To: Mike Ksar
From: Deborah Anderson, Script Encoding Initiative, L2/05-009
Department of Linguistics, UC Berkeley
Date: 19 January 2005
RE: Amendment 2 (Phoenician Script)

Dear Mr. Ksar,
Attached please find six letters in support of the inclusion of Phoenician in Amendment 2.

As the letters attest, Phoenician is needed by those studying the history of the alphabet, ancient Indo-European languages, the Punic (Cathaginian) civilization, and Phoenician and Punic inscriptions (including those found on coins). Phoenician is necessary for publishing dictionaries and general publications on the alphabet, as well as works on Punic and Indo-European materials. It would also make the current online coin databases of Punic coins accessible for viewing and searching for coin collectors, scholars, and laypeople alike. The use of Hebrew encoding with a required Phoenician font would cause severe obstacles for these users.

Letters were submitted from the following individuals:

1. Andrew Meadows, Curator of Greek Coins, British Museum and Co-ordinator of the UK *Sylloge Nummorum Graecorum* database
2. Sebastian Heath, Director of Information Technology, American Numismatic Society
3. Andrew Wilson, Prof. of Roman Archaeology at the University of Oxford and Honorary Secretary of the Society for Libyan Studies
4. Robert Kerr, Semiticist working in North-West Semitic epigraphy (primarily on Late Punic from North Africa), Leiden University Library
5. David Jost, Vice President and Director of Electronic Development of Trade and Reference Division, Houghton Mifflin Company, and Patrick Taylor, Staff Etymologist for *American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*
6. Peter Haarer, Lecturer, Ancient History, Corpus Christi College, Oxford (specialist in the history of Greek alphabetic writing)

As head of a project that solicits feedback from scholars and other user communities on script proposals, I hope that serious consideration is given to the attached letters.

Mike Ksar, Chair ISO JTC1/SC2 WG2
c/o The Unicode Consortium
P.O. Box 391476
Mountain View, CA 94039-1476
U.S.A.

Dear Mr. Ksar,

I am currently Curator of Greek Coins at the British Museum.

I am currently the co-ordinator the UK *Sylloge Nummorum Graecorum* (SNG) database, and secretary to the International Numismatic Commission's SNG database subcommittee. The former project is a web-based database of ancient Greek coins (the largest such academic site), which provides images and text data on coins in public and private collections in the UK. Currently we have approximately 25 000 records, but the number is rapidly growing. In my latter capacity I am working with the international numismatic community to establish best practice for the web publication of ancient Greek coins, based on our experience with the UK SNG Database.

The SNG database currently uses Unicode as the encoding for Greek. It is critical for us to be able to reflect the letters on coins with the Phoenician letters in our electronic database, which is accessible over the Web [www.sylloge-nummorum-graecorum.org]. Unicode/ISO 10646 can help us by being able to encode the Phoenician original letters. We could use this capability directly in our database project today, making it possible to search on Phoenician inscriptions.

At a more parochial level, within the British Museum we are currently moving to the use of Unicode in our internal collections management database, and would find considerable use for Phoenician letters for numismatic and other material.

It is my understanding that if Phoenician is not included in Unicode/ISO 10646, the letters will need to be encoded with a Hebrew encoding, requiring a Phoenician font. If a Phoenician font were not available, square Hebrew will appear as the default. This is not acceptable for our work because many of our users will not be familiar with Hebrew, and will be confused when confronted with Hebrew text alongside the image of a coin with an ostensibly different script.

I urge you strongly to approve the Phoenician proposal.

Sincerely,

Andrew Meadows

Curator of Greek Coins

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January 14, 2005

Mike Ksar, Chair ISO JTC1/SC2 WG2
c/o The Unicode Consortium
P.O. Box 391476
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U.S.A.

Dear Mr. Ksar,

I am Director of Information Technology at the American Numismatic Society, which is devoted to the study of the coins and money of all periods and cultures. Among the many resources we provide to the academic community, and to the general public, is free, web-based access to our database of over 550,000 records that describe the objects in our collection (http://www.amnumsoc.org/search). Since it's introduction in 1999, this database has become an essential tool for numismatic research that is used by scholars and collectors from around the world. The ANS will soon be updating its DBMS to a Unicode capable system. A primary reason for doing so is the ability to represent the varied characters appearing on our coins in a standardized and platform-independent manner. Accordingly, I am writing today in support of the request to establish a separate encoding for Phoenician letters, rather than construing Phoenician as a font variation of Hebrew.

