Universal Multiple-Octet Coded Character Set International Organization for Standardization Organisation Internationale de Normalisation Международная организация по стандартизации

**Doc Type: Working Group Document** 

Title: Unicode Technical Report #3: Early Aramaic, Balti, Kirat (Limbu), Manipuri

(Meitei), and Tai Lü scripts

Source: Rick McGowan (UTC), Michael Everson (IE)

**Status:** Discussion document

Action: For consideration by JTC1/SC2/WG2

Date: 1999-07-20

Apparently, Unicode Technical Report #3, published in 1993, was never submitted to JTC1/SC2/WG2 for distribution. Since a number of scripts in that Technical Report have already been encoded, or since other proposals for them have already been put forward to WG2, distribution of the UTR#3 itself at the present time would not be very useful.

This document presents the names and code tables of the scripts in the UTR#3 which have not yet been otherwise discussed in WG2, namely: Early Aramaic, Balti, Kirat/Limbu, Manipuri/Meitei, and Tai Lü.

These proposals were written by Rick McGowan. Formatting and some minor editing in this document is by Michael Everson.

# **Early Aramaic**

The Aramaic alphabet branched from the 22 letter alphabet used for Phoenician and evolved along separate lines culminating in Syriac, Arabic and other scripts. The Early Aramaic block should be used for Late Aramaic (especially papyri), Palmyrene, and Nabataean, Mandaic and their immediate precursors and successors.

The order shown in the accompanying chart matches the order of the Early Phoenician block and the shapes shown there are in the Palmyrene style.

See the Phoenician block introduction and the Early Alphabets block introduction in UTR#3 for further information and issues.

Healey, John F. The Early Alphabet.

Cross, Frank Moore. *The Invention and Development of the Alphabet*. Diringer, David. *Writing*.

### Aramaic Names List, draft 1999-07-20

00 ARAMAIC LETTER ALEPH 01 ARAMAIC LETTER BETH 02 ARAMAIC LETTER GIMEL 03 ARAMAIC LETTER DALETH 04 ARAMAIC LETTER HE 05 ARAMAIC LETTER WAW 06 ARAMAIC LETTER ZAIN 07 ARAMAIC LETTER HETH 08 ARAMAIC LETTER THET 09 ARAMAIC LETTER YODH OA ARAMAIC LETTER KAPH OB ARAMAIC LETTER LAMED OC ARAMAIC LETTER MEM OD ARAMAIC LETTER NUN OE ARAMAIC LETTER SAMEKH OF ARAMAIC LETTER AIN 10 ARAMAIC LETTER PE 11 ARAMAIC LETTER SAN 12 ARAMAIC LETTER QOPPA 13 ARAMAIC LETTER RESH 14 ARAMAIC LETTER SHIN 15 ARAMAIC LETTER TAU

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		Page 2

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### Balti

The Balti script is now extinct, but was formerly used to write the Balti language of Baltistan, in what is now part of Ladakh in Northern Kashmir. The script was apparently introduced in about the fifteenth century CE when the people converted to Islam. It is related to the Arabic script.

In contrast to many other Brahmic scripts, Balti is written from *right to left* horizontally, in the Arabic manner. All of the vowel signs except long *a* are integrated into the glyphs used for consonants, becoming projections from the consonants rather than being separate marks as in most of the modern Brahmic scripts. The consonants apparently have an inherent *a* vowel (or an explicit vowel sign *a* may appear; there may not be a distinction between long and short *a*). There appears to be a sign (overdot) used to indicate the end of a word, but no interword spacing seems to be used.

The base form of b is the same as p and t; only the dots distinguish these. There are two other similar pairs. These appear to approximately parallel similar dotted versus dotless letters in Arabic.

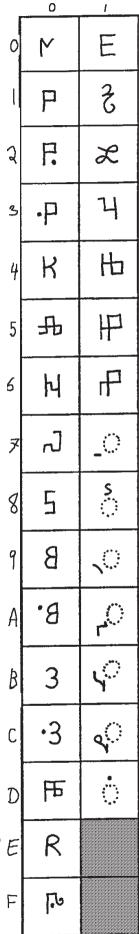
**Issues:** The set of Balti consonants is too small to make it worth encoding parallel to any of the other Brahmic scripts, or to Arabic. Not enough information is available at this time to determine the completeness of the accompanying chart. The digits, if any, are unknown. It is unknown how much literature is available in the old Balti script, or what the level of scholarly interest in it is. The function of the character listed in the names list as "Balti null vowel or word ending" is uncertain.

