

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:** 2001-07-14**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**

2001-07-14.

**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?**

No.

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

No.

## E. Proposal

The Osmanya script, called in Somali **ህፍረት ጽሑፍ** *far Soomaali* ‘Somali writing’ or **ህፍረት ጽሑፍ** *Cismaanya*, was devised in 1920–1922 by **ህፍረት ጽሑፍ ህሁን** (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 correspondence and in bookkeeping and that several books and a fortnightly journal **የኮሎን** *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. **ህፍረት ጽሑፍ ህሁን ህፍረት ጽሑፍ**: **ህፍረት ጽሑፍ**. *MS557: ስምጽዖን ህፍረት ጽሑፍ ህፍረት ጽሑፍ*. Xamar: Goosanka afka iyo suugaanta Soomaalida.]
- Cerulli, Enrico. 1932. “Tentativo indigeno di formare un alfabeto somalo”, in *Oriente Moderno* 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’alfabeto ‘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 fartysa*.

Row 104: OSMANYA

	1048	1049	104A
0	ø	ŋ	o
1	ʉ	ɓ	ʃ
2	ɔ	z	ɛ
3	l	ʎ	ɸ
4	ɱ	ɥ	ɔ
5	ɸ	ɛ	ɛ
6	o	s	y
7	ɹ	ɭ	ɔ
8	ɓ	ɠ	ɕ
9	ɔ	ɸ	u
A	ɔ	ɹ	
B	ɣ	ɠ	
C	ɹ	ɭ	
D	ɕ	ɱ	
E	ɸ		
F	ɣ		

G = 00  
P = 01

Row 104: OSMANYA

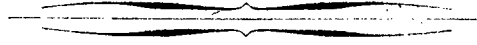
dec	hex	Name	dec	hex	Name
	80	OSMANYA LETTER ALEF			
	81	OSMANYA LETTER BA			
	82	OSMANYA LETTER TA			
	83	OSMANYA LETTER JA			
	84	OSMANYA LETTER XA			
	85	OSMANYA LETTER KHA			
	86	OSMANYA LETTER DEEL			
	87	OSMANYA LETTER RA			
	88	OSMANYA LETTER SA			
	89	OSMANYA LETTER SHIIN			
	8A	OSMANYA LETTER DHA			
	8B	OSMANYA LETTER CAYN			
	8C	OSMANYA LETTER GA			
	8D	OSMANYA LETTER FA			
	8E	OSMANYA LETTER QAAF			
	8F	OSMANYA LETTER KAAF			
	90	OSMANYA LETTER LAAN			
	91	OSMANYA LETTER MIIN			
	92	OSMANYA LETTER NUUN			
	93	OSMANYA LETTER WAW			
	94	OSMANYA LETTER HA			
	95	OSMANYA LETTER YA			
	96	OSMANYA LETTER A			
	97	OSMANYA LETTER E			
	98	OSMANYA LETTER I			
	99	OSMANYA LETTER O			
	9A	OSMANYA LETTER U			
	9B	OSMANYA LETTER AA			
	9C	OSMANYA LETTER EE			
	9D	OSMANYA LETTER OO			
	9E	(This position shall not be used)			
	9F	(This position shall not be used)			
	A0	OSMANYA DIGIT ZERO			
	A1	OSMANYA DIGIT ONE			
	A2	OSMANYA DIGIT TWO			
	A3	OSMANYA DIGIT THREE			
	A4	OSMANYA DIGIT FOUR			
	A5	OSMANYA DIGIT FIVE			
	A6	OSMANYA DIGIT SIX			
	A7	OSMANYA DIGIT SEVEN			
	A8	OSMANYA DIGIT EIGHT			
	A9	OSMANYA DIGIT NINE			
	AA	(This position shall not be used)			
	AB	(This position shall not be used)			
	AC	(This position shall not be used)			
	AD	(This position shall not be used)			
	AE	(This position shall not be used)			
	AF	(This position shall not be used)			



S C H U Z Z S

9 8 h

C S 7 d e z S



*Afkeenna iyo fartiisa*  
'our language and its handwriting'

Ƶ Ʒ ƶ 9 8 h Ʒ m Ʒ Ʒ O

*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: ɔ, Ʒ, ƶ, l, m, n, o, 7, t, z, e, y, h, u, x, s, z, h, e, &, s, l, g, h, a, q, u, (ɛ), m, (h), d, r, s, sh, dh, c, g, f, q, k, l, m, n, w, h, y, a, e, i, o, u, aa, ee, (ii), oo, (uu). The digits 0-9 are O, S, E, K, ɔ, e, y, J, C, U. Punctuation used is standard European (. , : ? “ ” -).



