Introduction and Background

This script was inspired by research conducted in preparation for the Kopikon Conlang Conference held on September 23rd, 2023. During the development of my presentation on 'How to make a good script' I was studying the Ithkuil script made by John Quijada. During this study, I began to notice the possibility of it being used as an alphasyllabary for the Klingon conlang, both due to its aesthetics, as well as the formation of the shapes and how they might fit together in a Hangul-like script. What follows is the subsequent script.

Serendipitously, and with some irony, John Quijada, during his presentation at Kopikon (after I had begun work on this project), mentioned that the aesthetic origins of his initial script for Ithkuil were based on the Klinzhai script from earlier in Trek lore.
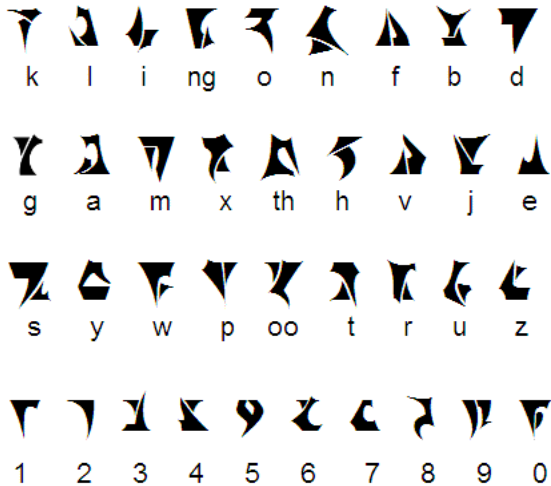
The Klinzhai alphabet as seen in the **U.S.S Enterprise Officer's Manual**, published in 1980.

This script and its creation were endorsed and authorized by Klingon creator Marc Okrand, as well as John Quijada, the creator of Ithkuil. Contributions were made by David J. Peterson, Barry Garcia, Brian Bourque, and Nicolás Campi.

Klingon Alphasyllabary

A working Klingon script – alphasyllabary, inspired by the aesthetic of Klinzhai, using elements of the Ithkuil script. The working name is **'InDogh ngoghmey** (syllable blocks).

Script Variations

The Clerical script is usually written vertically, and makes use of all characters, to include the Special Characters, and numerical digits; the Common script has simplified variations for a few consonants, doesn't use the Special Characters, and is written from left-to-right.

Anatomy of a syllable glyph

Each syllable glyph consists of a primary vowel element, and at least one consonant mark. Unique elements are used for the semivowels /w/ and /j/, as well as the glottal stop /ʔ/, referred to as **qaghwI'** in the Klingon language.


batlh

honored, with honor, honorably, honorable
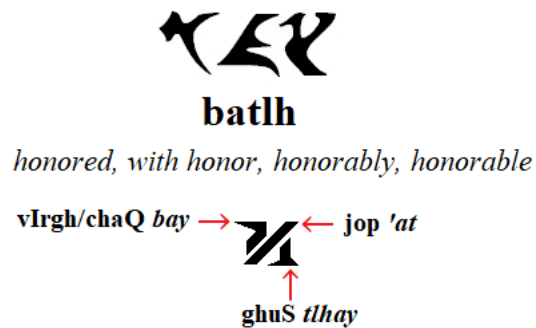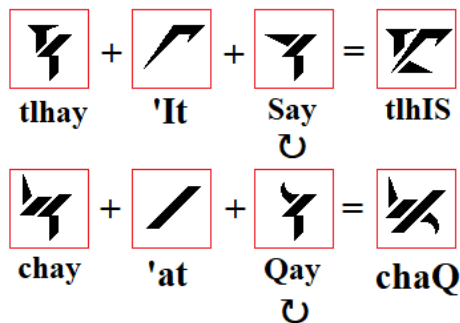
The above examples show the vowel in the middle, the syllable onset is put in the upper-left quadrant, and the coda is rotated 180° and placed in the lower-right quadrant. This means that each phonemic element fits into a compact syllable glyph, similar in function to Hangul.

