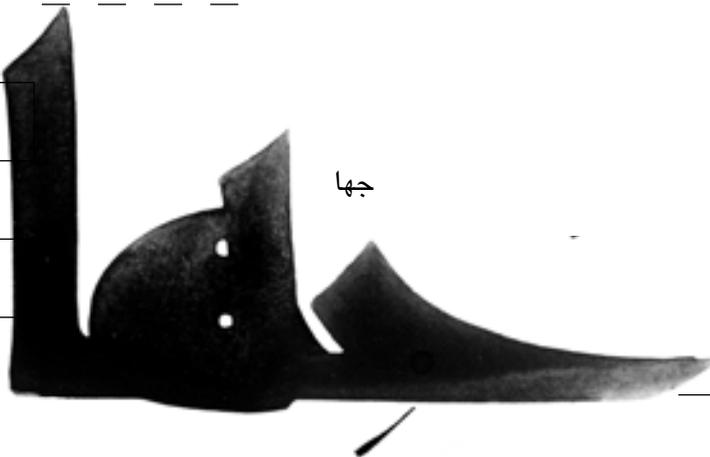


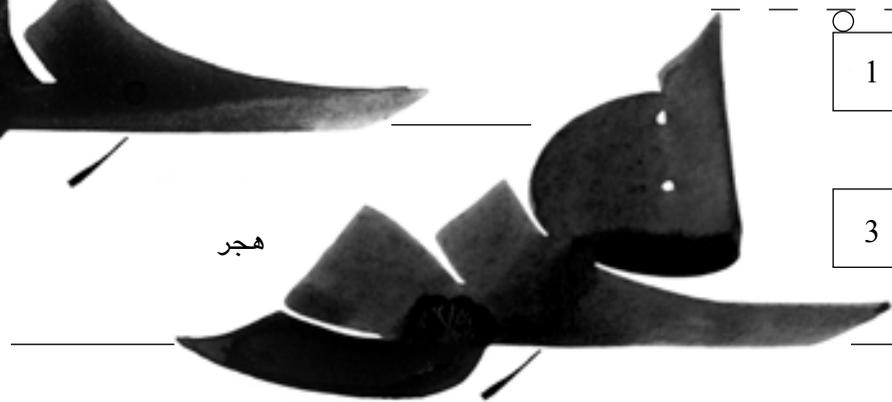


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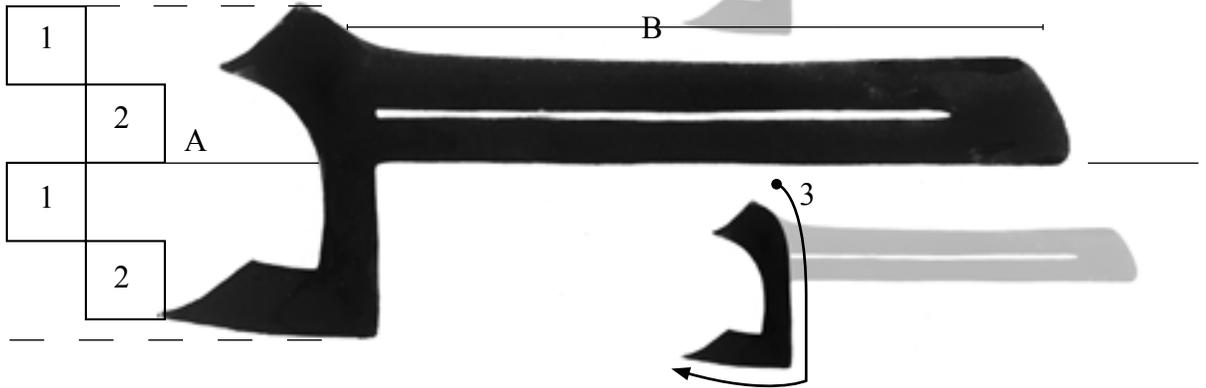


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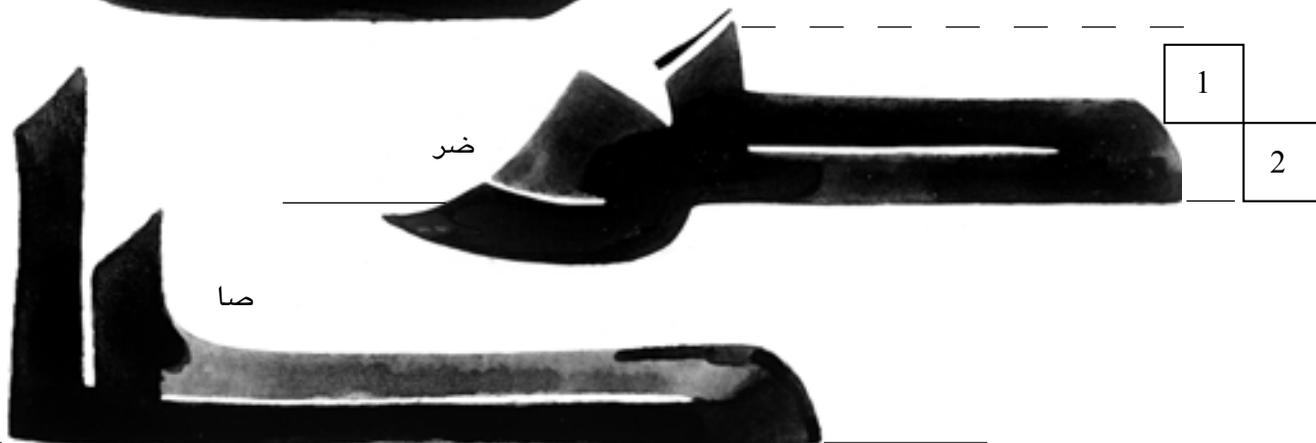
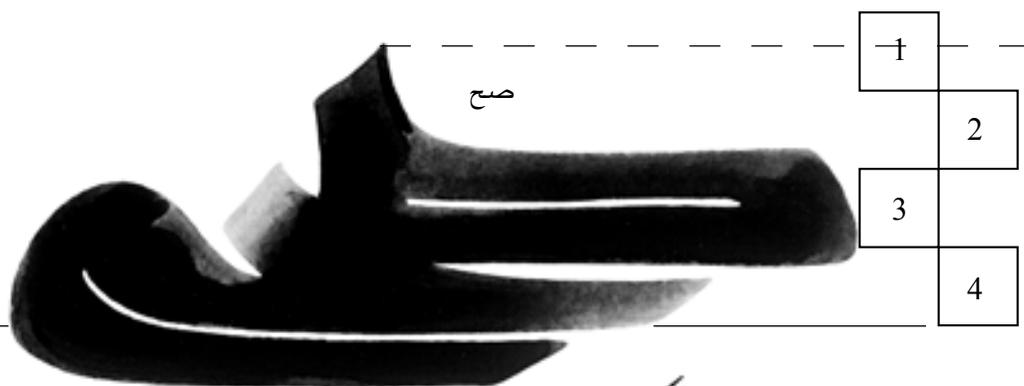
The almost rectilinear form of this letter in Primary contrasts strongly with its curvilinear form in contemporary Arabic scripts, such as Naskhi. In fact, the letter ṣād is a long letter: one that can be extended horizontally in accordance with the calligrapher's sense of appropriateness. Note that the curved parts of the first stroke are slightly thickened.

The isolated form of the letter is made from three separate strokes. Begin the



first stroke at the second point above the baseline, with the qalam in the normal position. Scoop the line slightly downwards while rolling the qalam a little towards the shallow-tip position. Continue the stroke to the right as far as seems good to you. Stop, and without lifting the qalam from the page, roll it on the spot into the medium shallow-tip position, then make a short wide downward curve to meet the baseline. While making this downward curve, widen it by rolling the qalam so that it arrives at the baseline in the full shallow-tip position. Slide the qalam sideways to the left to make a short horizontal mark. The second stroke will be narrower than the first. For this stroke, lift the qalam from the page and roll it back towards the medium shallow-tip position. Set it back on the page at the end of the previous stroke and push it leftwards exactly on the baseline until it approaches the starting point of the first stroke. Note the slender gap between the two horizontal strokes. As we have said, maintaining the accuracy and clarity of this gap is a mark of the calligrapher's skill.

The third stroke forms a cup at the end of the letter. It is quite a complex set of movements and will need practice. For this stroke, lift the qalam from the page and return it to the full normal position to ensure that you begin with a nicely curved top. Now set it just above the starting point of the first stroke and make



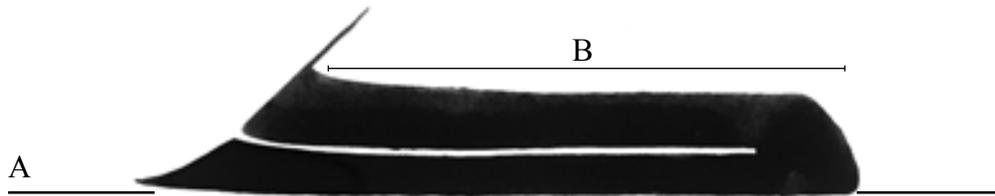
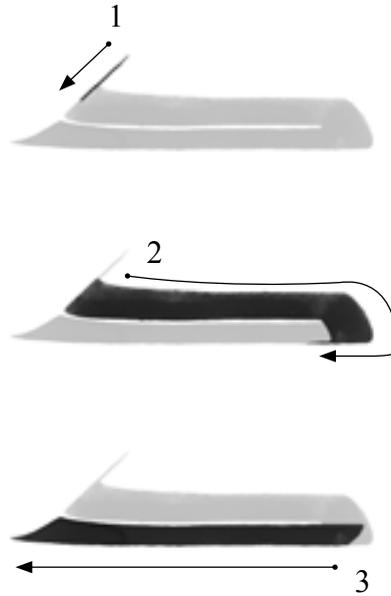
a gentle downward curve to the right until it has covered the ends of both previous strokes. Continue the stroke vertically with the qalam in the normal position. Just before the end, start rolling the qalam into the full shallow-tip position to create a clean angle for the corner. Without lifting the qalam from the page rotate it back to the normal position and push it to the left to complete the cup with a nicely curved tip.

The initial and medial forms for the letter lack the cup-tail almost entirely. There is only enough of it to close the loop formed by the first and second strokes and to join the letter as closely as possible to its successor.



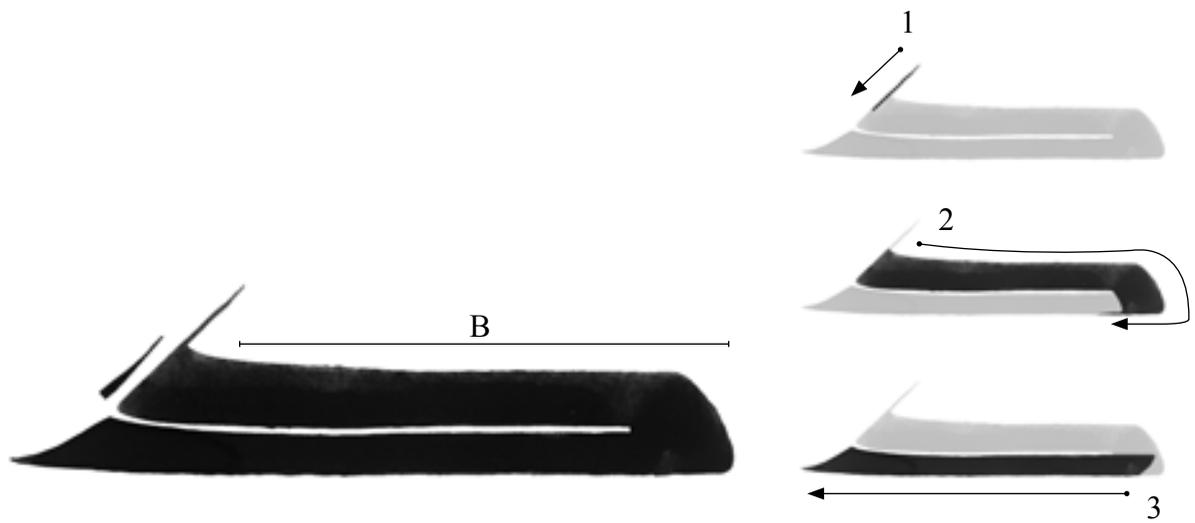
When using a normal pen, the letter is formed as with a qalam except that the first two strokes can be made in a single movement. The pen will still need to be lifted for the final stroke that makes the cup.

Related letter is *dād*.



The letter dāl is another whose rectilinear form contrasts strongly with its curvilinear form in contemporary Arabic scripts, such as Naskhi. In fact, this is another long letter that can be extended horizontally as appropriate. Like the letter šād, it involves close-set parallel lines and thus demonstrates the calligrapher’s skill in the narrowness and straightness of the gap between them. Having learned the letter šād will make the letter dāl much easier. Note that the letter dāl is always set directly on the baseline.

