

# Twelve cuneiform *tenû* numerals

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## 1 Summary

This document proposes filling the Cuneiform Numbers and Punctuation block with twelve cuneiform numerals used in the third millennium.

Three of those are additional numerals in the AŠ (or DIŠ) *tenû* series, 7<sup>^</sup>–9<sup>^</sup>, where 1<sup>^</sup> = <sup>^</sup> through 6<sup>^</sup> = <sup>^</sup> are already encoded. Their glyphic range and usage, as well as possible reasons for their absence in the current version of the Standard, are discussed in §3.

The other proposed characters constitute a new series of numerals, formed by <sup>^</sup> numerals crossing an <sup>^</sup> wedge. They are discussed in §4.

## 2 Proposed changes to the Standard

### 2.1 Core specification text

No change is needed in the core specification.

### 2.2 Code charts

The code charts for the affected block, including the character names list with proposed informative aliases, cross references, and informative notes, are shown on the following pages. A plain text file containing the [NamesList.txt](#) lines is attached to this document.

### 2.3 Properties

Add to the respective UCD files the lines given in this section. These are available as plain text files attached to this document. Changes to derived files are not listed.

#### 2.3.1 Name, General\_Category, Numeric\_Value, etc.

#### 2.3.2 Line\_Break

#### 2.3.3 Script

#### 2.3.4 Script\_Extensions

#### 2.3.5 Block

## 3 DIŠ *tenû* numerals

This section discusses the following proposed characters:

- U+1246F <sup>^</sup> CUNEIFORM NUMERIC SIGN SEVEN ASH TENU
- U+12475 <sup>^</sup> CUNEIFORM NUMERIC SIGN EIGHT ASH TENU
- U+12476 <sup>^</sup> CUNEIFORM NUMERIC SIGN NINE ASH TENU

### 3.1 Name

The existing numerals in the <sup>^</sup> series are named U+12039 <sup>^</sup> CUNEIFORM SIGN ASH ZIDA TENU for the first one and U+1244A–U+1244E <sup>^</sup>–<sup>^</sup> CUNEIFORM NUMERIC SIGN *n* ASH TENU for the others.








































- 135 -
- h) DIE SCHIEFEN KEILE UND DIE WINKELHAKEN** (für die Einheiten von 1-9, neben den senkrechten keilförmigen Zahlenzeichen).
- a) bei : *RTC. 276*:   
*Bart. III 118, 249*: 3 gín igi-4-gál  še.  
*Legr. TRU. 310*: ud- kam.  
*Gen. TD. 5487*:  áb.
- b) vor kam und àm:  
*Bart. III 152, 398*: dub--àm  
*Legr. TRU. 42*: a-du--kam  
a-du -kam  
a-du -kam  
a-du -kam  
*Legr. TRU. 346*: 1 máš-gal-še -kam-uš  
1 udu-še -kam-uš  
*Siehe*: itu-šu--ša; itu šu--ša; itu šu--ša.
- c) nach gud, áb, anše, zur Bezeichnung des Alters.  
*ITT. III, II 4956*: 20 áb--še 3 qa-ta  
*ITT. III, II 6090*: 3 anše-sal-; 1 anše-nita ;  
*Pinch. AT. I. 53*: 3 gud ; 1 áb ;  
*Bart. III 106, 191*: 3 anše-nita ;  
*ITT. II, I. 6965*: 20 zu-gud- 15 zu-gud .

Figure 1: [Sch35, p. 135]

Some<sup>1</sup> technical terms used in cuneiform character names are derived originate from the structural descriptions of cuneiform signs by Akkadian-speaking scribes in late second and first millennium lexical texts. [TODO(egg): Cite Yushu Gong on tenu itself] In particular, the word *tenû* is used to describe slanted signs or parts of signs: thus  is described as  *tenû* in [P365233]<sup>2</sup>,  as  *tenû* in [P391514; P467315],  as  *tenû* in [P391514],  as  (containing)  *tenû* in [P365267]<sup>3</sup>. In most cases, the direction of the slant not explicitly specified. The terms *kaba tenû* and *zida tenû*, from Sumerian  gab<sub>2</sub> "left" and  zid "right" respectively, are used in [P345960], which contrasts  described as *kaba tenû* and  described as *zida tenû*.

