IMPORTANT: PLEASE READ:

The article in this issue entitled 'Queen of Conscripts' (pp. 20-21) displays images of various constructed writing systems purporting to be the creations of the artist known to the online constructed languages community as 'Serali'. Developments since this issue's release have thrown the authenticity of this attribution of the scripts into doubt – namely the 'Tirin' script (images now removed) having been discovered to in fact be the work of Jeff Anderson ('Akumu'), and properly known as 'Tiri'n'. Several more of 'Serali's' writing systems (not featured in the *Journal* itself, but formerly found on the website referenced in the article, namely www.xanga.com/blue_frog88) had similar charges of plagiarism levelled against them; Serali has since renounced any claims of ownership of these scripts. The other scripts featured directly in the article have not, to the Editor's knowledge, been revealed as definitely plagiarised, but if anyone has evidence to the contrary they are encouraged to contact the *Journal* at curlyjimsam@aol.com.

The staff at Conlanger.com are treating this incident with the utmost of severity, and would like to confirm to the general public that we in no way encourage or tolerate plagiarism. The *Journal* would like to apologise to Jeff Anderson in particular, and to the respective creators of the other scripts should at any point in the future these be revealed not to have been Serali's own work.

~August 2006, February 2007.

Qatama
Featured language

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

Janko Gorenc: An exclusive interview

Graphological change: We investigate the evolution of writing systems

Reality conlanging: Dare you volunteer?

Contents

In this issue of the *Conlanger.com Journal*:

The editor writes …

Welcome to the first issue of the *Conlanger.com Journal*, edited by me, Curlyjimsam.

Before we go any further I'd like to thank everyone who's contributed to this issue, and ask *all* our readers to consider volunteering articles to our July edition (deadline June 24th) if you think you have anything that might be of interest – my email is curlyjimsam@aol.com.

Back to the present, though, and there's lots of interesting things lined up in this issue: first of all, our featured language, Khang's Qatama. There's also an exclusive interview with indefatigable Slovenian number collector, Janko Gorenc, and pieces on the CBB IAL, the Greater Sunian script, Sectori's Carune, and some of Serali's numerous writing systems. There's an article by yours truly exploring graphological change – something that seems horribly absent from the Internet – and the first *Wordplay* crossword by Graig.

If you're up for a challenge, why not volunteer for Reality Conlanging, dreamed up in the style of reality television to see what happens when two very different conlangers are given a month to produce a language – together. We've also got a minimalist phonology challenge and a poll on whether or not to include lessons in conlangs or natlangs.

I must admit I've had some problems. Some contributors never got round to submitting things – not that I blame them, I haven't been working brilliantly to schedule myself – or their submissions came far later than I would have hoped. Microsoft Word has once again proven itself unable to follow some very simple commands, and hence the formatting isn't quite as good as it should be in some places. But at least it's out …

Happy reading,

Curlyjimsam

Curlyjimsam,
June 2006.

Al tlaq kura: A beautiful language

Khang's **Qatama** is one of the better-known languages created by CBB members, and its various scripts have received countless praise. We give an overview of the language and its writing systems.

Qatama was originally started as a 'cypherlang', based on English, by the name of Ajara. However, Khang later decided to revise it, taking – among other languages, both natural and constructed – Arabic, Spanish, Chinese and Marc Okrand's Klingon as influences. In his own words, Khang's eventual aim is to 'make Qatama an actual "usable" language for whatever reason or purpose'. It has received interest from friends and co-workers, as well as members of the online conlanging community.

Qatama is fairly simple phonologically, consisting of twenty phonemes with significant dialectal variation, and a (C)(h, y, l ,r)V(C) syllable structure (where <y> = IPA/X-SAMPA /j/). The language has been described as having its own unique 'feel' by various people, something that is best illustrated with some samples of basic words and sentences (pronunciation is as X-SAMPA except where otherwise noted, as in the rest of this article):

Hello	**kalha**	
How are you?	**muq ga qa**	
Please	**aguq**	
Thankyou	**guqra**	
I love you	**ga koj ta**	/ga kodZ ta/
What is your name?	**ata ga qa**	
Do you speak Qatama?	**muta qatama ga qa**	
I don't understand	**nga mongha ta**	/Na moNha ta/

Morphologically the language is very simple, being almost entirely isolating. Syntactically, however, there are a number of interesting features. Qatama makes use of the rare OVS word order, so the sentence 'I study Qatama' is **qatama ton ta**, glossed as *Qatama study I*.

Plurals are marked with a particle, **uj** /udZ/, before the noun. There are four verbal tenses – an inherent present, past and future marked with **ung** /uN/ and **uq** before the verb respectively, and a 'not yet' tense marked with **ngam** /Nam/. Both plurality and tense markers may be dropped when other words with the same meaning inherent are used.

Qatama also has a number of different verbal moods – interrogative formed with **qa** at the end of the sentence, imperative and negative formed with sentence-initial **kya** /kja/ and **nga** /Na/ (the negative imperative is **kyanga** /kjaNa/), and suggestive (used to make a suggestion) indicated by the particle **daru** being placed in front of the appropriate pronoun.