The isolated and initial forms of the letter dāl are identical. They are made with three strokes beginning with the qalam in the dipped position so that only the straight lower edge of the tip is in contact with the page. Begin the first stroke at the third point above the baseline and slide the qalam diagonally along its straight lower edge to create the leading serif. The second stroke is a long horizontal that floats one point above the baseline. Make this stroke by gradually rolling the qalam towards the medium shallow-tip position so that the line becomes slightly thinner as it progresses. At the end of this horizontal, make a short thick downward curve while rolling the qalam more strongly so that it arrives at the baseline in the full shallow-tip position. Slide the qalam leftwards along its straight lower edge to form a short horizontal trace on the baseline. The skilled calligrapher can make the third stroke by rolling the qalam towards the normal position without lifting it from the page. The novice calligrapher will need to raise the qalam, roll it towards the normal position, and set it down again at the spot where the second stroke touches the baseline. Both calligraphers will then form the third stroke by drawing the qalam to the left along the baseline being



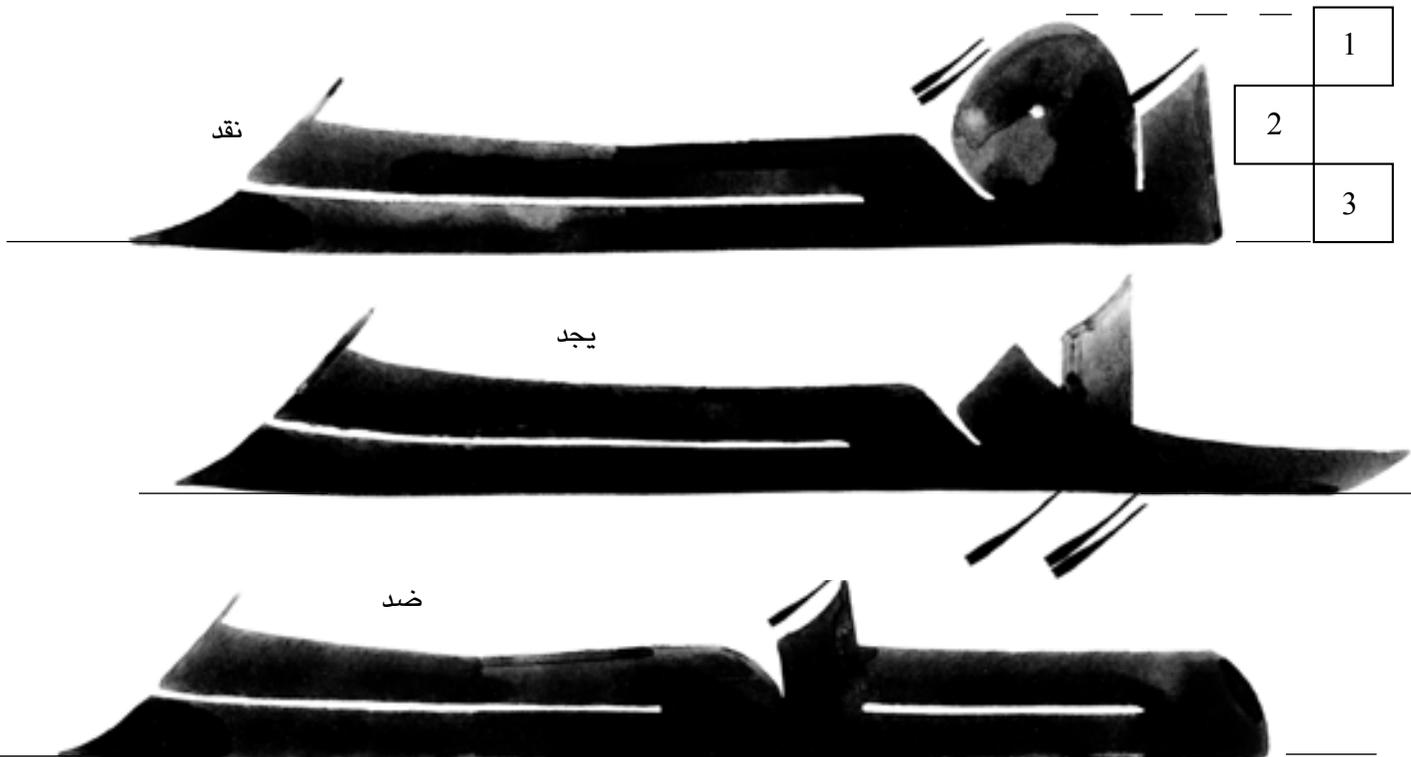
careful to keep a slender straight gap between it and the stroke above. Gradually roll the qalam to achieve a full normal position by the end of this stroke, so that letter ends with a graceful curve that extends the line begun with the first stroke.

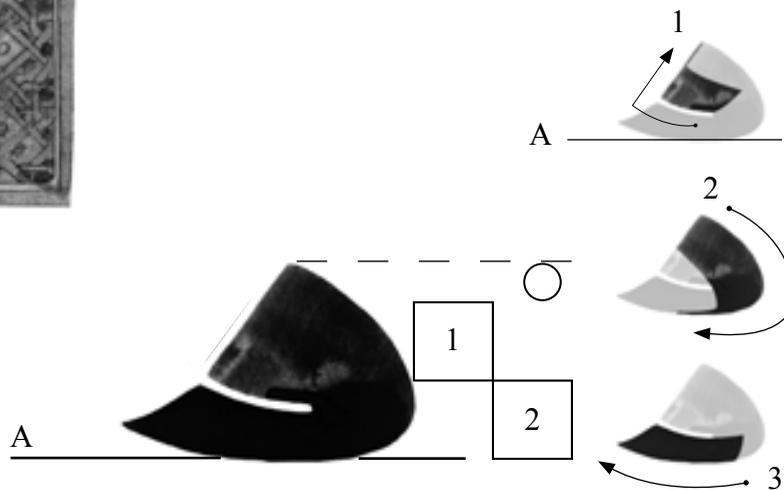
The medial and final forms of dāl are identical to each other and are written slightly differently from the isolated and initial forms. This time, the bottom stroke is made first, as it continues from the tail of the preceding letter, which then extends for the full length of the dāl. The first and second strokes are added afterwards, made exactly as described for the isolated form of the letter.

When using a normal pen, the letter is formed as with a qalam except that it can be done with a single stroke.



The related letter is dhāl.

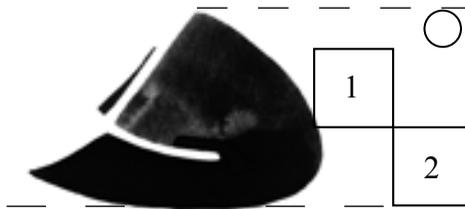




The letter *rā'* is written on or through the baseline depending on where it appears in the word. It is written in three strokes that make a “head” and a “tail”. The most noticeable contrast with its form in contemporary Arabic scripts, such as Naskhi, is that the curve is almost closed and the head is thickened.

For the isolated form of the letter, begin the first stroke with the qalam in the stub position a little below the second point above the baseline. Move the qalam slightly upwards and to the right for a short distance. Then, without raising the qalam from the page or changing its position, slide it diagonally upwards along its lower edge to create a smooth upper edge. Stop a little beyond the second point above the baseline. Keep the qalam in the stub position to start the second stroke, which is a shallow downward curve to the baseline. Roll the qalam as you make the curve so that it arrives at the baseline in the full shallow-tip position. Now slide it along its lower edge to create a short, narrow line towards the left. For the “tail” of the letter, raise the qalam from the page and set it back down where the previous stroke met the baseline. Keeping the upper point off the page, rock the qalam back to the normal position so that part of the curved upper edge comes into contact with the page. Now make the third stroke which will echo the curve of the head, separated by a hair-fine gap. Continue the stroke until it aligns with the start of the letter and allow the nicely curved tip of the qalam to create an elegant extension to the line of the head.

The isolated form of the letter *rā'* has its tail on the baseline, but for the medial and final forms the tail can be allowed to pass below the baseline if the previous syllable is a long one. The syllable can be long either because it has many letters or because it includes a long extension. This makes it possible to keep the total height of a syllable to five points. In this case, note also that the *rā'* barely touches the previous letter. On the other hand, if the previous syllable was short because it had few letters and no extension, the *rā'* remains on the baseline and

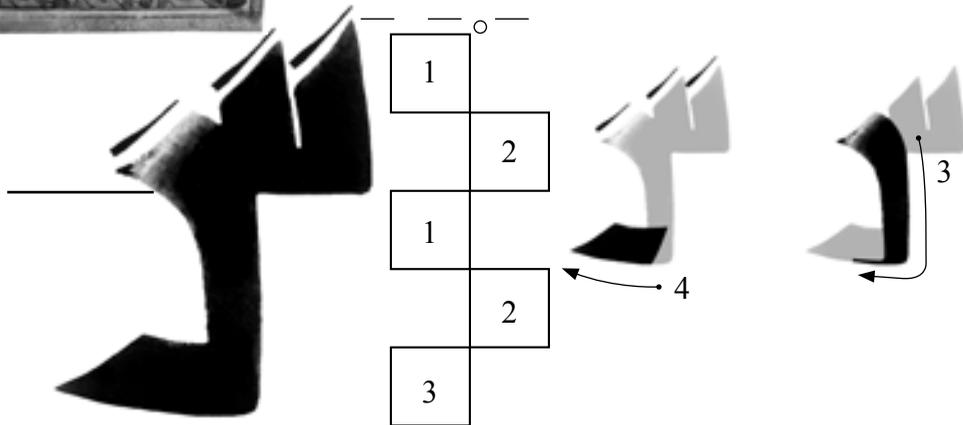
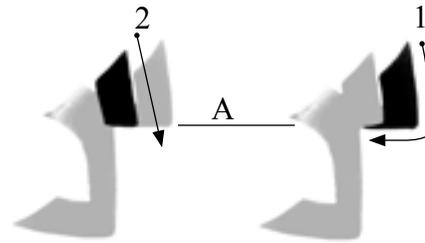


completely covers the connector of the previous letter.

When using a normal pen, the letter is formed as with a qalam except that it can be done with a single stroke. Be sure to fill in the head.

The related letter is zāy.





The letter shīn involves skills learned for the letters bā' and sād, which will make it easier to learn. It is made with four strokes that form two teeth and a cup. The top of each tooth and both ends of the cup show the elegant curve of the left (or outer) edge of the qalam.

For the isolated form of the letter, begin with the qalam in the normal position so that the first tooth has a nicely curved top. Set the qalam on the page two points above the baseline. Draw a short vertical stroke, gradually rocking the qalam forward into the detail position to make a good sharp angle at the baseline. Draw a short horizontal line towards the left to make a clean base for the letter. For the second stroke, lift the qalam from the page and set it down in the normal position and draw a second curve-topped vertical tooth close beside the first, leaving the finest possible gap between the two. Raise the qalam again and set it down fractionally above the baseline, close to the base of the second tooth. The third stroke makes the cup, beginning in the normal position to make with a nicely curved top. Now make a gentle downward curve to the right until it has covered the base of the nearest tooth. Continue the stroke vertically with the qalam in the normal position. Just before the end, start rolling the qalam into the full shallow-tip position and draw it a little way to the left to create a clean angle for the corner. Raise the qalam and set it down in the normal position to join the end of the stroke just made. Push it to the left to complete the cup with a nicely curved tip. Be sure to add the i'jām at the top of each tooth and cup, lightly touching the page with the qalam in the normal position.

The medial and final forms of the letter omit the cup of the tail and replace it with a third vertical tooth. This tooth is made like the two first, where the



qalam starts the stroke in the normal position and arrives at the baseline in the detail position to create a straight base. For the medial form, the letter is joined to the succeeding letters by closeness or even a slight overlap. For the final form, the third tooth receives a horizontal extension by moving the qalam (which is still in the detail position) to the left as far as seems good to you.

When using a normal pen, the letter is formed as with a qalam, but note that the third tooth (on the left) is appreciably longer than the one made with a qalam.

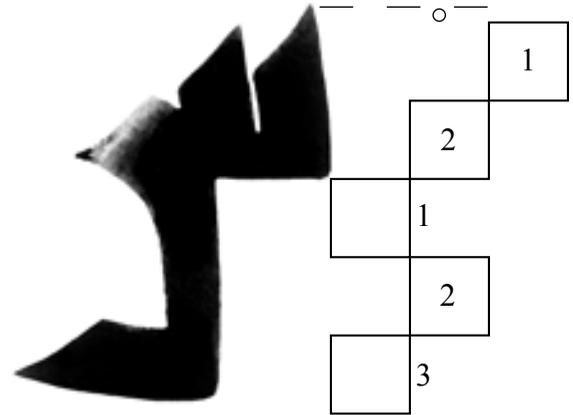
The related letter is sīn.

Notes about the teeth in the letter shān.

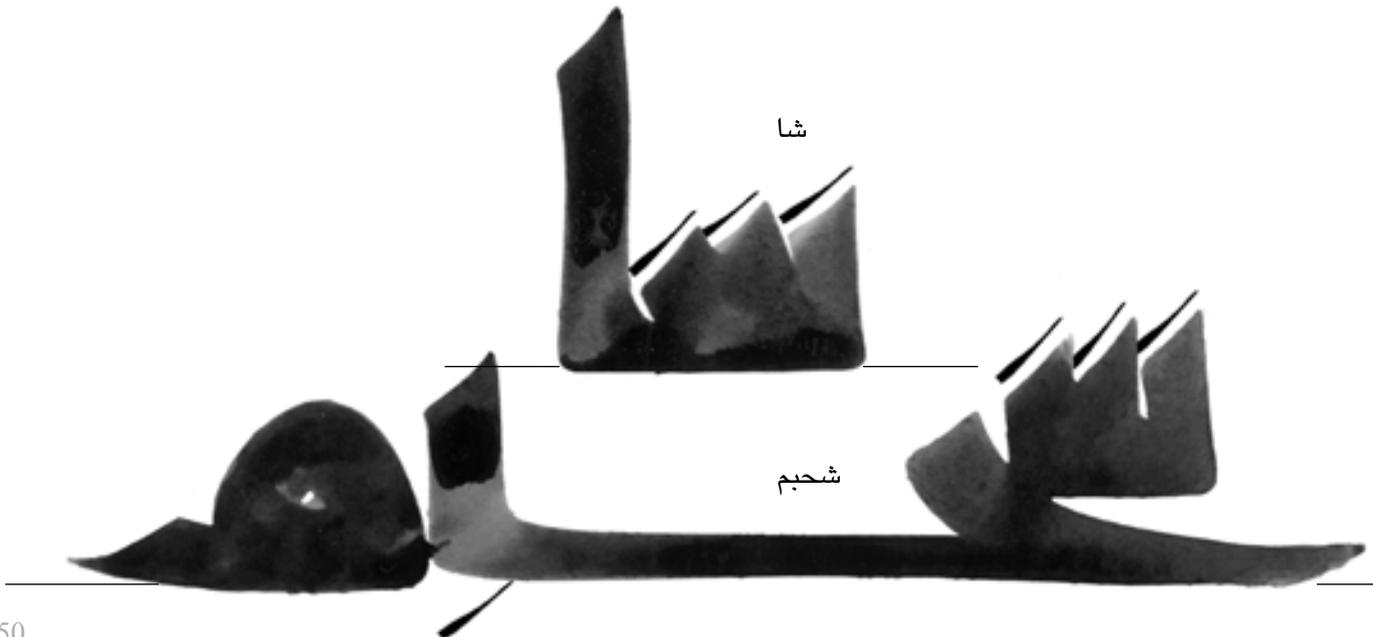
1. The gaps between the teeth can be omitted entirely for aesthetic purposes or to differentiate the letter from preceding toothed letters.