In modern transliteration,  numerals are described as  *tenû* (ATF: asz@t) or  *tenû* (ATF: disz@t), the latter being more common<sup>4</sup>. Informative aliases using *diš tenû* have been recommended for the existing characters in [L2/24-239]. The proposed names use ASH TENU for consistency with the already-encoded characters, and the proposed annotations include informative aliases with *diš tenû*.



Ordinals with ʾ numerals are also typically limited to small numbers or subtractive notation: many of the attestations of  $n \backslash \diamond$  “*n*th” are in year names<sup>10</sup>, such as 𐎶𐎵𐎠𐎺𐎡𐏁𐎧𐎢𐏃𐎫𐎠𐎥𐎲 mu kar<sub>2</sub>-ḫar<sup>ki</sup> a-ra<sub>2</sub> 2ʼ-kam-aš ba-ḫul “year Karhar was destroyed for the second time” (31st year of Šulgi’s reign), 𐎶𐎵𐎠𐎺𐎡𐏁𐎧𐎢𐏃𐎫𐎠𐎥𐎲𐎶𐎵𐎠𐎺𐎡𐏁𐎧𐎢𐏃𐎫𐎠𐎥𐎲 mu si-mu-ru-um<sup>ki</sup> a-ra<sub>2</sub> 3ʼ-kam-aš ba-ḫul “year Simurrum was destroyed for the third time” (32nd year of Šulgi’s reign), or 𐎶𐎵𐎠𐎺𐎡𐏁𐎧𐎢𐏃𐎫𐎠𐎥𐎲𐎶𐎵𐎠𐎺𐎡𐏁𐎧𐎢𐏃𐎫𐎠𐎥𐎲𐎶𐎵𐎠𐎺𐎡𐏁𐎧𐎢𐏃𐎫𐎠𐎥𐎲 mu si-mu-ru-um<sup>ki</sup> u<sub>3</sub> lu-lu-bu-um<sup>ki</sup> a-ra<sub>2</sub> 1𐎶𐎵𐎠𐎺𐎡𐏁𐎧𐎢𐏃𐎫𐎠𐎥𐎲 1ʼ-kam-aš ba-ḫul “year Simurrum and Lullubum were destroyed for the ninth time” (44th year of Šulgi’s reign). Larger ordinals are frequent, in particular for the day of the month, but these are written with ʔ numerals,

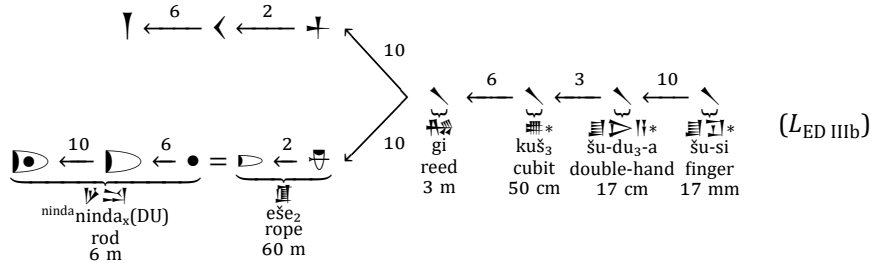
<sup>10</sup> 430 occurrences of *n(disz@t)-kam* are on lines starting with *mu*, of which 308 are in  $\langle \mathbf{R} \rangle$ .

thus  $\text{𐎶} \text{𐎵} \text{𐎶}$  for “the 7th day” or  $\text{𐎶} \text{𐎵} \text{𐎶} \text{𐎵} \text{𐎶}$  for “the 28th day”.

The rarity of the higher  $\backslash$  numerals in the Ur III corpus likely explains the absence of  $7\backslash$ – $9\backslash$  from the répertoire of Unicode Version 5.0, which was aiming to encode a répertoire appropriate for the Ur III period and later.