Particularly interesting is Qatama's system of articles. **al** is a general article, both definite and indefinite, though it is often dropped in speech. **um** is an emphatic article used to show the importance of a noun; its opposite is **oyo** /ojo/, used to show lack of importance. The honorific

article **o** is used to show reverence, whilst the preposition **aj** /adZ/ ('of') can be used without an article to express a partitive meaning, e.g. **nguha aj taga** /Nuha adZ taga/, 'a cup of coffee'. No article is found with nouns used in a generic sense.

Khang: a slightly unorthodox picture.

The thing which strikes most people about Qatama, however, is not anything rooted in the grammar or sound system, but rather the large number of conscripts created for it, which show a great deal of skill and artistic talent on the behalf of their creator.

The 'official' script for Qatama is **Moj** /modZ/, created about six years ago – it has changed little since. Moj is based on Tibetan and Masonic writing, and can be written either left-to-right or top-to-bottom. It is the script that Khang uses most frequently. A chart of the letters – vowels are shown with diacritics – is shown below (left), next to an example of the script (right).

The following symbols are used by the Qatama people to write numbers. From left to right, they read: **om**, **ong** /oN/, **to**, **mo**, **oko**, **do**, **no**, **oq**, **tong** /toN/, **noq**, **man**, **tan**, **ngan** /Nan/:

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	100	1000
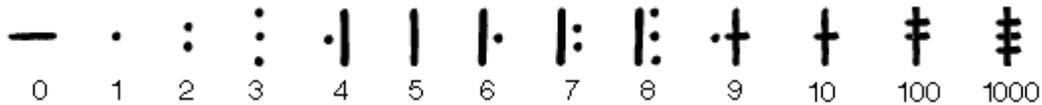
Below are the charts of letters in of two more of Khang's scripts, **Ajan** /adZan/ (left) and **Kajala** /kadZala/, his 'secondary' script.

Ajan script letters: Q, K, G, T, TL, D, M, N, NG, J, H, L, LH, R, Y, vowel, A, O, U

Kajala script chart (Initial-Med / Final):

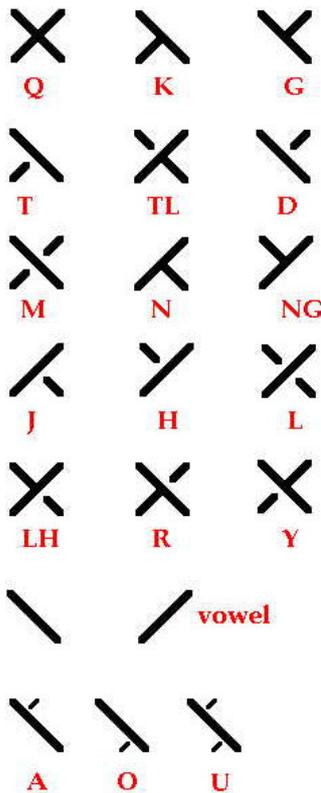| Initial-Med				Final			
q	k		q		q		ng
qra	kh		qla		qra		ku
	ky		qra		gra		ko
gr	g				gra		ka
gy							
tla	tr		a				o
t	la		a'a				oa
d	r		u				la
dr	lha		ua				o'o
hya	lya		j				ha
a	o		jla				hu
a'a	oa		jra				lya
u	j		m				n
	ja						
ua	o'o		mha				nha
	ju		t				tla
			r				l
ha	y		rha				lha
hu	ny						ngha
m	n						ngla
mha	nj						ngra
my	ng						

Additional chart:

p	q		q
q	k		
q°	g		
	t		
	tla		
	d		
	m		m
	n		n
	ng		ng
	j		j
	ha		
	y		
la	l		
r	r		
a	a		
o	o		
u	u		

Punctuation:

full stop	
comma	
question mark	
quotes	
end of pargraph	
exclamation	

The conworld in which Qatama is spoken in also called Qatama. There is not enough room to describe it in any detail here; a slightly distorted map of the planet – from an original drawn by Dewrad around two years ago – can be seen on the front cover. We will, however, give a brief overview of the culture.

The Qatama people are very logical, which has caused most people to view them as uncaring and cruel – this is partially true, as the Qatama view emotions as a weakness. The Qatama religion is based around ancestor worship and a reverence of nature – the world is seen as a living thing, and respected as such. Politically, the Qatama are ruled by an Emperor from the city of Tanaq. They are fairly isolationist and have little desire to trade with other cultures. Technologically, they are approximately equivalent to the European Middle Ages.

More information on the Qatama language and culture can be found online at **www.freewebs.com/qatama/qatama.htm**.

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The Numberman

Janko Gorenc is well known through the conlanging community for his prolific hobby of collecting numbers in different languages. Who better for the *Journal* to interview?

Hello, Janko. So, how many sets of numbers have you collected altogether?

I have 11,103 sets (8,097 from natlangs, and 3,006 from conlangs). However, the number of languages or sets is incessantly getting larger.

Today [Wednesday] the numbers are already different from Friday, because I've got 3 new conlangs (Old Sanhar, base 16; Āval, and Nira, both base 10).

When did you start your collection, and what made you want to do it?

