2001-06-12

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 to encode the Osmanya script in the SMP of the UCS

Source: Michael Everson Status: Expert Contribution

Action: For consideration by JTC1/SC2/WG2

Date: 2001-06-12

Replaces: N1948 (1999-01-25)

## A. Administrative

#### 1. Title

Revised proposal to encode the Osmanya script in the SMP of the UCS.

### 2. Requester's name

Michael Everson, (WG2 member for Ireland).

### 3. Requester type

Expert contribution.

### 4. Submission date

2001-06-12.

### 5. Requester's reference

### 6a. Completion

This is a complete proposal.

### 6b. More information to be provided?

No.

## B. Technical – General

### 1a. New script? Name?

Yes. Osmanya.

### 1b. Addition of characters to existing block? Name?

No.

### 2. Number of characters

40.

### 3. Proposed category

Category B.1.

### 4. Proposed level of implementation and rationale

As a simple left-to-right alphabetic script, Osmanya requires Level 1.

### 5a. Character names included in proposal?

Yes.

### 5b. Character names in accordance with guidelines?

Yes.

### 5c. Character shapes reviewable?

Yes (see below).

### 6a. Who will provide computerized font?

Michael Everson.

### 6b. Font currently available?

Yes.

#### 6c. Font format?

TrueType.

7a. Are references (to other character sets, dictionaries, descriptive texts, etc.) provided?

Yes. See the bibliography below.

7b. Are published examples (such as samples from newspapers, magazines, or other sources) of use of proposed characters attached?

Yes, see below.

8. Does the proposal address other aspects of character data processing?

Yes; see Unicode properties below.

## C. Technical – Justification

### 1. Contact with the user community?

Yes, with Osman Abdihalim Osman Yusuf Keenadiid, grandson of Osman Yusuf Keenadiid, the inventor of the script.

### 2. Information on the user community?

Mostly the scholarly and library communities, since the script was abandoned in 1973 in favour of Latin orthography for Somali. But there is some ordinary use as well.

### 3a. The context of use for the proposed characters?

Used to write Somali, especially from 1961–1973 (when Osmanya enjoyed official sanction); Osmanya was devised in 1920–1922.

### 3b. Reference

See bibliography below.

### 4a. Proposed characters in current use?

Yes.

### 4b. Where?

By scholars and librarians; there is still some native use.

### 5a. Characters should be encoded entirely in BMP?

No.

#### 5b. Rationale

Accordance with the Roadmap.

### 6. Should characters be kept in a continuous range?

Yes.

# 7a. Can the characters be considered a presentation form of an existing character or character sequence?

No.

7b. Where?

7c. Reference

# 8a. Can any of the characters be considered to be similar (in appearance or function) to an existing character?

No.

8b. Where?

8c. Reference

### 9a. Combining characters or use of composite sequences included?

No.

### 9b. List of composite sequences and their corresponding glyph images provided?

Nο

### 10. Characters with any special properties such as control function, etc. included?

No.

# **D. Proposal**

The Osmanya script, called in Somali **4S7** 8m59n9 far Soomaali 'Somali writing' or **4985928S** Cismaanya, was devised in 1920–1922 by **4985928** 8**%344 HUSSO80** (Cismaan Yuusuf Keenadiid) to represent the Somali language. It replaced an attempt by Sheikh Uweys of the Confraternity Qadiriyyah (died 1909) to devise an Arabic-based orthography for Somali. It has in turn been replaced by the Latin orthography of Muuse Xaaji Ismaaciil Galaal (1914-1980). In 1961 both the Latin and Osmanya scripts were adopted for use in Somalia, but in 1969 there was a coup, with one of its stated aims the resolution of the debate over the country's writing system. Latin orthography was adopted finally in 1973. Gregersen said in 1977 that some 20,000 or more people use Osmanya in private correspondance and in bookkeeping and that several books and a fortnightly journal **2h7840** Horseed ('Vanguard') was published, all "cyclostyped" which I take to be equivalent to "cyclostyled" and to mean 'mimeographed'.

### Structure

Osmanya is a simple alphabetic script, read from left to right in horizontal lines running from top to bottom. It has 22 consonants and 8 vowels. Unique long vowels are written for AA, EE, and OO; long UU and II are written with the consonants WAW and YA.

