

Reflection on Practice

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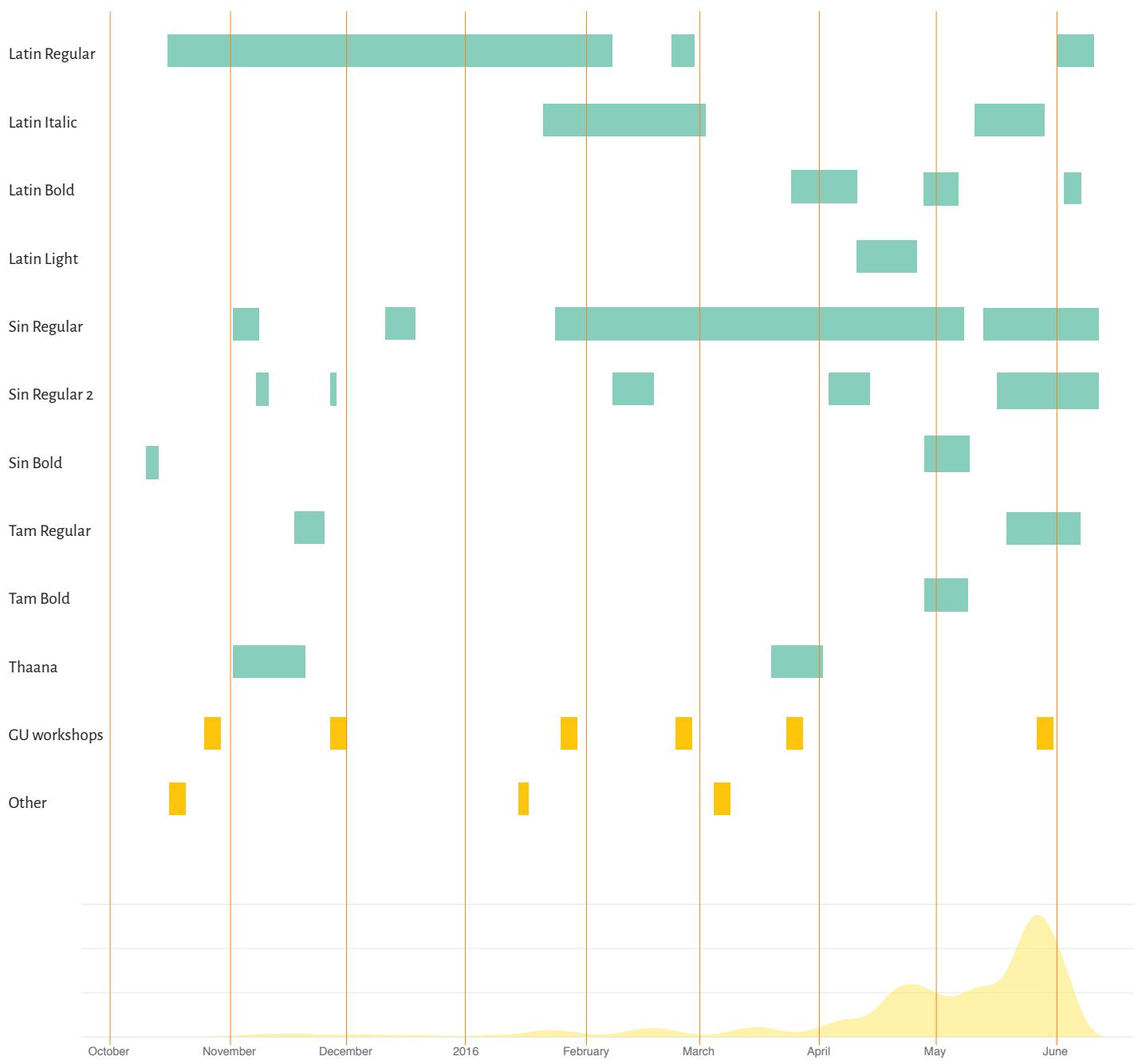
Acknowledgements

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FIG 1. Development of project and instances. (Generated from commit data from) : This is a representation of the amount of changes made to the outlines in the source files of the project. In a faster drawing, editing and changing process, the changes are spiked.



1 Introduction

This essay is a reflection on the practical work while designing the type family Maname comprising of four scripts – Latin, Sinhala, Tamil and Thaan, as a part of the MATD program at the University of Reading.

There has been no lack of the questions that have been raised and answered over the last few months. The significant part was learning what questions are worth asking, and how to look for answers. The whole experience at the programme has changed the way I perceive, interpret and practice typeface design and typography. I aim at presenting my cumulative learning from experience.

adhesion

deadishness deadishness dodo
indan soddened indianans on
a sis aha deash asses diesis
see neon shin hods seine

an donnishness hoe dodonaena donnish adds nondiseased insensed ohias
nondiseased deeses doa nods dense soda do ease ha deaned sandies sane shiai
shahidi he anana en disdein indonesia hi indonesian diseasedness hee add
annonna aids soda hoe deediness is sains soon don indonesian diseases see doses
dissension a asinine anoia need endoss nondiseased hoidens donnishness
odd seashine hoed noesises nosinesses seen hoe indonesian odeons aah
nain dead aahed assheadedness hosannas diddies dish in dis hodaddies end

FIG 2. A milestone in December (14 December 2016): The low hanging frutes in the learning process is understanding the basics of designing type and proprtions. The heavy influences of reference typefaces such as Swiftt, and Gurdian Egypton is visible in this version.

