

Shire Types Arabic

The respected Arabic type designer and calligrapher, Mourad Boutros, worked with Jeremy Tankard to create Shire Types Arabic. This new typeface has been designed to complement the look and feel of The Shire Types collection of fonts. Originally designed in 1998, The Shire Types has recently been expanded to include wider European language support as well as Cyrillic and Greek scripts.

The Shire Types

The concept behind The Shire Types was to create a dense black letterform that would make a dark, tight textural mass when set. Inspiration for the basic shapes came from the Grotesque and Egyptian lettering styles of the nineteenth century, from examples of lettering cast in iron, painted on locomotives, shop fascias and street nameplates.

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The six fonts of The Shire Types

The principal design feature of The Shire Types is that there are no ascenders or descenders; all the characters fit to the same, constant height. Six fonts make up The Shire Types. These can be used on their own or blended together to make unusual and interesting word shapes.

There are fundamental differences between the Arabic and Latin scripts. Latin can be perceived as static building blocks, whereas Arabic is a more flowing, written hand. It is a linked script with a strong calligraphic heritage. Arabic also requires height and depth in its structure. There are no capital lettershapes.



Developing the alignment with The Shire Types

Several routes were initially explored to obtain the best balance between the requirements of Arabic and those of The Shire Types design. Arabic requires height and depth, it also requires space; three things that are fundamental to the look and feel of The Shire Types. After various tests it was decided that the fixed height had to be compromised. However, the far reaching heights and depths that Arabic enjoys were reined in, in essence compressing the Arabic structure as much as possible whilst retaining full legibility.

As The Shire Types are a mix of upper and lowercase forms and Arabic has no uppercase, another feature was needed to help develop the look and feel of The Shire Types. A variety of terminal and stroke endings was incorporated together with straight and curved stems. This blend of different styles adds an unusual pattern to Shire Types Arabic, but one that still retains perfect legibility.



Sketch and final lettershape



Additional information

Visit <http://www.boutrosfonts.com> for information on the range of typefaces and calligraphic work of Mourad Boutros.

Further information on The Shire Types and Shire Types Pro can be read in [Footnote 15](#) as well as at typography.net. Shire Types Arabic can be seen and licensed at <http://typography.net/fontfamilies/view/41>.