

Universal Multiple-Octet Coded Character Set
International Organization for Standardization
Organisation Internationale de Normalisation
Международная организация по стандартизации

Doc Type: Working Group Document**Title: Revised proposal for encoding the Bassa Vah script in the SMP of the UCS****Source: UC Berkeley Script Encoding Initiative (Universal Scripts Project)****Authors: Michael Everson and Charles Riley****Status: Liaison Contribution****Action: For consideration by JTC1/SC2/WG2 and UTC****Date: 2010-07-31**

1. Introduction. The Vah script of the Bassa owes most of its development and current form to Thomas Flo Lewis, who worked with the typesetting of it beginning as early as 1907, producing various texts in the script through at least the 1930's. Dr Lewis, a Bassa from Liberia, studied in Syracuse for several years. There are traditions that trace the script's origin through contact between Lewis and Jenni Dirah, son of a slave who may have drawn on an older code of pictograms that was in use among the Bassa, for which there is little supporting documentary evidence. The Vah script and any of its possible antecedents are independent from another effort to develop an alphabet for the Bassa language that dates to the 1830's in the work of the missionary William Crocker.

Dr Lewis actively published while in Syracuse, and later in Dresden between 1915 and 1920. There is evidence of texts being produced in both places, although it is not known whether any of the texts from this period (1907-ca.1935) still exist. He returned for some time to Liberia in the 1910's and 1920's, and according to Dalby's record of an account of Abba G. Karnga, taught many students, including Barni Cheevahn, Jacob B. Logan, a Senator Morgan, and Representative Thomas H. Greeves. Graham Greene, on his travel through Liberia as recounted in his *Journey Without Maps*, reported having collected a fragment of a text in Bassa Vah script.

Since 1959, the script has been promoted through the Bassa Vah Association and United Bassa Organizations in the Americas (UNIBOA), and by individuals including Karnga, Dr Joseph M. N. Gbadyu, Dr Syrulwa Somah, and Varnie N'jola Karmo, among others.

2. Structure. Bassa Vah is a simple alphabetic script, written from left to right. Originally monocaligraphic, a lower-case based on handwriting was introduced in the 1990s. The lower-case was based on handwritten forms, just as Latin capital letters derive from monumental forms while Latin small letters derive from miniscule. Figures 1 and 2 shows the casing pairs. Figure 7 shows a text in a monumental style font; this is an older text prepared before the lower-case was introduced.

Vowels in Bassa Vah are written as letters with obligatory diacritical marks which indicate the tone of the vowel. These marks are positioned on the interior of the largest partially or wholly enclosed space of each vowel glyph; the diacritic should be toward the center without touching the edges. Because the tone is obligatory (a Bassa word is misspelled without it) the un-marked vowels are never used alone, except in discussions of the alphabet itself. In section 3 below the correct positioning of the diacritics can be seen.

Dalby's chart shows a number of glyph variants. It is likely that these should be treated as Vai and Bamum glyph variants have been: that if they are required, either a dedicated font for them should be used, or OpenType tables to invoke alternate forms. The forms used in the chart are the primary ones given in Dalby. In some cases (such as that of letter VU) modern practice has altered the glyphs somewhat from those which are given in Dalby. (Dalby's tone-names also differ from those used today; see below under character names.)

3. Collating order. Collation order is as in the code chart, though the tone-marked letters sort at the second level under the unadorned letter. The order of the consonants is well-established: n, k, s, f, mb, ñ, g, d, kp, j, xw, w, z, gb, ndf, c, hw, t, b, v, h, p, l. Dalby's charts use the order i, a, u, e, ε, ɔ, o—but the order a, ɔ, o, u, e, ε, i, found elsewhere, has been used here. The sequence is given below. Letters are separated at the first level by <, tone distinctions are separated at the second level by <<, and case distinctions are separated at the third level by <<<.

ɔ<<<ɔ< ɲ<<<ɲ< ʌ<<<ʌ< ɸ<<<ɸ< ɓ<<<ɓ< ɔ<<<ɔ< ɖ<<<ɖ< ɗ<<<ɗ< ɛ<<<ɛ< ɔ<<<ɔ< ɔ<<<ɔ< ɔ<<<ɔ< ɔ<<<ɔ<
 ɔ<<<ɔ< ɔ<<<ɔ< ɔ<<<ɔ< ɔ<<<ɔ< ɔ<<<ɔ< ɔ<<<ɔ< ɔ<<<ɔ< ɔ<<<ɔ< ɔ<<<ɔ< ɔ<<<ɔ< ɔ<<<ɔ< ɔ<<<ɔ<
 ɔ<<<ɔ< ɔ<<<ɔ< ɔ<<<ɔ< ɔ<<<ɔ< ɔ<<<ɔ< ɔ<<<ɔ< ɔ<<<ɔ< ɔ<<<ɔ< ɔ<<<ɔ< ɔ<<<ɔ< ɔ<<<ɔ<
 ɔ<<<ɔ< ɔ<<<ɔ< ɔ<<<ɔ< ɔ<<<ɔ< ɔ<<<ɔ< ɔ<<<ɔ< ɔ<<<ɔ< ɔ<<<ɔ< ɔ<<<ɔ< ɔ<<<ɔ< ɔ<<<ɔ<
 ɔ<<<ɔ< ɔ<<<ɔ< ɔ<<<ɔ< ɔ<<<ɔ< ɔ<<<ɔ< ɔ<<<ɔ< ɔ<<<ɔ< ɔ<<<ɔ< ɔ<<<ɔ< ɔ<<<ɔ< ɔ<<<ɔ<
 ɔ<<<ɔ< ɔ<<<ɔ< ɔ<<<ɔ< ɔ<<<ɔ< ɔ<<<ɔ< ɔ<<<ɔ< ɔ<<<ɔ< ɔ<<<ɔ< ɔ<<<ɔ< ɔ<<<ɔ< ɔ<<<ɔ<
 ɔ<<<ɔ< ɔ<<<ɔ< ɔ<<<ɔ< ɔ<<<ɔ< ɔ<<<ɔ< ɔ<<<ɔ< ɔ<<<ɔ< ɔ<<<ɔ< ɔ<<<ɔ< ɔ<<<ɔ< ɔ<<<ɔ<
 ɔ<<<ɔ< ɔ<<<ɔ< ɔ<<<ɔ< ɔ<<<ɔ< ɔ<<<ɔ< ɔ<<<ɔ< ɔ<<<ɔ< ɔ<<<ɔ< ɔ<<<ɔ< ɔ<<<ɔ< ɔ<<<ɔ<
 ɔ<<<ɔ< ɔ<<<ɔ< ɔ<<<ɔ< ɔ<<<ɔ< ɔ<<<ɔ< ɔ<<<ɔ< ɔ<<<ɔ< ɔ<<<ɔ< ɔ<<<ɔ< ɔ<<<ɔ< ɔ<<<ɔ<

