chapters I and II in preliminary printout even long before the book was published. Borger's work should have inspired and enabled IC(U)E to tackle this task.

Cuneiform sign lists are traditionally based on the Neo-Assyrian signs and arranged according to the position of the basic elements of cuneiform writing. This traditional arrangement has been thoroughly revised by Borger in his MesZL. The Neo-Assyrian script is the best and most regular version of cuneiform writing. Of course, all cuneiformists must be well acquainted with this classical script, including Sumerologists. Regrettably, it is practically impossible to arrange other versions of cuneiform writing (including the Ur III signs) by the shape of their signs in a consistent and unequivocal way.

In the Unicode Standard the characters are transliterated into, and arranged according to our Latin alphabet. The method chosen by IC(U)E is described as »a variant of simply ordering the characters according to their transliteration«: »alphabetical by primary sign name with complex signs based on the primary sign organized according to graphic principles; in some cases, these correspond to the native analyses« — whatever that may mean in detail.

Cuneiformists under given circumstances use a »conventional reading« for every sign, as described e.g. in chapter II of MesZL. The Unicode Standard introduces a new set of conventional readings, without offering any explanation. It also makes extensive use of the principle of »splittability«, again without explanations or cross references. In order to find out how in the Unicode Standard characters may have been decomposed, the user must consult Chapter II of MesZL and/or Y. Gong, Die Namen der Keilschriftzeichen. In many cases the user must write characters missing in the IC(U)E font by combining two or three other signs (14 and 21 key strokes respectively!), and he must find out the codepoints of these shorter signs himself. Some signs are »splittable« in the third millennium, but not in all other periods; so they should by all means have got codepoints of their own. It is not to be expected that Assyriologists will ever replace their ways of transliterating cuneiform texts by the system of the Unicode Standard of 5.0. The codes of Unicode are complicated and susceptible to errors. The impracticable (or even bad) »conventional readings« and the rather thoughtless splitting of characters are obstacles for users, even if they are qualified Assyriologists.

Users of the present Tinney/Everson Unicode font will very quickly be confronted with its shortcomings. The linguist D. A. Bachmann (Zürich) tried to help users of the Unicode font with its cuneiform blocks by publishing a »List of cuneiform signs« in the Wikipedia (October 2006). He organized and numbered the cuneiform signs in agreement with MesZL. After the first column of his list he mentions the traditional Deimel numbers, the numbers of the Hethitisches Zeichenlexikon, the Unicode codepoint numbers according to the »Standard 5.0«, and the Unicode »conventional readings«. When this list became known to Mrs. Studt (Hardegsen), she contacted Borger about the pros and cons of Bachmann's list. Borger had in course of time succeeded in deciphering most of the secret lore of the Unicodists. He had discovered several errors, mainly in N2664 (see Ugarit-Forschungen 35 96ff.), but also in the later proposals. Supported by Borger's notes, Mrs. Studt wrote a thoroughly revised version of Bachmann's list.

Her revised Bachmann list contains:

Col. 1) The sign numbers of MesZL;

Col. 2) The traditional numbers of Deimel etc., completed and adapted in Ellermeier and Studt, HA (see Col. 5);

Col. 3) The numbers of Mittermayer, aBZL = Altbabylonische Zeichenliste der sumerisch-literarischen Texte, Fribourg and Göttingen 2006 (a very useful contribution to Sumerian paleography);