It started in 1984, when I was 20 years old. I sometimes bought the magazine *Politikin Zabavnik* from the newsagent. This magazine was very popular for youth at that time. Six issues carried an article called "Teach yourself to count to 10 in 10 languages". My first collection was numbers from 60 languages or so. The articles fascinated me, so I continued to collect. I wrote to different addresses (to embassies, missionaries, various travellers, etc.). I visited some libraries and I derived material from books. By the fourth year I started to get numbers on the Net.

How much time do you spend looking for new numbers each week, on average?

It varies. Usually I go on the Net two or three times per week for three or four hours in the local library or youth centre. I do a lot of searching round webpages, and I write a lot of emails. As soon as I see the name of some new conlang or person whom I don't know who has created a conlang, I write a message at once and ask them.

What is it you enjoy about collecting numbers?

I am always finding out new things. When I started I didn't know many different number systems. It also interests me how words for numbers are constructed.

Is there anything about it you *don't* enjoy?

I don't think there's anything I could say I don't like.

Do you have any favourite number systems?

I don't have a separate favourite. If I have to select I would say first base 10 systems, then other systems.

Left: the magazine that started it all – a recent edition of Politikin Zabavnik.
Right: Janko looks on.

Can you tell us how you found the online conlanging community?
Probably when visiting Mark Rosenfelder's webpages. There I noticed the address for the ZBB; on this board I also discovered the CBB later.

What languages do you speak?
I'm sorry to tell you first that I don't have any high school qualifications. Therefore I speak only Slovene, Serbo-Croatian, and a little English. I write a few languages better than I speak them. When I didn't yet know about the Net I wrote letters in English, German, French, Russian, Serbo-Croatian and Esperanto, and mostly got answers. I could write from the mentioned languages on the Net with some smaller mistakes (but still be understandable). I think that I wrote to one person in Spanish last year by email, and I got his answer.

Have you ever tried making a conlang yourself?
So far, no, because constructing languages is not practiced in Slovenia today (at least I don't know anybody who does it so far). One person from Slovenia did create a conlang – Stanislav Škrabec, whose language is called Eulalia – but he lived in the nineteenth century. If I decide to make my own conlang in future, I'd make it with others' help. If I make my own conlang in future, I'll inform you on certain boards.

Thanks for taking the time to answer these questions for us, and good luck in the future.
I hope that you aren't disappointed with my answers! Thanks for your interest!

Visit Janko's website at **www.ataltane.net/jg**/. And if you have any number systems that he somehow hasn't got his hands on yet – we're sure he'd love you to send them to him at **j_gorenc@yahoo.com**.

Script of the Month

Look closely at the masthead on the cover of the magazine and you will notice fragments of a script visible through the letters of 'Conlanger.com'. Every issue the *Journal* will place a different constructed writing system behind these letters, complete with an article somewhere in the magazine giving an overview of the script itself.

This month, we see the editor – Curlyjimsam's – own conscript – that created for his language **Greater Sunian**. It is an alphabetic script, consisting of twenty-three letters representing both vowels and consonants, as follows:

'	∀	∪	⊎	A	O	Φ	⊂	+	⊆	↩	⧺
..	e	i	iː	a	o	ø	u	tʰ	s	m	n
ð	♀	ʄ	8	∧	∨	ℵ	⋒	Ⓜ	Ƴ	∪	
t	p	l	z	kʰ	v	q	j	ʋ	k	cʰ	

This alphabet is probably one of Curlyjimsam's favourites of his many self-created scripts, though he isn't entirely sure why: many of the letter forms are embarrassingly similar to their Roman alphabet counterparts (note those for /a/, /o/, /ø/, /tʰ/, /s/ and /v/ in particular) – a side effect, no doubt, of this being one of the creator's oldest still-current conscripts (albeit in a form revised from the original, especially regarding the values of the letters), dating back to July 2004 – though Curlyjimsam swears that even when the script was created the similarities weren't intentional.

The script is written right-to-left, top-to-bottom, though a lack of development in the Greater Sunian language makes the creation of extensive texts difficult (the example on the cover is, in fact, English). There are three basic punctuation marks – single, double and triple dots (<·>, <··> and <···>), used to show three lengths of pauses – as well as various other symbols which will not be detailed here. Numbers, based on an octal (base-8) system, are written using the first eight letters of an older form of the alphabet, as follows:

'	∀	∪	A	O	⊂	+	⊆
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Although it has been modified in real life as well, the alphabet also has an artificially (and retroactively) constructed 'history' dating back over 2000 years. The oldest detailed form of the script (excluding possibly the Enke script from which some of the letters are derived) is the Old Konin alphabet, as follows:

Δ	U	C	V	+	ι	Λ	⇐	⇒	Ϛ	Ϥ	Ϻ	⋔	ʃ	ʃ
ā	ī	ū	p	t	k	q	m	f	s	h	w	j	l	r

As can no doubt be recognised, the script has undergone some considerable changes in producing that used today. The Old Konin alphabet formed the basis of the Old Greater Ronan script, which was later borrowed by Old Greater Chican, the ancestor of Greater Sunian – the alphabet used for Greater Sunian is still often called 'Ronan'.

