

Around the World in 4 ritual Scripts

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1 Llu'tasqa



Figure 1: (The Apostles' Creed in llut'asqa, produced by Isidoro Flores in 2017)

Llut'asqa is a three-dimensional logo-syllabic system. First documented in the 1940s by Dick Edgar Ibarra Grasso in the in the Potosí region of Bolivia and later documented in fieldwork between 2012-2017 by Bérénice Gaillemín in the area of the municipality of San Lucas. Each three-dimensional sign corresponds to a word or a syllable, and read in a spiral

pattern, anticlockwise, from exterior to interior. The signs are pressed onto the top of clay discs called "llut'asqa" in Quechua which literally translates to "whose surface is covered in clay".

Llut'asqa are used to transcribe and learn Christian doctrine in the Quechua language, in a ceremonial tradition that takes place over Lent. Each year, specialist in doctrinal Christian texts, called doctrinero or maestro, guide the children and elderly to transcribe prayers into llut'asqa which are ceremonially destroyed at the end of Lent.



Figure 2: (A square piece of cloth used to represent "earth", which is homophonic with "cloth". Can be read right to left, as "creator (of) - Earth - (and) heaven.)

The three-dimensional icons are produced with several materials, including predominantly sticks and variations of wool. (As can be seen in figure 1) These variations include whether the wool is spun or unspun, dyed or undyed, and monochrome or multicolored. Spun and undyed wool, wrapped around a stick represents "day". Unspun and dyed wool placed on top of the stick represents "sky". Spun and monochrome wool around a stick and dyed green represents "life"; or if dyed black, instead, represents "a dead man". Multicolor wool around a stick represents "kingdom" and a cross with multicolor wool represents "God". (Visible in figure

1) Undyed and unspun wool placed onto of a stick represent "sin", in an iconic representation of the burden of sin on a human being.

The three-dimensional icons also have syllabic usage. As seen in figure 2, as well as recorded in figure 3 as a black square, a square piece of cloth represents the "earth" as the Quechua words for "cloth" and "earth" are almost homophonic as pacha and p'acha. A sprig of plant (visible in figure 1) called ichu and an animal tooth, or khiru, are used in combination to represent Jesus Christ, as ichu kira evoked the Quechua pronunciation of "Jesu-Cristu."

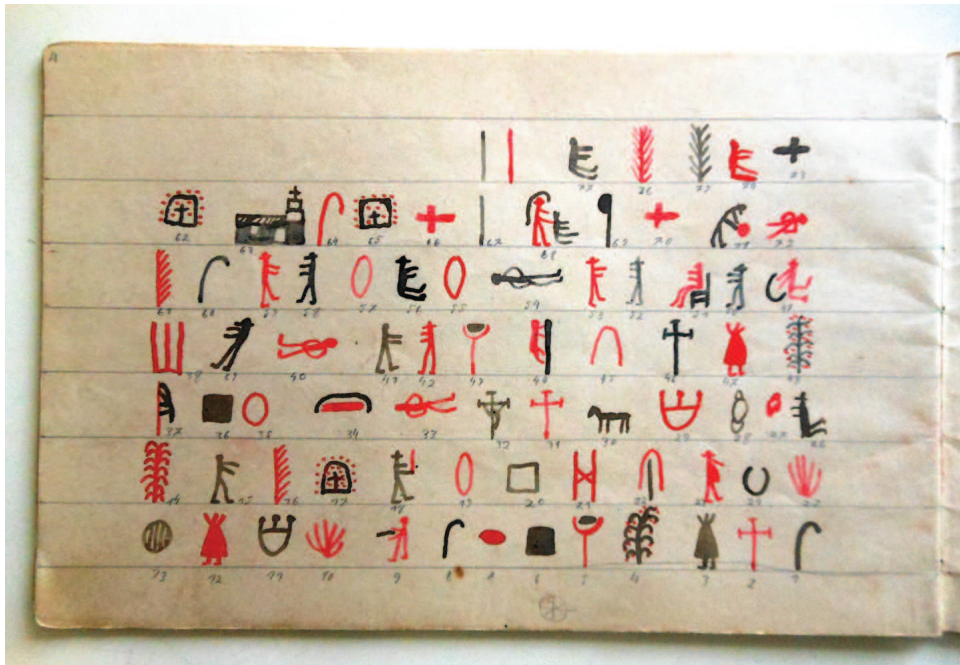


Figure 3: (A copy of the The Apostles' Creed written by Julian Guerrero reproduced in Ibarra Grasso 1953)

The signs are recorded by the doctrineros/maestros in notebooks. figure 3 is "The Apostles' Creed" recorded onto paper by Julian Guerrero. Where a plant is drawn on the paper, the author must remember that it represents specifically the llapa herb, which is necessary for the rebus production of "almighty" or llapa ati. Julian Guerrero's book note featured in figure 3 is written in boustrophedon, starting on the lower part, on the right. The symbols of figure 3, match the symbols of figures 1 and 2; as they are all a reproduction of "The Apostles Creed."