### 3.3 Early Dynastic usage

The situation is different in the Early Dynastic corpus. As described in [L2/24-210R],  $\backslash$  numerals are used in many Early Dynastic metrological systems, and in particular in the Early Dynastic IIIb length system



While these systems have a unit  $1 \text{ 𐎶} \text{ 𐎵} = 2 \text{ 𐎶} \text{ 𐎵}$ , lengths above  $1 \text{ 𐎶} \text{ 𐎵}$  are only expressed in  $\text{𐎶}$ , or equivalently in tens of  $\text{𐎶} \text{ 𐎵}$ , and in half- $\text{𐎶}$  equal to  $10 \text{ 𐎶} \text{ 𐎵}$ . We can therefore expect  $7\backslash$ – $9\backslash$  to occur, expressed using  $\backslash$  numerals. Indeed, 37 texts in the transliterated ED IIIb corpus on [CDLI] contain undamaged attestations of either  $\text{𐎶} \text{ 𐎵}$  or  $\text{𐎶} \text{ 𐎵}$ <sup>11</sup>; some of these attestations are shown in Figures 6–5. However,  $\text{𐎶} \text{ 𐎵}$  is not attested, since instead subtractive notation is used, as in  $\text{𐎶} \text{ 𐎵} \text{ 𐎶} \text{ 𐎵}$  in [P020129, obv. 3 3],  $\text{𐎶} \text{ 𐎵} \text{ 𐎶} \text{ 𐎵}$  in [P221272], or  $\text{𐎶} \text{ 𐎵}$  in [P020304].

The use of  $\backslash$  numerals for ordinals, especially for days, is more prevalent in the Early Dynastic period than in the Ur III period, and the use of subtractive notation is less frequent in these numbers. We therefore find many attestations of  $\text{𐎶} \text{ 𐎵}$  in  $\text{𐎶} \text{ 𐎵}$ . TODO(egg) Figures.

In Ebla, the  $\backslash$  numerals are primarily used in subtractive notation, see [Gor24, p. 88 n. 298, p. 120 n. 465, p. 167 n. 739, p. 180 n. 801]. However, contrary to Ur III,  $\backslash$  numerals remain used for large subtrahends, thus [Gor24, p. 101 n. 355] cites occurrences of  $\text{𐎶} \text{ 𐎵}$  for 36 and  $\text{𐎶} \text{ 𐎵}$  for 94. In particular, [Gor24, pp. 129 sq.] cites occurrences of  $\text{𐎶} \text{ 𐎵}$  in Ebla:  $\text{𐎶} \text{ 𐎵}$  “9 minas and 51 shekels of silver” in [P241283], and  $\text{𐎶} \text{ 𐎵}$  “1 mina and 51 shekels of silver” in [P241325].

<sup>11</sup>Of those, 34 have  $\text{𐎶} \text{ 𐎵}$  and 9 have  $\text{𐎶} \text{ 𐎵}$ .

<sup>12</sup>Recall that  $\text{𐎶} \text{ 𐎵}$  mi-at is Eblaite for “hundred”, see [Arc15, p. 33; L2/24-210R, p. 27].



Figure 3: 𒌦<sup>13</sup> 𒌦 𒌦 𒌦 “501 m (first) width” (of a field) in [P221254] from Nirsu, dated to the reign of 𒌦 𒌦 𒌦 𒌦. Left: Copy from [AllottedelaFuÿe1920]. Right: [CDLI] photograph.



Figure 4: 𒌦 𒌦 𒌦 𒌦 “21 m of reed-bed dyke” (attributed to 𒌦 𒌦 the farmer) in [P221266, obv. 1 1] from Nirsu, dated to the reign of 𒌦 𒌦 𒌦 𒌦. Left: Copy from [AllottedelaFuÿe1920]. Right: [LouvreCollections] photograph.



Figure 5: 𒌦 𒌦 𒌦 𒌦 𒌦 𒌦 𒌦 𒌦 “1344 m, its height 2 m” (dimensions of a dyke on the river 𒌦 𒌦 𒌦 𒌦 𒌦 𒌦) in [P020303] from Nirsu, dated to the reign of 𒌦 𒌦 𒌦 𒌦. Left: Copy from [Marzahn1991]. Right: [CDLI] photograph.

<sup>13</sup>TODO something about rhomboidal numerals, cite [Gor24].

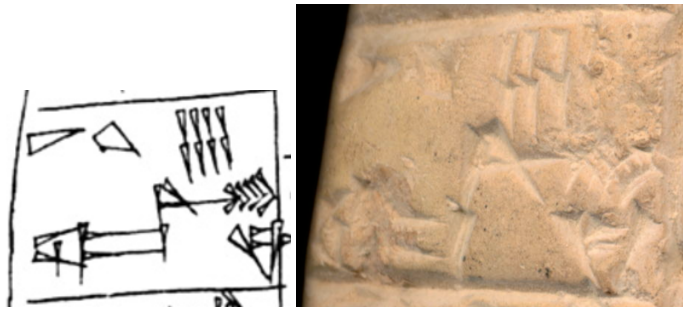


Figure 6:  $\nabla \lt \text{||||} \text{||||} \text{||||} \text{||||} \text{||||}$  “444 m equal widths” (of a field) in [P221254]. Left: Copy from [AllottedelaFuÿe1920]. Right: [CDLI] photograph.



