A GRAMMAR AND CHRONOLOGY OF THE

AKHIRENE LANGUAGES

by Michael M. Goessler

ON COMMISSION FOR [redacted]

REVISED VERSION, SEPTEMBER 2023

Contents

List of Tables

Introduction

The Akhirene languages form one of the two branches of the Iqathai-Akhirene language family, the other being Iqathai (see the family tree in Fig. 1). The Akhirene branch itself comprises five languages: **Common Akhirene** (*Proto-Ankisian A* on your language map) is the common ancestor of all Ahkirene dialects and was spoken in the early AoM (I will leave the exact dates to you). Chapter 1 of this document will introduce this language in detail, including phonology and grammar.

As the Akhirene communities are dispersed over the island, three dialects emerge, **Caethai**, **Maspavi**, and **Ovaitai**, which are partially intelligible amongst each other and form a dialect continuum. Chapter 2 will deal with these and briefly outline their phonology and grammar, although they are similar enough to each other—and to Common Akhirene—that you should readily understand what is going on based on the information I provide on the latter.

With the rise of the Aetamians, finally, an official standard is created based on the dialects (chiefly, Caethai, with influences from Maspavi and Ovaitai); this is the **High Akhirene** variety. Again, the grammar does not differ too substantially from Common Akhirene, with the most notable innovation the introduction of various irregular forms from the dialects (e.g., if you remember the alternative masculine suffixes *-tha* and *-thel*, they are from different dialects, and they don't appear in free variation but are tied to specific roots). You already have the full phonology for this one, but for completeness sake, I will include all the old materials here as well.

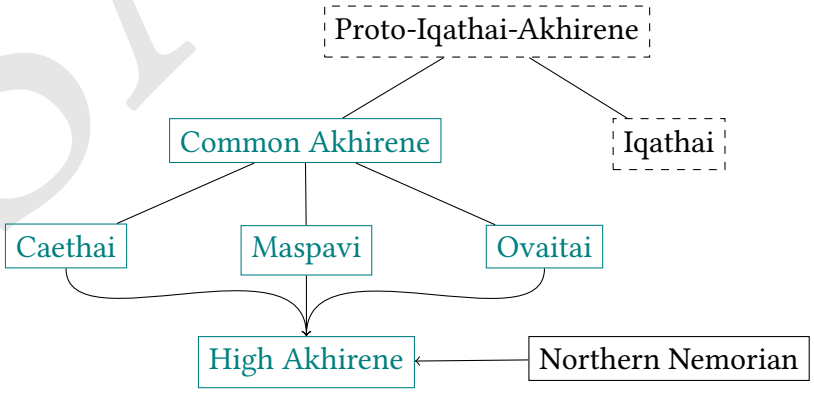


Figure 1: The Iqathai-Akhirene language family. Languages described here in teal; a dashed border signifies currently unconstructed languages.

Chapter 1
Common Akhirene

1.1 Introduction

You have already seen a brief introduction to this language during my talk at the LCC; this chapter should expand on what you already know and equip you with the working proficiency required to translate Akhirene passages whenever required. We introduced this language mostly as a virtual common ancestor for the Akhirene dialects, so I don't know if you will ever need to translate to (or from?) it, but for completeness sake (you did order a *basic conlang* after all), I will include it here in full and treat it like any other language—who knows, perhaps you will need it at some point. The grammar is also quite consistent from here across the dialects and into High Akhirene, so anything learnt in this chapter will be very helpful later on. And finally, as I think I have mused on the Discord before, should you ever need an Akhirene writing system, it could be based on this stage of the language, yielding a High Akhirene orthography that requires lots of silent sounds in seemingly random places (you'll see below).

I don't think there is much else you know about this one before diving in. As mentioned, I constructed it 'backwards' as the ancestor of the ancestors of Akhirene, so all of the grammar should be compatible with the handful of words and endings I provided as part of the first Akhirene package; I made a few conceptual changes (as part of my research), so beware that while all of the endings have the same meaning, they don't all quite do the same thing as was (and by the time of me writing this is still) glossed in the Akhirene 1.0 lexicon (so, e.g., the adjectivzing suffix *-i* is now the perfect passive ending, with essentially the same function).

1.2 Phonology

The phonology might be the point of greatest disparity between Common and High Akhirene. If you recall (and as you will see two chapters down from here), I kept High Akhirene intentionally simple and 'stoic' in a way to contrast it with the more entangled sounds of Nemorian; to keep up the fun and to give us a slightly larger palette to work with for the grammar and the dialects, I've expanded this a great deal for Common Akhirene, adding many small sounds that appear on word edges and between vowels and give it a flavour very distinct from that of High Akhirene you are familiar with. Assuming that you will not be working as frequently with this language, I have also used non-ASCII symbols a bit more freely—let me know if you end up using Common

Akhirene a great deal in your writings, and I can work out a more accessible romanization. I am also treating this as a starting point for later phonological developments, so there are no complex alternation rules as you will find in High Akhirene and some of the dialects.

1.2.1 Phoneme inventory

As per usual, a list of all sounds available in Common Akhirene, with their <orthographic>, /phonemic/ and, if releveant, [phonetic] notation and a description based on the sounds of English.

1.2.1.1 Vowels

Common Akhirene distinguishes twelve vowels; these are overall not very different from the vowels of High Akhirene, with the notable exception that all monophthongs can be either short or long (as in Nemorian), long vowels marked with a macron (¯). Unlike in High Akhirene, there is no tense–lax alternation, and unlike in Nemorian, vowel quality is not affected by length.

ā	/aː/	Like <a> in *bad* (Southern England)
a	/a/	Like <a> in *rattle* (Southern England)
ē	/eː/	Like <ai> in *hair* (Australia, NZ)
e	/e/	Like <e> in *wet* (NZ)
ī	/iː/	Like <ea> *bead*
i	/i/	Like <i> in *bid*
ō	/oː/	Like <o> in *wrote* (Scotland)
o	/o/	Like <o> in rot (England)
ai	/ɑi̯/	Like <i> in *right*
ei	/ɛi̯/	Like <ay> in *hay*
ao	/ɑʊ̯/	Like <ow> in *allow*
eo	/ɛʊ̯/	Like <ew> in *ew!*

1.2.1.2 Consonants

Common Akhirene had 22 consonant phonemes. These largely resemble those you already know from High Akhirene, with a few additions and some slight changes. Most importantly, while the two rows of plosives in High Akhirene are distinguished only by aspiration (e.g. /k/ ↔ /kʰ/), the unaspirated row in Common Akhirene was additionally voiced, although this was already fading by the time the dialects emerged. The positions

are the same, with /p t k/ as in English and the addtional /q/ (see below). Some of the sounds you know as allophones (alternate pronunciations of the same phoneme) from High Akhirene were still separate phonemes here; for example, both voiced and voiceless fricatives can appear anywhere in a word, and the /s/ ⟶ [r] alternation has not yet developed—innovations from Maspavi and Caethai, respectively.

b	/b ~ p/	<b> in *bold*, or <p> in *spot*
d	/d ~ t/	<d> in *doll*, or <t> in *stop*
g	/g ~ k/	<g> in *gold*, or <c> in *scot*
ɢ	/ɢ ~ q/	Like <g>, but aspirated further back, at the uvula
p	/pʰ/	<p> in *pot*
t	/tʰ/	<t> in *top*
k	/kʰ/	<c> in *cod*
q	/qʰ/	Like <ɢ>, but always voiceless and aspirated
f	/f/	<f> in *fast*
v	/v/	<v> in *vast*
s	/s/	<s> in *mace*
z	/z/	<z> in *maze*
ts	/ʦ/	<zz> in *pizza*
dz	/ʣ/	<ds> in *cods*
h	/h/	<h> in *here*
m	/m/	<m> in *map*
n	/n/	<n> in *nap*
ng	/ŋ/	<ng> in *ring*
w	/w/	<w> in *wing*
r	/r/	Rolled like in Italian
l	/l/	<l> in *lost*
y	/j/	<y> in *yet*

1.2.2 Syllable structure and stress assignment

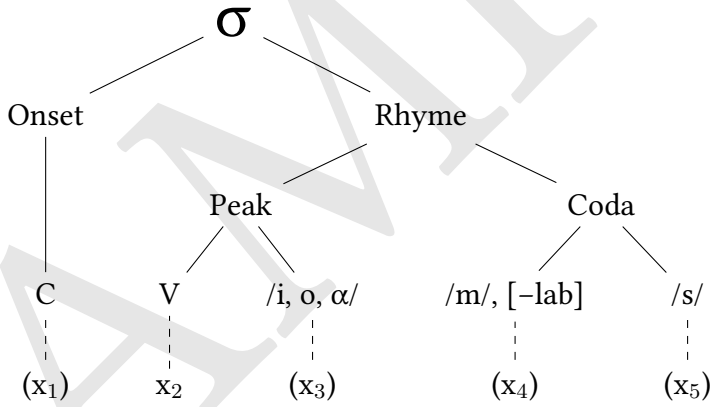
This is another point where Common Akhirene differed significantly from the later standard. If you recall, we generally divide syllabes into three parts, *onset*, *peak*, and *coda*, corresponding to beginning, middle, and end; these parts are further subdivided

into x-slots, metric divisions governing how many sounds can appear in each part of a syllable. I have here provided both a verbal and a formal notation:

Onset In Common Akhirene, the onset can contain any one consonant (C) from the inventory. Only one x-slot corresponds to the onset, hence there can never be more than one consonant, prohibiting clusters like /br/ or /st/. This component is optional, i.e. a syllable does not have to have an initial consonant.

Peak The peak is the only obligatory part of the syllable. It can contain any vowel (V) from the inventory. Like in High Akhirene, the peak has two x-slots, but unlike in the latter, no x-slots are shared with the coda, meaning the vowels and consonants in a syllable are counted separately. The second x-slot is optional and only used by long vowels; in diphthongs, this is used to accomodate the second sound, in long monophthongs, the slots simply doubles the vowel already in the first slot (notated as α).

Coda The coda contains two x-slots, both of which are optional. The first can contain any consonant except /b, p, f, v/, or, in formal terms, no labials except /m/. The second is somewhat curious in nature in that it only accepts /s/. This slot is only rarely filled, but appears in forms such as *fārs* 'to bleach' and *-ns* (the habitual passive suffix); x_5 cannot be filled if x_4 contains an affricate /ʦ, ʣ/.



Like in the standard pronunciation of High Akhirene, stress always falls into the penultimate syllable in a word. Given this and the absence of a tense–lax distinction in vowels, one would think that no distinction between light and heavy syllables is necessary for Common Akhirene, but as we will see in the following section, the language still seems to make such a distinction, and it is quite fierce about it.

1.2.3 Allophonic rules

As mentioned above, I am treating this as a kind of 'pure' starting point for Akhirene phonology, so we don't find the kind of complex alternation rules here that we have Akhriene. There are, however, still a few rules I should mention; most of them are relevant for the resolution of collisions, and a few are to do with sounds in forbidden positions.

1.2.3.1 Forbidden positions

Quite rarely, but still occasionally, the interplay of phonology and morphology will produce forms where sounds appear in x-slots not suited to accommodate them. Since vowels tend to merge and resolve themselves quite neatly, this will usually have to do with the consonants in onset and coda. If by some unfortunate occurrence, more than one consonant is trying to install itself in the onset, the phonology will first try to relocate the first consonant into the coda of the previous syllable; this works as long as the coda is empty or x_5 is free and the consonant in question happens to be /s/. Under any other circumstances (including in word-initial syllables), one of the consonants will have to go, again usually the first one.

The same is generally true of the coda. If a superfluous consonant cannot be banished to the following onset, it has to go; here, this fate will generally befall the rightmost consonant (disregarding a possible /s/ in x_5), but such cases are extremely rare and occur almost exclusively in the context of borrowings (which, if coming from Nemorian, will be very relevant for us later). But unlike the onset, the coda is also somewhat eclectic when it comes to the sounds it allows in its x-slots, and even if there are no superfluous consonants, it can happen that at the end of a derivation, a labial /b, pʰ, v, f/ appears in x_4. In such a case, we will simply move the sound back and turn it into the closest corresponding alveolar:

(1) a. /b/ → /d/
b. /pʰ/ → /tʰ/
c. /v/ → /z/
d. /f/ → /s/

This rule is also called into effect extremely rarely, but it is good to have it ready when it applies. An example of /f/ → /s/ will come up in (4) below.

1.2.3.2 Consonantal collisions

As long as no x-slots are violated, however, Common Akhirene syllable structure is sacred. The language will do whatever it can to preserve the distinction between light and heavy syllables, where a heavy syllable is a syllable with a non-empty coda, irrespective of vowel length. And since omitting sounds at the end of syllables, even if to ease articulation, would disturb this distinction, it is generally not an option in Common Akhirene.

(2) a. *wez* + ***dz****izema* → *wez**dz**izema*
PL + ‘to hold up’ → ‘they hold up’
b. *wez* + *zeilē* → *wez’zeilē*
PL + ‘water’ → ‘bodies of water’
c. *ɢes* + *zeilē* → *ɢes’seilē*
COL + ‘water’ → ‘a mass of water’

So in (2a), the merging of the plural prefix (see section 1.4.1) with the root yields the cluster /zdz/ (try pronouncing *glazed zest* fast). Many reasonable languages would try to

resolve this to either just /z/ or /ʣ/, but Common Akhirene draws a very hard boundary between its syllables, and since the /z/ is in the coda of the first and the /ʣ/ in the onset of the following syllable, no alternation takes place and /zʣ/ gets to be pronounced in its full glory.

