

Ethiopic Typography Questions

Unresolved Questions for Ethiopic Typography

The Ethiopian Writers Association is requested to consider and provide answers to questions pertaining to Ethiopic typography. To obtain better software support for Ethiopic writing conventions, answers are need to questions in the following areas:

- Proper use of Ethiopic commas.
- Ethiopic ordered lists.
- Ethiopic abbreviation formats.
- Ethiopic wordspace formatting.
- Ethiopic line breaking rules.
- Using non-Ethiopic symbols with Ethiopic.
- Ethiopic Numeral Practices
- Other special cases for Ethiopic.

Ethiopic Comma

Background:

- Two variant glyphs of comma made it into the Unicode standard: ፡ (U+1363, U+1365).
- ፤ is labeled “Ethiopic colon” but this is a misnomer, historically both are used as a comma.
- Some writers have begun to suggest that the two commas be used in different contexts. For example: ፡ to be used as a prose pause, and ፤ as a list separator (e.g. 1 ፤ 2 ፤ 3 ...)

Ethiopic Comma

Questions for the EWA:

- Are the two symbols identical except in appearance?
- If the same, which commas is preferred?
- If different, what is the proper use of the two symbols?

Ordered Lists

Background:

- Both **ሀለከመ** and **አበገደ** sequences for alphabetic lists are found for many languages.
- Often a list using the Ge'ez alphabet is used to make lists in Amharic and Tigrinya documents.
- “/” is the most frequently found in corpus to mark the list item, but “.” and “)” are also found.
- *Examples:*

Ordered Lists

Ge'ez (ህለሐመ)	Amharic (ህለሐመ)	Tigrinya (ህለሐመ)	Ge'ez (አበገደ)	Amharic (አበገደ)	Tigrinya (አበገደ)
ህ/	ህ/	ህ/	አ/	አ/	አ/
ለ/	ለ/	ለ/	በ/	በ/	በ/
ሐ/	ሐ/	ሐ/	ገ/	ገ/	ገ/
መ/	መ/	መ/	ደ/	ደ/	ደ/
ሠ/	ሠ/	ሠ/	ሀ/	ጀ/	ጀ/
ረ/	ረ/	ረ/	ወ/	ሀ/	ሀ/
ሰ/	ሰ/	ሰ/	ዘ/	ወ/	ወ/
ቀ/	ሸ/	ሸ/	ቀ/	ዘ/	ዘ/
በ/	ቀ/	ቀ/	ጠ/	ዘ/	ዘ/
ተ/	በ/	ቀ/	የ/	ሃ/	ሃ/
ኀ/	ሸ/	በ/	ከ/	ሠ/	ሠ/
ነ/	ተ/	ሸ/	ለ/	ጭ/	ጭ/
አ/	ቸ/	ተ/	መ/	የ/	የ/
ከ/	ኀ/	ቸ/	ኀ/	ከ/	ከ/
ወ/	ኀ/	ኀ/	ሠ/	ኀ/	ኀ/
ዐ/	ኀ/	ኀ/	ዐ/	ለ/	ለ/
ዘ/	አ/	ኀ/	ደ/	መ/	መ/
፡	፡	፡	፡	፡	፡

Ordered Lists

Questions for the EWA:

- Are both the **ህላከመ** and **አበገጸ** styles desired in software?
- Are language based lists desired in software or only Ge'ez?
- Is “/” preferred of as the list item marker?

Abbreviation Style

Background:

- Two styles are observed in corpus:
- **ክ.አ.ዩ, ዓ.ም** “.” separator with no ending “.”
 - The “.” may also be replaced with “/” in some cases.
- **ወ/ሮ, ወ/ሪቶ, ፍ/ቤት, ...**
 - In other cases, the abbreviations are never found with “.” replacing “/”.

Abbreviation Style

Questions for the EWA:

- What is the preferred abbreviation style?
- What rules apply when forming a new abbreviation?

