

For the Unicode Project

Title

A Proposal to encode Old Kurdish Alphabet in UCS

Author

Awira A & Eyyub Moradi

PROPOSAL SUMMARY FORM

TITLE

A Proposal to encode Old Kurdish Alphabet in UCS

Requester's name

Awira A.

Requester Type:

Student contribution

Submission Date:

2025/06/01

Technical – Justification.

Has this proposal for addition of character(s) been submitted before?

No.

Has contact been made to members of the user community?

Yes, Old Kurdish is a topic of renewed interest within study of the Kurdish language in Kurdistan. Adding them would be important to the rediscovery of this indigenous script.

Information on the user community for the proposed characters

Kurds and the study of Kurdology would benefit.

The context of use for the proposed characters (type of use; common or rare)

The former Alphabet of the old Kurdish language. Very common before the Kurdish language's arab/latinisation. Still common in the study of premodern Kurdish history.

Are the proposed characters in current use by the user community?

Yes. Old Kurdish is cited constantly.

After giving due considerations to the principles in Principles and Procedures document, must the proposed characters be entirely in the BMP?

Yes.

Should the proposed characters be kept together in a contiguous range (rather than being scattered)?

Yes, as they are from one alphabet.

Can any of the proposed characters be considered a presentation form of an existing character or character sequence?

No.

Can any of the proposed characters be encoded using a composed character sequence of either existing characters or other proposed characters?

No.

Can any of the proposed character(s) be considered to be similar (in appearance or function) to an existing character?

No.

Does the proposal include use of combining characters and/or use of composite sequences? No.

Does the proposal contain characters with any special properties such as control function or similar semantics?

No.

Does the proposal contain any Ideographic compatibility character(s)?

No.

Proposal.

The ancient Kurdish alphabet is recorded by Ahmed bin Ali, known as Ibn Wahshiyya. He authored many books and he records Kurdish poems, Kurdish literature and the Kurdish language. He wrote in 856AD, writing on the then ancient Kurdish alphabet which was derived from Egyptian hieroglyphs. It is believed that this Kurdish alphabet had likely existed since at the earliest 200BC, but most of the sources are lost to us. We believe this as Ibn Wahshiyya calls it ancient, and lists it alongside the Nabatean (200BC), Chaldean (800BC) and Hermesians (unknown) which roughly came around at this time. There are 37 Kurdish letters. These letters do not “correspond” to other languages. We have three copies of the manuscript, British Museum copy No. 444. H.173 and another in National Library of France, No. Arabe 6805. The Kurdish Alphabet. (Starting from the fifth row)

صفة قلم اخر من الاقلام القديمة
وفيه حروف زائدة عن القواعد الحرفية . تدعي
الاکراد وتزعم انه القلم الذي كتب به بينوشاد
وماسي السورائي . جميع علومهما وفنونهما
وكتبهما بهذا القلم . وهذه صورته كما تري .

١٠٠ ١٠١ ١٠٢ ١٠٣ ١٠٤ ١٠٥ ١٠٦ ١٠٧ ١٠٨ ١٠٩ ١١٠
ا ب ج د ه و ز ح ط

١١١ ١١٢ ١١٣ ١١٤ ١١٥ ١١٦ ١١٧ ١١٨ ١١٩ ١٢٠ ١٢١
ي ك ل م ن س ع ف ص

١٢٢ ١٢٣ ١٢٤ ١٢٥ ١٢٦ ١٢٧ ١٢٨ ١٢٩ ١٣٠ ١٣١ ١٣٢
ق ر ش ت ث خ ذ ض ظ

١٣٣ ١٣٤ ١٣٥

غ پ چ

١٣٦ ١٣٧ ١٣٨ ١٣٩ ١٤٠ ١٤١ ١٤٢ ١٤٣ ١٤٤ ١٤٥ ١٤٦

وباقي

୧. ୨. ୩. ୪. ୫. ୬. ୭. ୮. ୯.
 ୧୦. ୧୧. ୧୨. ୧୩. ୧୪. ୧୫. ୧୬. ୧୭. ୧୮.

ي ك ل م ن س ع ف ص

ق ر ه ت ث خ ذ ض ظ

ۛ.ۛ.ۛ.ۛ
 ع ب ج

14.6.1.7. WZ. 1

A set of this alphabet with Arabic underneath in Red.

