



nce upon a time – I was looking for some really cool Futhark rune fonts to add to my collection, to be included in a package that I've been working on, as a hobby, for folks who make maps - so that they can create some really cool fantasy genre maps that has that classic “Tolkienish” flavor. Alas – much to my dismay – as I looked for fonts with a really flexible license (hopefully SIL / OFL or Public Domain) – I found only runic fonts that had either a really strict, snooty, “*You can't fart in a southbound wind without written permission in triplicate, and a lawyer*” licenses, or – that had that obscure “For personal use only” thing that basically restricted anyone who had them from doing anything with them that was barely more inventive or useful than making party invitations, or lettering for their personal websites (ever got a party invite in Futhark?). Even worse still – some had no license information at all, or they had some really silly, understated “READ ME” file attached that simply said something like “Hey duder – just made this cool font – enjoy!” – which was not only a DUMB thing to waste a text file on in my opinion, (HEY! How about at least a hint as to what we can legally do with your font - “DUDER”?), but also meant that they were potentially legal bear traps – and thus – unusable. My search was leading me nowhere.

I found a few genuine Tolkien Futhark fonts that were duplicated from J.R.R. Tolkien's map work verbatim, but often they came with a warning that if they were used for commercial purposes or distributed by anyone who were “unauthorized” to do so, then the Tolkien estate might banish their butt to Mordor, where they would spend some time chained up in Barad Dur, (The Dark Tower for those of you who are not well versed in geek speak), not to mention pay a hefty fine. I wanted those fonts desperately – so I did some additional research into any legal claim that the Tolkien estate might have on runes that were clearly based on real existent language forms, but all that I got out of that were contradictory legal gray areas that left me confused and even more frustrated than before.

Finally I exclaimed “Forget this noise!” (“Forget” was not the exact term that I chose to use at the time), and I decided to make my own runes. I wasn't only thinking of myself - but the people out there using my stuff that wanted good quality tools and resources that did not come with a crippling catch 22, or the stench of tyrannical copyright over lording. This is the result of both my creative inspiration, and my rage against the machine of legal mumbo jumbo, blah blah hooley.

For those of you who are anal retentive about the proper applications of Futhark runes in linguistics (trust me – they're out there, believe it or not), I created these fonts based on REAL historical runic forms. My runes are a mixture of Anglo Saxon Futhark, Elder Futhark, and Younger Futhark runic glyphs, (I just sensed someone out there clenching their teeth). I invented new runes myself to both fill in the gaps in the standard Futhark forms where letters and sounds from the modern English Latin alphabet and pronunciations were missing, and to differentiate my Futhark from both the strict historical forms, and Tolkien's dwarvish runes, moon runes, and other“Futharkian” scriptures. For keyboard placement I kept as true as possible to approximating Latin glyphic to Futho'runic correspondences.

Ok – now that I've given you a little background on what inspired the creation of this font, let's take a look at it. And how it works...

NI TX PR VT IX R OSITX  
ΨXÐORP:

OR,  
HOW TO WRITE IN ROACHIAN  
FUTHARK.

The Roachian Futhark font comes in two flavors, solid and hollow. I made the hollow ones because I like the look of the “Moon Runes” on the map that's included in most available printings of Tolkien's “The Hobbit”. In the package that you've just downloaded, (or however that you've gotten it), you should have two (2) True Type font files, (If someone took the liberty of adding Open Type format versions of my fonts to the original distribution and passed them on – I'm not complaining). One is the hollow version – and the other is the regular version. The following page shows each rune, it's associated letter or “sound”, and it's keyboard position.