4. Character names. The usual UCS conventions are used, with DH representing *d*, D representing *d*, EE representing *e*, E representing *ε*, OO representing *o*, and O representing *ɔ*. More consultation with Bassa speakers and elders will be needed to verify the phonetics and finalize decisions on the names as represented in the repertoire. The current names are based on the following: enni, ká, se, fá, mbe, yie, gah, dii, kpah, jó, xwah, wa, zó, gbù, ɖɔ, cè, uwu, tš, ba, vù, yèin, pa, waɖɖa.

The names of the tone marks are a source of some confusion. The character names are a compromise of these. The MID TONE ɔ/ɔ and the LOW-MID TONE ɔ/ɔ have glyph variants, the first of which have been used in this proposal.

glyph	Dalby	UBOA	Bertkau 1975	Bertkau 1976	proposed
⦿	<i>high</i>	<i>high</i>	<i>stress the word (á)</i>	<i>high (á)</i>	HIGH
⦿	<i>low</i>	<i>grave</i>	<i>relax the word (à)</i>	<i>low (à)</i>	LOW
⦿/⦿	<i>mid</i>	<i>mid-low</i>	<i>raise voice from low (ā)</i>	<i>mid (a)</i>	MID
⦿/⦿	<i>mid-low</i>	<i>drag</i>	<i>slant the word (ã)</i>	<i>low-mid rise (ǎ)</i>	LOW-MID
⦿	<i>high-low</i>	<i>double</i>	<i>double (áà)</i>	<i>high-low (â)</i>	HIGH-LOW

5. Linebreaking. Letters and combining marks behave as in Latin.

6. Punctuation and digits. The European FULL STOP and COMMA may be used, as are European quotation marks, A Bassa Vah COMMA and FULL STOP are both found in fonts; they have been named COMMA and FULL STOP based on their encodings in Latin-1 hack fonts. The European punctuation and Bassa Vah punctuation were used more or less interchangeably by Joseph Gbadyu, though the latter are encoded

uniquely as they are obviously not glyph variants of the generic FULL STOP and COMMA. European digits are used; there are no script-specific digits to be encoded.

