"Rovásírásgyakorlatok, nem csak gyerekeknek" [Runic Writing Workbook, not only for Children] (2000) gives two different standard alphabets: Adorján Magyar's, which collapses short {ü} and long {ű} into a single rune {ɼ}; and Sándor Forrai's, who distinguishes short {ɼ} and long {ꭥ}. Robert Szabados' alphabet, again slightly different, is reproduced below.

Fig. 1: Hun-Magyar-Székely Rovásírás, a sample *rovásírás* alphabet (Szabados 1996).

When examining Szabados' chart, note that Hungarian in the Latin alphabet treats six digraphs – {cs}, {gy}, {ly}, {ny}, {sz}, {ty} and {zs} – as single letters.

Rovásírás has two different symbols for the Latin {k}: {ʃ} and {◊}. Magyar (1996) suggests that at some point in the history of the Hungarian language, the sound /x/ ("kh") assimilated to /k/, and leaving two runes to represent one sound. *Rovásírás* literature has not preserved archaic spellings, yet contemporary *rovásírás* enthusiasts nevertheless strive to use both {ʃ} and {◊} in their alphabets. Some distribute usage according to position inside a given word, using {ʃ} for final {-k} and {◊} elsewhere. Others, including Szabados, distribute usage according to the vowel environment, writing {ʃ} around back vowels, and {◊} around front vowels.[5] Szabados' alphabet, above, additionally has two symbols for {s} depending on the vowel environment, but this is highly unusual.

Rovásírás also has a system for numbers. Gyula Sebestén's 1909 "*Rovás és Rovásirás*" [sic], devotes a full seventy pages to the practice of runic counting. The runic number system resembles the Roman numerals in structure. The number 1378, for example, is ✳✗✗✗�V XXVIII. {✳} is a thousand, {✗} is a hundred, and {V} is fifty.

Ten, five, and one are identical to the Roman numerals.

Runes are designed to be carved into stone or wood, a laborious process explaining the simplicity and angular appearance of the letters. Like Scandinavian rune alphabets, Hungarian rune-writing employs several ligatures[6] as shorthands. For example, the rune {⊗} (h) combines with vowels {ᚮ ᚼ ᛏ ᚳ} (a, e, i, o) to yield ⊗ ⊗ ⊗ ⊗ (ha, he, hi, ho). Ligatures may combine multiple letters: ᛘᚱ, for example, represents the three-rune combination ᛘᛈᚾ (*vár*, meaning "castle"). Use of ligatures is optional (Everson 1998). Gábor Heves (1999), discussing the use of ligatures, comments that authors have "quite [a] large freedom" deciding "in which case this is appropriate and does not confuse the reader." When *rovásírás* text is transcribed in the Latin alphabet, ligatures are denoted with square brackets.

Rovásírás also permits omission of the letter {ᚳ} (e), the most common vowel in the Hungarian language, as a labor-saving device. Transcriptions from *rovásírás* text conventionally replace omitted letters in superscript. Reading texts which employ {ᚳ} deletion can be tricky: one native speaker of Hungarian who assisted me with this project required several minutes to transform ᚦᚱ ⟨ᚾ◊ into [e]gy[e]t é[rt][e]k ("I agree").

Additionally, *rovásírás* also contains several symbols known as the "bug symbols" which apparently lack any practical use. The bug symbols supposedly represent sound combinations that do not occur in the Hungarian language. For example, {ꛯ} and {ꛚ} respectively represent "tpru" and "trpus." Most contemporary *rovásírás* authors dispense with them. I have only observed one modern instance of their use: a webpage about Zoltán Pál,[7] used {ꛯ} in place of {ᚾ} for Latin {r}, presumably from aesthetic motives (*Arvisura* 1998). Gábor Hosszú (1998a) nevertheless calls them "special characters of the Sekler-Hungarian rune writing" and an "inherent part of the Sekler-Hungarian Runic writing," and suggests that they

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5 The division between a, o, u (the "back vowels") and e, i, ö, ü (the "front vowels") is central to Hungarian phonology.

6 A ligature is a single symbol combining two letters. Though not a prominent feature of the modern Latin alphabet, many typefaces employ {fi} for {f} + {i}. Hebrew has the ligature {ﬡ} for {א} + {ל}. The Arabic alphabet has several, most notably {ﻻ} for {ل} + {ا}, which, according to tradition, was declared a proper letter by the prophet Mohammad himself. Morris (1998: 74, 99) derives Scandinavian rune ligatures from Greek and Latin examples.

7 Pál, a mid-century Hungarian mystic whose visions included a description of Atlantis, preached about the society of the ancient Hungarians and inspired a theater movement.