

To: Unicode Technical Committee
 From: Bob Richmond
 Date: 2 November 2015
 Subject: Comments on [L2/15-240](#) Preliminary Draft of the Ptolemaic Repertoire

Some informal comments on “Preliminary draft of the Ptolemaic repertoire” (Michel Suignard, 2015-10-09)

0. I expect to release v1 of a Private Use Plane 15 specification for hieroglyphs (EGPZ 2 – Egyptian Private Zone) before years end. My original EGPZ BMP coding was used for fonts when developing the Everson/Richmond Basic Egyptian Hieroglyphs proposal but is now deprecated. EGPZ2 uses the same code points as George Douros’ Aegyptus font v6.0 where applicable (see <http://users.teilar.gr/~g1951d/> . Aegyptus merges Unicode Basic Hieroglyphs and Hieroglyphica. This compatibility point avoids adding yet another coding for private use fonts and software. As well as the specification I’m making various data tables and content available.
1. Work on taxonomies would be useful. The Gardiner division in Hieroglyphica is a start. The IFAO classification can be useful but is not ideal. I don’t personally see any need to follow the Hieroglyphica codes for Unicode names but if this were done it would be necessary to resolve any confusing names, errors, and differences in implementations.
2. Many hieroglyphs listed in Hieroglyphica but not yet in Unicode are attested before the Ptolemaic period, in some cases far earlier. A large number are PTOLEMAIC and some may originate later in the Greco-Roman era. Also note hieroglyphs appear in Middle Egyptian dictionaries such as Faulkner Dictionary of Middle Egyptian and Wortesbuch which are not encoded in Hieroglyphica. For Unicode purposes better therefore to use terms like EXTENDED or ADDITIONAL not PTOLEMAIC for discussion except where definitely PTOLEMAIC in origin.
3. For the sake of future readers, avoid basing the list at U+13430 in published notes since whatever ends up in this block eventually will likely be different. Also observe that the space allocated in the roadmap is not sufficient for the entire Hieroglyphica 2000 – the size was allocated by Michael Everson based on the shorter 1993 edition. EGPZ2 reserves a corresponding Plane 15 block at U+F8400 – U+F90FF specifically for experimenting with standards proposals.
4. There is a common held view that the next round of encoding of hieroglyphs should focus on evidence, with references to specific sources. It is useful to identify hapax/near hapax signs in data. Projects such as the Ramses database may help here. To adequately research over (probably) 6000 signs is quite a task unless it turns out there is adequate data available somewhere. The signs attested prior to the Ptolemaic period have a wider application for scholars so it’s undesirable to feel the need for an all or nothing next step in Unicode encoding.
5. The vast majority of these ‘Ptolemaic signs’ (in Egyptology terms) are ideograms or specialist determinatives rather than phonetic variants. There is no impact on my 3-control-character proposal for quadrat shaping.
6. The question is not mentioned explicitly in the draft but I also personally favour new codes for the vast majority of these signs rather than use of variation selectors.