7. Unicode Character Properties.

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16AB0;BASSA VAH CAPITAL LETTER ENNI;Lu;0;L;;;;;N;;;16AD0;
16AB1;BASSA VAH CAPITAL LETTER KA;Lu;0;L;;;;;N;;;16AD1;
16AB2;BASSA VAH CAPITAL LETTER SE;Lu;0;L;;;;;N;;;16AD2;
16AB3;BASSA VAH CAPITAL LETTER FA;Lu;0;L;;;;;N;;;16AD3;
16AB4;BASSA VAH CAPITAL LETTER MBE;Lu;0;L;;;;;N;;;16AD4;
16AB5;BASSA VAH CAPITAL LETTER YIE;Lu;0;L;;;;;N;;;16AD5;
16AB6;BASSA VAH CAPITAL LETTER GAH;Lu;0;L;;;;;N;;;16AD6;
16AB7;BASSA VAH CAPITAL LETTER DHII;Lu;0;L;;;;;N;;;16AD7;
16AB8;BASSA VAH CAPITAL LETTER KPAH;Lu;0;L;;;;;N;;;16AD8;
16AB9;BASSA VAH CAPITAL LETTER JO;Lu;0;L;;;;;N;;;16AD9;
16ABA;BASSA VAH CAPITAL LETTER HWAH;Lu;0;L;;;;;N;;;16ADA;
16ABB;BASSA VAH CAPITAL LETTER WA;Lu;0;L;;;;;N;;;16ADB;
16ABC;BASSA VAH CAPITAL LETTER ZO;Lu;0;L;;;;;N;;;16ADC;
16ABD;BASSA VAH CAPITAL LETTER GBU;Lu;0;L;;;;;N;;;16ADD;
16ABE;BASSA VAH CAPITAL LETTER DO;Lu;0;L;;;;;N;;;16ADE;
16ABF;BASSA VAH CAPITAL LETTER CE;Lu;0;L;;;;;N;;;16ADF;
16AC0;BASSA VAH CAPITAL LETTER UWU;Lu;0;L;;;;;N;;;16AE0;
16AC1;BASSA VAH CAPITAL LETTER TO;Lu;0;L;;;;;N;;;16AE1;
16AC2;BASSA VAH CAPITAL LETTER BA;Lu;0;L;;;;;N;;;16AE2;
16AC3;BASSA VAH CAPITAL LETTER VU;Lu;0;L;;;;;N;;;16AE3;
16AC4;BASSA VAH CAPITAL LETTER YEIN;Lu;0;L;;;;;N;;;16AE4;
16AC5;BASSA VAH CAPITAL LETTER PA;Lu;0;L;;;;;N;;;16AE5;
16AC6;BASSA VAH CAPITAL LETTER WADDA;Lu;0;L;;;;;N;;;16AE6;
16AC7;BASSA VAH CAPITAL LETTER A;Lu;0;L;;;;;N;;;16AE7;
16AC8;BASSA VAH CAPITAL LETTER O;Lu;0;L;;;;;N;;;16AE8;
16AC9;BASSA VAH CAPITAL LETTER OO;Lu;0;L;;;;;N;;;16AE9;
16ACA;BASSA VAH CAPITAL LETTER U;Lu;0;L;;;;;N;;;16AEA;
16ACB;BASSA VAH CAPITAL LETTER EE;Lu;0;L;;;;;N;;;16AEB;
16ACC;BASSA VAH CAPITAL LETTER E;Lu;0;L;;;;;N;;;16AEC;
16ACD;BASSA VAH CAPITAL LETTER I;Lu;0;L;;;;;N;;;16AED;
16AD0;BASSA VAH SMALL LETTER ENNI;Ll;0;L;;;;;N;;;16AB0;;16AB0
16AD1;BASSA VAH SMALL LETTER KA;Ll;0;L;;;;;N;;;16AB1;;16AB1
16AD2;BASSA VAH SMALL LETTER SE;Ll;0;L;;;;;N;;;16AB2;;16AB2
16AD3;BASSA VAH SMALL LETTER FA;Ll;0;L;;;;;N;;;16AB3;;16AB3
16AD4;BASSA VAH SMALL LETTER MBE;Ll;0;L;;;;;N;;;16AB4;;16AB4
16AD5;BASSA VAH SMALL LETTER YIE;Ll;0;L;;;;;N;;;16AB5;;16AB5
16AD6;BASSA VAH SMALL LETTER GAH;Ll;0;L;;;;;N;;;16AB6;;16AB6
16AD7;BASSA VAH SMALL LETTER DHII;Ll;0;L;;;;;N;;;16AB7;;16AB7
16AD8;BASSA VAH SMALL LETTER KPAH;Ll;0;L;;;;;N;;;16AB8;;16AB8
16AD9;BASSA VAH SMALL LETTER JO;Ll;0;L;;;;;N;;;16AB9;;16AB9
16ADA;BASSA VAH SMALL LETTER HWAH;Ll;0;L;;;;;N;;;16ABA;;16ABA
16ADB;BASSA VAH SMALL LETTER WA;Ll;0;L;;;;;N;;;16ABB;;16ABB
16ADC;BASSA VAH SMALL LETTER ZO;Ll;0;L;;;;;N;;;16ABC;;16ABC
16ADD;BASSA VAH SMALL LETTER GBU;Ll;0;L;;;;;N;;;16ABD;;16ABD
16ADE;BASSA VAH SMALL LETTER DO;Ll;0;L;;;;;N;;;16ABE;;16ABE
16ADF;BASSA VAH SMALL LETTER CE;Ll;0;L;;;;;N;;;16ABF;;16ABF
16AE0;BASSA VAH SMALL LETTER UWU;Ll;0;L;;;;;N;;;16AC0;;16AC0
16AE1;BASSA VAH SMALL LETTER TO;Ll;0;L;;;;;N;;;16AC1;;16AC1
16AE2;BASSA VAH SMALL LETTER BA;Ll;0;L;;;;;N;;;16AC2;;16AC2
16AE3;BASSA VAH SMALL LETTER VU;Ll;0;L;;;;;N;;;16AC3;;16AC3
16AE4;BASSA VAH SMALL LETTER YEIN;Ll;0;L;;;;;N;;;16AC4;;16AC4
16AE5;BASSA VAH SMALL LETTER PA;Ll;0;L;;;;;N;;;16AC5;;16AC5
16AE6;BASSA VAH SMALL LETTER WADDA;Ll;0;L;;;;;N;;;16AC6;;16AC6
16AE7;BASSA VAH SMALL LETTER A;Ll;0;L;;;;;N;;;16AC7;;16AC7
16AE8;BASSA VAH SMALL LETTER O;Ll;0;L;;;;;N;;;16AC8;;16AC8
16AE9;BASSA VAH SMALL LETTER OO;Ll;0;L;;;;;N;;;16AC9;;16AC9
16AEA;BASSA VAH SMALL LETTER U;Ll;0;L;;;;;N;;;16ACA;;16ACA
16AEB;BASSA VAH SMALL LETTER EE;Ll;0;L;;;;;N;;;16ACB;;16ACB
16AEC;BASSA VAH SMALL LETTER E;Ll;0;L;;;;;N;;;16ACC;;16ACC
16AED;BASSA VAH SMALL LETTER I;Ll;0;L;;;;;N;;;16ACD;;16ACD
16AF0;BASSA VAH COMBINING HIGH TONE;Mn;1;NSM;;;;;N;;;;;
16AF1;BASSA VAH COMBINING LOW TONE;Mn;1;NSM;;;;;N;;;;;
16AF2;BASSA VAH COMBINING MID TONE;Mn;1;NSM;;;;;N;;;;;
16AF3;BASSA VAH COMBINING LOW-MID TONE;Mn;1;NSM;;;;;N;;;;;
16AF4;BASSA VAH COMBINING HIGH-LOW TONE;Mn;1;NSM;;;;;N;;;;;
16AF5;BASSA VAH COMMA;Po;0;L;;;;;N;;;;;
16AF6;BASSA VAH FULL STOP;Po;0;L;;;;;N;;;;;

