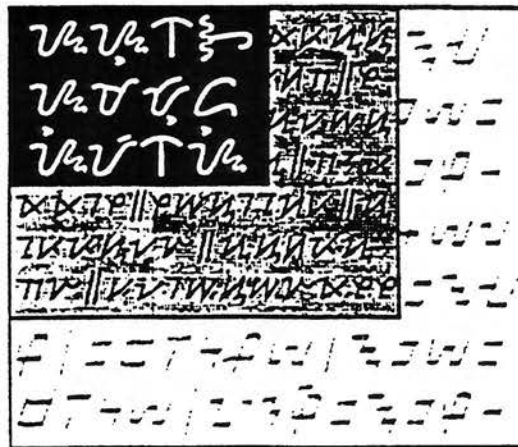# Ancient Philippine Scripts Series

THE LIVING SCRIPTS

PostScript and TrueType Fonts
for
IBM PC and Macintosh

SUSHI DOG GRAPHICS ✳ LOS ANGELES

LIVING SCRIPTS SAMPLE SHEET

Font Name: Buhid Espallargas

Font Name: Buhid Scott

Font Name: Hanunóo Gardner

Font Name: Hanunóo Postma

Font Name: Tagbanwa Maliwanag

Font Name: Tagbanwa Peralta

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LIVING PHILIPPINE SCRIPTS

THIS SECTION WILL START with a very brief historical background on ancient Philippine scripts. As I describe the six fonts included in the package I will also include relevant material. I hope that this short account will whet you appetite to go into a more serious study of ancient Philippine scripts. You will find the study exciting and you may even find that much of what you know are based on legend and not history.

A historical background

When the Spaniards led by Legazpi came to settle Manila in 1571, they encountered a society that was very highly literate. Almost everyone in the area could read and write in a script that was unlike anything they had ever seen. They were impressed and the first book (second?) published in the Philippines in 1593 was a catechism that was written partly in the ancient Tagalog script. Estimates indicate that the script called *baybayin* or *alibata* became extant around 1200. By 1600, it had apparently diffused to other parts of the Philippines that had trade contacts with Manila.

Within a century from Hispanic contact the script slowly faded from the scene. It ceased to be employed in its traditional way and was relegated for writing signatures on Spanish-introduced and mandated documents. Within another century, its disappearance became total.

However, a few cultural groups who had similar writing systems at the same time the Tagalogs did and were able to dodge Spanish influence by escaping to remote areas retained use of their ancient scripts. Today the Hanunóos and Buhids of Mindoro and the Tagbanwas of Palawan are still fluent in their centuries old scripts. We find that the areas that were conquered lost fluency in their writing systems and became mostly illiterate during the Spanish occupation.

Alphabets and syllabaries

The extinct Tagalog script as well as the living scripts are classified as syllabaries in the study of writing systems. We are all familiar with alphabets since that is what we grew up with. In an alphabet, the symbols rep-

resent phonemes, the basic unit of speech sounds. Consonants cannot be pronounced by themselves and need a vowel to form a syllable that can be pronounced.

Syllabaries, on the other hand, are systems where the symbols represent syllables. The symbols can be pronounced since the vowel sound is inherently built into the symbol. Keep this distinction in mind as it will be important in learning how to properly use the ancient Philippine scripts.

Philippine syllabaries have 17 signs representing 14 consonantals and 3 vowels that stand alone. The consonantals are *ka, ga, nga, ta, da, na, pa, ba, ma, ya, la, wa, sa,* and *ha.* The stand-alone vowels are *a, i,* and *u.* (The Mangyans added *ra* at some late point.) Kudlits or diacritics are used to change the default sound of the consonantal syllables (CV form) from an *a* to an *i* or a *u* depending on whether they are placed above or below the sign. Placed above, the sound changes to an *i,* below to a *u.*

Keyboard entry of the script

The Hanunóo and Buhid scripts have evolved such that their diacritics are no longer in their in their obvious up or down positions. Instead of remaining separate units, they have been incorporated into the symbol as an integral part of the design. The Tagbanwa has not evolved in the same manner but have kept their traditional positions.

The internalized diacritics retain much of their ancestry and it is very likely that current users of Hanunóo and Buhid scripts will still be able to read scripts written the traditional way, i.e., with basic symbols plus diacritics.

With this in mind, I have devised two keyboard mapping schemes: Quick Entry and Mapped Entry. Quick Entry can be learned quite easily and can be used without referring to a chart. Mapped Entry require reference to a chart for the *-u* syllables, at least until one gets used to the key locations.

Quick Entry is used for Tagbanwa and can be used with good results for Hanunóo and not-too-good results with Buhid. Mapped Entry is necessary for Buhid, gives better letterforms for Hanunóo, and is not available for Tagbanwa.

Quick Entry

The Quick Entry method retains the simple keyboard mapping scheme that I used for the Tagalog script. The consonantals are mapped on the keyboard in the same place as their corresponding alphabets. Thus *ka* is entered by pressing the letter *k.* For Tagbanwa, the capital letter *K* may also be used to enter *ka* since the characters are all mapped to both shifted and unshifted keys. *Nga* is entered by pressing the grave (`) key; the shifted character for this key, and for Tagbanwa, asciitilde (~), may also be used. If your keyboard has Ntilde (Ñ)

or ntilde (ñ), they may also be used, the former only for Tagbanwa. Vowel syllables are entered through their corresponding *a, i,* and *u* keys.

We are fortunate that there were only three vowels in ancient Philippine scripts. This allows us to use *e* and *o* to enter the kudlits that change the sound of the syllable. An *e* is used to place a kudlit above the basic syllabic sign while *o* is used to place one below. The *e* and *o* keys are designed to be deadkeys. After they are pressed, the next letter will print in the same location. This may not necessarily be shown on your screen depending on the sophistication of your computer system but will print correctly on paper.

To enter the symbol for *ki,* type *ek* (not *ke*). For *ku,* type *ok.* The keys for the kudlits, *e* or *o,* must be entered before the key for the basic sign. The use of deadkeys for the kudlits forces you to remember that they are not separate symbols but are modifiers for the following symbol.

A chart showing Quick Entry keys is shown in Figure 1, page 13.

Mapped Entry

Mapped Entry is not really that difficult to use either. The -*a* syllables are entered by using the same lower case keys as was described in the above Quick Entry section. Upper case or shifted keys are used to enter -*i* syllables. So far, so good. These two cases are actually easier to enter than using Quick Entry because no dead keys are involved.

However, it is necessary to use strange keys to enter -*u* syllables. These syllables are entered as follows:

bu	1
du	2
gu	3
hu	4
ku	5
lu	6
mu	7
nu	8
pu	9
su	0
tu	-
wu	[
yu	]
ngu	\
ru	; (if available)

A chart for Mapped Entry is shown in Figures 2 and 3, on pages 14-15.