As you know, the Phoenician alphabet is among the earliest alphabets in the Ancient Near Eastern and Mediterranean worlds. In numismatics, the terms Phoenician and Punic indicate a set of related languages and scripts that have long been recognized as belonging to a distinct cultural group. For illustration, I show a reduced image of an early 3rd century BC 5-shekel piece struck in Sicily and bearing the Punic inscription *B'RST* ("In the land") on its reverse. I am confident that the numismatic community would be best served by being able to search for such characters as Phoenician letters, and that the technical implementation of the ANS's database would be greatly facilitated by the adoption of separate encoding space for this alphabet.

Sincerely,
Sebastian Heath, Ph.D.
Director of Information Technology
American Numismatic Society

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Mike Ksar, Chair ISO JTC1/SC2 WG2
c/o The Unicode Consortium
P.O. Box 391476
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11th January 2005

Dear Mr Ksar,

I am Professor of Roman Archaeology at the University of Oxford, and Honorary Secretary of the Society for Libyan Studies, a UK-based academic organisation that co-ordinates British academic research in Libya. I have a particular interest in the archaeology and epigraphy of ancient North Africa, particularly the Roman and Punic (Carthaginian) civilisations there. In North Africa (modern Libya, Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco) the Phoenician script was used for inscriptions from before the middle of the first millennium B.C., evolving into the Punic script which remained in use for monumental inscriptions until the 2nd century A.D., and in graffiti and private documents for long after that.

I am in support of a separate Phoenician encoding in Unicode/ISO 10646 because it would enable the proper publication of Punic inscriptions electronically, make it possible to search an electronic database of Punic inscriptions and graffiti on pottery, and would finally allow the proper representation of this script in online documents.

A Phoenician encoding could be used today in work on archaeological publications from North Africa and indeed Punic Spain. Although I am not myself a Punic specialist, I have to deal with imported Punic material from my excavations of a Greek site at Benghazi in Libya, and the Punic script continued to be used throughout the Roman period in many parts of North Africa. The impact of not encoding Phoenician would adversely affect my field by making it impossible to be sure that Phoenician letters would appear in Web documents, causing potential confusion to readers if square Hebrew were to appear. The transliteration of Punic by Hebrew makes any discussion of Punic documents inaccessible to the non-specialist; if, for example, I have a photograph of a Punic inscription and I want to identify in an online document a translation of it or a commentary on it, I cannot recognise it in the online publication if it is transliterated in Hebrew; I need it to be given in Phoenician script. A Unicode encoding of Phoenician thus serves many more people than the community of Phoenician/Punic experts, by making information on Punic writing and inscriptions accessible to a wider range of people interested in the ancient world generally.

The Phoenician alphabet ultimately forms the basis of the alphabets of the Mediterranean and Western Europe, and thus stands at the origin of Western European literature and culture. As

Punic, it was the alphabet of Hannibal and of Carthage, one of the world's great empires of antiquity. If Unicode is truly to represent a global encoding standard, it cannot omit Phoenician/Punic. I strongly urge you to consider adoption of the Phoenician proposal.

Yours sincerely,

Andrew Wilson
Professor of the Archaeology of the Roman Empire
All Souls College
University of Oxford

Universiteit Leiden

Leiden University Library

Oriental Collections
Curator for Judaica and Semitica

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Mike Ksar, Chair ISO JTC1/SC2 WG2
c/o The Unicode Consortium
P.O. Box 391476
Mountain View, CA 94039-1476
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Dear Mr. Ksar,

I, the undersigned, a Semiticist working in North-West Semitic epigraphy (mostly Late Punic from North Africa) am writing this letter in support of the proposal to adopt a separate Phoenician encoding in Unicode/ISO 10646 because it would help in publication of Phoenician materials electronically and also make it possible to search an electronic database of encoded Phoenician inscriptions. As there is no standard at the moment, numerous fonts and transliteration systems are in use.

A Phoenician encoding would be especially useful for teaching purposes, in acquainting students with Phoenician as something different from Classical (Biblical) Hebrew, both linguistically and qua script (as in van den Branden's *Grammaire Phénicienne*).

The impact of not encoding Phoenician would cause some confusion, if Hebrew square script were to be displayed instead. A standard for Phoenician, although not a catch-all solution, will conceivably in the future help to distinguish Phoenician from other closely related languages. In addition, in general palaeographical discussions, Phoenician encoding will help to make some arguments more clear. The separate encoding of Phoenician is a logical addition to the Unicode programme and a continuation of the Western scholarly printing tradition (cf. e.g. the *Corpus Inscriptionum Semiticarum*).