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	16AB	16AC	16AD	16AE	16AF
0	𐞮 16AB0	𐞯 16AC0	𐞰 16AD0	𐞱 16AE0	𐞲 16AF0
1	𐞳 16AB1	𐞴 16AC1	𐞵 16AD1	𐞶 16AE1	𐞷 16AF1
2	𐞸 16AB2	𐞹 16AC2	𐞺 16AD2	𐞻 16AE2	𐞼 16AF2
3	𐞽 16AB3	𐞾 16AC3	𐞿 16AD3	𐟀 16AE3	𐟁 16AF3
4	𐟂 16AB4	𐟃 16AC4	𐟄 16AD4	𐟅 16AE4	𐟆 16AF4
5	𐟇 16AB5	𐟈 16AC5	𐟉 16AD5	𐟊 16AE5	𐟋 16AF5
6	𐟌 16AB6	𐟍 16AC6	𐟎 16AD6	𐟏 16AE6	𐟐 16AF6
7	𐟑 16AB7	𐟒 16AC7	𐟓 16AD7	𐟔 16AE7	
8	𐟕 16AB8	𐟖 16AC8	𐟗 16AD8	𐟘 16AE8	
9	𐟙 16AB9	𐟚 16AC9	𐟛 16AD9	𐟜 16AE9	
A	𐟝 16ABA	𐟞 16ACA	𐟟 16ADA	𐟠 16AEA	
B	𐟡 16ABB	𐟢 16ACB	𐟣 16ADB	𐟤 16AEB	
C	𐟥 16ABC	𐟦 16ACC	𐟧 16ADC	𐟨 16AEC	
D	𐟩 16ABD	𐟪 16ACD	𐟫 16ADD	𐟬 16AED	
E	𐟭 16ABE		𐟮 16ADE		
F	𐟯 16ABF		𐟰 16ADF		

Upper-case consonant letters

16AB0	ᱠ	BASSA VAH CAPITAL LETTER ENNI
16AB1	ᱡ	BASSA VAH CAPITAL LETTER KA
16AB2	ᱢ	BASSA VAH CAPITAL LETTER SE
16AB3	ᱣ	BASSA VAH CAPITAL LETTER FA
16AB4	ᱤ	BASSA VAH CAPITAL LETTER MBE
16AB5	ᱥ	BASSA VAH CAPITAL LETTER YIE
16AB6	ᱦ	BASSA VAH CAPITAL LETTER GAH
16AB7	ᱧ	BASSA VAH CAPITAL LETTER DHII
16AB8	ᱨ	BASSA VAH CAPITAL LETTER KPAH
16AB9	ᱩ	BASSA VAH CAPITAL LETTER JO
16ABA	ᱪ	BASSA VAH CAPITAL LETTER HWAH
16ABB	ᱫ	BASSA VAH CAPITAL LETTER WA
16ABC	ᱬ	BASSA VAH CAPITAL LETTER ZO
16ABD	ᱭ	BASSA VAH CAPITAL LETTER GBU
16ABE	ᱮ	BASSA VAH CAPITAL LETTER DO
16ABF	ᱯ	BASSA VAH CAPITAL LETTER CE
16AC0	ᱰ	BASSA VAH CAPITAL LETTER UWU
16AC1	ᱱ	BASSA VAH CAPITAL LETTER TO
16AC2	ᱲ	BASSA VAH CAPITAL LETTER BA
16AC3	ᱳ	BASSA VAH CAPITAL LETTER VU
16AC4	ᱴ	BASSA VAH CAPITAL LETTER YEIN
16AC5	ᱵ	BASSA VAH CAPITAL LETTER PA
16AC6	ᱶ	BASSA VAH CAPITAL LETTER WADDA

Upper-case vowel letters

16AC7	ᱷ	BASSA VAH CAPITAL LETTER A
16AC8	ᱸ	BASSA VAH CAPITAL LETTER O
16AC9	ᱹ	BASSA VAH CAPITAL LETTER OO
16ACA	ᱺ	BASSA VAH CAPITAL LETTER U
16ACB	ᱻ	BASSA VAH CAPITAL LETTER EE
16ACC	ᱼ	BASSA VAH CAPITAL LETTER E
16ACD	ᱽ	BASSA VAH CAPITAL LETTER I

Lower-case consonant letters

16AD0	᱿	BASSA VAH SMALL LETTER ENNI
16AD1	᱾	BASSA VAH SMALL LETTER KA
16AD2	᱿	BASSA VAH SMALL LETTER SE
16AD3	ᱽ	BASSA VAH SMALL LETTER FA
16AD4	᱾	BASSA VAH SMALL LETTER MBE
16AD5	᱾	BASSA VAH SMALL LETTER YIE
16AD6	᱾	BASSA VAH SMALL LETTER GAH
16AD7	᱾	BASSA VAH SMALL LETTER DHII
16AD8	᱾	BASSA VAH SMALL LETTER KPAH
16AD9	᱾	BASSA VAH SMALL LETTER JO
16ADA	᱾	BASSA VAH SMALL LETTER HWAH
16ADB	᱾	BASSA VAH SMALL LETTER WA
16ADC	᱾	BASSA VAH SMALL LETTER ZO
16ADD	᱾	BASSA VAH SMALL LETTER GBU
16ADE	᱾	BASSA VAH SMALL LETTER DO
16ADF	᱾	BASSA VAH SMALL LETTER CE
16AE0	᱾	BASSA VAH SMALL LETTER UWU
16AE1	᱾	BASSA VAH SMALL LETTER TO
16AE2	᱾	BASSA VAH SMALL LETTER BA
16AE3	᱾	BASSA VAH SMALL LETTER VU
16AE4	᱾	BASSA VAH SMALL LETTER YEIN
16AE5	᱾	BASSA VAH SMALL LETTER PA
16AE6	᱾	BASSA VAH SMALL LETTER WADDA