Grierson, G. A. Linguistic Survey of India, Vol. 3.

One photocopy of 2 pages (326 and 327) from an unknown volume in German.

#### Balti Names, draft 1999-07-20

00	BALTI	LETTER	A	10	BALTI	LETTER	NA		,
01	BALTI	LETTER	BA	11	BALTI	LETTER	HA		
02	BALTI	LETTER	PA	12	BALTI	LETTER	JA		
03	BALTI	LETTER	TA	13	BALTI	LETTER	KHA		
04	BALTI	LETTER	GA	14	BALTI	LETTER	THA		
05	BALTI	LETTER	HHA	15	BALTI	LETTER	TSA		
06	BALTI	LETTER	CA	16	BALTI	LETTER	NGA		
07	BALTI	LETTER	CHA	17	BALTI	VOWEL	SIGN	A	
80	BALTI	LETTER	DA	18	BALTI	VOWEL	SIGN	AA	
09	BALTI	LETTER	RA	19	BALTI	VOWEL	SIGN	E	
0A	BALTI	LETTER	ZA	1A	BALTI	VOWEL	SIGN	I	
0B	BALTI	LETTER	SA	1B	BALTI	VOWEL	SIGN	0	,
0C	BALTI	LETTER	SHA	1C	BALTI	VOWEL	SIGN	U	
0D	BALTI	LETTER	KA	1D	BALTI	NULL	VOWEL	OR	WORD
ΟE	BALTI	LETTER	LA	ENDI	NG?				,
0F	BALTI	LETTER	MA						



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# Kirat (Limbu)

The Limbu (or Kirat or Kiranti) alphabet is (or was) used among the Limbu of Sikkim and Darjeeling. Kirat is structurally similar to the Lepcha (Rong) script. It has 20 consonants (including the stand-alone "A" as in other Brahmic scripts), 8 vowel signs, 7 (or 8 or 10?) final consonants. Letters YA, RA, and WA may be subscripted in a manner similar to the Tibetan and Rong scripts. There appears to have been, at sometime in the past, an orthographic reform, and two slightly different varieties of the script appear to be in existence.

There are three other symbols needed for proper pronunciation of Limbu. These are *mukphreng* (aspiration mark), *kehmphreng* (length mark) and *sa-i* (possibly the virama). The *sa-i* appears to be used to remove the inherent *A* sound like a *virama*. *Sa-i* has been conjectured to occur visibly only in word-medial position. It has been observed also in apparent word-final position. Its function may be therefore different from an invisible *virama*.

Kirat appears to include three other marks, the names of which are not presently known. These are (1) a mark indicating colon or full stop, (2) a mark indicating a prolonged final note during a chant, (3) a mark which looks like the Oriya *anusvara* (a circle above) indicating an acute type of accent.

The accompanying chart was prepared from a draft supplied by Lloyd Anderson. The ISCII model and layout is followed in the accompanying chart. The shaded cells to the far right are final consonants (lower nine cells), a "tr" conjunct and a "j" rendering form.

**Issues:** It is not known whether the Kirat script is still in use as of this writing (1992). It was reported in 1855 as nearly extinct, but sources as recent as 1979 are available.

This draft for Kirat is by no means complete. Sources vary even as to the correct number of final consonants (or "conjoint letters" called *kedumba sok*); there may be as many as ten of them.

There are two different approaches to encoding of Kirat. If the script is postulated to contain an invisible *virama* distinct from *sa-i*, then the final consonants could be rendered in text by using this *virama* followed by the corresponding normal forms If, however, no such invisible virama is postulated, then the final consonants should be encoded distinctly. There is no concrete evidence yet available [to this author] for or against such an invisible *virama* that is distinct from *sa-i*. Both are transliterated into Devanagari by use of half-consonant forms, as Devanagari has no such distinction at all. The final consonants cannot be rendered alone by use of *sa-i*, since the *sa-i* appears to be always visible when it occurs, and *kedumba sok* forms also occur without the *sa-i*. There thus appears to be some distinction, and *sa-i* alone is insufficient to generate both forms. *Sa-i* is also seen with full consonants, where it presumably functions like a *virama* (in eliding the inherent vowel).

