

INTRODUCTION

Many Pagans use “magical alphabets,” most commonly writing spells and keeping records in their Books of Shadows.

In some of these alphabets, the characters stand for more than the letters used to spell words; they can also symbolize magical ideas. Runic alphabets are famous for this.

Because Rune-magic can be very powerful, and because it takes years to understand it well enough to use it correctly, this brochure won't be delving into the magical meanings of the runes or any other alphabets.

What we're showing you here are some of the most popular forms of “magical writing” that Neo-Pagans use as substitutes for the conventional Western alphabet (also called the Latin or Roman alphabet), the old A, B, C, D

When you use the alphabets in this brochure, you won't be writing in a different language. You'll just be changing the way the letters look. The letters in most magical alphabets don't have their own names, either.

When you write in an unusual alphabet, it tells your unconscious mind, your “inner magician,” that your spell is especially meaningful, or that your notes are particularly important.

Using one of these alphabets also protects your privacy to a certain degree, but none of them are secret codes.

We'll offer some warnings:

- ▶ Using one of these alphabets doesn't mean your spell can ignore the ethical rules. No spell should work on anyone without their permission, or intend harm to anyone.

- ▶ Magical alphabets should not be used to show off or “impress” others, or as a “code” to get around following mundane rules.

- ▶ Be especially careful with your handwriting when you are using a magical alphabet, both to show respect *and* so that you will be able to decipher it later.

- ▶ Don't overuse magical alphabets, or your mind will begin to take them for granted and they will lose their magical effect. Don't use them to write letters, for instance.

RUNES

There are a couple of things to notice about this alphabet. Some of the letters – *c* and *k*, for instance, and *v* and *w* – are the same. This is because the original Norse language didn't need a *k* or a *v*.

And, if you have learned anything about runes from a goði (Asatru priest) you will also see some runes that aren't in the aetts (sets of letters). That's because whoever designed this alphabet wanted an equivalent to all English letters. (What this alphabet uses for *x*, for instance, is actually the rune for *th*.)

What this means is that although this magical alphabet will work just fine in your spells and Book of Shadows, you can't use it for Rune magic.



This one is based on the Elder Futhark, but here are other runic alphabets. There's a Younger Futhark, and there are Anglo-Saxon runes. Fantasy authors – most famously, J.R.R. Tolkien in The Hobbit and the Lord of the Rings trilogy – invented others.

Some will say that the Runes should be used only in the practice of Asatru, but many Wiccans use them too. Just remember not to flaunt using them to anyone who would be offended.

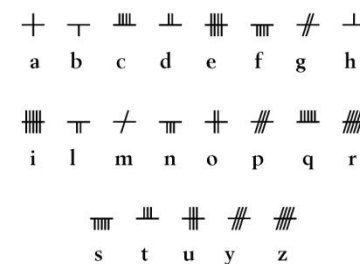


Hailsa is the blessed be
that Asatru exchange.
It's hope you're hale and hearty
and that wide your kin may range.

OGHAM

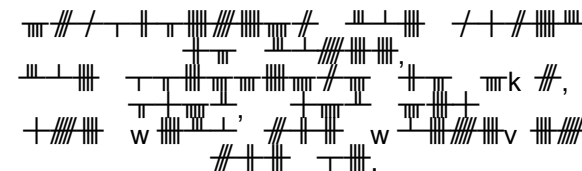
Ogham (pronounced oh-am or ohm, depending on who you ask) is the “tree alphabet” of the Druids. The letters are meant to be carved on the edges of stones or squared sticks/logs, and that's what the horizontal line in each letter represents.

The Ogham alphabet does not include the English letters *j*, *k*, *v*, *w*, or *x*. When you are trying to write English words with this alphabet, use a letter that comes close to the correct sound of the missing letter. For instance, use *c* for *k*, and *cs* for *x*.



This alphabet is called the Beth-Luis-Nuin because those are the Gaelic names of the trees after which the first three letters are named. (Most alphabets are named after their first two or three letters. Our word *alphabet* comes from *alpha* and *beta*, the Greek names for *a* and *b*. The *futharks* are named for *fehu*, *urisaz* and *thurisaz*, the first three letters in some versions.)

Based on the significance of the trees the letters stand for, there are magical meanings to the characters of this alphabet, too, but respecting the fact that it takes years to study and understand them fully, we won't explore them here.



Symbolizing the magic of three,
the blessings of sky, land, and sea
are with you wherever you be.

THEBAN

This popular magical alphabet is sometimes called Honorian, or just "the Witches' Alphabet." It first saw print in 1518, and has been attributed to both Honorius of Thebes and Pietro d'Abano.