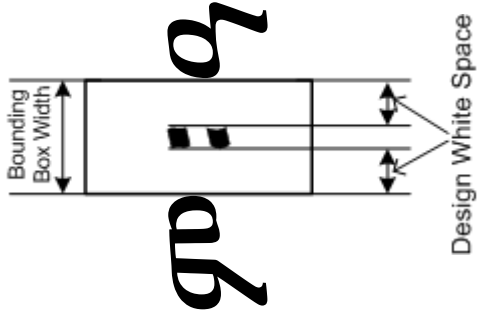
Ethiopic Wordspace

Background:

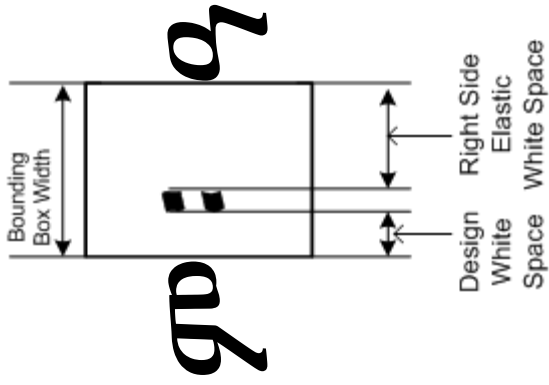
- «ሀለቅ፡ነጥብ» is known as “Ethiopic Wordspace” in the west.
- Two styles for the use of wordspace:
 - Centered: የዓለም፡አቀፍ፡ሽያጭ፡ጥናቱን፡ ...
 - Left bounded: የዓለም፡ አቀፍ፡ ሽያጭ፡ ጥናቱን፡ ...
- Whitespace elasticity:
 - The white space around Ethiopic Wordspace should be “stretchable” in line formatting.
 - Just as ASCII White Space stretches when justified.

Ethiopic Wordspace

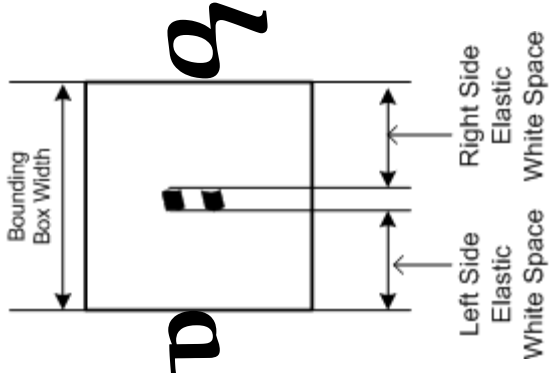
**Regular
Style**



**Left-Bounded
Style**



**Fully Justified
Style**



Ethiopic Wordspace

Questions for the EWA:

- Is support for the “left bounded” style a requirement?
- How much should whitespace around the Ethiopic Wordspace be allowed to stretch?
- Should the centered or left bounded style also be applied to Ethiopic punctuation?
- Should the whitespace around Ethiopic punctuation follow the same rules as for wordpace?

Ethiopic Line Breaking

Background:

- Classical Ethiopic text uses wordspace and thus words could be split (broken) across a line without ambiguity.
- Words are still split across lines in modern writing when wordspace is not used -leaving it to the reader to infer from context that one or two words have occurred.
- Ethiopic letters are syllables and words may be broken across a line at any point.
- Except for an opening punctuation “«” “[”, “(”, ... punctuation does not start a new line.

Ethiopic Line Breaking

Background:

- In some cases it is undesirable for a word to split following punctuation. For example: **ወ/ሪፖ** should not become: **ወ/**
ሪፖ
- Ethiopic numbers should never be split across two lines.

Ethiopic Line Breaking

Questions for the EWA:

- Are the statements on the previous slide accurate?
- What additional rules cause a line break occur?
- What additional rules prevent a word from breaking across a line?
- Is hyphenation desired for Ethiopic writing?
- What words should never be split across lines?