Alternate *ka-ki-ku* characters

I have included two alternate forms for the *ka-ki-ku* characters of Hanunóo Gardner. They are mapped as follows:

ka	c
ki	C
ku	'
ka	q
ki	Q
ku	/

Alternate characters are shown in Figure 4, on page 16.

The Mangyan *ra-ri-ru* characters are recent innovations and were traditionally represented as *la-li-lu*. See p. 16 for a discussion of this innovation.

Pamudpod

The *pamudpod* is an innovation proposed by Antoon Postma for Hanunóo and is identical in function to the cross kudlit proposed by Fr. Francisco Lopez for the Tagalog script in 1620. It will be discussed in detail in the font description. Like the Tagalog cross kudlit, it is mapped to the "=" and "+" (Shift-=) keys. However, unlike the cross kudlit which is a dead key and entered before the basic symbol, the *pamudpod* is not a diacritic and is entered after the synbol.

The use of the *pamudpod* is illustrated in the second version of the Hanunóo phrase shown below:

Si aypod bay upadan
You, my friend, dearest of all

(traditional)
si a-po ba u-pa-da
ม̞ᐯᲐ� 7ᲳᲐᐯ

(with pamudpod)
si a-y-po-d ba-y u-pa-da-n
ม̞ᐯ Ꮙ Აᐯ 7Ꮙ ᲳᲐᐯ Ꮙ

Description of the fonts

The typefaces were hand drawn on the computer and I tried to make them look that way. It is not easy to make those little kinks and imperfections look natural specially when the use of cubic splines tend to make everything look smooth and slick.

I have included two typefaces for each script in this package either to reflect the variety of styles the ethnic groups use or to illustrate how a script has evolved over time. I have named them after people who in my judgment have contributed something significant to the furtherance of our knowledge or to the preservation of Philippine scripts. The descriptions of the six fonts shown below would be more understandable if you use them in conjunction with the printed samples on page 4.

Buhid Espallargas

This font is named after Joseph Espallargas, CM who in his master's thesis and doctoral dissertation presented to the Ateneo de Manila University has written probably the best two pieces of literature on ancient Philippine scripts and early sounds of the Tagalog language.

His thesis on ancient scripts is very thorough and the list of references he provides is the most complete I have ever seen. His dissertation on the phonology of Tagalog sounds of the 16th century answers some of the many mysteries of the script. It suggests that the script is not defective as many believe in representing the sounds of the old language.

Unfortunately, the misguided policy of Ateneo de Manila against convenient copying of papers turned in by graduate students prevents bet-

ter dissemination of the important information contained in Espallargas' papers. This policy is out of step with current efforts to make information access easy for researchers and in conflict with proposals to make research papers available on-line on Internet.

This script style is one of the two used by the Buhids and is written in small letters. In Mangyan scripts, the diacritics have been incorporated into the main symbol so that some of the letterforms appear to be without the obvious mark above or below the basic symbol.

This stylistic change must have come in comparatively recent historical times. As the user base of a writing system shrinks, innovations and changes become easier to implement. A strong and large base keeps evolution to a minimum and keeps the system stable over time.

Buhid Scott

William Henry Scott has written many pieces on Philippine history. But he is best remembered for exposing as fraudulent the Pavón and Povedano manuscripts in 1965. These manuscripts had incorrect representations of ancient Philippine scripts which had been cited in earlier reasearch papers on the subject.

The Pavón manuscript is also the basis for the *Code of Kalantiaw*, a phony document taught in history classes to Filipino schoolchildren. Scott also clarified that the Maragtas story (the 10 datus who came from Borneo to settle in Panay) was not based, as commonly believed, on an original manuscript written in an ancient Philippine script but on oral tradition.

This font represents the other style of Buhid writing and is written in large letters.

Hanunóo Gardner (1904)

Fletcher Gardner was a medical doctor in the army when he was assigned to the Philippines right after the United States embarked on its mission of "manifest destiny" at the turn of the century. He volunteered to resign his commission to work instead for the welfare of the Mangyans of Mindoro.

Gardner gathered artifacts and writing samples over the years. These were deposited and preserved in various places like the Ayer Collection of the Newberry Library in Chicago, the University of Michigan Library, the Witte Museum of San Antonio, and the Library of Congress.

When he retired prior to World War II, he wrote several books and articles on Mangyan and Tagbanwan culture, language, and scripts.

The Hanunóos write in small letters and this font is based on a sample taken in 1904.

Hanunóo Postma (1994)

Antoon Postma first came to the Philippines from Holland in the midfifties. Since then he has stayed in his adopted country, mostly in the

mountains of Southern Mindoro where he is the director of the Mangyan Assistance and Research Center. At this time, Postma is the most knowledgeable person in the Philippines when it comes to ancient scripts.

He is best known for translating the oldest Philippine document, a copperplate from 900 A.D. He took on the task when "more qualified" people in academia begged off because they suddenly became too busy when asked to do the task by the National Museum. He has given us a better understanding of how the Philippines was before the Spaniards came.

This font is based on current Hanunóo writing style. By comparing this with the 1904 version, one can get a sense of how a script evolves as the result of a change in writing materials.

The 1904 version betrays traces of its palm leaf ancestry. Although the sample was taken from bamboo writing, the shapes still show how the script was written in earlier times when it was presumably written on palm leaves. Horizontal lines have to be avoided when writing on palm leaves as it would tend to cause the leaf to split easily. The rounded strokes in this style are needed for writing on palm leaf.

While rounded strokes are necessary for palm leaf writing, they are hard to cut into bamboo. The strong and long horizontal fibers make rounded cuts difficult to do. On the other hand, horizontal and vertical strokes are easy to cut in bamboo.

Bamboo is thick enough so that the problem of splitting does not occur.

Hanunóo writing, thus, changed within this century. The stokes are unchanged but the shapes have into a more angular and linear style.

This font includes the *pamudpod*, or *pamputol*, or *pamatay* which works like Fr. Lopez' cross kudlit of 1620.

When Francisco Lopez published his Ilocano catechism in 1620, he added an artifice which he thought would improve the readability of the Tagalog script (yes, it was the Tagalog script that was used to publish the Ilocano book). This was the cross kudlit that went under the basic consonantal symbol. The cross kudlit cancelled the vowel sound of the basic symbol much like what the *virama* does for Brahmi and Devanagari (used in writing Sanskrit) or the *paten* for the many Indonesian scripts.

The original Tagalog script only allowed for the recording of CV syllables and by adding the cross kudlit, Lopez wanted to add to the script the ability of to record CVC syllables. This, of course, really made it easier to read for those not used to the original script like the Spaniards or even us today.

However, it may not have made sense to the ancient Filipinos who never had problems in reading their script. We may never know just how it is to be really fluent and literate in ancient Philippine scripts. Those of us whose first script was the Latin script may never be able to fully comprehend how the ancient Filipinos read their script. When reading the script, we can only try to guess at the

CVC's final consonant from its context. The ancient Filipinos may additionally have been examining all the possible combinations in their mind, rejecting those that do not exist and filling in the missing consonant automatically.