Not quite the opposite happens in (2b). Here, we combine the collective prefix with the root for 'water'; that would in and of itself be an innocent operation, but it happens to result in a clash of two identical consonants. We could merge them into one /z/, but that would disturb the internal structure of at least one of the syllables, and Common Akhirene cannot let that happen. So we just keep both, separated by an apostrophe in the romanization but pronounced essentially as one long /zː/ (similar to a geminate, if you recall from Northern Nemorian). This extends as a general rule over all consonants. If the clashing consonants are identical except in voicing, so in (2c), the voicing of the first is carried over to the second (one of the few cases where we actually see one syllable influence another).

(3) a. *nga**ts*** + ***dz**ifi* → *nga**tsz**ifi*
beyond + ice → 'transglacial, far away'

b. *mor**s*** + ***dz**ane* → *mor**dz**ane*
direct + to look → 'to spy, scout

There are two minor exceptions to this rule, however. Since the main goal of the prohibition above is to preserve syllable weight, alternations that do not affect the latter are permitted: i) If two affricates clash, so in (3a), the second loses its plosive component and is reduced to a fricative.

ii) If both coda x-slots are filled, we can safely give up one without affecting syllable weight. /s/, indeed, can be dropped from x_5[1] in the rare circumstance that it is followed by an alveolar fricative or affricate, /s, z, ʦ, ʣ/, so in (3b).

1.2.3.3 Vowel hiatus

Clashes between vowels (hiatus) are significantly less common than those between consonants; most affixes are prepared and specify where to drop a vowel to avoid collisions, so you will mostly find them in compounds (see section 1.4.4). Since that always results in the creation of a new word, Akhirene here does allow for the blending of syllables. Unlike with the regular affixes, vowels are generally not dropped here (although there are always sporadic exceptions) but merged to form one of our four diphthongs.

	a	**e**	**i**	**o**
a	ao	ai	ai	ao
e	ya	ei	ei	eo
i	ya	ye	ei	yo
o	wa	we	we	ao

Table 1.1: Resolution of vowel clashes

As a general rule, if the components of a diphthong clash in diphthong order (e.g. /a/ + /i/) they will just form the diphthong in its usual form. /e/ and /i/ clashing with themselves form <ei>, /a/ and /o/ <ao>. If /i/ is the first segment in a clash, it will turn into the liquid <y> and form a cluster with the preceding consonant; the same is true for

[1]Note here that we only consider /s/ to sit in x_5 if x_4 is otherwise filled.

/o/, turning into <w>. A complete overview of vowel interactions is given in Tab. 1.1. Note that vowel length has no bearing on hiatus resolution.

(4) *dzifi* + *areda* → *dzisyareda*
to freeze + to mend → to freeze over, to freeze shut

In practice, that can look somewhat like in (4). We combine an item ending in /i/ with an item beginning in /a/, the /i/ turns into <y> forming a cluster <fy> with the preceding consonant; as this would put a (forbidden) labiodental /f/ in coda position, the latter is replaced with /s/, giving us the <sy> cluster in (4).

1.3 Predicates and argument structure

A more detailed section on syntax is to follow the morphology below, but there are a few basics we should cover now, before diving into the depths of Akhirene grammar. A lot of this will already be familiar to you from my talk at the LCC, and you will find that most things covered in this section remain quite stable across all of the Akhirene languages.

The structure of Akhirene is somewhat peculiar for (but in no way out of the scope of) a human language, and here, I will capture it using a *categorial grammar*. In essence, that just means we are working in a very formal framework based on the idea that language can be described using mathematical notions such as functions and variables; categorial grammars are very common in the study of formal semantics. Consequently, Akhirene grammar is based only on a handful of rules, but there are a lot of exceptions and special cases allowing it to move and breathe like a living language.

There are no word classes (noun, verb, adjective, …); words are instead classified by the function they fulfil and how they relate to each other. Every Akhirene word is formally considered a *predicate*, that is, a conceptual frame with a certain number of variables, its arguments. The classical predicate is, of course, the verb, and its arguments subject and object; but this concept can be extended to much more, and Akhirene grammar is an attempt at building a language (almost) entirely on the basis of recursive predication, and you will find that we can reconstruct nearly all 'traditional' word classes in this system. Note that I will be using the traditional terms to highlight the way in which a certain predicate is being used, but never as a categorical classification.

Every predicate in Akhirene is defined by two properties, its meaning and the number of arguments it takes. The syntax of Akhirene is then nothing other than a set of rules defining how we express this relationship between predicates and their arguments using word order. The basic rules for this are quite simple, but they can get pretty tricky once we are dealing with slightly more complex structures. So let me start at the very basics here.

1.3.1 Predication and verb-like predicates

A simple **1-place predicate** would be an intransitive verb like *gār* 'to sing': Its meaning is one of 'recounting a song', and it takes one argument (hence '1-place'), its subject, the entity singing. To express this, Akhirene has a very simple syntactic rule: The argument follows its predicate.

(5) *drēn gār lasatlā*
because sing servant
'because the servant sings'

Using this rule, we can build very simple sentences, like the one in (5). (You will be wondering why there is a *because*, I will get to that below!)

This rule is the fundamental basis of everything in Akhirene, and all to come hereafter is essentially extensions or modifications of this basic principle. But we already run into the first problem if we expand our construct just a bit and use a **2-place predicate**. The type example for this would, of course, be a transitive verb like *fēs* 'to hold': It takes two arguments, a holder (subject) and something being held (object).

(6) *drēn lasatlā fēs yōka*
because servant hold fire
'because the servant holds the fire'

But if we proceed as before, and let both arguments simply follow their host predicate, we will soon have trouble distinguishing which is which; so now, we will let one argument follow the predicate and the other precede it, giving us a subject–verb–object structure like in (6). I will also call this the *basic schema* and formally notate it as in (7).

(7) BASIC SCHEMA
[arg2 pred arg1]

Here, our general rule is that the *first* argument follows the predicate and the *second* argument precedes it; for 'transitive-verb-like' predicates, the first argument is always the object or patient (the participant the action is performed on) and the second the subject or agent (the participant performing the action). Not all predicates are, of course, verb-like, and indeed, we can recreate (almost) all of the 'traditional' word classes using predication; I will go over each of these in turn in section 1.5 below. The exact definition of what constitutes the first and second argument differs slightly between the different types of predicates, at least on a conceptual level, so I will define them individually for each type of predicate as discussed.

1.3.2 The matrix clause

There is one more thing I should talk about before we dive into the morphology. It concerns matrix clauses, why all sentences presented above start with *because*, and the fact that I just lied to you. Let me start at the beginning.

A matrix or main clause is a clause that can stand on its own without depending on any other clauses. Its counterpart is the embedded or dependent clause, which in some way depends on the matrix clause, for example by explaining why the main clause event is happening, and is usually introduced by a (subordinating) conjunction, for example the *because* in (5) and (6) above. I am sure you are familiar with the concept.

The critical point in Akhirene is that, since matrix clauses are so important, we want to make sure they are easy to recognize, so they will not follow the basic schema. The rule here is that the predicate comes last and is preceded by the first and then the second argument, giving us a matrix clause schema as in (8), or SOV word order.

(8) MATRIX SCHEMA
[arg2 arg1 pred]

(9) *lasatlā gār*
servant sing
'the servant sings'

(10) *lasatlā yōka fēs*
servant fire hold
'the servant holds the fire'

This alternative schema is used only for matrix clauses, specifically to highlight them in the structure. All other phrases, including subordinate clauses, follow the basic schema. Spelled out as matrix clauses, the examples in (5) and (6) will take the form in (9) and (10), respectively. Very importantly, since here, we can only distinguish first and second arguments by their order relative to each other, if a 2-place predicate appears with only one argument, we will alwasy assume it is the first, never the second.

1.4 Morphology

We will return to syntax and discuss other types of predicates below in section 1.5. For now, we should have a look at how words are structured internally and how this relates to their syntactic organization.

1.4.1 The universal paradigm

Since the Akhirene languages do not distinguish word classes, there is also only one morphological paradigm, which applies to all words indiscriminately. I based this paradigm on the small number of affixes we established for Akhirene 1.0, then amended many new forms. The result has a quite curious form, with several different positions for prefixes and suffixes, and somewhat randomly coding for number, gender, aspect, voice, and certain information relating to direction and valency; I will get to the details about what each of these mean and do down below. And before you ask, yes, we could model this just using predicates as well, and any proper linguistic analysis of Akhirene probably would, but for our purposes here I think it is easier to keep syntax and morphology separate and treat affixes simply as small items that attach to words.

Every Akhirene word follows the basic template in (11) with the ROOT (the core of the word carrying the meaning) in the centre and two slots for affixes on each side.

(11) NUMBER- -DIRECTION- $\sqrt{\text{ROOT}}$ -VALENCY- -[GENDER, VOICE, ASPECT]

The first and last slot obligatorily have to be filled, expressing number and aspect/gender/voice (AGV). The inner slots, which at a lack of better terms I have called *direction* and *valency*, are optional and provide additional information about an action: its direction in space and its argument structure; again, I will explain each category and their individual values down below. A fully inflected form (here used as a verb) with all slots filled can look like *wezdzinōvāgamis* in (12).

(12) *Gāratlā wezdzinōvāgamis.*

gāratlā wez- dzi- $\sqrt{\text{NŌVĀ}}$*- g- -amis*
singer PL- UP- continue- CAUS- F.PROG.ACT

'They (*f*) are making the singer continue up(hill).'

One could theoretically list all forms for all slots in one large table, but for ease of access, I have split them into two, Tab. 1.2 providing the obligatory and optional affixes.

1.4.1.1 Inflection

Let's have a look at Tab. 1.2 first; I will refer to this as the **inflectional paradigm**. You will find some of these forms on every Akhirene word, but note that the first cell in both columns contains a null-affix (∅), so it is possible (and very common) to find words without any overt coding on them. Vowels in parentheses are dropped if the root ends in a vowel; the vowels in the N.PROG forms are also frequently dropped following an alveolar fricative /s, z/. The features expressed by these affixes are largely the ones you would find coded on most 'traditional' verbs, but since there are no word classes in Akhirene and any word can refer to an action performed by someone, a person performing an action, a way an action is performed, etc., we cannot really refer to a subject or object an item can agree with (in number or gender). As a general rule, the affixes refer either to the entity performing the action (the second argument, if in the active) or the entity the action is performed on (the first argument, if in the passive), irrespective of whether the word itself is used to describe the action, the entity, or something else.

SG	*∅-*			*-∅*			*-(e)ns*	HAB
PL	*wez-*		*-(a)tlā*	*-(a)mis*	*-(a)we*	*-(e)ti*	*-(e)naz*	PROG
COLL	*ges-*	$\sqrt{\text{ROOT}}$		*-yat*			*-yo*	PERF
NUMBER			M	F	N	M/F	N	
				ACTIVE			PASSIVE	

Table 1.2: Common Akhirene inflectional morphology

Consider (13), where we have affixes expressing number and gender (beside other features). Here, *wezgāramis* can be interpreted in three different ways: (13a) uses it in a verb-like way, agreeing in number and gender with what would be its subject. (13b) uses it as an agent noun, that is, a noun describing someone performing an action (here, a singer); gender and number are then simply inherent properties of the agent. In (13c), it is interpreted as a verbal noun, a noun describing an action itself; here, the features are again taking from the (possibly invisible) subject. The same is true of the examples in (14), with the only difference that here it is the object of the action, rather than the subject, we focus on, and consequently, we use a passive suffix. The target of all morphological agreement is determined in this way (see also section 1.4.3); to avoid confusion and allow for generalizations, I will use the term THEME to refer to these landmark

entities. This distinction might seem a bit confusing right now, but I am confident you will find it relatively intuitive once you start using the language.

(13) *wez- gār- amis*
PL- sing- F.PROG.ACT
a. 'they (f) are singing'
b. 'the singers (f)'
c. 'their (f) singing'

(14) *wez- gār- eti*
PL- sing- C.PROG.PASS
a. 'they are being sung of' (people are singing songs about them)
b. 'celebrities, heroes of the moment' (people songs are being sung about)
c. 'their fame' (their being songs sung of)

Let's now have a look at the individual features and the values they can take. The **number** feature always refers to the number of the theme (15). The singular (SG) is zero-coded (no ending); it contrasts with the plural (PL) and the collective (COL), the latter used for uncountable masses, such as water[2] or sand.

(15) a. *∅-fēs* 'a chain' or 'he holds'
b. *wez-fēs* 'chains' or 'they hold'
c. *ɢes-fēs* 'chainmail' or 'it (mass) holds'

(16) a. *hīs-atlā* 'he is concealing [something]' or 'concealer (M)'
b. *hīs-amis* 'she is concealing' or 'concealer (F)'
c. *hīs-awe* 'it is concealing' or 'concealing item or circumstance'

Gender, likewise, refers to the (natural) gender of the theme, either masculine (M) or feminine (F) for animate and neuter (N) for inanimate themes (16). Gender does not have any suffixes of its own but always appears bundled with aspect and voice, and a full gender distinction is made only in the progressive active, presumably due to its association with agent nouns. The progressive passive forms distinguish animate and inanimate; habitual and perfect forms are syncretic (the same) across all genders.