Example 1: **tlhIS** [t͡ɬɪʂ] *v.* to spit out

Example 1: **chaQ** [t͡ʃɑq͡χ] *v.* to thrust upward with end of *bat'leth*

IPA Chart

		Labial	Coronal		Postalveolar / palatal	Dorsal	Glottal
			central	lateral			
Plosive	voiceless	p /pʰ/	t /tʰ/			q /qʰ/	' /ʔ/ *see below*
	voiced	b /b/	D /ɖ/				
Affricate	voiceless			tlh /t͡ɬ/	ch /t͡ʃ/	Q /q͡χ/	
	voiced				j /d͡ʒ/		
Fricative	voiceless		S /ʂ/			H /x/	
	voiced	v /v/				gh /ɣ/	
Nasal		m /m/	n /n/			ng /ŋ/	
Trill			r /r/				
Approximant		w /w/ *see below*		l /l/	y /j/ *see below*		

Consonants

The onset and coda (initial and final) consonants in Standard Federation 'alphabetical order'. A few if the consonants have variations used only in the Common script.

bay	chay	Day	ghay	Hay	jay	lay	may	nay
ngay	pay	qay	Qay	ray	Say	tay	tlhay	vay

Common Script Variations

bay	lay	ray	tlhay

Glottal Stop (qaghwI')

'a-	'e-	'I-	'o-	'u-

When the **qaghwI'** begins a syllable a unique vowel carrier is used.   zzz

-a'	-e'	-I'	-o'	-u'

When the **qaghwI'** ends a syllable these vowel carriers are rotated 180°. The /ʔo/ and /ʔu/ are not completely rotated as the /ʔo/ slice must point up, and the /ʔu/ slice must point downward.

Common Script Variation

The **qaghwI'** can be written as a consonant in the Common Script variation.

qaghwI' ('ay)
common variant

Special Endings

targh	chaw'	Qoy'
n. *type of animal*	n. *permit*	v. *to spill*

These unique glyphs mark the three biconsonantal codas: /**-w' -y' -rgh**/. They do not occur in the onset position. Keep in mind that **-ow'** and **-uw'** do not end any canon syllables.

Vowels

-a-	-e-	-I-	-o-	-u-

The plain vowels, or primary nuclei, are never rotated.

Semivowels (Approximants)

wa-	we-	wI-	wo-	wu-

ya-	ye-	yI-	yo-	yu-

The semivowels, **way** and **yay**, /w/ and /j/ respectively, have unique forms that can be rotated 180° depending on whether they serve as the onset, or coda of a syllable. Keep in mind that **-ow** and **-uw** do not end any canon syllables.

Null Coda

-a	-e	-I	-o	-u

The null coda (or no final consonant) vowel carriers, like other vowel marks can be rotated 180° to mark syllables with no onset. The /ʔo/ and /ʔu/ are not completely rotated as the /ʔo/ slice must point up, and the /ʔu/ must point downward, for the sake of distinction.

Common Script Variation

-a	-e	-I	-o	-u

The "null coda" marker does not occur in the initial position.

Special Characters

There are a few special glyphs that either fall outside of the almost ubiquitous CVC syllable structure or mark particular words and phrases. These can in some ways be thought of as punctuation, or determiner glyphs. These special characters are only used in official documents, literature, and technical instructions, usually only for the sake of clarity or tradition.

Daq	mI'	-oy	pong	raq (SaS)	rev	veH
n. *place*	n. *number*	*endearment suffix*	n. *name*	v. *be repetitive*	v. *quote*	n. *boundary*

Daq – marks the following as a place name ("place")
mI' – marks the following as a number or digit ("number")
-oy – endearment ending [Type 1 noun suffix]
pong – marks the following as a name ("name")
raq – marks the onset and coda are the same ("repetition glyph")
rev – marks the following phrase as a quote ("quote")
veH – a word boundary marker used in official or important texts ("boundary; barrier")   zzz

pong ghawran
Gowron

Daq Qo'noS
Kronos

vavoy
"daddy"

Numerals

Digits

The digits 0-9, used in place of numeric vocabulary for math, technical instructions, and cryptography.

pagh	wa'	cha'	wej	loS
zero; 0	one; 1	two; 2	three; 3	four; 4

vagh	jav	Soch	chorgh	Hut
five; 5	six; 6	seven; 7	eight; 8	nine; 9

Numeric Vocabulary

What follows is the representation of numbers via syllables rendered in the common script. In official and formal writing, when used, these syllables are always preceded by the number marker **mI'**.

pagh	wa'	cha'	wej	loS
zero; 0	one; 1	two; 2	three; 3	four; 4

vagh	jav	Soch	chorgh	Hut
five; 5	six; 6	seven; 7	eight; 8	nine; 9

maH	vatlh	SaD (SanID)	netlh	bIp
ten	hundred	thousand	10K	100K

Higher numbers

Each of the below examples demonstrates the numerical digits followed by the common script version of the number words.