The ancient Tagalogs did not accept the cross kudlit into their writing system.

Today, the Hanunóos face exactly the same situation that the Tagalog grammarians faced earlier—whether to use or not use the *pamudpod*. I have to admit that it makes the reading of Hanunóo easier for me but it is not up to me to make that choice. The *pamudpod* is included for those who want to use it.

Hanunóo writing today is still done in small letters as it was in 1904.

Tagbanwa Maliwanag

Ildefonso and Eusebio Maliwanag were brothers who lived in Mansalay, Mindoro before World War II. They were instrumental in obtaining, collecting, and translating indigenous Mangyan and Tagbanwan writing, actually doing all the fieldwork for the later studies by Fletcher Gardner. It is to their credit that they were able to make their informants write things that were of cultural significance in the writing samples they collected. The samples are valuable not only from an epigraphic but also from an ethnographic point of view.

The brothers were the source of most of the later samples passed on by Fletcher Gardner to the various repositories in the United States. Ildefonso, additionally, was co-author of Gardner's 3-vol. *Indic Writings of the Mindoro-Palawan Axis.* Their contributions to our knowledge of living scripts is tremendous.

It is possible that the Tagbanwan script reflects the oldest shapes of ancient Philippine writing. There are indications that this might be the case but still remains to be proven.

There is much variation in the few Tagbanwan writing samples I have seen. (I must emphasize the last three words of the last sentence, *I have seen.*) This font is based on one of them. Tagbanwan scripts are written in large letters such that only short words have been used to decorate objects. This is in contrast with the Hanunóos who use complete poems, for instance, to decorate objects like lime containers.

Tagbanwa Peralta

Dr. Jesus Peralta, Jr., a director at the National Museum of the Philippines, professes not to be an expert on Philippine scripts. But whether that is true or not is not important. He has done more behind the scenes to help those working on scripts projects than many people I know. He helps them get funding, gets them pointed to the right people, provides information, and more importantly, gives them encouragement.

Although a very busy man, he finds time to see people who come to him. On each of the two occasions that I visited him in his Manila office,

he had visitors asking for help—a tribal leader wanting to establish a regional museum and a linguist wondering how he can get a plane ticket to a remote area where he has to do some work.

He has helped launch conferences and projects where his name does not even show. He recently started a project to map the living users of the Tagbanwan script. This is very important because of all the living scripts, Tagbanwa is the one closest to dying. Peralta realized this and pushed to get this project moving.

This font is different from Tagbanwa Maliwanag and is only one of the many variations of Tagbanwan writing..

How to use the charts

On the next four pages are charts to help you in keying in the various symbols of Philippine living scripts. The columns represent vowels, the rows consonants. The cell at an intersection is the combination of the particular consonant and vowel. Thus row H, column I is the cell for the symbol (or syllable) *hi*. There you will find the symbol and the corresponding keystroke used to enter it.

For the above example *hi*, the keystroke for Quick Entry of Tagbanwa would be "eh." The Mapped Entry for Buhid would be "H" or Shift-h. Likewise, the keystroke for *mu* would be "om" for Quick Entry and "7" for Mapped Entry. Quick Entry keystrokes for Buhid and Hanunóo are the same as those for Tagbanwa.

That's all there is to it!

Entering the pamudpod

The *pamudpod* for Hanunóo Postma can be entered with either the "=" or "+" keys. Normally, you enter it with the "=" key. But since the *la* and the *sa* symbols extend more into the lower right area, the "=" *pamudpod* will overprint them. If you do not like this effect, use the "+" *pamudpod* which is designed with a deeper curve to clear the two wide symbols.

	A		I		U	
	a	ꓳ	i	ꓳ	u	ꙅ
B	b	◯	eb	◯̇	ob	◯̣
D	d	ꙅ	ed	ꙅ̇	od	ꙅ̣
G	g	ꙅ	eg	ꙅ̇	og	ꙅ̣
H	h		eh		oh	
K	k	✕	ek	✕̇	ok	✕̣
L	l	ꙅ	el	ꙅ̇	ol	ꙅ̣
M	m	ꙅ	em	ꙅ̇	om	ꙅ̣
N	n	⟙	en	⟙̇	on	⟙̣
P	p	ꙅ	ep	ꙅ̇	op	ꙅ̣
S	s	ꙅ	es	ꙅ̇	os	ꙅ̣
T	t	ꙅ	et	ꙅ̇	ot	ꙅ̣
W	w	ꙅ	ew	ꙅ̇	ow	ꙅ̣
Y	y	ꙅ	ey	ꙅ̇	oy	ꙅ̣
NG	`	ꙅ	e`	ꙅ̇	o`	ꙅ̣

Figure 1. Quick Entry Chart, Tagbanwa

The Tagbanwa writing system does not have a *ha-hi-hu* because the sound does not exist in their language.

	A		I		U	
	a	↗	i	↙	u	⇗
B	b	7	B	7̄	1	7
D	d	↙	D	↙̄	2	↙
G	g	Ʋ	G	Ʋ̄	3	Ʋ
H	h	↗	H	↙̄	4	↙
K	k	℘	K	℘̄	5	℘
L	l	Ʋ̗	L	Ʋ̗̄	6	Ʋ̗
M	m	↗̶	M	↗̶̄	7	↗̶
N	n	𝜋	N	𝜋̄	8	𝜋
P	p	Ʋ̶	P	Ʋ̶̄	9	Ʋ̶
S	s	𝓤̗	S	𝓤̗̄	0	𝓤̗
T *	t	W	T	W̄	-	W̦
W	w	↝	W	↝̄	[	↝̈
Y	y	𝓤	Y	𝓤̄	]	𝓤
NG	`	↙	~	↙	\	↙
R	r	–	R	ꝼ	;	✝

Figure 2. Mapped Entry Chart, Hanunóo

* Some applications may cause a line break if "-" (hyphen) is used to enter *tu*, thinking a hyphenated word or a word break is intended. If this happens, use Shift-hyphen or "_" to enter the symbol *tu* and the problem will be solved.

	A	**I**	**U**
	a	i	u
B	b	B	1
D	d	D	2
G	g	G	3
H	h	H	4
K	k	K	5
L	l	L	6
M	m	M	7
N	n	N	8
P	p	P	9
S	s	S	0
T *	t	T	-
W	w	W	[
Y	y	Y	]
NG	`	~	\
R	r	R	;

Figure 3. Mapped Entry Chart, Buhid

* Some applications may cause a line break if "-" (hyphen) is used to enter *tu*, thinking a hyphenated word or a word break is intended. If this happens, use Shift-hyphen or "_" to enter the symbol *tu* and the problem will be solved.