– Michael Everson  
2001-06-06

ƶ m ɔ S Z H S S C H S 9 8 h ɔ h ƶ ƶ z d S ɔ m b Ʒ ƶ 9 O S

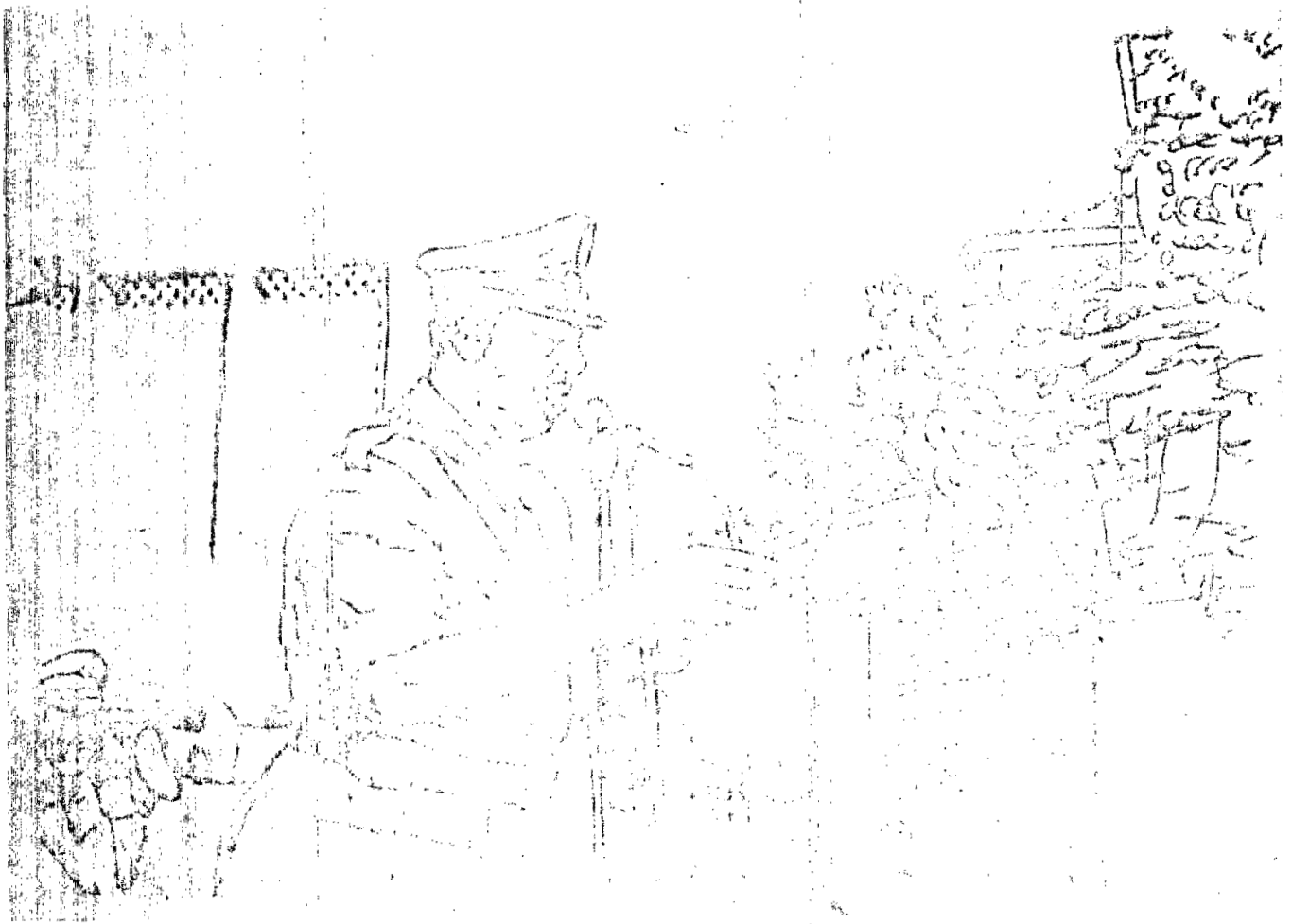
M S 5 S 7 S U S S

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

1988, 55920400 55MS560 89890 45776

in OSOYS 844949258585

*Jaalle, ammaanduule Maxamed Siyaad Barre oo dadka guubaabinahaya*  
*'Chief of staff Maxamed Siyaad Barre speaking to the people'*