(17) a. *hīs-∅* 'it conceals (generally)'
b. *hīs-awe* 'it is concealing (right now)'
c. *hīs-yat* 'it has concealed (and the object is hidden)' or 'it used to conceal (but the object has been revealed)'

Aspect does not refer to properties of the theme. It expresses the temporal relation of an action relative to the point in time considered, unlike tense, which defines the point in time considered relative to the present. In many languages (including English!), it combines with tense, but since Akhirene is lacking any specification for the latter, aspect stands on its own and is our only clue as to the temporal progression of events (17). The

[2] I should remark here that water can, indeed, be used with all three number values: *zeilē* (SG) 'the element water, a body of water', *ɢes'seilē* (COL) 'a mass of water', *wez'zeilē* (PL) 'several bodies of water'.

habitual (HAB) expresses that an action or event occurs regularly or usually or that an action is performed habitually; it is the default aspect in Akhirene and zero-coded in the active. It is a common aspect for adjectives, prepositions and pronouns. The progressive (PROG) is used to convey that an action is in process at the point in time considered (like the progressive tenses of English); it is the most common aspect for agent nouns ('person doing X'). The perfect (PERF) communicates that an action has been completed; it commonly appears with the passive and is often used to form adjective-like predicates (see section 1.5.3.1). I translate the perfect into English using either the present perfect or the past simple—either is correct, depending on the context—but remember that it is *not* a past tense. Any of the Akhirene aspects can be used with a past meaning; only use the perfect specifically to convey that an action has been completed and that this is relevant.

(18) a. *hīs-ens* 'it is concealed (generally)'
b. *hīs-enaz* 'it is being concealed (right now)'
c. *hīs-yo* 'it has been concealed (and is hidden now)' or 'it was concealed (but has been revealed)'

Speaking of perfect intricacies, it is also important to distinguish between result-oriented and process-oriented meaning, as we can see with *to hide* in (17c) and (18c): We can interpret *hiding [something]* either as inducing a state of being hidden ('it wasn't hidden. I hid it. Now it is hidden') or as perpetuating such as state ('it was hidden, and I made sure it would stay that way'). This distinction is relevant with the perfect insofar as the meaning of the perfect itself changes depending on which reading is chosen, as in (17c) and (18c). On an inductive reading, we would interpret the perfect as signalling that the action has been completed and the goal achieved (creating a *resultative*, a construction speaking of the result of an action); on a perpetuating reading, the perfect would imply that the perpetuation of the action, and therefore the action itself, has been terminated and the result undone. If an item with both readings available (such as *hīs*) appears in the perfect, it is therefore an auto-antonym (it has two opposite meanings).

Voice or **diathesis**, finally, defines which argument is the theme of the word (17–18), the first with the passive (PASS) and the second with the active (ACT). This is largely equivalent to the use of grammatical voice in English.

1.4.1.2 Derivation

Let's now turn to the second set of affixes; I will call them the *derivational* affixes as their use is optional and they have a greater influence on the meaning of the word itself. Their individual functions and uses are more varied than that of the inflectional affixes, and the division in direction- and valency-affecting operations I am using here is more of a stopgap motivated by the need for labels a little more accessible than merely 'Slot 3' and 'Slot 4'. Most of the individual affixes are relatively straightforward, and I would not get too hung up on the categories for any purpose other than determining where in a word they should apply, but even this is more of a rule of thumb in so far as at least the valency-manipulating affixes theoretically allow themselves to be stacked more or less indefinitely (see below). Tab. 1.3 gives an overview of all derivational affixes. I will again treat each category in turn.

DIRECTION			VALENCY	
UP	*-dzi-*		*-(e)zdar-*	APPL
DOWN	*-wa-*		*-(o)g-*	CAUS
MTS	*-met-*	$\sqrt{\text{ROOT}}$	*-(ē)zi*	GER
SEA	*-bes-*		XX	REFL

Table 1.3: Common Akhirene derivational morphology

The **directional** affixes are the more straightforward group. They appear between number affix and root and simply express the direction in which an action (usually a movement) is performed (19). This is defined along one of two axes, either UP vs. DOWN or towards the sea/downstream (SEA) vs. towards the mountains/upstream (MTS). The latter is used in a way comparable to cardinal directions (similar conventions can be found e.g. in Hawaiian); the forms, in fact, are based on the respective words for sea (*beswe*) and mountain (*meitan*).

(19) a. ***dzi**-yeramis* 'she is running **up**'
b. *wez-**wa**-yeramis* 'they are running **down**'
c. *wez-**met**-yeramis* 'they are running **upstream**'
d. ***bes**-yeramis* 'she is running **downstream**'

The valency-affecting affixes are probably the loosest of the four groupings; they mostly share their position between the root and the VAG-suffix (more or less), although some of them can appear recursively. They also vaguely share the fact that they all affect valency (the arguments a predicate can take) in some way, but I won't even try and make any deeper generalizations about them but rather treat them individually.

The **applicative** (APPL) is used to make an intransitive predicate transitive *without* changing its subject; i.e., the action itself is the same, performed by the same person, but it is now performed on a specified object, so in (20a).

(20) a. *ngatsatlā* 'he is leaving'
→ *bisdarēzi ngats**dar**atlā* 'he is leaving the city'
b. *ngatsatlā* 'he is leaving'
→ *yari ngats**og**atlā* 'he is making her leave'
c. *bisdarēzi ngats**dar**atlā* 'he is leaving the city'
→ *yari bisdarēzi ngatsdar**og**atlā* 'he is making her leave the city'
d. *nāmamis* 'she is fleeing'
→ *ilte nām**og**amis* 'she is driving them off'
→ *yari ilte nāmog**og**amis* 'she is making her drive them off'

The **causative** (CAUS) is diabolically similar, but with an important difference. It is also used to make an intransitive predicate transitive, but with an intended meaning of 'X is making Y do Z'. The derived predicate will take the original subject as its object and the entity forcing them to act as its subject; this probably makes a lot more sense with

an example, so have a look at (20b). Note that both applicative and causative can be stacked to express meanings like 'make X do Y to Z' (20c) but also 'make X make Y do Z' (20d). There theoretically is no restriction on the number of iterations of either APPL or CAUS that can appear in this slot, but more than two are rarely seen (or needed). If both applicative and causative appear at the same time, the applicative will always be closer to the root.

The remaining two forms are both special and don't really behave like any others we have looked at. A **gerund** is usually a nominalized form of a verb; since we don't have verbs and nouns in that sense in Akhirene, it might make more sense to say that the gerund refers to an action as an abstract or general, impersonal entity, so (21a). It can be considered valency-altering in the sense that it refocusses a predicate from its arguments to itself, both semantically and syntactically. Consequently, they cannot take any more suffixes specifying e.g. aspect or voice (21b), they cannot take arguments, and if number is coded on them, it refers to the number of entities themselves (21c)[3]. It can appear with APPL and CAUS and will then always take the last position, closing the word for any further suffixes (21d).

(21) a. *ɕōda* 'to bear' → *ɕōdazi* 'transport'
b. *ɕōdazi* 'transport' → **ɕōdazitla* 'he is transporting'
c. *nāmamis* 'she escapes' → *weznāmamis* 'they escape'
nāmēzi 'escape' → *weznāmēzi* 'escapes'
d. *ɕōdag* 'to make someone bear' → *ɕōdagēzi* 'slavery'

The final category to consider is the **reflexive/reciprocal/distributive** (REFL). Before getting into details about its function, I should say a few words about how it is formed, since this differs quite drastically from the other suffixes. The reflexive is technically speaking not a suffix but really more a form of the root itself; it is formed by reduplication (i.e., repetition) of the root without any further modifications (22a). Inflectional affixes can attach to it like to any other form, whereas derivational suffixes sometimes attach to the reduplicated form and sometimes are reduplicated with the root—more on that below, after a quick introduction to what exactly this form does.

(22) a. *areda* 'to heal' → *aredaoreda* 'to heal **oneself**'
b. *hīsatlā gāramiste aredaoredayat*
'the undertaker and the singer have healed **each other**'
c. *wezaredatlā ngifangifava* 'I anoint [all] healers (separately)'

REFL has a variety of related uses all connected to performing actions on oneself or over a defined group. In its base use as reflexive, it simply expresses that its subject and object are coreferential (i.e., the same), much like reflexives in English, so in (22a); if given a coordination ('X and Y') as its argument, it will be interpreted as a reciprocal action, so in (22b). The same form can also be used in a regular transitive configuration where either the subject or the object is plural-coded; it then expresses that the action

[3]Contrast this with the use of an inflected predicate as verbal noun in (13c): There, we refer to a specific instance with specific arguments. The gerund, on the other hand, usually has a more general or abstract meaning.

relates to each entity separately, so in (22c). I will briefly revisit reflexives below in section 1.5.2.4 and go into some greater detail about how they are and are not formed and used.

Which exact part of a word is reduplicated varies and ultimately depends on the meaning; or, more precisely, on *semantic scope*. We generally assume that everything that is reduplicated forms part of the reflexivized predicate, while anything that is added 'on top' of a reduplicated form is taking the reflexive as its input.

(23) a. *fēsfēs-amis* 'she is holding herself back'
b. *yari fēsfēs-**og**-amis* 'she is making him hold himself back'
c. *yari fēs**og**-fēs**og**-amis* 'she is making herself hold him back'

So in (23a), we first form a reflexive predicate *fēsfēs* 'to hold oneself'. In (23b), we add a causative suffix; since this comes after the reduplication, it acts on the reflexive meaning, yielding *fēsfēsog* 'to make someone hold themself'. If we instead, as in (23c), add the causative before reduplication, we first get *fēsog* 'to make someone hold'. This is reflexivized as we reduplicate the word with the suffix, yielding *fēsogfēsog* 'to make oneself hold'. The same is generally true of applicatives, although the latter come into play less commonly. Inflectional affixes are never reduplicated; directional prefixes always are. Also beware that many reduplicated forms are irregular (so *n*)

1.4.2 Negation

I am treating negation in his section rather than the following one as it is a purely morphological operation in Akhirene. It technically speaking belongs to the universal paradigm but occupies a rather peculiar position, so I have omitted it from the breakdown above. Negation in Common Akhirene is formed with a pseudo-derivational prefix[4] *bīl-* that steps in between the root and the number prefix, so in (24).

(24) a. *wezbisdarēzi **bīl-** yōkazdaryo*
PL-city **NEG-** burn-APPL-PERF.PASS
'The cities have not been burned.'
b. *ilte wez- **bīl-** ngatsamis*
3PL PL- **NEG-** leave-F.PROG.ACT
'They are not leaving.'

(25) a. ***bīl-** kās*
NEG- mix
'to keep separate, hold apart, distinguish'
b. ***bīl-** bōsyo*
NEG- enlightened
'unenlightened, in the dark'

[4] *bīl-* is also a separate word meaning 'to avoid', so one could argue it is not technically speaking a prefix but rather either a clitic (see section 1.5) or an independent root forming a compound with the negated item (see section 1.4.4). All three accounts should make largely the same predictions, so for simplicity I will here treat it as a prefix.

In the vast majority of cases, that does the trick. The NEG prefix can be applied to any type of predicate, most commonly verb-like (24, 25a) and adjective-like predicates (25b). Importantly, this means that it exhibits great variation in terms of its scope, that is, which items in a clause it affects. Namely, it either just negates the predicate itself, so in (25a), where NEG tells us that a non-mixing action *is* being performed, or it negates the predicate and all of its dependants, so in (24), where NEG tells us a leaving and burning action are *not* being performed. The difference between these two readings is often nuanced or even nonexistent ('distinguishing' and 'not confusing' two things is really more or less the same) but in certain cases can create a noteworthy disparity in meaning or even an auto-antonym. Ultimately, the interpretation comes down to context. Note, however, that I called NEG pseudo-derivational above, and also that I, while clearly pointing out that it follows number, have suspiciously avoided talking about NEG's position relative to derivational prefixes. And there's the rub. In a way, we could say that NEG can be either derivational or inflectional; in the former case, it produces a new item with a negated meaning (scope only over the predicate), while in the latter case, it produces an item with the original meaning but indicating that this meaning does not come to play.

(26) ***bīl-*** *dzi- bisyo*
NEG- UP- set-PERF.PASS
'It was not erected.'

Being inflectional, the latter places it certainly *outside* of all derivation, between number and direction, so in (26). But if NEG is used derivationally, it could theoretically appear either before or *after* the direction-affecting prefixes, and in fact, it comes after them. Such cases are rather rare, and I have not been able to think of any examples to post here beyond the rather clunky (27a), so you might never be confronted with this, but in case you are, it is good to know.

(27) a. *dzi-* ***bīl-*** *bisyo*
UP- **NEG-** set-PERF.PASS
'It was left up.' (Perhaps, 'It was left in an upwards position'?)

b. ***bīl-*** *dzi- bisyo*
NEG- UP- set-PERF.PASS
'It was not set *up* (but *down*, *over*, wherever).'

And there is a second remark I should make on the placing of NEG with respect to the directional prefixes. It *does* happen that derivational NEG appears before a DIR prefix, but in those cases, it is not negating the predicate, but the prefix itself (27b). Carefully note that this looks, here and always, exactly like inflectional negation in (26), so, as per usual, context will be the judge of which interpretation we choose. Again, I am not sure how often you will actually get to use this, but if you do, you are prepared.

1.4.3 Agreement

We have already established that predicates indicate gender and number of their theme, and I have hinted at the fact that this has something to do with agreement. How exactly

these features are expressed depends on the presence or absence of *referring expressions*, words referring to specific entities, in a nutshell, noun and pronoun(-like predicates). Akhirene is a *pro-drop* language, meaning that if we know who or what fills an argument slot, we can simply leave it blank (we drop the pro[noun]), so in (28); I will have (a lot) more to say on this in section 1.5.2.2.