من
الغنى
في
نحو
منه
في
و
اسم
من

١٢٣٤٥٦٧٨٩١٠١١١٢١٣١٤١٥١٦١٧١٨١٩٢٠٢١٢٢٢٣٢٤٢٥٢٦٢٧٢٨٢٩٣٠٣١٣٢٣٣٣٤٣٥٣٦٣٧٣٨٣٩٤٠٤١٤٢٤٣٤٤٤٥٤٦٤٧٤٨٤٩٥٠٥١٥٢٥٣٥٤٥٥٥٦٥٧٥٨٥٩٦٠٦١٦٢٦٣٦٤٦٥٦٦٦٧٦٨٦٩٧٠٧١٧٢٧٣٧٤٧٥٧٦٧٧٧٨٧٩٨٠٨١٨٢٨٣٨٤٨٥٨٦٨٧٨٨٨٩٩٠٩١٩٢٩٣٩٤٩٥٩٦٩٧٩٨٩٩١٠١١١٢١٣١٤١٥١٦١٧١٨١٩٢٠٢١٢٢٢٣٢٤٢٥٢٦٢٧٢٨٢٩٣٠٣١٣٢٣٣٣٤٣٥٣٦٣٧٣٨٣٩٤٠٤١٤٢٤٣٤٤٤٥٤٦٤٧٤٨٤٩٥٠٥١٥٢٥٣٥٤٥٥٥٦٥٧٥٨٥٩٦٠٦١٦٢٦٣٦٤٦٥٦٦٦٧٦٨٦٩٧٠٧١٧٢٧٣٧٤٧٥٧٦٧٧٧٨٧٩٨٠٨١٨٢٨٣٨٤٨٥٨٦٨٧٨٨٨٩٩٠٩١٩٢٩٣٩٤٩٥٩٦٩٧٩٨٩٩

ص ق ر ش ت ث

١٢٣٤٥٦٧٨٩١٠١١١٢١٣١٤١٥١٦١٧١٨١٩٢٠٢١٢٢٢٣٢٤٢٥٢٦٢٧٢٨٢٩٣٠٣١٣٢٣٣٣٤٣٥٣٦٣٧٣٨٣٩٤٠٤١٤٢٤٣٤٤٤٥٤٦٤٧٤٨٤٩٥٠٥١٥٢٥٣٥٤٥٥٥٦٥٧٥٨٥٩٦٠٦١٦٢٦٣٦٤٦٥٦٦٦٧٦٨٦٩٧٠٧١٧٢٧٣٧٤٧٥٧٦٧٧٧٨٧٩٨٠٨١٨٢٨٣٨٤٨٥٨٦٨٧٨٨٨٩٩٠٩١٩٢٩٣٩٤٩٥٩٦٩٧٩٨٩٩

خ ذ ض ظ ع پ

١٢٣٤٥٦٧٨٩١٠١١١٢١٣١٤١٥١٦١٧١٨١٩٢٠٢١٢٢٢٣٢٤٢٥٢٦٢٧٢٨٢٩٣٠٣١٣٢٣٣٣٤٣٥٣٦٣٧٣٨٣٩٤٠٤١٤٢٤٣٤٤٤٥٤٦٤٧٤٨٤٩٥٠٥١٥٢٥٣٥٤٥٥٥٦٥٧٥٨٥٩٦٠٦١٦٢٦٣٦٤٦٥٦٦٦٧٦٨٦٩٧٠٧١٧٢٧٣٧٤٧٥٧٦٧٧٧٨٧٩٨٠٨١٨٢٨٣٨٤٨٥٨٦٨٧٨٨٨٩٩٠٩١٩٢٩٣٩٤٩٥٩٦٩٧٩٨٩٩