Hanunóo Gardner

Figure 4. Alternate Characters

The *ra-ri-ru*, a Mangyan innovation

None of the ancient Philippines scripts originally had a symbol for *ra*, *ri*, and *ru*. However, because a living script is subject to change, symbols for these syllables have recently been introduced into the Buhid and Hanunóo systems of writing.

The Hanunóo script is used by the Hanunóo Mangyans and the Southern Buhids. The Buhid script is used by the Northern Buhids. It appears that contact among these peoples have increased in recent times.

It is strange that the same new symbols for *ra*, *ri*, and *ru* are shared in both writing systems. It would seem more probable that the innovation started with one group and was picked up by the other, rather than evolving independently.

We have no idea of how these languages sounded like 800 years ago when the original scripts first came into use. However, if they sounded like Tagalog, *r* was not a separate sound but was allophone of *d*. To represent borrowed words with an *r* sound, *l* was used instead.

Traditionally, *ra*, *ri*, and *ru* were written as *la*, *li*, and *lu*, respectively. I have no idea how extensive the use of this innovation is at this time.

3

HOW TO WRITE IN SCRIPT

WE WILL LEARN HOW TO USE living Philippine scripts in this section. It is not that difficult and it is best learned by simply studying the few examples provided. I will not state any rules as they are better illustrated by showing proper and wrong ways of using the script.
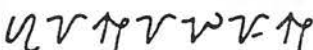
I will use Tagalog words in the examples for several reasons. First of all, very few people (including myself) know Buhid, Hanunóo, or Tagbanwan. Second, the sounds of these languages (including syllabification) are similar to Tagalog. And last, the rules for using these scripts are identical to Tagalog rules.

How some Filipinos use their scripts today
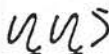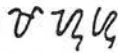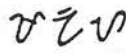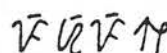
A few examples in Hanunóo will serve to illustrate how these ancient scripts are used. I have seen much misuse of the Tagalog script—some due to ignorance and some due to misguided efforts to compensate for the script's deficiencies. I'm afraid that unless care is observed, the same situation may arise once these living scripts become more known.

As we have said previously, these scripts are syllabaries and not alphabets. Thus each symbol represents a complete syllable, not phonemes or basic speech sounds.

The WORST WAY to possibly use the script is to use it like an alphabet as in:
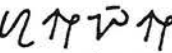
- ⇒ (ta-a-na-a-wa-i-na) for *tanawin*
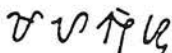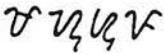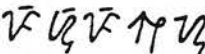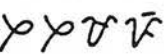
Here are a few examples that show PROPER use of the script:

- ⇒ (ma-ni-la) for *Maynila*

- ⇒ (tu-tu-bi) for *tutubi*

- ⇒ (ma-sa-la) for *masarap*

- ⇒ (ma-di-ya) for *Maria*

- ⇒ (pi-li-pi-na) for *Filipinas* or

17

Pilipinas

- Ꝓ Ꝓ Ꝟ
⇒ (ka-ka-pi) for *kakampi*

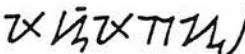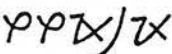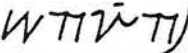Here are some examples that show WRONG use of the script:

- ꝟ ꝟ ꝟ ꝟ
⇒ (ma-ya-ni-la) for *Maynila*

- ꝟ ꝟ ꝟ ꝟ
⇒ (ma-sa-la-pa) for *masarap*

- ꝟ ꝟ ꝟ ꝟ ꝟ
⇒ (pi-li-pi-na-sa) for *Filipinas* or *Pilipinas*

- Ꝓ Ꝓ ꝟ Ꝟ
⇒ (ka-ka-ma-pi) for *kakampi*

- ꝟ ꝟ ꝟ ꝟ
⇒ (ta-na-wi-na) for *tanawin*

Note that *la* can be substituted for *ra* in *masarap*. But in *Maria*, *di* has been substituted for *ri*. *La* and *da* are sometimes used in place of the originally missing *ra*. There are linguistic reasons for using one or the other but it is beyond the scope of this short manual. Even today, we still interchange these sounds in Tagalog as in *maramot* and *madamot*.

Buhid and Hanunóo writing both have a *ra* symbol. This is a modern innovation and it is unlikely that they had it in earlier times.

Also note that living Pihilippine scripts, like Tagalog, have no means to represent CVC syllables like *kam* in *kakampi*. The final consonant is simply dropped and it is up to the reader to fill it in. This may raise problems for those like us who are not fluent in the these scripts, but Filipinos who are fluent in them apparently have very few problems.

The *pamudpod* or *pampatay* was introduced to Hanunóo by Antoon Postma and works this way:

- ꝟ ꝟ ꝟ ꝟ
⇒ (may-ni-la) for *Maynila*

- ꝟ ꝟ ꝟ ꝟ
⇒ (ma-sa-lap) for *masarap*

- ꝟ ꝟ ꝟ ꝟ ꝟ
⇒ (pi-li-pi-nas) for *Filipinas* or *Pilipinas*

- Ꝓ Ꝓ ꝟ ꝟ
⇒ (ka-kam-pi) for *kakampi*

- ꝟ ꝟ ꝟ ꝟ
⇒ (ta-na-win) for *tanawin*

It serves to improve the system by making it possible to represent CVC syllables. It makes the written script easier to read. However, it is an artifice that may or may not take root. Only the users can determine for themselves whether it will be of value to them or not. I have mixed feelings about its use.

"Improvements"

In Tagalog, there have been many "improvements" introduced lately in an effort to make the script easier to use. Some have added new symbols like *ra* and *fa;* some have tried to add the two missing vowels *e* and *o*. (Remnants of the three-vowel system still remain today, we still say *babae/babai* and *usok/usuk* interchangeably.) These are well-meaning but misguided efforts to make the old script accommodate modern Tagalog.

The first "improvement" was presented by Fr. Lopez to Tagalog grammarians in the early 17th century. It was later reported that "after highly praising it and expressing their thanks, they decided it cannot be introduced into their writing system because it was against the intrinsic nature and character given the Tagalog language by God and it would be equivalent to destroying in one stroke the whole syntax, prosody, and orthography of their language."

I certainly would not try to improve a dead language like Latin. Its major appeal is that its grammatical and morphological characteristics are set forever and not subject to change. In the same way, I wish we could respect the ancient Tagalog script and appreciate it for what it was and for the way it was used by our ancestors. I can only stand in awe to think of how they automatically processed in their minds the different possible combinations to determine if a final consonant was needed and what it should be if it was.

This is not to say that I disapprove of improvements to living scripts like the Hanunóo, the Buhid, and the Tagbanwa. It is possible that if a person is taught the Latin alphabet first before any of the ancient scripts, he may never learn to supply the missing final consonants. Perhaps, only a person whose first script was an ancient script and learned how to supply the missing final consonants can teach another how to properly use it.

However, it is up to the users to modify and improve their script themselves or evaluate suggestions from outside. Ultimately, the users, not the experts, have the last say.