Lower-case vowel letters

16AE7	᱾	BASSA VAH SMALL LETTER A
16AE8	᱾	BASSA VAH SMALL LETTER O
16AE9	᱾	BASSA VAH SMALL LETTER OO
16AEA	᱾	BASSA VAH SMALL LETTER U
16AEB	᱾	BASSA VAH SMALL LETTER EE
16AEC	᱾	BASSA VAH SMALL LETTER E
16AED	᱾	BASSA VAH SMALL LETTER I

Combining tone marks

16AF0	ᱠ	BASSA VAH COMBINING HIGH TONE
16AF1	ᱡ	BASSA VAH COMBINING LOW TONE
16AF2	ᱢ	BASSA VAH COMBINING MID TONE
16AF3	ᱣ	BASSA VAH COMBINING LOW-MID TONE
16AF4	ᱤ	BASSA VAH COMBINING HIGH-LOW TONE

Punctuation

16AF5	ᱥ	BASSA VAH COMMA
16AF6	ᱦ	BASSA VAH FULL STOP

9. Figures.

Bassa Vah "Vah" Alphabet							
CONSONANTS							
ㄋ ㄋ (n)	ㄏ ㄏ (k)	ㄟ ㄟ (s)	ㄨ ㄨ (f)	ㄿ ㄿ (mb)	ㄿ ㄿ (j/ɲ)	ㄿ ㄿ (g)	ㄿ ㄿ (d)
ㄿ ㄿ (kp)	ㄿ ㄿ (j)	ㄿ ㄿ (xw)	ㄿ ㄿ (w)	ㄿ ㄿ (z)	ㄿ ㄿ (gb)	ㄿ ㄿ (d/ɲ)	ㄿ ㄿ (ch)
ㄿ ㄿ (hw)	ㄿ ㄿ (t)	ㄿ ㄿ (b)	ㄿ ㄿ (v)	ㄿ ㄿ (h)	ㄿ ㄿ (p)	ㄿ ㄿ (r)	
VOWELS							
ㄿ ㄿ (a)	ㄿ ㄿ (ɔ)	ㄿ ㄿ (o)	ㄿ ㄿ (u)	ㄿ ㄿ (e)	ㄿ ㄿ (ɛ)	ㄿ ㄿ (i)	
TONAL MARKS		· (high)	˘ (grave)	˙ (mid-low)	˚ (double)	˛ (drag)	

Figure 1. Chart of Bassa Vah showing casing pairs and the vowels and tone marks in isolation. (The original scan here had the names “double” and “drag” reversed but this has been corrected.) Taken from www.uniboa.org/bassalanguage.html, on the “United Bassa Organizations in the Americas” website.

ㄋ ㄋ	ㄏ ㄏ	ㄟ ㄟ	ㄨ ㄨ	ㄿ ㄿ	ㄿ ㄿ	ㄿ ㄿ	ㄿ ㄿ	ㄿ ㄿ	ㄿ ㄿ	ㄿ ㄿ
ehni n	kah k	sah s	fah f	mbe mb	yeeay j, ɲ	gah g	dii d	kpah kp	jauh j	
ㄿ ㄿ	ㄿ ㄿ	ㄿ ㄿ	ㄿ ㄿ	ㄿ ㄿ	ㄿ ㄿ	ㄿ ㄿ	ㄿ ㄿ	ㄿ ㄿ	ㄿ ㄿ	ㄿ ㄿ
whah hw/xw	wah w	zau z	gbu gb	udau "d"	chay c	uwuu hw	tau t	bah b	vu v	
ㄿ ㄿ	ㄿ ㄿ	ㄿ ㄿ	ㄿ ㄿ	ㄿ ㄿ	ㄿ ㄿ	ㄿ ㄿ	ㄿ ㄿ	ㄿ ㄿ	ㄿ ㄿ	ㄿ ㄿ
yaayin h	pah p	uwada r/l	ah a	auh ɔ	oh o	uuh u	aay e	eh ɛ	iuh i	
	high	ㄿ	ㄿ	ㄿ	ㄿ	ㄿ	ㄿ	ㄿ	ㄿ	ㄿ
	grave	ㄿ	ㄿ	ㄿ	ㄿ	ㄿ	ㄿ	ㄿ	ㄿ	ㄿ
	mid-low	ㄿ	ㄿ	ㄿ	ㄿ	ㄿ	ㄿ	ㄿ	ㄿ	ㄿ
	double	ㄿ	ㄿ	ㄿ	ㄿ	ㄿ	ㄿ	ㄿ	ㄿ	ㄿ
	drag	ㄿ	ㄿ	ㄿ	ㄿ	ㄿ	ㄿ	ㄿ	ㄿ	ㄿ

Figure 2. Chart of Bassa Vah showing casing pairs with character names, as well as the vowels and tone marks in isolation. (The original scan here had the names “double” and “drag” reversed but this has been corrected.) Taken from www.uniboa.org/bassalanguage.html, on the “United Bassa Organizations in the Americas” website.