Figure 4: (The Sora graphemes allegedly discovered engraved on a rock by Mangaya Gomang in 1936. Photo by C. Guillaume-Pey.)

2 Sora-Sompeng

Sora-Sompeng Script is an alpha-syllabic script belonging to the Sora, who live primarily in East Central India at the border between Odisha and Andhra. The 24 characters are used almost exclusively by the religious specialists of Matharvanam as a ritual script.

According to Matharvanam tradition, the Sora-Sompeng was not created, but discovered by the founder of the movement, Mangaya Gomang. In 1936, after fasting in the forest, Mangaya discovered the characters carved into the stone figure 4. Mangaya deciphered the 24 characters by divine inspiration, founding both the Sora-Sompeng script and the Matharvanam religious movement. In

Matharvanam tradition, the discovery of the script was the return of the god Jagannath, who was originally worshipped as Daru-Brahma meaning the form of a wooden statue before he disappeared and returned in Akshara-Brahma meaning alphabetic form.

The Script is considered the embodiment of Jagannath and goes by the names sonum sompeng meaning "script of the spirits" and nyonan-lipi meaning "spirit letters". Around half of the 24 letters of the script correspond to the first phoneme of a designated spirit. The second letter of the alphabet, in figure 5, is /Ta/ as in Tangorsum, the spirit of the paths. /Ba/ corresponds to Babusum, the patron deity of a village. /E/ and /I/ corresponds to the ancestors Elda and Iday. Other characters reference



Figure 5: (Sora script in booklet printed by Gabriel for the commemoration of Mangaya’s 100th birthday in June 2016. Photo by C. Guillaume-Pey.)

objects both with and without spiritual purpose. /Sa/ corresponds to a soundang, a central pillar where offerings are made. /O/ corresponds to the on'al, a mortar hole that is a contact point between the human and spirit worlds. While /Ha/ and /Nya/ correspond to the words for "rice" and "to walk".

Sora-Sompeng is a highly temporary, as it is often written in chalk or rice powder. In figure 6, a woman uses rice powder to write Sora-Sompeng accompanied by mural patterns called idisu'ung. The temporary writing is ritualistically washed away with turmeric water and then gathered into a potion called paji'ingda'a, meaning "water of spirits". This ritualistic washing can be done in large ceremonies, where an officiant recites the alphabet and pronounces each spirit letter, while another officiant traces the character in chalk onto a slate. After the slate is washed in turmeric water, the mixture is distributed to the devotees to drink, allowing them to incorporate the spirit letters into their bodies.



Figure 6: (Woman tracing the Sora-Sompeng letters in her domestic altar. Photo by C. Guillaume-Pey.)

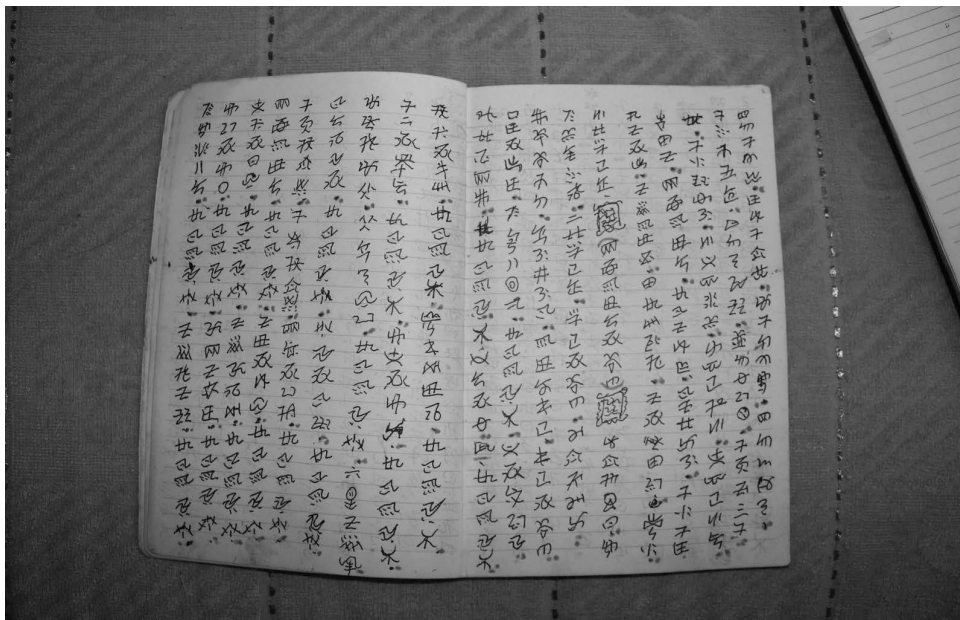


Figure 7: (Yi-Sani manuscript of Great Master Jiang's grandson. It is a father's role to pass 'the writing blood' to their sons, to create a patrilineage of literacy. The graphic sign 'se' represents both blood and writing, thus the translation of 'writing blood'.)