Uses for the scripts

These living Philippine scripts are part of our Filipino heritage and are related to out extinct Tagalog script. Their shapes are unique in the world of writing systems and reflect the Filipino culture in the same way that Mayan hieroglyphics distinctly reflect the culture of Mesoamerica.

Do not let anybody tell you how to use them. There are those who would restrict their use and say that you would be trivializing them if you use them for applications of which they do not approve. For instance, I have heard those who say that using the Tagalog script for T-shirts or logos is not a good way to use it.

Do not believe them. The scripts are part of your culture and you have the right to use them in any way you choose to express pride in your heritage. Enjoy them!

Nagtalok ako, ithagay-hagay
Tinmubo sa lanbung balay
Kawdaglantang dagdugay
Mahimanglawun sa balay
Matangisun si Inday

I planted grass
It sprung forth underneath the house
Please tarry not
For sadness stalks our shack
And Inday continually cries.

Gusto ko lamang kag si Inambay sa dalan
Kag managun latay
Sa batang kag managaytay
Pag-uli kaw sa balay kita ga araway
Gaamigos kita anay

I want Inambay to stay only on the pathway
So we can roam freely in the woods
And when I reach home, you and I
Will not quarrel
And we could remain together

Kahoy-kahoy kot malago
Kabuyong-buyong sing ulo
Kaduyan-duyan sing damgu,
Dalikaw sa pagromedyu
Singhanmu kag sa balay barku
Anay umabut ka nimu

Like a tree overgrown with branches,
My mind is full of turmoil
Though loaded with pain and grief
My dreams continually seek for an end,
Let it be known that I am on my way
Perchance you'll catch up with me.

Buhid Urukay. From *The Mangyans of Mindoro* by Violeta B. Lopez.

Hanunoo script	Transliteration	English translation
ᜩᜤᜦᜨᜦᜪᜩ	Si manok tigba-ungan	*Know the bird tigba-ungan?*
ᜦᜪᜦᜬᜩᜦᜪ	Napabanwa kalapan	*Once he went to Calapan,*
ᜦᜪᜧᜪᜨᜩᜪᜩᜪ	Napatalon sablayan	*and the woods of Sablayan.*
ᜪᜪᜨᜧᜬᜦᜪ	Mapalista kay ngaran	*There, he said he changed his name!*
ᜪᜨᜩᜪᜪᜩᜪ	Ngaran unman ma-uman	*But his name, oh, what a shame*
ᜧᜩᜪᜩᜪ	Tigba-ungan di maan	*Tigba-ungan all the same!*

Hanunoo script	Transliteration	English translation
ᜩᜪᜦᜨᜧᜪ	Kawayan sa tumalo	*Bamboo bush along the stream;*
ᜩᜦᜧᜩᜨᜧᜪ	Kawo no kang itudlo	*If I could show it to you,*
ᜩᜦᜨᜪᜧᜪ	Kawo balaw dumayo	*you would like the glossy gleam.*
ᜪᜨᜧᜩᜨᜧ	Hurok nakaburino	*Beautiful the young shoots too,*
ᜦᜧᜨᜪ	Ga panabasan panyo	*like a headdress cut supreme!*

Hanunoo script	Transliteration	English translation
	Magkunkuno ti anak lunas	*Says the baby, lifeless born:*
	Anong suyong muyuan	*My beloved mother dear,*
	Anong bansay kayasan	*Father, oh, my father dear!*
	Kang di way sa bilugan	*When still resting in your womb,*
	Ako kanmo nga amban	*Closely united with you,*
	Ako kan bansay huywan	*I was father's favorite.*
	Pagka ngap ak nirwasan	*Taken from my safe abode,*
	Pag idnas sa salsagan	*plac'd upon the bamboo floor,*
	Ud binabaw sa pupwan	*no one put me on your lap,*
	Ud linilang sa duyan	*no one rock'd me in a crib.*
	Ti lumilang bay aban	*What became my crib at last,*
	Uyayi bansanayan	*was a hammock strongly built:*
	Sud-an sa bagunbunan	*as a bed, a burial hill!*
	Ako inaghon diman	*Discarded I was, unlov'd.*
	Tinakip dagaynaan	*Cov'ring me was the cold earth*
	Tinambon di linyawan	*and the weeping sky above.*
	Dapat bay una kunman	*But although it be like this,*
	Aba hulin lumbadan	*a happier day will come.*
	Kanta nga aldaw masdan	*Maybe it'll be coming soon!*
	Hinton di nguna aban	*And what will be happ'ning then?*
	Girangon yi rug-usan	*The old people weeping, sad,*
	Ti may pa-oy linyawan	*in a dark'ning, mourning sky:*
	Kang hulin talisigan	*I will fin'lly leave behind!*

Hanunoo Ambahan. From *Treasure of a Minority* by Antoon Postma.

Marriage Custom

[Tagbanwa script — 6 lines]

a-da-ti(t)/ ma(g)-pa-nga-sa-wa/ si-to a-mo(n)/ ma(g)-so-ro-gi-do(n)/
i-ma(g)-ka-sa-wa na/ mo-ga-na-i(t) ba(n)-di/ a-ma/ i-i-ro(g) mi na/
ma-nga-sa-wa a-ko na/ i-ma-nga-sa-wa o-no/ a-ri pa-nga-sa-wa-a(n) mo/
nga du-wa(n) pu-lo/ ma(y) li-ma/ ma-pa-ni-sa(n)/ ni la-na/
ka-i-ya-ni/ a-da(t) na-mo(n)

The custom/ of marriage/ among us/ will be discussed./
The man about to marry/ gives money,/ (tells) father,/ "I wish/
to marry now."/ If you marry/ (give) whom you will marry/
twenty/ and five (pesos),/ wipe on hands/ oil./
That's/ our custom.

Kinship

[Tagbanwa script — 3 lines]

so(l)-so(g)/ na(g)-ta-sa(n)/ na(g)-du-wa/ si i-na/ si a-ma/ i-na-o ko/
a-ma-ya(n)/ a-po ko/ a-ka ko/ a-li ko/ ka-ma-na ko/
a-na(k) ko

sibling/ cousin/ second cousin/ the mother/ the father/ my aunt/
uncle/ my grandchild/ my older sibling/ my younger sibling/ my relative/
my child

Tagbanwa writing. From *Indic Writings of the Mindoro-Palawan Axis* by Fletcher Gardner and Ildefonso Maliwanag.

4

KEEP OUR LIVING SCRIPTS ALIVE!

ALTHOUGH THE TAGALOG script quickly faded from the Philippine scene, three related scripts survived. They are the scripts of the Hanunóos and Buhids of Mindoro and the Tagbanwas of Palawan.

These three cultural groups originally lived on coastal shores along the ancient trade and migration route between Borneo and Manila on the western flanks of Mindoro and Palawan. They were incessantly forced to move inland by raiders until they occupied only the highlands of their respective islands. By fleeing and refusing to give up their way of life that they were able to preserve their knowledge of the ancient scripts.

