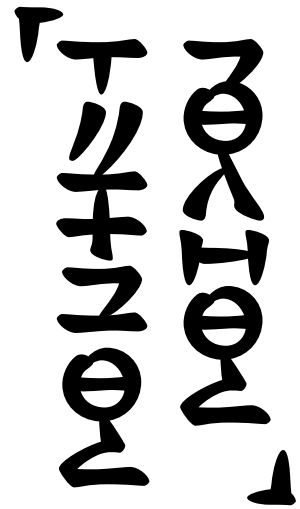


Christian Thalmann

Language & Writing System Design



Hello!

I am Christian Thalmann (christian.d.thalmann@gmail.com), an astrophysicist and physics teacher living near Zürich, Switzerland. I am happy to offer

- naturalistic constructed languages (**conlangs**) with robust grammar and vocabulary, rich with idiosyncrasies, internal references and implied linguistic history, and suffused with the speakers' cultural flavor;
- naturalistic **writing systems** developed organically from basic principles, conscious of the culture's past and present writing tools and grown for functionality and aesthetics in equal measure; and
- professional-grade **electronic fonts** for those writing systems, including ligatures, contextual alternates, and OpenType programming, in any conceivable style: handwriting, print, brush calligraphy, blackletter, you name it.

I have been creating languages since 1999, offering professional conlanging services for hire since 2019, and creating typefaces (fonts) on a professional level since 2013. My most well-known works to date are

- the Open Source typefaces **Cormorant** (2016, this document's title font) and **Ysabeau** (2023), which were commissioned by Google Fonts and are served to several hundred million people each week; and
- the **Fjerdan** language and the **Shu** writing system (top right on this page) for Netflix' *Shadow and Bone* series (2021–2023).

Looking forward to hearing from you!

Best regards, Christian

Language work (selection)

- **Fjerdan** (2021), spoken by a Scandinavian-inspired people in Leigh Bardugo's *Grishaverse* novels, commissioned by Netflix for their *Shadow and Bone* series, co-created with David J. Peterson.

Kat öle yer lindigen chiikkas feshnet?

[kat 'ø.lə jər 'lin.di.gən 'tʃyk.kas ˌfɛʃ.nət]

well let:PASS:1s 1s next:DEF dance:ACC to_ask_for

«May I ask for the next dance?»

Hear it spoken! 

- **Ipani** (2021), a language for an island-dwelling people commissioned by Killian Wolf for her *Tarotland* novel series. If you feel like taking a deep dive into it, check out the full [Ipani Reference Grammar](#), or watch my [conference presentation](#) on Ipani for the highlights!

Uám kekong pamu'y a n'keo puvohang ā chie m'parang.

[u.ˈãŋ ke.ˌkõm pa.'mu ja ŋ.ˌkeo pu.vo.'haŋ 'ʔa: ciɛ m.pa.'rãŋ]

mushroom type any COP can ICP:eating:PRF one instance at_least

«Any kind of mushroom can be eaten at least once.»

Hear it spoken! 

- **Obrenje** (1999), a personal artistic language with a subtle touch of Slavic flavor.

Naqze i tse le pwos warve.

['naŋz i tʃlɐ pwɔs 'war.və]

like:1 DIR that 2:DIR bite:PST:3e dog

«I like the fact that a dog bit you.»

Hear it spoken! 

- **Jovian** (2001), a fictional Romance language spoken in the Alsace region, grown from Classical Latin with a substrate of Alemannic. I am using it as a testbed for high-level conlanging practices, such as poetry, dialects, and slang. The sample text to the right is a faithful translation of the first stanza of *Es ist ein Ros' entsprungen* (Lo, how a rose e'er blooming) — in meter and rhyme. Feel free to watch my [conference presentation](#) on Jovian, or listen to the parable of the [North Wind and the Sun](#) spoken in Jovian!

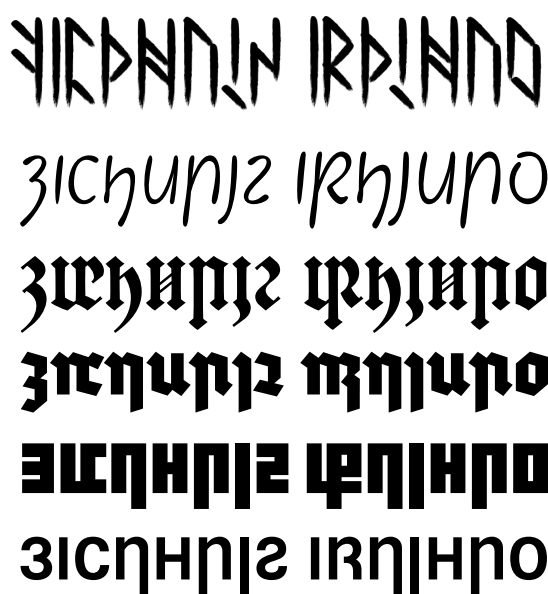
*¡Ec! Noe hae crede a roful
D'in herde ni raehe deicade,
In seine praeziçte ei mozu il;
Ioßae id seime hae jade.
Hae prompfe un flore d'in oc,
Yh hiowe in frize ei iwun,
Con meidse era blude ja noc.*

Writing systems

- The **Shu** writing system, an alphasyllabary spanning over 3000 glyphs, commissioned by Netflix for *Shadow and Bone*. Each glyph represents a syllable and is composed of an onset consonant, a core vowel, and an optional consonant or vowel coda. A base-100 number system is included. The illustration shows three different the pointed-brush calligraphy and geometric sans-serif styles.



- The **Fjerdan** writing system to the right is aimed at exploring the evolution of a writing system with time and cultural progress. It originated as runes carved into wood, hence the lack of horizontal strokes. Note how the strong bias toward downward diagonals sets the visual feel apart from real-world rune systems. The stiff angles of the runes are then smoothed down in rapid handwriting, which in turn evolves to include blackletter broad-nib calligraphy. The advent of the printing press then brings about a wide variety of innovative new styles, including geometric abstractions. Note now the shapes of letters are reinterpreted at each step to conform to the constraints and aesthetic needs of the new medium.
- **Hairo**, a writing system for a fictional «lost» language spoken around the North Sea before the rise of Indo-European (below).



Type design

- My Open Source typefaces *Cormorant* and *Ysabeau* are freely available at [Google Fonts](#).
- My commercial typefaces can be found under the label Catharsis Fonts at [MyFonts.com](#).

Cormorant Ysabeau

Octant Brilliance Gryffensee

maestrale Ruscelfraktur

Overbold Quinoa Traction