# Ordering and names

Alphabetical ordering follows the order of the Arabic alphabet, and is given here as specified by Osman Abdihalim Yuusuf Osman Keenadiid. This ordering is similar to the ordering given in Diringer 1996 and reported in Gregerson 1977 for Cerulli 1932 and Maino 1951. The names are as given by Osman. Glyphs are taken from *Afkeenna iyo fartysa* ('our language and it's handwriting') 1971, which was supplied to me by Osman.

Code positions proposed in the table are based on the Roadmap to tthe SMP.

# **Unicode Character Properties**

Spacing letters, category "Lo", bidi category "L" (strong left to right) 0001 0480 - 0001 049D

Spacing digits, category "\_\_", bidi category "L" (strong left to right) 0001 04A0 - 0001 04A9

# Bibliography

[s.n.]. 1971. SUHÜRRS 98h USTURSS: Whith Hm 440. MS5S7: hm 888HS 98h 84h 84h 9008. [Afkeenna iyo fartiisa: buug koowaad ('Our language and its handwriting: book one'). Xamar: Goosanka afka iyo suugaanta Soomaalida.]

Cerulli, Enrico. 1932. "Tentativo indigeno di formare un alfabeta somalo", in *Oriente Maderno* 12:212–13.

Diringer, David. 1996 (1947). *The alphabet: a key to the history of mankind*. Munshiram Manoharlal. ISBN 81-215-0748-0

Gaur, Albertine. 1992. A history of writing. London: British Library. ISBN 0-7123-0270-0

Gregersen, Edgar A. 1977. *Language in Africa: an introductory survey*. New York: Gordon and Breach. ISBN 0-677-04380-5

Maino, Mario. 1951. "L'alfabeta 'Osmania' in Somalia", in Rassegna di Studi Etopici 10:108–21.

Nakanishi, Akira. 1990. Writing systems of the world: alphabets, syllabaries, pictograms. Rutland, VT: Charles E. Tuttle. ISBN 0-8048-1654-9

## Annex A

In N1948 I have samples from Nakanishi 1990, Gaur 1990, and Gregerson 1977. At the end of this document, I attach a selection of pages from *Afkeenna iyo fartiisa*.

### **Row 104: OSMANYA**

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### **Row 104: OSMANYA**

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Afkeenna iyo fartiisa 'our language and its handwriting' YHR HMH90

Buug koowaad 'book one'

In this PDF file, I have annotated a few pages with transliterations and translations. Of interest to students of writing systems are pages 21 and 66. Of interest to students of phonology and morphology are pages 62, 63, 64, and 65.

Alphabetical order is not given in this book but it is:  $\delta$ ,  $\Psi$ ,  $\mathcal{L}$ , I,  $\mathcal{H}$ ,  $\mathcal{R}$ , O,  $\mathbf{7}$ ,  $\mathcal{L}$ ,  $\mathbf{3}$ ,  $\mathbf{2}$ ,  $\mathcal{L}$ ,

- Michael Everson 2001-06-06









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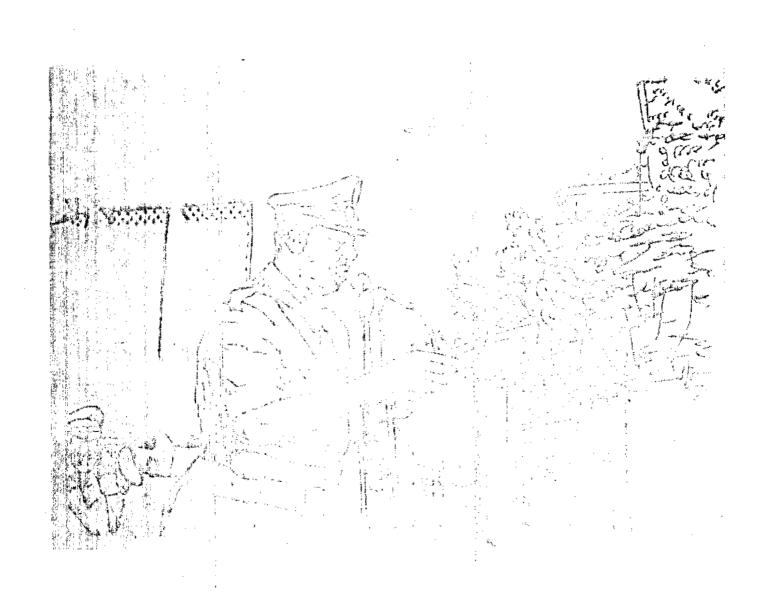
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Goosanka afka iyo suugaanta Soomaalida 'briefing(?) Somali language and literature' Xamar 1971