Figure 7:  $\nabla \lt \text{||||} \text{||||} \text{||||} \text{||||}$  “seventh day TODO” in [P221590] from Nippur. Left: Copy from [Westenholz1975]. Right: [CDLI] photograph.

### 3.4 Stacking patterns

## 4 AŠ×(DIŠ *tenû*) numerals

<https://cdli.mpiwg-berlin.mpg.de/artifacts/452986/reader/209489> <https://cdli.mpiwg-berlin.mpg.de/artifacts/467743/reader/213564>

### 4.1 Stacking patterns

The subsequent mu-iti system, which saw limited use at the end of the presargonic and the beginning of the Old Akkadian periods, seems, on its surface, to be a rational development from the system it replaced; the *basis* of a 30-day month carries on (cf. for instance the texts B. Foster, Umma in the Sargonic Period [Hamden 1982] pl. 18, Nr 37, discussed by J. Friberg, Scientific American 250/2 [Feb. 1984] 114 and Foster, ASJ 4 [1982] 43 obv iii9-11) and, for a period at least, a graphically comparable method of representing year dates, with now vertical strokes impressed on either side of the long horizontal, was used (the date of the text BIN 8, 117,  $\text{||||} \lt \text{+} \text{||||}$ , which both Powell, HUCA 49, 9 and B. Foster, Or.NS 48 (1979) 156 and USP p. 7 read 7 (mu) 1 (iti) 7 (ud), should be registered with some scepticism). Only here is the refinement of day added, so that documents

Figure 8: TODO note that this should cite BIN 8, 116, not 117.












A connection of *im* with the later usage of *im(.ma)* (presargonic Lagash and later; Akkadian *šaddaqqi/a(m)* with lexical equivalent *MU.IM.MA* [MSL 5, 65:195]), meaning “previous (year)” is not apparent. For the latter usage cf. particularly DP 280 (= 281), a presargonic temple document which “loads onto the backs” (*gu<sub>2</sub>.ne.ne.a e.ne.gar*) of the fisheries foremen *Ne.sag* and *Lugal.šag.la<sub>2</sub>.tuku* the quota arrears of *im.im.ma.kam* , *im.ma.kam*  and *mu.a.kam* , that is of the year before last = year one (of the king *Urukagina* [second regnal year]), of last year = year 2 and of this year = year 3. Also DP 243 goats of various colors / *maš im.ma.kam* / ditto / *maš mu.a.kam* and DP 94. *maš im.ma* as delivery arrears noted after grown nannies (*ud<sub>5</sub>*) and before *maš šag.HI* (*//mu.a.kam*, “of the current year”), further *maš im.ma* = *maš.gal.gal* in the summation rev i2 (see footnote 17 to the notations of the type ). A parallel usage is found in the Old Akkadian text ITT 2/1, 3078 obv 1-4. 3 1/2 *ma.na siki* / *[i]im.ma.kam* / 1 *gu<sub>2</sub> la<sub>2</sub>.4 ma.na siki* / *mu.a.kam*. It would seem difficult to reconcile this clear usage *im* = “previous year” with the often translated *im* = “account tablet” (*im* = clay)

Figure 9: TODO

## Acknowledgements

The *CuneiformComposite* font by Steve Tinney is used when referring to the reference glyphs for already-encoded cuneiform. *Noto Sans Cuneiform*, by Monotype Imaging, is used to for most of the cuneiform text in this document, with modifications (cuneiform glyph for , corrected glyphs for  UN and  KALAM per [Uni16], alternate glyph  for ). Arabic text is set in *Scheherazade New* by SIL International; Traditional Chinese text is set in *Noto Serif TC* by Ken Lunde et al.; monospace text is set in *Consolas* by Luc(as) de Groot; the remainder of the text is set in *Cambria* and *Cambria Math* by Monotype Imaging and Tiro Typeworks.

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