

The Tala Script

The Tala script is a syllabary whose intent is to encode the cries of the bird-like Tala creatures. Though the characters are mapped to keystrokes of the Roman alphabet, it's not my intent to suggest that that's how these things *sound* in any way. Rather, the idea is that a cry has the following features:

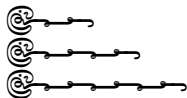
- The cry can begin with one of several unique openings.
- The cry can be of short, medium, or long duration.
- The cry can be modified in quality in one of six ways.
- The cry can end in one of six different ways.

That's how this writing system is structured.

Now, **the most important thing about this font is that it is intended to be rotated 90° clockwise**. Due to the way fonts are created, a character may occupy unlimited horizontal space, but its vertical space is *extremely* limited. Consequently, if one wants to make a vertical font, one has to make sacrifices: Either the font must be *extremely* small, or the font should be rendered horizontally and then rotated when used. I opted for the latter option.

Let me demonstrate precisely what I mean by showing you the font in action.

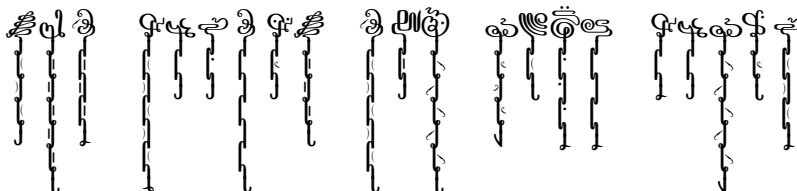
Below is what will happen if you press the a key twice, three times, and four times in succession followed each time by a period:



As you can see, the character gets progressively longer. That's basically the point—except that to see what it *should* look like, you have to rotate it 90° clockwise:



The idea is that an utterance is a series of cries, each one placed vertically on its own space, with spaces (i.e. return carriages) in between words. A longer phrase might look like this:



With that in mind, here are the particulars of the font.

There are 26 initial characters (one for each letter a through z on the keyboard), 6 trailing characters (a, e, i, o, u, and y), each of which can be typed two or three times in succession, and 6 terminations (period, comma, semi-colon, colon, back slash, and forward slash). Each syllable of a Tala word should contain one and only one initial character; between one to three trailing characters (the vowels must be identical, so aa is fine, but ai is not); and one termination. A nice variety is suggested to make it look like an authentic script.

Below is a table showing all the initial characters. They're shown with each vowel and each termination, as an example, but all combinations are possible:

TRAILING CHARACTER AND TERMINATION						
	A.	E,	I;	O:	U\	Y/
A						
B						
C						
D						
E						
F						
G						
H						
I						
J						
K						
L						
M						
N						
O						

TRAILING CHARACTER AND TERMINATION						
	A.	E,	I;	O:	U\	Y/
P						
Q						
R						
S						
T						
U						
V						
W						
X						
Y						
Z						

Again, each of these should be rotated 90° clockwise. And, of course, any termination can be used with any trailing character, and trailing characters can be type singly, doubly, or triply.

In addition to these characters there are unique, abstract forms for numbers. They are listed below, along with the number sign and a spacer character:

ROMANIZED FORM	TALA SCRIPT	KEYSTROKE(S)
#		#
0		0
1		1
2		2
3		3
4		4

ROMANIZED FORM	TALA SCRIPT	KEYSTROKE(S)
5	𐌵	5
6	𐌶	6
7	𐌷	7
8	𐌸	8
9	𐌹	9
Spacer	!	*

To write a number, first use the number symbol, then type out the number. Do the whole thing horizontally and then rotate it 90° clockwise. For example, this is how you would write the number 219:

𐌶𐌵𐌹

And this is what it would look like when rotated:

𐌶𐌵𐌹

For longer numbers, you can use the spacer to help space things out:

𐌶𐌵𐌹!𐌶𐌵𐌹!𐌶𐌵𐌹!

And here that is again vertically:

𐌶𐌵𐌹!𐌶𐌵𐌹!𐌶𐌵𐌹!

When writing longer blocks of text, successive lines should appear below the *lowest* termination. Here's an example:

𐌶𐌵𐌹!𐌶𐌵𐌹!𐌶𐌵𐌹!
 𐌶𐌵𐌹!𐌶𐌵𐌹!𐌶𐌵𐌹!
 𐌶𐌵𐌹!𐌶𐌵𐌹!𐌶𐌵𐌹!
 𐌶𐌵𐌹!𐌶𐌵𐌹!𐌶𐌵𐌹!
 𐌶𐌵𐌹!𐌶𐌵𐌹!𐌶𐌵𐌹!
 𐌶𐌵𐌹!𐌶𐌵𐌹!𐌶𐌵𐌹!

The entire script, as a whole, should give the appearance of hanging vines. I'm hoping due to the varying length of trailing characters and the thinness of the script overall it should be easy to put in and amongst things.

To be sure the font is function properly, do the following test. With the font installed, open up a document or Photoshop file and type `baa`. If the test is a success, the number will look like this:



If the test fails, though, you will get three separate initial character that look like this:



If you see that, ligatures aren't functioning, and ligatures are crucial to the proper function of this font. Ensure that your program supports contextual ligatures, and if it does, be sure contextual ligatures are enabled. They should be enabled by default.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact me at djpquery@gmail.com. Enjoy!