

THE HÄHNOREN ALPHABET

The Development of the Alphabet

The following table shows the development of the Hähnoren alphabetic system, and places it into a context with other known Indo-European and Semitic scripts, including Phoenician and Mycenaean Linear B. From this context it is clearly demonstrable that the Hähnoren alphabet is the common ancestor of these later systems. However, the links with Linear B remain tenuous, and more difficult to prove beyond doubt; one reason for this is that Linear B was not alphabetic, but rather syllabic, with characters used to express a consonant followed by a vowel: *da, de, di*, etc. Therefore the characters included in this table were chosen specifically because they were deemed to show sufficient similarities with the Hähnoren forms, though there remain plenty of others which do not.

However, the links with Phoenician and Greek are unmistakable, and underline the close contact there was among all these cultures within the Eastern Mediterranean at the time. Certain letters tie in particularly closely with the early Greek scripts of Euboea, Corinth and Megara, eg. *b* and *p*; this suggests links between Herenor and these city-states known for their early maritime expansion.

Our records of early Hähnoren come from a glossary compiled in the Academy of Rilformò in the early Second Epoch of the Sixth Age, at a time when the city's university was renowned for its linguistic research. It is thanks to these documents that we are able to trace the emergence of the Classical forms, which became the norm throughout the Empire and beyond its demise, appearing on inscriptions and in official documents. From these elegant and refined forms of the alphabet, during the Third Epoch, the Cursive script, developed as a handwritten method for use with ink on paper, largely replaced the Inscription forms. It was not until printing was invented in the Third Epoch that we find the emergence of the last incarnation of the Hähnoren alphabet; this was used alongside the ancient Inscription and Cursive forms, though there was never any mixing of them as we find in our own use of upper and lower cases.

A final mention should be made of the vowels, which from the outset had always been considered individual letters in their own right. This remained the case throughout the earlier imperial period, but with the advent of the Cursive script we find an increasing use of diacritics replacing vowels. Right up until the final demise of the Herenore civilisation, vowels were marked with a system of dots and accents above and below the consonant preceding them, though inscriptions tended to continue with the traditional convention of indicating vowels with full letters.

There was a modified form for *-r* if elided with a preceding vowel; there had also existed an equivalent form for *-l*, though this had long disappeared by Classical times, and no record of it remains.

	<i>Value in Transliteration</i>	<i>Early forms of Håbnoren</i>	<i>Imperial Håbnoren Inscription</i>	<i>Cursive Håbnoren</i>	<i>Printed Håbnoren</i>	<i>Linear B</i>	<i>Phoenician</i>	<i>Archaic Greek</i>	<i>Classical Greek Upper Case</i>	<i>Classical Greek Lower Case</i>	<i>Classical Roman</i>
a	𐌰	𐌰	𐌰	𐌰	𐌰	𐌰	𐌰	𐌰	Α	α	A
à	𐌰	𐌰	𐌰	𐌰	𐌰	𐌰	𐌰	𐌰	Α	α	A
b	𐌱	𐌱	𐌱	𐌱	𐌱	𐌱	𐌱	𐌱	Β	β	B
c	𐌲	𐌲	𐌲	𐌲	𐌲	𐌲	𐌲	𐌲	Γ	γ	C
d	𐌳	𐌳	𐌳	𐌳	𐌳	𐌳	𐌳	𐌳	Δ	δ	D
e	𐌴	𐌴	𐌴	𐌴	𐌴	𐌴	𐌴	𐌴	Ε	ε	E
é	𐌴	𐌴	𐌴	𐌴	𐌴	𐌴	𐌴	𐌴	Ε	ε	E
ë	𐌴	𐌴	𐌴	𐌴	𐌴	𐌴	𐌴	𐌴	Ε	ε	E
f	𐌵	𐌵	𐌵	𐌵	𐌵	𐌵	𐌵	𐌵	Φ	φ	F
g	𐌶	𐌶	𐌶	𐌶	𐌶	𐌶	𐌶	𐌶	Γ	γ	G
h	𐌷	𐌷	𐌷	𐌷	𐌷	𐌷	𐌷	𐌷	Η	η	H
i	𐌸	𐌸	𐌸	𐌸	𐌸	𐌸	𐌸	𐌸	Υ	υ	I
í	𐌸	𐌸	𐌸	𐌸	𐌸	𐌸	𐌸	Υ	Υ	υ	I
l	𐌹	𐌹	𐌹	𐌹	𐌹	𐌹	𐌹	𐌹	Λ	λ	L
m	𐌺	𐌺	𐌺	𐌺	𐌺	𐌺	𐌺	𐌺	Μ	μ	M