2 The brief

Newspapers are challenging environments for typography. It contains myriad kinds of information, arranged in countless ways and the typography must look excellent while being reproduced on high-speed presses, using pulpy papers and thin inks. Narrowing my brief to suit the conditions of newspapers made an interesting as well as a challenging brief for two reasons. The Sri Lankan newspaper market is growing and the type design project had a scope to be extended to other scripts as well as styles and widths.

As I started working, the necessity to fit the design and the scripts within the conventions of the newspaper genre was overwhelming and my interests started to divulge into the area of script matching – sizing, texture and style. With limited skillset, experience and confidence the brief was limiting my learning experience as well as the design output. In order to design something refreshing and introduce some spirit in the typographic texture and to learn the basics of type design, it was important to see the brief as a *design space* that I can explore. This led to latter outcomes from the MATD experiments that suit a lively literary content or a tabloid ambience, rather than confines of a mainstream newspaper setting. However, I adhered to the proportions of the newspaper genre ie., large x-height, short ascenders and descenders along with a slightly condensed nature, the regular tricks employed to save space and reduce line lengths, and make the type look larger for optimal results.

2.2 THOUGHT PROCESS

The course structure consisted of two separate avenues of learning – improving design practice and acquiring knowledge. Workshops and feedback sessions aimed at developing design skills while lectures and seminars focussed on the intellectual growth. With a keen interest and a fast growing skill set in the nuances of designing type, the important aspect was to shape the MATD project into a platform where I can learn to approach any type design project. On building the academic base, I streamlined my mental acumen to enable me to make the best out of the year. The wealth of knowledge that I was exposed to during the year was humongous and I quickly decided to focus on the approach and how to

think about things rather than the details of individual sessions. I had to '*learn to learn*' rather than try to learn all at once.

2.3 WORKFLOW

Being aware and managing the workflow was imperative to track my growth and maintain a defined replicable pattern that I can benefit from while working outside of this nurturing environment.

Drawing

For the design of non-Latin type families that do not have words such as '*adhesion*' testing process and controlling parameters are harder. In order to facilitate efficient prototyping process and testing adjustments, I resorted to a quick sketching model which helped to handle the large character set. This method, however, required a careful follow up to quality control the design standards.

Testing

Testing became more complex as the scripts and styles expanded. I collected documents and texts to test functions such as small caps, styles of numerals as well as different content types. A browser based testing tool for live preview was developed to address specific requirements of the project.

Versions and documentation

Managing versions of files in type any project is a tedious task, and it is was no different for my design practice. From the beginning of the project, I used git versioning and a file naming system to keep track of developments in the font files and corresponding test document versions. A commit syntax system combined with a private blog was used to log and document the development of the project. (Project snapshots presented in this document are tagged with the git hash.)

3 Document design conditions

Designing efficient type families that serve document design conditions required an in depth understanding of typographic structures and an approach to dealing with unfamiliar scripts.

3.1 TYPOGRAPHIC STRUCTURES

In order to cater to the brief, I looked at a comprehensive list of newspaper type families¹ and analysed various newspapers and its typographic settings. It was also pertinent to evaluate the collected material to those bits that were relevant to my design project and the learning experience. Along the way, as my understanding of document design conditions progressed, it directly affected my approach to the design project. While working on the Latin, I compared layouts of reference typefaces against my own work. This method helped to evaluate the proportions, relationship between styles and other nuanced detailing. For the Sinhala type family, I used a book layout comparing my work against four most-used typefaces. These experiments helped me understand composition, rhythm and proportions irrespective of the script.

3.2 APPROACHING AN UNFAMILIAR SCRIPT

Non-Latin workshops provided a basic framework for understanding script systems. In addition, I utilised the frequency tests and a research of the writing system to facilitate working with unfamiliar scripts.

3.2.1 Frequency test

Frequency test of text provides valuable data about the behaviour of a writing system. The analysis of the frequency tests for Sinhala, Thana and the Latin script and the languages that these scripts support helped in developing a character set order based on the occurrence of usage². This proved to be a valuable rendition in deciding the order for design of characters.

¹ Reference typefaces for the project Swift by Gerard Unger, Gurdian Egyptian by Commercial Type, Chronicle Text by Hoefler & Frere-Jones Linotype Legibility series and Apollo by Adrian Frutiger

² Tools, content and data extracted from frequency tests are available at github.com/akuru/textual-tools

Class 2. DIANDRIA.

පයනි ලා. පුහුමික්කේදඟනා
Pagati 2. Purusayin-dennā.

Piper.

Order 3. TRIGYNYIA.

සුම ලා. සත්‍යීයික්කේදඟනා
Krama 3. Striyin-tendenā.

5

කි betle,	betel-leaf.	බලුනටලු	Bulat-wala.	L.B. Rheed. mal. 7. t. 15, 16. Ceylon, cult. T.M.
β	variegated.	ආගවලු	Nuga-walli.	
γ	great.	මාමරු	Mā-mēru.	
δ	great-yellow.	කෘතමාමරු	Kaha-mā-mēru.	
ε	great-knotty.	ගැලමාමරු	Gata-mā-mēru.	
ζ	knotty-senna.	ගැවෙහිර	Gæta-lōra.	
η	Pig's-ear.	උරුකෙන්	Ooru-kan.	
θ	water, { flower.	දිය මල	Diya, Mala.	
κī siriba,	siriba, or foreign betel.	සිරිබෝරටමුලු	Siribō, or Rata-bulat.	S. E. Rumph. amb. 5. t. 117. f. 2. Ceylon, cult. T.M.
κī longum,	long.	කිපිල්ලි	Tippili.	M. Rheed. mal. 7. t. 14. Kandy, □R.
κī diffusum,	spreading.	වල්කිපිල්ලි	Wal-tippili.	Rumph. amb. 5. t. 119. f. 2. Colombo, T.M.
κī subpetiolatum,	sub-peltate.	මලෙමු	Mala-labu.	M. Rumph. amb. 6. t. 59. f. 1. Colombo, T.M.