(28) a. *Gāramis wezngifayatets. Oyaz bisdarēzi qōno**mis**.*
'We annointed the singer. Now [she] is building a city.'

b. *Wezbisdarēzi nāmatlāva. **Wez**yōkazdar**enaz**.*
'I have fled the cities. [They] are being burned.' (For now ignore person coding.)

In cases like this, the predicate will always agree with its theme, irrespective of whether the theme is animate or inanimate (28). And that I just said that should already tell you that that is not always the case.

(29) a. i. *Ilte gāramis wezngifayat. Oyaz yari bisdarēzi qōno**mis**.*
'[They] annointed the singer. Now she is building a city.'

ii. *Yari wezbisdarēzi nāmatlā. Ilte yōkazdarenaz.*
'He has fled the cities. They are being burned.'

b. i. *Gāramis bisdarēzi qōno**mis**.*
'The singer is building a city.'

ii. *Wezbisdarēzi yōkazdarenaz.*
'The cities are being burned.'

Indeed, when we do have an overt referring expression, as in (29), either a 'pronoun' (29a) or a 'noun' (29b), the 'verb-like' predicate only agrees with animate themes and completely ignores inanimate ones. Note, though, that we still need to code for aspect and voice, and since gender is always part of the GAV-suffix, this rule really only affects number—the ending *-enaz* is retained in (29a-ii), primarily to express PERF.PASS, but it so happens to also express neuter gender.

1.4.4 Compounding

This section is going to be more of a brief tangent from the heavily grammatical discussions we have been wading so far, and hopefully it will be a fun one; I am going to talk about how to create new words by compounding, so this will hopefully also be very useful for you in the future.

The simplest way of creating a new word is to combine two existing ones. The rules for this are fairly simple (and similar to those in English): Any two items can be combined as long as they consist of nothing more than a root with derivational affixes, so the examples in (30).

(30) a. *yōka + bis* → *yōkabis*
'fire' + 'to set' → 'to ignite'

b. *mors + dzane* → *mordzane*
direct + to look → 'to spy, scout'

c. *dzifi + areda* → *dzisyareda*
to freeze + to mend → to freeze over, to freeze shut

You will notice that in at least the first two examples, the word on the right is the head, i.e. the part of the compound dictating base meaning and semantic category (setting something on fire is a kind of setting, not a kind of fire etc.). While this is generally the case, it is not a hard-and-fast rule, and head-initial compounds do appear in Akhirene (albeit less frequently), so (30c).

(31) *ngats + dzifi* → *ngatszifi*
beyond + ice → 'far away'

Otherwise, there are not many special rules to follow when it comes to compounding. Where consonants or vowels clash, the resolution rules as described in section 1.2.3 come to play. Going hand in hand with the ambiguity in headedness, the meaning of compounds is not always fully transparent; (3a), for example, here repeated as (31), while literally meaning 'beyond the ice', is used as 'very far away' (presumably referring to the frozen peaks of either the Ethomo or the Ecivina mountains).

1.5 Syntax

With the thorough morphological knowledge we have gained over the previous section, we are now ready to return to our discussion of argument structure begun in section 1.3 and properly dive into Akhirene syntax. I will start with another quick tangent, having a closer look at a feature we have so far mostly glanced over, the passive. I will then go into detail about how most 'traditional' word classes can be recreated in the Akhirene predicate system and how each of these predicate types behaves in the field.

1.5.1 Passives

As has already been established in section 1.4.1.1, the Akhirene passive is one of two voices forming part of the GAV-suffixes, with no specific passive suffix but rather a whole separate set of GA-suffixes in the passive. In terms of argument structure, there really aren't any surprises here: The passive merges the first- and second-argument positions into one single position, occupied by the predicate's object or object-like argument. In less technical terms, it turns the object into the subject, so in (32).

(32) a. *Ngifayo bisdarēzi qōnomis.*
'The anointed is building a city.'
b. *Bisdarēzi qōnonaz (taya ngifayo).*
'A city is being built (by the anointed).'

(33) *hos- og- yo taiva*
blush- CAUS- PERF.PASS *tai*.1SG
'She was embarrassed by me.'

Important to note is that the object rather than the subject is now the theme of the predicate and the target for agreement. The original subject can be reintroduced as a *tai*-phrase, a construction introduced by the pseudo-preposition *tai*. I will have more to say about prepositions in section 1.5.4.1; for now, it suffices to say that *tai* follows the 'verb' and is itself followed by the displaced subject.

SG	*taiva*	*tazin*	*taya*
PL	*tang*	*tazin*	*talte*
	1	2	3

Table 1.4: Agreement of *tai*

tai itself is a *pseudo*-preposition due to the fact that, for complicated historical reasons, it changes forms depending on the features of the displaced subject it introduces. It seems to have been 'verb-like' at some point[5] and it still shows some remnants of theme agreement. For more complicated historical reasons to do with pronouns (see also section 1.5.2.1), it agrees with the following 'noun' in person and number, by the paradigm in Tab. 1.4. In practice, the first- and second-person forms don't need a separate referring expression and will often stand alone, as in (33). In any case, combining an inflected form of *tai* with a following pronoun is ungrammatical.

1.5.2 0-place predicates

Far above I introduced the notions of 1- and 2-place predicates with the example of intransitive and transitive verbs, and we will find that most classical word classes can be sorted into one of the two groups: Like intransitive verbs, adjectives, determiners and quantifiers (as we will see in section 1.5.3) all have one argument, the meaning of which they modify in some way; like transitive verbs, prepositions and quantifiers (section 1.5.4) take two arguments and connect them in some meaningful way.

Good so far, but what about nouns and pronouns? We already know that Common Ahkirene has no issue dealing with them, as I have been flashing them again and again in the previous sections. But nouns don't usually have subjects or objects or any other kind of arguments, then how can they fit into this model? I think the question is very much the answer here, if we just reframe it in slightly more formal terms: Nouns take no arguments, so noun-like predicates are *zero-place* predicates. That term might seem a bit nonsensical at first, and while it does exist in non-Akhirene linguistics, it is usually reserved for weather verbs like *it rains*; I am using it here simply in the sense of, and to express that, nouns and pronouns are structurally *complete* without taking any arguments.

Consider 1- and 2-place predicates as we have discussed above: They are, in formal terms, FUNCTIONS: They take a variable input and produce a variable output. While with classical mathematical functions, both these values will usually be numbers, so in (34), in our system, input and output will be some form of meaning.

(34) a. $f(x) = x^2$
b. $f(2) = 2^2 = 4$

A predicate like *las* 'to serve' really only has a partial meaning, something like (35a), a template waiting for its holes to be filled. Once we input an argument, the predicate will output some kind of meaning (35b).

[5]There indeed still is a verb CA *tāyē*, HA *thai* 'to initiate'.

(35) a. [arg2] [arg1] LAS ‘to serve’
b. [arg2] *ngifayo* LAS ‘to serve the annointed’
c. *gāramis ngifayo* LAS(*-amis*) ‘the singer serves the annointed’

If a predicate can take more than one argument, we can repeat the process to receive an even more elaborate meaning (35c). In other words, we can say that by inputting one argument, we saturate one of the open slots in the 2-place predicate (35a), turning it into a 1-place predicate (35b). Saturating the second slot, we turn the 1-place predicate into a proposition[6], an expression that does not take any arguments[7]. So by calling nouns and pronouns ‘0-place predicates’, I really just mean that: They are functionally complete without taking any arguments, just on their own[8].

But then, some nouns *can* take arguments! Just think of phrases like *the taming of the shrew—taming* is a noun, and it takes *of the shrew* as its argument. This is usually true of *deverbal nouns*, nouns derived from verbs, which tend to keep their source verb’s argument structure. In English, we clearly have to say that nouns aren’t always logically 0-place; but let’s think back at example (13) from section 1.4, repeated here as (36).

(36) *wez- gār- amis*
PL- sing- F.PROG.ACT
a. ‘they (f) are singing’
b. ‘the singers (f)’
c. ‘their (f) singing’

I presented *gār* as able to fulfill three syntactic functions, that of a verb (36a), that of a verbal noun (36c), and that of an agent noun (36b). I describe both (36b) and (36c) as nouns here, but note the structural differences between them: (36c) is a 1-place predicate with an invisible argument (let’s assume a dropped pronoun) and its number and gender features arise out of agreement with this argument/theme. (36b) is a 0-place predicate; all of its features are inherent, and it is clearly a noun. (36c), on the other hand, behaves so much like a verb that we might as well treat it like one, and indeed, we could just translate it as ‘[the fact] that they are singing’, a complement clause. In general, all Akhirene ‘nouns’ that take arguments really behave like verbs, and we can safely treat them as such, or as subordinate clauses. While it, by all means, does not work for *most* languages (including English), in Akhirene, we can actually take being a 0-place predicate as our *definition* of what constitutes a noun; I will refer to verbs like in (36c) as *nominalizations*.

Such nouns come in three forms: i) inflected predicates like in (36), ii) gerunds, which, being abstract, also cannot take arguments, and iii) pronouns, which I will treat in greater detail in the following section. Being 0-place predicates, these items have a

[6] *Technically,* a proposition is a bit more than that, but for here it should suffice the way it is.

[7] I have tried to keep this introduction as simple and informal as possible, but if you are interested in this kind of thing, λ-calculus is a semantic system based entirely on the notion of saturating argument slots one by one, with the important addition that it is also interested in the truth.

[8] Yes, in traditional terms, that means they aren’t really predicates in the first place, but I am going to bend that term a bit within Akhirene linguistics, just for the sake of parsimony and to keep terminology consistent.

	FREE		CLITIC	
	SG	PL	SG	PL
1	*ova*	*ngets*	*=va*	*=(ng)ets*
2	*dzin*	*wedzin*	*=zin*	*=zin*
3	*yari*	*ilte*	*=yaz*	C=*el*, V=*lte*

Table 1.5: Common Akhirene pronouns

very special role in Akhirene syntax: Since all non-0-place predicates need their argument slots filled, in theory, every grammatical sentence of Akhirene must include at least one 0-place predicate. But, as I have already mentioned that Common Akhirene is a pro-drop language, in practice, this 0-place predicate can be and very often is invisible.

1.5.2.1 Pronouns

We have already covered options i) and ii) above in enough detail that you should be able to work with them, but I haven't really given much attention to the group in iii), the pronouns of Common Akhirene. Syntactically speaking, they are quite curious in two ways, first that they, unlike virtually any other Akhirene words, always behave the same, i.e. they are always 'pronoun-like' and never 'verb-like' or 'adjective-like', and secondly that they cliticize in many positions (more on what that means below).

Fundamentally, Common Akhirene pronouns are really just a special class of 0-place predicates that refer specifically to the speaker, listener, and nonpartisan bystanders. They code for person and number, but not gender; the number dimension only distinguishes SG and PL, where the SG doubles for collectives. Tab. 1.5 gives an overview of all forms. Theoretically, these items can take inflection like any others, but since the identities they communicate are rarely subject to change, they are generally understood to only appear in the habitual, and since number is inherent to the forms, they are never found with number prefixes (although the form of the 2PL pronoun suggests it did originate in this way).

Where pronouns significantly differ from other Akhirene words is their syntactic behaviour. As far as they appear as separate items, pronouns behave exactly like any other Akhirene word; they can be used to refer to a predicate's theme or any other argument.

(37) a. *yari ngatsamis* 'she is leaving'
b. *ngatsamis* '[she] is leaving'

I have mentioned before that Common Akhirene is pro-drop, and while that wasn't stricly a lie, I should remark here that most of the time, this only applies to the third person (37); first- and second-person pronouns will almost always be realized, unless it is absolutely clear whom we are talking about (for example, if I am describing a chain of activities I have performed, I might omit the first-person pronoun after having established my identity once).

(38) a. *yari yari lasatlā* 'he is serving her'
b. *yari lasatlā* '[he] is serving her'
c. * *yari lasatlā* 'he is serving [her]'
d. *lasatlā* '[he] is serving [her]'

The second restriction to pronoun dropping concerns their position in a construction. As has been covered before, if a 2-place predicate appears with only one overt argument, we will always assume that this is its *first* argument. Consequently, we cannot drop the first argument but keep the second in place, as this would lead to confusion (38). As a rule, third-person theme pronouns can be dropped from any unambiguous sentence; non-theme third-person pronouns can only be dropped if the theme is not overtly realized. First- and Second-person pronouns are (almost) always overtly realized, nonregarding whether they appear in subject, object, or any other position.

(39) a. *ngatsamisva*
ngats -amis =va
leave -F.PROG.ACT =1SG
'I (F) am leaving'
b. *yari lasatlāzin*
yari las -atlā =zin
3SG serve -M.PROG.ACT =2
'you (M.SG) are serving her'

The second crucial difference to other Akhirene words lies in what happens to pronouns when they are themes. You will have noticed that Tab. 1.5 lists two sets of forms, a full or FREE and a reduced or CLITIC set. The former contains the base forms of all pronouns, which are used in non-theme position; the latter are *clitics*, a sort-of intermediate category between words and affixes: In syntactic and semantic terms, they are distinct words, but phonologically, they cannot stand on their own but have to cling onto another, stronger word (in glosses, this is indicated with the = symbol). Akhirene pronouns specifically cliticize when they are themes, and they cling onto their host predicate (39).

There are other uses for clitic pronouns (as you will see below) which make it a bit clearer how they differ from affixes, but as far as the inflection of predicates is concerned, you can safely think of them a simply person-coding suffixes. Note that the 3PL clitic has two different forms, one if following a consonant, the other if following a vowel. Conversely, the second-person clitic, since omitting its beginning, is syncretic across both singular and plural; number can usually be ascertained through the number prefix on the host predicate.