	"A" as in "BAT" lowercase "a" keyboard position.		"E" as in "SEEN" capitol "E" keyboard position.		Standard "L" lowercase "l" keyboard position.		Standard "Q" lowercase "q" keyboard position.		"U" as in "RUN" lowercase "u" keyboard position.
	"A" as in "ARM" capitol "A" keyboard position.		"F" or "PH" lowercase "f" keyboard position.		Standard "M" lowercase "m" keyboard position.		"OO" as in "BOOK" capitol "Q" keyboard position.		"OY" as in "BOY" or "U" as in "CUE" capitol "U" keyboard position.
	"A" as in "GAME" capitol "B" keyboard position.		"G" as in "GAS" lowercase "g" keyboard position.		Standard "N" lowercase "n" keyboard position.		Standard "R" lowercase "r" keyboard position.		Standard "V" lowercase v keyboard position.
	Standard "B" lowercase "b" keyboard position.		Standard "H" lowercase "h" keyboard position.		"NG" as in "SING" capitol "N" keyboard position.		"S" as in "SAND" lowercase "s" keyboard position.		Standard "W" lowercase "w" keyboard position.
	Standard "C" lowercase "c" keyboard position.		"I" as in "WIN" lowercase "i" keyboard position.		"O" as in "OFF" lowercase "o" keyboard position.		"SH" as in "SHE" capitol "S" keyboard position.		Standard "X" lowercase "x" keyboard position.
	"CH" as in "CHAIR" capitol "C" keyboard position.		"I" as in "LIME" capitol "I" keyboard position.		"O" as in "TOE" capitol "O" keyboard position.		Standard "T" lowercase "t" keyboard position.		"Y" as in "YOUNG" lowercase "y" keyboard position.
	Standard "D" lowercase "d" keyboard position.		"J" as in "Jump" lowercase "j" keyboard position.		Standard "P" lowercase "p" keyboard position.		"TH" as in "The" or "BROTH" capitol "T" keyboard position.		Standard "Z" lowercase "z" keyboard position.
	"E" as in "BED" lowercase "e" keyboard position.		Standard "K" lowercase "k" keyboard position.		"OO" as in "FOOD" capitol "P" keyboard position.	38 Runes In The Catalogue.			

In the above table – the runes that are highlighted in red are the one's that I had to invent to streamline the alphabet to be a little more “English friendly”. The runes with green information boxes are the runes that are accessed by holding down the SHIFT key and hitting the appropriate letter key (capitols) on your computer keyboard.

Original Futhark runes were very simple to use in their day. No punctuation, no spaces between words, and everything was spelled out exactly as it sounded. The original Futhark only had 24 runes divided into three families of eight runes each, called “Aett”. Punctuation came in later historical variations of the writing system chiefly in the form of a simple colon like mark (:) referred to here as a “separator”. Except for a little linguistic license – I've kept the annunciations of the original runes as accurate as practical for what I was trying to accomplish. Historically there is really no set direction for reading Futhark – as it has been written right to left, left to right, and even in vertical columns in much the same way as some oriental writing systems are written – so there are really no set rules in how you might choose to write it.

As I said before – Futhark is literally written in such a way that words are spelled out **exactly as they sound**. There are no rules such as “i before e except after c”, (English spelling has actually changed a little over the years – so that rule's a bit “old school” anyway).

Take the word “LIGHT” for example. There are five letters in the Latino - English spelling of this word. Actually if you spelled it “LIHT” - it would still sound the same. The “silent g” is really unnecessary from a technical perspective, and it is more, or less just a traditional convention. If you spell it in my variation of Futhark, it looks like this:



We've gone from writing a word in five characters – to needing only three. The symbols represent simply sounds, not formulaic elements of a complex syntax based phonetic system dependent upon complicated rules governing every single context of use and inflection. Let's spell another word. Let's use the word “DAUGHTER”. In Roachian Futhark – it looks like this:



We've now gone from eight letters – to only four. Actually – it would also be correct if we spelled it like this:



To the ancient people's who used Futhark – particularly the Elder Futhark – if you understood what the word was after you pronounced it – then it was spelled “good enough”. Since we are dealing with runes that represent sounds and not true “letters”, then there are no rigid rules governing spelling. As long as the word is understood after it is pronounced, then it's spelling is perfectly sufficient.

Spelling the English word “DAUGHTER” in Futhark, is roughly the same as spelling it D – O – T – R. There are no silent letters like the G, H, and E present, just the basic

sounds that form the word. If two runes have similar sounds like , then using either one would be ok, as long as the basic sound of the word as a whole were comprehend-able, and the word was understood. Let's try a big word this time. How about spelling out the word “NUEROSURGEON”! In Roachian Futhark – this is what it looks like:

YARONRSHY

We went from twelve letters to only nine glyphs! We don't even have to spell it like that, we could spell it this way:

YARONRSHY

Or we could even spell it like this:

YARONRSHY

In this case – it's not the spelling of the word that's really important, but the sounds that form the word. Back in the days when folks actually used Futhark in everyday life, (those few who were even literate), grammar was not really an issue. They only cared that the words that they wrote could be understood on a basic level, and that the message could be conveyed, not whether or not “cat” was spelled “C-A-T” or “K-A-T”. So long as you understood that they were writing about a cat, how the word “cat” was spelled was less important than pronouncing the word “cat” – and then understanding it.

Now I've heard that runes nowadays are often used by persons of the Wiccan, and Neopagan beliefs to use in rituals, and to write spells and grimoires (magical books / Book of Shadows). Being a man who subscribes to more or less “white bread” traditional beliefs, I can't really speak about using Futhark or so called “magical runes” for **real** metaphysical purposes. I would however advise you not to use **my** runes for those purposes anyway – not just because I have personal convictions against it – but more directly because I embellished or altered a few of these runes for linguistic purposes, and just in case magic, (excuse me - “magik”), actually works, I wouldn't want you to write a love spell with my runes – and then have it turn into cursing someone with a horrific case of bleeding hemorrhoids, because you “dialed the wrong number”.

