

Diversity of Writing System - Notes

Dalecarlian Runes

- Developed from Younger Futhark in 16th century
- Used in Dalarna/Dalecarlia in central Sweden until 1900 for the Elfdalian language
- Inscribed on furniture, buildings, bowls, sticks etc to write names

Old Hungarian Script (Székely-magyar rovás / ᐱᐸᐃᐅᐱ ᐱᐸᐸᐸᐸᐸᐸᐸᐸ)

- Thought to have developed from the Turkic Script (*Kök Turki*) during the 8th century AD
- Used until the 11th century AD, and in Transylvania until 1850s
- Revival of interest during 20th century

Old Church Slavonic

- Old version of the Cyrillic alphabet from 10th century AD
- Used to write (Old) Church Slavonic, the liturgical language of the Russian Orthodox church

Ogham (ᐅᐸᐸᐸᐸ)

- Unknown origin, possibly based on Latin, Greek or Runic
- Monumental inscriptions from 4th-6th centuries AD, used in manuscripts from 6th-9th centuries
- Written on stone, wood, parchment manuscripts
- used to write Primitive/Archaic Irish & Old Irish, Old Welsh, Pictish & Latin
- Used in Ireland, Britain & Isle of Man

Gaelic script

- A variant of the Latin alphabet from medieval manuscripts
- Used in print from 1571 – mid-20th century
- Still used for decoration and calligraphy

Ge'ez / Ethiopic script (ᐸᐸᐸᐸ)

- Old Ge'ez alphabet (abjad) developed from old South Arabian script in first centuries AD
- Vowel indication added in about 330 AD
- Used to write: Ge'ez, Amharic, Argobba, Awngi, Blin, Chaha, Dizin, Harai, Inor, Silt'e, Tigre, Tiringya, Xamtanga in Ethiopia and Eritrea

Vai syllabary (ᐸᐸᐸᐸ)

- Vai is a Mande language spoken in Liberia and Sierra Leone
- Syllabary invented in 1833 in Liberia by Momolu Duwalu Bukele (inspired by a dream)
- Or inspired by the Cherokee syllabary – some Cherokees emigrated to Africa in 19th century
- Standardized in 1962 by University of Liberia
- Still used to some extent

Kpelle syllabary

- Kpelle is a Mande language spoken in Liberia and Guinea
- Syllabary invented in 1935 by Chief Gbili of Sanoyie in Liberia (inspired by a dream)

- ## Loma syllabary (ᲑᲠ)

- ## Mende syllabary (Ki-ka-kui)

- Cherokee syllabary (
- CWY**
- / Tsalagi)

- ## Cree Syllabics

- Inuktitut Syllabics (ᐃᐃᓴᐅᓯᑦᑦ ᐅᑦᑦᑦ / titirausiq nutaaq)**

- Inuktitut is an Inuit language spoken in Nunavut, Northwest Territories, Manitoba, Newfoundland, Labrador, Quebec in northern Canada
- Inuktitut syllabics adapted from Cree syllabics by John Horden & Edwin Arthur Watkins in London in November 1865
- First used in print in the 1870s
- Became the co-official script for Inuit languages in Canada in 1976

- Used in Nunavut and in the Nunavik region of Quebec by Inuktitut speakers

Deseret (ᐃᐣᐃᐣᐣᐣ / ᐃᐣᐣᐣᐣ)

- Developed in 1850s at the University of Deseret (now the University of Utah)
- Promoted by LDS / Mormon Church, especially by Brigham Young, Church President
- Modelled on Pitman English Phonotypic Alphabet of 1847
- Used in the Deseret News, in historical records, diaries, coins and signs
- Not promoted after 1869
- Today of interest to historians

Naguaké Taíno Pictographic Alphabet

- Created in 2005 by Dr Yarey Meléndez from Naguaké in Puerto Rico
- Based on Taíno petroglyphs
- Used to write Taíno-Borikenaíki, a reconstructed version of Taíno, an Arawakan language that was spoken throughout the Greater Antillies in the Caribbean

Baybayin (Tagalog Script)

- Possibly developed from a script used in Borneo in the 15th century
- Used until about 18th century. Recent revival of use – now appears on bank notes, passports, signs, logos, tattoos, and is used decoratively
- Used to write: Tagalog, Ilocano, Kapampangan

Balinese (Aksara Bali / Hanacaraka)

- Developed from the Old Kawi script of Java in about the 11th century AD
- Traditionally written on palm leaves (lontar)
- Still used, esp in traditional ceremonies and for writing religious texts

Cham

- Cham is a Malayo-Polynesian language spoken in Vietnam and Cambodia
- The Cham script developed from the Grantha alphabet in about 400 AD
- Used to write Sanskrit at first, then later (by 8th century) Cham
- Cham in Vietnam use this script. Those in Cambodia use the Arabic script
- Traditionally boys learn it from the age of 12, girls do not

Sinhala (සිංහල)

- Sinhala is an Indo-Aryan language spoken mainly in Sri Lanka
- The Sinhala alphabet developed from the Brahmi script of ancient India during the 3rd and 2nd centuries BC
- Earliest literature in Sinhala dates from the 9th century AD
- Used to write Sinhala, Pali and Sanskrit

Caroline Island Script

- Used in the Caroline Islands in Central Micronesia
- Thought to be modelled on the Latin alphabet, reinterpreted as a syllabary, brought to the islands in 1905 by Alfred Snelling, a missionary.
- Used until the mid-20th century

- Used to write Woleai, a Micronesian language spoken in Woleai and nearby islands (formerly known as the Caroline Islands) in the state of Yap in the Federated States of Micronesia

Tengwar / Feanorian Letters

- Invented by J.R.R. Tolkien in the 1920s and 1930s.
- First appeared in 1937 in The Hobbit
- Used to write Quenya, Sindarin, Black Speech of Mordor, English
- Adapted to write other languages
- Vowels marked with Tehtar (“marking”) diacritics

New Maori

- Created by Ian James and a script for Māori.
- Consonants based on traditional chin tatoos. Vowels based on common motif – koru (fern frond) and kowhaiwhai designs
- Can be used to write Hawaiian, Tahitian and other Polynesian languages

Sitelen

- Invented by Jonathan Gabel as a way to write Toki Pona
- Based on the Mayan script
- Syllabic and logographic versions

Betamaze

- Created by Terrana Cliff, an American art student in California
- Designed to draw mazes
- Used to write English