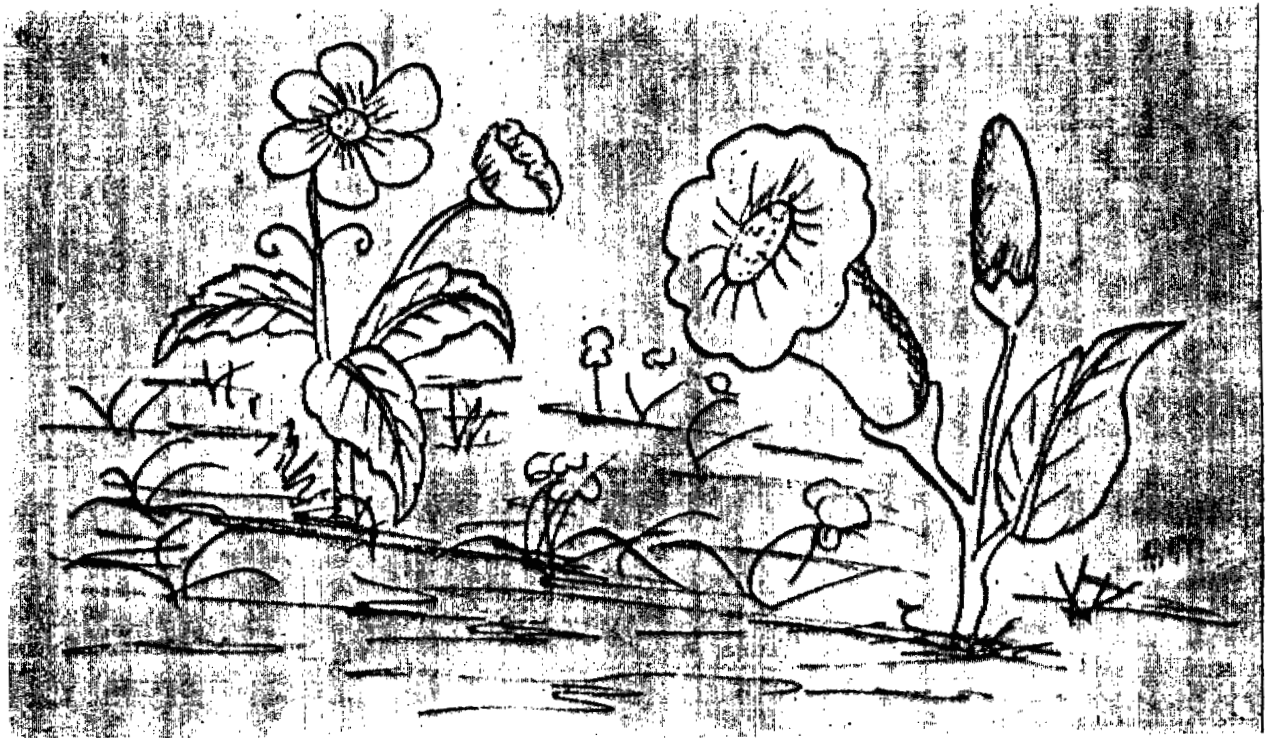


ճ ճ ճ ճ ճ

ճԿՏՄ ճՆ ճ ճճԿՆՆ ԿճԶՈճՆ  
ճճԿՅԼ ճԿՏՄ ճՃՏՄ



ճԿՏՄՏ ճ ճՆ . ճճԿՆՆԿՏ ԿճԴ  
ճճՈՕՏԵՏ ԿՆԶ . ՕճԿԿՏ ԿճՆճԶ .



ճԿՏՄ

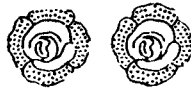


- 8 -



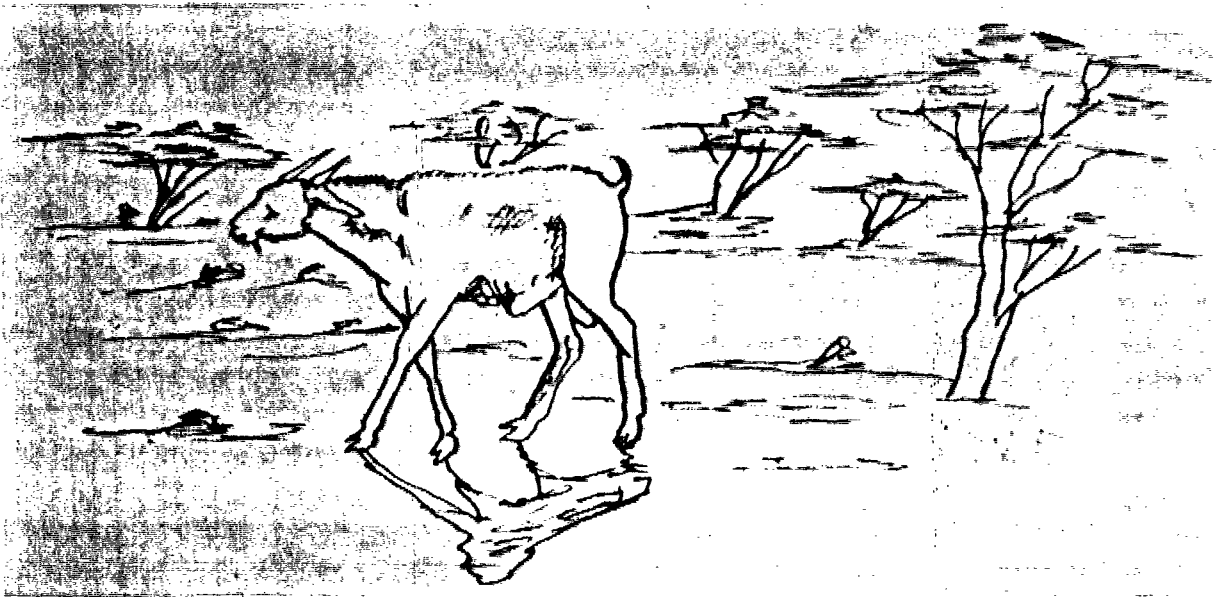
ከ ከ ከ ከ ከ

ከ 0 5 8    ጸ ከ 7 ከ 8 ከ    ከ 0 ከ 0    ከ 2 4 ከ 0



ከ 7 8 9    8 5 7 .    ከ 0 5 8    ጸ ከ 0 5 2 .