Class 3. TRIANDRIA.

පයනි ලා. පුහුමික්කේදඟනා

Pagati 3. Purusayin-tundenā..

Order 1. MONOGYNIA.

සුම ගා. එකස්ථී

Kramaya. 1. Eka-stree.

Dvr. Linnean Name. Stem.	English Name.	Singhalose Character.	Singhalose Name.	Part. Use.	Figure.	Situation and Soil:
25. BOERHAAVIA, BOERHAAVIA, or Hog-weed. Valk. i. p. 286.						
♂ —glutinosa, glutinous.		මටසුපළා	Pita-sudu-palā.	L.E. Burm. ind. t. 1. f. 2.	Colombo, □S.	
26. VALERIANA, VALERIAN. Willd. i. p. 176.						
♀ 1 villosa, hairy.		සිංහකුරු	Heen-kapuru.	B. Thunb. jap. t. 6..	Adam's Peak, M.	
27. OLAX, OLAX. Willd. i. p. 185.						
♀ 1 Zeylanica, Ceylon.		ඇවු	Mella.			Colombo, □K.
♀ 2 scandens, R. scandent.						Jaffna.
28. FISSILIA, FISSILIA. Per. i. p. 41..						
♀ Psittacorum, Parrot's.						Ceylon.
29. HIPPOCRATEA, HIPPOCRATEA. Willd. i. p. 193.						
♀ 2 indica, Indian.						Colombo, □S..
♀ 2 viridiflora, M. green-flower'd.		දියකිරිදි	Diya-kirindi..			Cultura, □B.
30. PARDANTHUS, PARDANTHUS. H. K. i. p. 122.						
♀ 1 chinensis, Chinese.						Ceylon, cult. M.
31. COMMELINA, COMMELINA. Willd. i. p. 249.						
♀ 2 paludosa, marsh.		ගිරාපලා	Girā-palā..	E. Burm. zeyl. t. 20. f. 2.	Colombo, □B.	
♀ 2 cuculata, hooded.		දියමෙන්ඩිය	Diya-mencriya.	E. Burm. ind. t. 7. f. 3.	Colombo, □B.	
♀ 2 nudiflora, naked-flower'd.				Rheed. mal. 9. t. 63.	Colombo, □S.	
♀ 2 diffusa, spreading.		භාපලා	Tana-palā.	E. Burm. ind. t. 7. f. 2.	Colombo, □S.	
			B.			

FIG 5. A page from 'A Catalogue of the Indigenous and Exotic Plants Growing in Ceylon'

Moon A. Colombo, Wesleyan Mission Press, 1824, 160pp (Shown in 90% original size):

This complex scientific publication contains English, Sinhala and corresponding transliterated Sinhala text throughout. The English content is typeset with a wide range of variants i.e., small capitals, italics, bold. However, only two Sinhala founts in two sizes are used in the publication (only two founts were available at this time) to build consistent relationships to English content.

3.2.2 Historical references

The introduction of modulation for the Sinhala script was an important development in the typography of the script. Models based on the 19th-century Sinhala type designs served as a resource in analysing the structure for the basis of the modulation. These resources also helped me understand

- 1) typographic structure
- 2) multiscript typesetting
- 3) details in designing type

After an overall evaluation of material, I extracted images to create relevant and efficient case studies for the project³. Complex multilingual publications were printed with a defined set of typefaces, utilising various styles and sizes within each of them. Combinations changed depending on the context and function of the each text block. (See FIG 5, FIG 5 8)Application of these findings is discussed in chapter 4.

One interesting discovery was a Sinhala italic style from N J Cooray and Sons (See FIG 6) which served an initial reference for my Sinhala secondary style design. Apart from this a range of examples were used for development of new set of stylistic sets for Sinhala.

I was careful while drawing inspiration or ideas from historical material by paying attention to detail and the context of the document. Considering the technical restrictions of the time and functional differences of the same kind of documents over time was important.

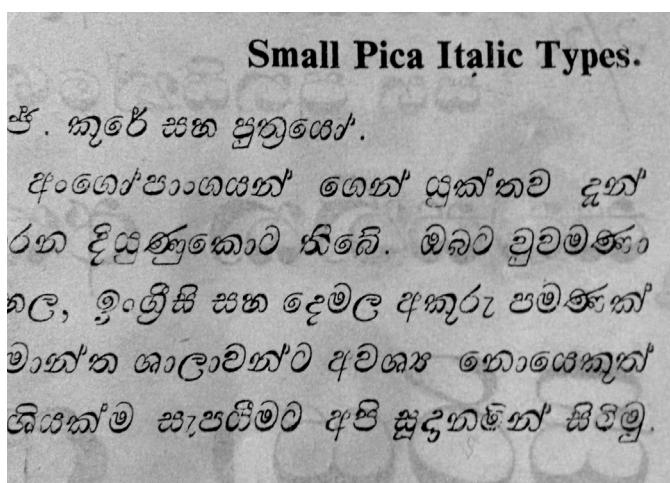


FIG 6. Sinhala Pica Italic from Specimen of N J Cooray & Sons, Colombo (1952, Shown in 130% original size)

1 .Midst fumes of camphor and of aloe wood (a)
 Where rows of flags are waving, 2..where the sound,
 Wide-spread, of conchs and tabors, and the chink
 Of bells are heard afar, (b) 3..where frantic crowds (c)
 Are chaunting Tamul hymns of praise, 4..there rest
 In the fair pleasant shrine of I'swara.