The third person behaves a bit differently from the others. I have already mentioned that unlike first- and second-, third-person pronouns are optional and are only used to help disambiguate between two possible readings; but not only can they optionally appear, they are also optionally clitic. The critical difference here comes from the context they can and cannot be used in: Given (40a), we would assume that *he* is known and was in fact the last third-person referent we talked about; (40b) implies that we are referring

to someone mentioned in discourse before but not the last person mentioned—in other words, we are referring back to an older referent.

(40) a. *yari lasatlā* '[he] is serving her'
b. ***yari*** *yari lasatlā* 'he is serving her'
c. *lasatlā=**yaz*** 'he is serving [her]'
d. ? *yari lasatlā=**yaz*** 'he is serving her'

The clitic form in (40c) is special in that it violates the rule I mentioned above (and will go into more detail about below): If only one pronoun is present, this will always be the object, but never the subject of a predicate (38); but exactly this *can* be the case if said pronoun is a clitic, as in (40c). We would use this form to emphasize that *he* is an older referent, as with the full pronoun in (40b), while at the same time dropping the object pronoun *her* (see section 1.5 for examples of this in practice). The fourth possible option, as shown in (40d), where there is both an overt object pronoun and a clitic subject pronoun, is consequently not particularly useful and even somewhat contradictory and you will not find it in use with active predicates (the ? indicates that we are unsure about whether an utterance is grammatical or not, or that language users disagree on this point).

1.5.2.2 Referent tracing

I should say a bit more on this last topic; namely, how we know, when reducing nouns to pronouns and dropping pronouns into nothing, who exactly we are talking about. In academic linguistics, this falls under the term *referent tracing*: How we trace a referent (an individual we reference) across sentences. Some languages are relatively casual about this; in English, for example, we would introduce a referent once using a full noun and then just refer to them by pronouns, when at risk of ambiguity, we use expressions like *the former, the latter*, etc. Other languages (like German or Italian) have a more complex system to avoid ambiguities, and Akhirene certainly belongs to the latter group.

(41) a. *Aredamis gāryat.*
'The healer has sung.'
b. *Aredamis gāryat**va**.*
'I, the healer, have sung.'

(42) *Aredamis gāryat. Oyaz hoshosamis.*
'The healer has sung. Now [she] is blushing.'

I have already introduced many of the rules in the previous section and when talking about agreement above. There are two basic stages in Akhirene referent tracing, FIRST MENTION and SUBSEQUENT MENTIONS. On its first mention, every referent has to be introduced in full, that is, as a full noun like in (41a). First- and second-person referents are, of course excluded from this rule, as we should already know who we are and who we are talking to; Akhirene does, however, allow for the use of nouns with first- and second-person pronouns if we want to make it extra clear in what capacity we are speaking (41b).

On subsequent mentions of the same referent, we don't have to be as specific anymore. If there is no risk of ambiguity, e.g. in a chain like (42), where there is only one referent, we can safely just drop the pronoun. As a general rule, if no overt argument is given for a verb-like predicate, we assume that it is represented by a dropped pronoun referring to the **last mentioned theme.** In (42), we trace back to the theme in the previous sentence, *aredamis*.

(43) a. *Aredamis gāryat. Gāratlā yari*[9] *ngifyat. Oyaz hoshos**amis**.*
'The healer (*f*) has sung. The singer (*m*) has anointed her. Now **she** is blushing.'

b. *Aredamis gāryat. Gāratlā yari ngifyat. Oyaz hoshos**atlā**.*
'The healer (*f*) has sung. The singer (*m*) has annointed her. Now **he** is blushing.'

Things get a little more complicated when we have a transitive verb (or any other 2-place predicate), as in (43–44). Now, there are two referents the argument-less predicate in the second sentence can refer to; there are two ways to resolve such an ambiguity, based on the features on each referent. (43) represents the easier case, namely, when the referents differ in gender and/or number and this is clearly represented. The *healer* here is female, the *singer* male, so we know which one is blushing simply by the gender-coding on the verb, and we can safely drop the pronoun in both cases. Note, however, that this is only possible if there is a clear distinction in the morphology: Were (43) in the perfect rather than the progressive, the verb would simply end in *-yat*, obscuring any gender difference.

(44) a. *Aredamis gāryat. Gāramis yari ngifyat. Oyaz hoshosamis.*
'The healer (*f*) has sung. The singer (*f*) has anointed her. Now she [the singer] is blushing.'

b. *Aredamis gāryat. Gāramis yari ngifyat. Oyaz yari hoshosamis.*
'The healer has sung. The singer has anointed her. Now she [healer] is blushing.'

(45) *Gāryat**va**. Aredamis ngifyat. Bisdarēzi qōnoyat. Oyaz hoshosyat.*
'**I** sang. [I] anointed the healer. [I] built a city. Then, [I] blushed.

In such a case, or if there is no gender distinction, such as in (44), we have to bring pronouns into play. I have mentioned above that per default, dropped pronouns always refer to the last mentioned theme, and that is the rule we will now stick to. In (44a), the theme of the second sentence is *gāramis*, the singer, so we will assume that when the pronoun is dropped in the third sentence, it refers back to her. This allows us to build long chains of verbs with a shared subject but different objects without having to reassert whom were are talking about every time (45).

If instead, we want to refer to a non-theme argument, we have to opt for a solution with an overt pronoun (44b). Conversely, whenever we find a non-obligatory overt pronoun, we will assume that it refers back to the last non-theme argument mentioned;

[9]This pronoun is, of course, obligatory, since we are not allowed to let a second argument (here, *gāratlā*), stand on its own.

so in (44b) the first/object argument of *ngifyat* which in turn is a pronoun referring back to *aredamis*.

And still, there is one case in which this strategy does not work: If we want to refer to a previous theme from an object position. The basic rule for referring to themes is to drop the pronoun, but this we can't do, lest it leave the subject standing alone, making it look like the object and yielding a sentence with the inverse of the meaning we are trying to convey. We have to use a full pronoun; but we only use pronouns to refer to non-themes, so this again will leave us with a sentence that does not mean what it should mean.

(46) Intended: 'The singer (*m*) anointed the healer (*f*). The hero served him.'
   a. *Gāratlā aredamis ngifyat. Gāreti lasyat.*
   'The singer (*m*) anointed the healer (*f*). He served the hero.'
   b. *Gāratlā aredamis ngifyat. Gāreti yari lasyat.*
   'The singer (*m*) anointed the healer (*f*). The hero served her.'

So in (46a), dropping the object pronoun in the second sentence will make it look like *gāreti* 'hero' is itself the object; as no other subject is given, we will refer back to the lat theme, *gāratlā*. The resulting interpretation is the opposite of what was intended. In (46b), the use of *yari* implies that we are referring to a non-theme, and while this at least yields the correct argument structure, it is now *aredamis*, rather than *gāratlā*, that fills the object slot.

(47) a. *Wezgāratlā wezhoshosyat. Gāreti aredamis ngifyat. Wezlasyat=el.*
   'The singers blushed. The hero anointed the healer. They [the singers] served her.'
   b. *Gāratlā aredamis ngifyat. Gāreti yariz lasyat.*
   'The singer anointed the healer. The hero served him.'

Third-person clitics can offer partial relief. I have said before that clitic pronouns are uniquely able to appear as second arguments of a predicate even when no first argument is given. We can exploit this in cases like (47a), where dropping the object pronoun in the third sentence clearly demarks *gāreti* as the object, which is possible since we can indicate the identity of the singers through the 3PL-clitic *=el*.

Unfortunately, this strategy only works in selected examples where we can clearly distinguish whom the clitic is referring to, and it would not be a viable solution for the intended meaning in (46), as the (gender-neutral) clitic *=yaz* could refer back to either *gāratlā* or *aredamis*. To properly formulate this sentence, we need the help of a special word, the emphatic pronoun *yariz* (PL *iltyaz*). It behaves like any other pronoun except that it does not cliticize and that it has a slightly stronger[10] meaning, closer to 'that one'. In practice, we use *yariz* just like we would use *yari*, with the important difference that it, just like a dropped pronoun, refers back to the last theme. Thus, we can finally express the meaning in (46) by forming a construction such as in (47b).

[10]Or weaker? In a way, it stands between the regular pronoun and an empty/dropped pronoun, so in terms of specificity, it is actually weaker than *yari*. A point to debate…

1.5.2.3 Pronominal modifiers

I have covered the basic functions of pronouns two sections ago, but there are yet a few more things to say about them, and I will devote the following two sections thereto. The first has to do with another function of clitic pronouns. Agile but clingy as they are, they attach not only to predicates but also to their own set of *pronominal modifiers*, almost prefixes in a way, which slightly modify a pronoun's meaning: the intensifier *do-* and the partitive marker *kin-*.

(48) a. *ova* 'I'
dzin 'you'
yari 'he'

b. ***do****va* 'I myself'
do*zin* 'you yourself'
do*yaz* 'he himself'

The **intensifier *do-***, as the name promises, puts a special emphasis on a pronoun (48), insisting that we are speaking of this person and truly and only of the one. This is used in very much the same way as the English *-self* forms, so in examples like (49).

(49) ***do****va wezfēs gōdayat* 'I bore the chains myself.'

The **partitive marker *kin-*** has a function (or, strictly speaking, two related functions) very similar to the distributive use of reduplication. While reduplication such as in (22c), here repeated as (50), tells us that an action is performed repeatedly, *kin-* expresses that we are looking at the individual members of a group, either to say something about each of them individually or to indicate we are concerned with only a part of it (hence *partitive*).

(50) *wezaredatlā ngifangifava* 'I anoint [all] healers (separately)'

(51) a. i. *ilte fēs gōdayat* 'they carried a chain (together)'
ii. *kinel fēs gōdayat* 'they each carried a chain'
b. i. *āval hīsyatva* 'I hid the gold'
ii. *āval kinyaz hīsyatva* 'I hid some gold'

So in (51a), we are contrasting an action performed by a group of people on a single object with an action performed separately by each member of the group (presumably on different objects). In (51b), we use the partitive to express that we are talking about a certain subset of a collective sum; here, an undefined amount that forms part of the collective 'gold', i.e., all gold that exists. English solves this simply by ommitting an article, but French, for example, also uses a partitive in cases like this, and part of that has made its way into English in expressions like *one pound of apples*, where we imply to be speaking of 'one pound out of the whole sum of apples'. In general, you should be able to translate partitives as 'some X' or 'some of X'.

As I said above, these are really two functions, one distributive, yielding an 'each' meaning, and one a true partitive, yielding a 'some' meaning. Distinguishing them might not always be easy, and theoretically, a partitive form can be ambiguous. As a rule of thumb, mass nouns, that is, expressions referring to uncountable masses like 'water' or 'gold', can only appear with the true partitive reading, so in (51b); count nouns, that is, expressions referring to countable entities, can theoretically appear with

both but are more likely to be found with a distributive reading, so in (51a). Additionally, the distributive reading is more likely to appear with subjects and the partitive reading with objects. Ultimately, as so often in Akhirene grammar, context is the final judge.

Finally, I should mention two syntactic peculiarities of *kin-* and *do-* that you might already have noticed. Firstly, they combine with clitic pronouns and attract them more strongly than predicates do; so in (49), the first-person clitic attaches to *do-* rather than *cōdayat*. This is a hard rule, as *kin-* and *do-* cannot stand on their own and only attach to clitic pronouns (making them prefixes more than clitics themselves), and if a clitic pronoun attached to the verb, they would have nowhere to go. This, in turn, also means that we cannot intensify or partitive-code a noun such as *āval* 'gold' in (51b). What instead happens is that an *expletive*, a 'dummy pronoun', appears right after the original noun and carries the prefix for it, creating an expression literally meaning something like 'The gold, I hid some of it.'

1.5.2.4 Reflexives and reciprocals

This section is in essence an addendum to the things I have already said about the reflexive form in section 1.4.1.2, mostly concerning how pronouns are used in reflexive constructions.

To briefly recapitulate the previous discussion: Reflexives are formed by reduplication and express that a predicate's subject is also its object, so in (52a). Reciprocals are reflexives which take a coordination as predicate, with an 'each other' meaning (52b).

(52) a. *Gāramis hoshosamis.*
'The singer is blushing (= reddening herself).'
b. *Hīsatlā gāramiste aredaoredayat.*
'The undertaker and the singer have healed each other.'

Simple reflexive constructions are quite common in Akhirene. Many predicates are inherently reflexive when used in a verb-like way, that is, they always appear in reflexive form even when their meaning is strictly speaking intransitive, so *hos* above and the examples in (53).

(53) a. *wazema* 'here' → *wazemawazema* 'to stay'
b. *wasōr* 'meadow' → *wasōrwasōr* 'to graze'
c. *wata* 'down' → *watawata* 'to descend'

Others change their meaning, not always in predictable ways, when put in the reflexive form (54). I will remark these items, or the relevant interpretations, in the lexicon as REFL or *[r]*.

(54) a. *yōka* 'to burn something' → *yōkayōka* 'to be on fire'
b. *las* 'to serve, tend, quench' → *laslas* 'to drink'
c. *bis* 'to set, install' → *bisbis* 'to settle down'

The distinction between predicates which are inherently reflexive and those which are not is a very important one. We can generally assume that there is nothing uncommon

or surprising about one of the words above appearing in the reflexive, and syntactically, we can simply treat them as intransitives, as *hos* in (52a).

But crucially, not all predicates fall into this category, and there are some, like *areda* 'to heal', which appear much more rarely in the reflexive. In these cases, we want to draw special attention to the fact that the object is the same as the subject (the predicate is *autopathic*), and we do so by using an over pronoun in its strongest form, with the intensifier *do-* (55).

