

Subject: Latin letter middle dot

From: Nathan Hill <nathanwhill@gmail.com>

Date: Wed, 14 Apr 2010 18:39:12 +0100

To: mikeksar@10646.com

CC: l2doc@unicode.org, Andrew West <andrewcwest@gmail.com>

Dear Mr. Ksar,

I have enthusiastically supported the encoding of U+A78F LATIN LETTER MIDDLE DOT in conversations with Dr. Andrew West. Dr. West has recently notified me that this proposal is receiving little support and has asked me to clarify to you the reasons for my enthusiasm.

Dr. West has also drawn to my attention an email you have received from Dr. Bibiko at the MPI in Leipzig. I have read this email, and am surprised to see to what extent I am in agreement. Both Dr. Bibiko and I reject U+00B7 MIDDLE DOT as a suitable substitute for U+A78F LATIN LETTER MIDDLE DOT. Despite our agreement in this domain, I find myself still in support of the encoding of U+A78F LATIN LETTER MIDDLE DOT.

Dr. Bibiko points out that U+02D1 MODIFIER LETTER HALF TRIANGULAR COLON fits all of the specifications for U+A78F LATIN LETTER MIDDLE DOT except in shape, and suggests that U+02D1 be recommended as a suitable alternative for U+A78F.

It is possible that I have misunderstood something in his argument, but it seems to me that many hundreds of code points match the specification sought for U+A78F LATIN LETTER MIDDLE DOT if one excludes shape. Is it not the case that any non punctuation mark for which capitals and lower case are not divided matches these specifications?

It is my impression following the suggestion of Dr. Bibiko to use a character with the wrong shape to encode the middle dot is to abandon the ethos of Unicode. One could use the code point for to encode and simply require that a font display as , but surely this is not a logic which Dr. Bibiko would support.

I would also like to point out that the character U+A78F LATIN LETTER MIDDLE DOT is needed not only for the transliteration of the 'phags-pa script, but also for the transcription of Tangut and according to some conventions also for Chinese.

Finally, I point out that Dr. Bibiko consistently misspells the name of the 'phags-pa script by leaving off the first letter of this name (here written with an apostrophe following the Wylie convention for this word's Tibetan spelling). It is perhaps not coincidental that this letter in the 'phags-pa script would be transliterated with U+A78F LATIN LETTER MIDDLE DOT. Perhaps Dr. Bibiko would have found it easier to spell the name of this script correctly if this unicode character had been available to him.

with very best regards,
Nathan

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