

# Typesetting Arabic:

## Tasmeem software and the DT Emiri font

*Extract from the Brill Wiki page of the same title (basic text dating from August 8, 2019), with specific instructions on how to use the Tasmeem plugin for Adobe InDesign, and the Tasmeem font DT Emiri*

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### Script styles, Tasmeem software, and Tasmeem fonts (DT Naskh, DT Emiri)

In Brill publications, Arabic text in the Arabic script occurs frequently. In scholarly publications, the Naskhi style is generally preferred. Brill's typesetters (at least Asia-type, SPi and Palm) use Adobe InDesign ME (Middle East) with the Tasmeem plugin, and special Tasmeem fonts. Two Tasmeem fonts have the Naskhi style: DecoType Naskh and **DecoType Emiri**. The latter is the default choice for short runs of text; the former is to be used if a more flexible type of Naskhi is necessary, for instance in critical text editions and the typesetting of Arabic poetry (something not dealt with in this basic document). Please note that at the time of this writing (June, 2020) we have no definitive all-purpose solution for Arabic type. Always consult Pim Rietbroek before specifying any particular Arabic font(s) apart from DT Emiri.

[Note that the font choices and Tasmeem settings **apply to Arabic-language text**. The Emiri settings can also be applied to small runs of Persian-language text, but Persian text sometimes demands the application of another typeface. Brill's editors must communicate such cases to the typesetters. Other languages such as Urdu demand a different type style called Nastaliq, and there are distinct other styles that are preferred for writing and typesetting African languages in the 'Arabic' or Muslim script. Central and East Asian languages employ different styles again. Although Brill has limited volumes of non-Arabic and non-Persian texts, Brill's editors must be aware of the distinct demands posed by them and contact Pim Rietbroek for instructions if they encounter them.]

### Emiri font sizes and Tasmeem settings

Emiri was chosen as the basic font for Arabic-language text in Brill publications because it strictly adheres to the Unicode standard, provides the flexibility needed to represent not only modern standard Arabic but also historic forms of the language, and is as 'neutral' a book face as possible. It represents essentially the typographic form of Naskhi. The flexibility of the InDesign Tasmeem plugin and the Tasmeem fonts makes it necessary to define default values for typesetters to use, contrary to what typesetters are used to when dealing with more rigid OpenType fonts. Some

basic presets in Tasmeeem are suitable for some texts but not for Brill publications. Authors who quote Arabic text in the original script are quite sensitive to spacing and kerning of Arabic text, as well as to script styles, some of which are vehemently rejected (like Nastaliq by several Arabic authors). In 2012, basic Tasmeeem settings for Emiri were developed and communicated to typesetters. In June and July of 2014, a more developed set of settings was defined which can be found below.

- The font sizes, Tasmeeem presets, and Arabic spacing settings are different depending on the presence or absence of vowels. In the following, vocalised and unvocalised Arabic text will be treated separately. Even within one Arabic phrase, different Tasmeeem presets and Arabic spacing settings must be applied for vocalised and unvocalised text.
- There are also differences between the settings for paragraphs that are entirely in Arabic, and ‘Latin’ (or ‘western’) paragraphs that contain a few Arabic words or phrases: mixed ‘Latin’-Arabic paragraphs.
- Finally, distinction must be made between: body text and block quotation paragraphs; bibliography text; and footnote and indexes text.

**Leading** needs special attention. Care must always be taken to avoid clashes between Arabic ascenders, diacritics, vowels, and descenders of text lines above and below, and of Arabic letter parts and diacritics and ‘Latin’ text above and/or below. Especially in mixed ‘Latin’-Arabic paragraphs, typesetters **must** adjust leading for each line individually; leading must not be made too big: it should suffice to separate letters and diacritics clearly.

