Proposal to encode an Arabic *qaf* with dot below

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Proposal

Encode the following character:

codepoint	isolated	final	medial	initial	name
U+08B5	ڵ	ڵ	ڋ	ڢ	ARABIC LETTER QAF WITH DOT BELOW AND NO DOTS ABOVE

The UnicodeData.txt properties would be:
```
08B5;ARABIC LETTER QAF WITH DOT BELOW AND NO DOTS ABOVE;Lo;0;AL;;;;;N;;;;;
```

The ArabicShaping.txt properties would be:
```
08B5; DOTLESS QAF WITH DOT BELOW; D; QAF
```

All other properties would be similar to U+0642 ARABIC LETTER QAF.

The letter is confusable with U+06A2 ARABIC LETTER FEH WITH DOT MOVED BELOW and U+08BB ARABIC LETTER AFRICAN FEH. It looks identical to them in initial and medial forms, while different in final and isolated forms.

Background

Modern Maghrebi print Qurans have a *qāf* with one dot above, "ڧ", and a *fāʾ* with one dot below, "ڢ". These are currently encoded in the Unicode. But in ancient Quranic manuscripts we find the exact opposite distribution. While *fāʾ* with dot above is already encoded, "ف", the *qāf* with a single dot below is not encoded yet.

Here is an example of the *qāf* with dot below used medially in the word القُرانَ, from Small 2013:

Among other places, Small 2013 mentions that Leemhuis 2006 "observes that in the first Islamic century this was a convention used in a few manuscripts from the Hijaz and Yemen and even in the Dome of the Rock Inscriptions."
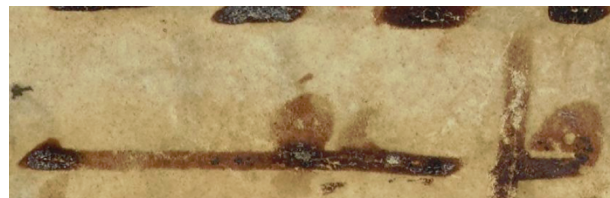
Below we show a selection of the use of the *qāf* with a dot below in three different Quranic manuscript fragments, all located in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris. The left-side images show a final or isolated *qāf* with a dot below, while the right-side images show a final or isolated *fā'* from the same manuscript for contrast.

Note that the dots are the thin diagonal lines, not the round filled circles. That's how dots were typically written at the time period.
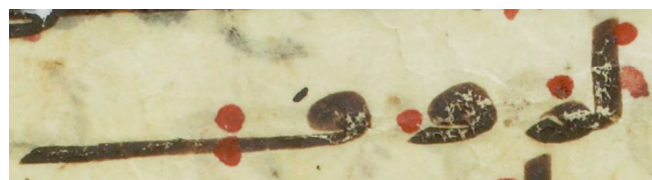
1. Arabe 334a

al-mašriq المشرق

fa-ʿfu فاعف
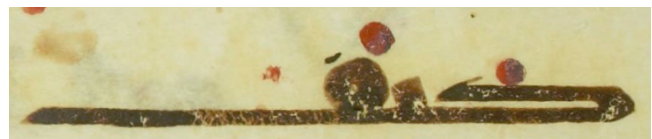
2. Arabe 330c

Istaraq استرق

la-ra'ūf لروف

Bi-l-ḥaqq بالحق
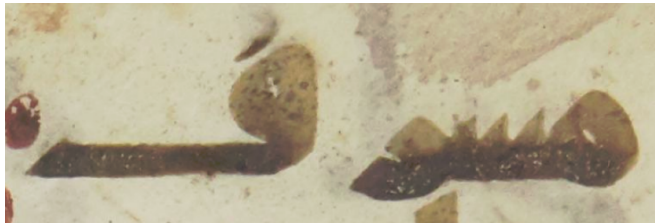

kayfa كف

3. Arabe 335

Ḥaqq حـ<mark>ق</mark>

musrif مسرف

Wāq وا<mark>ق</mark>

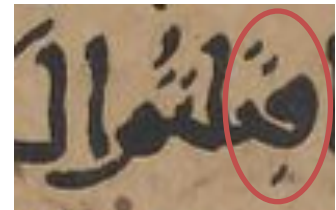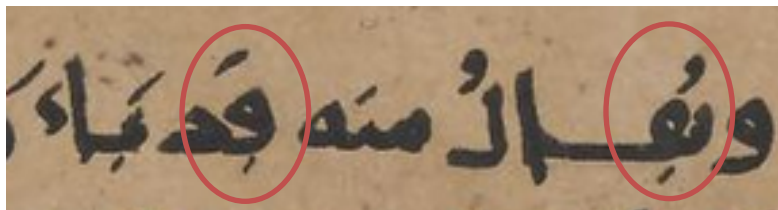ʾaḫāfa أخاف

Here's a discussion of the letter in Blau 1966. It lacks the glyph to typeset it properly, thus using U+06A2 ڢ ARABIC LETTER FEH WITH DOT MOVED BELOW instead:

25. Diacritical points : for the particular use of the diacritical points, cf. the introductions to the various texts, as Fleischer III, *passim* and Levin 14/5 ¹. Remarkable is the use of ڢ and ٮ to mark *q* and *f* respectively in some mss., of ٮ and ڢ in others. *Shîn* is sometimes marked by three points written in the same level, v. e.g. Fleischer III 396, note 1 and the facsimiles reproduced in SS 2 and SS 7, sometimes alternating with the ordinarily marked *shîn* (i.e. by one point at the top and two beneath it at the same level), as in Camb. *Sîn* is sometimes marked by a diagonal stroke above it : سَ, v. e g. S 508 72b, 1 ; 2 ; 3 ; 4. *Tâ marbûṭa* is, as a rule, written without dots (cf. also § 8.9, note 64) ². In some mss., as in BM 5019, the diacritical points altogether are very scarce, in others again they are added quite regularly

Finally, here are two examples from Ibn Sallam 866, the earliest Arabic paper manuscript at Leiden University Libraries. The same manuscript sometimes uses two dots above like the modern "ق", but some other times uses the form proposed here. The examples show the letter initially and medially:

Bibliography

1. Joshua Blau. 1966. *A Grammar of Christian Arabic, Based Mainly on South-Palestinian Texts from the First Millennium.* In *Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium*. Louvain, Secrétariat du CorpusSCO.
2. Frederick Leemhuis. 2006. "From Palm Leaves to the Internet". In Jane Dammen McCauliffe (ed.), *Cambridge Companion to the Qur'ān*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press. ISBN 978-0-521-53934-0.
3. Abu 'Ubayd al-Qasim Ibn Sallam. 866 (=252 AH). *Gharib al-Hadith.* Leiden University Libraries. Or. 298. Accessed September 23, 2019. http://hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:2000455
4. Keith Small. 2013. "How do you distinguish *fā'* from *qāf* in early Qur'ān manuscripts?". International Qur'anic Studies Association. Posted July 29, 2013. Accessed September 22, 2019. https://iqsaweb.wordpress.com/2013/07/29/qfq/