

Comment on Malayalam circular Virama sign (L2/14-014r)

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Continuing my comments about Grantha stage of script using “Combining Anusvara Sign Above”, “Comment on L2/14-003: Any need for Combining Anusvara Sign Above in Malayalam Block?”

<http://www.unicode.org/L2/L2015/15011-anusvara-malayalam.pdf>

and about a third way to represent Chillus in Malayalam fonts using a Vertical Bar or Chillu Marker sign, this is a comment about proposed Circular Virama Sign in Malayalam Script (L2/14-014r).

**Subject: Tamil PuLLi and Latin Breve Signs as Malayalam Virama**

Grantha script lacks the concept of PuLLi (Virama in Unicode), that is the reason vertical bar ligated Chillus are present in it.

It looks when Malayalam script was born, like the 2-circled vowel sign for EE and OO going from Tamil script into Malayalam script (check the Tamil and Malayalam blocks), the PuLLi (circle as Virama) was borrowed in Malayalam script from Tamil script. At around the same time, European missionaries introduced Breve sign of Latin script as Virama also, and in a matter of few decades instead of circle glyph (Tamil Virama), breve sign got into ascendancy and given a name, *candrakkala* (crescent of the moon).

The reason for Spacing Candrakala (or full circle) property of Malayalam Virama sign is clear, at the time Malayalam script was forming in 18-19<sup>th</sup> centuries, the Chillu Marker in Grantha script was a vertical bar line going through at the center. All these chillus in Grantha and Malayalam scripts are easily produced in fonts using Joiner sequences. Hence, the script creators of Malayalam script moved the Tamil virama (circular dot, called PuLLi) or its equivalent, Latin breve sign to the right of consonant.

So, the question is: whether two variants of Virama glyphs

(1) full circle (compare Tamil virama)

(2) half circle (breve sign)

essentially doing the same function of Virama - should they be distinguished in plain-text for Malayalam script?

This is a comment on L2/14-014r, requested to be considered by UTC.

Thanks,

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Reference: Cibu Johny, et al ., <http://www.unicode.org/L2/L2014/14014r-circular-virama.pdf>