



Erekett-Aramansch ***Featured Script***

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

Yuiyo: featured language.

ConCommentary: a spotlight on Solresol.

Arêndron: behind the scenes on its ongoing revision.

The Conlanger.com Journal
Issue 7
April/May 2007

Publication hosted on Conlanger.com. Domain property of Aszev.
All original content (images and text) and constructed language/script
examples copyright © their respective creators.
All non-credited content copyright © the Editor (Curlyjimsam). Cover image (p.
1) based on artwork by Rose Immortal.
Permission must be sought from the relevant parties before reproducing any
part of this publication.

Contents

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

Page 4: The Editor writes ...

Curlyjimsam's introduction.

Page 5: Featured Conlang – Yuiyo

Klaivas writes about his current main project.

Page 10: Editor's Script Pick

An article by Rose Immortal on her Ereket-Aramansch script, selected for inclusion in this issue by the Editor.

Page 15: ConCommentary

Rik Roots covers Solresol in his column.

Page 17: Arêndron – Behind the Scenes

Nuntar details the revision of his primary constructed language.

Page 19 (lower): Conlangers' Crossword – Answers

The solution to last issue's puzzle.

The Editor writes ...

Dear readers,

This issue of the *Journal* has suffered from an unusual affliction: too much in terms of submissions. Originally I intended to include at least two further articles, but lengthy language and script features have pushed the page count up considerably, and I've decided it makes most sense in the long term to publish this issue of the magazine without these extra pieces.

Granted, nineteen pages is not particularly lengthy for the publication: for Issues 1-6, the average length has been twenty-one pages. However, neither is it overly short (two issues so far have been of the same length or less), and I feel it seems fit to keep any other articles back an issue. This way, I have some guaranteed content for Issue 8 even if I meet difficulties in other areas. The articles in question include the next instalment of *Colin the Conlanger* and the third part in Sectori's 'On Cases' series – apologies to anyone whose been particularly awaiting these, but I hope you can see my reasoning behind holding them back. I've also got a couple of ideas for my own regular commentary pieces, a competition and something on the first CBB Reconstruction Relay, all of which I hope to be able to put in.

As to what I *have*, this time around, decided to include, there are the aforementioned lengthy conlang and script features – by Klaivas on his Yuiyo language and Rose Immortal on her Ereket-Aramansch alphabet. There's also the regular instalment of Rik Root's column taken from his highly interesting blog, and finally an article by Nuntar in which he covers revising his Arëndron. The answers to last issue's crossword are also included. It's only a small number of articles, admittedly, but still quite a lot in terms of reading matter. I certainly found all four articles very interesting to read, and I hope you will also.

Can I also make yet another plea for people to carry on submitting articles; just because this issue wasn't a problem (indeed, I think it's probably been the least work I've had since starting the magazine), it doesn't mean the next one won't be any different. The *Journal* relies on contributions from as many people as possible, and in many ways I think the less I have to write the better – this is a publication for Conlanger.com, not Curlyjimsam.com (which, before you try it, doesn't exist – yet), and as such ought I think to contain a pretty wide-ranging set of opinions. Don't assume that because a lot of other people seem to be contributing at the moment that there won't be any need or use for something from you in future. The next edition is due to mark the first anniversary of the magazine, and the higher the quality of the issue the better. But before you worry too much about that, I urge you to enjoy what's in store in this edition first.

Until next time,



Curlyjimsam,
April 2007.

Featured Conlang – Yuiyo

By Clive 'Klaivas' Newstead.

Yuiyo's background

Yuiyo (natively *Diúedaug*, pronounced /'jø.jəu/) must be my googolplexth conlang, but it is also the one I've got furthest with, and the one which has lasted longer than the others ... and it's still going! Started in November 2006 after the death of Ewari (my previous language), Yuiyo has come quite far in all its insanity, to the point where I am semi-regularly writing a blog (diuedaug.com/plotsvo) in it, and I was kindly asked to write an article about the language for the *Conlanger.com Journal*!

Making the language

Though short, the history of the language is long enough to talk about here. It started when one of my old languages died. Between its death and the creation of Yuiyo, I experimented with many different conlangs, and I studied natural languages from all over the globe – both Indo-European and non-IE. This not only gave me several ideas, it also improved my understanding of linguistics and, especially, semantic roles and different ways of looking at concepts and situations. This way of thinking is key to the creation of Yuiyo. In the beginning, Yuiyo started with me sitting in front of an IPA chart, circling the POAs I wanted to take phonemes from. I also scribbled down a couple of very basic syntax trees, giving me some brief detail on word order, and I put together a few sample sentences so that I knew the direction I was going in. After a week or two I became very dissatisfied with the phonology, as it was going way over the top with the length distinction, so I decided to bomb it with sound changes (instead of giving up and starting a new language, as I may have done previously). I used these sound changes to mould the existing, quite boring phonology into one which I found aesthetically pleasing and amply naturalistic. This all happened with a catch: I made no changes to the orthography of the language. This caused very strange word pairs, such as one which changes a vowel at the start of the word by adding a silent 'g' to the end of it (*túolo* /'ta.lu/ vs. *túolog* /'tu.lu/).