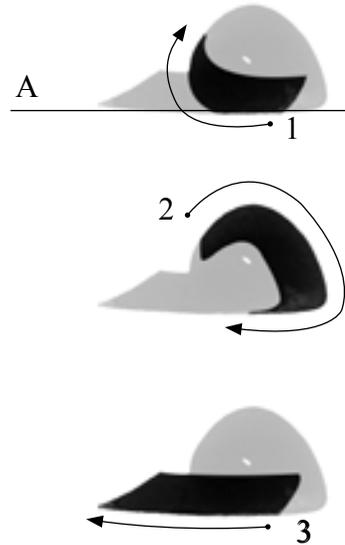
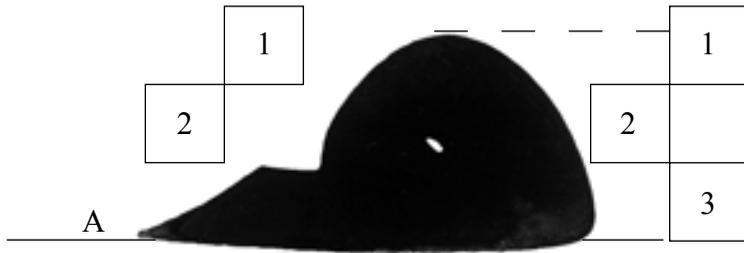
2. In the initial form, the second and third teeth can be written diagonally and set closer to each other than to the first tooth.

3. In the medial form, all the teeth can be written diagonally with matching narrow gaps or with no gaps.



ش





The letter *mīm* introduces a new skill involving tight curves with smoothly flat baselines and a pinhead-sized hole at the center. Although it looks almost circular, notice that it is also almost triangular. Several other letters will use this shape, including *fāʾ*, *qāf*, and *wāw*. If working with a brush qalam, use the point downwards position and rotate to form the body of the letter. The instructions below are for a solid wood or reed qalam.

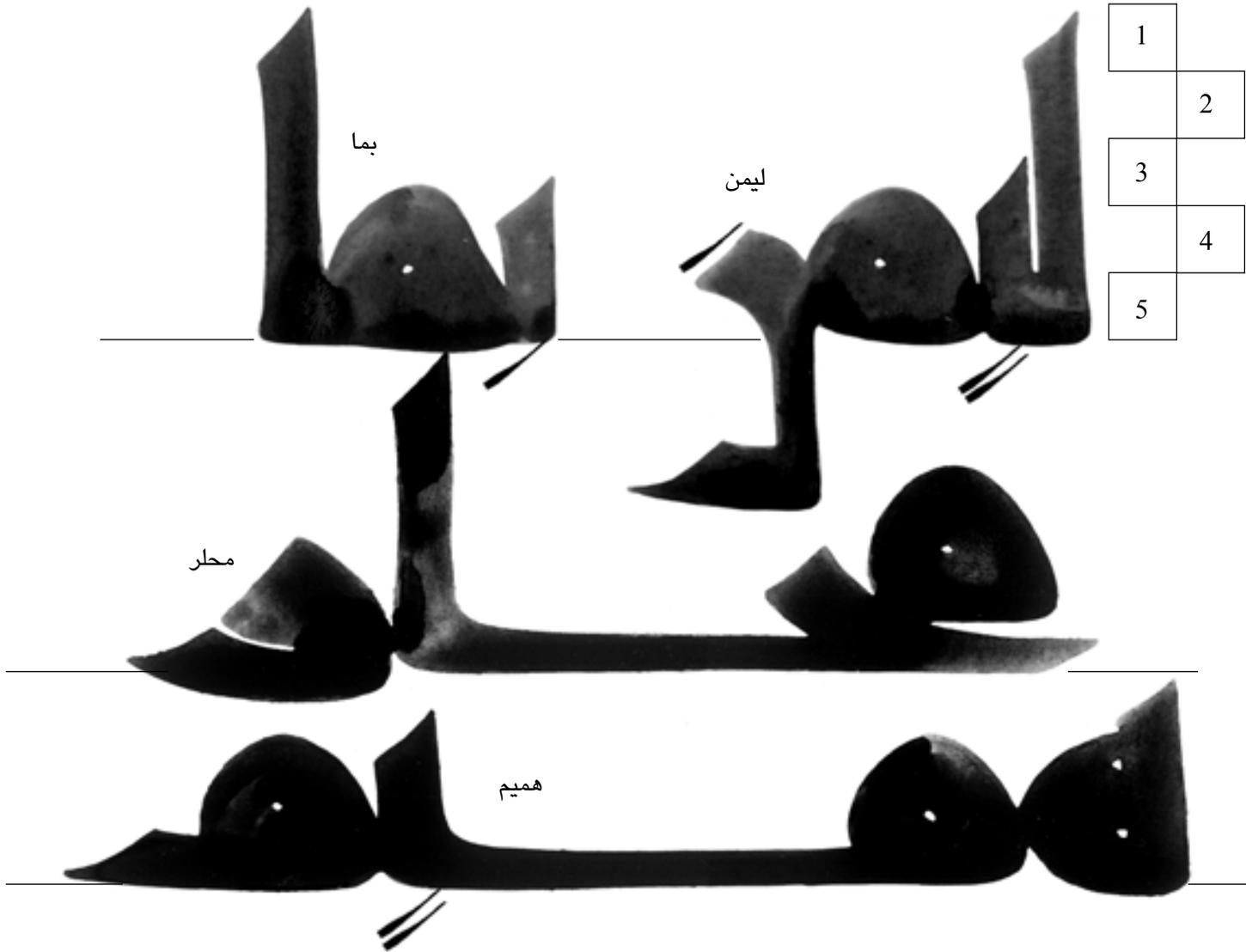
The isolated and final forms of the letter are made with three strokes. For the first stroke, set the qalam on the baseline in the normal position and draw it to the left a short way before smoothly curving the stroke upwards until it is about two points tall. The experienced calligrapher will continue smoothly into the second stroke. The novice calligrapher will need to raise the qalam and set it down again, still in the normal position, a little below the end of the first stroke. Now continue the curve upwards and to the right and then descend diagonally to the baseline. Roll the qalam as it travels so that it arrives at the baseline in the full shallow-tip position. Maintaining that position, pull the qalam a short way to the right. This will create a wide flat base for the letter with a full rounded corner on the right. For the third stroke, raise the qalam, return it to the normal position and set it down near that corner. Draw it horizontally to the right until it aligns diagonally with the first curve. End the stroke with a nicely curved tip.

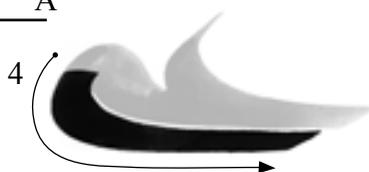
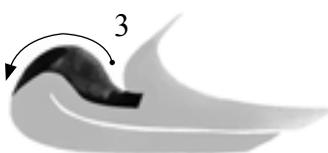
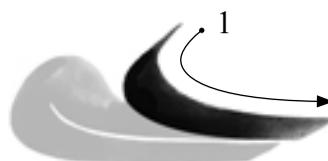
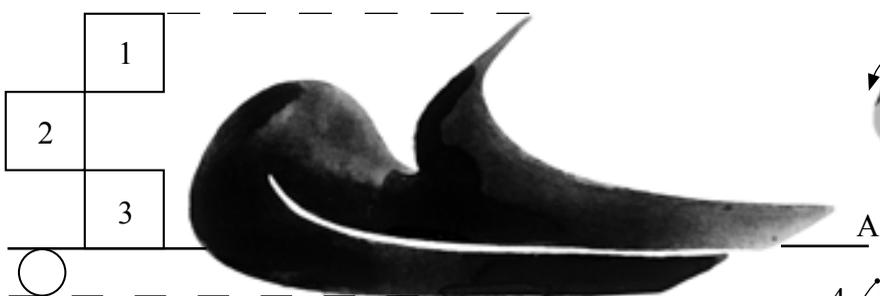
The basic medial form is made in the same way but it is connected differently, depending on the letters that precede or follow it, or on the need for *mashqʿ*. Thus, if the preceding letter has a connector (as in the word *بما*), that connector is kept short so that the letter *mīm* seems to abut the previous letter. If the preceding letter has no connector (as in the words *لمن* and *حميم*), then the letter *mīm* is set close enough to touch.

Similarly, if a curved letter follows the *mīm* (as in the words *ليمن* and *محرار*),

there is no tail: instead, the mīm nestles as close as possible to the succeeding letter. If the following letter has a connector, the tail of the mīm can be kept short for a condensed word (as in **بما**), or extended if there is a need for *mashq'* (as in the word **هميم**).

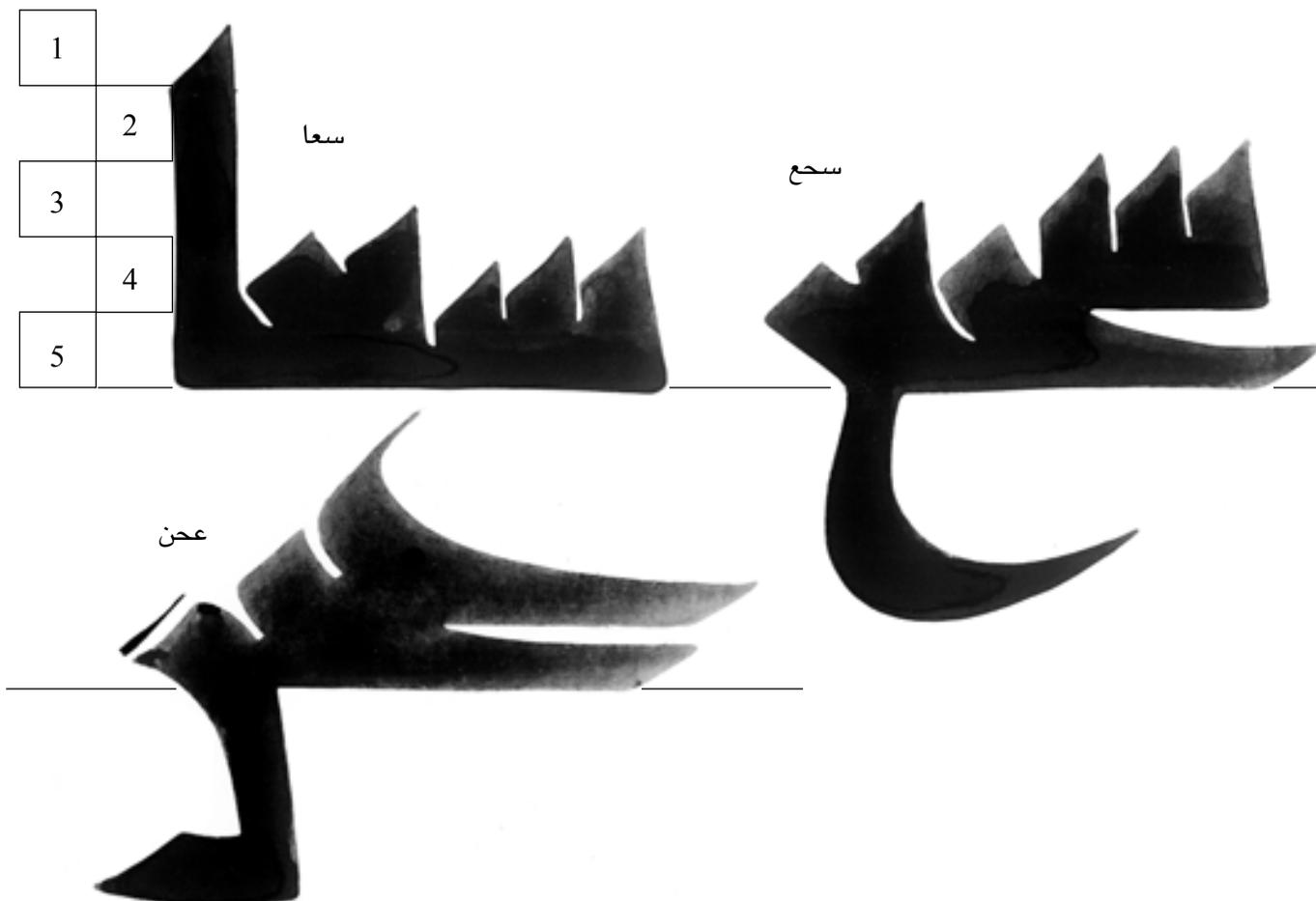
When using a normal pen, the letter is formed as with a qalam except that it can be done in a single stroke. Be sure to add the dot at the center to refer to the pinhole that would have been made with a qalam.





In all its forms, the letter ‘ayn contrasts markedly with its appearance in contemporary Arabic scripts, such as Naskhi. This letter has surprisingly different isolated, initial and medial forms. However, it exploits the skills learned for the letters alif, jīm and shīn, which makes it easier to learn. For the beginner, it is made with four strokes, although the advanced calligrapher will produce it without lifting the qalam.