In fact, two forms of the alphabet exist today – the 'Scribe's Form', that shown above, and the more angular 'Printer's Form'. The alphabet is used for a great number of languages, with diacritics and digraphs used where necessary. In fact, the twenty-three letters are not enough to represent all of the sounds even of Greater Sunian (largely thought to be the language responsible for the alphabet's popularity), which makes use of four doubled consonant letters to show sounds not covered by the simple forms, as well as using doubled vowels to represent their long varieties. The alphabet is also the basis of the widely-used Sunian Phonetic Alphabet.

The Greater Sunian alphabet is the only one of Curlyjimsam's scripts to be converted to a usable computer font – this has, in fact, been done twice. The two fonts created (both TrueType Font files, and in Scribe's Form) are the slightly-outdated *Sunian 2005* and the currently accurate, but possibly less æsthetically-pleasing, *Sunian 2006*. Both are available from the creator (email: curlyjimsam@aol.com), but are not currently online. A comparison of the two fonts is given below.

Sunian 2005:

Sunian 2006:

The story of the writing system does not end here. Various further information on the script itself, including detail on its historical evolution, can also be acquired via email through the creator; like the fonts, this information is not presently available on any website. And who knows what developments the future will see? Curlyjimsam's work with the Greater Sunian alphabet is not finished yet.

Would you like to see your writing system featured in the *Journal*? Email a 900x200 pixel example text and enough material for at least a one-page article to **curlyjimsam@aol.com** for your chance to do so.

Estum esse al mua linga

We asked **Sectori** to produce a piece on his Romance conlang, **Carune**. Here's what he came up with.

Hi! I'm Sectori, or, if you are from the Zompist Bulletin Board, Arunas. My most developed conlang, by far, is something I started back in December 2005. It's called Carune. Carune is a Romance conlang ("romlang"), designed with no specific goal other than to not use/need accent marks or diacritics of any kind. Originally, I suspected that Carune would seem to be Spanish with some Italianesque changes. However, subsequent questions posed to various people have come up with a general consensus that the language is in fact closer to Italian grammatically, though I still think my vocabulary may be more like Spanish.

In thinking about what I should write, and some of the things that Curlyjimsam suggested, I decided I'd touch on two grammar points: nominal morphology and the derivational suffix **-tum**. Nominal morphology in Carune is more inflecting than Spanish, and some of its nominal suffixes are comparable to Italian. First of all it is worth pointing out that æsthetically in Carune I abhor double vowels, which narrows down some of the words I can have. Secondly, I like words ending in vowels. In fact, all nouns must end in a vowel, except for those in the neuter singular (which end in **-um**). Speaking of neuter singular, that's something else that makes Carune special: Carune and the other Ibero-Italic (the language family that Carune belongs to) languages retain the neuter gender from Latin, present in only a few other Romance languages. Carune's masculine nouns end in **-e** for the singular and **-i** for the plural. Feminine nouns end in **-a** for the singular and **-ae** for the plural. Neuter nouns preserve the **-um** ending from Latin, and some part of my mind gave me **-o** for the plural ending. It's just one of those things, I suppose. The derivational suffix **-tum** is similar to the past participle of a verb. However, this particular derivation is my sort of all-purpose derivation. For example, the verb **liberare** means *to liberate*, and **libertatum** means *liberty*. Then, of course, the adjective **libertate** (*liberated*), in the neuter singular form, gives us **libertatum libertatum**, the rather nonsensical *liberated liberty*, just for fun.

Now there's the who, what, where, when, why, and how: how the language happened in the first place. Who? Me. I was bored, and I decided to make a language based on something I knew about, rather than making something up. At the time, in my ignorance, I didn't know anyone had done anything like this (silly me). Where? My house, sitting in my comfortable old chair in the living room, watching television. Why? I decided it would be easier. It turns out after a massive grammar revision that I was wrong. I also thought it would be fun, which it most emphatically was. I recommend it completely to anyone who's up for the challenge. When? December 2005. I happened to be on break for the holidays, and

after Christmas I had little else to do. How? I started with subject pronouns. They're the first thing I put on the document that has first edition Carune: "**Pronomi Soggeti**". On the whole, a few changes have been made, but they're still the same old "**io**, **tu**, **ele**, **ela**, **to**, **nio**, **vo**, **eli**, **elae**". I originally had the past conditional (though now I realize I could call it the "pluperfect conditional") as a simple tense, rather than a compound of **avere** and the past participle of another verb. But as my study of Spanish continued, I started making changes, and now I think Carune is a language of its own.
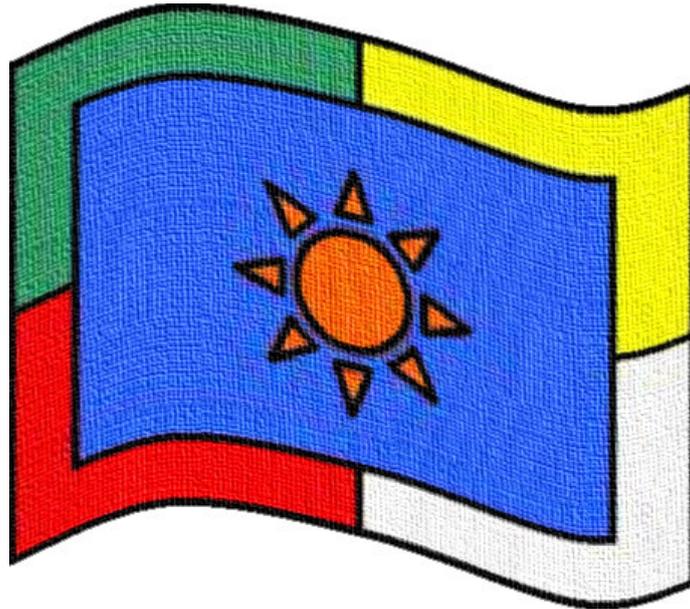
The flag of the Carune nation, which would be located in northern Italy and parts of France and Switzerland in our world. The six colours represent the different Romance-language speaking countries: orange represents Carune itself.

