-Muḥīṭ*. According to al-Bustānī a carpet refers to any wool fabric that has been laid down in houses. He writes that in the past, straw was spread on the floor for the purpose of heating and for the wellbeing of the inhabitants. In England, in the days of Queen Mary, straw was spread on the floor although abundant wool and carpets were brought to England from the Orient.

He also explains that carpets were produced in the East and only later reached Europe via Izmir and Constantinople. Over the years England became one of the world's largest manufacturers of carpets. Eastern carpets and especially Persian carpets were popular throughout the world. For example, Sultan Abdul Aziz (r. 1830-1876) gave the world's

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51 The meanings mentioned in (1)-(5) and (10) are also found in *al-Munjid*. See MAʿLŪF 1986: 37-38.

52 Al-BUSTĀNĪ 1876-1883, V: 412-413.

largest oriental carpet to an American president (whose name is not mentioned in the entry). Thus in the encyclopedic entries al-Bustānī focuses on European sources to increase the modern knowledge of his Arab readers, while in *Muḥīṭ al-Muḥīṭ* this information is mentioned in passing.[53]

The next example, the entry for *al-masīḥ*, shows how al-Bustānī[54] inserted references to religions other than Islam—a feature which is not included in classical Arabic dictionaries. In *Lisān al-ʿArab*,[55] *al-masīḥ* interpreted as *al-ṣiddīq* "the righteous", refers to ʿĪsā (Jesus). According to the lexicographer al-Azhārī (282-370H/895-981CE), Abū al-Haytham, one of the *ṣaḥāba* (d. 37H/657CE), stated that the *masīḥ* is *al-ṣiddīq*; however, this expression was not commonplace among Arab linguists. According to Ibn Sīda, *al-masīḥ* is ʿĪsā, the son of Maryam. Ibn Manẓūr mentions several possible etymologies for *masīḥ*:

(a) ʿĪsā was called *al-masīḥ* for his righteousness.
(b) ʿĪsā was a *sāʾiḥ* "a traveller", who did not stay in one place.
(c) It is derived from the verb *masaḥa* because ʿĪsā used to heal the sick and lepers by anointing them with oil.
(d) ʿĪsā was anointed with a blessing (*musiḥa bi-baraka*).
(e) ʿĪsā used to travel throughout the land (*kāna yamsaḥu l-ʾarḍa ʾay yaqṭaʿuhā*).
(f) ʿĪsā was born anointed with oil.

God created two *masīḥ*, one is opposed to the other: *al-masīḥ ibn Maryam al-ṣiddīq*, and *al-masīḥ al-dajjāl* "the liar, the deceiver". Both have the power to resuscitate the dead, an operation that can only occur with God's permission; however, one is *masīḥ al-hudā* "the Messiah of right guidance", whereas the other is *masīḥ al-ḍalāla* "the Messiah of wrong guidance".

Although al-Bustānī preserves the classical meaning of *al-masīḥ* as the epithet ascribed to Jesus,[56] his analysis of the etymology of the word *al-masīḥ* is abridged in *Muḥīṭ al-Muḥīṭ* and in contrast to classical dictionaries he refers to other religions, saying that in Hebrew Jesus is called "*mashīḥ*" [māshîªḫ], in Syriac "*mshīḥ*" [mᵊshîḥâ], and in Greek "*khrīstus*" [χριστός]. The word *al-masīḥ* literally means *mamsūḥ* "the anointed". Jesus was called *al-masīḥ* because he was anointed by God as a priest, a prophet, and a king (*musiḥa min-a llāhi kāhinan wa-nabiyyan wa-malikan*).

The classical tendency of *Muḥīṭ al-Muḥīṭ* is further emphasized in the entry for *m-d-n*, from which the word *tamaddun* is derived and later became the concept most strongly identified with the *Nahḍa* and modern Arabic thought. It is clear that this entry includes many details found in the *Lisān al-ʿArab*[57] such as: (1) the verb *madana bi-l-makāni* means *aqāmahu* "to found/build a place/city"; (2) *al-madān*, the name of an idol (*ṣanam*); (3) *al-madīna* (pl. *madāʾin*, *mudun* and *mudn*) means a metropolis or a tower built in the middle

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[53] Al-Bustānī does not mention his sources in *al- Muḥīṭ*, however in the introduction to his Encyclopedia (*al-Dāʾira*) he specifically mentions that he relies on European sources (without mentioning their titles).

[54] Al-Bustānī 1987, II: 1974.

[55] Ibn Manẓūr 1994, VI: 51.

[56] Issa 2017: 473.

