

Comments on Grantha OM

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Mr. Ganesan has shown a sample image for Grantha OM in his document “L2/09-345”, and further delineated the glyph in his document “L2/10-053”, with an additional image.

The glyph identified by N. Ganesan forms as a part of collage of various others OMs. They do not unambiguously identify it as belonging to the Grantha Script. It should be noted that the identification of the glyph as Grantha OM is Ganesan’s own personal reading.

It must be reiterated here, that Grantha does not use any specific ligature for denoting OM. It is either denoted by *Long O + Anusvara* or *Long O + Pure-Consonant M*. Therefore, the claim for the existence of the special character for Grantha OM is completely dubious.

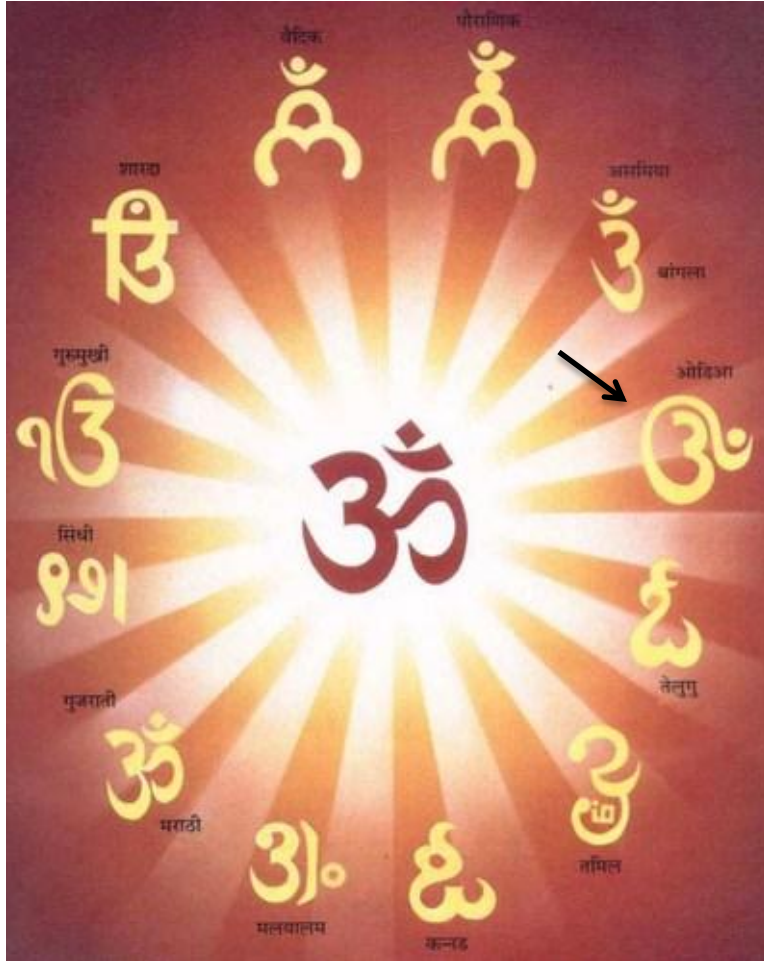
On the first look of the Ganesan’s proposed glyph, it occurred to me that the so-called Grantha OM identified by Ganesan should probably belong to the Oriya Script.



The leftmost image is the Oriyan OM [*Oriya Long O + Oriya Chandrabindu*], the others two being the so-called Grantha OM glyph, cropped from the samples provided by Ganesan.

The proposed glyph is a very cursive variant of the above Oriya OM.

The below image clearly identifies Ganesan’s glyph as belonging to the Oriya Script.



<http://www.panoramio.com/photo/10405833>

The Caption above the OM glyph reads “ओड़िया” (oḍiā)

It is clearly identified that the OM glyph proposed by Ganesan is infact the Oriya OM. It’s highly disturbing to know that Ganesan has made such deliberate misidentification of the Glyph, to put forward his own hypothetical character.

Ganesan had further commented in “L2/09-345”

“The Grantha OM sign is well published, and is in manuscripts.”

Yet, Ganesan has not provided any evidence from books and/or manuscripts for this *well-published* Grantha OM of his. He had to rely only on some random collage image for providing the usage sample. He cannot provide any usage evidence, because there doesn’t exist any.

Further,

“This Grantha OM sign is seen in temples, according to priests from Hindu temples in Chicago and New York.”

We do not know if the priests are Oriya, and Temples are situated in Orissa !

*“Back in 1980s, I have personally seen this **Grantha OM** sign printed in papers such as India Abroad”*

There have been even alleged sightings of Bigfoot and the Loch ness monster. So, I don't want to comment further on this.

Setting aside all the gross blunders in the framing of false evidences to encode his hypothetical character, I do want to appreciate Mr. Ganesan, for identifying a Ligatured OM belonging to the Oriya Script.