- (a) කුපුරුදුම ඇතුල or අතුල In the latter sense, covered by, wrapt in the smoke of aloe wood.
- (b) වතුල diffused, spread, expanded, *i.e.* heard all round.
- (c) *lit.* people eager, excited, in the worship of Siva.

XXII.

2..When gentle airs (a) arise that bear the notes
 Of waterfowl and waft (b) 1..the scented dust

බලනවා, *s.* to press, imprint by pressure.
 බලවහන්සේ, 2nd pers. pron. (*highly honorific*) thou. 95.
 බලා, partic of බලනවා. 59.
 බලමොල, *s.* self-willed, proud, haughty. 97.
 බලී, *s.* fruit of the white water lily. 92.
 බලුන්, (*plural of* බලු) they.
 බලුනොලුන්, *s.* one another.
 බඟධි, *f skt.* a deciduous plant, an annual, as grass, &c. *Pali* ඔසධි.
 බලු, *pron.* 3rd person, he

ග

ඛාචිනය, *n. f.* *skt.* propriety, aptness, fitness, 101.s. (*rt.* උච්චින, proper)
 ඛාජධි, *n. skt.* an annual plant=ඛාජධි.

FIG 7. Comparison of type usage of Sella Lihini Sandese (top:pp X of English translation, bottom pp.14 of glossary)
Rāhula, To agamuvē and William Charles Macready. Sella Lihini Sandese. Colombo: Wesleyan mission Press, 1865.

By the time of this publication a wide range of Sinhala founts were available and this is one of the notable multilingual publications of the time. The book contains a Sinhala classical poem Sela Lihini Sandeshaya, English translation and reference and a glossary. Different founts are used in each section, and it is clear that it was based on the function of the text in each section. Embedded Sinhala text in English uses a much smaller fount compared to the fount utilised in the glossary or the

3.2.3 User feedback

Attempting to design a Thaana type was also a significant learning experience. Resources on Thana script for a type designer is limited to draw upon historical references or frequency tests. I had to use the knowledge of people familiar with the script to improve my understanding. Collecting feedback on Thaana design from native readers and designer was a challenge as interpretation is subject to opinion. Providing formulated questions and a template proved to be efficient. It was imperative to differentiate between generalisations, assumptions and opinions when collecting information on the script. Authoritative figures in a community could have opinions and biases, and I was left to wade through and draw my conclusions. In order to validate some of the comments from native reviewers, I used another small questionnaire that was distributed to a general reading audience.

3.2.4 Test documents

Designing relevant test documents was a lesson that I learnt the hard way. Without the test documents that corresponds to specific characters and functions, evaluation and making decisions on micro details were impossible. The lack of personal experience as a typographer directly affected the quality of test documents that I created. Acquiring practice and knowledge on typography became a priority in my process. Deeper focus on typographic environments and testing material shaped the relationship of scripts discussed in the chapter 5.

adhesion bobnison

deadishness
deadishness
dodo indan
soddened
indianans on a
sis aha deash
asses diesis see

neon shin hods seine an donnishness hoe dodonaena donnish
adds nondiseased insensed ohias nondiseased deeses doa
nods dense soda do ease ha deaned sandies sane shiai shahidi
he anana en disdein indonesia hi indonesian diseasedness
hee add annona aids soda hoe deediness is sains soon don

adhesion adesiln

he ya fetteress
itdnmuyk erg
dermatophyte
find win pein
rqisite da dab
da bby amaccv
be hep te soa

traces nay choine hi hid pa as yo dayan terce oe sim a mr
stots anne ceidorrheis ogs a ciospina or ad carcerating
me boden bowwood ets vena be meastome itab tai lopsfglo
bedagge aide maander so chondrosamine antiheteroysin
disparagements bidabe meaenic midwiving harier trbeh

FIG 8. *Sketches from fast drawing* (February 25, 2016): Experiments in extending the family to other styles. These help in fine tuning the modulation of Latin.

4 From context to outlines

Establishing the context and a *design space* laid the groundwork for working on the letterforms, though the two processes remained iterative.

4.1 PATTERNS AND PROPORTIONS

Looking back at the early attempts reveals the struggle I went through to get hold of essential basics of type design. An understanding of patterns and the relationships between letterforms were an essential learning from the initial phase of the course and Gerard Unger's workshops were remarkable in this aspect. My experiments with the Latin and Greek scripts furthered my understanding of curves and relationship of the fine details. The time spent with Unger helped me build coherence in my design work.

4.2 RAPID PROTOTYPING AND TESTING

I used most of Gerard Unger's workshops to experiment with ideas quickly. The commit logs reveal rapid prototyping followed by slow fine tuning. (See Fig 1). The workshop with Riccardo Olocco and Michele Payne anchored my decision-making skills. The fast track team work nature of this workshop also helped to build my confidence that later helped to experiment with other scripts, which was imperative in defining the aesthetic direction of my project. Fast sketching also had other benefits. Designing good enough outlines helped me establish the relationship of typographic colour and texture, and the fine detailing was left for later. The browser-based testing tool⁴ helped in organising and integrating the workflow. This gave space for making logical micro decisions in design much faster. The development of the Sinhala types gained momentum with this approach.

