

Unification of Tamil and Grantha numerals

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I am writing this document to briefly recap what was already said in documents submitted over 5 years ago, since I was somewhat shocked to discover recently that apparently the committees are still not clear about the fact that the same set of numerals as already encoded/proposed under the name of Tamil are also used by Grantha.

The Grantha proposal docs submitted by Naga Ganesan (L2/09-141, L2/09-141R and L2/09-345) proposed separate digits 0-9 and numbers 10-1000 for Grantha. In my docs L2/09-258 p 3 and L2/09-317 pp 14-17, I had strongly objected to this, providing clear proof that the same set of digits and numbers are used in both Tamil and Grantha. In my own Grantha proposal L2/09-372 pp 5-6 I had extended this to show that even fractions like $\frac{1}{4}$, $\frac{1}{2}$ and $\frac{3}{4}$ are common to Tamil and Grantha and recommended that they *not* be disunified.

I reproduce on the next page the same attestations which I provided back then. Comparing these attestations to the existing Tamil code chart (for the digits and numbers) and the standing Tamil fractions proposal N4430 L2/13-047 (for the fractions) should make it clear that the same set of identical glyphs is used both in Tamil and Grantha as numerals.

In fact I had even provided a *Grantha* attestation in my *Tamil* fractions proposal for the signs for $\frac{1}{4}$, $\frac{1}{2}$ and $\frac{3}{4}$! (See N4462 p 2 and L2/12-231 p 8.)

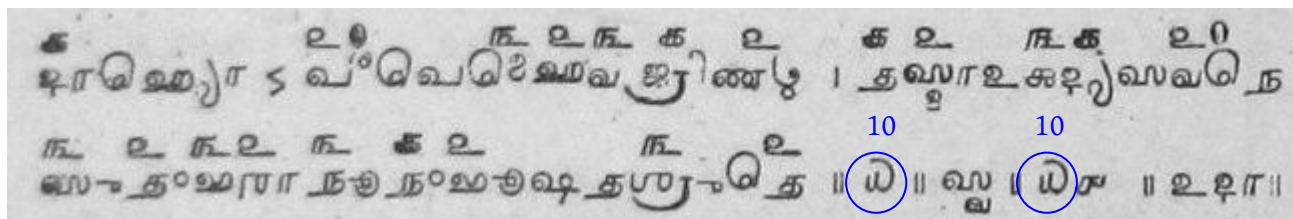
Of course, there are glyphic variants for some of these characters but these are clearly identifiable as such as explained in my previous documents.

The GoI conducted an expert committee meeting on 2010-Sep-06 at the Ministry of IT premises in New Delhi. I was also an invited member of that committee. The report of that meeting submitted to the UTC as L2/10-409 clearly states on pp 4-5:

The fact that Tamil and Grantha share the same set of digits, numbers and fractions was accepted by all without debate. Digits 0-9 and numbers 10, 100 and 1000 are encoded in the Tamil block and can used from the Tamil block. Experts affirmed that there is no need to separately encode Grantha numerals and the Tamil numerals (U+0BE6 to U+0BF2) should be used for Grantha. Similarly for Grantha fractions, Tamil fractions are to be used. It is understood that the Tamil fractions need to be encoded in Unicode.

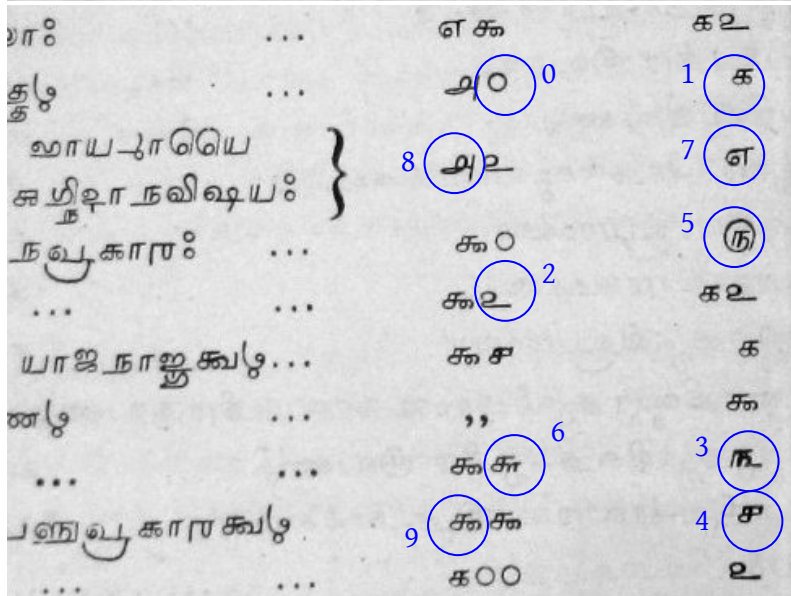
Given this, there need be no further doubt about unifying Tamil and Grantha numerals.

