Proposal For Addition To Arabic Repertoire

by Mark Davis & Kamal Mansour

This proposal specifies the characters necessary for the writing of Ancient Arabic text. In the early stages of Arabic writing, many letters were ambivalent or even multivalent; for instance, a DAL (U+062F) also stood for THAL (U+0630) which bears a dot in Modern Arabic.

Since the alphabet of Modern Arabic consists of many letter shapes which appear in both dotless and dotted forms, in most cases there exists already a dotless form of every character. As exceptions to this pattern, the following 2 letterforms are missing from the standard alphabet of Modern Arabic:

1. Dotless BEH
   Usage   This letter was used to represent BEH, TEH, THEH, and NUN without distinction.

2. Dotless QAF
   Usage   This letter was used for the final and separate forms of QAF. Its initial and medial forms are indistinguishable from that of Dotless FEH.[1]

List of Proposed Characters

We propose the addition of the following two characters to the Arabic repertoire of Unicode.

1. Dotless Beh: ب

2. Dotless Qaf: ڧ

[1] Note: It may also appear that the Dotless FEH is missing. Dotless FEH is used to represent, without distinction, both FEH and QAF in initial and medial positions. Although this letter is not part of the alphabet of Modern Arabic, it is used in the writing of Adyghe, a Caucasian language. Consequently, it has already been allocated in the Unicode Standard at U+06A1.