For those interested in Carune, here are some basic phrases that you could start using in your everyday life:

chao	hello, goodbye
benvenite	welcome
benencontrate	nice to meet you
iqualamente	and you *(response to **benencontrate**)*
lo sinto	I'm sorry *(lit. 'I regret it')*
gratiae	thanks
di nadum	you're welcome

More information about Carune and the other languages of the Ibero-Italic family may be found at wiki.frath.net/Carune. To find out about the conworld in which Carune and its speakers currently reside, you can visit wiki.frath.net/Alternate_Earth. Finally, to read about Carune's sister language, this time closer to Spanish, check out the Mònzo page on FrathWiki: wiki.frath.net/Monzo.

Changing *Scripts*

By the Editor

Scripts, like spoken languages, change over time. The purpose of this article is to outline the possibilities of change to those interested in creating their own 'conscripts' – something that seems to be painfully absent from the Internet; neither have I been able to find any information offline, though that may just be a result of not looking hard enough. Please note I have no linguistic qualification and hence am liable to get things wrong. Much of the terminology in this article I have made up myself (on occasion deviating slightly from the meaning that might be expected), not having any access to professional research into this area.

An Example of Graphological Change

For the purpose of illustrating the possibilities of script change I will here use an example that should – one would hope – be familiar to the vast majority of readers – the Roman alphabet. The question this section shall attempt to address is – how did the 23-letter alphabet of the Romans themselves evolve into the 26-letter modern lowercase alphabet used today in English and many other languages (both are shown below in case for some reason you need to refresh your memory)? (The uppercase changes are less substantial and will not be covered.) Note that this actually a rather simplified account of the changes – Roman inscriptions included serifs (omitted here) and changes of course vary depending on which font or handwriting style you happen to be paying attention to.

A B C D E F G H I K L M N O P Q R S T V X Y

?↓?

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y

The ways in which the forms of the graphemes have evolved in the last two thousand years or so can be summarised with the following six types of changes (I use the term 'component' to refer to an individual segment of a graph – that is, a part of a letter rather than the letter itself):

- **Subtraction** – the removal of components from a graph.
- **Addition** – the insertion of new components into a graph.
- **Reflection** – the 'flipping' of all or part of a graph across a certain line.
- **Distortion** – the stretching or shrinking of particular components or an entire graph.
- **Relocation** – the moving of a component to another place relative

to the remainder of the graph, or the moving of the entire graph to a new position relative to others when written.
- **Cursivation** – the 'smoothing' or 'rounding' of a graph or certain components.

The best way to illustrate these changes, of course, is to use examples – note that many letters have undergone more than one of the changes above. The individual changes did not always actually apply in the order shown; indeed, some may have occurred simultaneously within a single graph. Thus:

- <A> to <a> shows examples of both subtraction and addition, as well as distortion and cursivation. This is illustrated better in the image below:

$$A > A > ʌ > ʌ > a$$

- <B> to <b> is essentially a case of the subtraction of the upper 'arc' segment and a distortion or cursivation of the lower part.
- <C> to <c>, <O> to <o> and others show examples of a simple distortion of the entire graph.
- <D> to <d> is the best, if not only, example of reflection: the letter has undergone a 'flip' in direction, as well as gaining an ascender through addition and being subject to distortion and cursivation.
- <E> to <e> shows the addition of a segment joining the upper and lower 'bars' of the graph, and then distortion and cursivation (as shown below).

$$E > Ɛ > ɛ > e$$

- <G> to <g> is a complicated one. I think it's best described as an addition of a descender, the subtraction of the 'crossbar' and a distortion of the entire graph.

$$G > ɢ > ɡ > g$$

- <I> to <j> shows the addition of a descender and dot ('tittle'), and a distortion of the letter to make it smaller relative to other graphs.
- <M> to <m> is basically an example of cursivation and distortion, with a small segment at the top of the first horizontal stroke also gained through addition.
- <N> to <n> shows loss of the rightmost stroke, cursivation and the addition of a small stroke at the top of the initial line.
- <Q> to <q> is the best example of relocation – the 'tail' moved from crossing the main body of the letter to extending from it, as well as undergoing distortion along with the rest of the letter. A small stroke

on the rightmost line has also been gained through addition in this particular typeface.