ج ح خ د ذ

وباقى هذه الحروف

لم وجدنا لها نطق ولا

مثال في لغة ولا قلم

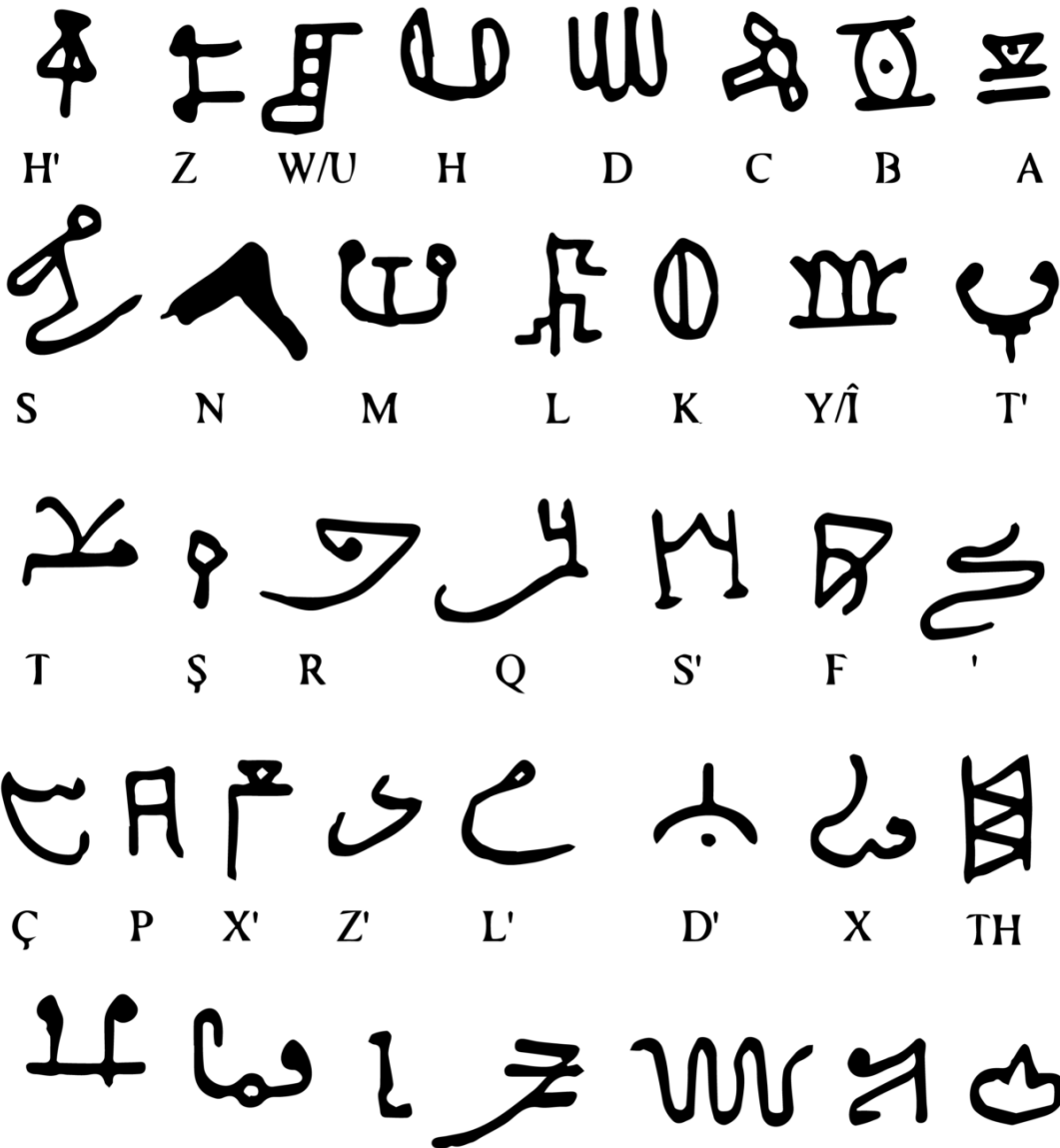
دعوى

According to the Iraqi alchemist, toxicologist and agronomist *Ibn Wahsiyya*, who lived in the ninth century AD, prior to Islamization and Arabization, the Kurds had their own indigenous alphabet, which in the course of time almost died. Wahsiyya also tried to translate the ancient Egyptian hieroglyphs into Arabic. In the southern row of this graphic the letters are to be seen, whose exact meaning one predominates today is unclear.

Old drawing from the face of *Ibn Wahsiyya*

Simple drawing of the alphabet





These characters should be encoded because they are still used in discussing this alphabet and in modern studies of them. They are also important to Kurdish culture and history, as our first alphabet and should be encoded as a result. Its existence is often, wrongly, denied and its existence confined to only a small group of intellectuals due to state repression of Kurdish existence. It is necessary to encode it to show it is real, it is not fake. It also plays a role as there may be undeciphered manuscripts in this script which are labelled and preserve as an unknown language which could be translated with this Kurdish alphabet, further knowledge of this script could solve it.

Egyptian scholar of ancient Linguistics Daria Auni states that this alphabet was likely written from left to right.

Bibliography:

Ibn Wahshiyya, Shawq al-Mustaham fi Ma'rifat Rumuz al-Aqlam (856AD/241After Hijra).

Ancient Alphabets and Hieroglyphic Characters Explained: With an Account of the Egyptian Priests, Their Classes, Initiation, and Sacrifices (1806)

Ancient Alphabets and Hieroglyphic Characters Explained, Ahmed Bin Wahshih (2014)

[Kurdistan Chronicle, 6th edition](#) (2023)