

Re: Ethiopic writing Re: intrinsic advantage of Latin alphabet over bopomofo (for Chinese)??

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- *From:* phoglund@xxxxxx
 - *Date:* 6 Mar 2007 09:55:21 -0800
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On 6 maalís, 16:22, "Peter T. Daniels" <gramma...@xxxxxxxxxxxx> wrote:

On Mar 5, 11:31 am, phogl...@xxxxxx wrote:

On 5 maalís, 17:34, "Peter T. Daniels" <gramma...@xxxxxxxxxxxx> wrote:

I am not trying to score points, as you usually are. I am only pointing out a fact that might be significant.

"Prove a point" and "make a point" have nothing to do with "scoring a point."

I am not entirely convinced that you know the difference yourself.

I've been speaking the language for nearly 55 years. You obviously haven't.

You are quite right – I have spoken English habitually only during my seven-months stay in Ireland some eight years ago. I have always found English more like a code than a language – I read books in it, but I don't really speak it. It is not a "language" for me, in the sense that Irish, German, Swedish, or Amharic for that matter, is a language. English is a necessary evil; but if you acquire a real language, you have accomplished something.

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Even
though
the
Avestan
alphabet
was
available
to
them
several
centuries
before
the
Arabic
script.

It certainly
was, but if
I am not
very much
mistaken,
Middle
Persian
(Pahlavi)
used a script
that
represented
vowels at
least as
inadequately
as the
Arabic
alphabet.

Oh, don't even go there. I
doubt you have the slightest
idea how
Pahlavi represents the
Iranian languages it was
used for.

You might be correct, because my
knowledge of Pahlavi is limited to
seeing the alphabet a couple of times in
reference works. It is not a

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very widely known script after all.

Read Skjaervo's account in WWS. It's not exactly transparent, but he doesn't seem able to write for the non-specialist. But there really isn't anyone else who can write on these subjects at all — fortunately (I suppose), he seems never to turn down an invitation to contribute to a reference work.

I guess I need to read it, then.

You mean, you've been pontificating about Pahlavi without having learned anything about it?

I do not think I have been "pontificating" about anything. I have some idea of Pahlavi, and that is all there is to it — I gladly leave the pontificating part to you, if you have something interesting to say, or teach, about Pahlavi. I take it however that you are more keen on poking fun at other people's ignorance than on disseminating knowledge.

I doubt I'll ever learn Middle Persian, but Modern Persian is one of the languages I have started years ago but never quite got on with them. (Irish used to be one, too.)

I see. However, I would appreciate an elementary guidebook to writing Amharic, which would show in what order the lines should be drawn.

Monica Devens showed me on a napkin in 5 minutes one day. Start at the top left. See WWS p. 575.

At the top left? I'll have a go at it. Am I supposed to use a paintbrush, or will a normal biro pen do the job?

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You're "supposed" to use a pen. Do you know what a "paintbrush" is? Do you suppose that the brush used for writing Chinese resembles a "paintbrush" in anything other than having bristles mounted in a handle?

I do not suppose anything, and I know "paintbrush" is probably not the correct English word. The appearance of the characters does leave the impression that the desired forms are only attainable by using some kind of special calligraphic instrument.

Have you never even had any training in using a broadedge pen?

I am not entirely sure if the instrument I use for writing Irish Gaelic script and German Black Letters is called a broadedge pen in English. Would you be so kind as to give me a description of a "broadedge pen"?

It
looks
more
elegant
and
is
easier
to
read,
and
I
think
it
would
be
no
problem
to
modify
the
Arabic
alphabet
for
use

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in
Amharic.
But
of
course,
for
saying
that
you
will
call
me
a
crypto-Muslim
fundamentalist
bigot.

No,
your
bigotry
is
exposed
by
such
words
as
"crude,"
"unreadable,"
and
non-"elegant."

People have
these things
called
aesthetic
preferences,
and I very
much
prefer the
Arabic
alphabet –
for aesthetic
reasons. But
then I have
always been
fascinated
by

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calligraphy.

"Crude" and "unreadable"
are not aesthetic judgments.

Please do not try to intimidate me. You
know I am not afraid of you
anymore.—

Oh, you mean you don't know the meanings of the words
"crude" and
"unreadable"? Then you shouldn't be using them.

Okay. Let's make it "difficult to read for the untrained eye"

Um, wouldn't that apply to any script in the world that you haven't
been "trained" in?

Not exactly. I am about as untrained in reading Georgian letters as in
reading Ethiopic writing, but I can guarantee that I find Georgian
letters more readable at this stage.

and
"aesthetically somewhat less pleasing than Arabic calligraphy". Happy
now?—

Chacun a son gout. There's no tradition of rendering Ethiopic texts
unreadable for the sake of esthetic impression.

Calligraphy is not by definition the same as "rendering unreadable".

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