It might be pretty cool to make fake magical books or manuscripts with for theatrical stage or motion picture productions, as props for games, or for prop spell books and such to decorate a room for a halloween party or a haunted house attraction. My runes were created strictly for artistic and literary purposes. If you keep a digital diary however, or if your paranoid about keeping grandma's bunt cake recipe under wraps - then my runes might come in pretty handy. Now back to our primer.

Writing sentences in Futhark is a lot different than writing them in a modern writing form like Cyrillic, English, Spanish, or even contemporary Japanese. First of all – there are no spaces between words, and secondly – the only historically widely used punctuation mark that was seen to any level of frequency in the Younger and Anglo-Saxon flavors of the syntax was a seperator similar to a colon (: ) mark. Here's an English sentence written in formal contemporary mode:

“Jane has three apples, and they are very, very plump – and very red and delicious.”

Here is the same sentence as it would be roughly written in Futhark **mode**:

JANHASTHREAPLSANDTHAARVERYVERYPLUMPANDVERYREDANDDELISHUS:

Now here's the sentence written in my Futhark in the traditional Futhark mode:

The image shows two lines of red Futhark runes. The first line contains 24 runes and the second line contains 20 runes. The runes are stylized and angular, typical of the Futhark script. The text they represent is the sentence: "Jane has three apples, and they are very, very plump – and very red and delicious." The first line ends with a colon-like separator, and the second line ends with a similar separator.

You can see in the previous example how both beautiful, and confusing Futhark can be. I have taken the liberty of inventing my own punctuation system that – if you want to use it and deviate from writing in the traditional Futhark mode to make the writing system more refined - you can. The punctuation marks basically cover only the exclamation mark, question mark, comma, and period, the colon like mark replacing the period being the traditional Futhark punctuation.

- ◆ Takes the place of a period (.).
- ◆ Takes the place of a comma (,).
- ◆◆ Takes the place of an exclamation point (!).
- ◆◆ Takes the place of a question mark (?).

Now let's write a phrase using both the R.Futhark, and the updated punctuation. The Phrase in Latino English convention is written this way:

“I own a pet shop. I sell lizards, puppies, birds, and snakes.” I am really fed up with the pet store business though! Do you think that I should find another line of work?

Now the translation of this phrase into Roachian Futhark scripture, this time we'll write it in the Hollow variant:

KQYJCMTSQC : KNMNCNHN. BRM  
 N. FYMNYJPN : KFRANPMN  
 PIPANMTNTR BIYYMNBQ  
 MXTXANYPPTV SXMPV YMFY  
 NBRV YLPRP

Pretty cool huh? It quickly becomes quite obvious that these fonts are excellent to make borders with. I've always loved Futhark anyway for no other reason than the fact that it just looks so darn awesome!

Here are the names of the runes, some are the actual historical names – and some names are contrived by myself for either invented runes, or actual historical runes that I could not discover the true names of through my own research efforts. The names are given for identification purposes only.

 ABRAZ	 ABRUZ	 LAGUZ	 QUZU	 URUZ
 ANSUZ	 FEHU	 MANNAZ	 EHLA'NA	 NARU
 EIHWAZ	 GEBO	 NAUTHIZ	 RAIDHO	 VURU
 BERKANO	 HAGALAZ	 INGWAZ	 SOWILO' ELYA	 WUNJO
 KENAZ	 ISA	 OTHALA	 SOWILO	 UX
 CHAD	 INUZ	 OTHALA' NA	 TIWAZ	 YUB
 DAGAZ	 JERA	 PERTHRO	 THURISAZ	 ALGIZ
 EHWAZ	 KALU	 EHLA		

Well, that pretty much covers it. If you want some cool “Tolkienish” runes for your maps, games, or fantasy fiction – don't waste your time scouring the internet and spending days screening fonts, reviewing licenses and tyrannical use limitations written by overbearing narcissists who think that their crummy little font files are “all that and a bag of chips” - or lazy individuals who just throw fonts out there without any use info or documentation at all like I had to deal with. Use mine. Mine are absolutely worry free (SIL OFL), they don't cost anything, and quite frankly I think that they look just about a thousand times better than most of the Futhark fonts out there. You don't have to credit me, you don't have to “send me a postcard”, you don't have to email me if you don't want to, you don't have to send me a five or ten buck donation, you don't have to do a thing except download them – that's it! Whatever you create with them is yours!

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