Attestations



ABOVE: From *Sāma Veda Saṃhitā*

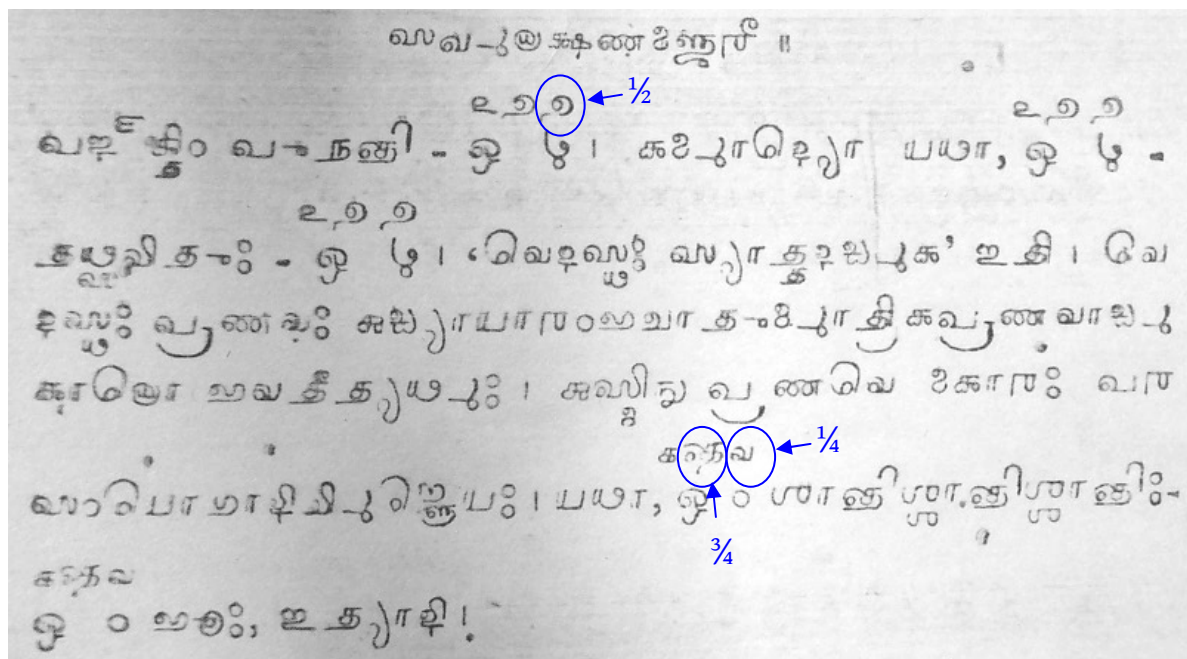
(AVMSSGDPS Samithi, Kumbakonam, Tamil Nadu, 1985) Ārcika p 15. Shows usage of number 10. Also shows usage of same Tamil-Grantha digits placed above as svara markers.



LEFT: From *Smṛti Muktāphala -*

Varṇāśrama Dharma Kāṇḍa (Sharada Vilasa Press, Kumbakonam, Tamil Nadu, 1939). Illustrates all the digits 0-9 being used in the place value system to denote page and line numbers.

BELOW: From *Vyāsa Śikṣā with Veda Taijasa commentary* (Brahmananda Press, Tiruvadi, 1908). Already used in Grantha proposal L2/09-372 and Tamil fractions proposal L2/12-231 (N4462). Illustrates the usage of the major Tamil fractions denoting 1/4, 1/2 and 3/4 as part of Grantha text to denote length in moras in ruby notation:



-0-0-0-