Title: Request to Rename 'Coptic Numbers' to 'Coptic Epact Numerals'
Source: Script Encoding Initiative (SEI)
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Action: For consideration by UTC and WG2
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1 Introduction

The 'Coptic Numbers' were proposed for encoding in the Universal Character Set (ISO/IEC 10646) by the present author in the document N3843R L2/10-206R. The characters were accepted for encoding in a future version of the standard by the Unicode Technical Committee in August 2010 (meeting 124) and by ISO/IEC JTC1/SC2/WG2 in October 2010 (meeting 57).

Further discussion with specialists indicates that the name 'Coptic Numbers' is too generic and should be changed to in order to prevent confusion.

2 Issue

In N3886 L2/10-333, Michael Everson and Stephen Emmel write that the 'Coptic Numbers' (what they call 'Coptic Numerals') proposed for encoding in N3483R are what "Copts call the 'epact' numerals, 'epact' being the Greek word ἐπακτός 'imported'." These numbers are cursive forms of ordinary Coptic letters that are part of a system of numeric notation used mainly in Coptic-Arabic manuscripts. This system differs from the standard representation of numbers in Coptic using regular letters of the alphabet.

Given the above, the name 'Coptic Numbers' as suggested for the script block in N3483R is misleading. The name implies that the 'epact' or 'imported' numbers are regular Coptic numbers. In order to prevent confusion among users and implementers, it is necessary to distinguish between the standard and 'imported' Coptic numbers in the UCS.

3 Recommendation

It is recommended that the name 'Coptic Numbers' be changed to 'Coptic Epact Numerals'. The new name more accurately describes the characters. It will facilitate identification and appropriate usage of the characters. The change will affect both the name of the block and the names of characters.