After the phonology was more or less complete, I did much more work on the morphosyntax. This was helped by a craze of translation challenges on the ZBB, and it made my vocabulary increase by eightfold. I decided from the start that I didn't want a language with declensions, as is found almost everywhere these days, but I certainly didn't want an isolating language. I tackled this by making the language quite unconventionally (for me, at least). It started with two sheets of A4 paper – a long list of vocabulary on one, and a list of various grammatical features and a hellishly long list of affixes on the other. To this day, those sheets contain information which I don't have anywhere else, so if I lose them I'll be doomed!

Disappointingly to some, but certainly not to me, Yuiyo doesn't run alongside a conworld of any sort. This is for several reasons: for one, I don't

have nearly enough time or patience to develop a conworld into anything worth making. I also don't want one because it would tempt me to create other language projects, and my tendency for distraction is too great to risk to detract my attention from Yuiyo. On top of that, I want Yuiyo to be much more 'real' and personal to me, and creating a conworld would make it more imaginary and fantasised.

My personality is put into Yuiyo in many places, and the first and most obvious (at least to me) place for this is in its vocabulary. Due to my numeric synaesthesia (being able to 'see' things as numbers), it has made it easy for me to be able to create vocabulary which relates to the same numbers as the numbers I see when thinking about the object, sound or even smell, that I'm trying to create a word for. A random example of this is *núil*, the Yuiyo word for 'rock'. For this, I thought of a rock and the number 32 came to my mind, and I picked a series of sounds based on Yuiyo's old phonology (i.e. a word) to match the number. I enjoy making vocabulary in this way because it puts a bit of me into my conlangs, and really does bring a language from within me. It also makes the words much easier to memorise! Because I use the old phonology, the evolved words often sound very different to the original word I imagined in my head, but I like it this way because it gives the language a feel of development, even if nothing is happening.

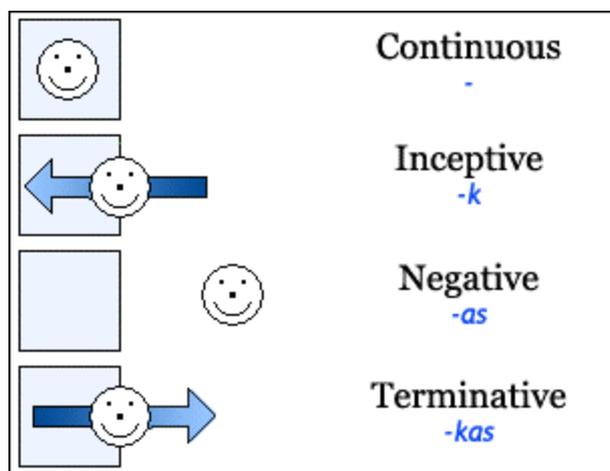
Much of the vocabulary is also generated by onomatopoeia. These are generally animals (for example *haurur*, 'dog', and *emmi*, 'cow'), but onomatopoeia can also be used for many other things, such as laughter (*mli*), day (*makka*, relating to crows squawking in the morning) and various others which sound can be processed into vocabulary for via onomatopoeia. No conlang of mine would be complete without derivational morphology, of course, but this isn't nearly as developed as I hope it would be at this stage. It's also worth mentioning at this stage, for your amusement, that Yuiyo has two separate words for a penis; one for a flaccid penis and one for an erect one. It's not as ridiculous as it sounds... think of how many words English has!

Some grammar

One of the most notable features of Yuiyo is its heavy use of affixes. Affixes can be crammed onto almost any Yuiyo word like there's no tomorrow, each with a different meaning, to help clarify exactly what it is you're trying to say. Let's take the word *mno* 'speak'. Add some various tense markers to this and you can get *mmokas* ('finish speaking'). Add the prefix *et-* to this and it becomes 'one who is finishing speaking'. Add the prefix *na-* as a causative, the prefix *se-* as a negative inceptive, the suffix *-ong* as a hedge, another agent marker *et-*, a supervisor marker *ag-* and a demonstrative marker *s-* and you get *sagetsenaetmmokasong* /sʌ.ʒʌdʒ.ʃʌ.nʌ.jʌdʒ.ɹmu.'kʌ.zʌŋ/, roughly meaning 'that person who supervises someone who becomes one who causes people who are about to finishing speaking to exist'. A quite insane example, I know, and probably one which would never be used, but it goes to show what is possible if insanity and morphology work together.

The Yuiyo verbs have a system of tense and aspect which took quite a while to think up (though looking back on it, I don't know why it took so long). It has four tenses: the present tense, the past tense, the future tense and the iterative tense. These come pretty much as is, being an action happening

(respectively) now, in the past, in the future and generally; however there are also four aspects to alter their meanings. There is the continuous aspect, where the action is happening at that specific time; the inceptive aspect, where the action is beginning to happen, or has just begun; the negative 'aspect', where the action is not happening; and the terminative aspect, where the action is ending or has just ended. These make it clear exactly when an action is said to have happened. Here's a diagram to show the aspects:



You'll notice that there are only two suffixes used here: *-k* and *-as*. The *-k* suffix is used when there is movement to or from doing an action, i.e. if it is starting or stopping, and the *-as* suffix reverses the other affix (or lack thereof). These differences can be very subtle, but make a big difference to the meaning of the sentence. Take this pair of answers, for example:

- Question:** **Dese om da -s?** /'ɪʃɪ wam dæʃ/
be.PST LOC INTERR 2ND Where are you?
- Answer 1:** **lulétse aliaral -t** /'jɒlɪdʒʃɪ ʃalʃɹɹalt/
go.PST shop.ALL 1ST I was going to the shop (and I was on my way)
- Answer 2:** **lulétsek aliaral -t** /'jɒlɪdʒʃɪk ʃalʃɹɹalt/
go.PST.INCP shop.ALL 1ST I was going to the shop (and I was just leaving)

One of the bittersweet things I love and hate about Yuiyo is the active/passive voice distinction in the verbs, with the active voice being assumed by default (with a few exceptions). It's great because it allows me to say a great deal more things with half the vocabulary, but it's a bastard for me to get my head around. Using the example above, I can show an example of the active/passive voice distinction:

- Answer 3:** **Luiulétse aliaral -t** /lo'jɒlɪdʒʃɪ ʃalʃɹɹalt/
PSV.go.PST shop.ALL 1ST I was being taken to the shop

I won't bore you with more examples of this, not just because the

language is still very much in its development stages, but also because I don't want to reveal too many 'secrets' about the language before I release the grammar I'm currently working on, which you will be able to preview soon enough.

Another part of Yuiyo which I spent some time thinking about was the number system. I was bored of making languages which had the good ol' 'singular vs. plural, end of' system, and I wanted something more complex. With logic being kept in mind, I decided to distinguish five numbers: nullar, singular, general plural, partitive plural and exhaustive plural. The nullar and singular can go without explanation, as it is reasonably obvious what they do. The plurals, however, are different. The general plural can be used for anything which there is more than one of, and this applies to anything and everything, but this can be a little ambiguous, which is where the other two plurals come in. The partitive plural is used to express that there is more than one of something, but less than all of them. In the sentence 'I am hunting for spiders', for example, 'spiders' would use the partitive plural, unless your intention was to wipe out all the spiders in the given area. If this were the case, the exhaustive plural would be used, which is used to talk about *all* of something. This also includes words like *kaól* "everyone", which is formed by adding the exhaustive plural to the 3rd person pronoun. This five-way distinction of number allows me to make distinctions such as this:

Nul.	D' om sá io-t órdoas.	There is <u>no</u> wine in my glass.
Sg.	D' om sá io-t órdo.	There is wine in my glass (and my glass is full).
GPI.	D' om sá io-t órdoo.	There is <u>too much</u> wine in my glass.
PPI.	D' om sá io-t órdoós.	There is <u>some</u> wine in my glass (unspecified amount).
EPI.	D' om sá io-t órdoól.	<u>All the</u> wine is in my glass.

The Script

The Yuiyo script took up quite a lot of my time. The creation of the script itself took a week or so, but most of my time was spent on creating a font and various other elements of the script which require much more thought than just creating glyphs. A brief outline of the script is as follows:

There are letters for each consonant (in terms of Old Yuiyo's phonology), and diacritics for the vowels. Though this may sound like your average boring old conscript, it has various additions to make it more interesting. The first of which is, obviously, the sound changes. The Latin transliteration is one-to-one with the Yuiyo transcription, meaning that each Yuiyo letter corresponds to its Latin counterpart. The main features that I enjoy about the Yuiyo script, however, are its compound system and its logography system.

The basic letters for Yuiyo are derived from pictures of nouns whose words begin with that letter. Take, for example, the letter  (S). This letter's name is *súeva*, which is the word for 'person'. Historically the letter would have been a drawn person, but it evolved to show only the legs, creating today's letter . Some letters were less developed than this, for example, the letter  (G; small form: ) , which still looks similar to that which its historic

version would have looked like, and hasn't changed much. For the curious, this is the letter's name is *gau*, meaning 'spider'. The vowels came later in the script's history, so have no particular origin other than that they were created to represent vowel sounds! They are written as diacritics over the letter, and can also be accompanied by a long vowel diacritic.

Each letter has a large form (when no vowels are used), a small form (when it has a vowel after) and a miniscule form (for use in compound glyphs). The compound system was one of my favourite parts to do. Though it took me a while to think up, it ended up being much simpler than I thought. Each compound glyph has seven 'consonant slots', with vowels unrepresented. The glyphs are mostly used for proper nouns, but can be used for any word with more than three consonants (as is often used for artistic purposes in book titles or shop names, for example). An example of this is the glyph for 'Yuiyo' ('Diúedaug') itself:



Written in the Yuiyo script normally, this word is $\approx \sim \approx \sim \approx \sim \approx$ (di ú e da u g). This means that there are 6 consonants: \approx , \sim , \approx , \sim , \approx , \sim , and they are put in order, starting at the top-left, working down, then finishing at the bottom-right, to form the finalised glyph. Unfortunately there isn't any support for these compound glyphs in the Yuiyo font just yet, so in Yuiyo texts these glyphs aren't used.

The final feature of the script that I want to talk about is the logography. A few commonly-used affixes and words are often represented by single letters, instead of being written by their respective letter-for-letter counterparts. As with the single letters, these letters also derive from the meaning of the words they represent. An example of this is the letter δ . This represents the word *ió*, which is a possessive preposition, and it derives from a picture of a sack or bag. The logographic consonants can have more than one reading, though, such as the letter \dagger . This represents the copula (*de*, 'to be'), and the topicalisation marker (which can be *-i* or *-s*, depending on position). This causes some ambiguity in readings to come up, but it is usually obvious by context.