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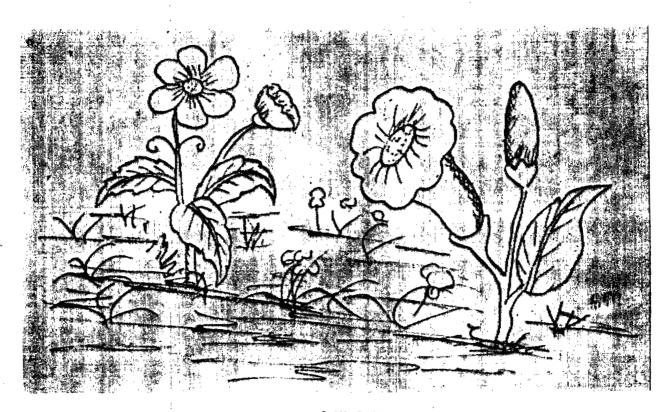


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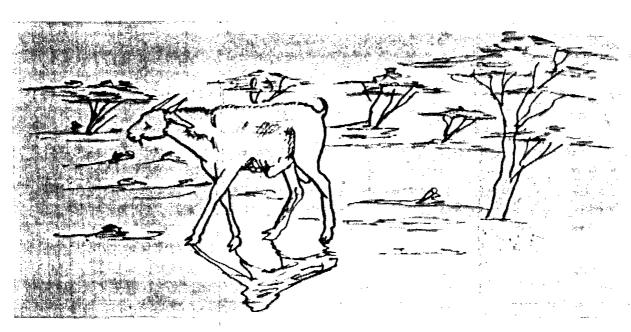
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kalluun karsan 'cooked fish'; kitaabka keen 'bring the holy book'

SSNAK SHEPPEK SS625K SANNSK

sonkor 'sugar'

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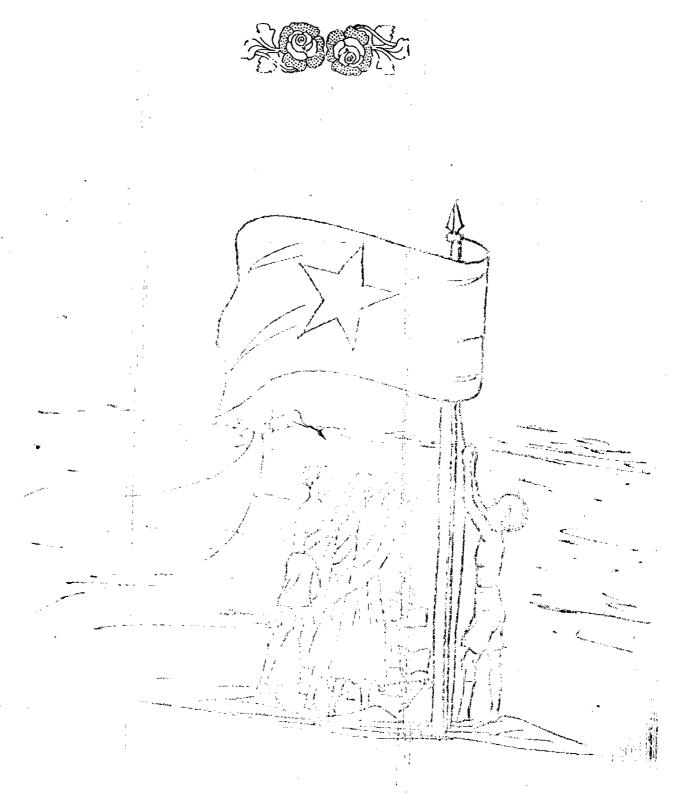
kalluun 'fish'

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simidda furayaasha 'vowels' gaaggaab 'short'; dheerdheer 'long'

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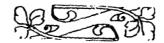
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