(55) a. *Gāramis **doyaz** aredaoredayat.* 'The singer healed **herself**.'
b. ***Dova** ngifangifava.* 'I anoint **myself**.'

This distinction is one between SIMPLEX and COMPLEX ANAPHORS, and it is present in many languages, including Dutch and Homeric Greek. Most of the time, it is a simple matter of knowing which predicates are and aren't inherently reflexive, but in certain cases, the presence or absence of a *do*-pronoun can come with an actual change in meaning.

(56) a. i. *Ilte aredaoredayat.* 'They healed each other.'
ii. *Ilte dolte aredaoredayat.* 'They healed themselves.'
b. i. *Yari yōkayōkatlā.* 'He is on fire.'
ii. *Yari doyaz yōkayōkatlā.* 'He is setting himself on fire.'

Reciprocals as in (52b) generally appear without a *do* since the action itself is not strictly speaking reflexive; if we, however, speak of a group of people performing an action on themselves, the result is reflexive and will be marked with *do* (56a). Similarly, many predicates have a more passive or stative meaning as simplex and an active meaning as complex anaphors, so (56b).

1.5.2.5 Possessives

Common Akhirene distinguishes between two types of possession, alienable and inalienable.

Inalienable possession refers to things that relate to us in a certain way but that we don't really own, they cannot be taken away from us, the 'possessive relationship' will never change; classic examples are body parts (*my arm*) and relatives (*my grandmother*). In Akhirene, an inalienable possession will always precede its possessor, as in (57a)[11]. If the possessor is a pronoun, it will appear as a clitic and attach to the possession (57b).

(57) a. *dzōma gāramis* 'the singer's head'
b. *dzōmava* 'my head'

(58) a. *drēn gāramis fēs* 'the singer's chain'
b. *drēnva fēs* 'my chain'

[11] This seems like a curious violation of the basic schema. I don't have a complete answer for why this is happening, but there appears to be an invisible POSS predicate taking the possessor as its first and the possessed as its second argument, thus creating the surface order in (57a).

Alienable possession constitutes any other kind of ownership relation. It is expressed through a construction of the possessive particle *drēn* + possessor *preceding* possession (58). Is is a kind of special construction, as *drēn* here behaves like a 1-place predicate, but once its argument slot is filled, it doesn't convert to 0-place but rather produces a new 1-place predicate (it is different from 2-place predicate in that both arguments follow). Again, if the possessor is a pronoun, it will take its clitic form and attach directly to *drēn*.

1.5.3 1-place predicates

This section is concerned with three types of 1-place predicates, **adjectives**, **determiners**, and **quantifiers**, and also includes a brief note about the copula, or rather the absence of a copula, in Akhirene. All of these have very similar functions—they communicate a certain type of information about their argument—and they indeed behave in (almost) the exact same ways in the syntax. Where there a differences, they mostly concern things 'adjective-like' predicates can do and the others can't, and since you almost undoubtedly will be using adjectives the most, I will be using them as the type example and only briefly comment (see section 1.5.3.3 below) on where determiner- and quantifier-like predicates differ.

1.5.3.1 Adjectives

Adjective-like predicates behave essentially like intransitive verbs: They take one argument and add some defined meaning to it, so *hos* 'red', or 'to be red, to blush'. It takes one argument only, and by the basic schema we know that argument will follow, as in (59). This is a general rule: In Ahkirene, adjectives precede nouns.

(59) *hosyat* *yōka*
blush-PERF fire
'red fire'

Note that *hos* takes an inflected form in this example. Indeed, the item's base meaning is only one of 'to blush, to turn red', which we can reframe as 'red' or 'being red' by using its perfect form (implying that it turned red at some point in the past and is therefore red now). You will find that most Akhirene 'adjectives' are derived in this way, most commonly by forming the perfect passive of a 'verb-like' predicate[12], more rarely by using the perfect active, such as here, and occasionally by using other forms.

(60) *hosyat yōka bis =va*
red fire set =1SG
'I set red fire.'

I have before likened the filling of an argument slot with converting a predicate with x argument slots into a predicate with x−1 argument slots; and indeed, a 1-place argument which has taken an argument behaves like a 0-place argument: Syntactically, *hosyat yōka* is the same as *yōka*, and other predicates can take it as an argument, so in (60). Akhirene prdication is recursive.

[12]The suffix *-yo* will indeed develop into the adjective marker *-i* we used in High Ahkirene 1.0.

(61) a. ***wez**ngifayo wezaredamis* ‘anointed healers’
b. *hisyo wezbisdarēzi* ‘hidden cities’
c. *wezyōkanaz* ‘things being burnt’

As there formally is no difference between ‘adjectives’ and ‘verbs’, they also agree just like any other predicate: An adjective taking an animate argument will agree with it in number (61a), an adjective taking an inanimate argument will not (61b). Just like with verbs, if an adjective stands on its own, usually because we are talking about a category of things, it will show full agreement no matter the animacy of its (nonexistent) argument (61c).

1.5.3.2 The copula

A copula is a word, usually a verb, connecting the subject of a sentence with some kind of attribute or identity assigned to it, such as *to be* and *to become* in English (62). Since in Akhirene, every word is already a predicate, we have no need for a copula, as whatever attribute or identity we want to assign can simply be expressed in a ‘verb-like’ way.

(62) a. *The dawn is golden.*
b. *I am becoming hungry.*

(63) a. *Yezba āvalyo.* ‘the dawn is golden’
b. *Hīsatlā gāratlā.* ‘The undertaker is a singer.’
c. *Hīsatlāva.* ‘I am an undertaker.’

So in (63), the ‘adjective’ golden appears as the main predicate of the sentence, taking *yezba* ‘dawn’ as its first argument, and the second example works similarly. Note that here, *gāratlā* can mean either ‘one who is singing’ or just ‘is singing’, so there strictly speaking is no difference, in Akhirene, between saying that someone sings and that someone is a singer. Pronoun work as usual, by attaching in their clitic form.

1.5.3.3 Determiners and quantifiers

Determiners and quantifiers work in the exact same way (64–65), but their use is often complicated by additional rules. *=yaz* ‘this’ in (64), for example, is a clitic and always attached to its argument noun; the resulting construction is, in fact, a possessive, and *=yaz* none other than the 3SG clitic—you will find that this form is used *a lot* to emphasize a referent (and is also the source for *yariz* and *iltyaz* above).

(64) *āval =yaz*
gold =DET
‘this gold’

(65) a. *hen bōsēzi*
more teaching
‘further instructions’

b. *āval hen kin=yaz*
gold more of=it
‘more gold’

Likewise, *hen* 'more' in (65) can appear directly with abstract concepts, including most gerunds and other adjectives, and so in (65a), but when used with concrete mass nouns requires a partitive, such as in (65b), and then appears *between* the noun and the partitive expletive, making the word order appear a bit scrambled. Like all irregularities, I will be sure to clearly note in the lexicon when a demonstrative, or any other form, has special requirements or is used in a special way.

1.5.3.4 Numerals and ordering of 1-place predicates

#	CARDINAL	ORDINAL		
		M	F	N
one (1)	god	godatlā	godamis	godwe
two (2)	evas	evasatlā	evasamis	evasawe
three (3)	zaole	zaoletlā	zaolemis	zaolwe
four (4)	ōtar	ōtaratlā	ōtarmis	ōtarwe
five (5)	kova	kovatlā	kovamis	kowe
six (6)	beser	beseratlā	besermis	beserwe
seven (7)	sēmo	sēmotlā	sēmis	sēmowe
eight (8)	nai	naitlā	naimis	naiwe
nine (9)	sova	sovatlā	sovamis	sowe
ten (10)	wareti	waretlā	waretimis	waretwe

Table 1.6: Common Akhirene numerals

The fourth kind of 1-place predicates we should look at are numerals, or number words. They essentially work like adjectives and determiners in that they take a noun as their complement; complements of numbers other than 1 always have to be in the plural (66).

(66) a. *god bisdarēzi* 'one city'
b. *ōtar wezbisdarēzi* 'four cities'
c. *ōtar wezaredamis* 'four healers'

(67) a. *godwe bisdarēzi* 'the first city'
b. i. *ōtarwe bisdarēzi* 'the fourth city'
ii. *ōtarmis aredamis* 'the fourth healer (F)'
iii. *ōtaratlā yeratlā* 'the fourth runner (M)'
iv. *wezōtaratlā wezbosdaratlā* 'the fourth teachers (PL.M)'

Where numerals signifcantly differ from other 1-place predicates is in the fact that they come in both cardinal and ordinal form. Cardinal numbers are expressed by the base

form (ACT.HAB) as in (66); ordinal numbers come closest to what would be the ACT.PROG forms, so in (67). As per usual with the ACT.PROG, ordinal numbers also agree with their complement in gender and, if it is animate, number (67b). A full breakdown of all numbers and their forms can be found in table 1.6.

Of course it can happen that we find multiple 1-place predicates together, stacking on the same 0-place. In such cases, the order of the predicates is not arbitrary but always follows the pattern in (68).

(68) DET – QUANT/NUM – ADJ – NOUN

You will note that this is the exact same order we have in English, so using this template should be relatively intuitive for you. Ordering rules like this are indeed very common in the world's languages, and the order itself is almost universally the one given here or its mirror image (and that's actually kind of a big deal in theoretical syntax).

1.5.3.5 Comparison

As Akhirene morphology is not specific to word classes, or their equivalent predicate types, there also is no gradal inflection for adjectives; to express comparison, we have to reach for a periphrastic, that is, syntactic, solution.

(69) a. *ngotwe* 'fast'
b. *hen ngotwe* 'faster'
c. *henyaz ngotwe* 'fastest'

The comparative is formed using *hen* 'more', which we have already encountered before (69b). Since adjectives usually refer to abstract entities, we do not need to use a partitive construction here, but if we instead want to 'grade' a noun-like predicate, as in (70), we have to use *kin=*. The superlative is formed using our old friend, the 3SG clitic, here attaching to *hen* (69c).

(70) *yari aredamis hen kinyaz*
3SG healer more of.it
'She is more of a healer.'

(71) a. *ngotwe* 'fast'
b. *rog ngotwe* 'less fast'
c. *rogyaz ngotwe* 'the least fast'

To express a negative comparison, we use *rog* 'less' instead of *hen*.

(72) a. *hen ngotwe aredatlā* 'a faster healer'
b. i. *Yōka aredatlā hen ngotwe.*
'The fire is faster than a healer.'
ii. *yōka hen ngotwe aredatlā*
'a fire faster than a healer.'

Syntactically, *hen* forms a construction similar to *drēn*, taking one argument which it precedes (72a). If used predicatively, as in (72b), it will take the referent it describes as the second and the referent it is evaluated against as its first argument; word order will depend on whether basic or matrix schema applies. This construction also needs special attention to argument order: If a comparative takes only one argument, it will be whatever is being described; if it takes two, the first will be the reference point and the only the second the entity described. Here, again, it is very important never to drop the first argument if a second is present, as this would lead to widespread confusion and riots in Marsarri. To disambiguate, the rules described in section 1.5.2.2 will be helpful.

1.5.3.6 Adverbs

Akhirene does not really have adverbs, or even 'adverb-like' predicates (but see below that there are some conjunctions behaving a lot like adverbs). If we want to attribute a certain quality to a verb-like predicate, we have to do so by treating the verb as a nominalization (not a noun!) and forming a copula clause as in (73).

(73) *Yeratlā ngotwe.* 'He is running fast.' (lit. 'His running is fast.')

(74) a. *yeratlā aredatlā ngotwe*
running healer fast
'The healer is running fast.'

b. *gāramis qōnomis bisdarēzi ngotwe*
singer build city fast
'The singer is building the city quickly.'

c. *gāramis qōnomis bisdarēzi aredatlā qōnomis yari hen ngotwe*
singer build city healer build it more fast
'The singer is building the city more quickly than the healer.'

This differs from what 'true adverbs' would look like only in terms of which word-order schemas we use: Since now, the adjective is the matrix predicate, the nominalization will be its first argument and precede it, as per the matrix schema (73). Since the nominalization is *not* the matrix predicate, it will follow the basic schema, preceding its first and following its second argument (74).

1.5.4 2-place predicates

Finally, all that is left to look at are 2-place predicates. I have already covered transitive verbs in section 1.3.1, so this section will be focussed on **prepositions** and **conjunctions and embedded clauses**.

1.5.4.1 Prepositions

Prepositions work exactly like transitive verbs in that they take two arguments, usually but not necessarily two noun-like argument, the first a reference point for the second (75). We generally assume that prepositions are always in the habitual active, so they never take any inflectional suffixes.

(75) a. *wasōr wata mas*
meadow under sky
'a meadow under the sky'

b. *bisdarēzi wazema maitan*
city cis mountain
'a city on this side of the mountain'

(76) a. ***wez**bosdaratlā **wez**wata ngifayo*
PL-teacher PL-under anointed
'teachers in the shadow of the anointed'

b. ***Wez**bisdarēzi nāmyatva. Fēs **wez**wata.*
PL-city flee-PERF=1SG chain PL-under
'I have fled the cities. They have been subdued.' (lit. 'They are under a chain.')

Like verbs, however, they do agree with animate (and dropped inanimate) second arguments in number, so in (76). Like 'adverbs', prepostions can also be used as matrix predicates and will then follow the matrix schema, so in (76b).

(77) *āval kinyaz hīsyatva wata bisdarēzi*
gold of.it conceal-PERF.ACT=1SG under city
'I hid gold under the city.'