ሄ 5 0 6 9    ጸ ከ 7 ከ 8 ከ . ከ 2 4 ከ 0    9 8 ከ    ጸ 0 ከ 0 .



ከ 7 8 9

- 50 -

ዖ ዖ ዖ ዖ ዖ

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

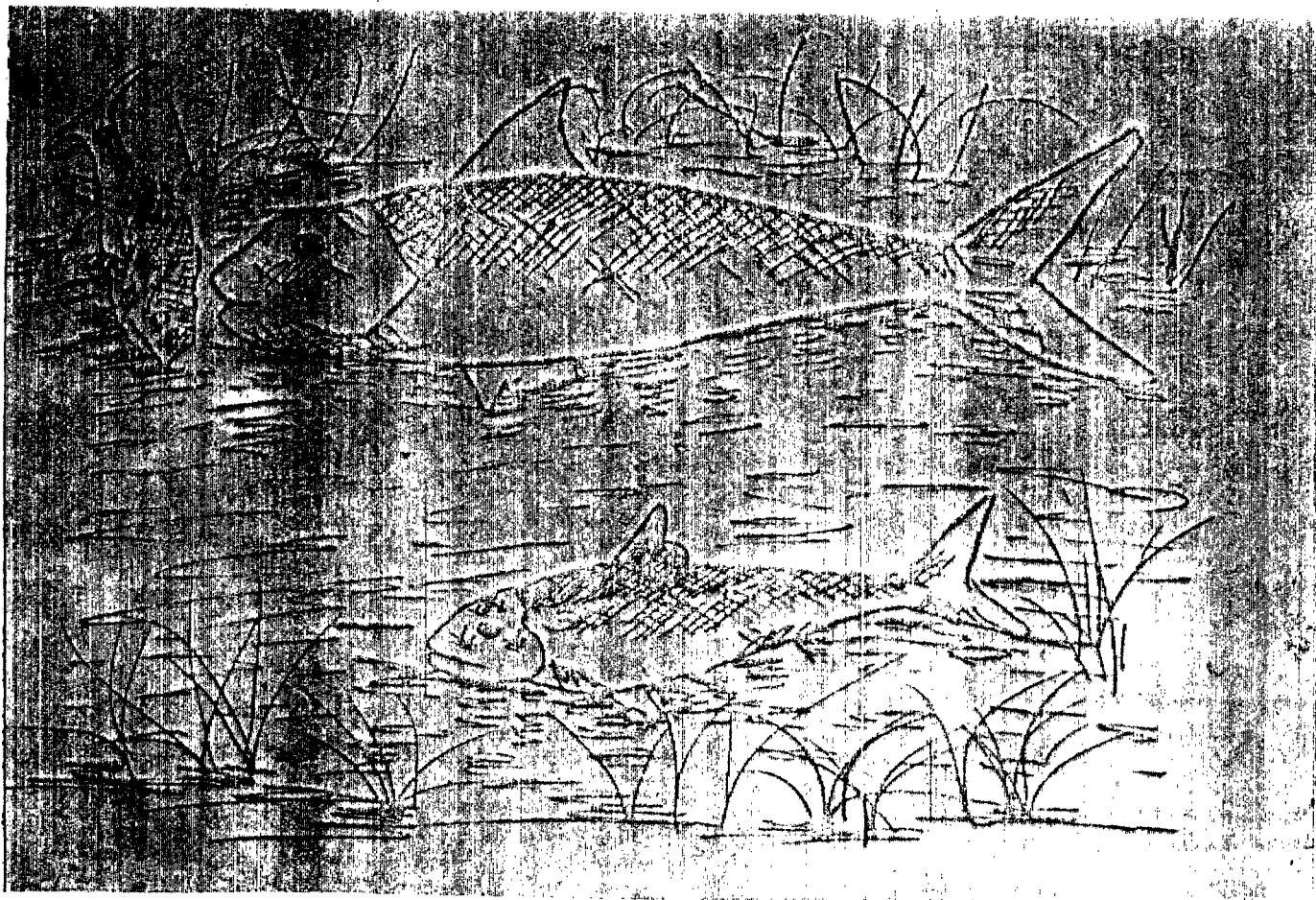
ዘስቦሎ ዘስገራ ዘግብረዮሽ ዘሠራ ዘሰረጸ

ጸሐጊዮሽ ስራ . ዘግብረዮሽ ዘሰራ . ዘሰረጸ

*sonkor* 'sugar'

*kubbad* 'ball'

ዘስገራዮሽ .