I strongly urge you to consider adoption of the Phoenician proposal.

Sincerely,

Robert Kerr

Trade and Reference Division
Houghton Mifflin Company
222 Berkeley Street
Boston MA 02116
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617-351-1116
Patrick_Taylor@hmco.com

Dear Sir or Madam,

As Vice President and Director of Electronic Development of the Trade and Reference Division of Houghton Mifflin Company and staff etymologist for the *American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, respectively, we strongly urge the acceptance of the Phoenician alphabet into Unicode / ISO 10646.

The inclusion of Phoenician will have a direct and important effect on the books being produced today by the reference division of Houghton Mifflin Co., such as *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language* (ISBN 0395825172) and *The American Heritage Book of English Usage* (ISBN 03895767865). These works discuss the history of the alphabet and versions of these books are also available electronically. The paper version of the *American Heritage Dictionary* illustrates the Phoenician alphabet as part of a presentation of the development of the Roman alphabet we use today. Online versions of the dictionary do not include these illustrations, however, because of the difficulties posed by integrating image files into the text. Future electronic versions of these books would benefit from the availability of Phoenician in Unicode. We will be able to discuss the development of the alphabet more easily. Our readers will be able to see the correct shape of the Phoenician letters, rather than Square Hebrew. The actual shapes of the Phoenician letters differ quite markedly from the Square Hebrew shapes, and they explain better the development of the modern Roman alphabet. As an example, the availability of Phoenician will help our readers understand how the letter A developed from the picture of an ox, something that Square Hebrew cannot illustrate at all. Our readers will also be able to search the Phoenician letters without getting false hits (i.e., Hebrew mixed with Phoenician in the results).

In the scholarly community, the inclusion of Phoenician will benefit those who study the Indo-European languages. It will be a boon to all scholars who work on the many ancient languages written with alphabets ultimately descended from the Phoenician writing system, such as Oscan, Umbrian, Etruscan, Venetic, even the early Germanic dialects written with Runes—not to mention Greek and Latin. It would facilitate discussion of the various local alphabets of ancient Anatolia (Turkey), such as Lycian, Carian, Lydian, and Phrygian, that are descended from early Semitic alphabets. Some of the rarer symbols used to write the ancient languages of Anatolia still pose problems of decipherment, and the inclusion in Unicode would make comparison between various alphabets and thus the progress of decipherment easier.

Among Indo-European historical linguists, Phoenician texts are most frequently encountered when reading the important bilingual inscriptions in Phoenician and Hieroglyphic Luwian. These texts are like Rosetta stones, crucial to our understanding of Hieroglyphic Luwian, a language that plays an increasingly prominent role in our reconstruction of the Indo-European proto-language. The Phoenician texts form a corpus just as historically and culturally significant as other corpora of ancient languages, such as the Greek texts written in Linear B, for which provision has been made in Unicode. Phoenician deserves equal treatment.

If Phoenician is included, it will be easier for everyone, from grade-school teachers to philologists, to illustrate the history of the alphabet—a topic which students and readers in general find perennially interesting. The Square Hebrew characters are completely inadequate as "stand-ins" for the forms of the Phoenician letters ancestral to those we use today.

David Jost
Vice President,
Director of Electronic Development
Electronic Publishing and General Reference
Trade and Reference Division
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Patrick Taylor
Associate Editor
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Peter Haarer,
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Mike Ksar, Chair ISO JTC1/SC2 WG2,
c/o The Unicode Consortium,
P.O. Box 391476,
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U.S.A.

Dear Mr. Ksar,

I am the lecturer in Ancient History at Corpus Christi College, Oxford, and until September last year was a researcher at the Centre for the Study of Ancient Documents, Oxford. My research currently centres on the development of Greek alphabetic writing, and as such I am frequently concerned also with its parent script, Phoenician alphabetic writing.

The establishment of the proposed Phoenician encoding in Unicode/ISO 10646 would be of considerable help in this field. In particular, in many contexts it would greatly facilitate the illustration of the close nature of the relationship between Greek and Phoenician, something which cannot be achieved satisfactorily at present using square Hebrew characters. Furthermore, Phoenician unicode would be a major asset for the publication of texts electronically on the Web, and indispensible to searching these specifically for Phoenician characters.

In my opinion, the use of square Hebrew does not offer a suitable alternative for the purposes outlined above and, if displayed in place of Phoenician, is misleading. I have no hesitation in giving the proposal my full support.

Yours sincerely,

Peter Haarer,

Dr. P.S. Haarer,
Lecturer in Ancient History,
Corpus Christi College, Oxford.