Finally, if a prepositional phrase is applied to a verb phrase as a whole, it will always follow after the matrix schema: The matrix clause itself remains untouched (77).

1.5.4.2 Conjunctions and embedded clauses

Conjunctions are very similar to prepositions, with the important difference that they can take entire clauses as their arguments. That means conjunctions very often appear on the highest level in a hierarchy of predicates, but nonetheless they always follow the basic schema, while some or all of their arguments might appear in the matrix schema.

(78) a. *lasatlā bisdarēzi gāratlā aredamis =te yōka fēsamis*
servant city sing healer =and fire hold
'The servant sings of the city and the healer holds the fire.'

b. *drēn lasatlā gāratlā bisdarēzi aredamis =te fēsamis yōka*
because servant city sing healer =and fire hold
'…because the servant sings of the city and the healer holds the fire'

Conjunctions can be either coordinating or subordinating. **Coordinating** conjunctions combine two clauses of the same rank, so either two matrix clauses (78a) or two embedded clauses (78b). Both clauses should then follow the matrix schema, but the overall construction the basic schema, with the conjunction between the clauses. In practice, not all conjunctions are full words; the coordinating conjunction used here, *=te* 'and', is in fact a clitic attaching to the first word of the second clause, but remember that this is only a feature of the surface form.

Subordinating conjunctions combine two clauses of unequal rank, so a matrix clause and an embedded clause (79a) or an embedded clause and a clause embedded

therein (79b). We can determine the rank of a clause by its function in a sentence: If it is a predicate on or an argument in another clause, it is subordinate, if it stands on its own, it is a matrix clause. *drēn gāramis fēsamis yōka* in (79a) gives us a reason for the event in the matrix clause: It is subordinate. *aredamiste yōka fēsamis* in (78a), on the other hand, just tells us about another event that happens to coincide with that in the first clause[13]: It is a matrix clause.

(79) a. *lasatlā bisdarēzi gāratlā drēn gāramis fēsamis yōka*
servant city sing because singer hold fire
'The servant is singing of the city because the singer is holding the fire.'

b. *aredamis lasatlā ngifamis ngats yari gāryat bisdarēzi drēn*
healer servant anoint-PROG after 3SG sing-PERF city because
gāramis fēsamis yōka
singer hold-PROG fire
'The healer is anointing the servant after he sang of the city because the singer was holding the fire.'

(80) a. *hīsatlā gāramis=te* 'the undertaker and the singer'
b. *bisdarēzi ēqo wasōr* 'the city or the meadow'

But all conjunctions aren't restricted to combining clauses, at least some coordinating conjunctions can also combine other kinds of predicates, usually noun- and adjective-like ones, as in (80). also note that many subordinating conjunctions can also appear with non-clausal arguments, but are then better described as prepositions (not that it really makes a difference in Ahkirene).

(81) *Gāramis wezngifayatets, oyaz yari bisdarēzi qōnoyat.*
'We annointed the singer, then she built a city.'

(82) *Oyaz bisdarēzi qōnomis.*
'Now she is building a city.'

Some conjunctions, finally, can also appear with just one clause, behaving a bit more like an adverb. One such example is the coordinating conjunction *oyaz* 'then, now', which can either combine two matrix clauses, expressing that the second happened after the first (82), or introduce a standalone matrix clause, expressing that it either follows on previous events or is happening at the time of speaking.

[13]Causality might even be implied here, but grammar generally doesn't care about implications.

Chapter 2
The Akhirene Dialects

2.1 Introduction

Let us now have a look at the individual dialects of Akhirene, Caethai (Cth.), Maspavi (Msp.), and Ovaitai (Ovt.). I imagine they started to diverge from Common Akhirene some time before the founding of Pesthe Akhirei, but as said above, I will leave the chronological details to you. I will also try to keep this section relatively short, as the dialects mainly differ in terms of phonology and semantics (some words are very similar across all of them, some barely recognizable) while the grammar is relatively consistent, so you should be well-prepared with what you have learned in the previous chapter.

In the following, I will treat each dialect in turn, listing all sound changes that affect it in vaguely chronological order and giving an overview over its morphology with a few comments on where things have changed significantly. The Akhirene Lexicon, once it is completed, should contain vocabulary forms in Common, High, and all dialects, so you can access them quickly whenever needed.

2.2 Caethai

2.2.1 Introduction

Caethai (Cth. *Jaethei*) is the first dialect, and the closest to High Akhirene. Most of the later HA morphology and lexicon is derived from its paradigms, and you will recognize a lot of the HA sound system in the sound changes presented below; but there are also significant discrepancies between the two, and they are far from the same language. Importantly for later Akhirene, this dialect loses a distinction between long and short vowels, abandons voicing in plosives, and drops quite a few sounds entirely, creating the abundance of vowel hiatus typical for High Akhirene.

2.2.2 Sound changes

The phonological history of Caethai can be divided into three phases, **Old Caethai**, **Middle Caethai**, and **Late Caethai**, each introduced by a unique set of sound changes. I will leave their exact historical placement to you, but I would suggest giving each phase at least two generations—the first generation learns the old form from their parents but begins unconsciously using the new form, the second generation learns the new form from the start. Late Caethai introduces some features typical of High Akhirene, and I

imagine that this changed happened not long before, or even partially during, the time of Aetamis; the lexicon lists only Middle Caethai forms.

2.2.2.1 Old Caethai

/aː/ > /eː/

<ā> always becomes <ē>.

/eː/ > /iː/

<ē> always becomes <ī>.

/ɑi̯/ > /ɛi̯/

<ai> always become <ei>.

/ɑʊ̯/ > /aː/

<ao> monophthongizes, becoming <ā>.

/jV/ > /iː/ / _C

If occurring before a consonant, <y>+vowel turns to <ī>.

/ʦ/ > [ʧ] <c>

<ts> is now pronounced [ʧ] and written as <c>.

/ʣ/ > [ʤ] <j>

<dz> is now pronounced [ʤ] and written as <j>.

/r/ > /i/ / _#

<r> goes to <i> at the end of words.

w > ∅

<w> is dropped.

C > ∅ / _C#

If two consonants appear at the end of a word, the first is dropped, leaving /s/ in x_5. Note that this rule is subject to sporadic variation, and some words might drop the /s/.

$$\begin{bmatrix} \text{plos} \\ \text{+voi} \end{bmatrix} > \begin{bmatrix} \text{–voi} \end{bmatrix}$$

Voiced plosives lose their voicing. The two rows of plosives can only be distinguished by aspiration now; I will use <p t k q> and <ph th kh qh> to reflect this change in writing.

/lV/ > /Vl/ / _C

<l> and a vowel swap places if they appear before a consonant. This is a process called *metathesis*, and it is responsible for the change from CA *-tlā* to HA *-thel*.

2.2.2.2 Middle Caethai

$$\begin{bmatrix} \text{+vow} \\ \text{+front} \\ \text{–low} \\ \text{+long} \end{bmatrix} > \begin{bmatrix} \text{–long} \end{bmatrix}$$

<ī, ē> are shortened to <i, e>.

/oː, aː/ > /ɛ̯ʊ̯/

Long <ō> and <ā> diphthongize to <eo>.

/V̥o̥/ > /ɛ̯ʊ̯/

Any hiatus of Vowel + /o/ in converted into the diphthong <eo>.

/ḁi̥/ > /ɑi̯/ / _#

An <a–i> hiatus at the end of words is turned into a diphthong <ai>.

/z/ > /s/ / { _# ; _C }

<z> loses its voicing at the end of words and before a consonant.

/z/ > ∅ / { V_V ; #_ }

<z> is dropped between vowels and at the beginning of words.

/r/ > ∅

<r> is dropped.

2.2.2.3 Late Caethai

∅ > i / **C_#

∅ > e / i**C_#

Here we see the origin of High Akhirene's very strict rules as to what sounds are permitted in the final x-slot of a syllable; in both Late Caethai and High Akhirene, this position is reserved for /s, l, m, n/. Should any other consonant appear at the end of a word, we append *-i* (*-e* if the previous vowel was /i/) to correct this fault.

/ŋ/ > n / #_

<ng> goes to <n> at the beginning of words.

/s/ → /r/ <r> V_V

/s/ is pronounced [r] between vowels.

/l/ → [ɬ] <lh> #_

/l/ is pronounced as a lateral fricative [ɬ] <lh> at the beginning of words.

2.2.3 Morphosyntax

Caethai introduces many of the forms you already know from Akhirene 1.0. The syntax is very similar to that of Common Akhirene, so in this section I am mostly just giving you the new paradigms and explain a few things to take note of. All forms given here are in Middle Caethai.

2.2.3.1 Inflection

SG	*∅-*			*-∅*			*-(e)n*		HAB
PL	*e(sC)-*		*-(a)thel*	*-(a)mis*	*C-o, V-e*	*-(e)thi*	*-(e)na*	PROG
COLL	*qes-*	$\sqrt{\text{ROOT}}$	*V-yathi, C-ithe*			*V-yo, C-i*		PERF
NUMBER			M	F	N	M/F	N	
			ACTIVE			PASSIVE		

Table 2.1: Caethai inflectional morphology

Caethai introduces several new alternations for forms depending on whether they follow a consonant or a vowel. Note the consonantal ending for the perfect passive: This is the birth of the *-i* ending we already had in Akhirene 1.0. The plural prefix, likewise, is similar to the one in High Akhirene, but note that in Caethai, it is *e-* only before a vowel and *es-* before a consonant. This alternation will later be abolished by Aetamian grammarians, but it is preserved in some irregular plural forms (listed, of course, in the lexicon).

SG	*theiva*	*thain*	*thaya*
PL	*thang*	*thain*	*thal*
	1	2	3

Table 2.2: Agreement of *thei*

Common Akhirene *tai* (marking the 'subject' of a passive) becomes ***thei*** and agrees as given in Tab. 2.2. The forms are mostly regular follow the sound laws, except for 3PL, which is shortened from **thathel*.

2.2.3.2 Derivation

UP	*[only fossilized]*		*-(e)stai, -(e)st(a)-*	APPL	
DOWN			*-(o)k-*, LATE *-(o)ki*	CAUS	
MTS		$\sqrt{\text{ROOT}}$	*-ei*	GER	
SEA			X(e)X	REFL	
DIRECTION			VALENCY		

Table 2.3: Caethai derivational morphology

Not much interesting happens with the valency-affecting suffixes in Caethai; the sound laws give us the endings *-stai* and *-ei*, which you doubtlessly have seen in Akhirene 1.0; but attention with *-stai*: Since the /r/ > ∅ rule only applies at the end of words, the suffix becomes *-star-* when followed by another ending. The directional affixes, on the other hand, are lost entirely; in practice, this mostly means that they are no longer productive in Caethai, but survive in fossilzed form in many older formations.

Negation is formed with **NEG *-pil-***, alienable possession with **POSS *din***, comparisons with **COMP *hen*** and **SUP *henyas***.

2.2.3.3 Pronouns

	FREE		CLITIC	
	SG	PL	SG	PL
1	*ova*	*nec*	*=va*	*=nec*
2	*jin*	*ejin*	*=(s)in*	*=(s)in*
3	*yai*	*ilthe*	V=*yas*, C=*is*	C=*el*, V=*lthe*

Table 2.4: Caethai pronouns

All changes affecting Caethai pronouns are regular; of note is only the addition of an alternation in the 3PL clitic. The pronominal modifiers become **INTS *to=*** and **PART *khin=***, respectively.

2.3 Maspavi

2.3.1 Introduction

Maspavi (Msp. *Masbave*) is relatively close to Caethai in most aspects, and its closest coconspirator in the creation of High Akhirene, and where a form or worsd is not from Caethai, one can be (almost) certain it hails from Maspavi. Many HA irregularities, especially, are derived from alternating choices between Caethai and Maspavi forms.

2.3.2 Sound changes

The sound changes of Maspavi can be divided into two phases, **Old Maspavi** and **Classical Maspavi**.

2.3.2.1 Old Maspavi

/a/ > /o/

Short <a> turns into <o>.

/i/ > /e/

Short <i> turns into <e>.

/ɛi̯/ > /i/

<ei> is pulled into the space left empty by the previous rule and becomes <i>.

/ɛʊ̯/ > /o/

<eo> turns into <o>.

/ŋ/ > /n/

<ng> turns into <n>.

[+delayed] > [−delayed] / _#

The affricates <ts, dz> are simplified to <t, d> at the end of words.

$$/z/ > \varnothing \; / \begin{cases} V\_V \\ \_\# \end{cases}$$

<z> is dropped between vowels and at the end of words.

/s, l/ > ∅ / _#

<s> and <l> are dropped at the end of words.

2.3.2.2 Classical Maspavi

[fric] > [+voi] / V_V

Fricatives (and affricates) are always voiced between vowels.

$$[\text{fric}] > [-\text{voi}] \; / \begin{cases} \_C, \# \\ C, \#\_ \end{cases}$$

Fricatives (and affricates) are always voiceless in all other positions. This and the previous rule are the source of the voice-alternation of fricatives still productive in High Akhirene.

/al/ > /ɑʊ̯/ / _C

<al> turns to <ao> before consonants.

/il, el, ol/ > /ɛʊ̯/ / _C

All other vowel+l combinations turn to <eo> before a consonant.