Not much was known about them until recently. Knowledge that they had writing systems only came about at the end of the 19th century.

Their scripts' similarity to the Tagalog script was not only in the shapes of their symbols. They had the same kudlits, had the same orthographic rule about dropping the final consonant in a CVC syllable, and had the same uses for their scripts: writing poetry and personal communication. These facts reinforce and verify earlier accounts of friar-histori-ans regarding features of the Tagalog script.

There must have been a time long ago when these people were culturally similar to the Tagalogs. Isolation and different influences made the Tagalogs, Buhids, Hanunóos, and Tagbanwas develop along divergent cultural paths.

There is new evidence (the Laguna Copperplate Inscription) that ancient Philippines may have been more politically united than was the case when the Spaniards came, that linked settlements rather than independent barangays were the norm, and that material culture was at a higher level than at the time of contact with the West. But like Mycenaean Greece which degenerated into independent city-states, some unknown event caused the breakup of the older Philippine civilization into independent barangays. Greece eventually bounced back and reinvented most of her material culture, developing into the classical Greece that we know of. The Philippines was on its way to new levels of cultural development when Western civilization intervened.

Today, there are frequent calls for

the revival of the Tagalog script as a symbol of national pride and identity. Unfortunately, the Tagalog script died a long time ago while the spoken language continued to evolve and they are very much out of step with each other today.

On the other hand, we have living scripts in the Philippines today that have been in continuous use for almost a millennium. The same people who call for the revival of the Tagalog script have not shown any interest in propagating and maintaining the living Philippine scripts used by our second-class citizens. These scripts are in danger of disappearing because of cultural contamination.

This is a sad but accurate commentary on the divisions within Philippine society today: lowlanders vs. highlanders, Christians vs. non-Christians, urban vs. taga-bundok, western vs. traditional, pants vs. bahags, blouses vs. bare breasts, and so on.

Could it be that the disappearance of the Tagalog script marked that point in history when the Filipinos' cultural will was finally broken? Are we now forever fragmented as a nation grasping for empty symbols when there are so many real things that we should be proud of?

Organizations that care

Here is a list of organizations that actively work to maintain the literacy of ethnic groups in their indigenous scripts. Hanunóo and Tagbanwa have organizations that help them but Buhid is still unsponsored.

You may write to them to express support or provide material help. However, I cannot guarantee that you will get a reply because they may be undermanned and underfunded. I think they will feel good to know that people care, though.

(Hanunóo)
Ewald Dinter, SVD
Mangyan Mission Foundation
Bait, Mansalay
5213 Or. Mindoro, Philippines

(Hanunóo)
Antoon Postma
Mangyan Assistance & Research Center
Panaytayan, Mansalay
5213 Or. Mindoro, Philippines

(Tagbanwa)
Palawan State University Tagbanwa Script
  Project
c/o Dr. Jesus Peralta, Jr.
National Museum
P. Burgos Street
Manila, Philippines

At this point, Dr. Peralta is a good contact point until a direct address for the project becomes available for the Palawan State University project.

Ancient Philippine Scripts Series

THE TAGALOG SCRIPT

PostScript and TrueType Fonts
for
IBM PC and Macintosh

SUSHI DOG GRAPHICS ☀ LOS ANGELES

TAGALOG FONTS SAMPLE SHEET

Font Name: Tagalog15 Knife

Font Name: Tagalog15 Stylus

Font Name: Tagalog17 Light

Font Name: Tagalog17 Regular

Font Name: Tagalog Chirino

Font Name: Tagalog Lopez

2

THE TAGALOG SCRIPT

THIS SECTION WILL START with a very brief historical background on ancient Philippine scripts. As I describe the six fonts included in the package I will also include relevant material. I hope that this short account will whet your appetite to go into a more serious study of ancient Philippine scripts. You will find the study exciting and you may even find that much of what you think you know are based on legend and not history.

A historical background

When the Spaniards led by Legazpi came to settle Manila in 1571, they encountered a society that was very highly literate. Almost everyone in the area could read and write in a script that was unlike anything they had ever seen. They were impressed and the first book (second?) published in the Philippines in 1593 was a catechism that was written partly in the ancient Tagalog script. Estimates indicate that the script called *bay bayin* or *alibata* became extant around 1200. By 1600, it had apparently diffused to other parts of the Philippines that had trade contacts with Manila.

Within a century from Hispanic contact the script slowly faded from the scene. It ceased to be employed in its traditional way and was relegated for writing signatures on Spanish-introduced and mandated documents. Within another century, its disappearance became total.

However, many a few groups who had similar writing systems and were able to dodge Spanish influence by escaping to remote areas retained use of their ancient scripts. Today the Hanunóos and Buhids of Mindoro and the Tagbanwas of Palawan are still fluent in their centuries old scripts. We find that the areas that were conquered lost fluency in their writing systems and became mostly illiterate during the Spanish occupation.

Alphabets and syllabaries

The extinct Tagalog script as well as the living scripts are classified as syllabaries in the study of writing systems. We are all familiar with alphabets since that is what we grew up with. In an alphabet, the symbols represent phonemes, the basic unit of speech sounds. Consonants cannot

be pronounced by themselves and need a vowel to form a syllable that can be pronounced. Syllabaries, on the other hand, are systems where the symbols represent syllables. The symbols can be pronounced since the vowel sound is inherently built into the symbol. Keep this distinction in mind as it will be important in learning how to properly use the ancient Tagalog script.

The Tagalog syllabary has 17 signs representing 14 consonantals and 3 vowels that stand alone. The consonantals are *ka, ga, nga, ta, da, na, pa, ba, ma, ya, la, wa, sa,* and *ha.* The stand-alone vowels are *a, i,* and *u.* Kudlits or diacritics are used to change the defau`` sound of the consonantal syllables (C `` form) from an *a* to an *i* or a *u* depending `` whether they are placed above or below the sign. Placed above, the sound changes to an *i,* below to a *u.*

Keyboard entry of the script

With this in mind, I have devised a simple keyboard mapping scheme that is easy to remember and use. The consonantals are mapped on the keyboard in the same place as their corresponding alphabets. Thus *ka* is entered by pressing the letter *k.* The capital letter *K* may also be used to enter *ka* since the characters are all mapped to both shifted and unshifted keys. *Nga* is entered by pressing the grave (`) key; the shifted character for this key, asciitilde (~), may also be used. If your keyboard has Ntilde (Ñ) or ntilde (ñ), they may also be used.

Vowel syllables are entered through their corresponding *a, i,* and *u* keys.

