Comment on L2/10-285: Handwritten styles in Tamil, Grantha, and English scripts – Touching vowel signs and viramas

Sri. R. Krishnamurthi in L2/10-285 has referred to the general opinion of Grantha script experts that there are only two Viramas in Grantha script. This is correct, and this is what is followed in Grantha teaching books throughout. I have also consulted several Grantha experts on this matter. Please note that the touching and non-touching viramas are just a cursive and continuous style of writing, and there is absolutely no need to add a 3rd virama to Grantha script encoding. In English script, there is a style of handwriting where the letters are continuous and touching each other, but that style is taken care of in fonts & not in Unicode sequences. Similarly in Indic scripts such as Tamil or Grantha or Malayalam scripts, there is a cursive and touching style, and that can be easily taken care of by fonts. Usually, vowel signs or virama touching letters in Tamil are used for rich text purposes and taken care by fonts only. The same procedure can be followed for Grantha fonts also.

Numerous Grantha script books (e.g., R. Gruenendahl or Lakshmi Muthuswamy or Sritharan or P. Visalakshy, etc.,) only have 2 Grantha forms - full virama or pre-pausal Chillu form. There is no *third* virama other than these two virama forms, and there is no need to represent them by separate Unicode sequence for the invented 3rd virama.

Encoding 3 viramas will move Grantha away from all Indian scripts, and Grantha works well with just 2 viramas just like Malayalam does. The Chillu consonants are called "prepausal" in R. Grunendahl's book for both Grantha and Malayalam scripts.

As such, this Grantha is rare and ancient, and given the antagonism of Tamil vs. Sanskrit, the teaching of Grantha script to Tamils is difficult. Teaching to Tamil students, the Grantha script is easy with the regular virama and chillu mark code points. This model is the simplest for Grantha viramas among all the proposals.

Hence, the request to UTC is NOT to encode a third virama form for Grantha, as there are only 2 viramas in India's scripts including Grantha.

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