

## Why jihvamuliya and upadhmaniya characters are *not* proposed for Grantha

Shriramana Sharma – jamadagni-at-gmail-dot-com

2009-Oct-11

In his book “South Indian Scripts in Sanskrit Manuscripts and Prints” (ISBN 3-447-04504-3) Dr Reinhold Grünendahl of Germany has shown on page 17 distinct written forms for the jihvamuliya and upadhmaniya (velar and bilabial voiceless fricatives) of Sanskrit as part of the repertoire of the Grantha script:

⊗	- <i>ḥ</i> ( <i>jihvāmūliya</i> )
○	- <i>ḥ</i> ( <i>upadhmanīya</i> )

However, in the errata he has interchanged the shapes (and the romanizations):

○	- <i>ḥ</i> ( <i>jihvāmūliya</i> )	⊗	- <i>ḥ</i> ( <i>upadhmanīya</i> )
---	-----------------------------------	---	-----------------------------------

Elmar Kniprath of Germany and I, who were both working together on a Grantha proposal, decided to investigate this further since such distinct usage for jihvamuliya and upadhmaniya is quite rare.

So Elmar Kniprath asked Dr Grünendahl via e-mail on 2009-Sep-01 21:39 +0530:

Auf S.9 Ihres Buches geben Sie für Jihvamuliya (unter Berücksichtigung der Errata) ein Zeichen an, das praktisch identisch mit dem Anusvara ist. Haben sie das häufiger beobachtet? Kennen Sie weitere Varianten? Kommen die von Ihnen beschriebenen Upadhmaniya und Jihvamuliya nur in Handschriften oder auch in Drucken vor? In gedruckten Texten findet man häufig Ardhavisarga, der sowohl für Upadhmaniya als auch für Jihvamuliya verwendet wird.

to which Dr Grünendahl responded (in English for my benefit) on 2009-Sep-10 21:16 +0530:

As for the characters that are of particular interest to you, I think they were contributed by Dr. Gerhard Ehlers (Berlin), who has great experience in these things due to years of manuscript cataloguing.

Upon redirecting the question to Dr Ehlers, he responded on 2009-Sep-11 20:05 +0530:

Jihvamuliya und Upadhmaniya sind aber identisch, und zwar als Ardhavisarga. In den Handschriften, die ich bisher gelesen habe, gibt es ebenfalls keine Unterscheidung zwischen Jihvamuliya und Upadhmaniya. Es handelt sich um einen Kreis mit einem Kreuz darin, das diagonal aber auch senkrecht/waagerecht darin stehen kann. Gelegentlich ist es so klein, dass man es kaum sieht, so dass es leicht mit dem Anusvara zu verwechseln ist.

The important part here is: “In den Handschriften gibt es keine Unterscheidung zwischen Jihvamuliya und Upadhmaniya” which (obviously) translates to “In the manuscripts there is no difference between jihvamuliya and upadhmaniya”. In his later mail to me on 2009-Sep-15 17:29 +0530 he clearly stated this in English:

Jihvamuliya and Upadhmaniya are identical and can be written either way. I cannot remember that I have provided Mr Gruenendahl clearly distinct shapes for both.

and on 2009-Sep-16 17:28 +0530 he further clarified this as follows:

The problem of distinct glyphs is a bit more complicated.

In general, both are identical, and merely forms of ardhavisarga.

In the manuscripts, however, the cross inside the circle is sometimes missing. This holds true for both the Upadhmaniya and the Jihvamuliya. So the missing cross does not mean that this sign is an Upadhmaniya, a Jihvamuliya or an Anusvara, which is then identical with both. It depends on the position the circle occupies. There are many cases where Upadhmaniya or Jihvamuliya have been misread or misinterpreted as Anusvara. If you have a circle before p(h) and k(h) it may also be an Anusvara. But if the Anusvara does not fit in grammatically you can be sure that the original sign was or was meant to be an Upadhmaniya or Jihvamuliya. Moreover, even in the same manuscript the scribe is writing Upadhmaniya and Jihvamuliya with a cross, without or even does not differentiate between Visarga and Upadhmaniya/Jihvamuliya.

In fact I have not seen distinct glyphs for Upadhmaniya and Jihvamuliya in Grantha manuscripts and prints. In a Grantha edition of the Samaveda (Tirupati 1890) I find both printed as ardhavisarga: half circle (open high) above half circle (open low).

Therefore I asked Dr Grünendahl whether he had any other sources for his distinct shapes for the two characters to which he briefly replied on 2009-Sep-30 20:49 +0530:

Dr. Ehlers is probably right about the lack of distinction.

Hence the shapes presented in Dr Grünendahl’s book are not sufficient attestation for the existence of distinct characters in Grantha for jihvamuliya and upadhmaniya, as admitted by Dr Grünendahl himself. Evidently, the characters presented by him are merely an archaic version of ardhavisarga. Thus, without further evidence for the existence of distinct characters for jihvamuliya and upadhmaniya in Grantha, they cannot be encoded.

My previous document L2/09-342 on why it is not appropriate to unify characters for the jihvamuliya and upadhmaniya across Indic scripts still stands, however, since there may still exist distinct written forms for these sounds in scripts other than Grantha.

-o-o-o-