And this is where I leave you! I have already gone well over the 1000 words asked of me. Yuiyo has been a lot of fun to make, and there is still a very long way to go with it. In the near future, a grammar will be released (of which, forty-two pages are done so far), and a website (www.diuedaug.com) is under construction. The language itself is taking shape and evolving by the day, and I hope it inspires and that you get as much out of it as I have. Enjoy!

Readers who wish to suggest their own or another's conlang as a feature in the Journal should contact the Editor by email at curlyjimsam@aol.com.

Editor's Script Pick

The Editor writes: When Rose Immortal put forward her Erekett-Aramansch script as a possible feature for the Journal, I have to admit I was somewhat impressed by the detailed available. The piece which follows is the result of my request for her to write an article on the alphabet as my Editor's Script Pick for April/May.

Conlang History

Erekett-Aramansch is the conscript designed for the Erekett family of languages in my novel *The Way of the Shadow Blade*. The first question likely to come to an observer's mind is, why the resemblance in phonology between Aramansch and German? The name of the language itself suggests a connection to the Germanic language family with the '-sch' suffix. To understand the reason behind the similarities, it is important to understand the structure of the multiverse of which Erekjaht – and our Earth – are a part. As with C.S. Lewis' *Chronicles of Narnia* concept, *The Way of the Shadow Blade* postulates not just one world but a multiverse of worlds under a single Creator. Erekjaht, however, is so similar to Earth that at times there is an interchange – most often subconscious – between the two.

Araman in particular exists in a geographic area similar to Germany of Earth. On occasions when natives of either country have developed a sensitivity to the other world, it has caused linguistic developments to occur in parallel in a sort of 'linguistic bleed' from one world to the other. Therefore, the native languages of both countries have similar sound sets as well as manners of ordering one's thoughts. Occasionally, words in both worlds occasionally show similarities that seem to be more than coincidence. More often than not, due to characteristics of Erekjaht, the linguistic bleed moves from our world into Erekjaht. However, on occasion certain features from the Erekett languages seem to have bled into our world – though oddly enough not into the Germanic languages. (It may be that the characteristic '-k' / '-ik' / '-ek' plural endings of Aramansch and their corresponding adjectival endings led to this unique, isolating characteristic of the Basque language that eludes linguists' explanations to this day!)

Development and Cultural Significance

The Erekett tribes, the ancestors of the Aramansch, first started writing by carving on trees, then stone obelisks. Over time, the Erekett priesthood began keeping records on hides and parchments to maintain prophecies and revelations, and eventually historical chronicles. By this time, they were so thoroughly used to writing in columns that it never occurred to them to write in any other direction. It is interesting to note, though, that while scrolls are written such that they would unroll lengthwise rather than vertical, that by the time at which *Shadow Blade* takes place books are bound in the fashion Americans and Europeans would expect. This is for the simple, practical

reason that it would be inconvenient to have some columns of writing on the 'upper' page significantly further away than those on the 'lower', as would occur if the book was bound at its top instead of on the left.

The Aramansch, as well as the other Erekett-descended nations, hold a fierce attachment to their language and alphabet owing to the efforts of the Seratic Empire to forcibly destroy their sense of pride in both during the days when they ruled over Erekett territories. Unlike Earth's corresponding Germanic tribes, however, the Erekett peoples maintained a much greater degree of political and cultural organization after overthrowing the Empire itself. Part of this owes to the divine choice of the Erekett language as one of the four in which the Holy Scriptures were revealed – in fact, this event is held by Aramansch historians to be one of the triggers of the Erekett uprising.

Despite the fact that Seratic was later found to be another of the four selected, the Erekett tribes deliberately expunged the influence of the Seratic alphabet and language, opting instead for their own writing system: for centuries thereafter, writings in the old imperial tongue were required by royal decree to either be translated into Aramansch or destroyed forever, and to speak Seratic in the Aramansch courts was a crime punishable by death. While these laws have been relaxed in the current century, an insult to the sound of the guttural Aramansch language is still considered a dueling matter by many.

Orthography and Punctuation

It should be noted that the English orthography for Aramansch has been designed so that readers of *The Way of the Shadow Blade* who have very little or no foreign-language experience can quickly get a grasp of what the Aramansch language sounds like; this overriding consideration means a slightly less 'precise' English transliteration – including the potentially controversial use of the oft-derided apostrophe. While scorned by many conlangers as a means of disguising linguistic weaknesses, if the ease of reading Aramansch draws others into learning more about natlangs, conlangs, and someday constructing languages of their own, I strongly believe it to be a price worth paying.

In figure 1 (p. 9): the first column is the Erekett-Aramansch letter, the second is how I transliterate it in my novel, the third is how a German might transliterate it, and the fourth is the name that the Aramansch give to the letter (written so that a monolingual English speaker could properly sound the name out). In general, Aramansch words are to be pronounced exactly as written; the spoken language has had far less time to drift away from the written system than has English or even German, and the cultural ascendancy of Aramansch has further shielded the language from outside influences.