ዘስቦሎ

*kalluun* 'fish'

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7 7 7 7 7

7Sፄ 7Sፄፄ ሃገ ሄS7Sፄ. 7ሠ7

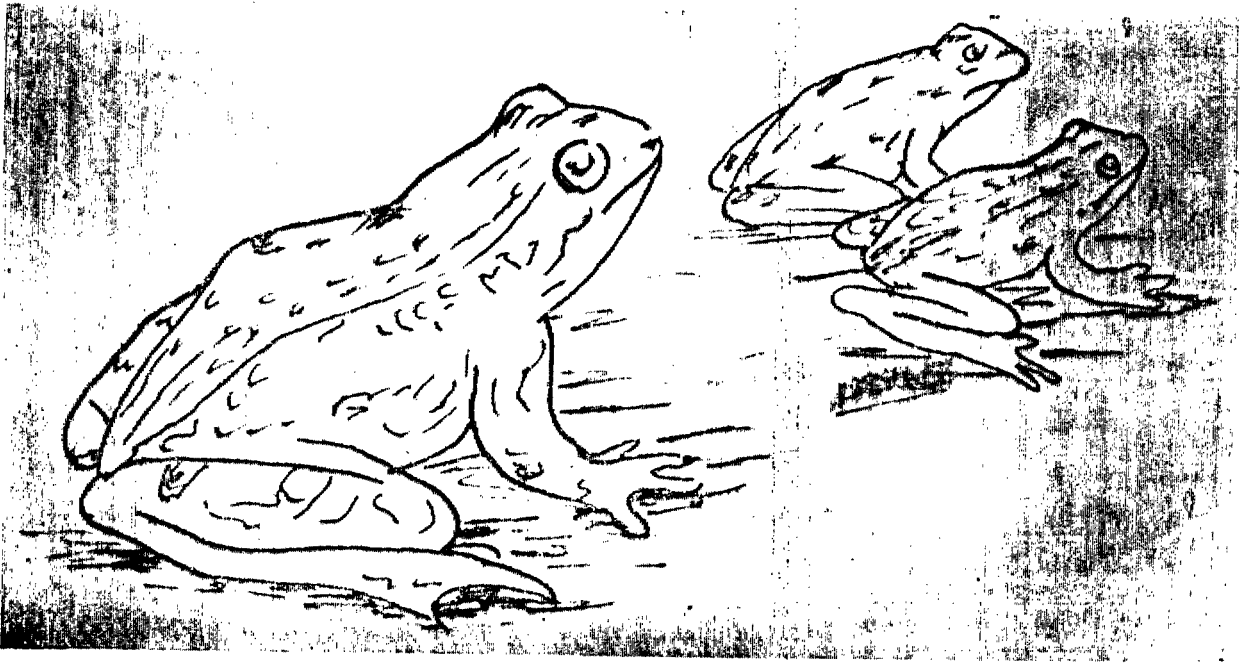
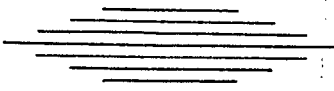
ጸኅ7ፄፄ 9ፄገ 7ሠ7 ጊፄጸ9.