To make the isolated form of the letter, begin with the qalam in the dipped position in order to create a nice straight leading serif. Start the first stroke at the third point above the baseline. Slide the qalam diagonally downwards along its straight edge to create the serif. Then pull the qalam in a gentle, shallow curve towards the right and continue horizontally along the baseline. The long upper serif is the big difference between the isolated ‘ayn and the isolated jīm. Be sure to emphasize it as you write and to look for it when you read. For the second stroke, keep the qalam in the same position and push it back the way it came until it arrives just past the starting point of the tooth. Continue upwards, making a curve with a slightly deeper throat than the tooth. Be sure to make this stroke nearly as tall as the tooth. Raise the qalam from the page and return it to the base of the curve just made, still in the medium shallow-tip position. Make a hump in the curve somewhat higher than the top of the tooth rolling the qalam



back to the normal position to end the stroke with a sharp “beak”. For the fourth stroke, continue the curve down to the baseline, closely hugging the profile of the second stroke. Without lifting the qalam, extend the stroke just below the baseline towards the right. Be sure to maintain a hair-fine gap between the upper and lower strokes, and end with a straight diagonal edge well before the right extremity of the letter.

The initial form of the letter has only two strokes. The first stroke is the same as for the isolated form. The second stroke begins as for the isolated form but never rises from the baseline. Instead it continues along the baseline for as long as necessary to connect with the subsequent letter. Note that, like the *jīm*, this letter can join the subsequent letter from above, as in the word *عحن*.

The medial form of the letter is very different, and very unlike its contemporary form. It is made from two strokes that borrow the connector line of the previous letter. So when producing a medial ‘ayn, be sure to extend the previous letter’s connector at least twice as far as normal. Now, to form the medial ‘ayn, begin with the qalam in the normal position. Start just above the second point above the baseline and make a vertical tooth downwards to meet the connector line from the previous letter. As you meet that line, dip the qalam slightly and make a rounded corner to the right, to blend the tooth with the connector.



Lift the qalam, return it to the normal position, and move to a space a little to the left of the first tooth. Start this second stroke at the second point above the baseline and pull it diagonally downwards to meet the base of the previous tooth. Dip the qalam slightly and continue smoothly into the connector line. Note that the teeth meet at the baseline and that they curve into it smoothly. This is the big difference between the teeth of a medial ‘ayn and the parallel, angular teeth of a shīn. Be sure to make these differences clear as you write, and look for them as you read. Compare the two forms in the word **سعا**.

Compare the two forms in the word **سعا**.

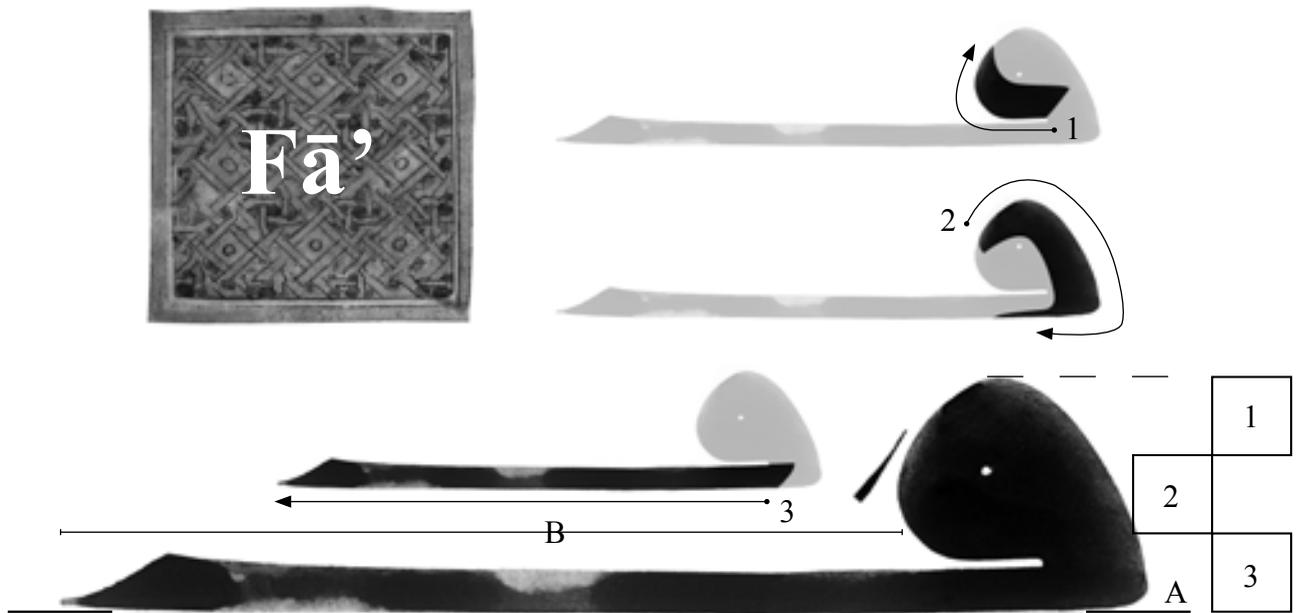
The final form of the letter includes a tail similar to the isolated alif. So, make the first tooth of the ‘ayn as for the medial form, joining it smoothly to the connector line from the previous letter. Start the second tooth as for the medial form, but instead of blending it into the connector line, stop when it meets the base of the first tooth. Then roll the qalam into the steep-tip position and drop a vertical line two points below the baseline. Without lifting the qalam, shift it to the dipped position and start a smooth curve towards the right outwards and upwards to end with an elegant, sharp tip.

When using a normal pen, the letter is formed as with a qalam



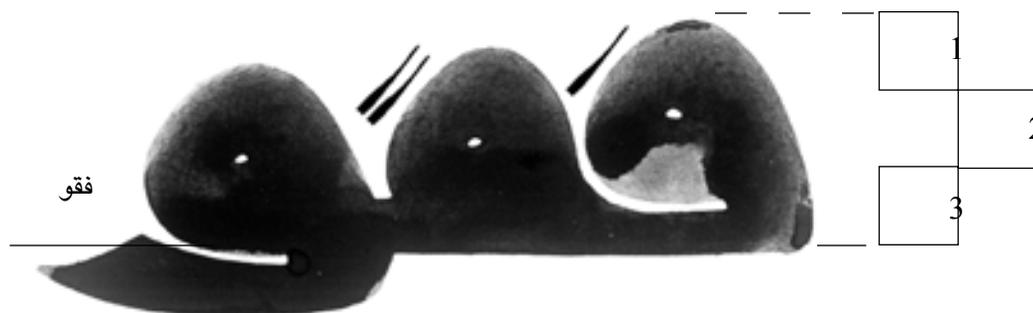
except that it can be done with a single stroke.

The related letter is ghayn.



The letter fā' is one of the long letters and also one of the sub circular letters. It uses the skill developed for the letter mīm, that of making an almost circular (or almost triangular) body for the letter. But the body of the fā' is set higher than for the mīm, and hangs a little above its horizontal tail. The novice calligrapher will need three strokes. The advanced calligrapher will complete the letter in a single continuous movement. All forms of this letter are set on the baseline. As with the letter mīm, if working with a brush qalam, use the point downwards position and rotate to form the body of the letter. The instructions below are for a solid wood or reed qalam.

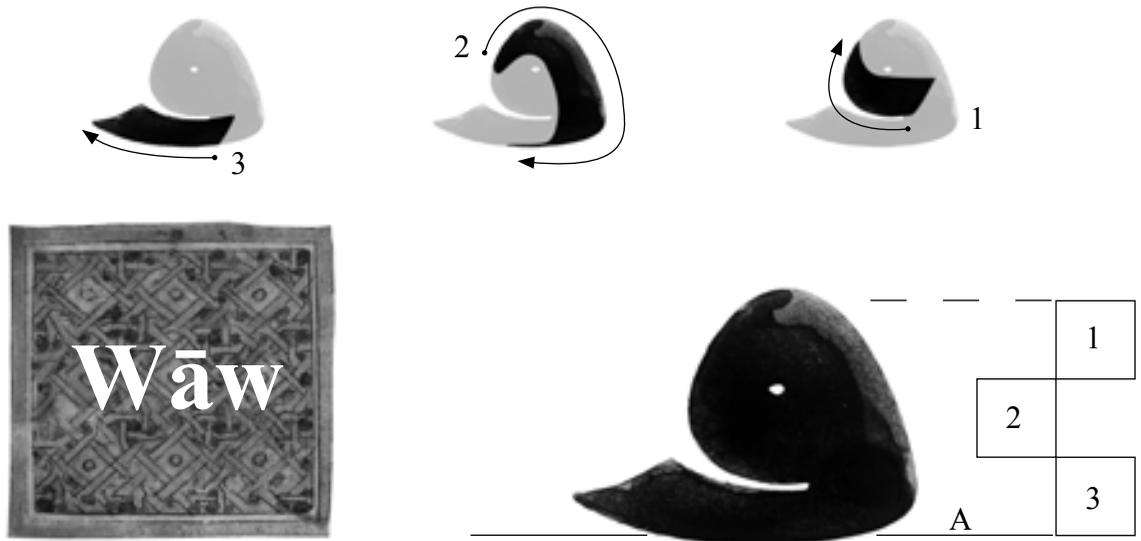
The isolated form of the letter is made with three strokes. For the first stroke, set the qalam in the normal position slightly straddling the second point above the baseline. Draw it to the left a short way before smoothly curving the stroke upwards until it is about two points tall. The experienced calligrapher will continue smoothly into the second stroke. The novice calligrapher will need to raise the qalam and set it down again, still in the normal position, a little below the end of the first stroke. Now continue the curve upwards and to the right and then descend diagonally to the baseline. Roll the qalam as it travels so that it arrives at the baseline in the full shallow-tip position. Maintaining that position, pull the qalam a short way to the right. This will create a wide flat base for the letter with a full rounded corner on the right. For the third stroke, raise the qalam, return it to the normal position and set it down near that corner. Draw it horizontally to the right as far as seems good to you, gradually returning the qalam to the normal position. Be sure to leave a narrow parallel space between this stroke and the curved body above it. End the stroke with an elegantly curved tip. Perfect the letter by filling in the body to create a small round hole at the center, the size of a pinhead.



There are two slightly different medial forms for this letter. Each has a rounder and narrower body than the isolated and initial forms and, unlike the isolated and initial forms, the body rests directly on the connector line. This form of the letter introduces a new skill, rotating the qalam in almost a full circle to create the body of the letter with a small round hole at the center. To make the most common form, complete the connector line from the previous letter. The qalam will be in the medium shallow-tip position. At the end of the connector line start an upward curve to the left until it is about one point high. Raise the qalam and return it to the normal position. Now rotate it about 180° and set it down slightly overlapping the curve just made. Start the stroke by moving the qalam slightly upwards and then immediately rotate it, still in contact with the page, to make a tight curve. Keep attention on the empty center, which should be the size of a pinhead. Complete the stroke by moving vertically downwards to rejoin and merge with the connector line. The variant form occurs after curved letters such as qāf and fā', or slanted letters such as jīm. It is made like the common form, except that the end of the stroke curves round the previous letter on its way to the connector line, as in the words *خفت* and *فقو*.

Add the i'jām close to the head of the letter, on the upper left.

When using a normal pen, the letter is formed as with a qalam except that it can be done with a single stroke. Remember to make the i'jām with a stroke, and to add the dot at the center of the head.



This is one of the most important sub-circular letters, and one of the main criteria by which the skill of the calligrapher is assessed. Its multiple tight curves are challenging. It has no initial form, and the medial and final forms are identical. However the length of the connector will vary depending on the previous letter's shape, as will be seen. As with the letter mīm, if working with a brush qalam, use the point downwards position and rotate to form the body of the letter. The instructions below are for a solid wood or reed qalam.

The isolated form of the letter is made with three strokes. For the first stroke, set the qalam on the page in the normal position, one point above the baseline. Push it slightly upwards and to the left and then begin a tight curve upwards for about half a point. Raise the qalam. For the second stroke, and set the qalam down again to overlap the end of the curve just made, still in the normal position. Continue upwards and to the right for half a point and make a smooth, tight curve downwards, rolling the qalam towards the medium shallow-tip position as it turns. Keeping the qalam on the page, draw it in a downward slope almost to the baseline, allowing the line to widen gradually. Rock the pen into the detail position and draw a smooth curving transition for the third stroke. Raise the qalam and set it down in a nearly full shallow-tip position to overlap the base of the previous stroke. Draw a slightly dished line to the left, rolling the qalam back towards the normal position to let the line widen towards the end. Finish with an elegantly curved tip that aligns with the pinhole space at the center of the head.

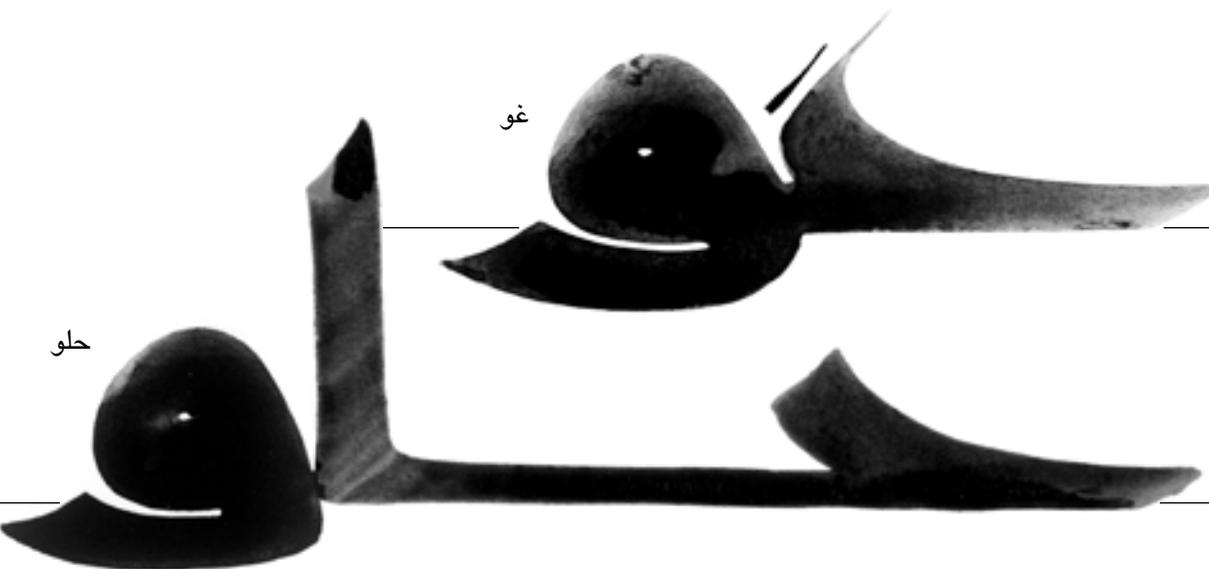
The medial and final forms of the letter are identical to the initial form, except that because they use the connector of the previous letter, which is on the baseline, the third stroke goes below the baseline. Notice the different ways the letter connects to the ones before it. In the word, *غو*, for example, the projecting curve of the ghāyn necessitates a long connector line which can be seen between the wāw and the ghāyn. In the word, *علو*, on the other hand, where the wāw

follows a tall letter, there is no connector. Instead, the wāw abuts the previous letter. If the previous letter is a low one, as in the word, **بصو**, a small length of connector is needed.

