To: UTC
From: Deborah Anderson, Script Encoding Initiative, UC Berkeley
RE: Spelling of CROSS POMMY in 1F540, 1F541, 1F542
Date: 6 August 2010

Three Typikon characters were approved at Meeting #56 of the ISO/IEC JTC1/SC2 WG2 meeting in April 2010 (L2/10-142 = N3834). They have the following spelling:

- 1F540 CIRCLED CROSS POMMY
- 1F541 CROSS POMMY WITH HALF-CIRCLE BELOW
- 1F542 CROSS POMMY

At the same WG2 meeting, it was agreed that the Oxford English Dictionary will serve “as the primary reference for the spelling of English words in characters names, unless a proposal document provides credible evidence to use alternative spellings” (N3832).

Upon investigation, the OED’s headword is “pommé” (see figure 1), with an acute accent, which is not allowed in the spelling of character names in 10646.

According to the OED guidelines, “The headword shows the most common modern spelling of the word” (http://dictionary.oed.com/about/guide/head.html).

A check on Google on August 6, 2010, however, reveals that the spelling with éé/ee is most common, followed by é/e:


This breakdown is similar to the results in Google Books and Google Scholar:

(Google Books) “cross pommée” 1050 hits (“cross pomme” 1040), “cross pommé” 182 hits (“cross pomme” 181 hits), “cross pommy” 83 hits

(Google Scholar) cross pommée”57 hits (“cross pomme”57 hits), “cross pommé”14 hits (“cross pomme” 14 hits), “cross pommy” 5 hits.

A check in two handbooks on heraldry also show the spelling with “é” or “ée”:


When asked about the spelling of “pommy”, Bruce Durie, Course Director, Genealogical Studies, University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, wrote:

In fact, as "croix" is feminine, the correct version is "pommée", likewise for cross patée. However, we also use cross flory (when the French would be "fleurie") and cross fitchy (French fitchée). In all these cases, formally the é or és is correct and the -y ending is an anglicisation of the French, and we can avoid accents by using the -y form (e.g., chevron raguly).
The *OED* citation (figure 1) notes that the spelling POMMY appears in the 20th century. In 1913, another word spelled with “y” appears. This POMMY is a colloquial term, usually derogatory, that refers to immigrants to Australia or New Zealand from Britain. (It may be that the current preference for the spelling with é or é is because it differentiates the heraldic term from the offensive word.)

Because the spelling of the *OED* headword without the accent (POMME) doesn’t reflect the current pronunciation and could lead to confusion, I would suggest one of the following two options be considered:

a. Change the spelling of the characters’ names to match the most common usage, POMMEE, but include an annotation that the word also appears with an accent and can also be spelled cross pommé or cross pommy.

b. Retain the current spelling, POMMY, but add an annotation:
   - usually spelled cross pommée, or with accent suppressed as cross pomme