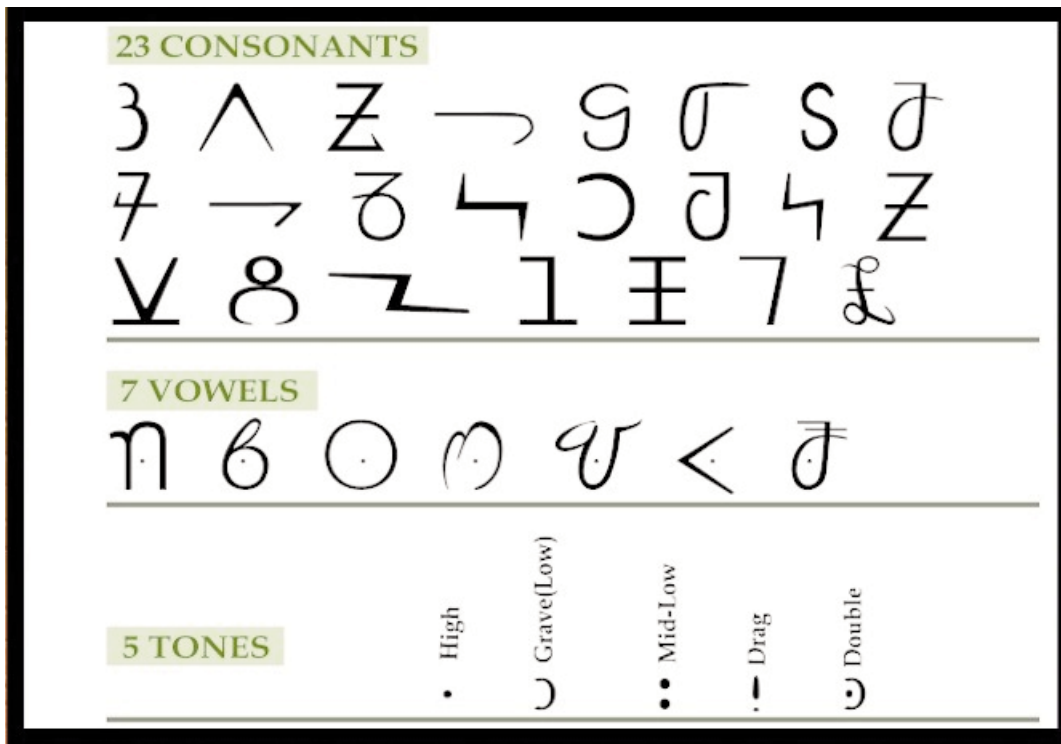


Figure 3. Sample of handwritten Bassa Vah text.

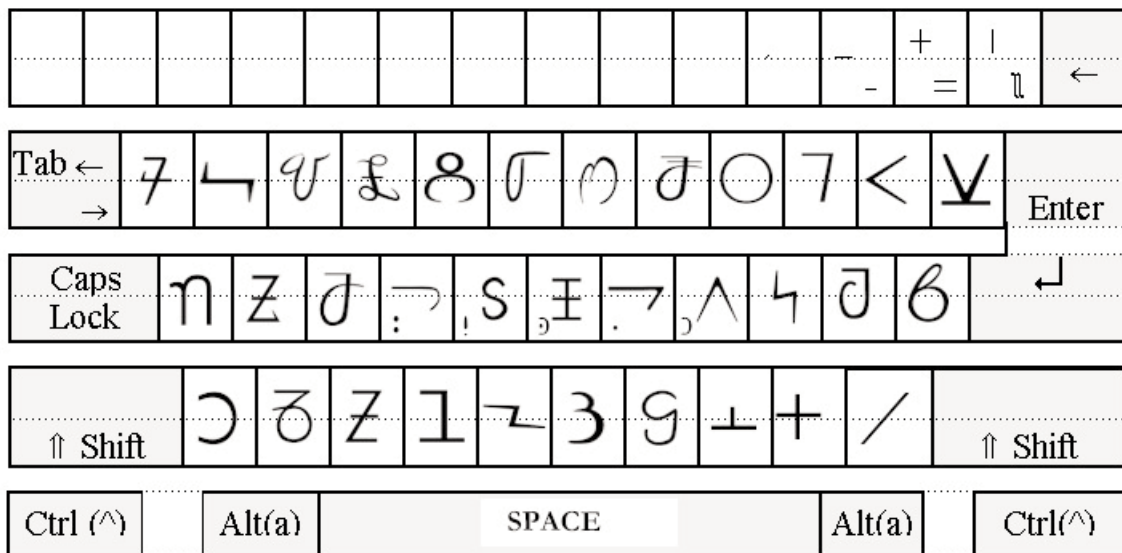


Figure 4 Bassa Vah keyboard layout. Note the COMMA and FULL STOP

Table V The Bassa Alphabet									
CONSONANTS				VOWELS AND TONES					
LENIS		FORTIS			HIGH	MID	LOW	MID-LOW	HIGH-LOW
p	²² ɔ(ɔ)	b	¹⁹ ɓ	i	ɪ	ɪ(ɪ)	ɪ	ɪ	ɪ
kp	⁹ ɔ(ɔ)	gb/gm	¹⁴ ɓ	a	ɒ(ɒ)		ɛ		
m/b	⁵ ɔ(ɔ)			u	ʊ(ʊ)		ɛ		
f	⁴ ɔ(ɔ)	v	²⁰ ɓ	e	ɛ(ɛ)		ɛ		
t	¹⁸ ɔ(ɔ)	d	⁸ ɓ	ɛ	ɛ		ɛ		
n	¹ ɔ(ɔ)			ɔ	ɔ(ɔ)		ɛ		
dy/ny	⁶ ɔ(ɔ)			o	ɔ(ɔ)		ɛ		
d(ɔ)	¹⁵ ɔ(ɔ)			ɔ	ɔ(ɔ)		ɛ		
r	²³ ɔ(ɔ)			o	ɔ(ɔ)		ɛ		
s	³ ɔ(ɔ)	z	¹³ ɓ	o	ɔ(ɔ)		ɛ		
c	¹⁶ ɔ(ɔ)	j	¹⁰ ɓ	o	ɔ(ɔ)		ɛ		
k	² ɔ(ɔ)	g	⁷ ɓ	o	ɔ(ɔ)		ɛ		
w	¹² ɔ(ɔ)	h	²¹ ɓ	o	ɔ(ɔ)		ɛ		
xw	¹¹ ɔ(ɔ)	hw	¹⁷ ɓ				ɛ		

Figure 5. Table of Bassa Vah syllables from Dalby 1967.