Aramansch letter names mean nothing unless by coincidence; they only name the sound. To some extent the Aramansch have tried to keep similar-sounding letters from being named alike ('mah' and 'neh') but it doesn't always work ('beh' and 'peh'). The character of 'ah-*nalad*' is an example of how the Aramansch handle long vowels. '*Nalad*' or 'long' vowels are possible for any other vowel and are created the same way. Diphthongs may be made by combining the vowels here (example: 'oj' for the German 'eu').



𐌆	a	a	ah	𐌎	n	n	neh
𐌇	ah	ah, aa	ah-nalad	𐌏	o	o	oh
𐌈	ae	ä	ät (aet)	𐌐	oe	ö	öt (oet)
𐌉	au	au	ow	𐌑	p	p	peh
𐌊	b	b	beh	𐌒	r	r (guttural in Araman)	reh
𐌋	ch	ch	ácheh	𐌓	s	"s" not pronounced "z"	sah
𐌌	d	d	deh	𐌔	sch	sch, "s" before "p" and "t"	shah
𐌍	e	e	eh	𐌕	t	t	TEH
𐌎	ei	ei	ei	𐌖	u	u	ooh
𐌏	f	f	fah	𐌗	ue	ü, y	üt (uet)
𐌐	g	g	geh	𐌘	v	w	veh
𐌑	h	h	ha	𐌙	x	x	ahks
𐌒	i	i	iht	𐌚	ts	z	tseh
𐌓	ie	ie	ee	𐌛	tch	tsch	chah
𐌔	j	j	yah	𐌜	z	English "z"	zeh
𐌕	k	k	kah				
𐌖	l	l	lah				
𐌗	m	m	mah				

Fig. 1

𐌛	0	𐌛	Brackets a sentence
𐌜	1	𐌜	Brackets an exclamation or command
𐌝	2	𐌝	Brackets a question
𐌞	3	𐌞	Brackets quotes
𐌟	4	𐌟	Brackets used where a proper noun heads off or ends a quote
𐌠	5	𐌠	Brackets a proper noun
𐌡	6	𐌡	Apostrophe used to separate case prefixes from their following nouns
𐌢	7	𐌢	Accent mark (rarely used)
𐌣	8		
𐌤	9		

Fig. 2

Aramansch numbers (Figure 2) are written vertically in the same fashion as words. The punctuation shown here is the only kind that exists in Aramansch. Paired symbols occur at the beginning and end of the marked word or phrase. 'Proper nouns' are defined in the same way as English; adjectives coming from these proper nouns are not marked. Quote marks appear inside the sentence, exclamation, and question marks. The quote/proper noun mark only occurs where a proper noun is at the beginning or end of a sentence; the combined mark only occurs on the end of the sentence where the proper noun occurs.



The existence of the ‘apostrophe’ mark indicates that Aramansch case prefixes may at some time have been separate words, perhaps co-opted to serve as case markers due to an instance of linguistic bleed from Earth’s Indo-European language family. This mark is not used under any other circumstances in Aramansch writing. It is debatable whether this mark will continue to exist in future centuries, as the Aramansch begin to consider the case prefixes as part of the nouns themselves. For the time being, at least, it appears the Aramansch apostrophe will remain in place to prevent confusion with words beginning with the same sounds at the case prefixes.

However, in the English transliteration, the apostrophe must serve one more function: to separate letter combinations that could mislead a monolingual English-speaking reader. These fall into two categories: vowel combinations that are not to be treated as diphthongs (such as in the word *esrukei'ek*) and consonant clusters that could appear to signify sounds that do not exist in Aramansch (such as the ‘th’ sound, leading to the spelling *Kurat'hafje*).

Foreign-Language Transliteration and Variations

Other languages besides Aramansch can be written with the Erekett-Aramansch alphabet; perhaps the most obvious example is our world’s German (Figure 3). This sample of transliterated German comes from Schiller’s poem *An die Freude*, famously used in Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony. It should be noted that the doubled consonants seen here are not used in writing Aramansch.)

