Review of: "The problem of Morpho-Semantic Change and historical lexicography: The case of form VIII verbs in Arabic"

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This article is an interesting look at the somewhat perplexing Form VIII verbs in Arabic. The categorization of these verbs was quite helpful, and the other offers many interesting examples. Overall it's a very interesting read, but I sometimes hoped it would move the narrative forward a bit more than it does at present.

I think a stronger historical focus would make the article stronger. I appreciate quite a lot that the author is taking an appropriately nuanced view of this - it's not simply a matter of "when did this form stop being clearly productive" but rather that the form has varying levels of productivity and transparency even today. Nonetheless, I think a clearer historical view from the Gt form in Semitic (where the t- morpheme much more clearly maps to a middle form, hence forms II/V, III/VI) to "Doha dictionary" supposedly pre-classical era to the 19th century shift to MSA. It might be worth checking into things like Safaitic, where as of 2015 we find iqtatala 'to fight' which seems like a nice example of the 'ibtada' semantically neutral versions of this verb (Al-Jallad 2015: 131) - there are probably many more examples now.

Not to ask that the author re-write this existing paper, but it might be fruitful to do a historical analysis of 1 verb from each of their proposed 8 classes. Does ibtahal have Semitic cognates with a more reasonable G-stem (Form I) verb, that later was lost? When do the denominal versions of this verb seem to have been formed?

A few housekeeping issues:

1) The list of "Classes" of Form VIII verbs would be better presented as a numbered list than a paragraph. It's too hard to reference in its current form.

2) The verb irta2a didn't really make clear what its class is supposed to do, since 'see' and 'suggest' have very different agents and patients.

3) The author needs to decide whether this is for a general audience or an Arabist audience. If the former, gloss all examples fully. If the latter, ditch the Arabic morphology 101 stuff and spend more time on the analysis.

This was an interesting read, and I'm glad to see more on this frankly bewildering set of verbs!