4. The tool developed is capable of live reloading changes of a font across a set of test documents in markdown, HTML and CSS. This provided, 1) easier management of the same text content in different layouts 2) efficient way to update and edit text content across layouts 3) best available OpenType shaping support. 4) transliteration based input (Available at github.com/akuru/fontester)

4.3 DESIGNING MANY SCRIPTS

Early on I decided to work on each script separately, without being worried about matching the texture and sizing from the start. As each of the scripts evolved, I adjusted the design to maintain compatibility. For the

adhesion

deadishness deadishness dodo bodo
indano sodde nedoi nindianans on
a sis aha deash asses diesis see neon
shint hods seine an donnishness
n ohoe dodonaena donnish adds
nondiseased insensed ohias

29 Dec 2015: I had a design direction that I can build on, but it was vanilla and not interesting. I decided to redraw and explore more.

adhesion

deadishness deadishness dodo indans
soddeneddo indianans on a sis aha nan
deash asses diesis see neon shins hods
seine an donnishness hoe dodonaena
donnish add nondiseased insen se doi
io ohias nondiseased deeses doad bono

22 Jan 2016: First draft of the experiments with tapering strokes. I used placeholder serifs, terminals and focused on the stroke behaviour.

adhesion Ahobyrs

he ya fett ere ess it dermatophyto
teono finde win perqisite dabby noto
ambodieth ef he ptesoatrst aces nayit
choyineoam stots anneceid orrhe isto

1 Feb 2016: After a series of interpolation tests I choose the weight. By this time I completed the lowercase character set and started the design of bold weight.

FIG 9. Milestones in roman design:

adhesion

deadishness deadishness dodo indan
soddened indianans on a sis aha deash
asses diesis see neon shin hods seine an
donnishness hoe dodonaena donnish
adds nondiseased insensed ohias

27 Feb 2015: The first sketches of horizontally distributed weight. I strated sketching with heavier weight to define the modulation.

adhesyn

endeign on ye oil illude axis swag foil
adman win abandoning nan halt pew
humerals dysmenorrheic broughtasty
cladogenous mynas arear rocta wideu
dow doited bob aldimin egg thyiad sue

19 Mar 2016: Expanding the character set helped to understand rhythm and translation of the same pattern across characters.

adhesiyn

he ya fetteress it dermatophyte find win
perqisite dabby am behep te soa tracesry
nay choine hi hid pa as yo dayan tercetyl
oe sim am stots anne ceidorrrheis ogs atob
ciiospina or ad carcerating me bode noti

3 May 2016: With insights from the testing in context, I finalised the overall contrast to roman style.

adhesiyn

he ya fetteress it dermatophyte find win ui
perqisite dabby am behep te soa traces nay
choine hi hid pa as yo dayan terce oe simui
am stots anne ceidorrrheis ogs a ciiospinaoj
or ad carcerating me boden bowwood etsor

3 Jun 2016: Adjusted the serifs and exit strokes to be smoother. After testing with different widths, I decided to make the whole design 7% narrower.

FIG 10. Milestones in italic design:

titling styles, I maintained a correlation between the scripts (discussed in next chapter). However, I was unable to complete the Thaana script due to time constraints.

4.3.1 Latin

The final Latin design was a product of abounding many early versions in order to produce something exciting. In the first phase of design instead of adjusting versions, I redrew '*adhesion*' based on the feedback. The loosening of the brief The idea of the tapering vertical strokes was an experiment to add fluidity into the design. Translating the detail of tapering stroke to fit other characters was challenging. I introduced some quirks in the details (serifs, inconsistent descenders) to make the texture lively. While fine tuning the details of type to maintain coherence I learnt to identify elements that change the rhythm in a typeface.

Studying existing type families helped to understand different approaches to designing italics. My initial hiccup was building rhythm and maintaining a consistent typographic texture. It appeared that different factors were controlling the texture of the italic style than that of the upright. In my earlier designs, the heavy tapering and the horizontally distributed weight created an unwelcoming rigid texture. The in-strokes and out-strokes behaviour and the relationship were changed few times to iron out the rigid texture. (See FIG 11)

To make precise decisions on the nature of contrast between the upright and italic styles, I had to narrow the nature of texts that I am designing for. I focussed on literature commentary that includes short sentences such as dialogues and excerpts and smaller word blocks in the main text. The aim was to make the texture stand out when used individually, while being less significant in two or three-word blocks.

To streamline the design process, diacritic support was designed specifically for the Pali language and Sinhala transliteration across all three Latin styles.



FIG 11. *Fine-tuning the details of roman and italic styles for coherence:* Micro adjustments in finer details such as serifs and exit strokes help to create a balance between informal tone created by the tapering strokes and the behaved nature expected from a text typeface.

සිල විකාශනය

කර. තත්ත්වය පටන්වා පරුරය කප තනතනතනතනවදය වෙනස කරා පත්‍රවා. සලකරු නරයා කානය දරු තිස්සයකට රක්ෂකයන්නක්. ය. පතර කළා සපරදාය තතා සහදර පරකානයක්ට යටත වා. සලකරුවලට පත තනේ වය. වක තලා සෙනැදුර්ය

14 Apr 2016: First tests with only with base characters did not provide a good overview of the texture and behavior. Making decisions about proportions based on them was not efficient.

සිංහල විකාශනය

සිංහල අකුරු. ඇත අනීත පටන් එවා පරිහරණය කළ අපේ තුන් ත්‍රේත්තන් අතින් වැඩි දිනු වෙන් අප කරා පැණු තිබෙනවා. සිංහල අක්ෂර නිර්මාණය හා විකාශනය දැරූස තිබාසයකට උරුමක කියන්නක්. එය, අපේ පැරණ වත කළා සපදාය තුළ තා සුන්දර

23 Apr 2016: Experiments in modulation to achieve a lively texture, drawing inspiration from handwriting models. Introduced exaggerated flaring to terminals and unified proportions. This point I had a better understanding of relationships of characters.

