Lao Sorting Add-In for Excel

Dr John Durdin, https://laoscript.net

Microsoft Windows does not provide any way of sorting Lao text according to standard Lao dictionary ordering. The difficulty is that Lao dictionaries usually order words phonetically by syllables rather than according to the written form of the words.

The **Lao Sorting Add-In for Microsoft Excel** provides a way to correctly sort columns of Lao words or text according to any of the three commonly-used methods of sorting Lao word lists.

Using the Add-In

After installing the Add-In, a new ribbon tab named **SORT LAO** will be visible:

- To sort a column of Lao text, select a range of cells or the entire column and click the **SORT LAO** button in the ribbon menu. If a selection includes more than one column, the entire selection will be re-ordered according to the entries in the first (left-most) column.
- To sort entire rows using any column other than the first, select the column to order by then choose **Full rows** from the **Sort column:** drop down list before clicking **SORT LAO**.
- For more complex sorting needs, such as multi-level sorting, select all the cells that need to be sorted as Lao text and click **Add Keys**. This will add a (Latin script) alphabetic string to the start of each cell. The range or entire worksheet can then be sorted using the standard Excel sorting procedure and options, but will sorting the Lao cells according to Lao alphabetical order. After sorting, select the columns or cells that had keys added (or the entire range) and click **Remove Keys** to leave only the re-ordered range. (This approach also allows keys to be corrected individually for entries that do not conform to standard Lao syllable rules, such as for words from other languages written using the Lao alphabet.)

Methods for sorting Lao

Each Lao word normally consists of one or more syllables, each syllable having four components:

    (a) the initial consonant or consonant cluster,

    (b) the vowel, which may have several parts (e.g. �ᨅⵣ, ເⵣະ or ເⵣຶອາ),

    (c) the final consonant (if any),

    (d) the tone mark (if any).

All methods for sorting Lao give the highest priority to the initial consonant or consonant cluster, but different methods prioritize the remaining components differently. The standard method for sorting Lao words sorts according to **Initial – Final – Vowel – Tone**, while a commonly used alternative orders syllables by **Initial – Vowel – Final – Tone**.   Another method that is sometimes used orders words by their written characters, except that prefix vowels are not given priority over the initial consonants. (This method is the way Thai words are ordered alphabetically.)

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All three of the above methods are supported by the Add-In, but note that words that have irregular syllable patterns may not be ordered consistently.
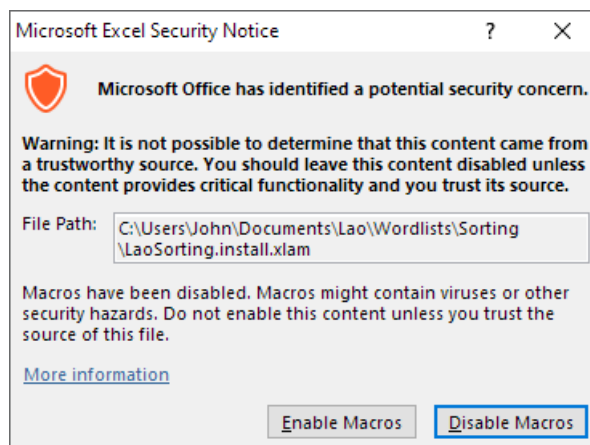
The following table illustrates the difference between the three methods of ordering Lao syllables.

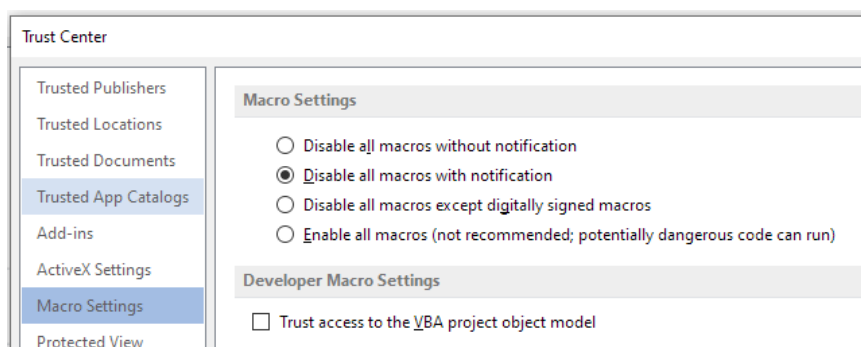| Standard			Vowel priority			Orthographic	
ກະ	1		ກະ	1		ກະ	1
ແກະ	2		ເກກ	7		ກ້ກ	8
ໂກະ	3		ເກງ	12		ກ້ງ	14
ເກີ	4		ເກດ	21		ກ້ດ	23
ເກີ	5		ແກະ	2		ກ້ວ	6
ກ້ວ	6		ແກງ	13		ກງງ	17
ເກກ	7		ແກດ	22		ເກີ	4
ກ້ກ	8		ໂກະ	3		ເກີ	5
ໂກກ	9		ກ້ກ	8		ເກກ	7
ກອກ	10		ກ້ງ	14		ເກງ	12
ກວກ	11		ກ້ດ	23		ເກດ	21
ເກງ	12		ໂກກ	9		ແກະ	2
ແກງ	13		ໂກງ	15		ແກງ	13
ກ້ງ	14		ໂກດ	24		ແກດ	22
ໂກງ	15		ກອກ	10		ໂກະ	3
ກອງ	16		ກອງ	16		ໂກກ	9
ກງງ	17		ກອຍ	19		ໂກງ	15
ກວງ	18		ກອດ	25		ໂກດ	24
ກອຍ	19		ເກີ	4		ກວກ	11
ກວຍ	20		ເກີ	5		ກວງ	18
ເກດ	21		ກງງ	17		ກວຍ	20
ແກດ	22		ກ້ວ	6		ກອກ	10
ກ້ດ	23		ກວກ	11		ກອງ	16
ໂກດ	24		ກວງ	18		ກອຍ	19
ກອດ	25		ກວຍ	20		ກອດ	25

From Version 2.5, Lao words written with old (pre-1975) spelling conventions (with initial clusters and inherent vowels) will usually also be ordered consistently with words written with the current conventions.
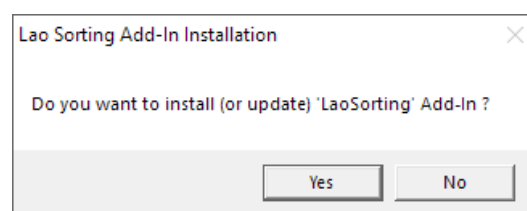
Installing the Add-In

1. Download and unpack the Add-In from https://laoscript.net/download/sortlao.zip
2. Unblock file **LaoSorting.install.xlam** (using the option shown in File Properties).
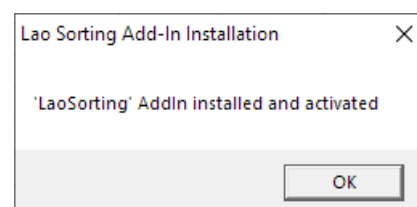3. Open file **LaoSorting.install.xlam** and accept the prompt to **Enable Macros**:

4. *If you do not see this Security Notice or the prompt to install the Add-In (see next step), you may have not unblocked the file, or will need to change your macro security settings in **Trust Center** to allow the installation to continue. The recommended setting is **Disable all macros with notification**:*

5. You will then be prompted to confirm installation:

6. The Add-In will then be installed and activated (or updated) and a message displayed:

7. If you open the file **LaoSorting.install.xlam** again, you are given the option of re-installing (or upgrading to a new version) or uninstalling the installed version of the Add-In.