ɔ(ɔ) ɔ(ɔ)-ɔ(ɔ) ɔ(ɔ) ɔ(ɔ) ɔ(ɔ)-ɔ(ɔ) ɔ(ɔ) ɔ(ɔ) ɔ(ɔ)
 ɔ(ɔ) ɔ(ɔ)-ɔ(ɔ) ɔ(ɔ) ɔ(ɔ) ɔ(ɔ) ɔ(ɔ) ɔ(ɔ)-ɔ(ɔ)
 ɔ(ɔ) ɔ(ɔ) ɔ(ɔ) ɔ(ɔ) ɔ(ɔ)-ɔ(ɔ) ɔ(ɔ) ɔ(ɔ)-ɔ(ɔ)
 ɔ(ɔ) ɔ(ɔ) ɔ(ɔ) ɔ(ɔ)-ɔ(ɔ) ɔ(ɔ) ɔ(ɔ) ɔ(ɔ) ɔ(ɔ)
 ɔ(ɔ) ɔ(ɔ) ɔ(ɔ) ɔ(ɔ) ɔ(ɔ) ɔ(ɔ) ɔ(ɔ)-ɔ(ɔ)
 ɔ(ɔ) ɔ(ɔ) ɔ(ɔ) ɔ(ɔ) ɔ(ɔ) ɔ(ɔ) ɔ(ɔ) ɔ(ɔ)

Figure 6. Sample of handwritten Bassa Vah text.

Text written by Peter Gorwor of Liberia, taken from www.omniglot.com/writing/bassa.htm

𑏊𑏗𑏛𑏛𑏛 𑏏𑏒 𑏑𑏘

𑏧𑏘𑏏𑏒 𑏊𑏗𑏛𑏛𑏛 𑏏𑏒 𑏑𑏘 𑏚𑏞𑏛 𑏚𑏘𑏚𑏘𑏘
𑏏𑏒 𑏘𑏘 𑏚𑏘 𑏚𑏘𑏛 𑏚𑏘 𑏊𑏗𑏛𑏛𑏛 𑏚𑏞𑏛𑏚𑏘
𑏒 𑏚𑏘𑏚𑏘𑏚𑏘 𑏑𑏘 𑏚𑏘 𑏏𑏒 𑏒 𑏚𑏘 “𑏑𑏘,
𑏒 𑏚𑏘 𑏚𑏘 𑏚𑏘 𑏚𑏘 𑏏𑏒 𑏚𑏘𑏚𑏘𑏘 𑏚𑏘
𑏚𑏘𑏘, 𑏚𑏘𑏚𑏘𑏘𑏚𑏘 𑏒 𑏚𑏘 𑏚𑏘𑏘 𑏚𑏘𑏘
𑏚𑏘𑏚𑏘 𑏒 𑏚𑏘𑏚𑏘 𑏚𑏘𑏘 𑏚𑏘𑏛𑏛𑏛 𑏏𑏘”
𑏑𑏘 𑏚𑏘 “𑏚𑏘 𑏚𑏘𑏚𑏘𑏘 𑏏𑏘 𑏘𑏘𑏘 𑏚𑏘
𑏚𑏘 𑏏𑏒 𑏚𑏘 𑏚𑏘𑏚𑏘𑏘 𑏚𑏘𑏘 𑏚𑏘𑏛𑏛𑏛”
𑏊𑏗𑏛𑏛𑏛 𑏚𑏘 “𑏚𑏘𑏘, 𑏏𑏘 𑏘𑏘𑏘 𑏚𑏘
𑏏𑏒 𑏚𑏘 𑏚𑏘𑏚𑏘𑏘 𑏚𑏘𑏘 𑏚𑏘𑏛𑏛𑏛”
𑏧𑏘 𑏏𑏒 𑏑𑏘 𑏚𑏘𑏚𑏘+.

𑏏𑏒 𑏊𑏗𑏛𑏛𑏛 𑏚𑏘𑏘 𑏑𑏘 𑏚𑏘𑏚𑏘𑏘
𑏚𑏘𑏘 𑏒 𑏚𑏘𑏚𑏘 𑏑𑏘, 𑏏𑏒 𑏒 𑏘𑏘𑏘+
𑏏𑏒 𑏑𑏘 𑏚𑏘𑏚𑏘 𑏚𑏘 𑏚𑏘 𑏊𑏗𑏛𑏛𑏛
𑏚𑏘𑏚𑏘𑏘 𑏏𑏒 𑏑𑏘 𑏚𑏘 “𑏊𑏗𑏛𑏛𑏛
𑏒 𑏚𑏘𑏘 𑏚𑏘𑏚𑏘𑏘+.”

𑏏𑏒 𑏊𑏗𑏛𑏛𑏛 𑏚𑏘 “𑏚𑏘𑏚 𑏚𑏘𑏚𑏘
𑏚𑏘 𑏚𑏘𑏚𑏘?”

𑏏𑏒 𑏑𑏘 𑏚𑏘 “𑏚𑏘 𑏚𑏘𑏘 𑏚𑏘𑏚𑏘
𑏒 𑏚𑏘𑏘 𑏚𑏘𑏚𑏘𑏘𑏚𑏘 𑏚𑏘” 𑏧𑏘 𑏏𑏒
𑏊𑏗𑏛𑏛𑏛 𑏚𑏘𑏘 𑏊𑏗𑏛𑏛𑏛 𑏏𑏒 𑏒 𑏚𑏘
𑏚𑏘𑏚𑏘𑏘+.

Figure 7. Sample of upper-case or “monumental” (all caps) style Bassa Vah text. This particular text was written before case was innovated for the script.



Figure 8. Sample from a Bassa Vah primer, ca. 1975.