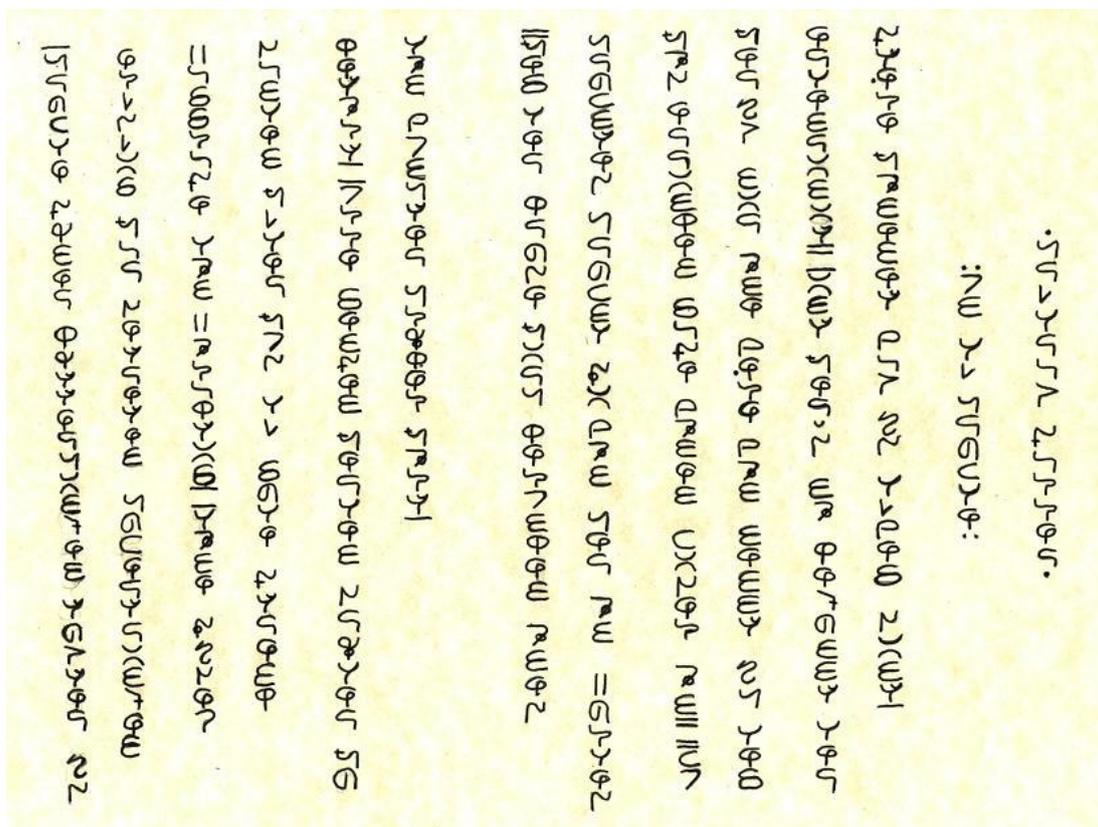


Fig. 3

However, the Aramansch also use their own script to transliterate foreign languages in their own world, where one script has yet to reign supreme as the Latin alphabet does in our own. For instance, in coping with Reúhel, a language in their world that contains sounds such as /θ/, /ð/, and /ʒ/, the Aramansch translate these using a doubled 's', 'z', and 'sch' respectively.

The Ereket-Aramansch alphabet seen in this article is the 'everyday' form used by schoolchildren, accountants, merchants and others who use writing on an everyday, non-formal basis. Another form, far more ornate, but similar enough to the 'everyday' writing to be easily comprehensible without additional schooling, is used for books and other scholarly or religious publications. More formal correspondence is done in a cursive script not covered in this article. It is recommended to those unfamiliar with the Ereket-Aramansch alphabet to learn the everyday forms first and only then to learn the cursive script, as unless one interacts with noble, diplomatic, and high-ranking circles on a regular basis, it is not necessary.

The image on the cover of this issue shows the flag of the Allied Kingdoms of Araman and standard of the High King of Holautren (left) and an Aramansch war medal (right), both reproduced below. The text on the flag reads Eischevak Kaetabrechek hau le'Araman, 'Allied Kingdoms of Araman' in English. On the medal, the writing on the left column reads Nohltikorkaft te le'Keilin Ahndochar Moersusei ('Order of the Keilin Ahndochar Moersusei'), and the right column reads Uehatgaltan ma te ge'Aurahn Heivald voer Erchandemur ('By Decree of King Heivald of Erchandemur'). 'Keilin' is a title similar to 'Saint', but without the intercessory powers ascribed to saints by Catholic and Orthodox traditions.

More information on the Aramansch language and the world in which it is located can be found at Rose Immortal's website at minstrel.ayreon.sheezyart.com.



Flag of the Allied Kingdoms of Araman and standard of the High King of Holautren.



ConCommentary

Rik Roots's column.

Conlang Spotlight: Solresol

Originally posted at rikfiles.blogspot.com on December 13th, 2005; adapted.

The subject of this article will be Solresol, which stood at No. 10 in the 2005 Top 200 Conlangs List on www.langmaker.com. The best article I've read to date on Solresol comes courtesy of Paul Collins writing in *Fortean Times* (www.forteanimes.com/articles/145_solresol.shtml), and other articles are available by typing 'solresol' into Google.

A conlang, in my opinion, cannot be separated from the conlanger who devised it. One is a part of the other, even in the most commercial of products. For those rare conlangs that survive the death of their creators, there may be opportunities for supporters to imprint some of their own hopes and desires into the language, but the core language remains the coded thoughts and desires of that creator.

So what of Solresol's creator? Jean Francois Sudre was French, born in the last, stuttering years of the French monarchy before the revolution washed the streets of Paris in blood. Sometime between Napoleon Bonaparte's final exile to St. Helena and Sudre's arrival in Paris (in 1822), our hero had started thinking about communication and language in a different way to other people – though given that he didn't arrive in Paris until the age of thirty-five his fascination may well have started much earlier. Anecdotal evidence from many conlangers seems to indicate that many catch the conlanging bug around the same time as they catch puberty – which also seems to be the time when children lose the ability to pick up languages easily. If so, then it is possible that Sudre's fascination with conlanging can be dated back to a time in French history when everything was changing: measurements, institutions, rights and freedoms – even the calendar for four years or so. If the world was changing, then why not language itself?