There's no *j*, *u*, or *w* in this alphabet; use *g* or *z* for the *j*, and *v* for both *u* and *w*.

ⱥ ⱦ Ⱨ ⱨ Ⱪ ⱪ Ⱬ
a b c d e f g

ⱬ Ɑ Ɱ Ɐ Ɒ ⱱ Ⱳ ⱳ
h i k l m n o p

ⱴ Ⱶ ⱶ ⱷ ⱸ ⱹ ⱺ ⱻ
q r s t v x y z

ⱥⱦⱧⱨ ⱩⱪⱫⱬⱭⱮⱯⱰⱱⱲⱳⱴⱵⱶⱷⱸⱹⱺⱻ
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This is my Book of Shadows
 and my heart is written within.
 Leave these pages lying calm,
 you who would glance and grin.

ⱥⱦⱧⱨⱩⱪⱫⱬⱭⱮⱯⱰⱱⱲⱳⱴⱵⱶⱷⱸⱹⱺⱻ
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ANGELIC

Derived from Hebrew, and also called the Celestial alphabet, this one is used more by magicians and non-Wiccan witches than by Wiccans. There is no *f*, no *j*, and no *w* or *x*; *u* and *v* are the same. An example of how it looks is above.

Ⲁ ⲁ Ⲃ ⲃ Ⲅ ⲅ Ⲇ
a b c d e g h

ⲇ Ⲉ ⲉ Ⲋ ⲋ Ⲍ ⲍ Ⲏ
i k l m n o p q

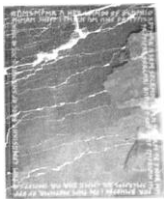
ⲏ Ⲑ ⲑ Ⲓ ⲓ Ⲕ ⲕ
r s t u v y z

USES OF MAGICAL ALPHABETS

First, a fair warning. Magical alphabets are considered one of a witch's tools. That means that when you use them, you must use them thoughtfully, carefully, and with no intent to defraud or harm.

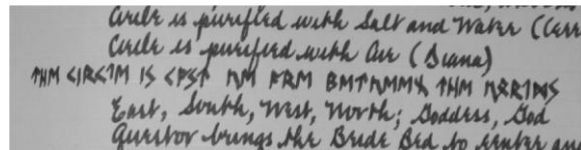
You can do significant damage to your karma if you use magical alphabets unethically. But there's another danger. Even if you have not formally taken an oath, when you use magical tools, you are tacitly agreeing to follow the rules – and if you don't, your tools can "turn against you." Beware of using magical alphabets to exploit, deceive, coerce or harm, for they could turn your words against you.

In Books of Shadows, a magical alphabet can be used for whole pages or for certain lines. The first example is of blessings and protections on the cover of a BoS. (The photo is deliberately distorted to make the runes difficult to read.)



The second photo (also deliberately difficult to read) is a full page of a BoS, written entirely in a runic alphabet and illustrated. It is for use as a challenge to students, who must be able to decipher the alphabet and understand the riddles in the writing.

The last example is an excerpt from a BoS, describing the coven's instructions for casting a Circle. Only a few lines (one showing) are written in runic letters. Otherwise it would be hard to use the directions during an actual ritual. (The rune-line says, The Circle is cast. We are between the Worlds.)



Other magical alphabets can be used in the same ways. Any magical alphabet can be used to write the words to a spell, or a blessing – so we'll end with a blessing.

ⲀⲁⲂⲃⲄⲅⲆⲇⲈⲉⲊⲋⲌⲍⲎⲏⲐⲑⲒⲓⲔⲕⲌⲍⲎⲏⲐⲑⲒⲓⲔⲕ
 ⲀⲁⲂⲃⲄⲅⲆⲇⲈⲉⲊⲋⲌⲍⲎⲏⲐⲑⲒⲓⲔⲕ
 Brave heart and quest cheer!



Mother Earth Ministries-ATC is happy to provide this brief overview of a few magical alphabets and the way many Neo-Pagans use them.

Are they secret codes? No more than any set of letter substitutions might be.

Do they have secret, esoteric meanings? Some of them do, but this brochure doesn't go into them.

Why do Pagans need magical alphabets? Well, everybody knows that when you write something down, it becomes easier to remember. When you take the time to write it down in fancy letters—*Italics*, maybe, or **one unusual script** or *another* – it sticks in your mind even better. And when you use a magical alphabet, with different-looking letters, it takes even more concentration, and helps you remember that this information is especially important.

Read on for a quick look at some magical alphabets. Use them with care and respect.



Mother Earth Ministries-ATC
 Post Office Box 35906
 Tucson, Arizona 85740-5906
www.MotherEarthMinistries.org
Scribe@MotherEarthMinistries.org