We are fortunate that there are only three vowels in the old Tagalog script. This allows us to use *e* and *o* to enter the kudlits that change the sound of the syllable. An *e* is used to place a kudlit above the basic syllabic sign while *o* is used to place one below. Again, capital (shifted key) letters also serve the same purpose. The *e* and *o* keys are designed to be deadkeys. After they are pressed, the next letter will print in the same location. This may not necessarily be shown on your screen depending on the sophistication of your computer system but will print correctly on paper.

To enter the symbol for *ki,* type *ek* (not *ke*). For *ku,* type *ok.* The keys for the kudlits, *e* or *o,* must be entered before the key for the basic sign. The use of deadkeys for the kudlits forces you to remember that they are not separate symbols but are modifiers for the following symbol.

I have looked at other mapping schemes specially those that combine the kudlits with the basic signs in composite symbols. However, they require that a user entering text in the Tagalog script refer to a chart to determine what keys to press. This simple mapping scheme I have decided on will let one enter Tagalog text intuitively. Although a slightly better scheme is possible for the Macintosh, I have also decided to use the same one for consistency across hardware platforms.

Description of the fonts

I have included six Tagalog typefaces in this package to provide a variety of styles from which you can choose from. They are of different weights and styles so that they provide different textures on the printed page. The descriptions of the six fonts shown below would be more understandable if you use them in conjunction with the printed samples on page 4.

The typefaces were hand drawn on the computer and I tried to make them look that way. It is not easy to make those little kinks and imperfections look natural specially when the use of cubic splines tend to make everything look smooth and slick. I have tried to present a different personality for each style and I hope I have succeeded.

Tagalog15 Knife

This is a very simple basic shape that might result from writing on bamboo with a knife as the Mangyans still do. The bamboo is held so that its fibers go horizontally. The knife is held like a pen with the blade vertical and its sharp edge below. Thus, horizontal and vertical strokes are easy to cut into the bamboo. Diagonal strokes are not as easy; curved strokes take a lot of practice to master. These characteristics are reflected in the shapes of Tagalog15 Knife.

Tagalog15 Stylus

This typestyle is the same as Tagalog15 Knife but its edges and corners are rounded instead of sharp as might happen if one used a stylus instead of a knife. Of course, a stylus would be more logically used with palm leaves and bark and would probably result in different symbol shapes than Tagalog15. It is provided in this package to simply give you another look for the script. Note that the character widths are not the same as Tagalog15 Knife.

Tagalog17 Regular

If I were to write in the Tagalog script, this is probably how I would do it. Tagalog17 Regular is a composite derived from different original and historical sources and is free from the over-stylization that later resulted from the script's use by non-natives. It is a compact typestyle and takes less space than the other styles. Tagalog17 Regular includes the cross kudlit, a description of which is given in the Tagalog Lopez font description below.

Tagalog17 Light

Same as Tagalog17 Regular but in a lighter weight.

Tagalog Chirino

Pedro Chirino was one of the first friar-historians to write about early Philippine scripts. He is generally considered by historians to have been sympathetic to the natives' concerns and wrote glowingly about the high literacy rate he noticed among them He did not have a symbol for *nga* or for *wa*. I have added substitutes for them, both from San Agustin, another friar-historian who also recorded the script while it was still alive.

Note that Chirino's *i* is upside-down compared to most other recorded versions left by early writers. This is not a mistake as some actual samples from early Filipinos show *i* written this way. His *ga* is also different but I did not use it because I have not yet seen a sample that is similar enough to it. I have substituted a more conventional version of *ga.*

Tagalog Lopez

When Francisco Lopez published his Ilocano catechism in 1620 (not 1621 as some experts think) using woodcuts, he added an artifice which he thought would improve the readability of the Tagalog script (yes, it was the Tagalog script that was used to publish the Ilocano book). This was the cross kudlit that went under the basic consonantal symbol. The cross kudlit cancelled the vowel sound of the basic symbol much like what the *virama* does for Brahmi and Devana-

gari (used in writing Sanskrit) or the *paten* for the many Indonesian scripts.

The original Tagalog script only allowed for the recording of CV syllables and by adding the cross kudlit, Lopez wanted to add to the script the ability of to record CVC syllables. This, of course, really made it easier to read for those not used to the original script like the Spaniards or even us today.

However, it may not have made sense to the ancient Filipinos who never had problems in reading their script. We may never know just how it is to be really fluent and literate in ancient Philippine scripts. Those of us whose first script was the Latin script may never be able to fully comprehend how the ancient Filipinos read their script. When reading the script, we can only try to guess at the CVC's final consonant from its context. The ancient Filipinos may additionally have been examining all the possible combinations in their mind, rejecting those that do not exist and filling in the missing consonant automatically.

This Tagalog Lopez style is the one most loved by current Filipino artists who are more and more incorporating the script into their works. It is also the one taught at most workshops on how to use ancient Philippine scripts. However, it is also the least faithful to the script used in the old days. It is very stylized almost to the point of being unnatural for a handwriting system. In particular note *i, ka,* and *ta* with their overemphasized curves. The upside-down

This is a page from the 1620 Libro a naisuratan amin ti bagas ti Dotrina Cristiana *published by Fr. Francisco Lopez. It was written by Cardinal Bellarmino, who was later installed as a saint.*

The only known copy of this edition is in the Lopez Museum in Pasig, Metro Manila, Philippines.

heart symbol for *ba* may also look attractive but *ba* was written more like a circle in the old days. I have not seen an actual sample that had the sharp point on top. Be that as it may, if the Tagalog script had lived on this is probably what a moveable typeface would have looked like in the script's later development.

lalo salabat. Angycalua ybíg
in mo naman ang capova mo tavŏ
parang ang catauan mo. Amen.
Jesus.

should this be encoded?

should this be encoded?

A page from the 1593 Doctrina Christiana en lengua espanola y tagala. *It is the* Rosetta Stone *of Philippine scripts with Spanish text in Latin script and parallel Tagalog texts in both Latin and Tagalog scripts. Interestingly, the first book was not published in the United States until 1640, 47 years later.*

3
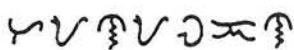
HOW TO WRITE IN SCRIPT

WE WILL LEARN HOW TO USE the ancient Tagalog script in this section. It is not that difficult and it is best learned by simply studying the few examples provided. I will not state any rules as they are better illustrated by showing proper and wrong ways of using the script.

How ancient Filipinos used the script

A few examples will serve to illustrate how the ancient script was traditionally used. I have seen much misuse of the script—some due to ignorance and some due to misguided efforts to compensate for the script's deficiencies. As we have said previously, the script is a syllabary and not an alphabet. Thus each symbol represents a complete syllable and not phonemes or basic speech sounds.