[57] Ibn Manẓūr 1994, VI: 30.

of the land (*ḥiṣnun yubnā fī uṣṭummati l-arḍi*). The form of the word *madīna* is *faʿīla* since it is derived from the verb *madana*, i.e., *aqāma*. Its plural form is *madāʾin* (if it is derived from the root *mdn*) or *madāyin* (without *hamza*, if it is derived from *dyn*, like *maʿāyish*).[58]

It is obvious that the classical meanings are dominant, and that there is only one word which has a modern interpretation—*tamaddun*. Al-Bustānī defines this word as follows: *tamaddana l-rajulu* [means] *takhallaqa bi-akhlāqi ahli l-muduni wa-ntaqala min ḥālati l-khushūnati wa-l-barbariyyati wa-l-jahli ilā ḥālati l-ẓarfi wa-l-unsi wa-l-maʿrifati*[,] *aw muwallada* "to take on the characters of the city-dwellers, [or] to pass from a state of roughness, barbarism and ignorance to that of refinement, or to grow up under the influence of an Arabic society and to be educated within its culture; perhaps [*lit.:* or] [the word is] a 'newcomer' [i.e., a postclassical, modern coining]."[59] This definition would become the basic meaning of the word *tamaddun* which was extended throughout the nineteenth century and was used by Arabic intellectuals to define modernity and civilization.[60]

3.3 Modern Interpretations

This section covers the technical terms used in modern times or words which were redefined. Al-Bustānī gives these words a modern interpretation but only briefly and does not elaborate on these interpretations as he does in his encyclopedia.

The entry *ṭibāʿa* is a good example. The modern meaning of the word *ṭibāʿa*, "printing", is not found in the *Lisān al-ʿArab*. Al-Bustānī[61] only mentions the word *dār al-ṭibāʿa* "printing house" in *Muḥīṭ al-Muḥīṭ*, saying that this is the place where books are printed and that *maṭbaʿa* is "press." More information on "printing" appears in *Dāʾirat al-maʿārif*.[62] In this entry he first explains printing, stating that it is a process for reproducing text and images using a master form or template. He notes that the earliest known form of printing as applied to paper was woodblock printing, which appeared in China in the sixth

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58 Although al-Bustānī preserves the morphological analysis he still eliminates many details. For example, Ibn Manẓūr mentions that Abū ʿAlī al-Fasawī (also known as Yaʿqūb al-Fasawī, 190-277?H/806-90?CE) was asked about the *hamza* in *madāʾin*. In the same context Ibn Manẓūr mentions that according to Ibn Sīda (398-458H/1007-1066CE) and al-Farrāʾ (d. 207H/822CE), *madīna* is built on the form of *faʿīla* (*madīna* seen as derived from the root *m-d-n*), and therefore the *hamza* in the plural form is *zāʾida* "supplementary".

59 Al-BUSTĀNĪ 1870: II: 1959. – The term *tamaddun* probably appeared in the eleventh century in the work of the philosopher Ibn Miskawayh in the meaning 'a high form of civilization.' Fourteenth century Ibn Khaldūn used the term less frequently, but nineteenth century philosophers returned to it extensively. The meaning of *tamaddun* shifted to describe the authors' changed perception of modernity. During this century it merged with the term *taqaddum* ('progress'), which was less relevant to medieval writings. For more information, see ABU-ʿUKSA 2019: 673-676. Bustānī's addition of the word *muwallad* ('new, generated, not truly old Arabic') signifies that he was not aware when the term *tamaddun* emerged and what it originally meant. Thus, he acknowledged that the meaning *he* gave perhaps was new. – We would like to thank Prof. Stephan Guth and Dr. Wael Abu-ʿUksa for their assistance in elucidating these terms.

60 See ABU-ʿUKSA 2019: 672-676.

61 Al-BUSTĀNĪ 1987, II: 1265.

62 Al-BUSTĀNĪ 1876-1883, XI: 192-202. The entry of *ṭibāʿa* appears in volume 11; however, it adheres to the spirit of Al-Bustānī's writing style.

century. Al-Bustānī also refers to Johannes Gutenberg, who introduced the first movable type printing system in Europe in the 15th century, indicating that Gutenberg was the first to create type from an alloy of lead, tin, antimony, copper and bismuth—the same components still used today. To show how the Gutenberg printing press constituted a revolution in printing, al-Bustānī mentions the first printing of the Qurʾān in Hamburg in 1694, the printing of the Bible in 1671 and the works of Ibn Sīnā in 1593. These details in the entry clearly show the difference between *Muḥīṭ al-Muḥīṭ*, where the modern meanings are kept to a bare minimum, and *Dāʾirat al-maʿārif*, where al-Bustānī gives more details based on modern knowledge.