- <R> to <r> is a drastic example of loss, as well as of distortion and the addition of a small segment at the top of the main horizontal stroke (diagram shown below).

$$R > \Gamma > r$$

- <T> to <t> can also be seen to show relocation: the crossbar moving further down the stem (and being made smaller through distortion), as well a 'tail' being gained through addition.

Other possible changes

The letters of the Roman alphabet as used in English have not experienced every type of change in plausible existence during the evolution between the two sets of graphemes shown above. Another two possibilities (there may be more) are:

- **Rotation** – the 'spinning' or an entire graph or one of its components around a fixed point, e.g. to create the schwa-symbol <ə> from <e>.
- **Angularisation** – the replacement of 'rounded' or 'smoothed' components of graphs by more angular forms, the opposite of cursivation; certain Nordic runes can be seen to have derived from letters in other alphabets (it is disputed as to which) through this change – two examples are shown below.

$$B > \text{ᛒ}$$

$$R > \text{ᚱ}$$

As well as the eight types of changes already outlined, the following can be seen as important subsets that deserve a mention:

- **Creation** of a new graph altogether, or **addition from zero** – the first graphemes must have been formed in this way.
- **Deletion** of a graph from a script, or **subtraction to zero** – e.g. Greek <Θ> (theta) was deleted in the transition to the Roman alphabet.
- **Combination addition** – the combining of two individual graphs to create a new one, e.g. <A> + <E> → <Æ> (a **ligature**; this change also involves distortion) or <T> + <H> → <TH> (a **digraph** representing a single phoneme).
- **Repetition** or **reduplication addition**: subset of combination addition, involving adding a graph to itself, e.g. <V> + <V> → <W>.
- **Graphemic split** – a grapheme, or two allophones of a grapheme, developing into two separate graphemes, e.g. Latin <V> becoming

both <u> and <v>, and <C> developing into <G> as well as retaining its older form.
- **Graphemic merge** – two separate graphemes merging with each other to form allographs of a single grapheme.

It would be possible, of course, to go even further with cutting down the number of basic changes – make cursivation a subset of distortion, or reducing all changes to deletion, subtraction or a combination of the two. However, this seems rather extreme and is not a particularly useful way of looking at things.

Why does graphological change occur?

It is difficult to say for certain what the causes of change in writing systems are, just as it is difficult to identify the causes of change in spoken languages. The main factors, to my mind, are probably:

- The desire for **ease of writing**, or **minimisation of complexity**, causing such changes as subtraction, creation (thus avoiding digraphs etc.) and cursivation and angularisation (depending on the medium of writing used). Rotation and reflection of graphemes can also aid writing in certain situations, by reducing the effort required in movement of the writing implement between letters.
- The desire for **ease of reading**, or **minimisation of similarity**, responsible for the majority of different types of changes, including some of those that also benefit ease of writing (creation, for example, can minimise the problem of two graphemes representing a single sound).

Obviously it is virtually impossible to have the 'best of both worlds' and a script that is both maximally easy to write and to read. The two factors of change therefore work to an extent in opposition to each other, though it is untrue to say that a change cannot possibly benefit both.

There are of course other possible factors of change, such as **æsthetics** – scripts are often modified for display purposes and so on. However, scripts with a purely æsthetic function can cause problems with writing and/or reading, and are unlikely to be adopted for everyday use without some modification.

Conclusion

I hope this article has been of interest, and once again I apologise for any errors I may have included in my ignorance. Nevertheless, I hope you will be able to use it when creating your own script evolution: as a source of ideas for what changes to apply, perhaps.

I intend to perform similar analyses of script change in the future (on constructed as well as natural systems) and I hope to be able to include these articles in future editions of the *Journal*.

A Language for Everyone

The **Conlanger Bulletin Board International Auxiliary Language** was begun by Tzirtzi in November 2004, and several CBB members have contributed to its development. **Aanimo**, one of these members, writes a short article on the language.

The CBB IAL was a collaborative project started on the CBB, to try to create a better international auxiliary language. The basic premise was to have everything be as generic and simple as possible, but not be so simple that all flavour was lost. (For example, voicing distinction was retained after much debate, even though there are some languages that lack it). It was eventually decided that the language would be isolating. The SOV sentence structure was decided upon.

The chart below shows the language's phoneme inventory (in X-SAMPA) and orthography. A Greek-based orthography was also created, here, however, for ease of use only Roman orthography and examples have been included.

CONSONANTS	Labial	Coronal	Dorsal
Plosive	/p b/ <p b>	/t d/ <t d>	/k g/ <k g>
Nasal	/m/ <m>	/n/ <n>	
Fricative	/f/ <f>	/s/ <s>	
Approximant		/l/ <l>	/j/ <j>

VOWELS	Front	Back
High	/i/ <i>	/u/ <u>
Low	/a/ <e>	/A/ <a>

The syllable structure is CV(C), with the only consonant clusters allowed being *(non-nasal plosive, fricative) + liquid*.