## Main text and block quotations

1. **Arabic-only paragraphs**, with Arabic vocalised: **13 pt Emiri**, set on alternating standard baseline grid lines (*i.e.*, double grid line spacing)
  - **Tasmeem Text Shaping Preset:** *Emiri Kashidah Short*
  - **Tasmeem Arabic Spacing:** External Word spacing: 350, Overlap: 100; Internal Word Spacing: 180, Overlap: 10
2. **mixed ‘Latin’-Arabic paragraphs**, with Arabic vocalised: **12 pt Emiri**, leading must be sufficient to avoid clashes with lines above and below (up to 24 pt leading may sometimes prove necessary, but leading should never be too large either). Leading must be adjusted individually for each line of text containing Arabic words or phrases.
  - **Tasmeem Text Shaping Preset:** *Emiri Kashidah Short*
  - **Tasmeem Arabic Spacing:** External Word spacing: 350, Overlap: 100; Internal Word Spacing: 180, Overlap: 10
3. **Arabic-only paragraphs**, with Arabic unvocalised: **13 pt Emiri**, leading 20 pt (*i.e.*, not on the baseline grid)
  - **Tasmeem Text Shaping Preset:** *Emiri Meem Closed*
  - **Tasmeem Arabic Spacing:** External Word spacing: 400, Overlap: 40; Internal Word Spacing: 150, Overlap: 10
4. **mixed ‘Latin’-Arabic paragraphs**, with Arabic unvocalised: **12 pt Emiri**, leading must be sufficient to avoid clashes with lines above and below (up to 18 pt leading may sometimes prove necessary, but leading should never be too large either). Leading must be adjusted individually for each line of text containing Arabic words or phrases.
  - **Tasmeem Text Shaping Preset:** *Emiri Meem Closed*
  - **Tasmeem Arabic Spacing:** External Word spacing: 400, Overlap: 40; Internal Word Spacing: 150, Overlap: 10

## Bibliographies

1. Arabic vocalised: **12 pt Emiri**, not on baseline grid – leading up to 24 pt to avoid clashes (not too much, though)
  - **Tasmeem Text Shaping Preset:** *Emiri Kashidah Short*
  - **Tasmeem Arabic Spacing:** External Word spacing: 350, Overlap: 100; Internal Word Spacing: 180, Overlap: 10
2. Arabic unvocalised: **12 pt Emiri**, not on baseline grid – leading up to 18 pt to avoid clashes (not too much, though)
  - **Tasmeem Text Shaping Preset:** *Emiri Meem Closed*
  - **Tasmeem Arabic Spacing:** External Word spacing: 400, Overlap: 40; Internal Word Spacing: 150, Overlap: 10

## Footnote text, indexes

1. **Arabic-only paragraphs, vocalised: 11 pt Emiri**, leading 21 pt (*i.e.*, not on the baseline grid)
  - **Tasmeem Text Shaping Preset:** *Emiri Kashidah Short*
  - **Tasmeem Arabic Spacing:** External Word spacing: 350, Overlap: 100; Internal Word Spacing: 180, Overlap: 10
2. **mixed ‘Latin’-Arabic paragraphs, with Arabic vocalised: 11 pt Emiri**, leading must be sufficient to avoid clashes with lines above and below (up to 21 pt leading may sometimes prove necessary, but leading should never be too large either). Leading must be adjusted individually for each line of text containing Arabic words or phrases.
  - **Tasmeem Text Shaping Preset:** *Emiri Kashidah Short*
  - **Tasmeem Arabic Spacing:** External Word spacing: 350, Overlap: 100; Internal Word Spacing: 180, Overlap: 10
3. **Arabic-only paragraphs, unvocalised: 11 pt Emiri**, leading 17 pt (*i.e.*, not on the baseline grid)
  - **Tasmeem Text Shaping Preset:** *Emiri Meem Closed*
  - **Tasmeem Arabic Spacing:** External Word spacing: 400, Overlap: 40; Internal Word Spacing: 150, Overlap: 10
4. **mixed ‘Latin’-Arabic paragraphs, with Arabic unvocalised: 11 pt Emiri**, leading must be sufficient to avoid clashes with lines above and below (up to 18 pt leading may sometimes prove necessary, but leading should never be too large either). Leading must be adjusted individually for each line of text containing Arabic words or phrases.
  - **Tasmeem Text Shaping Preset:** *Emiri Meem Closed*
  - **Tasmeem Arabic Spacing:** External Word spacing: 400, Overlap: 40; Internal Word Spacing: 150, Overlap: 10

These settings are defaults. Brill’s production editors may specify different settings in exceptional cases, in consultation with Pim Rietbroek. These include Arabic and Persian poetry, and close approximations of textual material found in manuscript sources (including papyri).

## Marking emphasis

There is no generally agreed method of marking emphasis in Arabic type. Traditionally, a contrasting color was used. One may also use another type style, for instance Nasta’liq in an otherwise Naskhi context, but some authors object to this. Some authors demand bold Arabic type, but the DecoType fonts are not available in bold style. Bold text can be applied in the Amiri font used by TAT Zetwerk (AsiaType also have the Amiri font). Note that the behavior of this font cannot be adjusted in the Tasmeem plug-in: it only has OpenType functionalities.

**Windows and macOS**

The Tasmeeem plugin and Tasmeeem fonts are available for Adobe InDesign for both major operating systems, MS Windows and macOS.