

**Consensus Statement on the Computer Encoding of Sumero-Akkadian Cuneiform Initiative for Cuneiform Encoding Conference (ICE1)
Johns Hopkins University
November 2-3, 2000**

- 1) It is both possible and desirable to devise a computer character encoding for Sumero-Akkadian cuneiform (hereafter "cuneiform").
- 2) Unicode is the appropriate technology for encoding cuneiform.
- 3) The encoding will not target the unrelated cuneiform script systems used for writing texts in the Old Persian or Ugaritic languages.
- 4) For various scholarly reasons, the encoding of proto-cuneiform is initially, but not necessarily ultimately, beyond the purview of the project.
- 5) The abstract characters of cuneiform will be encoded; information specific to the concrete glyphs of cuneiform will be conveyed by mechanisms above the plain-text encoding level (mechanisms such as text markup).

By "abstract characters" we mean those entities traditionally treated by cuneiformists as distinct signs and roughly corresponding to the sign numbers in the standard sign lists, such as those by Borger, Labat, and von Soden. By "concrete glyphs" we mean the actual, paleographic manifestations of those characters appearing on cuneiform tablets, inscriptions, etc.
- 6) [Provisional] Compound signs formed by the juxtaposition of two or more signs will be encoded as a sequence of two or more Unicode code points.
- 7) [Provisional] Compound signs formed by inscribing one or more signs inside another will be encoded as single Unicode code points, in order to keep the encoding simple, and easier to process.
- 8) Sign mergers and splits (of which there are expected to be 40 or so) will be encoded using a principle of maximal distinction - when a sign has split over time, the split forms will be separately encoded; when signs have merged over time, the original antecedent forms will be separately encoded.

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