

To: Unicode Technical Committee

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Subject: Expanding the “Syriac Supplement” U+0860 Block for historical glyphs and marks

Date: September 21,, 2019 (Version 3)

Background

In 1998, Paul Nelson, George Kiraz and Sargon Hasso put forward a proposal to add Syriac to Unicode. The proposal was accepted after some emendations and a Syriac block with the range U+0700 to U+074F was created in Version 3.0. Subsequently, a few additional glyphs to handle Persian and Soghdean garshunographic writing was proposed by Nicholas Sims-Willimas and Michael Everson and six characters were allocated within the same block in Version 4.0. In 2015, Malayalam garshunographic writing was proposed by Anshuman Pandey and was added in a “Syriac Supplement” block in Version 10.0 and was assigned the U+0860 column.

Our current proposal calls for adding two diacritical marks necessary for editing liturgical texts as well as scholarly editions: supralinear *left* accent mark and a sublinear *left* accent mark. Both take the form of a dot. These dots differ from the regular *centered* supralinear dot (U+0307) and the regular *centered* sublinear dot (U+0323) in both position and function (and sometimes in shape) as follows:

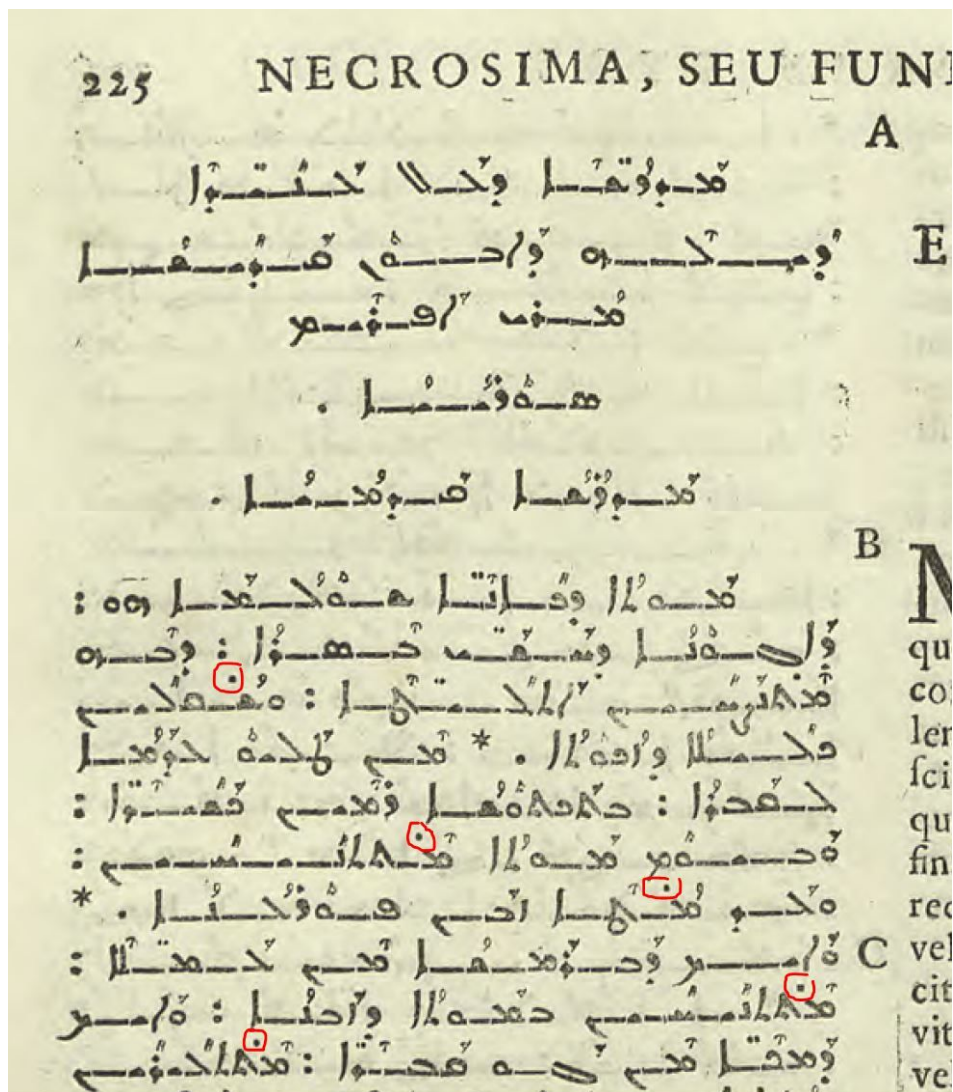
1. Position. As denoted in italics above, these dots appear to the left of characters between two consonants while U+0307 and U+0323 are usually centered above or below characters.
2. Function. The proposed dots are homographic markers that distinguish two homograph words while the centered dots denote a feminine suffix.
3. Shape. In some manuscripts, the proposed dots tend to be a bit larger than normal dots.