Here is an example of the IAL, a poem:

belkun dus tulu dun pi
ice on jump 1 PL
We jump on the ice

sil pi dus salde dun pi
wind PL on fly 1 PL
We fly on the wind

**fin let senu dun**
moon at laugh 1
I laugh at the moon

kan let senu jun
sun at laugh 2
You laugh at the sun

nuldef pi lek niki dun pi
star PL to skip 1 PL
We skip to the stars

Editor's Review

At a hefty two hundred and ninety-five pounds sterling, *The World Atlas of Language Structures* is probably by far the most expensive book I have ever purchased. I should very much hope, therefore, you can understand how anxious I was that it would live up to my expectations. It was a long wait last August, after reading an article on the book in the *Guardian* newspaper and ordering it soon after, before the *Atlas* finally arrived. I propped it up on my knees as best I could – it's almost as large as it is pricey – and started to read.
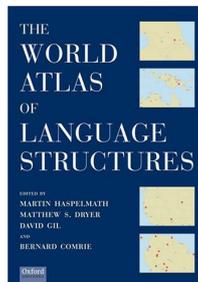
Thankfully I can say that it *was* worth the price, though if you're a bit short on cash it might be wiser to invest in something a little cheaper. The book is just what the title says – on one double-page a particular area of language (be it basic word order, number of phonemes or even the etymology of the word for *tea*) is discussed, and on the next a map illustrates the different structures used by languages around the world. It's a fascinating read for a conlanger – not only to see how common different structures are, but also in many cases to unveil possibilities that might not have occurred to one previously. And although it goes into a quite lot of detail, don't be put off by thinking it might be too complicated – most specialist terms are explained in the text. A brilliant book.

The World Atlas of Language Structures is available from both Amazon.com and Amazon.co.uk. Availability is limited.

Queen of Conscripts

Few people can have produced as many writing systems as **Serali**: she claims to have over a hundred! The *Conlanger.com Journal* takes a look.

Serali – real name Brittanie - is not sure of how long she's been making up writing systems, but she estimates it at least three to four years. This is not much compared with how long some people have been conlanging, but she has been amazingly productive, churning out conscripts at a rate of something like one every two weeks. Not only are these scripts so numerous, they also show incredible design skills – perhaps to be expected after so much practice, but remember that their creator is not yet even fifteen! Not surprising she calls them her 'babies'.
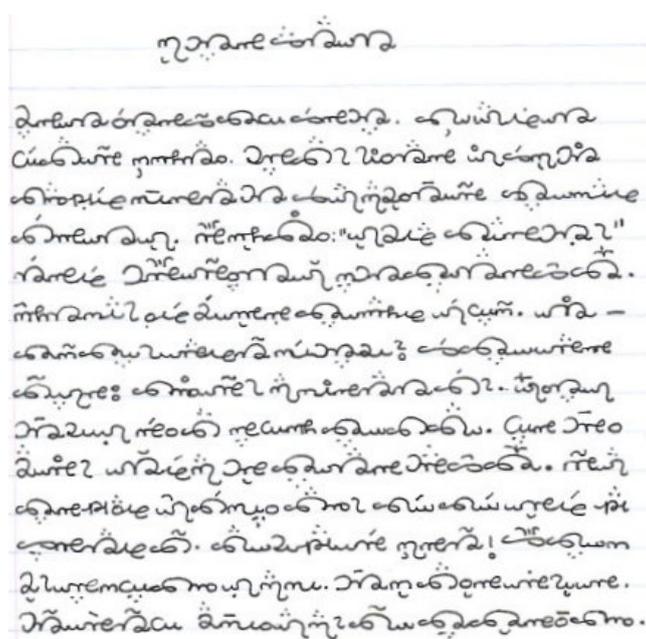
Above is an example of a text in the Seral writing system (one of the most praised), and below one in the Tirin script, which Serali unashamedly admits she based on Tolkien's Tengwar. On the next page a chart of the various letters in Tirin can be seen.

(Image removed for copyright reasons)

Serali has received a great deal of acclaim for her work, with comments including 'impressive', 'amazing', 'fantastic', 'beautiful' and – repeatedly – 'wow', which for all its brevity sums people's typical reactions up perfectly.

The final scripts we take a look at are Sidel and Taeiär (examples below). More details on these and many of Serali's other scripts can be found on her website, www.xanga.com/blue_frog88. Let's hope she continues to update for many years into the future.

Reality conlanging?

What happens when two very different conlangers are put together – virtually, at least – and given one month to complete a useable language? That's something the *Conlanger.com Journal* would like to find out …

Does four weeks of electronic communication with someone who may not necessarily agree to your ideas, in a bid to produce a working conlang by the time of the release of the next edition of the *Journal*, seem like something that might appeal to you? Come on, we can all do with a bit of challenge … If this does seem like something you might want to do, contact the editor at curlyjimsam@aol.com, making sure you include the following details:

- Your name.
- Your contact details in any online messaging services you may happen to have (email, MSN, AOL Instant Messaging, CBB/ZBB Private Messaging, etc.).
- Your preferred style of conlangs (*a priori*, natlang-derived, auxlangs, etc.).
- Some detail on how you go about creating a language (where do you start? what next? what sort of detail do you go into?).
- Links to examples of previous projects, completed or otherwise.