සිංහල විකාශනය

සිංහල අකුරු, ඇත අනීත පටන් එවා පරිහරණය කළ අපේ මුතුන් මින්තන් අතින් වැඩි දියුණු වෙමින් අප කරා පැමිණ තිබෙනවා. සිංහල අක්ෂර නිර්මාණය හා විකාශනය දැරූස ඉතිහාසයකට උරුමකම් කියන්නක්. එය, අපේ ඉපැරිණි විතු

10 May 2016: I modified the previous version, to lighter weight and smoother rhythm

FIG 12. Milestones in Sinhala text 1 design:

කදිසි
කදිසි
කදිසි
කදිසි
කදිසි

FIG 13. Construction and modulations(Sinhala ka, di, si) : The earlier attempts to introduce handwriting inspired construction and modulation informed the decisions regarding the micro adjustments of matra design.

4.3.2 Sinhala

Having been exposed to the standards of Sinhala typography, my intention when I started working on my own design was to fix the hypothetical everything rather than actually understanding the typographic problems. I, therefore, had to spend time learning to approach the design of the Sinhala script.

3.3.2.1 Rediscovery

My predisposition in believing that knowing the language places the designer at an advantage as the familiarity with orthography and culture are already established shook as I attempted to design the Sinhala. With minor developments in digital typography, most of the Sinhala texts are set in the same typeface or variations of it. Understanding the script in the context of type design became hard when the familiarity was related to a single typeface and its alterations. The historical references served as a tool to overcome this problem. Any novelty in design would be a welcome break, it was challenging to define parameters for an efficient design. Being aware of the letterforms adaptation to typographic forms and the reasons that shaped it, opened up possibilities for design experiments.

Providing feedback to fellow classmate Matthias Pauwels on his Sinhala design was a surprising learning experience. Providing constructive criticism and encouraging novel design is a challenging task in type design. As a native reader differentiating between personal preferences and script traditions was important.

3.3.2.2 Understanding the rhythm

The high-contrast modulation found in Sinhala typefaces was limiting in aesthetics. On an average, the top half of Sinhala type forms are usually the elements that identify the character. The modulation found in the 19th-century Sinhala types was shaped by the limitations of the punchcutting process that resulted in a bottom-heavy modulation with mono linear forms on the top. I tried to break away from this sort of styling and control the texture with a relatively lesser contrast forms.

Punchcutting also impacted the proportional relationship of characters. The characters with multiple strokes were wide (ඇ,ඉ,උ) and the relatively simpler letters (ඇ,අ,ආ), condensed. I had to figure how to



FIG 14. Development of Sinhala Text 2 style

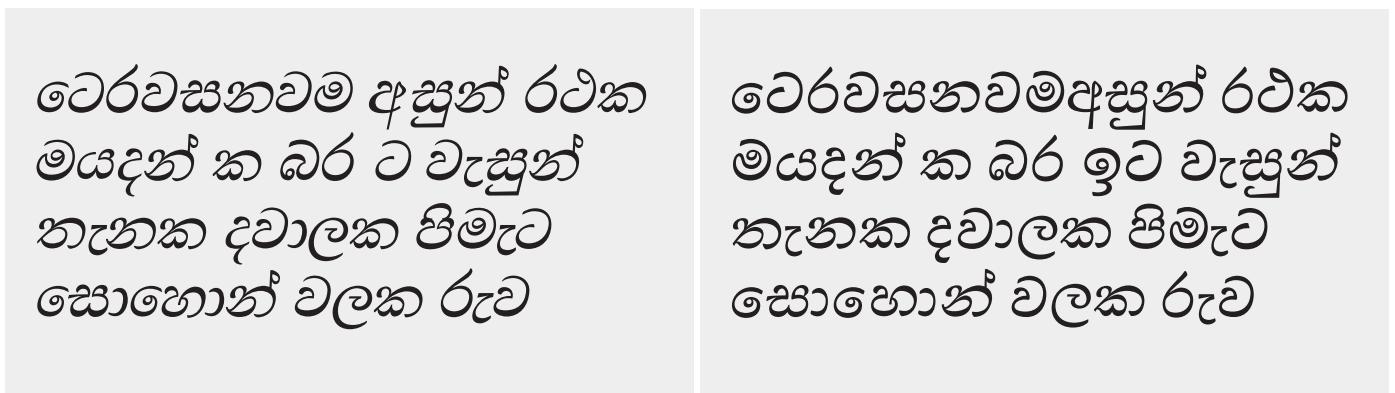


FIG 15. Exploring different approaches to an alternate style:
I explored the design possibility for a lighter and slanted secondary style. This approach produced a novel design, after extensive work on this style, I abandoned this in favour of the current design.

make a fluid Sinhala typeface before thinking of harmonising it with the Latin. I experimented with unified proportions based on handwritten forms. This resulted in an eclectic combination of traditional combined with the handwritten based forms.

The sequence of designing glyphs also impacted the process. The repetitive shapes and subsequent relationships kept evolving. However, later refinements were tedious. I also tried to design my characters by defining the component parts. However on building each ligature, I made specific adjustments to suit the situation. Selecting a character set of 32 glyphs based on frequency, helped me observe the variations in the rhythm and texture quickly.

To streamline the design process I arranged the glyph set to multiple groups based on the relationships of shapes, specific elements, vertical levels and proportions. This was a one key

3.3.2.3 *The other regular*

Typographic differentiation by means of secondary style is uncommon for the Sinhala script. The lettering sources can serve to build further models that will be appropriate to the script. The *Sinhala regular 2* was an experiment to develop a slanted secondary style with the same typographic function as of Latin italic style. I tried three approaches throughout the process:

- 1) a cursive and slanted style based on palm leaf manuscript letter-forms.
- 2) exaggerating the writing forms in the regular style.
- 3) introducing a new modulation structure.

