

Dr. Mark Eduard Davis

President

The Unicode Consortium

P.O. Box 391476

Mountain View, CA 94039-1476

USA

Email: mark@macchiato.com, v-magdad@microsoft.comBudapest, September 12th, 2011**Dear President Dr. Davis,**

I am Gábor Hosszú, Assoc. Prof. at the Budapest University of Technology and Economics, dealing with computerized paleography and character encoding. I am also a member of the Hungarian Standards Institution (Hungarian National Body) in the ISO/IEC JTC1/SC2, representing Hungary in the encoding process of the Szekely-Hungarian Rovas (now erroneously dealt as “Old Hungarian”). Hereby, I officially request you to annul the decision of the Unicode Technical Committee in Augustus 4, 2011 about the Szekely-Hungarian Rovas (err: Old Hungarian) block: 10C80..10CFF, since it was based on the WG2 resolution ([N4110](#)), which is definitely opposed by the Hungarian NB.

The reasons are the followings:

The Szekely-Hungarian Rovas is a traditional script with Eastern roots that always has been used parallel with the official Latin-based Hungarian script throughout among the Hungarians. Nowadays, the Szekely-Hungarian Rovas has an increasing popularity in Hungary. Accordingly, the Hungarian Standards Institution - backed by the major stakeholders of the user community - created an appropriate proposal for encoding the Szekely-Hungarian Rovas; its latest version is [N4007](#): (<http://std.dkuug.dk/jtc1/sc2/wg2/docs/n4007.pdf>).

The proposal supports the contemporary Szekely-Hungarian Rovas orthography and contains some historically used Rovas characters as well. The selection of the characters for encoding is the result of careful paleographic analysis based on the research of acknowledged Hungarian and international scholars. Moreover, the Hungarian National Body submitted to WG2 some descriptive contributions, which clarified the scientific background of the Hungarian proposal: [N4055](#), [N4076](#), and [N4080](#) (see *Appendix 4* for their titles).

Parallel to the Hungarian standardization efforts, some individuals also submitted alternative proposals. These proposals are mainly based on limited and outdated sources and popular web sites with questionable scientific reliability. However – as in the latest WG2 meeting, in Helsinki (2011-06-06/10) there was no representation of the Hungarian Standards Institution – the ad-hoc committee accepted essentially the proposals of two individuals ([N3531](#) and [N3697](#)) and unfortunately neglected the submissions of Hungary in every important issue. This fact shocked the Hungarian experts largely and caused this official protest.

As the related representatives have been already officially informed, the result of the ad-hoc (N4110) is unacceptable for Hungary. In addition, for fundamental errors, there is no possibility to reach consensus based on the N4110. We are sure that the situation is mainly caused by lack of communication and misunderstanding, and hope that Unicode does not intend to force a standard to the user community contradicting its definitely expressed and considered opinion. In the followings, I shortly summarize the main reasons of opposing the resolution of the ad-hoc (N4110):

- “Old Hungarian” for naming the Szekely-Hungarian Rovas script is unacceptable. Details: *Appendix 1*.
- The whole character repertoire proposed by the Hungarian NB is necessary to be encoded. Details: *Appendix 2*.
- The names of each character in the resolution of the ad-hoc (N4110) is unacceptable. Details: *Appendix 3*.

To summarize, the Hungarian National Body sees no chance to reach consensus based on the resolution of the ad-hoc (N4110) and officially states that the N4110 and the block “Old Hungarian” **is not adequate for encoding**.

The Hungarian Standards Institution (Hungarian National Body), the only legitimate representative of the Szekely-Hungarian Rovas (err: Old Hungarian) is open to cooperate by all means to resolve the unfortunate situation at the soonest possible way.

Sincerely yours,

Gábor Hosszú Dr.

Address: Budapest University of Technology and Economics,
Department of Electron Devices
Budapest, Pf. 91. H-1521, Hungary

Email: hosszu@eet.bme.hu

Appendix 1: Naming of the script

The ad-hoc meeting recommended the use of the term “Old Hungarian” as the name of the script, instead of the term “Szekely-Hungarian Rovas”. However, the term “Old Hungarian” is not acceptable; the arguments are listed below.

Arguments against the term “Old Hungarian”:

- The name “Old Hungarian” is ambiguous: the Hungarian linguistics uses this term for denoting the medieval version of the Hungarian Latin-based script (see: http://wiki.rovas.info/index.php/Old_Hungarian_script). Using the term “Old Hungarian” to another script could lead to a serious collision.
- The Szekely-Hungarian Rovas was developed in the Ancient Hungarian linguistic period (3000 BC - 896 AD), before the Old Hungarian linguistic period (896 AD - 1526). Consequently, using the name “Old Hungarian” for an earlier script would be misleading.
- The expression “Old Hungarian” for denoting the Szekely-Hungarian Rovas has no traditional use either in the Hungarian culture or in the script history.
- It is noteworthy that the authors of the individuals’ proposals ([N3531](#) and [N3697](#)) frequently modified their opinion between two terms for naming the script: in [N3531](#) they used the “Old Hungarian”, in [N3697](#) they switched to the similarly incorrect “Hungarian Runic” (about its incorrectness: *Section 2.2* of [N4076](#)), and in Helsinki, they switched back to the “Old Hungarian”. Their wobbliness is evident and understandable: a good solution cannot be selected from two wrong terms.

