

On revision of 1F76D ALCHEMICAL SYMBOL FOR RETORT

Doc. type: individual contribution

Source: Andreas Stötzner

Date: October 30, 2025

Action: for consideration by SEWG and UTC

In the doc. L2/25-238 (dated August 8, 2025) another glyph change of 1F76D has been proposed by Kirk Miller. This would be the 3rd glyph change after the initial version of the code chart which persisted up to UCS version 14.0.

I do not support the recently proposed glyph. It is unsuitable because it is not really representative of the instances of that character in the historic sources. For the proposed change no investigation of relevant historic sources was presented; instead just two more recent print examples are given and the one with a rather poor typographic quality was chosen. The claim of “a simple modern design of the glyph” does not meet the criterion of a code chart glyph should be representative and informative in the best possible way.

I acknowledge that alchemical symbols partly show a great shape variety over the centuries, and this – sometimes disturbing – variability makes the choice of a single token as the representative one not always an easy task.

This shows the history of the 1F76D glyph:

			
1F76D	1F76D	1F76D	

Unicode 6.0m to Unicode 14.0	Unicode 15.0α	Unicode 15.1 to Unicode 17.0	proposed 2025 by Kirk Miller
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The least troublesome of those four is the UCS 15.1 version. However, I propose to

- a) either leave the current glyph unchanged
- or
- b) adopt a minor improvement (shortening of the rightward bow) to better match the average shape of the historic character:



On the following pages a range of historic samples will illustrate my suggestion.

ꝝ	Purificiren.	4
†	Putrificiren.	S.S.
□	Quadratus.	II
Q. E.	Quinta Essentia.	BB†
ꝝ	Recipient.	‡
ꝝ	Regulus.	△
ꝝ	Retorta.	△
ff.	Saccharum, Zucker.	△
ꝝ	Sal alcali.	X
ꝝ	* Sal armoniacum, Salmiac.	□
⊖	Sal commune, gemein Salz.	□
ꝝ	Sal gemmae, Salzstein.	□
M	Sal marinum, Meer-Salz.	□
ꝝ	Sal nitrum, Salpeter Salz.	□

Ernesti 1733, p. 44.

33 (45) 30	
ꝝ	Purificiren. † Putrificiren.
□	Quadratus.
Q. E.	Quinta Essentia.
ꝝ	Recipient. ꝝ Regulus.
ꝝ	Retorta. ff Saccharum, Zucker.
ꝝ	Sal alcali ꝝ * Sal armoniacum, Salmiac.
⊖	Sal commune, gemein Salz.
⊖	Sal nitrum, Salpeter-Salz.
ꝝ	Sal gemmae, Salzstein.
M	Sal marinum, Meer-Salz.
□	Sapo, Seiffe.
ꝝ	Saturnus, Bley.
m	Scorpium, Scorpion, sign. coel.
ꝝ	Scrupulus, Scrupel.
ꝝ	Semis halb * Sextilis.

Breitkopf 1739.

Source:

HAB Wolfenbüttel

Quinta Essentia	Q E	古
Realgar	R A	古
Regulus	R I	日
Retorta	R O	日
Sal comune	Se	日
Sal Alkali	S	日
Sal Annomiae	S A	日
Sal Gemmea	S G	日
Sal petra	S P	日
Sapo	S P	日
Spiritus	S P	日
Spiritus Vini	S P X	日
Strati superstrati	SSS	日
Solvare	S E	日
Sublimare	S L	日
Sulphur	S U	日
Sulphur vivi	S V	日
Sulphur Philosophorum	S P	日
Sulphur nigrum	S N	日

From "Letztes Testament und Offenbahrung der himmlischen und irdischen Geheimnüß" by Basilius Valentinus, 1670. Source: Wikipedia