In either case, the script bears some similarity to the Lepcha script, and it seems that the same conceptual model should be used for both. Kirat could be laid out in a manner compatible with ISCII and parallel to Devanagari as far as the arrangement of its vowels and consonants. However, since it has a somewhat smaller complement of consonants than Devanagari, and needs no precomposed long vowels, many empty codepoints are unnecessarily scattered throughout such an encoding. Kirat could also be encoded parallel to Tibetan as far as the arrangement of its consonants.

Campbell, A. Note on the Limboo Alphabet of the Sikkim Himalaya. Chemsong, Iman Singh. The Kirat Grammar (Limbu). Subba, B. B. Limbu Nepali English Dictionary. Kirat Primary Book. Limbu Reader VI.

# Kirat (Limbu) Names List, draft 1999-07-20

39 KIRAT LETTER HA

00 Reserved	3A Reserved
01 Reserved	3B Reserved
02 Reserved	3C Reserved
03 KIRAT ASPIRATION MARK (mukhphreng)	3D KIRAT VOWEL SIGN AH (tit-cha)
04 Reserved	3E KIRAT VOWEL SIGN AA
05 KIRAT LETTER A	3F KIRAT VOWEL SIGN I
06 Reserved	40 KIRAT VOWEL SIGN II
07 Reserved	41 KIRAT VOWEL SIGN U
08 Reserved	42 KIRAT VOWEL SIGN UU
09 Reserved	43 Reserved
0A Reserved	44 Reserved
OB Reserved	45 Reserved
OC Reserved	46 KIRAT VOWEL SIGN AE (peh-cha)
OD Reserved	47 KIRAT VOWEL SIGN E
OE Reserved	48 KIRAT VOWEL SIGN AI
OF Reserved	49 Reserved
10 Reserved	4A Reserved
11 Reserved	4B KIRAT VOWEL SIGN O
12 Reserved	4C KIRAT VOWEL SIGN AU
13 Reserved	4D KIRAT VIRAMA (sa-i)
14 Reserved	4E Reserved
15 KIRAT LETTER KA	4F KIRAT LENGTH MARK (kehmphreng)
16 KIRAT LETTER KHA	50 Reserved
17 KIRAT LETTER GA	51 Reserved
18 KIRAT LETTER GHA	52 Reserved
19 KIRAT LETTER NGA	53 Reserved
1A KIRAT LETTER CHA	54 Reserved
1B KIRAT LETTER CHHA	55 Reserved
1C KIRAT LETTER JA	56 Reserved
1D KIRAT LETTER JHA	57 Reserved
1E KIRAT LETTER NYA	58 Reserved
1F Reserved	
	59 Reserved
20 Reserved	5A KIRAT STOP
21 Reserved	5B Reserved
22 Reserved	5C KIRAT SUBSCRIPT YA
23 Reserved	5D KIRAT SUBSCRIPT RA
24 KIRAT LETTER TA	5E KIRAT SUBSCRIPT WA
25 KIRAT LETTER THA	5F Reserved
26 KIRAT LETTER DA	<b></b>
27 KIRAT LETTER DHA	65 KIRAT CONJUNCT TR
28 KIRAT LETTER NA	66 KIRAT RENDERING FORM OF JA
29 Reserved	67 KIRAT FINAL CONSONANT K
2A KIRAT LETTER PA	68 KIRAT FINAL CONSONANT NG
2B KIRAT LETTER PHA	69 Reserved
2C KIRAT LETTER BA	6A KIRAT FINAL CONSONANT T
2D KIRAT LETTER BHA	6B KIRAT FINAL CONSONANT N
2E KIRAT LETTER MA	6C KIRAT FINAL CONSONANT P
2F KIRAT LETTER YA	6D KIRAT FINAL CONSONANT M
30 KIRAT LETTER RA	6E KIRAT FINAL CONSONANT R
31 Reserved	6F KIRAT FINAL CONSONANT L
32 KIRAT LETTER LA	
33 Reserved	
34 Reserved	
35 KIRAT LETTER WA	
36 KIRAT LETTER SHA	
37 KIRAT LETTER SSA	
38 KIRAT LETTER SA	
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# Manipuri (Meithei)

The Manipuri script is a recently extinct script that was formerly used to write the Meithei language in Manipur State, India. The script may have been introduced as early as the fourteenth century CE or as late as the sixteenth. The only available source has been Grierson (see below).