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n	Ɱ	Ɱ	Ɱ	Ɱ	Ɱ	Ɱ	Ɱ	Ɱ	Ν	ν	Ν
o	Ɱ	Ɱ	Ɱ	Ɱ	Ɱ	Ɱ	Ɱ	Ɱ	Ο	ο	Ο
ó	Ɱ	Ɱ	Ɱ	Ɱ	Ɱ	Ɱ	Ɱ	Ɱ	Ο		Ο
p	Ɱ	Ɱ	Ɱ	Ɱ	Ɱ	Ɱ	Ɱ	Ɱ	Π	π	Ρ
q	Ɱ	Ɱ	Ɱ	Ɱ	Ɱ	Ɱ	Ɱ	Ɱ	Κ	κ	Q
r	Ɱ	Ɱ	Ɱ	Ɱ	Ɱ	Ɱ	Ɱ	Ɱ	Ρ	ρ	R
-r	Ɱ	Ɱ	Ɱ	Ɱ	Ɱ	Ɱ	Ɱ	Ɱ	Ρ		
s	Ɱ	Ɱ	Ɱ	Ɱ	Ɱ	Ɱ	Ɱ	Ɱ	Σ	ς	S
t	Ɱ	Ɱ	Ɱ	Ɱ	Ɱ	Ɱ	Ɱ	Ɱ	Τ	τ	T
u	Ɱ	Ɱ	Ɱ	Ɱ	Ɱ	Ɱ	Ɱ	Ɱ			U
ú	Ɱ	Ɱ	Ɱ	Ɱ	Ɱ	Ɱ	Ɱ	Ɱ			
v	Ɱ	Ɱ	Ɱ	Ɱ	Ɱ	Ɱ	Ɱ	Ɱ			V
w	Ɱ	Ɱ	Ɱ	Ɱ	Ɱ	Ɱ	Ɱ	Ɱ			
x	Ɱ	Ɱ	Ɱ	Ɱ	Ɱ	Ɱ	Ɱ	Ɱ	Ξ	ξ	X

<i>Inscription:</i>	ALTANS	ᲐᲕᲗᲚᲘᲚ
	GAMURECIN	ᲕᲐᲚᲗᲘᲚᲘᲚᲘᲚᲘᲚ
	RILFORMÒ	ᲘᲚᲗᲘᲚᲘᲚᲘᲚᲘᲚ
	DÚHAR	ᲕᲘᲚᲗᲘᲚ
	HÀHNOR	ᲕᲘᲚᲗᲘᲚᲘᲚ
	HERENOR	ᲕᲘᲚᲗᲘᲚᲘᲚᲘᲚ

<i>Cursive:</i>	<i>altans</i>	ᲐᲕᲗᲚᲘᲚ
	<i>gamurecin</i>	ᲕᲐᲚᲗᲘᲚᲘᲚᲘᲚᲘᲚ
	<i>rilformò</i>	ᲘᲚᲗᲘᲚᲘᲚᲘᲚᲘᲚ
	<i>dúhar</i>	ᲕᲘᲚᲗᲘᲚ
	<i>hàhnor</i>	ᲕᲘᲚᲗᲘᲚᲘᲚ
	<i>herenor</i>	ᲕᲘᲚᲗᲘᲚᲘᲚᲘᲚ

<i>Printed:</i>	<i>altans</i>	ᲐᲕᲗᲚᲘᲚ
	<i>gamurecin</i>	ᲕᲐᲚᲗᲘᲚᲘᲚᲘᲚᲘᲚ
	<i>rilformò</i>	ᲘᲚᲗᲘᲚᲘᲚᲘᲚᲘᲚ
	<i>dúhar</i>	ᲕᲘᲚᲗᲘᲚ
	<i>hàhnor</i>	ᲕᲘᲚᲗᲘᲚᲘᲚ
	<i>herenor</i>	ᲕᲘᲚᲗᲘᲚᲘᲚᲘᲚ

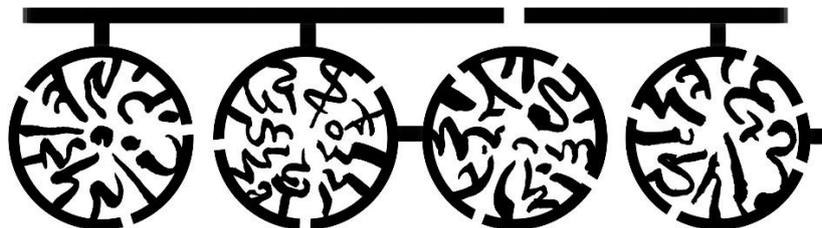
Other Writing Systems

Alongside the Hähnoren alphabet, other scripts did exist. Some developed directly out of the Hähnoren scripts at various stages of history, while other systems indigenous to initially isolated cultures persisted well into the Sixth Age. Little is known about these, though a number of documents suggest how they appeared.