C H E M I S T R Y.			Plate CXXXII.
Chemical Characters or Symbols.			
△ Fir.	○○ Regulus of Antimony.	c○ Caglii vel Alkali.	○ A Powder.
△ Air.	○○ Arsenic.	Ψ Potash.	E Ashes.
▽ Water.	○○ Regulus of Arsenic.	†-+,-,γ Acid.	B Bath.
▽ Earth.	○ Cobalt.	†-+,-,γ Vinegar.	BM, MB, Water bath.
▽ Air.	N Nickel.	○+,-,γ Vitriolic Acid.	AB Sand bath.
m. △ Mephitic Air.	S.M. Malleable Sulphur.	○+,-,γ Nitrous Acid.	VB Vapor bath.
▽ Clay.	C Calc.	○+,-,γ Marine Acid.	X An Hour.
▽ Gypsum.	○○ Orypiment.	Ψ,A. Aquafortis.	○ A Day.
▽, △ Calcareous Earth.	○ Cobbar.	R,A. Aqua Regia.	○ A Night.
Ψ,C,V,T. Quicksilver.	L,C. Lapis Cetaminaris.	† Vol Sulphuric Acid.	■ A. Month.
▽, △ Vitreous or Siliceous Earths.	○ Trif.	△ Phosphoric Acid.	△ Anadgum.
▽, △ Fluors or Fusible Earths.	○ Virul.	V Wine.	○ Vol Distill.
X. Lalk.	○,θ, Sea Salt.	R Rectified V.	— to Sublime.
M,▽ Magneia.	8,○, Sol Gem.	Æ Ether.	— to Precipitate.
A,▽,θ Earth of Alum.	○,Mer.	▼ Lime Water.	○ A Retort.
△ Sand.	S.S. Sedative Salt.	□ Urine.	XX. Am Membr.
○ Gold.	*,*, Sal Ammonia.	○,○,Φ,▷, Ol.	+,+, A Crucible.
○,△, Silver.	○,Alum.	△ Fixed Oil.	SS, Stratum Super Stratum.
○, Copper.	□ Tartar.	△ Sulphur.	C.C. Cornu Cervi
○, Tin.	□, Alkali.	θ,Hyper of Sulphur.	Hornshorn.
○, Lead.	θ,θ, Fixed Alkali.	△ Phosphorus.	△ A Bottle.
○, Mercury.	θ,θ, Vitabile Alkali.	△ Phlogiston.	g, A Grin.
○, Iron.	m,θ, Mild fixed Alkali.	○, Soap.	ti, A Scruple.
○, Zinc.	c,θ, Caglii fixed Alkali.	⊕ Verdigrise.	zi, A Dram.
B, W, & Bismuth.	m,θ, Mild vit Alkali.	○, Glauber.	zi, An Ounce.
○, Antimony.		○, Cupr. Mercurium.	thi, A Pound.
			dwt, A Pennyweight.

a.	♀ A Night.
Acid.	☒ A Month.
id.	aaa; ▲; Amalgam.
	∅; √; To Distill.
.	— To Sublime.
	— To Precipitate.
	∞ A Retort.
	XX An Alembic.
	†; † ^{ble} A Crucible.
.	SSS, Stratum Super-
Oil.	Stratum.

Engraving of Andrew Bell (1726–1809); from: Wellcome collection

Wahren GOZZ / beschworend und geprueft / von man an sich in auf Erwacht. Waren,
GOZZ allein die Ehr. 1713. ~~1713. 1713. 1713. 1713.~~

N.º 42. Cicero Calender-Zeichen.

藏文大藏经

№ 46. Medecinische und Chymische Zeichen.

የኢትዮጵያዊነት የዕለታዊ የስራ የዕለታዊ የስራ የዕለታዊ የስራ የዕለታዊ
የዕለታዊ የስራ የዕለታዊ የስራ የዕለታዊ የስራ የዕለታዊ የስራ የዕለታዊ የስራ የዕለታዊ
የዕለታዊ የስራ የዕለታዊ የስራ የዕለታዊ የስራ የዕለታዊ የስራ የዕለታዊ የስራ የዕለታዊ
የዕለታዊ የስራ የዕለታዊ የስራ የዕለታዊ የስራ የዕለታዊ የስራ የዕለታዊ የስራ የዕለታዊ

griffsten / sampt noch vielen andern / welche wegen Einge
Ferners Hebräische / Griechische / und Lateinische Schrif
als: Arabisch / Syrisch / und Samaritanisch ; Desgleichen

From a type specimen print by Johannes Pistorius, Basel 1721.

Source: Goethe-University Frankfurt

This variant form with crossbar σ' may be considered for encoding of a variant sequence.

Philipp Glaser, Frankfurt/Oder 1741

UB Frankfurt