At present, the Oriya code chart does not have any special symbol for OM.

Hence, Ganesan may submit a proposal to encode the Glyph in Oriya Script. The glyph belongs to the Oriya code chart, not Grantha.

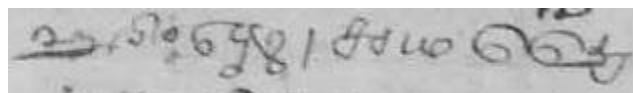
OM as Grantha O and Vowelless M [ଠ୧ୱ]

ଠ୧.

ଶ୍ରୀ-ଠ୧-ଅଥା.

om

śriyainamaḥ [1]

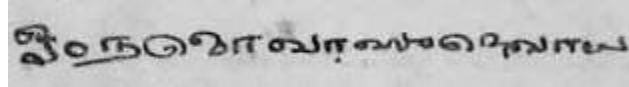


hariḥ om | atha trai[...] [2]

OM as Grantha O and Grantha Anusvara [ଠௌ]

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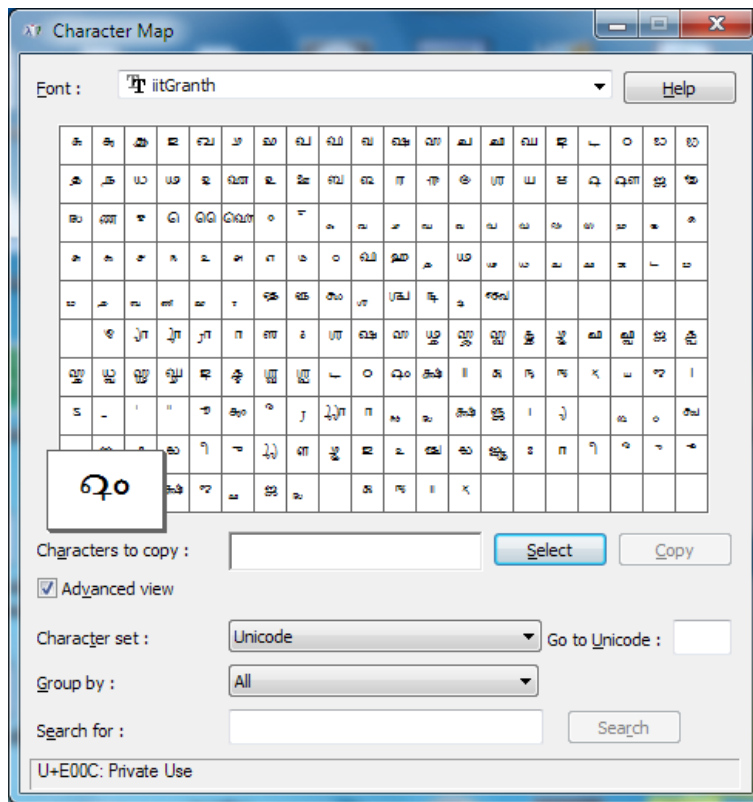
*dhūdhū dhūdhū om bhūḥ om bhuvah om suvah om mahah
 om janaḥ om tapaḥ om satyam̐ anekāneka [3]*



om namo vāsudevāya [2]

Innumerable samples can be provided for the OM digraph. For, Ligatured OM as proposed by Ganesan doesn't even exit in Grantha Script. Even the highly ligatured handwritten variant of the script [2] also uses only a digraph to represent OM.

Also, The Truetype Grantha font created by Indian Institute of Technology Madras (IIT-M) has included the *O + Anusvara* digraph as the OM glyph. This font is used in publications such as *Grantha lipi or arimukam* and *Granthākṣara kaiyēluttu paiyirci puttakam*



As a native user, I strongly object to encode a non-existent hypothetical glyph to the Code Chart of the Grantha Script.

While many legitimate Indic characters are waiting to get encoded in the Unicode, I do not know why Ganesan is taking great pains to encode a hypothetical false character. Personally, he may want a unique OM glyph for Grantha. But that shouldn't go to an extent of misrepresenting the ancient script in the official registry.

It is best that the code-point be reserved as in the case of other Indic scripts like Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam, Bengali etc. which use *Long O + Anusvara* or *Long O + Chandrabindu* for representing OM in the native scripts.

If the Grantha OM is to be encoded, the representative glyph in the code chart should either be a digraph of *O and Anusvara* [ॐ] or *O + Vowelless M* [ॐ], rather than a hypothetical glyph.

References

1. Grantha edition of āraṇya kāṇḍa - rāmāyana , 1908
<http://www.archive.org/details/sooranyakashyaha015347mbp>
2. Handwritten Grantha Transcript of bilvāraṇyamāhātmyam & palāsavanamāhātmyam,
Muktabodha Digital Library
3. *Kāmikāgama*, South Indian Archakar Association, 1977