By sending such an email, you are certifying that, if chosen:

- You agree to take part.
- You are able to take part between 1:00 am Saturday June 24th 2006 and 11:00 pm Sunday July 23rd 2006 (GMT).
- You agree to your contact details being given to anyone else who might also be chosen.
- You will work collaboratively with your partner to the best of your collective ability to produce as detailed a language as possible (the language must be the work of both partners to a fairly equal extent, and both must agree on any details that form part of the final submission).
- You agree to submit details of any and all conversations held between you and your partner between the dates given above regarding the development of the language for possible publication in the *Conlanger.com Journal*.
- You agree to maintain a diary or weblog of your private feelings regarding the project, extracts of which may be published in the *Conlanger.com Journal*.
- You agree to the publication of the finished project (the version current at 11:00pm (GMT) on Sunday July 23rd 2006) in the

Conlanger.com Journal.

So, how does this work? Basically, the two conlangers deemed to be most radically different or otherwise likely to produce the most 'entertainment' for readers (in the style of reality television) in the eyes of the *Journal*'s editorship will be chosen to be given the challenge of producing a conlang – together. The two conlangers chosen will be notified in time for a start date of June 24th, and then given a month to work together – all communication and private thoughts being recorded for possible future publication – to produce a collaborative language. The two chosen will be announced in the July edition of the *Journal* and the finished project published in the August edition. And let's hope we can see just how emotional making up languages can get …

Conlang *Challenge*

Set by Sectori

This month's challenge is to create a language with a minimalist phonology. There are people who like to include every possible phoneme in their language, and people who like to include massive allophony. This challenge is neither. Each participant must choose at most nine phonemes, including no more than three vowels and no more than six consonants; syllable structure (C)V. That's as detailed as their phonology can get: no allophones are permitted. And then – make a conlang out of it. All languages must be submitted to the Editor (curlyjimsam@aol.com) by June 24th for judging. The winner will be included in the next edition.

Poll

Should the *Journal* include lessons in natlangs or conlangs, or both? Please send your opinions to the Editor at curlyjimsam@aol.com by June 24th. The results will be published in the July edition, and then … well, we'll see. You decide.

Got anything else you'd like us to know about? We're happy to receive emails on any conlanging- or conworlding-related subject, as well as any comments on the *Journal* itself.

Wordplay
The Conlanger's Crossword
Set by Graig
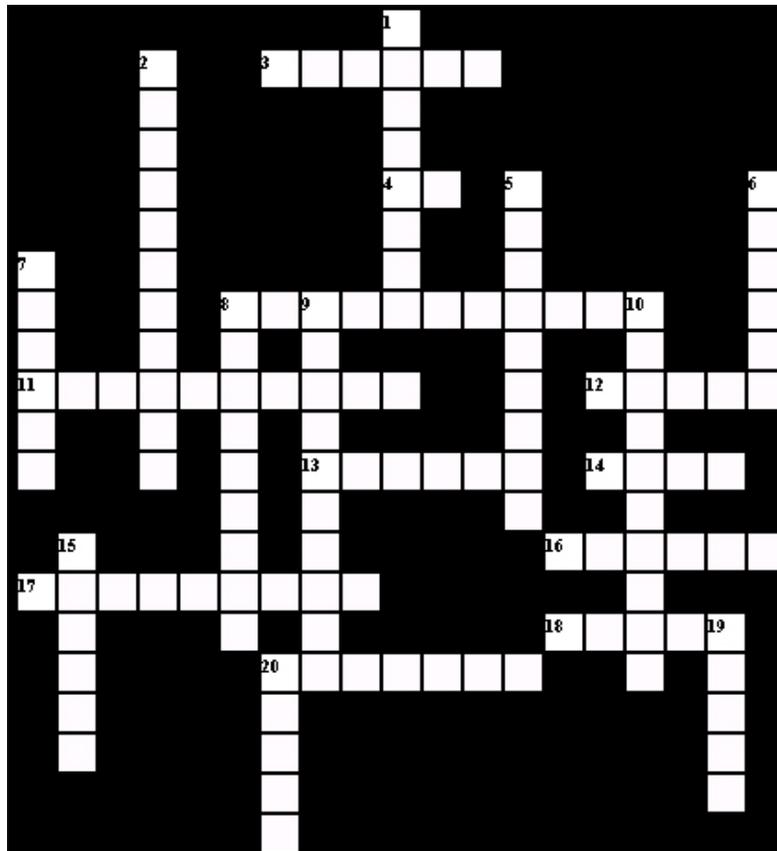
CLUES

Across

3. Subject plus predicate
4. Towards etymology of Boustrophedon
8. Means of communication
11. Keeps clusters out
12. Unwitting instigator
13. Arguably including Mongolian and Korean
14. Minimal ____
16. A word 'bound' to a word
17. By way of a homage to our founding father
18. Aware object
20. All Spanish tables are

Down

1. From the lungs
2. Hairy study, 'most cited' namesake
5. ____ vs. Syntax
6. Isolated in Spain
7. Intervocalically ____
8. Inherent features marked again
9. Used by Wangkumara
10. R-ish
15. Complete contextuality
19. Rhetorical play on words
20. Stress of a sentence

Solution in next issue.