

U+1CED4: tartar-salt or salt of tartar?

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Date: 2026-01-29

During the UTC #186 meeting, some participants asked whether the name ALCHEMICAL SYMBOL FOR TARTAR-SALT was correct, or whether it should be a SYMBOL FOR SALT OF TARTAR. For several reasons, the issue appeared unclear in plenary discussion. The same decision had a SYMBOL FOR MOON-JUPITER, which is not for a moon of Jupiter (let alone a Jupiter of moon), but a hybrid of the symbols for Moon (☾, also representing silver) and Jupiter (♃, also representing tin), which represents silver-bearing tin. Further, it was noted that tartar (☐, potassium tartrate) is itself a salt (of tartaric acid) in modern terminology. Eventually the character was approved as proposed, by decision [186-C30](#).

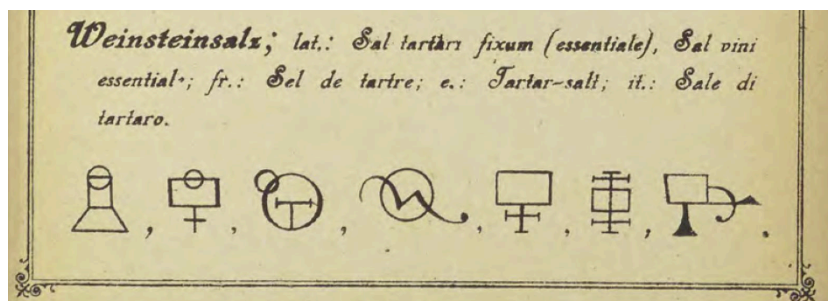
After the close of the UTC meeting, the author of the present proposal asked the authors of [WG 2 N5332R](#) about this issue:

Is this a symbol for salt of tartar, i.e., potassium carbonate (in which case it should be named ALCHEMICAL SYMBOL FOR SALT OF TARTAR, cf. ☐ ALCHEMICAL SYMBOL FOR SALT OF ANTIMONY, ☐ ALCHEMICAL SYMBOL FOR SALT OF COPPER ANTIMONIATE, etc.), or does the name refer to the [visual] decomposition of the symbol [into ☐ and ☐] as in ALCHEMICAL SYMBOL FOR MOON-JUPITER (in which case the hyphenated construct seems appropriate)?

Uwe Mayer responded as follows (*italics added*):

I had taken the english translation given in the work of Gessmann on alchemical symbols (G. W. Gessmann, *Die Geheimsymbole der Alchymie* etc., 1964). Since it's indeed a symbol for salt of tartar (latin name: *Sal tartari*) and not a decomposition, the appropriate name of the symbol should be ALCHEMICAL SYMBOL FOR SALT OF TARTAR.

Indeed, Tartar-salt is the English translation found on in Gessmann's *Geheimsymbole der Alchymie, Arzneikunde und Astrologie des Mittelalters*, see the relevant part of *Tafel LXXV* from the 1922 edition below. Gessmann's English translations consistently deviate from our naming conventions in that way; for instance, it gives the English name Copper-saffran for the symbols ☐ ☐ which we call ALCHEMICAL SYMBOL FOR CROCUS OF COPPER(-2).



We therefore propose that the name of this character be changed:

Proposal: Change the name of U+1CED4, accepted for 18.0, from ALCHEMICAL SYMBOL FOR TARTAR-SALT to ALCHEMICAL SYMBOL FOR SALT OF TARTAR, for Unicode Version 18.0.