

To: Unicode Technical Committee and ISO/IEC JTC1/SC2 and WG2
From: Deborah Anderson, SEI, UC Berkeley
Date: 22 September 2016
Title: Feedback on Cypro-Minoan (based on Script Ad Hoc comments in L2/16-216)

This document is a summary of responses from experts to questions posed by the Unicode Script Ad Hoc group (contained on pp. 1-2 of [L2-16-216](#).)

[Questions from the script ad hoc sent to experts]

Can experts and the proposal author explain why *22 is encoded, given the current assessment of the field, since *22 appears to be a CM3 version of *21? The proposal should, in our view, reflect the best understanding of the repertoire, not proposing for separate encoding catalog entries for signs that are generally viewed by expert consensus in the field as being the same. A proposal that includes signs widely viewed as being unified with other characters -- solely to document the history of the decipherment -- is not a good use of an international standard, in our opinion.

Question posed to experts:

Do you feel strongly that it is important to include in the proposal the earlier characters (which may now be unified with other characters), or do you agree it should reflect the current understanding of the field?

Responses

1. From: Silvia Ferrara <silvia.ferrara@gmail.com>
Date: Tue, Aug 16, 2016 at 11:49 AM

Hi Debbie, all,

There is no reason, in my opinion, to have CM 22. If the question is broader than that and is intended for other signs that can or should be merged, we're bound to open a Cypriot Pandora's box.

I hope this helps!

Silvia

(See response to this comment from Michael Everson, #6 below)

2. From: Miguel Valério <mfg_valerio@yahoo.com>
Date: Tue, Sep 13, 2016 at 3:24 AM

Dear Debbie,

I agree with Silvia. At this point, if you want to encode a font, the best option is to include the repertoire with a larger number of forms, even if many of them are just variants. As I think Michael mentioned, it is actually the case that having these characters is useful for scholars to discuss the script and the history

of decipherment. Although I would not remove CM 22, I think it is no great loss if it is not encoded. However, if it becomes the precedent to cast doubt on several other characters, then the result will be an endless (and probably unfruitful) discussion...

Best wishes,

Miguel Valério

3. From: Jean-Pierre Olivier <jolivier@ulb.ac.be>

Date: Wed, Aug 17, 2016 at 10:05 AM

Dear Professor Anderson,

1. It should reflect the current understanding of the field.

2. *22 should not be encoded.

Sincerely yours,
Jean-Pierre Olivier.

4. From: Yves Duhoux <yves1duhoux@gmail.com>

Date: Tue, Aug 30, 2016 at 2:35 AM

Dear Debbie,

No, I do not think it important to include the proposal the earlier characters (which may now be unified with other characters).

Yes, it should reflect the current understanding of the field.

As what concerns *22, I believe it should NOT be encoded.

Best wishes,

Yves Duhoux
Professeur émérite
de l'Université Catholique de Louvain

5. From: Maurizio Del Freo <delfreo@tiscalinet.it>

Date: Tue, Sep 20, 2016 at 8:08 AM

Dear Deborah,

I am very sorry for not responding earlier to your messages. I have been completely absorbed by the preparation of a book this summer. Unfortunately this job is far from finished and my time is still very limited. Thus, I really have no time to go through all the details of the CM encoding proposal. I am very sorry about that.

What I can say to help you is that IF there is an agreement between Jean-Pierre Olivier and Silvia Ferrara in suppressing a sign which made part of Masson's repertoire (as it seems to be the case of *22), it should be excluded from Unicode. But, as I repeat, I unfortunately have no time right now to revise all the details of the proposal. I am really sorry for not being able to contribute further.

With all best wishes,

Maurizio

6. (Response to Silvia F's message, #1)

From: Michael Everson everson@evertype.com

Date: Tue, Aug 16, 2016 at 12:23 PM

Dear Silvia,

Thank you for your comment. It is not a surprising answer.

On 16 Aug 2016, at 19:49, Silvia Ferrara <silvia.ferrara@gmail.com> wrote:

> There is no reason, in my opinion, to have CM 22. If the question is broader than that and is intended for other signs that can or should be merged, we're bound to open a Cypriot Pandora's box.

All right, that's certainly one approach. Then how will you (or anyone else) cite an article which discusses CM 22 and shows its glyph? How will you typeset a new version of Masson's chart, or cite any of these ghost characters for any reason?

I wager at least 20% of the 583 Anatolian Hieroglyphs in Unicode derive from items in the Laroche set of Hieroglyphs but were later identified and unified with other characters. Yet we encoded the catalogue completely, and the same reasons were given in the Anatolian document as have been given in the Cypro-Minoan document.

See §4 in <http://www.unicode.org/L2/L2012/12213-n4282-anatolian.pdf>

Yes, we could leave gaps in the code table. Maybe CM 22 is so obviously unifiable that it could have no other purpose. But the script is undeciphered, and since scholars differ as to *other* unifications, is it safe to omit any of them, in a proposal which is for general use? Does every scholar agree with every proposed unification? I gather that this is still up for debate.

If a character is encoded and you don't want to use it, you don't have to. If a character (like CM 22) is not encoded, you can't make use of it for interchange.

I don't understand why some of the UTC members think that Cypro-Minoan should be encoded along different principles than were used for Anatolian Hieroglyphs or Linear A. Both of those were catalogue-based encodings. As to their argument:

"A proposal that includes signs widely viewed as being unified with other characters -- solely to document the history of the decipherment -- is not a good use of an international standard, in our opinion."

Well both Linear A and Anatolian were encoded on that basis, and 75% of the UCS is comprised of unused Chinese characters, so I don't see the need for such timidity for Cypro-Minoan.

Best regards,

Michael