Arguments for the term “Szekely-Hungarian Rovas”:

- The variety of traditional names of the script usually contains adjectives; among the most frequent ones are the “Szekely” and “Hungarian”. Therefore, the widely accepted name “**Szekely-Hungarian Rovas**” perfectly shows the traditional naming. The Szekelys played a key role in preserving the tradition of Szekely-Hungarian Rovas and regarded the Rovas script as key part of their identity.
- The term “**Rovas**” has been widely used in several languages; see *Ch. 4* of [N4120](#).
- The Rovas user community organized the “Living Rovas” Conference in 2008 was the largest ever Rovas user-researcher meeting. After a detailed discussion, the attendance made the resolution that the English name of the script is “Szekely-Hungarian Rovas”.
- The term “Rovas” is a category name; three related scripts belong to this script family, namely: **Szekely-Hungarian Rovas** ([N4007](#)), **Carpathian Basin Rovas** ([N4006](#)), and **Khazarian Rovas** ([N3999](#)). For more detailed information see: http://wiki.rovas.info/index.php/Rovas_Script_Family

Appendix 2: Refused, but necessary Szekely-Hungarian Rovas characters

The ad-hoc ([N4110](#)) refused to encode several Szekely-Hungarian Rovas characters, which are necessary in the present-day Szekely-Hungarian Rovas orthography and all of them must be considered as individual letters. It is absolutely necessary to include these missing characters into the standard in order to avoid information loss. For instance, without these characters the automated transliteration of Latin-based texts into Szekely-Hungarian Rovas texts – and vice versa as well - would be impossible, causing the recent Unicode repertoire to be an unsuitable platform for Szekely-Hungarian Rovas (and all the computer) users.

This situation is similar to the *wasei kanji* (和製漢字). These were created combining existing components, though using a combination that is not used in China. Obviously, Japan would have protested if the ISO/IEC JTC1/SC2/WG2 had not included the wasei kanji just because the combinations of other CJK characters could be used to represent their meaning.

Appendix 3: The character-names

The main reason for encoding the Szekely-Hungarian Rovas is the present-day use; therefore, the contemporary character names of the consonant letters must be encoded. The archaic character names used in the [N4110](#) shows an outdated state of the Rovas-related paleography from the middle of the 20th century.

Another essential aspect to be considered is the vital present-day user activity in the Szekely-Hungarian Rovas orthography. Currently, in every part of the Hungarian society including the state administration, the number of Szekely-Hungarian Rovas users is dynamically increasing. This strong and conscious user support is manifested clearly, as the Hungarian National Body, professional and civil Rovas stakeholders officially support the Szekely-Hungarian Rovas, the Carpathian Basin Rovas, and the Khazarian Rovas proposals.

It is noteworthy that the authors of the individual proposals [N3531](#) and [N3697](#) practically do not have any connection to the Szekely-Hungarian Rovas community (their authors live outside of Hungary). Moreover, one of them, who participated in the WG2 in Helsinki, does not know Hungarian even.

Appendix 4: List of the contributions of the Hungarian NB

Latest Szekely-Hungarian Rovas related documents, supported by the Hungarian NB:

<u>N4007</u>	Revised proposal for encoding the Szekely-Hungarian Rovas script in the SMP of the UCS (http://std.dkuug.dk/jtc1/sc2/wg2/docs/n4007.pdf)	2011-05-21
<u>N4055</u>	Notes on the Szekely-Hungarian Rovas script (http://std.dkuug.dk/jtc1/sc2/wg2/docs/n4055.pdf)	2011-05-15
<u>N4076</u>	Comments on encoding the Rovas scripts (http://std.dkuug.dk/jtc1/sc2/wg2/docs/n4076.pdf)	2011-05-22
<u>N4080</u>	Issues of encoding the Rovas scripts (http://std.dkuug.dk/jtc1/sc2/wg2/docs/n4080.pdf)	2011-05-25
<u>N4120</u>	Response to the Ad-hoc Report N4110 about the Rovas scripts (http://std.dkuug.dk/jtc1/sc2/wg2/docs/n4120.pdf)	2011-07-05

Latest other Rovas related documents, supported by the Hungarian NB:

<u>N3999</u>	Revised proposal for encoding the Khazarian Rovas script in the SMP of the UCS (http://std.dkuug.dk/jtc1/sc2/wg2/docs/n3999.pdf)	2011-05-19
<u>N4006</u>	Revised proposal for encoding the Carpathian Basin Rovas script in the SMP of the UCS (http://std.dkuug.dk/jtc1/sc2/wg2/docs/n4006.pdf)	2011-05-19

The Rovas-related knowledge is summarized in English in a new book:

Gábor Hosszú: *Heritage of Scribes. The Rovas Scripts' Relations to Eurasian Writing Systems*. First edition. Budapest, 2011

Note:

Unfortunately, both the scientific results and the user community news of the latest 2 decades are mainly available in Hungarian. Therefore, the Western sources are seriously outdated, especially in the fields of contemporary usage.

Furthermore, persons related to alternative proposals of Szekely-Hungarian Rovas (err: Old Hungarian) continuously vandalize the English Wikipedia pages, deleting and altering all information that contradicts their views. Therefore, the user community just started a new professional media, the **RovasPedia**, where some Rovas-related issues are already presented:

http://wiki.rovas.info/index.php/Szekely-Hungarian_Rovas.