When using a normal pen, the letter is formed as with a qalam except  that it can be done with a single stroke. Remember to add the dot at the center of the head.

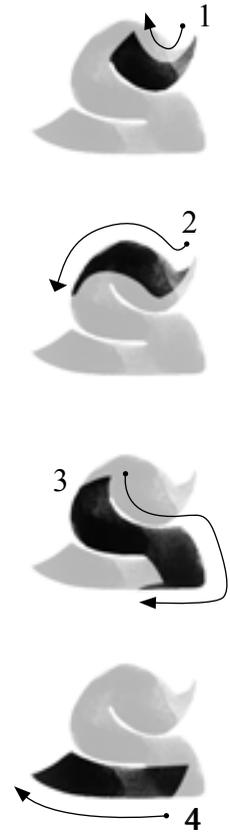
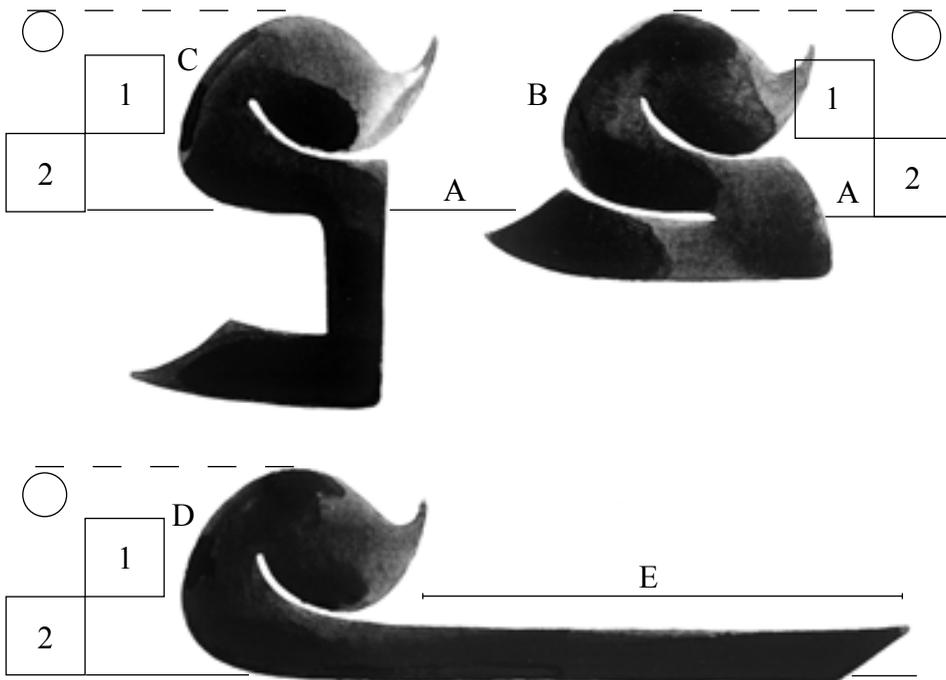
حلو

غو



بصو



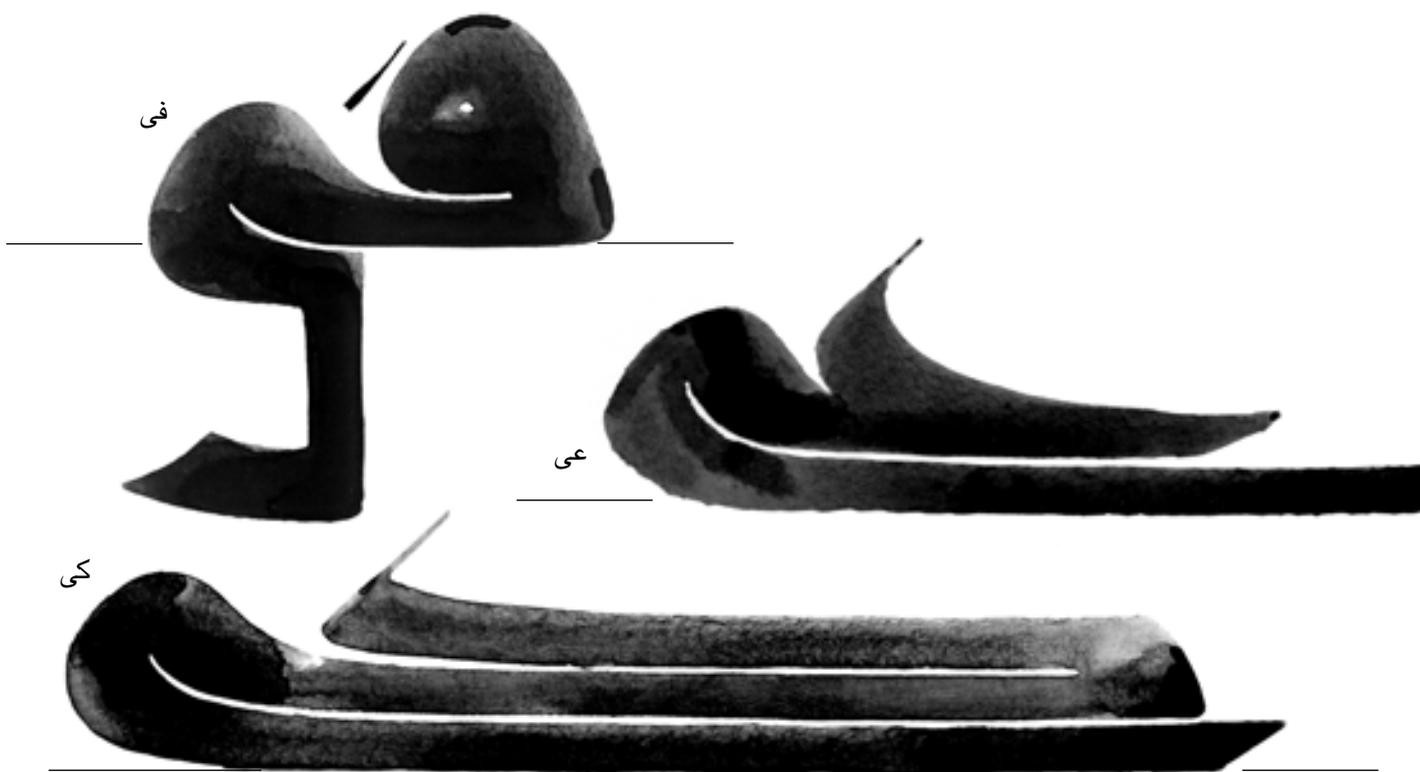


The letter yā' is another whose appearance in Primary Kufic is very different from the way it looks in contemporary Arabic scripts, such as Naskhi. One of the long letters and also one of the sub circular letters, it is unique in the Primary Kufic alphabet in that it has three forms that are all used as variants for both the isolated and final versions of the letter. Remember that one of the skill criteria for Primary Kufic is the calligrapher's judgment in using variants to prevent monotony.

Note that in its base form, the letter has a closely similar shape and size to the letter wāw. It is easier to control the yā' if you imagine the wāw superimposed on it. All you should see is the "beak" of the yā' sticking out behind the letter. Notice also that the yā' has a slightly flatter tail than the wāw.

The first variant of the isolated form of the letter is made with four strokes. The advanced calligrapher can reduce this to two. For the first stroke, set the qalam down in the normal position just over one point above the baseline. Move

it slightly downwards and then make an upward curve to the left. Both novice and advanced calligraphers now need to raise the qalam to thicken the head. For the second stroke, set the qalam down in the normal position over the start of the previous stroke and make another curve to overlap the upper edge of the first one. As the qalam reaches the top of the curve, start to rotate it into the steep-tip position to create a neat transition for the down stroke. The novice calligrapher will need to raise the qalam for the third stroke which begins with the qalam in the normal position, rolling it through the medium shallow-tip position as it curves closely around the head of the letter. When it reaches the “beak”, make a downward slope to end well below the baseline in the full shallow-tip position. Slide the qalam a good way to the left to create a clean base for the letter. Raise



the qalam for the fourth stroke and set it down again in the normal position within the body of the previous stroke. Draw it to the left, closely hugging the head of the letter and allowing the stroke to widen slightly as it goes. End with a nicely curved tip.

There is no i’jām for the isolated and final forms of the yā’ in Primary Kufic.

The final form of the letter is made without its “beak”. Instead, the first two strokes rise from the connector of the previous letter. This first variant of the letter is useful for balancing a word formed with one or more tall letters, such as لي.

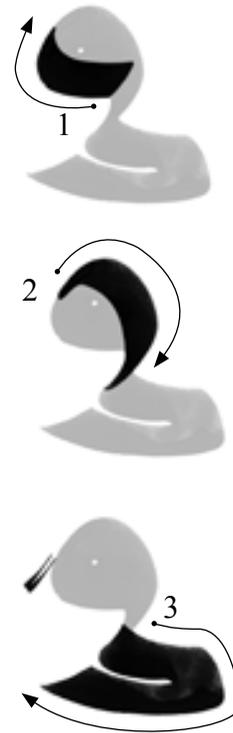
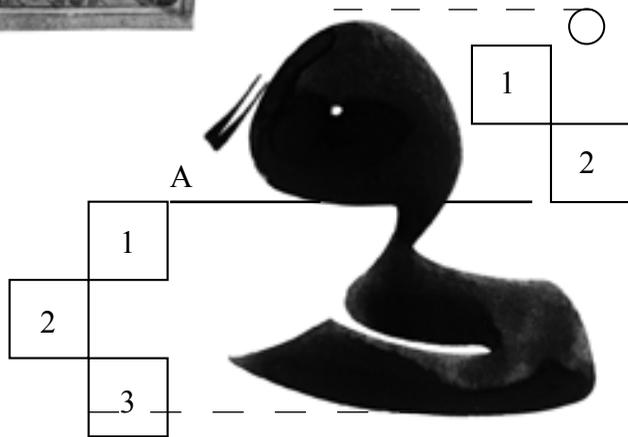
The second variant is made with almost the same four strokes, except that the

third stroke is taken two points below the baseline with the qalam in the normal position. The fourth stroke is completed as before. In the final form, this second variant goes well after a sub circular letter such as fā', as in the word, في.

The third variant is made with the same two first strokes, but the third stroke is extended along the baseline to the right until it passes the beginning of the word. It can then continue as long as seems good to the calligrapher. This variant is especially useful for mashq'. In its final form, this third variant is useful when the final yā' comes after strongly horizontal letters such as ghāyn or kāf, as in the words يكي and عي.

The initial and medial forms of the letter are made exactly as for the letter bā'. Start with the qalam in the normal position and set it down at the second point above the baseline. Make a short vertical stroke down to the baseline rocking the qalam into the full shallow-tip or detail position towards the end of the stroke so that the entire stroke lands flat on the baseline. Still in that position, make a short horizontal line to the left to tidy up the outline. For this form of the letter, the horizontal tail is kept extremely short in order to connect it tightly to the succeeding letters. Remember to add the two i'jām under the tooth.

When using a normal pen, the letter is formed as with a qalam except that it can be done with a single stroke.



This letter uses the skills developed for the head of the letters *mīm*, *wāw* and *fāʾ* and for the tail of the first variant of *yāʾ*. Its initial and medial forms are like those of the letter *fāʾ*. Thus, if using a brush qalam, the head will be formed using the point downwards position and rotating. The instructions below are for the reed qalam.