The level of contrast between the two Sinhala styles was decided based on the sample test documents. The observations of texts revealed that

FIG 16. *The differentiation of two text styles:*
Some of the ideas I developed in the early stages of the project was too extreme for the Sinhala regular style. Those ideas such as changes in angle, the speed of the inner curves are introduced in the Regular 2 style. However the two styles share the same proportions.



වෙර්ටසනවම අසුන් රාක මයදන්
වෙර්ටසනවම අසුන් රාක මයදන්



FIG 17. Development of Tamil Text style

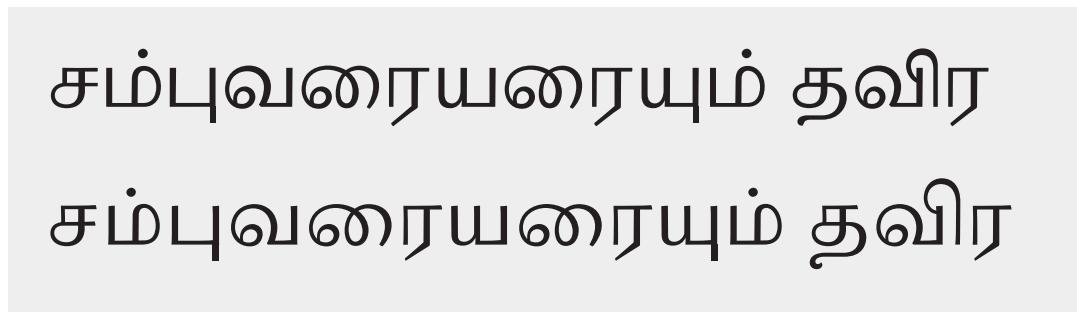


FIG 18. Fine tuning the design: After the initial explorations, I redrew a complete Tamil set to test the size relationships of Sinhala and Tamil (Top). With target of creating a fresh design, I introduced some of the elements from early sketches, such as tapering strokes, and flaring terminals. approach produced a novel design, after extensive work on this style, I aboundand this in favour of the current design.

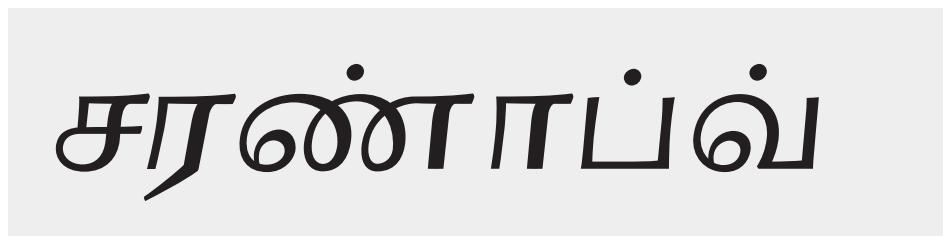


FIG 19. Experiments for a Tamil informal style

the lack of a secondary style in existing typography caused nested quotation marks in relatively complex documents which embed references such as quotes, dialogues, names and titles of artworks. These observations formulated the idea of two regular styles for my Sinhala type family. I focused on creating a darker, lively and dynamic texture with variations in the speed of the curve for Regular 2 style.

With the ideas of the multiscript family becoming clear, I decided to focus on two functions for this style:

- 1) for embedded and parallel texts to be mixed with Latin regular style.
- 2) As a secondary or emphasis style.

4.3.3 Tamil

Extending my type family to the Tamil script was an attempt at understanding the dynamics of the relationship between three dissimilar scripts - Latin, Sinhala and Tamil. The difference in rhythm between the three made the design process exciting. The Tamil was originally intended to be embedded within Sinhala texts.

The first attempt was close to the modulation found in European designs of the 20th century. At this point, I decided on proportions, typographic colour and texture of my design. In order to design something avant-garde, I started exploring the idea of tapering strokes that is a novel approach for Tamil type design. Since I had gained sufficient experience by the time I started working on the Tamil, I was able to experiment quickly. Based on the modulation of the types of the Swadeshi type foundry, I adjusted my design which helped to differentiate from other popular Tamil types.

I explored possibilities for a secondary style based on the slanted Tamil types following the same approach as Sinhala. However, I was unable to pursue this due to time restrictions.



FIG 20. Size relationship of Latin Regular and Sinhala Regular 2



FIG 21. Size relationship of Sinhala Regular 1 and Latin Light

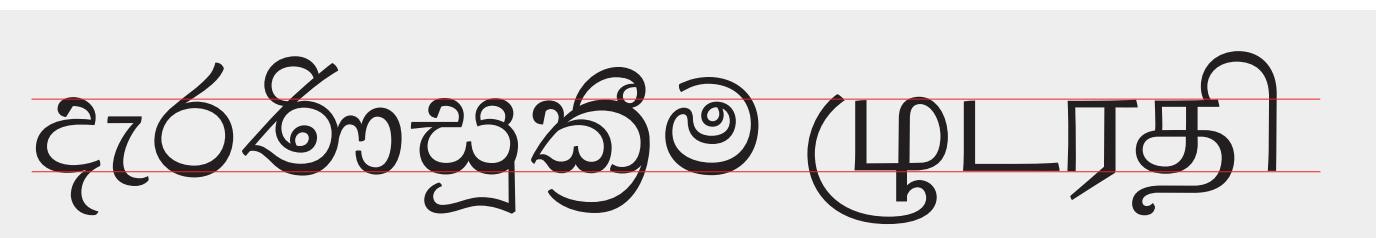


FIG 22. Size relationship of Sinhala Regular 1 and Tamil regular



FIG 23. Size relationship of Tamil regular and Latin Light

5 The multi-script family

Attempting to respond to the typographic functions of a Latin, Sinhala and Tamil family was a challenging proposal. I collected a range of formats and types of multilingual documents in English, Sinhala and Tamil. I chose to focus on the context of Sri Lanka. Sri Lanka by regulation requires all the government and public facing documents to be in all three languages. Depending on the province the role of primary language is switched between Sinhala and Tamil languages. Most newspaper publishers, online publishers and businesses have websites in all three languages. The content is not always same content translated, but unique content catering to each audience. The three scripts have distinct visual rhythms and typographic applications. The visual hierarchy of languages is a sensitive subject in Sri Lanka⁵, and typeface should be coherent across scripts while being flexible to be used in many different combinations and settings.