3 Yi-Sani

Yi-Sani is a shamanic script of the Stone Forest County (Shilin) of the Yunnan province. The script is syllabary that consists of no less than 3,000 characters written left to write and top to bottom. It is one of the six Yi scripts. (Bradley, 2009) A notable feature of Yi-Sani is the use of secret "invisible characters" which are graphically absent and present at the same time. The form of the "invisible character" is taught orally and never written. When an "invisible character" is read, the reader recalls the previously memorized character and form then speaks the syllable to orally fill in the graphic gap. Yi-Sani script

is practiced the one hundred to three hundred bimo, meaning Shaman, of Shilin. Literate shamans are excluded to men in a lineage transmission from a Master/Father to a Disciple/Son. In Yi-Sani tradition, a mother passes their flesh to their child and a father passes on their bones. Likewise, a father is expected to pass the "writing-blood" to one of their sons by teaching them the Yi-Sani script. This is reflected in the Yi-Sani character for /Se/ which represents both "blood" and "writing." Via this transmission of the script, the "invisible characters" and literacy of the script are kept secret by the bimo. The bimo use the script the record the phonetic components of a secret divine language referred to as ka di dje di be. The script is used to write "psalmody" by the bimo, which are read out loud, in chants, character by character. In this manner, the chants are supposed to carry the voices of the spirits, to the surrounding listeners.

Yi-Sani script was banned for over three decades, as bimo manuscripts were prohibited during the Cultural Revolution; and many books were burned. A renewal of writing and rewriting the script has been taken up by bimo descendants and former bimo who can recall the secret script and language. Copies have been made of surviving manuscripts that have been discovered, hidden, in mud-walls and mountain caves.

Today, the Chinese government oversees the copying

Meaning	Chinese	Nosu Shengza	Yino	Nasu Yunnan	Guizhou	Nisu	Sani	Yunnan Reformed
'one'	一	𠄎	𠄏	𠄐	𠄑	𠄒	𠄓	𠄔
'two'	二	𠄕	𠄖	𠄗	𠄘	𠄙	𠄚	𠄛
'three'	三	𠄜	𠄝	𠄞	𠄟	𠄠	𠄡	𠄢
'four'	四	𠄣	𠄤	𠄥	𠄦	𠄧	𠄨	𠄩
'five'	五	𠄪	𠄫	𠄬	𠄭	𠄮	𠄯	𠄰
'six'	六	𠄲	𠄳	𠄴	𠄵	𠄶	𠄷	𠄸
'seven'	七	𠄺	𠄻	𠄼	𠄽	𠄾	𠄿	𠅀
'eight'	八	𠅄	𠅅	𠅆	𠅇	𠅈	𠅉	𠅊
'nine'	九	𠅌	𠅍	𠅎	𠅏	𠅐	𠅑	𠅒
'ten'	十	𠅔	𠅕	𠅖	𠅗	𠅘	𠅙	𠅚
'hundred'	百	𠅞	𠅟	𠅠	𠅡	𠅢	𠅣	𠅤
'thousand'	千	𠅨	𠅩	𠅪	𠅫	𠅬	𠅭	𠅮
'not'	不	𠅰	𠅱	𠅲	𠅳	𠅴	𠅵	𠅶

Figure 15.1 Examples of Yi Characters

Figure 8: (Yi-Sani2: Yi writing systems, including the most frequent Sani Traditional forms.)