The isolated form of the letter is made with three strokes, although the final stroke may be replaced with two, as in the letter *yāʾ*. Set the qalam down in the normal position on or a little above the baseline. Push it at least two points to the left and slightly upwards, and then begin a tight curve upwards for about half a point. Raise the qalam. For the second stroke, set the qalam down again to overlap the end of the curve just made, still in the normal position. Continue upwards and to the right for half a point and make a smooth, tight curve downwards, rolling the qalam towards the medium or full shallow-tip position as it turns. Keeping the qalam on the page, draw it in a downward slope, allowing the line to widen gradually. Start rolling the qalam back towards the normal position as it approaches the baseline and take it through the baseline curving diagonally and to the left for one point. It should end directly below the pinhole space in the head. Raise the qalam or continue in the normal position to make a tail similar to the letter *yāʾ*. So, the third stroke makes a shallow downward curve to the right. It extends one point behind the head of the letter and arrives at the second point below the baseline. Once there, rotate the qalam into the full shallow-tip position to form a corner and make a downward slope for half a point. Slide the qalam a good way to the left to create a clean base for the letter. Raise the qalam for the fourth stroke and set it down again in the normal position within the body of the

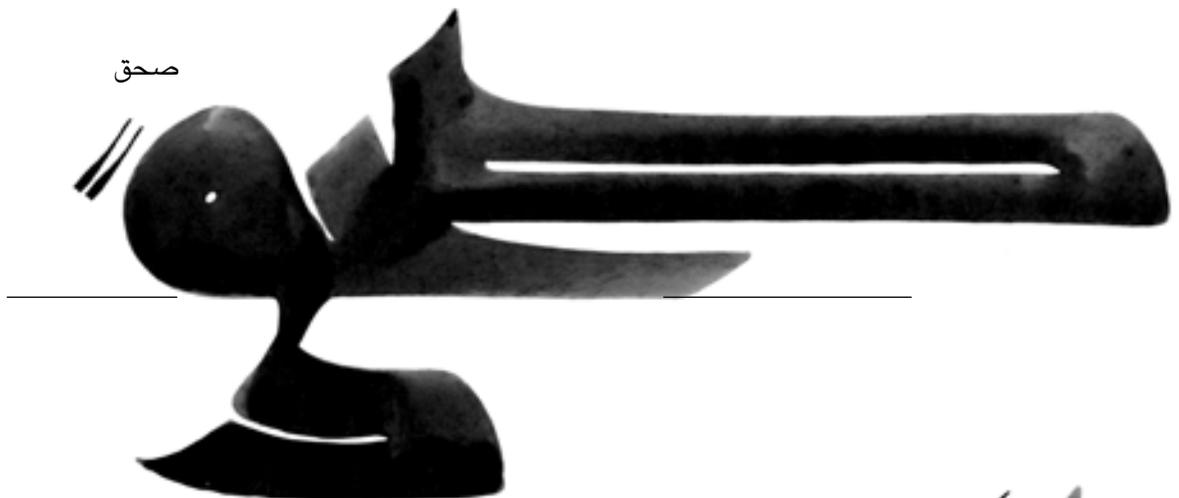
previous stroke. Draw it to the left, closely hugging the stroke just made and allowing the stroke to widen slightly as it goes. End with an elegantly curved tip that aligns with the “neck” of the letter.

Add two i’jām close to the upper left of the head.

The initial and medial forms of the letter are like those of the letter fā’. Remember to differentiate them clearly with the correct i’jām. Add two i’jām close to the head of the letter qāf.

The final form of the letter is like the isolated form. Set it to abut the previous letter or its connector as closely as possible. Consider the word صعق.

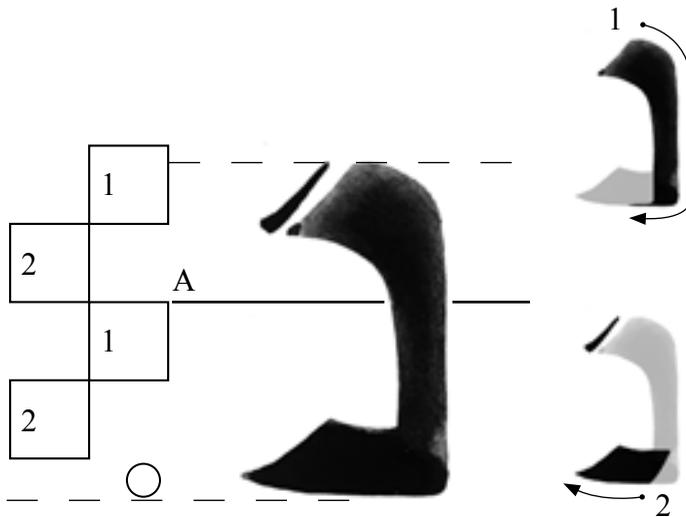
When using a normal pen, the letter is formed as with a qalam except that it can be done with a single stroke. Remember to make the two i’jām with a stroke and to add the dot at the center of the head.



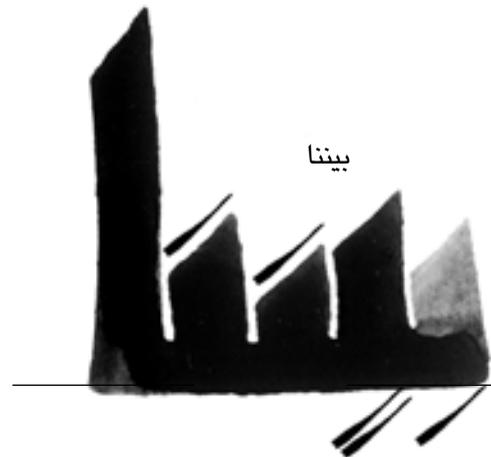
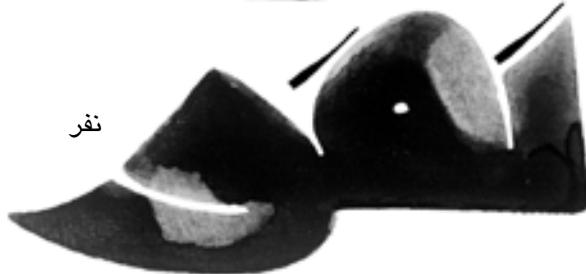
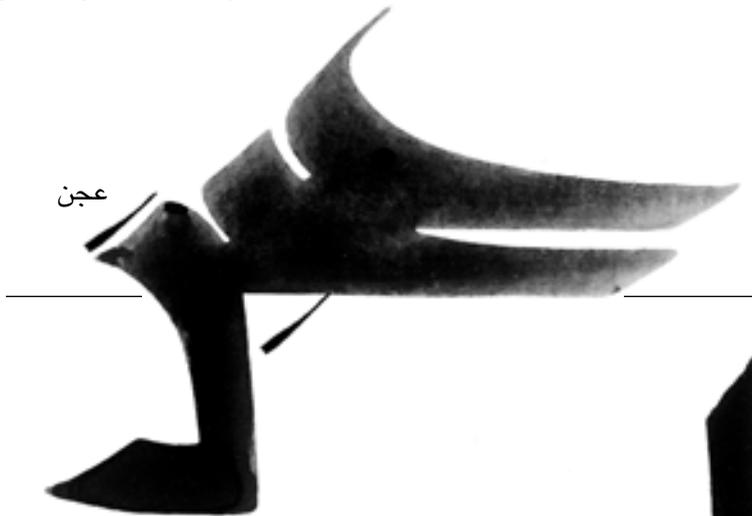
يفغضقى



ق



This letter is another whose form will be unfamiliar to those accustomed to contemporary Arabic scripts, such as Naskhi. In those scripts it is a sub circular form, whereas in Primary Kufic it is a vertical letter. The letter nūn uses the skill learned to make the tail of the letter shīn. Remember that both ends of the cup must show the elegant curve of the left (or outer) edge of the qalam. This name of this letter sounds like the archaic Arabic word for inkpot, so be sure to make it especially beautifully.



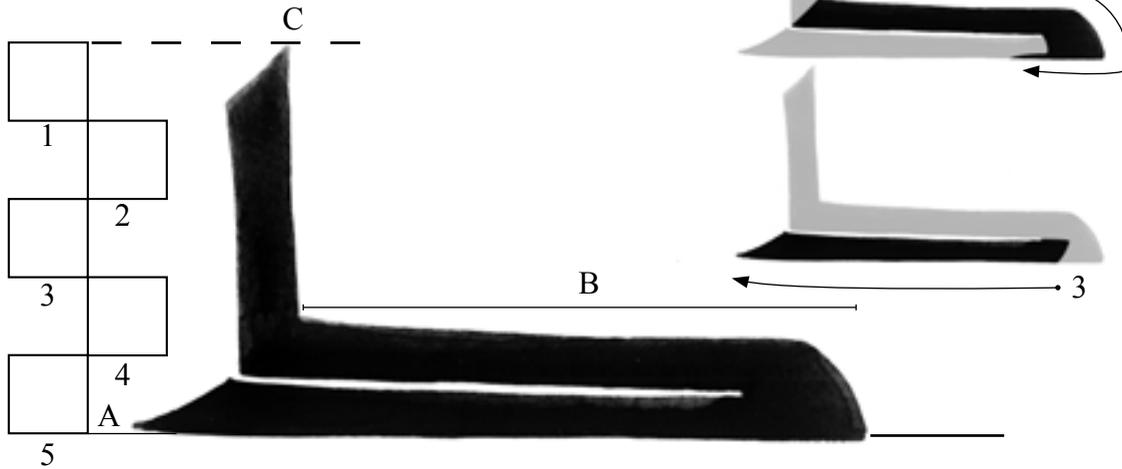
The isolated form of the letter is made with two strokes. For the first stroke, set the qalam down at the second point above the baseline in the normal position. Start with a gentle downward curve to the right, rolling the qalam towards the steep-tip position until it reaches the baseline. Without raising the qalam, continue the stroke vertically. Just before the end, start rocking the qalam into the detail position and draw it a little way to the left to create a clean angle for the corner. For the second stroke, raise the qalam from the page and set it down in the normal position at the end of the stroke just made. Push it to the left to complete the cup with a nicely curved tip. Be sure to add the i'jām at the top of the cup, lightly touching the page with the qalam in the normal position.

The initial and medial forms of the letter are similar to those of the letter bā' and its associates. So, start with the qalam in the normal position and set it down at the second point above the baseline. Make a short vertical stroke down to the baseline rocking the qalam into the detail position towards the end of the stroke so that the entire stroke lands flat on the baseline. Still in the detail position, make a short horizontal line to the left to tidy up the outline. Note that the horizontal tail is kept extremely short in order to connect it tightly to the succeeding letters. Remember to add the i'jām at the top of the letter with a light touch of the qalam in the normal position. A good example of a word using the medial nūn along with its relatives is **بيننا**.

The final form of the letter is very like the isolated form, except that it is set to abut the previous letter or its connector as closely as possible. If the letter has a vertical component, as in the word **بن**, the nūn will abut the vertical component, hiding the connector completely. Compare this with the word **عجن**, where the letter jīm has a diagonal component that could merge with the nūn if there was not a short length of connector to push the two letters apart.

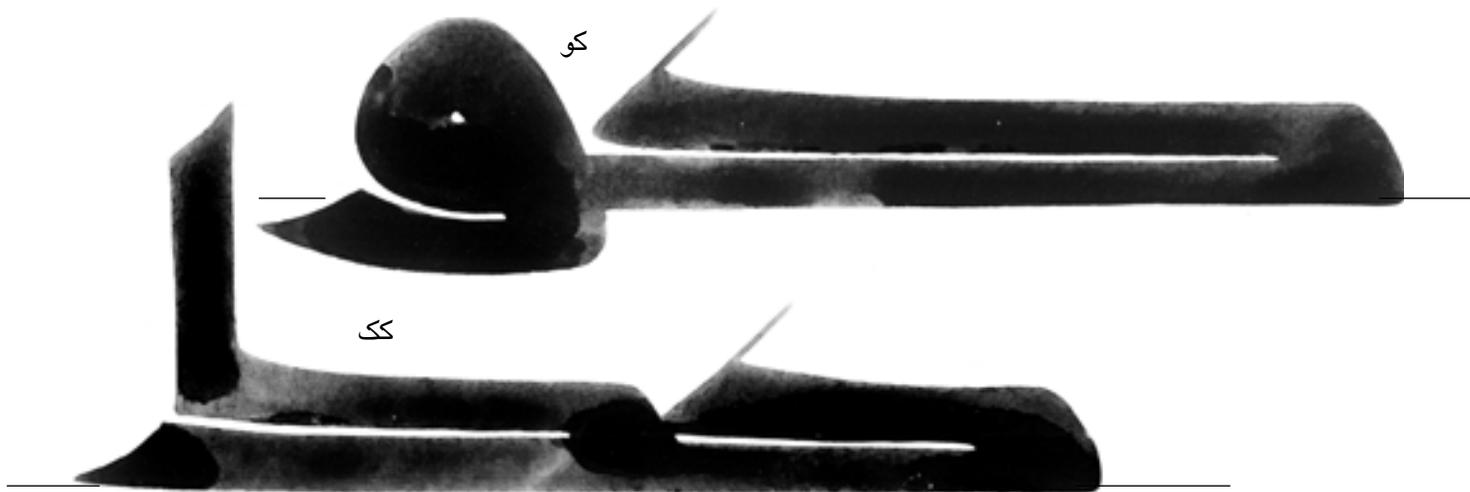
When using a normal pen, the body of the letter is made as with a qalam. The i'jām is made with a downward stroke, rather than a simple touch, which is all that was necessary with a qalam.

ن



The letter kāf is one of those whose appearance is rather different from the way it looks in contemporary Arabic scripts, such as Naskhi. It is one of the long letters, and in Primary Kufic its isolated form can easily be mistaken for a tā', from which it differs only in that the stem connects to its lower horizontal line, so be sure to look for this when reading and to make the difference scrupulously clear when writing. Equally, its initial and medial forms look very similar to those of the letter dāl, and can be recognized only by the fact that they join subsequent letters, where the letter dāl does not. The letter kāf uses the skills learned with the letters alif, dāl, and šād. The novice calligrapher may make the letter with three strokes, where the advanced calligrapher will only need one stroke.