Sudre studied music at the Paris Conservatory and later became a music teacher. While at the Conservatory the first glimmerings of the conlang madness in our hero began to emerge into the public domain. Sudre developed a code – not tied to his native French language but rather to the letters of the Latin alphabet – which could be played on musical instruments. Tonal in form, this invention demonstrated its ability to pass messages across greater distances than the human voice could achieve. This attracted the attention of the French military, and led to Sudre developing another code – the *Telephonie* – for their use.

But codes aren't conlanging. Solresol took its time to emerge from Sudre's mind, and made its first tentative steps in the world around the end of the 1820s. Much of its inventor's remaining life was dedicated to perfecting the language, and promoting it's use as a universal language.



So there's the potted history of Solresol, the first of many attempts to devise an effective International Auxillary Language (IAL) during the nineteenth century. But how does it perform as a conlang? And how is it presented today?

The best place to view the conlang on the web is probably the Solresol webpage (www.ptialaska.net/~srice/solresol/intro.htm) maintained by Stephen L. Rice (though that page hasn't been updated since 1997). This page links to an HTML-ified version of Boleslas Gajewski's *Solresol grammar* published in 1902, offered both in the original French and an English translation. There are also links to some dictionaries and other resources relating to the conlang. The website is more than adequate for its purpose, simple in layout and free of unnecessary images. It is also small enough not to need a comprehensive sitemap or navigation system. The original book opens as a single webpage. If I have one criticism it would be that the page has not been updated for so many years – a link to more recent articles on Solresol (such as the FT article) would have been very welcome.

The conlang itself remains unique in many of its features. I've always been fascinated by the number of ways Sudre devised for communicating the language: it can be spoken, played on a musical instrument, semaphored, displayed on flags, written in Latin and in its own alphabet, and even painted in stripes of colour! This is entirely possible because the language limits itself to just 7 constituent 'letters'.

Also impressive is the systematic way Sudre tackled the problem of devising words for the language. Words of one, two and three 'letters' are used for the *structural* parts of the language, and for common words. Most of the rest of the words are of four syllables and are divided into groups according to the first letter of the word – '*The class of DO belongs to man, to his faculties, to his good qualities and to food*', '*The words beginning with FA are set apart for the country, agriculture, war, the sea, and travel*' etc.

There are, in my view, difficulties with the language. The method chosen to distinguish various parts of speech by means of accenting the first, second, third or last 'letter' reads as very messy, especially when tied in to the shenanigans to differentiate masculine from feminine nouns, and plurals. It must work in some way as Sudre demonstrated the conlang in public on many occasions and managed to gather a large number of supporters (and speakers?) during his lifetime, but without comprehensive audio or visual examples it's difficult to see how the system pulls itself together.

And in the end, Solresol wasn't up to the job its creator intended for it. Other people developed other IALs which, either through design or better marketing, outperformed and outcompeted it. The conlang survived its creator by no more than forty odd years, by which time its supporters could probably fit into the proverbial telephone box. Only the books remain, and a few stattered references to the endeavour across the wastes of the Internet.

ConCommentary is a regular column by conlanger Rik Roots, with articles taken from his blog ('The Rik Files') at rikfiles.blogspot.com. Rik would welcome your take on his opinions; if there is anything in his articles readers would like to comment on they are invited to email the Editor at curlyjimsam@aol.com.

Arêndron – Behind the Scenes

Nuntar describes the process of revising his main conlang.

Many of you may already be familiar with Arêndron, a language that has been on the Web for over three years now. Around January of last year, I decided to scrap everything I'd done on the language so far and start again with a revised version, which I've slowly been building up on the Arêndron site (www.geocities.com/zarathustra47/Arendron.html). I highly recommend taking a look; I've now got most of the phonology, morphology and syntax of the new version finalised, and I have to say I'm pleased with it.

I'd like to talk about why I decided to restart the language and what it's involved. It wasn't an easy decision to make, as I'd done a lot of work up to that point, including building a 1500-word lexicon and a syntax that was complex enough to handle anything I could throw at it. However, the main reason I wasn't satisfied was that in many ways the language seemed cumbersome and unnatural. This was, I think, largely because of the way I'd built it adding details as I thought of them, without having an overall picture in mind. For example, in the verbal morphology, I worked out the basic set of person/number endings first, then added tense, then added (or tried to add) the passive. This process ended up with endings like *-naghrat* for the fourth person plural past passive, as in *khôsnaghrat* 'they have been broken', from *-an* (plural) + *-agh* (fourth person) + *-ar* (passive) + *-at* (past), with a couple of elisions. But – that's fine for a verb like *khôs-*, but what do you do with verbs like *tump-* ('to stop') whose stem ends in two consonants? Since **tumpnaghrat* would contain an illegal cluster /mpn/, while **tumpanaghrat* would violate the equally fundamental rule that the stress cannot migrate as far back as the fourth-last syllable, there wasn't really a good answer. In the end, I ended up with a nightmarish list of exceptions and sub-exceptions – there's nothing wrong with that; many natural languages have complex and irregular verbal morphology – but the exceptions bore the unmistakable mark of having been chosen primarily for aesthetic reasons; they didn't look *natural*.

