

On U+055F ARMENIAN ABBREVIATION MARK

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This document records some public evidence about U+055F ARMENIAN ABBREVIATION MARK; it has been prepared for the reader's information, and proposes no action. It has been prepared using GPT-5.6 Sol. The document is typeset using the Calibri font, which assigns U+055F zero advance.

1. History in Unicode and WG2 documents

The record repeatedly distinguishes two questions: whether the sign is typographically positioned over an abbreviation, and whether it should be encoded or classified as a combining character. The principal documents are summarized chronologically below.

Date	Document	Treatment of U+055F
1990	<u>Pre-Unicode 1.0 draft</u>	U+0559–U+055F were described as modifier letters. The draft chose spacing treatment because it claimed modern Armenian typography placed the signs above and to the right, in their own letter position, rather than treating them as nonspacing diacritics.
1994	<u>WG2 N1022 / X3L2/94-092</u>	Michel Suignard submitted a defect report on Armenian graphic symbols. Only the archive metadata is publicly available. The later status report N1952 records that France and the Netherlands were asked to prepare a formal defect report and that the item stopped in 1995.
1996	<u>ISO 10585:1996 (L2/01-237)</u>	The Armenian 7-bit standard includes the abbreviation mark (patiw). In that encoding, the question mark, abbreviation mark, and exclamation mark are coded before the letter above which they appear and are called non-spacing.
1996	<u>WG2 N1395 / X3L2/96-064</u>	The Armenian standards body described U+055F as combining and said its chart symbol was misprinted.
1996	<u>WG2 N1444</u>	Michael Everson proposed adding U+055F to the combining-character list and showing the corrected glyph with a dotted circle.
1996	<u>WG2 N1446</u>	A U.S. position on N1395 is cited by later documents and status records. The body of N1446 was not located in the accessible archive used for this review.
1996	<u>WG2 N1453, Meeting 31 minutes</u>	WG2 noted that the characters were between combining and non-combining. The placement above a letter might be a rendering matter rather than combining behavior in the usual sense; a response was requested.

Date	Document	Treatment of U+055F
1996	<u>UTC #69 minutes</u>	UTC reviewed N1395. Several requested characters were already encoded, proposed name changes were rejected, and a revised submission or further implementation discussion was requested; no immediate reclassification of U+055F was made.
1997	<u>WG2 N1560 / L2/97-084</u>	Richard Youatt described five Armenian adjustment marks as combining and grouped U+0559 DUR and U+055F PATIW.
1997	<u>WG2 N1603 and N1616</u>	The Meeting 33 minutes summarize the Armenian ad hoc report N1616. WG2 treated the existing signs as borderline combining/noncombining, with widths ranging from full to zero, and decided to leave them unchanged and leave the remaining behavior to rendering. Only U+058A ARMENIAN HYPHEN was added (resolution M33.22). The body of N1616 was not available to the author.
1998	<u>SC2 N3134 / L2/98-244</u>	The registration application for ISO 10585 appears to map the abbreviation mark to U+055C. This is evidently an error for U+055F.
1998–1999	<u>SC2 N3222 / WG2 N1981</u>	The Armenian national body compared ISO 10585, ISO/IEC 10646, and Armenian national standards. Patiw was omitted from the table of the modern national repertoire.
1999	<u>WG2 N1952</u>	The status report links N1022, N1395, N1444, and N1446 and records that only the Armenian hyphen proposal was accepted.
1999	<u>WG2 N1984 / L2/99-047</u>	The U.S. response to the Armenian objections cited N1395, N1446, N1560, and N1616 but did not reopen the combining-classification issue for U+055F.
2000	<u>WG2 N2190 / L2/00-090</u>	A submission of Armenia's 1999 national standards again showed a modern repertoire that omitted patiw.
2018	<u>UTC #155 / PRI #355</u>	UTC changed U+055B, U+055C, and U+055E to Word_Break=ALetter. Action 155-A4 requested review of additional UAX #29 cases, specifically including U+055A, U+055F, U+058A, and modifier letters.
2019	<u>L2/19-359, UAX #29 revision 36 draft</u>	The draft added U+055F to Word_Break=MidLetter and retained an editorial review note asking whether that was the correct category.
2020	<u>PRI #396 and UTC #162</u>	PRI #396 closed without U+055F-specific feedback. Action 162-A3 asked for review of the revision 36 notes for a future UAX #29 update. U+055F remained MidLetter.
Current	<u>Unicode 17.0 Core Specification, Chapter 7</u>	The Core Specification identifies U+055F patiw as one of four manuscript abbreviation marks, used in abbreviations of words such as God, Jesus, Christos, Lord, and Saint. It describes the mark as placed above the abbreviated word and spanning all its letters. In the UCD it is gc=Po, ccc=0, Script=Armenian, Word_Break=MidLetter, Grapheme_Cluster_Break=Other, and Line_Break=AL.