The script is of the same lineage as Devanagari. Unlike Devanagari, there are no independent signs for vowels other than a, the other independent vowels being expressed as signs upon the independent vowel a (similar to the Tibetan method). The consonantal and vowel systems are both fairly complete, so it is probably most useful and correct to encode it in the ISCII manner, parallel to Devanagari as much as possible.

The *anusvara* (nasalization) mark in Manipuri produces some special rendering forms depending on the vowel preceding it. There are eight of these, producing the endings *ang*, *-ng*, *-ng*, *-ing*, *-eng*, *-ung*, *ng*, and *-ong*. The rendering forms look like ligatures of the vowel sign with the *anusvara*, or similar. Manipuri contains no long O vowel, so the place of the long O is filled with the diphthong sign AO, which does not seem to fit elsewhere.

**Issues:** Because Manipuri lacks special symbols for the independent vowels, the entire first column of an encoding completely parallel to Devanagari would be empty but for *anusvara* and the letter A. Therefore, to save one column, these have been moved into the column containing the consonants, so that A occurs just before KA, and the *anusvara* is left in the third position of that same row. The script can thus be put into four rows instead of five. There are presumably digits belonging to Manipuri, but no samples have been available. Space for them is available in the fifth column of the chart. It is also not known how much scholarly and historical interest there is in the Manipuri script.

Grierson, G. A. Linguistic Survey of India, Vol. 3, pt. 3., Bombay?, 1898?

### Manipuri Names draft, mostly parallel to ISCII, 1992-10-23

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00
01
02 MANIPURI ANUSVARA
04 MANIPURI LETTER A
05 MANIPURI LETTER KA
06 MANIPURI LETTER KHA
07 MANIPURI LETTER GA
08 MANIPURI LETTER GHA
09 MANIPURI LETTER NGA
OA MANIPURI LETTER CA
OB MANIPURI LETTER CHA
OC MANIPURI LETTER JA
OD MANIPURI LETTER JHA
OE MANIPURI LETTER NYA
OF MANIPURI LETTER TTA
10 MANIPURI LETTER TTHA
11 MANIPURI LETTER DDA
12 MANIPURI LETTER DDHA
13 MANIPURI LETTER NNA
14 MANIPURI LETTER TA
15 MANIPURI LETTER THA
16 MANIPURI LETTER DA
17 MANIPURI LETTER DHA
18 MANIPURI LETTER NA
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1C	_			
1D	_			
1E	_			
1F	_			
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	MANIPURI	TETIER	K KA	
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22	MANIPURI	LETTER	R LA	
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28	MANIPURI			
29	MANIPURI	LETTER	AH S	
2A	MANIPURI	LETTER	R KSHA	7
2В				
2C				
2D				
2E	MANIPURI	VOWEL	SIGN	AA
2F	MANIPURI	VOWEL	SIGN	I
30	MANIPURI	VOWEL	SIGN	II
31	MANIPURI	VOWEL	SIGN	U
32	MANIPURI	VOWEL	SIGN	UU
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35				
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41	MANIPURI	DIGIT	_	
42	MANIPURI	DIGIT	TWO	
43	MANIPURI	DIGIT	THREE	;
44	MANIPURI	DIGIT		
45	MANIPURI	DIGIT		
46	MANIPURI	DIGIT		
47	MANIPURI	DIGIT		1
48	MANIPURI	DIGIT	EIGHT	
49	MANIPURI	DIGIT	NINE	
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## Tai Lü (Chieng Mai, Northern Thai)

The Tai Lü script is widely used for various Tai dialects in northern Thailand, Yunnan, and parts of Myanmar (they are variously referred to as Lannathai, Yuan, or Kam Muang). The Tai Lü script is of the Brahmic variety, and is structurally similar to both the Thai and Myanmar scripts to which the affinities can be easily seen in the forms. The script is also known by the name *Northern Thai*; neither name seems to be a standard. The script referred to as *Chieng Mai* by Nakanishi is a fancier typographical form of the Tai Lü script, and hence included here. The *language* known as Tai Lü is in use in northern Thailand and in Yunnan province of China. There are about 1 million speakers of Tai Lu, and this script is officially recognized by the Chinese government.