7ገፄ 9ፄገ ሄሠፄ9 ሃSፄS 7ፄ0

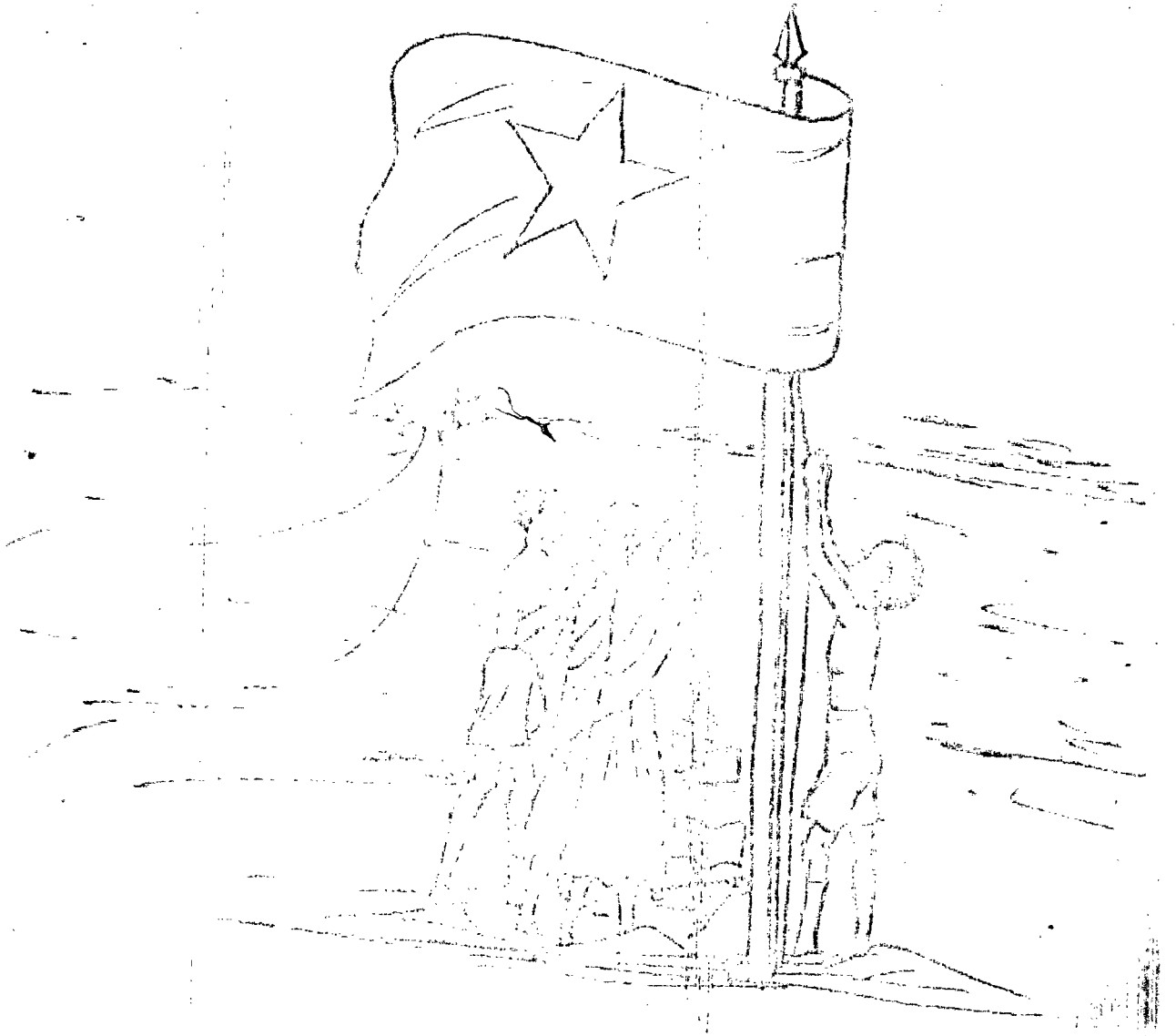
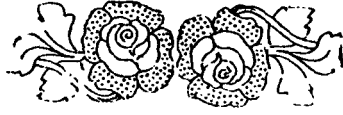
ፄፄፄ 7Sገ 9ፄገ 7Sፄፄ0. 7ፄፄS

9ፄገ 0ገፄS7.

ፄSፄ7S00SፄSፄ ሄS7SፄSፄፄSፄ.







8050LS 486 822H2USF 44

Տ 7 Մ Տ Մ Տ 7 Ա Կ Ա Ձ

Յոնեգոնցոյ ԿԳ ԵՂՆԳՁ ԵՏՄ ՏԸ, ԳՆՆԳՁՁԳԵՏՕՏՕՏ  
ԿԳ ԿԱ ԿԳՁՎԳ. ԵՏՆԳՆՏ ԿՏՅՎՏ ԿՏՄՏՑ ԿԱ  
ՆԱՕՏԵՏՑ ԵՏՅԳԻԳՕ ՏԵՏ ԵՏՅԳԻԳՕՑԻ. ԿԱԿԱՕՏ  
ԿԳՆԿՏ ԿԱՑՁ ԿՏՄԳ ԿՏ ԵԳՕ ՏԸ Տ 7 Մ Տ Մ Տ 7 Ա Կ Ա Ձ.



ԵԱՆՏԵՏ ՆԱՂԱ ԱԴԱԴԻ ԵՏՅԳԻԳՕԿՏ ՏՑԳ Ա  
ԿՑԴՏՁ. ԿՏՄԳ ՆՊՆԱ ԱԴԱԴԳ ԳՁ ԱՄՄԼ  
ՆԱՂԱ ԻԿԻՄՄՏՁԳՕԻ, ՏԵՏ ԿՏՄ ՆԱՂԱ  
ՄՏԴՎԻ. ԵՂՆԳՁԿՏ ԳՁ ԵՏՑՑՏՁ ԵԱՆՏՑ  
ՅԱՄՕԳՁ ԿՏՄՏՑ ՅԱՄՕԳՁ ԵՏՅԳԻԳՕԿՏ.  
ԵՏՅԳԻԳՕԿԱ ԿԱՄԿ ԿՏ ԵՄԱՑԳ ԵՂՆԳՁԿՏ  
ԻՊ ԵՏՁ, ԴՏԻ ԳՑԻ ՕՂԵՏԴՄՏ. ԵՏՅԳԻԳՕՑՕՏ  
ՅՊԵԳՆԳՕՏ ԵՄՕՕԳՆՊՕԿՏ ՆՊԵՏ ԻՂՂԻՆՏ.  
ԵՏՄԳ ՆՊՆԱ ՕՑՕՏԵՏՑԳ?

