

FrisianusOT

© Torbjørn Eng 1994 – originally as two fonts in PostScript Type1 og TrueType for Mac and PC. From 2011 as OpenType-font with extended character set and advanced OpenType-functions.

The Frisianus typeface is inspired by the richly decorated, blackletter manuscripts of the Middle Ages. The Norwegian artist Gerhard Munthe created these letterforms in the handwritten text for the publication of the Norwegian medieval poem/folksong Draumkvedet (The Dream Song) in 1904. The following years the German typefoundry Gebr. Klingspor worked on a metal typeface based on Munthe's letterforms, but their Munthe-Schrift was never finished. The Norwegian printer Fabritius made their, rather different, version of Munthes letterforms for hot metal Monotype-setting in 1962. Frisianus is my version of Munthe's letterforms, this time for digital typesetting. It is now available in OpenType-format.

In order to resemble handwriting, Frisianus contains many variants of a number of characters. To use these variants, in the previous version of Frisianus one had to pick and replace characters one at a time from a separate font called Spesial, consulting a document showing all the characters. With the OpenType-font FrisianusOT this can be done in a simple and elegant way: one can format the text according to pre-defined typographic styles (if the your application supports OpenType-functionality). You choose alternatives in an OpenType-menu (see illustration top right), which automatically changes some of the characters. All alternatives in the menu without brackets are available. The three alternatives which are ticked (Contextual Alternates, Default Figure Style and Ligatures), are on by default. The others must be chosen actively.

If you want to pick characters independently of the predefined alternatives, you can use the Glyph-palette (see illustration bottom right). Here all available characters are shown, and groups of

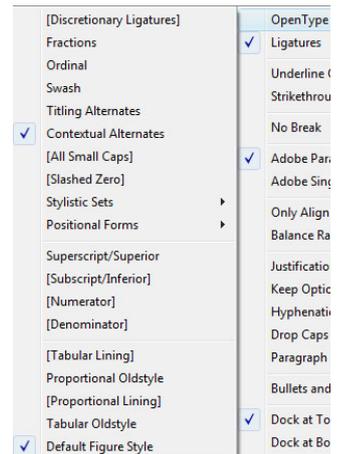
similar characters can be sorted out, for example all the different currency symbols.

Compared to the previous version of Frisianus many characters in FrisianusOT are altered – some considerably, some in minor details. A few more characters are added. Esthetically bad character combinations are solved by automatically replacement of characters (Contextual Alternates). In the previous version this was cumbersome, and often ignored. In FrisianusOT all characters are part of the kerning table, while in the previous version there was no kerning between characters from the two fonts Frisianus Regular and Frisianus Spesial. FrisianusOT contains 398 characters.

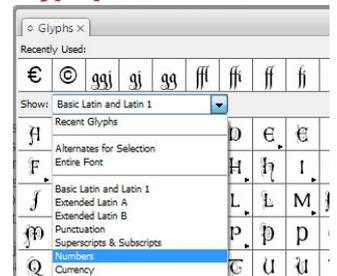
With its OpenType-functionality FrisianusOT gives the user the possibility to make varied and beautiful typographic work in a practical way. The most important options in the OpenType-menu are explained below.

Read about Frisianus and its historical background here: <http://typografi.org/fris/frisianus.html>

OpenType-menyen



Glyph-paletten



CONTEXTUAL ALTERNATES

Ð ð T t d d ll kk

LIGATURES

fi fl fj ff ffi ffl gg gj ggi

DEFAULT FIGURE STYLE

1234567890 1/2 5%

PROPORTIONAL OLDSTYLE

1234567890 1/2 5%

STANDARD TEKST

Adam Helg Mjød

SWASH

Adam Helg Mjød

TITLING

Adam Helg Mjød

STYLISTIC SETS – SET1

Adam Helg Mjød

Contextual Alternates improves visually bad character combinations, by taking advantage of the many alternative characters in FrisianusOT. As an example, the font has three different d's. The collision between l and d (see the illustration on the left hand side, grayed) is avoided by replacing the d (see the following in black). Other combinations are esthetically improved, like the distracting empty space inside the Th combination, which is solved by the alternative T. All in all 63 character combinations in FrisianusOT are subject to replacement of characters with the option contextual alternates. Contextual Alternates is on by default.

Some character combinations are made into a separate character. Then the two (or three) characters are merged. Ligatures have a long tradition in typography. Some, like fi og fl, are standard in almost all typefaces. On the left hand side are shown all the ligatures in FrisianusOT. Ligatures is on by default.

Default figure style in FrisianusOT is lining. These figures have all the same height, though a bit lower than the upper case letters, in order not to visually dominate the text. These figures are of proportional width, so they can't easily be used for tabular setting. But as Frisianus is meant for text setting, the figures make harmonious 'figure images' inside text. Default Figure Style is (of course) on by default.

Old Style Figures is the alternative to the lining figures in the Default Figure Style. Compared to the lining figures, they stand even less out from the text. They have the x-height of the lower case letters, as well as ascenders and descenders. Characters often used when setting figures, like % og €, have alternatives harmonizing with the old style figures, and they are active with this option on. These figures are also of proportional width. Oldstyle Figures must be chosen actively.

When FrisianusOT is used without taking advantage of the OpenType-functionality, alphabetic text is set with the simplest character variants. Standard text may be the right choice for long texts, giving a relatively quiet visual impression and good readability. (Nevertheless, all text set in Frisianus OT is lively and decorative, which is the reason for the typeface.) The more calligraphic character variants can be used for headings and smaller text groups. (Note: the lower d in Adam is a result of the Contextual Alternates function.)

The Swash alternative gives more decorative variants of a number of characters. In the example on the left hand side are shown the swash alternatives of A, l, g, j and ø. The Swash alternative creates the impression of the rich, calligraphic medieval manuscripts. Swash must be chosen actively.

Titling gives ornate versions of all upper case letters. These are useful as initials (large starting letters) in headings and text. Such letters are rare in typefaces. They are based on the large, decorated starting letters, often with small paintings inside, in the medieval manuscripts, typically in a contrasting colour. Titling must be chosen actively.

There are more decorative, calligraphic character variants available in Stylistic Sets 1, 2 og 3 – mostly in Set 1. In the example on the left hand side the a is replaced with a variant with two storeys, the ornated H is changed, as well as g, M and j. Stylistic Sets must be chosen actively.