Using Non-Ethiopic Symbols with Ethiopic

Background:

- In corpus both / and () are found to form parenthetical expressions:
 - በቅርቡ ለንባብ የበቃው /ኒው አፍሪካ/ የተሰኘው መጽሔት...
 - በቅርቡ ለንባብ የበቃው (ኒው አፍሪካ) የተሰኘው መጽሔት...
- Latin punctuation is often “Ethiopicized” where the style is made to have a “heavier” weight and modified shapes to better fit with Ethiopic. For example:
 - Angle quotations: «Hello» vs «ሰላም» vs «ሰላም» vs «Hello»
 - Apostrophe (Tigrinya): ካብ’ቲ, ስለ’ዚ, 1996’ዩ, ...
 - Question mark: what? vs ምን? vs ምን? vs what?
 - Dot: A.D. vs ዓ.ም vs ዓ.ም vs A.D.

Using Non-Ethiopic Symbols with Ethiopic

Questions for the EWA:

- What is the preferred style for parenthetical expressions:
with / or () ?
- What, if any, non-Ethiopic punctuation should be
Ethiopicized?
- Should Latin numbers be Ethiopicized? For example:
 - 0 14 ደቂቃ ከ39 ነጥብ 28 አጠናቃለች
 - vs
 - 014 ደቂቃ ከ39 ነጥብ 28 አጠናቃለች
- If Latin numbers are *NOT* to be Ethiopicized, should
Ethiopicized punctuation be used or not used with
numbers? For example:
 - 123,456 vs 123,456
 - 5.00 vs 5.00

Using Non-Ethiopic Symbols with Ethiopic

Questions for the EWA:

- When Latin punctuation is used with a segment of Latin text, should the punctuation be Ethiopicized or not? For example:
 - በቅርቡ ለንባብ የበቃው «New Africa» የተሰኘው መጽሔት...
 - በቅርቡ ለንባብ የበቃው «New Africa» የተሰኘው መጽሔት...
 - በቅርቡ ለንባብ የበቃው “New Africa” የተሰኘው መጽሔት...
 - በቅርቡ ለንባብ የበቃው “New Africa” የተሰኘው መጽሔት...

Ethiopic Numerals Practices

Background:

- In an ordinal context the superscript of ሺ (Amharic) and ፪ (Tigrinya) are applied to both Latin and Ethiopic numbers. For example:
- 5^ሺ and 5^፪, ፯^ሺ and ፯^፪

Questions for the EWA:

- What other superscript text is essential? For example 5^{ሺ፱}, ፯^{ሺ፱፻፺}, etc?

Ethiopic Numerals Practices

Background:

- In handwriting, and hand written manuscripts, the line written above numerals is sometimes joined (similar to Roman and Coptic numerals) :

፲፱፻፹፯ vs ፲፱፻፹፯

Questions for the EWA:

- Technology has not supported this practice, but could. Is the joined numeral style desirable?
- If yes, should the joined style be the only style or an option? Should it be the default style?

Ethiopic Numerals Practices

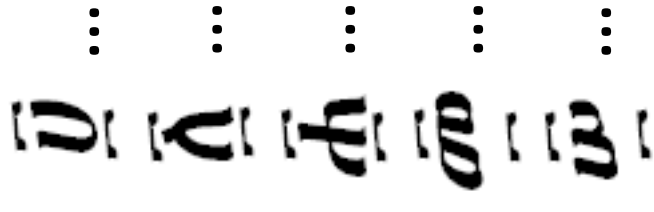
Background:

- In older manuscripts, primarily in Ge'ez, the letters can be given with the lines used for numbers. This is done when the letters are used in a counting context.

Questions for the EWA:

- Should the numeral bars be available with letters?

Example:



Other special cases for Ethiopic

Questions for the EWA:

- What other software requirements are there for Ethiopic typography?
- What non-typography issues are problematic for composing and publishing in Ethiopic script?
- It is assumed that the answers provided in this survey are applicable to primarily for Amharic writing. Can the answers also apply to all other languages using Ethiopic? If not, what are they different or additional rules needed for other languages