Each Tai Lü consonant has an inherent vowel and (apparently) an inherent tone. Most of the consonants contain an inherent "o" vowel (or "a"?), but some seem to contain other inherent vowels. There are 41 consonants, five stand-alone vowels, and 32 vowel signs. The vowel system of the Northern Thai language is very complex, so the script contains a correspondingly large number of vowel signs, though some of them are written as compounds of simpler graphic symbols.

The traditional order of the consonants as given by Davis is distinctly different from the typical Devanagari order (for instance, the *aspirated* letters all come before the associated unaspirated ones, while Devanagari order is the opposite).

**Issues:** This draft is nowhere near complete as not enough is known at this time and sources are currently scarce. The chart is thought to contain a complete repertoire of possible candidates for encoding, except for punctuation and digits.

The vowel system could be greatly reduced by removing several compound vowel signs and manufacturing these vowels from simpler vowels and glyphic fragments. The glottal stop consonant itself is a component of the graphic representation of two other vowel signs.

The letters at codepoints 1B, 1D, 1E, 1F may be conjuncts of some type involving 18 together with other letters. Perhaps: MA=1B=18+13, LA=1D=18+14, NYA=1E=18+07, NGA=1F=18+03.

The names list is fully inadequate for any purpose except unique identification. The names were generated by taking Davis's pseudo-IPA transliterations and formulating unique names from them, while utilizing only the symbols allowed in ISO names.

Because the order cited by Davis differs so significantly from the Devanagari order, the utility and correctness of this order should be corroborated by other sources.

Davis, Richard. *A Northern Thai Reader.* Pontalis, Pierre Lefevre. *L'invasion Thaie en Indo-Chine.* 

### Tai Lü (Chieng Mai, Northern Thai) names, rev 1992-10-21

```
00 TAI LU LETTER KHA
01 TAI LU LETTER KA
02 TAI LU LETTER KHAA1
03 TAI LU LETTER NGAA
04 TAI LU LETTER SA1
05 TAI LU LETTER SAA1
06 TAI LU LETTER SAA1
07 TAI LU LETTER NYAA
08 TAI LU LETTER LAATHA
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13 TAI LU LETTER MAA		<del></del>				150
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15 TAI LU LETTER LAA2	٩١			9	· · · · · ·	
16 TAI LU LETTER WAA	į	Ichaa'	phaa	had		ie
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18 TAI LU LETTER HA	3	P)	थ।	<b>a</b> 1		
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1D TAI LU LETTER LA					GE	CK to
1E TAI LU LETTER NYA 1F TAI LU LETTER NGA	5	B		22		ಿಂದ
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30 TAI LU VOWEL SIGN A	п	Leatha	a a			
31 TAI LU VOWEL SIGN AA		- CCCT-C				002
32 TAI LU VOWEL SIGN I	Ь	100	20 e	19,	66	600
33 TAI LU VOWEL SIGN II	В	S	1 e			9
34 TAI LU VOWEL SIGN I BAR		Lana	1 ma		-	
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- 42 TAI LU VOWEL SIGN IEH
- 43 TAI LU VOWEL SIGN IE
- 44 TAI LU VOWEL SIGN I BAR E
- 45 TAI LU VOWEL SIGN I BAR SCHWA
- 46 TAI LU VOWEL SIGN SCHWA
- 47 TAI LU VOWEL SIGN SCHWA SCHWA
- 48 TAI LU VOWEL SIGN ANG
- 49 TAI LU VOWEL SIGN AM
- 4A TAI LU VOWEL SIGN AW
- 4B TAI LU VOWEL SIGN OO TWO
- 4C TAI LU VOWEL SIGN ANG TWO
- 4D TAI LU VOWEL SIGN ANG THREE
- 4E TAI LU VOWEL SIGN O MEDIAL
- 4F TAI LU VOWEL SIGN A MEDIAL