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

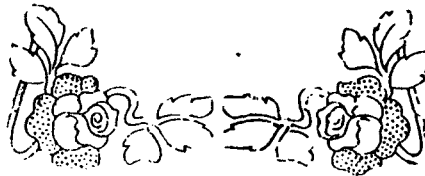
ጸፃፃፃፃፃፃ ህህህህህህህህ

ጸፃፃፃፃፃ

ፃ : ፃ	ህ : ህ	ሀ : ሀ	ከ : ከ	ሐ : ሐ
09797	ህህህ	ሀሀሀ	ከከከ	ሐሐሐ
09797	ህህህ	ሀሀሀ	ከከከ	ሐሐሐ

ህህህህህ

ፅ : ፅ	ሠ : ሠ	ና : ና	ከ : ከ	ካ : ካ
080	ሠሠሠ	ናናና	ከከከ	ካካካ
080	ሠሠሠ	ናናና	ከከከ	ካካካ

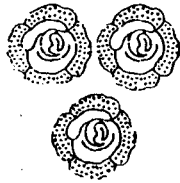


- 9ኪ -

adaygga xarfaha 'geminaton?'

S O S ጆ ጸ ጸ S ጠ S ፕ ህ S ሄ S

b	ሄ	ዐ	ፕ	ቤ	l
xabad	ጠSሄSO	ጸፍዐኪ	ሄSፕኪ	ህSቤSጆ	falay
xabbad	ጠSሄሄSO	ጸፍዐዐኪ	ሄSፕፕኪ	ህSቤቤSጆ	fallay
g	ጸ	ጆ	ኃ	ጊ	n
xuuga	ጠጸጸጸS	ፍጆጊ	Sኃኅፕ	ዘጊጊSጆ	keenay
xuugga	ጠጸጸጸጸS	ፍጆጆጊ	Sኃኃኅፕ	ዘጊጊጊSጆ	keennay



ጠSሄሄSO ጠSሄSO ዘገ ጌSሄOSጆ . ጸፍዐOSOS ጸፍዐኪ .  
 ሄSፕS OSፕህጠO ሄSፕፕSOS ሄSጊህኪ . ኪSMፍጊ  
 ህSቤSጆሄS ህSቤቤSጆ .  
 ጠጸጸጸS OSቤዘገ ሄS ጠጸጸኪ . ፍጆጊ ኪSጊፍጸጆSጊ  
 ፍጆኪ ፍጆጆጊ ኪSሄSጊ .  
 Sኃኅፕዘጆ Sኃኃኅፕ ሄኪ ጌፍጸSጆ . ፍጆSጸገ ሄፍጆኪ  
 ዘጊጊSጆ, ፍጆጊጊS ሄፍጆጊ ዘጊጊጊSጆ.



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ዓ ስ ስ ስ ስ ስ ስ ስ ስ ስ ስ ስ ስ ስ ስ ስ ስ ስ ስ

ስ ስ ስ ስ

daah	ዐፍ	go'	ስከፊ	madax	5505ጠ	ፊሰ	sac	ፊ5775ገ	tarraq
daaha	ዐፍ5	goa	ስከፍ	madaxa	5505ጠ5	ፊሰ5	saca	ፊ5775ገ5	tarraqa
daahu	ዐፍላ	gou	ስከላ	maduxu	550ጠላ	ፊላ	sucu	ፊ5775ገላ	tarraqu
daahii	ዐፍይ	goy	ስከይ	madixii	5509ጠይ	ፊ9ሃይ	sicii	ፊ5775ገይ	tarraqii

jookh	ጠጠ	tog	ፊኪ	xay	ጠጠ	ይይ	miis	ፊፍፍ	shaash
jookha	ጠጠ5	togga	ፊኪሶስ	xayga	ጠጠሶስ	ይይገገ	miiska	ፊፍፍገገ	shaashkii
jookhu	ጠጠላ	toggu	ፊኪሶላ	xaygu	ጠጠሶላ	ይይገላ	miisku	ፊፍፍገላ	shaashka
jookhii	ጠጠይ	toggii	ፊኪሶይ	xaygii	ጠጠሶይ	ይይገይ	miiskii	ፊፍፍገይ	shaashku

wiil	ኅፊሪ	war	ኅፊ7	wan	ኅፊፊ	ዐ50	dad	ገኪህ	qof
wiilka	ኅፊሪገገ	warka	ኅፊ7ገገ	wanka	ኅፊፊገገ	ዐ50ገገ	dadka	ገኪህገገ	qofka
wiilku	ኅፊሪላ	warku	ኅፊ7ላ	wanku	ኅፊፊላ	ዐ50ላ	dadku	ገኪህላ	qofku
wiilkii	ኅፊሪይ	warkii	ኅፊ7ይ	wankii	ኅፊፊይ	ዐ50ይ	dadkii	ገኪህይ	qofkii

qaboow	ገፊሰሕገገ	ዐ5ፊ	dab
qaboowga	ገፊሰሕገገሶስ	ዐ5ፊገገ	dabka
qaboowgu	ገፊሰሕገገላ	ዐ5ፊላ	dabku
qaboowgii	ገፊሰሕገገይ	ዐ5ፊይ	dabkii