Part of the reason for this, of course, was that I hadn't started with a proto-language and worked forwards. I'm a bit ambivalent about this advice, which is often given to beginning conlangers. In many ways it's like encouraging them to run before they can walk; how can you get a real grip on diachronic change before you've understood how language works in just one language? But I definitely felt that this was the right time for me to try a proto-language. I didn't want to put Arêndron on hold, so I decided to develop both simultaneously; that is, doing each part in both languages before moving on to the next part. I didn't entirely stick with this – I'm not interested enough in the proto-language for its own sake to work out all the details of syntax as I've done for Arêndron, for instance – but the scheme has worked well enough.

I started by working out the phonology and sound changes *backwards*, since I already had a strong idea about what I wanted Arêndron phonology to be like. (The phonology is similar to the old version, although I abandoned the trill phoneme /r/, which I find difficult to pronounce, and I decided that [ç] and [ʒ] being allophones was unsupportable, so I made them phonemic, keeping

the total number of phonemes the same.) It's often said that working backwards is much harder, but this more limited sort of working backwards turned out very well; the irregularities and asymmetries of the phonology told me what sound changes I needed to create them, whereas I've always found doing sound changes forward very hard, because you can do pretty much anything, so you don't know where to begin. The only catch was that I had to be prepared to change minor details if they didn't fit with the changes required to produce the major features I wanted. For example, Arêndron doesn't allow /p/ or /b/ to end a syllable, which I decided to justify by saying these came from labiovelar consonants, /k^w/ and /g^w/. But Arêndron also has a large fricative series, which I decided to derive from aspirated stops in the proto-language – I could just have said the fricatives were already present in the proto-language, but I know now that a large fricative series is quite unusual cross-linguistically, something I wasn't aware of when I first devised Arêndron's phonology. So, putting these two facts together, /f/ in Arêndron clearly comes from /k^{wh}/ in the proto-language, which means that /f/ also can't end a syllable – something I hadn't intended but was happy to accept.

Having a system of sound changes also helped me create an orthography I was happy with; the old version was completely phonemic, which is not realistic. I didn't want to go the whole hog and create a system as difficult to learn as English or French orthography (although I have done this with my other conlang, Vardeu), so I chose a point five-sixths of the way through the sound changes and decided that changes subsequent to that point would not be written. For example, in the old version <kh> is always /x/ and <gh> always /ɣ/, but in the new version I decided that word-final fricatives are devoiced, so the fourth person ending *-agh* is pronounced /ax/. Conversely, intervocalic fricatives are voiced, so in the sentence *Glœsé kleissa* ('I love milk'), the <s> represents voiced /z/, while the doubled <ss> shows that the consonant is voiceless /s/. I also decided that schwa comes from reduction of the other vowels and should be written with the appropriate letter for the unreduced vowel – freeing up <e> to represent /ɛ/ instead of using <æ>. (Some have expressed disappointment at the loss of <æ>, which was quite a distinctive feature of the old Arêndron, but I like the look of the language much better without it. Except that I do miss <Ændros> a little.)

Having got the phonology in place, the next step was to create a morphology I was happy with. A good number of the actual morphemes are the same – I'm used to them, and I didn't want to change anything without a particular reason – but in many cases I've rethought the rules for how they interact with the stem, always looking back at the proto-language to try to make my rules naturalistic. Perhaps the biggest change is the past tense, which is now an infix *-en-* rather than the Germanic *-t*, and fuses with aspect and mood, not with person and number. I decided that the proto-language was more isolating, so in most cases, my noun and verb endings are derived from separate words that had become fused onto the stem. In fact, in the new version you can clearly see the relations between the verb endings and the personal pronouns: for instance, the first person plural pronoun is *krû*, the verb ending *-û* (in the old version it was the unrelated *-ên*). Rather nicely, because both the fourth person singular and plural pronouns end in <agh>, the verb ending is *-agh* for both, getting rid of the fourth person plural ending that caused such nightmares in the old version. The passive, too, is gone; I

originally included it because I didn't want to copy English's way of forming the passive with *to be* + participle, and didn't realise there were other options. (The new Arêndron in fact has *three* different ways to make a sentence passive; I won't summarise them here, but the details are on Syntax 7 of the online grammar.)

As well as improving on the mistakes of the old version, I feel the new Arêndron includes some quite interesting new features and details. For example, there are different types of conditional (if-clause) depending on what *type* of 'if' you mean. This feature wasn't at all essential to the expressive power of the language, but it felt natural to include it, as it's a realistic example of how languages categorise things differently from English. I've also gone into a lot more detail on such matters as forming different types of relative clause, exactly which elements can be relativised, when it's permissible to use a dummy pronoun and what effect this has in terms of focus. Indeed, overall the new version places a lot more emphasis on rearrangements to produce focusing effects, whereas the old version was much more about there being one and only one right way to translate a given sentence.

My next goal is to get the new Arêndron back to the same level of expressive power as the old version; there are certain gaps, such as derivational morphology and prepositions, still to be filled, but the main thing lacking at the moment is vocabulary. This may not come quickly, as I'm happy with the progress I've made and I'm now leaving the conlang alone for a while to do some work on the conworld I've been neglecting for a long time, but I hope to have a decent vocabulary in place by the end of the year. As they say in the conlanging business – watch this space!

Conlangers' Crossword – Answers

The solution to last issue's crossword, as set by **Nuntar**, is as follows:



The staff of the *Journal* would like to extend congratulations to anyone who managed to complete the crossword without the solution.