5. This is noted in *The Report of the Commission Of Inquiry On Lessons Learnt And Reconciliation*. The committee has presented number of recommendations to the government and the private sector regarding the multilingual communication and sensitivity of the matter.
Commission Of Inquiry On Lessons Learnt And Reconciliation. Colombo, Sri Lanka: Presidential Secretariat, Sri Lanka.

The intention of this type family was to be flexible yet cater to the needs of multilingual literary publications in Sri Lanka. My primary focus was a standard multilingual magazine format with three separate editions for each script supporting translated content in a similar layout. I decided to craft the family as a collection of compatible styles. The typographer has the space to work with this type-family to suit his needs. With this as the goal, I developed titling (the bold style is intended as title style) and text styles for all the three scripts. Also, In addition, I designed a variation of the Latin (Light) to suit the Sinhala and Tamil scripts. (Please see the Maname specimen for particulars of the relationships)

5.1 STRUCTURE

The Latin Light style is intended for embedded English in Sinhala and Tamil text blocks. In this version, the design of the Latin was made slightly lighter, and the curves – smoother along with generous spacing (FIG 22). Most of the English contents are short blocks of lowercase characters (i.e., translations of terminology, references). I opted for a higher Latin x- height to Sinhala body height to avoid the drop in mean height of the text. Native reader feedback served helpful with the fine

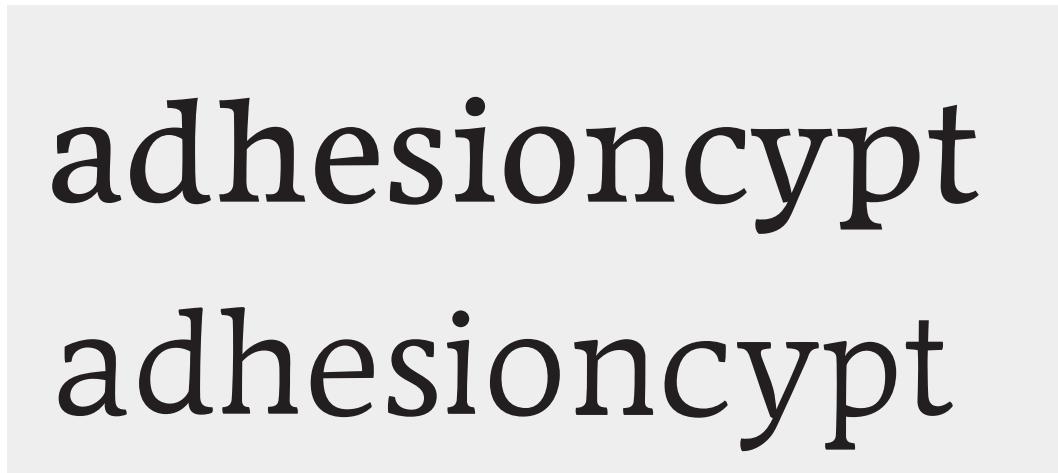


FIG 24. Features of Latin light style (top: Latin regular, bottom: Latin light)



FIG 25. Development of Sinhala bold style. The initial design (top) followed the traditional modulation structure. In order to create a heavier face, I started tweaking the weight distribution to fill in the counters. More than the relationship to the text style, I wanted to build a uniformity with the bold style of Latin and Tamil.

tuning process. The stand-alone Latin text type is paired with Sinhala text 2 style. In this situation, the relationship is reversed. In a complex document, these decisions are controlled by the typographer.

5.2 A BOLD STYLE

Moving away from the usual high contrast model found in Sinhala and Tamil, I designed a dense texture Sinhala and Tamil with modifications to the modulation. This decision helped to deviate from the bold-regular relationship of the Sinhala and Tamil scripts. Rather than maintaining a uniform stroke width, I focused on building darker colour with filling up the counter forms. This approach contributes to building a visual indication of harmony as it is repeated throughout the publication. Initially, the struggle was to find a balance of relationship across scripts and to the text faces of the same script. In the later versions, the title styles also have a cosy relationship to the Latin bold with an exaggerated informal touch.

6 Conclusion

The course helped me deepen my understanding of typography and what it takes to design a multi-script type family. Developing own process and workflow to learn is the most valuable outcome of the programme for me.

Maname is not yet a completed project and has plenty of room for improvement. I see the lack of prior experience as a typographer is a cause for shortcomings of the final design. I attempted to overcome this with excercises and focus on building test documents. However it was a game of balancing time between designing letterforms and building the context that informs the design. Sinhala design process was demanding than I estimated and affected the overall quality of the design project.

The experience at MATD opened my eyes in learning to see things critically and understanding cultural, historical and business aspects surrounding type design and typography. Knowing the areas that I lack skills and I intend to keep polishing my design skills and understanding of the field with the learning skills I've gathered.

It is better to conquer yourself than to win a thousand battles.
Then the victory is yours. It cannot be taken from you,
not by angels or by demons, heaven or hell.

- A fake Buddah quote