The WORST WAY to possibly use the script is to use it like an alphabet as in:

- ᜌ᜔ᜏᜒᜆᜒᜏᜓᜈᜒᜈ

⇒ (ta-a-na-a-wa-i-na) for *tanawin*

Here are a few examples that show PROPER use of the script:

- ᜋᜈᜒᜎ

⇒ (ma-ni-la) for *Maynila*

- ᜆᜓᜆᜓᜊᜒ

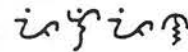⇒ (tu-tu-bi) for *tutubi*

- ᜋᜐᜎ

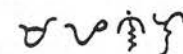⇒ (ma-sa-la) for *masarap*

- ᜋᜇᜒᜌ

⇒ (ma-di-ya) for *Maria*

- ᜉᜒᜎᜒᜉᜒᜈ

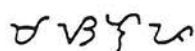⇒ (pi-li-pi-na) for *Filipinas* or *Pilipinas*

- ᜃᜃᜉᜒ

⇒ (ka-ka-pi) for *kakampi*

Here are some examples that show WRONG use of the script:
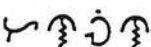
- ᜋᜌᜈᜒᜎ

⇒ (ma-ya-ni-la) for *Maynila*

- ᜋ ᜊ ᜔ ᜎᜓ

⇒ (ma-sa-la-pa) for *masarap*

- ᜉᜒ ᜎᜒ ᜉᜒ ᜈᜒ ᜐ

⇒ (pi-li-pi-na-sa) for *Filipinas* or *Pilipinas*

- ᜃ ᜃ ᜋ ᜉᜒ

⇒ (ka-ka-ma-pi) for *kakampi*

- ᜆ ᜈ ᜏᜒ ᜈ

⇒ (ta-na-wi-na) for *tanawin*

- ᜋᜒ ᜈᜒ ᜎ

⇒ (may-ni-la) for *Maynila*

- ᜋ ᜊ ᜎᜓ

⇒ (ma-sa-lap) for *masarap*

- ᜉᜒ ᜎᜒ ᜉᜒ ᜈᜐ

⇒ (pi-li-pi-nas) for *Filipinas* or *Pilipinas*

- ᜃ ᜃ ᜋ ᜉᜒ

⇒ (ka-kam-pi) for *kakampi*

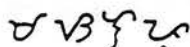- ᜆ ᜈ ᜏ
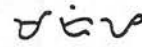
⇒ (ta-na-win) for *tanawin*

Note that *la* has been substituted for *ra* in *masarap* because there was no *ra* in Old Tagalog. (There was no *fa* in Old Tagalog either; modern Tagalog now has a *ra* but still no *fa*. However, Filipino now has a *fa* so it is okay to write "Filipino" instead of "Pilipino.") But in *Maria, di* has been substituted for *ri. La* and *da* are used in place of the missing *ra*. There are linguistic reasons for using one or the other but it is beyond the scope of this short manual. Even today, we still interchange these sounds as in *maramot* and *madamot*.

Also note that the old Tagalog script had no means to represent CVC syllables like *kam* in *kakampi*. The final consonant was simply dropped and it was up to the reader to fill it in. This may raise problems for those like us who are not fluent in the Tagalog script, but the ancient Filipinos apparently had no problems (neither do the Mangyans today, it seems).
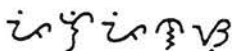
The cross kudlit innovation introduced by Francisco Lopez in 1621 works this way:
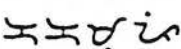
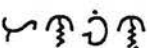It serves to improve the system by enabling the representation of CVC syllables. It really makes the written script easier to read. However, it was an artifice that did not catch on, probably because it was externally mandated rather than originating from within the body of users. I personally do not favor its use.

Other "improvements"

There have been many other "improvements" that have been introduced lately in an effort to make the script easier to use. Some have added new symbols like *ra* and *fa;* some have tried to add the two missing vowels *e* and *o*. (Remnants of the three-vowel system still remain today, we still say *babae/babai* and *usok/usuk* interchangeably.) These are well-meaning but misguided efforts to make the old script accommodate modern Tagalog.

The first "improvement" was presented by Fr. Lopez to Tagalog grammarians in the early 17th century. It was later reported that "after highly praising it and expressing their thanks, they decided it cannot be introduced into their writing system because it was against the intrinsic nature and character given the Tagalog language by God and it would be equivalent to destroying in one stroke the whole syntax, prosody, and orthography of their language."

I certainly would not try to improve a dead language like Latin. Its major appeal is that its grammatical and morphological characteristics are set forever and not subject to change. In the same way, I wish we could respect the ancient Tagalog script and appreciate it for what it was and for the way it was used by our ancestors. I can only stand in awe to think of how they automatically processed in their minds the different possible combinations to determine if a final consonant was needed and what it should be if it was.

This is not to say that I disapprove of improvements to living scripts like the Hanunóo, the Buhid, and the Tagbanwa. However, it is up to the users to modify and improve it themselves or evaluate suggestions from outside. Ultimately, the users, not the experts, have the last say.

Use of the scripts

The ancient Tagalog scripts are part of our Filipino heritage. Its shapes are unique in the world of writing systems and reflect the Filipino culture in the same way that Mayan hieroglyphics distinctly reflect the culture of Mesoamerica.

Do not let anybody tell you how to use it. There are those who would restrict how you use it and say that
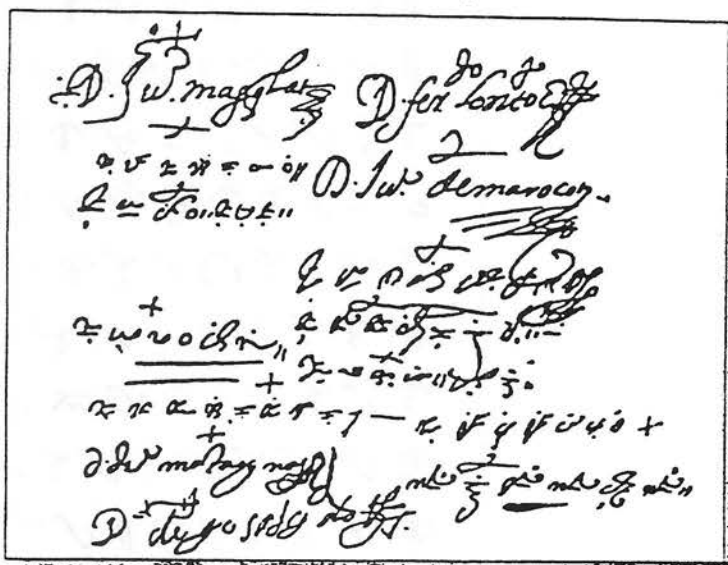
This is a portion of a 1665 document from Naujan, Mindoro. The document was written in Tagalog using the Latin script but some of the signatures were in the ancient Tagalog script. How does this sample compare with your perception of what the written script should look like?

you are trivializing it if you use it for applications of which they do not approve. (Some of them do not have any qualms about "improving" the script, though.) I have heard those who say that using the script for T-shirts or logos is not a good way to use the script.

Do not believe them. The script is part of your culture and you have the right to use them in any way you choose to express pride in your heritage. Enjoy them!

Kung Tuyo Na ang Luha Mo, Aking Bayan
ni Amado Hernandez