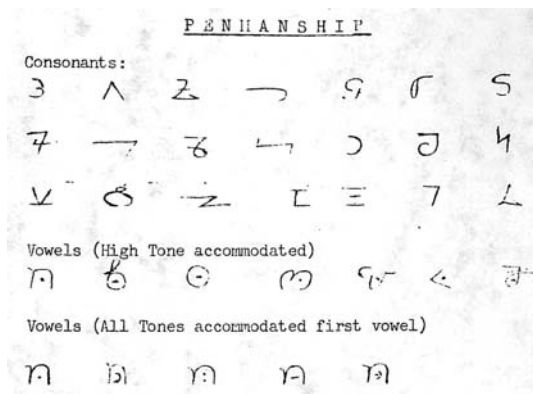


Figure 9. Sample of handwritten text, ca. 1975.

A. Administrative

1. Title

Proposal for encoding the Bassa Vah script in the SMP of the UCS

2. Requester's name

UC Berkeley Script Encoding Initiative (Universal Scripts Project)

3. Requester type (Member body/Liaison/Individual contribution)

Liaison contribution.

4. Submission date

2010-07-31

5. Requester's reference (if applicable)

6. Choose one of the following:

6a. This is a complete proposal

No.

6b. More information will be provided later

Yes.

B. Technical – General

1. Choose one of the following:

1a. This proposal is for a new script (set of characters)

Yes.

1b. Proposed name of script

Bassa Vah.

1c. The proposal is for addition of character(s) to an existing block

No.

1d. Name of the existing block

2. Number of characters in proposal

67.

3. Proposed category (A-Contemporary; B.1-Specialized (small collection); B.2-Specialized (large collection); C-Major extinct; D-Attested extinct; E-Minor extinct; F-Archaic Hieroglyphic or Ideographic; G-Obscure or questionable usage symbols)

Category A.

4a. Is a repertoire including character names provided?

Yes.

4b. If YES, are the names in accordance with the “character naming guidelines” in Annex L of P&P document?

Yes.

4c. Are the character shapes attached in a legible form suitable for review?

Yes.

5a. Who will provide the appropriate computerized font (ordered preference: True Type, or PostScript format) for publishing the standard?

Jason Glavy and Michael Everson.

5b. If available now, identify source(s) for the font (include address, e-mail, ftp-site, etc.) and indicate the tools used:

Michael Everson, FontLab.

6a. Are references (to other character sets, dictionaries, descriptive texts etc.) provided?

Yes.

6b. Are published examples of use (such as samples from newspapers, magazines, or other sources) of proposed characters attached?

Yes.

7. Does the proposal address other aspects of character data processing (if applicable) such as input, presentation, sorting, searching, indexing, transliteration etc. (if yes please enclose information)?

Yes.

8. Submitters are invited to provide any additional information about Properties of the proposed Character(s) or Script that will assist in correct understanding of and correct linguistic processing of the proposed character(s) or script. Examples of such properties are: Casing information, Numeric information, Currency information, Display behaviour information such as line breaks, widths etc., Combining behaviour, Spacing behaviour, Directional behaviour, Default Collation behaviour, relevance in Mark Up contexts, Compatibility equivalence and other Unicode normalization related information. See the Unicode standard at <http://www.unicode.org> for such information on other scripts. Also see Unicode Character Database <http://www.unicode.org/Public/UNIDATA/UnicodeCharacterDatabase.html> and associated Unicode Technical Reports for information needed for consideration by the Unicode Technical Committee for inclusion in the Unicode Standard.

See above.

C. Technical – Justification

1. Has this proposal for addition of character(s) been submitted before? If YES, explain.

No.

2a. Has contact been made to members of the user community (for example: National Body, user groups of the script or characters, other experts, etc.)?

No.

2b. If YES, with whom?

2c. If YES, available relevant documents

3. Information on the user community for the proposed characters (for example: size, demographics, information technology use, or publishing use) is included?

See above.

4a. The context of use for the proposed characters (type of use; common or rare)

Slightly common.

4b. Reference

5a. Are the proposed characters in current use by the user community?

Yes.

5b. If YES, where?

Scholars and some local use in Sierra Leone and Liberia.

6a. After giving due considerations to the principles in the P&P document must the proposed characters be entirely in the BMP?

No.

6b. If YES, is a rationale provided?

6c. If YES, reference

7. Should the proposed characters be kept together in a contiguous range (rather than being scattered)?

Yes.

8a. Can any of the proposed characters be considered a presentation form of an existing character or character sequence?

No.

8b. If YES, is a rationale for its inclusion provided?

8c. If YES, reference

9a. Can any of the proposed characters be encoded using a composed character sequence of either existing characters or other proposed characters?

Yes.

9b. If YES, is a rationale for its inclusion provided?

Yes.

9c. If YES, reference

Canonical decompositions are given along with the base characters and script-specific diacritics.

10a. Can any of the proposed character(s) be considered to be similar (in appearance or function) to an existing character?

No.

10b. If YES, is a rationale for its inclusion provided?

10c. If YES, reference

11a. Does the proposal include use of combining characters and/or use of composite sequences (see clauses 4.12 and 4.14 in ISO/IEC 10646-1: 2000)?

Yes.

11b. If YES, is a rationale for such use provided?

Yes.

11c. If YES, reference

See above.

11d. Is a list of composite sequences and their corresponding glyph images (graphic symbols) provided?

Yes.

11e. If YES, reference

See code chart and Unicode properties.

12a. Does the proposal contain characters with any special properties such as control function or similar semantics?

No.

12b. If YES, describe in detail (include attachment if necessary)

13a. Does the proposal contain any Ideographic compatibility character(s)?

No.

13b. If YES, is the equivalent corresponding unified ideographic character(s) identified?