To make the isolated form of the letter, start the first stroke with the qalam in the normal position five points above the baseline. This letter is as tall as the letter alif. Descend vertically four points towards the baseline and stop. The novice calligrapher may raise the qalam and set it down again, still in the normal position, to join the previous stroke. For the second stroke, pull the qalam to the right for a distance of about seven points or longer. Nuance the line by rolling the qalam towards the shallow-tip position and back to normal as the line progresses. When it is as long as seems good, rotate the qalam sharply to the full shallow-tip position and make a downward slope to the baseline. Push the qalam to the left a little way to make a clean base for the letter. For the third stroke, set the qalam down in the medium shallow-tip position at the base of the stroke just made and push it to the left until it reaches the corner of the letter, allowing the



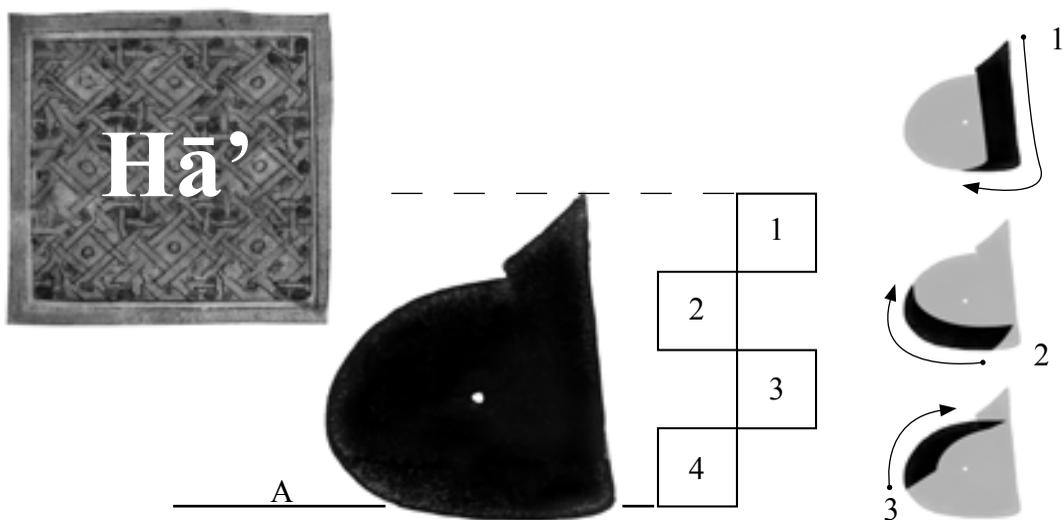
stroke to widen as it travels. Complete the stroke with an elegantly curved tip that aligns with the angle of the stem.

The initial and medial forms of the letter, are also made with three strokes. The first stroke forms a large initial serif, as for the letter dāl. For this stroke, set the qalam down in the normal position at the second point above the baseline. Slide it diagonally downwards and to the left to make the serif. The letter may then be continued as for the isolated form, in one continuous stroke or as three separate ones. Like the sub circular letters, it joins the previous letters sympathetically. Thus if the previous letter is a qāf, as in the word **بفکا**, it will need a very short connector to keep it separate from the curved edge of the qāf. On the other hand, if the previous letter is another kāf, as in the word **کک**, then the medial form can abut or even slightly overlap the previous letter, whose identity remains perfectly clear.

The final form of the letter is identical to the isolated form, and it joins the preceding letters in the same way as the medial form. Again, consider the word **کک**.

When using a normal pen, the letter is formed as with a qalam except that it can be done with a single stroke.



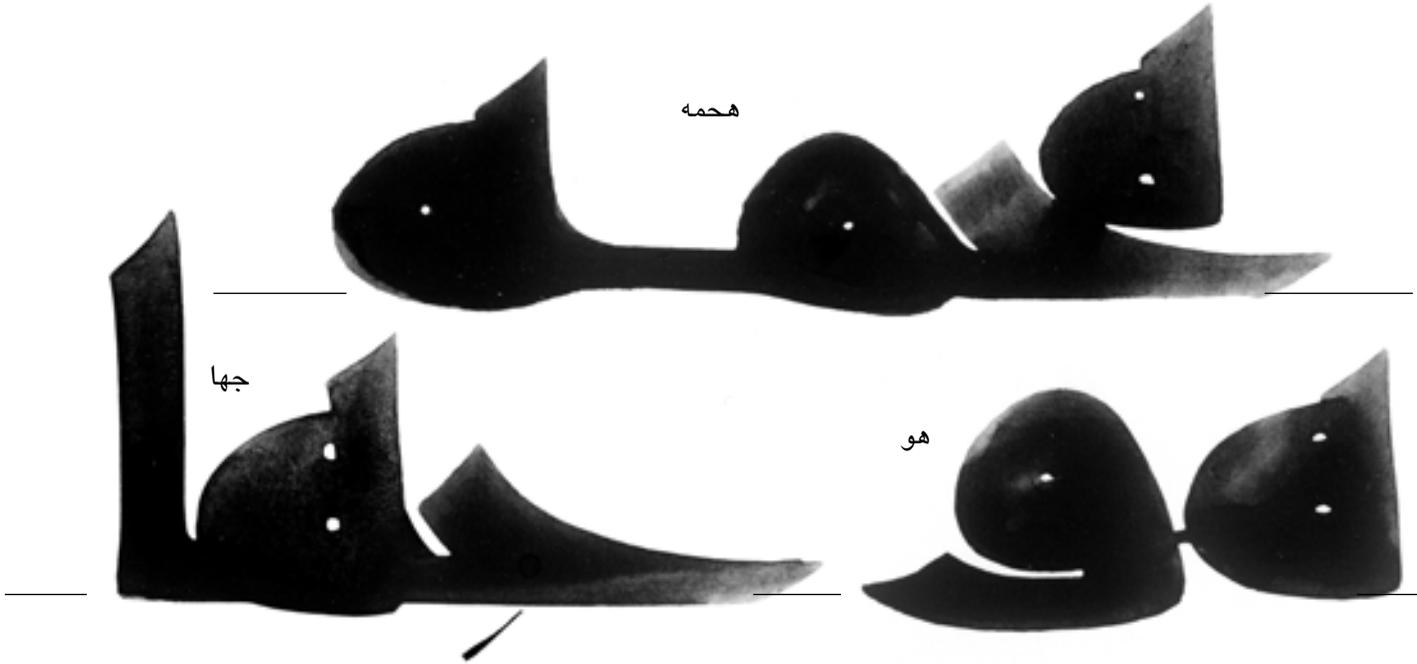


The letter hā' is one of the sub circular letters, and it is one of the most exacting letters in the Primary Kufic alphabet. It requires the calligrapher to refine to a high precision the skills learned with the letters mīm, fā', and qāf. This is because in the isolated and final forms of the letter, the body is thickened and it is therefore challenging to make a small enough pinhole space at the center. And in the initial and medial forms there are two pinhole gaps hugging the first stroke, and it is even trickier to achieve these. To control both outlines and pinholes so that this letter seems to have been made in a single flowing movement takes much practice.

If using a brush qalam, this is an especially difficult letter to achieve as the rotation of the second stroke must be especially tight, while the partially rotated third stroke must be kept close enough to the second stroke to seem continuous while leaving sufficient room for the pinhole space.

The isolated form of the letter is made with three strokes and a hidden extra stroke. For the first stroke, set the qalam down in the normal position four points above the baseline and make a straight, slightly sloping line all the way to the baseline. At the baseline, rock the qalam into the detail position and push it a little way to the left to make a clean base for the letter. Now make the hidden extra stroke that will make it possible to achieve a central pinhole space. Set the qalam down in the normal position three points above the baseline and half overlapping the first stroke. Make a parallel sloping stroke all the way to the baseline and finish it neatly with the detail position. Make the second stroke by setting the qalam down in the normal position at the base of the double stroke just made. Push it a little way to the left and begin an upward curve stopping at the second point above the baseline. For the third stroke raise the qalam and set it down again, still in the normal position, a little below the end of the curve. Continue the curve upwards and to the right until it meets the stem of the letter, three points above the baseline.

The initial form is made without the hidden stroke, but this time the second and third strokes are repeated with slightly different proportions. So, make the first stroke as for the isolated form. Now, for the second stroke set the qalam down in the normal position at the base of the stem and push it no more than one point to the left to make the upward curve, which must stop one point above the baseline. Make the third stroke as for the isolated form, setting the qalam down in the normal position on the end of the curve and bringing it to the right until it

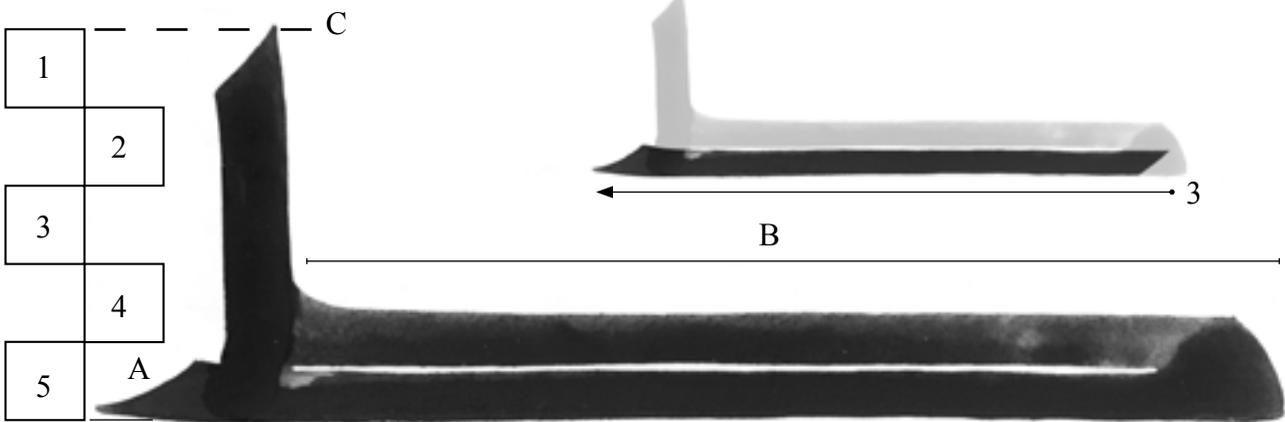


meets the stem. Be sure to leave the pinhole space close to the vertical edge of the stem. Raise the qalam and repeat the second stroke as if it was for the isolated form. So, set the qalam down in the normal position at the base of the stem and on top of the second stroke. Push it to the left about two points and make an upward curve ending about two points above the baseline. The third stroke is the same as before, but this time it is carried out in the medium shallow-tip position. So, raise the qalam and set it down again on the curve in the shallow-tip position. Take the curve upwards and to the right until it meets the stem. Be sure to keep this stroke close to the one below it but leave enough room to make the second pinhole against the vertical edge of the stem.

The medial form is exactly like the initial form except that the first stroke rises from the previous letter's connector instead of starting at the top of the letter. If the previous letter has a curved or diagonal form, like the letters *jīm* or *fā'*, the stroke should start with a curve or diagonal to echo that shape.

Notice that the medial and final forms of this letter can be allowed to sink through the baseline, as in the words *هحه* and *جها*.

When using a normal pen, all forms of the letter can be done with a single stroke. Remember to add the central dot for the isolated and initial forms, and the two dots for the initial and medial forms.



The letter ṭā' is one of those whose rectilinear form will be unfamiliar to those accustomed to contemporary Arabic scripts, such as Naskhi. It is one of the long letters, and uses the skills developed for the letters ṣād and especially kāf and dāl. It is made with three strokes, although the advanced calligrapher can reduce this to two. Visually, it is very like the isolated form of the letter kāf, and can only be told apart from it by the fact that its stem passes all the way to the baseline so that the extended horizontal body is closed at both ends, so be sure to make this difference very clear as you write and to look for it as you read.

To make the isolated and final forms of the letter, set the qalam down in the normal position five points above the baseline (it will therefore be as tall as the letter alif). Make the first stroke by drawing the qalam vertically all the way to the baseline. For the second stroke, set the qalam down on the stem in the normal position two points above the baseline. Bring the qalam downwards half a point while making a curve to the right. Without raising the qalam, extend the stroke seven to ten points to the right, or more. When the stroke is as long as seems good, rotate the qalam into the full shallow-tip position and make a downward slope to the baseline. Then slide the qalam a little way to the left to make a clean angle for the letter. For the third stroke, raise the qalam and set it down in a shallow-to-normal position at the end of the stroke just made. Push the qalam all the



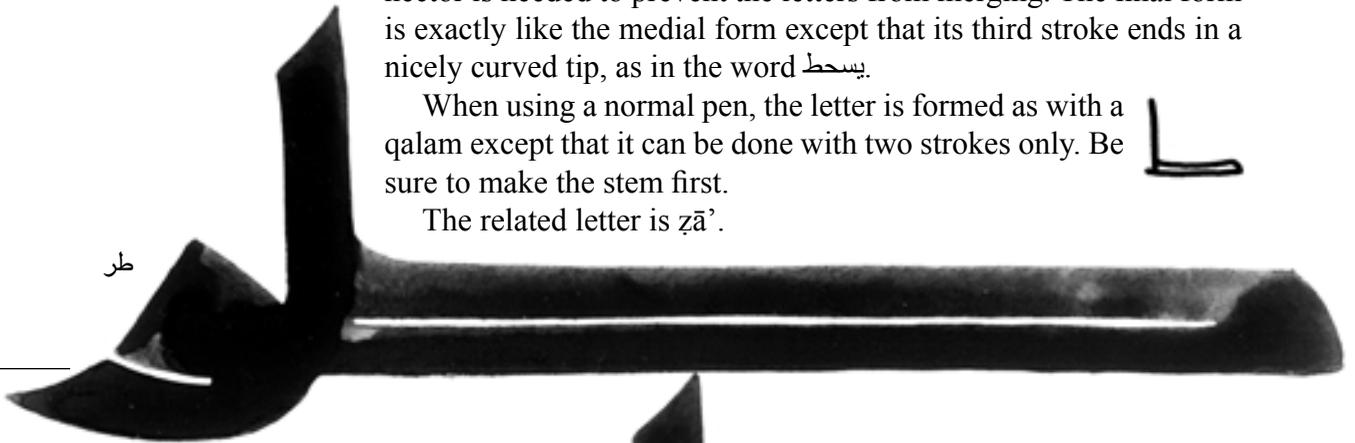
way back to the stem, continue through the stem and stop after about half a point. End the stroke with an elegantly curved tip that aligns with the angle of the stem.

The initial form of the letter is exactly like the isolated form, except that the tip of the final stroke becomes a connector to the subsequent letter, as in the word *طر*.

The medial form of the letter is exactly like the initial form except that the letter abuts its predecessor as closely as possible. As always, if the previous letter has a curved or diagonal form, like the letters *jīm* or *fā'*, a tiny length of connector is needed to prevent the letters from merging. The final form is exactly like the medial form except that its third stroke ends in a nicely curved tip, as in the word *يسحط*.

