

List of Neo-Assyrian Cuneiform Signs

A practical and critical guide to the Unicode blocks
»Cuneiform« and »Cuneiform Numbers«
of Unicode Standard Version 5.0

Version 1.2 – 14.10.2007 (codepoint in Nr. 588 fixed)

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Introduction (by R. BORGER)

November 2 and 3, 2000 the Initiative for Cuneiform Encoding (ICE) was founded in Baltimore. The initiator was D. SNYDER, Baltimore. The name was a misnomer. It should have been ICUE = Initiative for Cuneiform Unicode Encoding. The real initiative for cuneiform encoding had been taken 1987 by Paul LI. Rev. LI's pioneer font had been replaced by BORGER's fonts Akkadian RB, 1996. Akkadian RB had been vectorized and released under the name Laser Akkadian by Linguist's Software, Edmonds WA, 1999/2000. Also elsewhere cuneiform fonts had been written with various encodings.

Sign lists with Unicode encoding were written and published in the Internet by M. EVERSON (N2297, November 20, 2000, based on LI's original font), by SNYDER & S. TINNEY (N2664, to which a revision N2664R was added), and by EVERSON & TINNEY & K. FEUERHERM (N2698). June 8, 2004, EVERSON & FEUERHERM & TINNEY offered their »Final proposal to encode the cuneiform script« (N2786) to the Unicode Consortium.

Meantime, Akkadian RB had enabled BORGER to write his rather voluminous MesZL = Mesopotamisches Zeichenlexikon (Münster, March 2004), with relative ease. The sophisticated and very full Hardeggen font NeoAssyrian (F. ELLERMEIER, with highly competent technical support by M. STUDDT) enabled Ellermeier to write his Kurzglossar, likewise with relative ease.

More details about the history of cuneiform electronic fonts are given in BORGER's article Ugarit-Forschungen 35 (2003/04) 79–102 (and in MesZL chapter I).

2006, after some more changes (not always corrections), the »final proposal« was canonized by the Unicode Consortium as part of The Unicode Standard, Version 5.0. It consists of the hexadecimal numbers 12000–1236E, 12400–12462, and 12470–12473.

The code charts of Unicode Standard 5.0 are a frame that can be filled with several special fonts. Hitherto the TINNEY/EVERSON Font »Cuneiform Classic«, mainly based on the signs of the Ur III period in Southern Mesopotamia, is the sole »canonized« Unicode font with cuneiform signs in existence. IC(U)E expected that several other fonts would be prepared by cuneiformists interested in font architecture and delivered in Baltimore. For that reason codepoint numbers have been assigned providently to Hittite/Hurrite signs, a few Neo-Assyrian signs, and even one Elamite sign. However, in order to introduce the important fonts for other periods and regions, hundreds of additional provident codepoints could and should have been inserted into the »final proposal«, before offering it for Unicode »canonization«. MesZL was accessible to IC(U)E when the final proposal was written,