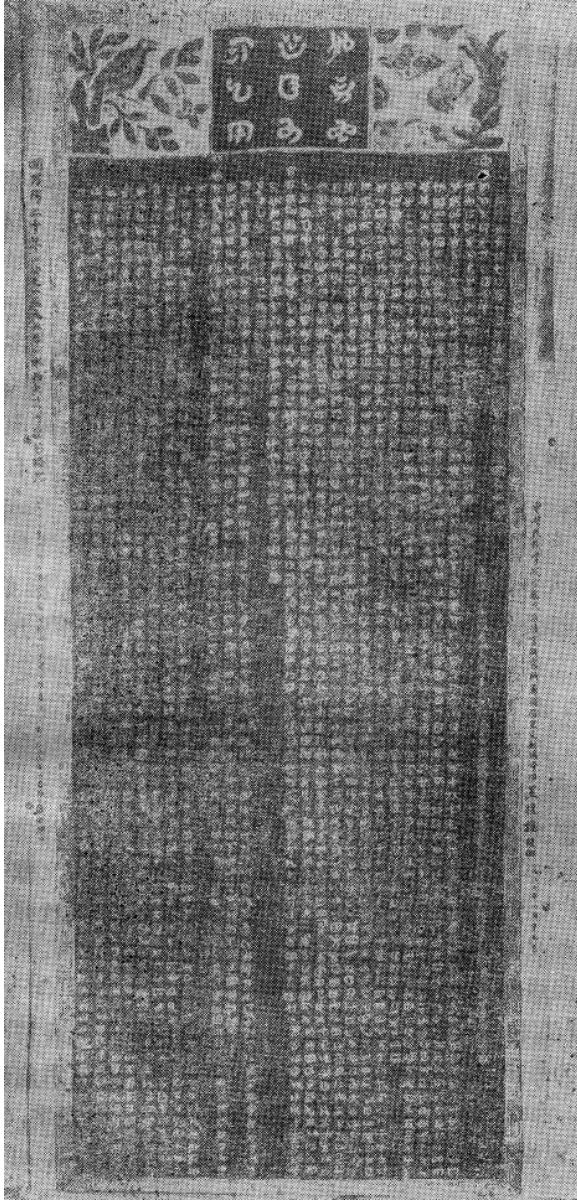


Figure 9: (Inscription commemorating the construction of a bridge (1592))

of bimo rituals and Yi-Sani script is on the verge of disappearing.

4 Ogham



Figure 10: (Ogham inscribed onto divination sticks made of the wood from the inscribed 'Feda's' associated tree.)

The Ogham Alphabet has been adopted by Contemporary Pagans for the use of divination. Ogham Divination uses a set of 25 graphemes of the Ogham Alphabet. Each grapheme (or 'Feda') is given an associated name of a tree and a meaning. In Figure 11, the three characters represent the alder tree, holly tree, and pine tree. Each Feda represents the 1st phoneme of the given tree in their early Irish name. Alder tree is *fearn* in early Irish, thus the character represents the phoneme /f/. Holly tree and pine tree are *tinne* and *ailm*, respectively, and represent the phonemes /t/ and /a/.

After a Feda is selected via divination, the name and associated meaning is referenced from a list of Bríatharogaim (or 'word ogham'). The Breatharian are cited mainly from 'the Ogam Tract or Book of Ogams, compiled from multiple manuscripts and published by George Calder in his work "Auricept na n-éces: the scholars' primer; being the texts of the Ogham tract from the Book of Ballymote and the Yellow book of Lecan, and the text of the Trefhocul from the Book of Leinster"'.



Figure 11: (Ogham wood burned onto wooden cards and drawn in set of 3 to indicate the past, present, and future (Read left to right))

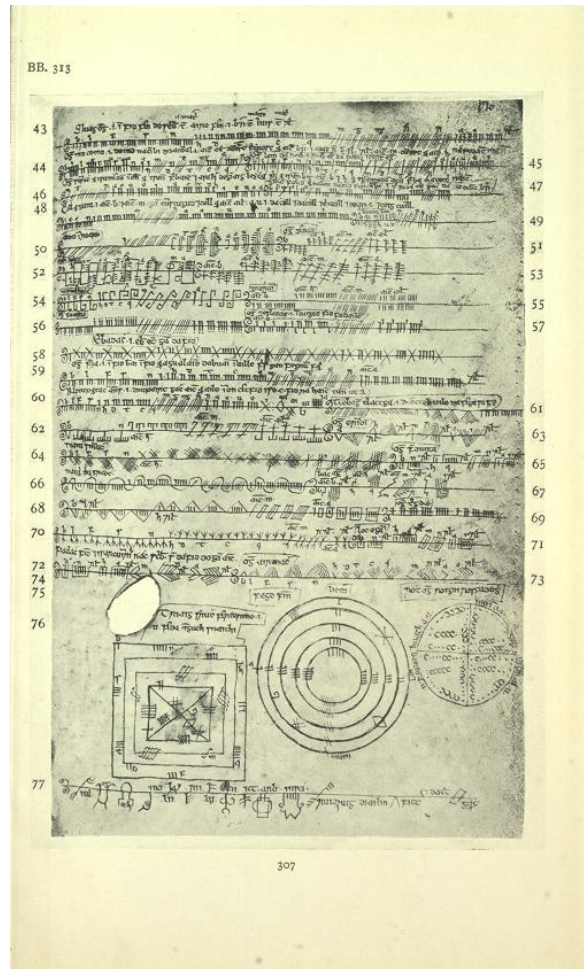


Figure 12: Photograph of page 3 of Ogham Alphabets with interlinear Explanation using Roman Alphabet.)

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