In terms of language and geographical area, all these glyphs appear in Syriac (ISO 639-3 code *syr*) manuscripts of various periods of time. The area covered includes most of the countries of the Middle East today including, but not limited to, Turkey, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, and Iran. In addition, they appear in Syriac manuscripts written in Kerala, India.

Proposed characters

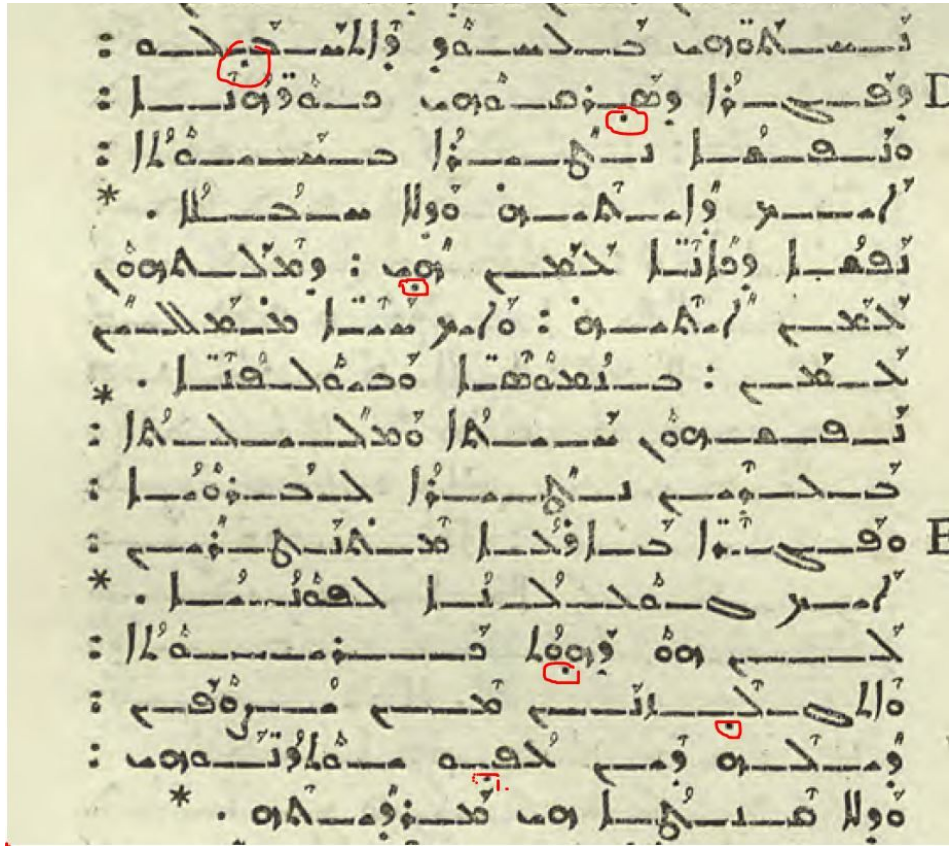
1. SYRIAC SUPERScript LEFT HOMOGRAPH MARK

1.1.1. Example: ܘܘ



1.2. SYRIAC SUBSCRIPT LEFT HOMOGRAPH MARK

1.2.1. Example: ܘܒܘܕ



The above images are taken from the edition of Ephrem's Madroshe by Assemani (1732).