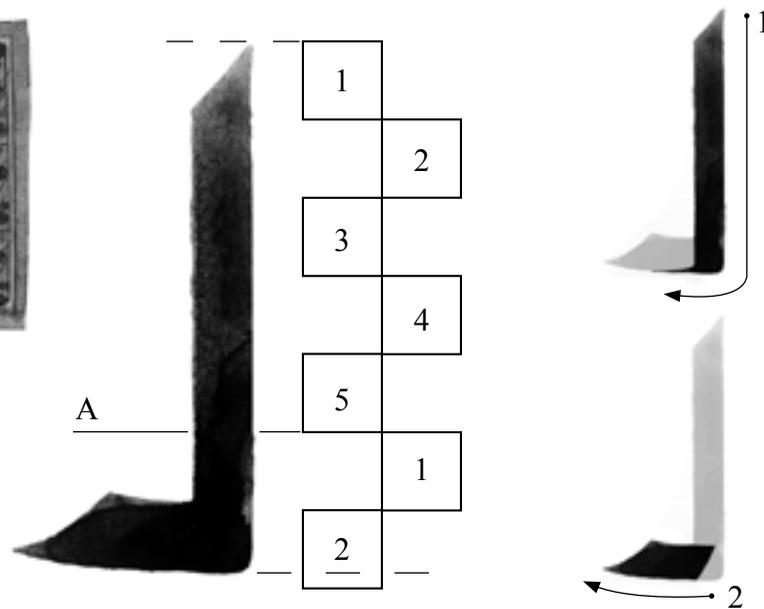
When using a normal pen, the letter is formed as with a qalam except that it can be done with two strokes only. Be sure to make the stem first.

The related letter is *zā'*.



طح

يسحط

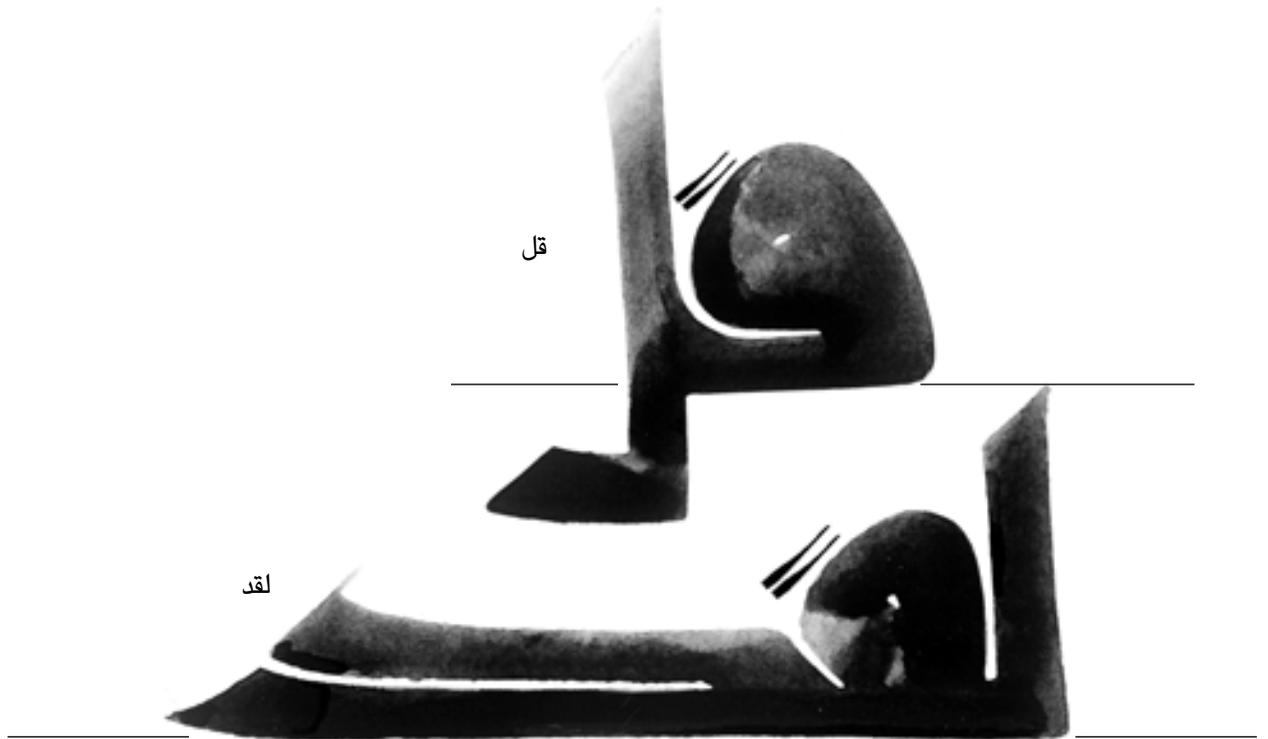


The letter *lām* is very similar to its form in contemporary Arabic scripts, such as Naskhi, although it is more angular. In Primary Kufic, this letter can be like a mirror image of the letter *alif*, which gives it useful symbolic design potential. However, this similarity could also confuse the reader, so there is a special ligature to ensure absolute clarity when the letter *lām* is followed by an *alif*, as we shall see.

To make the isolated form of the letter, start the first stroke by setting the qalam down in the normal position five points above the baseline. Draw a vertical line down through the baseline and continue for two more points (so the line is seven points long in total). As it reaches the end, rock the qalam into the detail position and draw a thin line a little way to the left to create a clean angle and base for the letter. For the second stroke, raise the qalam and set it down in the normal position at the base of the stem. Push it two points to the left and a little upwards, ending with a nicely curved tip. Note that the form of the letter below the baseline is very similar to the final form of the letter *nūn*. Be sure to differentiate these: the *nūn* extends two and a half points below the baseline, while the *lām* only extends two points.

The stem of the initial form of the letter stops at the baseline. To make this form of the letter, start the first stroke in the normal position five points above the baseline. Take the stroke all the way to the baseline and stop there. Rock the qalam into the detail position and push it a little way to the left to make a clean angle and base for the letter. For the second stroke, raise the qalam and set it down in the normal position at the base of the stem. Push it a little to the left to start the connector.

The medial form looks just like the initial form except that it abuts the connector of the previous letter. However, if the previous letter has a curved or diagonal form, like the letters *jīm* or *fā'*, the medial lam can be written upwards as



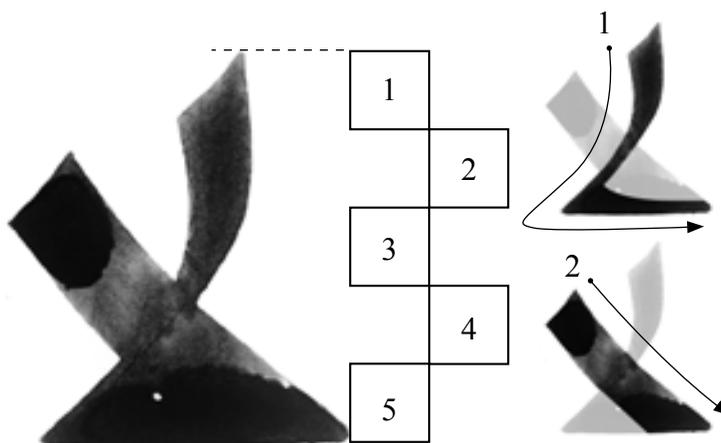
a smooth continuation of the connector. In this case, the transition should echo the curve or diagonal of the previous letter, as in the word قلي.

The final form can also be written from the top downwards, or from the connector upwards, depending on the shape of the previous letter. It looks exactly like the isolated form of the letter, except that it abuts or develops smoothly from the preceding letter's connector, as in the word قل.

When using a normal pen, the letter is formed exactly as with a qalam.



# Lām- Alif Ligature



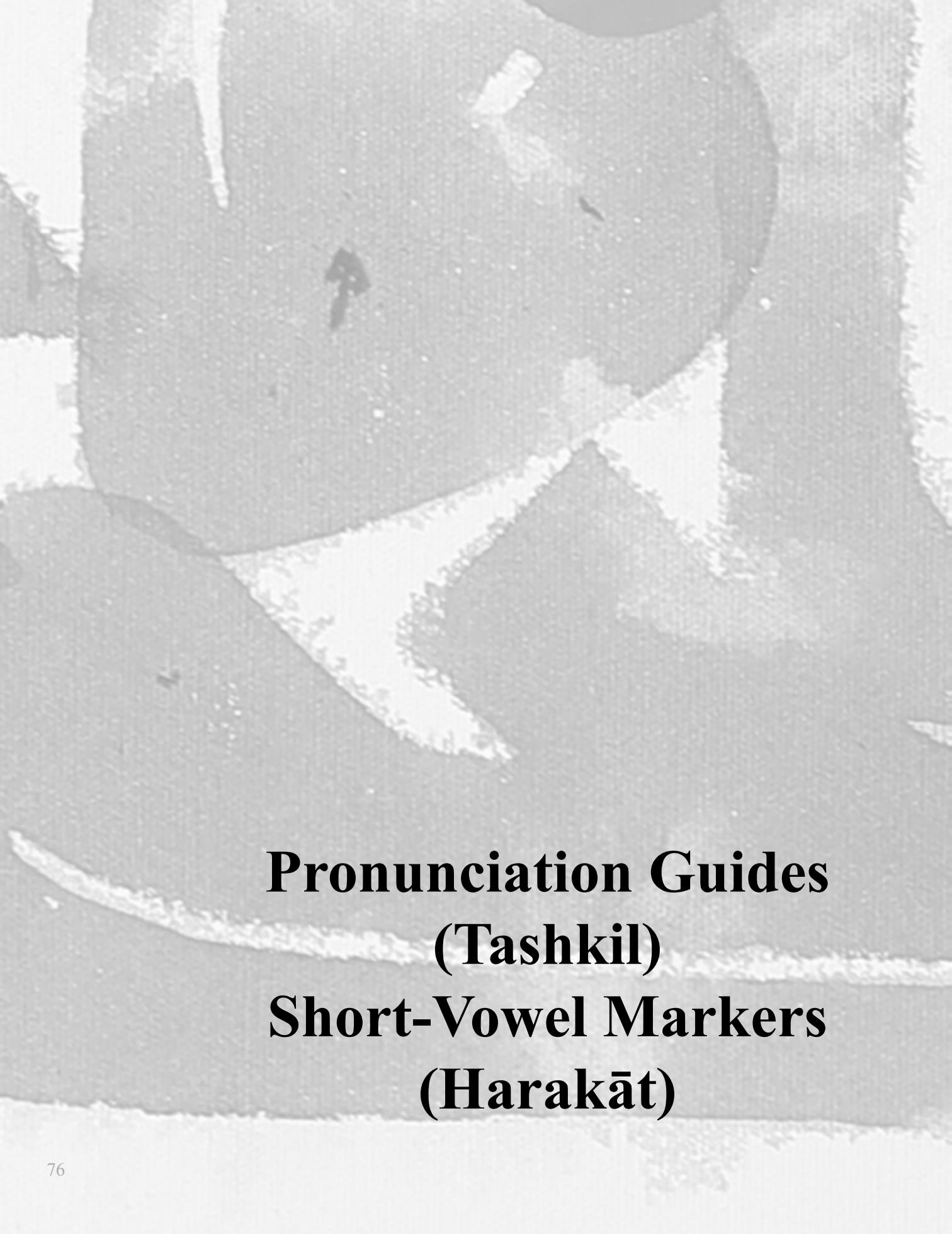
In Primary Kufic, the medial form of the letter alif looks so similar to the initial form of the letter lām that when they are side by side it could be difficult to recognize the alif. Since Primary Kufic was developed in order to record the Qur'an with utmost clarity, a special ligature is used to prevent this difficulty. Standing alone, this ligature creates the word “la”, which means “no”. But the ligature is also needed within words and sometimes to bridge words. A good example of both uses is found in the phrase, لا اله الا الله (there is no god but God), where the lām-alif ligature is used for the word “no” at the beginning, and to clarify the words “but God” at the end.

The isolated form of this ligature will be made with two strokes by both the novice and the advanced calligrapher. Start the first stroke by setting the qalam down in the normal position five points above the baseline. Draw it downwards in a graceful curve to the left and allow the stroke to taper as it progresses. Stop at the baseline and without lifting the qalam pull it horizontally to the left for about four points. Raise the qalam and set it down in the normal position four points above the baseline and to the left of the curved stroke. Make slightly dished diagonal through the curved stroke rolling the qalam into the shallow-tip position as it progresses so that it arrives at the baseline and connects with the previous stroke in the full shallow-tip position. Be sure to leave a pinhole space in the triangular body of the letter.

The medial and final forms of this ligature borrow the connector from the previous letter, which is extended to form the horizontal base of the ligature. The ligature is then formed with the curved and diagonal strokes alone. Each is drawn downwards to meet the connector cleanly. Again, be sure to leave a pinhole space in the triangular body of the letter.

When using a normal pen, the ligature is formed exactly as with the qalam, but there is no need to add a dot in the triangular body of the letter.





**Pronunciation Guides  
(Tashkil)  
Short-Vowel Markers  
(Harakāt)**

As we have seen, the Arabic alphabet acknowledges three long vowels: alif, wāw, and yā'. This arrangement is the basis of the vowelation system, which consists of large round dots, one point in diameter, that are set in specific relation to the letter. Thus, all short "ah" sounds will touch or overlap the top right of the letter, all short "ooh" sounds will appear near the top and to the left of the letter, and all short "ih" sounds will appear close below the letter. Where there are i'jām, the "ah" will slightly overlap them to the left, and the "ooh" will be set beside them to the right. In the same order, these short-vowel markers are called fathah, kasrah, and dammah.

This worked well until the i'jām system was introduced later on. Unfortunately, it too sometimes consisted of dots (as today) rather than the fine oblique lines that we have reproduced here. To counteract that difficulty, the short-vowel markers were always added in a different color, which was a vividly bright red-orange made with minium. It is so bright that the dots seem to float above the page, adding liveliness and beauty to the script.

Study the pages showing the locations of these short-vowel markers.



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