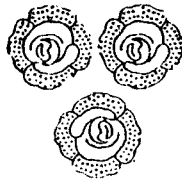


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## Iambarrada soomaalida 'Somali numbers'

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9  
 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

rug 0	ገለጺ (ጸጠኞ)	0	ዓረፍ	፩ shan 5
koow 1	አጠኝ	1	አጠኝ	2 lix 6
labo 2	ጸጠኞ	2	ጠጠኞ	3 toddoba 7
saddex 3	ጸጠኞ	3	ጸጠኞ	4 siddeed 8
afar 4	ጸጠኞ	4	ጸጠኞ	5 sagaal 9



toban 10	ጠጠኞ	10	አጠኝ	6 lixdan 60
labaatan 20	ጸጠኞ	20	ጠጠኞ	7 toddobaatan 70
soddon 30	ጸጠኞ	30	ጸጠኞ	8 siddeetan 80
afartan 40	ጸጠኞ	40	ጸጠኞ	9 sagaashan 90
konton 50	አጠኝ	50	አጠኝ	10 boqol 100

- 40 -

ԵՏԻՏՑՈՑՏՕԼ 987 29229 (5)

ԿԳ ԿՏԿԿԿԿԿՏ ՏԵ ՄԳ ԿՏՄԳ 987 89590  
ԵՏԻՏՑՈՑՏՕԼ 987 29229.

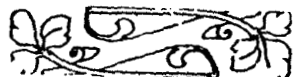
2922908 : ԿՏԿ ԵՏՄԳՕ ԿՏՄ Ե  
ՎՏԵՆՏՏԿՍՍՕԼԸ ?

ԵՏԻՏՑՈՑՏՕԼ : 92492 ՇՄՆՏԵՏՑ ԿՏՄՄՏ  
ԿԳ895ՏԵՏՑԿ. ԿՏՄԳ ԿՏՄ  
ՎՏԵՑՏ Կ9ՄՑ ԿՏԿ ՏԵ ՏՏՏ  
ՑՏՄՄՆ ՏԵ.

2922908 : ԵՏՕՕԱ ԵԳՎՏԸ ԿԳ ԿՏԿԿԿԿԿԿ.  
ՆՄԿՎՑ ՏԿԳԿԿ ԵՏԿՕԿ ԸԳ ԿԳ  
ԿՏՆՆՏՏԿԳՕՏՑ 92ԳՕՏԸ ԿՏԿ  
ՏՏՏ ՑՏՄՄՆ ՇՄՄՄՑՕՄՑԸ ?

ԵՏԻՏՑՈՑՏՕԼ : ՇԳ ՏՑԿՆՏ ՆՄԿՎՑ ԳՑ ԿՏԿԿԿԿԿԿ  
ԿՏՄ ԵՏՑ ՑՑՑԼ. ՏՕԿՆԿ ԵԳՕ  
ՇՏՑՎԳՕ Մ ԿՄԿԿԿՆՏ ԿՏԿՎԳՕ.

2922908 : ՏՑԿՆԿ ՕՄՆՆՑ ԿԳ ՆՄՆՑՕԳ,  
ԿՏՄՑՏ ԿԳ ԿՏՑՕՑՕԳ,  
ՏԿԳԿՎՑՏ ԿԳ ՇՏՎԳ Մ  
ԿՏՑՕԿՏՆՏ ԿՏԿ.



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5545808506 98ክ 99229 (8)

5545808509ይ 5497ብ ማኅ ጸገጠዐይ . ኅጠህ  
 ለ ላህህ 9922908. ኅገ ማ578ህ . ኅህህህ ለ  
 ብገ9 ጸኅህ 92 ማ57ኅገህህህ ጠጠህህህ ጠ  
 ኅህህ ለህህህህ 18ጠጠጠጠ ኅህህ ጠህህ ህህህ .

ኅጠህ ህህህ 92ኅ ጠጠጠጠ ጠህህህህ .  
 ህህ ህህ ኅህህህ ኅገ ለ ጸህህህህ . ጠጠጠጠ  
 ለ ህህህህ ማኅ ህህ ህህህህ . ህህህ ማኅ  
 ህህህ ለ ህህህ . ጠ ጠጠጠጠ ጠህህህህ ጠጠጠ  
 ለ ህህህ . 98ህህ ማኅ ህህ ለ ህህህ ጠ  
 ጠጠጠ ለ ጠህህ .

9922908 ኅህህህ ብገ9 ጸኅህ 92 ኅህህ  
 ለህህህህ ኅጠህ ጠህህ ህህ ጠጠጠጠ ጸኅህ  
 ለህህ ለህህ .





**Founder of Osmanian Script**

**Osman Yusuf Keenadiid**