A semi-alphabetic script was in use during the early Third Epoch of the Sixth Age in the region around the Lake Aimulle, chiefly among the Meries tribe. This was adapted from the Hähnoren, with the order of the letters organised so that the vowels were grouped at the centre of each word. A circle above an opening or closing consonant indicated that this letter represented either the beginning or end of a word; by extension, if such a consonant did not have a circle, then a vowel had to be placed in front of it, to open the word, or after it, to finish the word. Clusters of consonants, where no vowel was to be inserted, were indicated with a line below them.

$\overset{\circ}{\text{CA}}\underline{\text{ÉMB}}$ = CAMBÉ
 $\text{PNDRAA}\underline{\text{ELL}}^{\circ}$ = APANDRELL

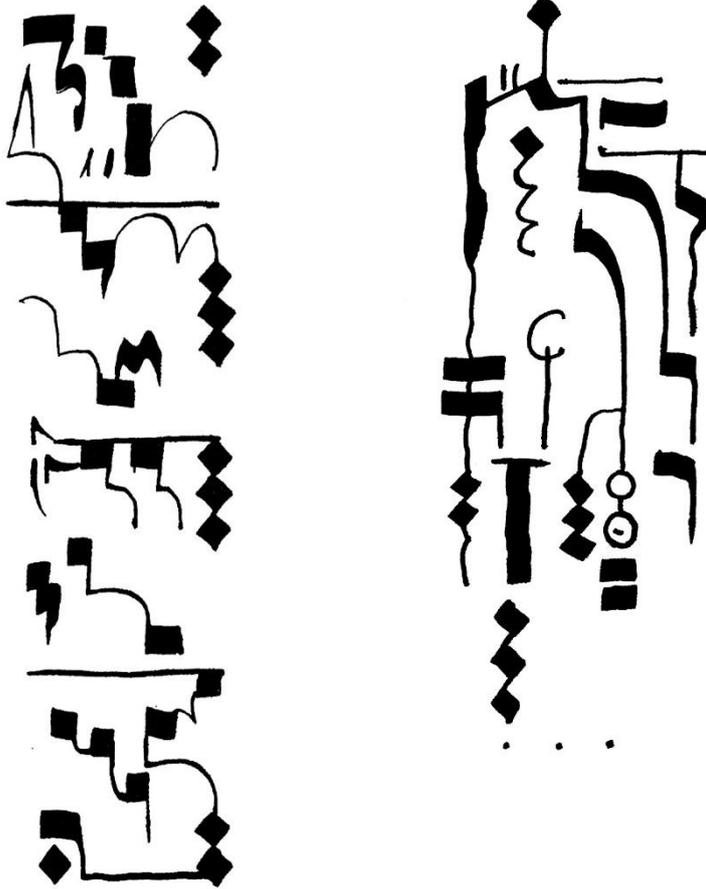
One of the most original scripts came from the North-eastern region, around Gorla. This was based on having single words as individual units, each one centred on circles. It is known that the basic phonemes employed in this script would be doubled if a vowel was intended to be read as long, or, in the case of a consonant, if the sound was voiced. However, little else is known about this script, including which direction individual words and whole sentences were read.



Another interesting script appears to have developed in the Deep West, among the Kraezí people and the various tribes of the Hot Hills. This writing system was recorded in documents kept in the Rilformò Academy, but the examples that have come down to us have defied any attempts to decipher it, or even to comprehend how it functioned. Two versions of it appear to exist:



Another unintelligible script originated in the western reaches of Camrain, written vertically and inscribed on stone tomb markers. The differences in the appearance of these two extant versions might indicate that the same script is being used for two distinct languages, much as French and English, or Cantonese and Mandarin Chinese use the same characters for their own purposes.



There is still a great deal of work to be done on these scripts, but when they are decrypted they will surely shed more light on the way these ancient, remote cultures lived.