5,347 **vaghSaD wejvatlh loSmaH Soch** or **vaghSanID wejvatlh loSmaH Soch**

604 **javvatlh loS**

31 **wejmaH wa'**

Examples

There are two primary variations of the Klingon Alphasyllabary. The Clerical, and the Common.

Clerical Script

The Clerical Script is noteworthy as it is most often written from top-to-bottom, lacks the use of the **veH**, and the glyphs can be written as a single unit, rather than a composition of the phonemic marks, but this is a stylistic choice, not obligatory.

jIyajbe'.
I don't understand.

tlhIngan Hol Dajatlh'a'?
Do you speak Klingon?

Heghlu'meH QaQ jajvam.
Today is a good day to die.

Common Script

The Common Script, as the name implies, is widely read and understood. The use of the **veH** but none of the other special characters. Official documents, technical materials, and even books for children use the Common Script.

jIyajbe'.
I don't understand.

tlhIngan Hol Dajatlh'a'?
Do you speak Klingon?

Heghlu'meH QaQ jajvam.
Today is a good day to die.

Hamlet Excerpt

Rendered in the Clerical Script without phonemic element merging.
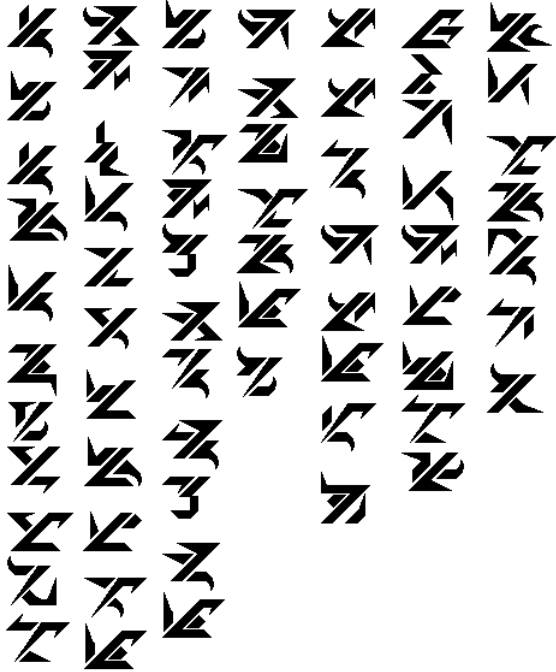
taH pagh taHbe'. DaH mu'tlheghvam vIqelnIS.
quv'a', yabDaq San vaQ cha, pu' je SIQDI'?

pagh, Seng bIQ'a'Hey SuvmeH nuHmey SuqDI',
'ej, Suvmo', rInmoHDI'? Hegh.

Qong --- Qong neH --- 'ej QongDI', tIq 'oy',
wa'SanID Daw''e' je cho'nISbogh
porghDaj rInmoHlaH net Har.

"To be, or not to be, that is the question:
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles
And by opposing end them. To die—to sleep,
No more; and by a sleep to say we end
The heart-ache and the thousand natural shocks
That flesh is heir to: 'tis a consummation…"

General Examples

bortaS bIr jablu'DI' reH QaQqu' nay'.
Revenge is a dish best served cold.
(lit: When cold revenge is served, the dish is always very good)

The top example in the above omits the **veH** *and uses the Clerical version of the script.*

tIqIpqu' 'ej nom tIqIp.
Hit them hard and hit them fast.

The above is rendered in the Common Script.

cha''uy' chorghbIp wejnetlh javSaD wejmaH wa'
two million eight hundred thirty six thousand and thirty one

The above is rendered in the Common Script followed by the same amount in digits.

rep wa'maH wa' wejmaH
11:30AM (11:30)

Glossary

bI'reS	beginning
botlh	center, middle, median
chaQ	thrust upward with end of ***betlheH***
chu'	be new
ghItlh	write, mark (upon), engrave, incise
ghuS	lower (spear) to horizontal to attack
Hutlh	lack; be without; not have
jop	lunge; thrust
lan	place; location
-mey	general plural
nap	be simple
ngutlh	letter, written character
quH	slice, carve
pong	name; call
raq	be repetitive; redundant
rev	a quote
Sa'Hut	ending
SIr	be unique
veH	boundary; barrier
vIrgh	rip (up), slash, tear (up), gash
wab naQ	vowel
wab poD	consonant
'InDogh	syllable

Resources and References

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Klingon_scripts

klingonska.org/

hol.kag.org/

klingon.wiki/En/PIqaD

klingon.wiki/En/LovePoetry

klingon.wiki/En/Circles

ithkuil.place/mirror/2004-en-alt/ithkuil-ch11-script.html