Kahrabā,[63] is also a good example of the modern additions in *Muḥīṭ al-muhit* that are missing in classical dictionaries. Al-Bustānī first defines the verb *kahraba* as "to electrify, to give something the power of electricity, to charge something with electricity". The same definition is found in the modern dictionary *al-Maʿānī*.

The last example is *tuffāḥ*,[64] which shows how al-Bustānī managed in some cases to redefine words. In a short entry (6 lines) he states that an apple is the fruit of a horticultural tree/cultivated tree. It is a sweet fruit but there are also sour varieties of apples. The singular form of *tuffāḥ* is *tuffāḥa*. There are various types of *tuffāḥ*: *tuffāḥat al-farj* [=] *al-ʿafal*; *tuffāḥ al-arḍ* [=] *al-bābūnj* "camomille"; *tuffāḥ al-jinn [=] thamar al-yabrūḥ* "mandrake"; *tuffāḥ al-arḍ* [=] *al-mishmish* "Armenian plum"; *tuffāḥ al-fārisī* [=] *al-khūkh* "peach" or "plum", and *tuffāḥ al-māhī* (relative adj. from *māh*, i.e.), *al-utrujj*, and this type of *tuffāḥ* is known also as *al-bāmī* "citron." This definition is further developed in the encyclopedic entry, in which al-Bustānī provides various facts about apples:[65]

(1) al-Bustānī explains that the apple tree in Europe is known by the name "pommier", whereas in Latin it is called "malus". There are various varieties of apples, for example the crabapple—a wild species of apple tree, genus Malus, which generally yields small, bitter fruit (in comparison to domestic apples, Malus domestica).

(2) Apple trees are large if grown from seed. They are not regarded as tall trees, they are umbrella-shaped and their leaves are dark green simple ovals with serrated margins and slightly downy undersides.

(3) The fruit matures in late summer or autumn, and varieties exist in a wide range of sizes.

(4) Al-Bustānī elaborates on the health benefits of eating apples. The phytonutrients and antioxidants in apples may strengthen the brain, the heart and the liver. Apple juice can be used to treat various infections, such as urinary tract infections, and it helps relieve coughing.

Both the dictionary and the encyclopedia entry are very different from the entry found in *Lisān al-ʿArab*. Ibn Manẓūr[66] says that the apple is a famous fruit, its singular form is *tuffāḥa*, its plural form is *tafāfīḥ* and the diminutive form is *tufayfiḥa*.

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63 Al-Bustānī 1987, II: 1850.

64 Al-Bustānī 1987, I: 167.

65 Al-Bustānī 1876-1883, VI: 176.

66 Ibn Manẓūr 1994, I: 304.

Thus, even in this straightforward entry where there appears to be little opportunity for a modern interpretation, al-Bustānī found a way to revitalize its meanings. Thus, in *Muḥīṭ al-Muḥīṭ*, al-Bustānī began shifting Arabic lexicography toward modern meanings which he would complete in *Dāʾirat al-maʿārif*.

Conclusion

One of the challenges al-Bustānī aimed to address was to make Arabic more accessible to the people. *Muḥīṭ al-Muḥīṭ* was the first attempt to facilitate readers' access to the written language (at this point mainly to the newly emerged bourgeois middle class).[67] The encyclopedia *Dāʾirat al-maʿārif* was al-Bustānī's final attempt to transform the language into a living entity and was designed to solidify his vision of modernizing the Arabic language. This work freed itself from the shackles of classical Arabic dictionaries, and in contrast to *Muḥīṭ al-Muḥīṭ*, was more modern.

The transformation from the classical to the modern view of language could not have been achieved without *Muḥīṭ al-Muḥīṭ* which was mainly based on the classical language. This dictionary is characterized by three key features which enabled this transformation and gave the classical language the flexibility to evolve. Al-Bustānī understood that he could not completely eliminate the classical meanings because they were still used in the language, and as an Arab he considered them to be the roots of his culture. However, he did abridge certain features such as Qurʾānic and poetic verses. He also realized that he needed to include some modern meanings which would percolate among the Arab readers, and would prepare them to absorb his modern encyclopedia.

Later, some of the methods used in *Muḥīṭ al-Muḥīṭ* would be adopted in modern Arabic dictionaries in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Today, the entries in any online dictionary such as *al-maʿānī* include both the classical and the modern meanings without Qurʾānic or poetic verses, names of lexicographers or morphological analysis.

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67 See more details on this new class, Ryzova 2014.

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