2. Usage in Wikimedia projects

Armenian Wikipedia

A complete September 2026 pages-articles dump contained 20 literal occurrences of U+055F on 13 pages. Nine were metalinguistic or technical uses in Unicode, script, punctuation, or template material; ten appeared to be typographical or encoding errors; one was an unambiguous use in running historical text. The [Saint Paul chapel article](#) quotes an inscription dated 1892:

Յաւի Տնն 1892

Տնն abbreviates a form of Տեառն, meaning “of the Lord.”

Armenian Wiktionary

A complete dump containing 314,102 pages had nine occurrences on nine pages, all in modules or templates. No occurrence was found in the headword, definition, quotation, or example text of a lexical entry.

English Wiktionary

The only headword containing U+055F was the [entry for the sign itself](#). It lists word-final abbreviated forms such as Աժ, Այ, Ալ, աւ, պտ, սք. No ordinary Armenian or Old Armenian headword contained the character.

The Old Armenian entry [աստուած](#) gives the conventional abbreviations Աժ, Այ, յԱյ, Ալ for Christian “God.” The entry [Լմաւորութիւն](#) includes a sixth-century Philo quotation with internal forms յԱյ, Աժ, Ալ. A systematic extract found 17 distinct Old Armenian example strings with terminal or internal U+055F; Armenian-tagged data supplied five distinct quotation or example strings, largely historical.

3. Treatment in fonts

The existing font inspection compared cmap, hmtx, glyph outlines, GDEF, GPOS, and shaped samples. The results show two main implementations: a spacing superscript glyph after the preceding text, or a zero-advance glyph drawn back over the immediately preceding glyph.

Open-source fonts

Font and version	Advance	Observed treatment
Noto Sans Armenian 2.008	0.415 em	Positive advance; appears as a spacing superscript after the text. No anchor-based or other GPOS positioning was found.
Noto Serif Armenian 2.008	0.423 em	Positive advance; spacing treatment. No mark anchor was found.
DejaVu Sans / Serif 2.37	0.500 em	Positive advance; spacing treatment.
GNU FreeSans	0.333 em	Positive advance; spacing treatment.
GNU FreeSerif	0.300 em	Positive advance; spacing treatment.

Font and version	Advance	Observed treatment
Nishiki-teki 4.0.5	0	Negative-x outline overprints the immediately preceding glyph. GDEF still classifies U+055F as a base, and no mark attachment was found.

The Noto results refer to release 2.008 of the [Noto Armenian fonts](#).

Windows fonts

Font and version	Advance	Observed treatment
Calibri 6.26	0	Negative-x outline overstrikes the immediately preceding glyph.
Cambria / Cambria Math 6.99	0	Negative-x outline overstrikes the immediately preceding glyph.
Trebuchet MS 5.15	0	Negative-x outline overstrikes the immediately preceding glyph.
Segoe UI 5.65	0.351 em	Positive advance; spacing treatment.
Sylfaen 5.07	0.320 em	Positive advance; spacing treatment.

These results are from current or near-current Windows 11 font binaries and show that Windows has no single platform-wide behavior: treatment depends on the selected font and on fallback. A [2019 Windows/BabelPad report](#) likewise observed overprinting in Calibri, Cambria, Cambria Math, Trebuchet MS, and Nishiki-teki.

In all inspected fonts, U+055F was classified as a base or left unclassified in GDEF, rather than treated as an OpenType combining mark; none used mark-to-base positioning. No inspected implementation made the mark span an abbreviation of arbitrary length. Spacing fonts place it after the word, while zero-width fonts overlay only the immediately preceding glyph.