/l/ > /w/ / C_

<l> turns to <w> following a consonant.

$$\begin{bmatrix} \text{+vow} \\ \text{–long} \\ \text{–stress} \end{bmatrix} > /e/$$

Short unstressed vowels are reduced to <e>. Note that this rule does not affect combinations of y+vowel and w+vowel, as these are technically seen as diphthongs.

$$\begin{bmatrix} \text{+vow} \\ \text{+long} \end{bmatrix} > \begin{bmatrix} \text{–long} \end{bmatrix}$$

All long vowels are shortened.

$$\begin{bmatrix} \text{plos} \\ \text{+alv, +vel} \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} \text{approx} \\ \text{+pal} \end{bmatrix} > /ʧ/ \text{ <c>}$$

A combination of an alveolar or velar plosive <t, k, th, kh> and the palatal approximant <y> turns to /ʧ/, written <c>.

/r/ > ∅ / V_V

<r> is deleted between vowels.

2.3.3 Morphosyntax

2.3.3.1 Inflection

Maspavi inflection shows many of the same phenomena as that of Caethai; it is unique in that is has certain forms only appearing after a plosive (P); as in Caethai, the plural prefix has an additional *-s-* if affixed to a consonantal onset.

SG	*∅-*			*-∅*		*-(e)n*	HAB
PL	*we(sC)-*		*-(e, ó)twa*	*-(e, ó)m*	*-(e, ó)we*	*-(e)ce* *-(e)ne*	PROG
COLL	*ges-, gez-*	$\sqrt{\text{ROOT}}$	*-yat, P-cet*			*-ye, P-ce*	PERF
NUMBER			M	F	N	M/F N	
			ACTIVE			PASSIVE	

Table 2.5: Maspavi inflectional morphology

The COLL prefix alternates depending on whether the following sound is voiced (incl. vowels) or voiceless. All optional vowels in the PROG.ACT are <o> if stressed (´) or otherwise <e>.

SG	*taive*	*ton*	*toye*
PL	*ton*	*ton*	*teote*
	1	2	3

Table 2.6: Agreement of *tai*

tai becomes ***tai*** in Maspavi, and its paradigm is a slightly more syncretic than in Common Akhirene.

2.3.3.2 Derivation

Unlike its close neighbour, Maspavi fully preserves the directional prefixes. Negation is formed with **NEG *-beo-***, alienable possession with **POSS *dren***, comparisons with **COMP *hen*** and **SUP *heneo***.

UP	*ts-*		*-(e)sd(e)-*	APPL
DOWN	*we-*		*-(ó)g-*	CAUS
MTS	*met-*	$\sqrt{\text{ROOT}}$	*-e*	GER
SEA	*bes-*		XX	REFL
DIRECTION			VALENCY	

Table 2.7: Maspavi derivational morphology

2.3.3.3 Pronouns

1	*ove*	*nets*	*=ve*	*=nets*
2	*tsen*	*wetsen*	*=en*	*=en*
3	*yae*	*eote*	*=i*, P=*ci*	*=eo*
	SG	PL	SG	PL
	FREE		CLITIC	

Table 2.8: Maspavi pronouns

Intensive pronouns are formed with **INTS** ***de=***, ***do=*** if stressed, the partitive with **PART** ***ken=***.

2.4 Ovaitai

2.4.1 Introduction

Ovaitai (Ovt. *Avētei*) is, in a way, the weird cousin of the family. It is much further from both Caethai and Maspavi than they are from each other, and it played only a peripheral role in the creation of High Ahkirene, although a fair number of Akhirene words, including the *akh-* in *Akhirene*, are of Ovaitai origin.

2.4.2 Sound changes

Ovaitai sound changes can be divided into two phases, **Early Ovaitai** and **(Modern) Ovaitai**. Ovaitai is the only dialect to preserve a vowel length distinction alongside many fricatives and approximants which are lost in the other dialects, making vowel hiatus much rarer than in Caethai and Maspavi. As final nasals are dropped, it also develop nasal vowels. Beyond the changes listed here, Ovaitai undergoes a shift in stress assignment: In this dialect, stress always falls on the $\sqrt{\text{ROOT}}$.

2.4.2.1 Early Ovaitai

/ɛi̯/ > /iː/

<ei> rises and monophthongizes to <ī>, starting the **Ovaitai Vowel Chain Shift**.

/ɑi̯/ > /ɛi̯/

<ai> then rises as well, taking the former place of <ei>. Also affects <ay>.

/ɑʊ̯/ > /ɛʊ̯/

/l/ > /j/ / V_V

<ao> mirrors this movement, rising and merging with <eo>.
<l> goes to <y> between vowels. Note that this occurs before the following change.

/w/ > /v/

<w> merges with <v>.

2.4.2.2 Ovaitai

/ɛi̯/ > /eː/

<ei> monophthongizes to <ē>.

/aː/ > /ɛi̯/

<ā> seizes the now-empty position and rises to <ei>, continuing the chain shift.

/oː/ > /aː/

<ō> is then lowered to fill the <ā> position.

/ɛʊ̯/ > /oː/

<eo>, finally, monophthongizes to <ō>, filling the position left open by the last change and mirroring the shift of <ei> to <ē>.

$$\left[\ \text{+vow}\ \right] > \left[\begin{array}{c}\text{+long}\\ \text{+nasalized}\end{array}\right] / \text{\_m\$, n\$, ŋ\$}$$

Vowels are nasalized and lengthened before nasals, if the nasals appear in the same syllable ($ denotes a syllable boundary). Nasalized vowels are articulated by letting the airflow escape through both mouth and nose; I notate them here with an *ogonek*, so on <ą>.

[+vow] > [+round] / _m

Vowels are additionally rounded before /m/. Combined with the previous change, this entails the shift of /a(ː), o(ː)/ to /õː/ <ǭ> and of /e(ː), i(ː)/ to /ɵ̃ː/ <ų̄>.

$$[\text{+nas}] > \varnothing \,/ \begin{cases} \text{V\_C} \\ \text{V\_\#} \end{cases}$$

The nasals /m, n, ŋ/ are dropped before consonants and at the end of words.

$$\begin{bmatrix} \text{+vow} \\ \text{–long} \end{bmatrix} > \varnothing \,/\, \text{\_\#}$$

Short vowels are dropped at the end of words. Note that this produces words with final stress; I indicate this with an acute (´) in the dictionary.

$$/\text{h}/ > \varnothing$$

The aspirant <h> is lost.

$$/\text{f}/ > /\text{p}/ \,/\, \text{V\_V}$$

<f> goes to <p> between vowels.

2.4.3 Morphosyntax

In terms of the morphology, you will find that Ovaitai is actually the closest to Common Ahirene, preserving many of the endings that have been lost in its sister dialects.

2.4.3.1 Inflection

SG	∅-		-∅			C-ęs, -V̨s		HAB
PL	*vez-*		*-(a)tlei*	*-(a)mis*	*-(a)v*	*-(e)t*	*-(e)naz*	PROG
COLL	*ges-*	$\sqrt{\text{ROOT}}$	*-yat*			*V-l, C-i*		PERF
NUMBER			M	F	N	M/F	N	
			ACTIVE			PASSIVE		

Table 2.9: Ovaitai inflectional morphology

Notable here is the HAB.PASS: It includes a nasalized vowel when following a consonant; but when following a vowel, this vowel itself is nasalized.

SG	*tēv*	*tazį̄*	*tel*
PL	*tą̄*	*tazį̄*	*talt*
	1	2	3

Table 2.10: Agreement of *tē*

tai becomes *tē* in Ovaitai, and inflects as given in Tab. 2.10.

2.4.3.2 Derivation

UP	*[only foss.]*		*-(e)zdar-*	APPL
DOWN			*-(o)g-*	CAUS
MTS	*-met-*	$\sqrt{\text{ROOT}}$	*-eiz*	GER
SEA	*-bes-*		XX	REFL
DIRECTION			VALENCY	

Table 2.11: Ovaitai derivational morphology

Like inflection, Ovaitai derivation is relatively close to that of Common Akhirene. The directional affixes for UP and DOWN have been lost and are only preserved in fossilized form. Negation is formed with **NEG *-bīl-*C, *-bīy-*V**, alienable possession with **POSS *drę̄***, comparisons with **COMP *ę̄*** and **SUP *ę̄ yaz***.

2.4.3.3 Pronouns

1	*ova*	*ngets*	*=va*	*=(ng)ets*
2	*dzį̄*	*wedzį̄*	*=zį̄*	*=zį̄*
3	*yar*	*ilt*	*=yaz*	*=ilt*
	SG	PL	SG	PL
	FREE		CLITIC	

Table 2.12: Ovaitai pronouns

Intensive pronouns are formed with **INTS *do*=**, the partitive with **PART *kin*=V, *kį̄*=C**.

Chapter 3
High Akhirene

3.1 Introduction

Finally, we have arrived: High Akhirene, the Aetamian standard. Yeah, that sounds like a marketing thing. Anyway. The time of Paristam Aetamis Nevei has come and gone, and the new church is compiling an official standard language. They heavily lean on Late Caethai in this enterprise, but Maspavi and Ovaitai also play their part, and then there are even handful of original contributions, rules or words that don't quite exist in any of the dialects but were created solely during the standardization process.

This is in essence Akhirene 1.0, so you will already be familiar with a lot of what is to follow. For the sake of completeness, I have nonetheless included the better part of the original phonology as well, if you don't need the reminder, you can safely skip ahead to section 3.2.4, where I give a few words of guidance when it comes to the borrowing of vocabulary from the dialects into High Akhirene. The grammar, as with the dialects, is largely the same as for Common Akhirene, to save you some study; unlike with the dialects, however, I have included a very curt breakdown of the whole syntax here, so you can use this chapter as an Akhirene reference grammar for quick access.

3.2 Phonology

Large parts of this are copied directly from the original phonology of Akhirene 1.0. There is no section on sound change, as High Ahkirene did not strictly speaking *evolve* anywhere but is rather a strategic (and oftentimes not so strategic) compilation of forms and features from the dialects—which is not uncommon in the development of standards; you can find this phenomenon, for example, in Standard Castilian. I will, however, include a brief section on how to treat sounds which do not exist in High Akhirene during this process.

3.2.1 Phoneme inventory

The first section straight from Akhirene 1.0. You will find that the sound system of High Akhirene most closely resembles that of Caethai, complemented with the fricative voice alternation of Maspavi.

3.2.1.1 Vowels

High Akhirene distinguishes seven vowel phonemes. Each vowel can additionally be found in two different pronunciations, *tense* and *lax*, depending on the type of syllable it appears in (see below); the diphthongs <ai>, <ei>, and <eo> are always tense.

		TENSE	LAX	
i	/i/	[i]	[ɪ]	Like <ee> in English *feel* and <i> in *fill*
e	/e/	[e]	[ɛ]	Like <ai> in *hair* (Australia, NZ) and <e> in *then*
a	/a/	[æ]	[ɐ]	Like <a> in *bat* and (a bit like) <oo> in *blood*
o	/o/	[o]	[ɔ]	Like <o> in *wrote* (Scotland, Ireland) and <o> in *rot*
ai	/ɑi̯/			Like <i> in *right*
ei	/ɛɪ̯/			Like <ay> in *ray*
eo	/ɛʊ̯/			Like <ew> in *ew!*

3.2.1.2 Consonants

High Akhirene distinguishes 15 phonemic consonants. I don't want to get into too minute detail about phonological features at this point; the one important distinction you should know concerns only the plosives (the first eight on the list). You will note that Akhirene does not make a voicing distinction like English (*mate* and *made*) but instead distinguishes the series /p, t, k, q/ from /p^h, t^h, k^h, q^h/ through *aspiration*, an audible *h*-like noise following the sound (we also find that in English plosives in certain positions).

Otherwise, it might seem odd that <s> and <r> are grouped under the phoneme <s>; in Akhirene, they are indeed different pronunciations of the same underlying sound, with [r] appearing only between vowels (see, again, also the rules in section 3.2.3).

p	/p/	<p> in *spot*
t	/t/	<t> in *stop*
k	/k/	<c> in *scot*
q	/q/	Like <k>, but aspirated further back, at the uvula
ph	/p^h/	<p> in *pot*
th	/t^h/	<t> in *top*
kh	/k^h/	<c> in *cod*
qh	/q^h/	Like <q>, but aspirated
f	/f/	<f> in *fast*
v		<v> in *vast* (pronunciation between vowels)

s	/s/	<s> in *some*
r		Rolled like in Italian (pronunciation between vowels)
h	/h/	<h> in *here*
c	/ʧ/	<ch> in *chat*
m	/m/	<m> in *map*
n	/n/	<n> in *nap*
l	/l/	<l> in *lost*
lh		Voiceless lateral fricative [ɬ] (pronunciation at the beginning of words)

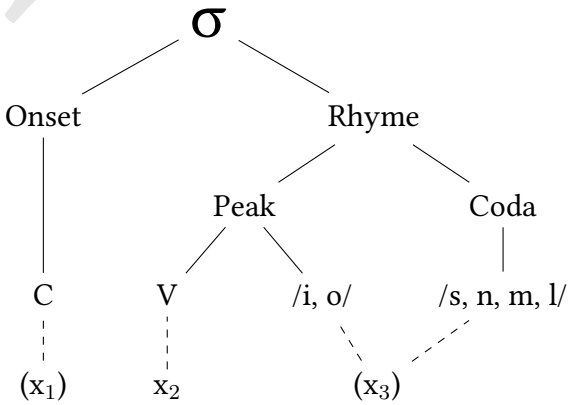
3.2.2 Syllable structure and stress assignment

Syllable structure governs what Akhirene syllables can look like and which sounds can appear in what places; this will only really get important once you start inventing new words. Generally, we distinguish three main components of a syllable, ONSET, PEAK, and CODA, which essentially just means beginning, middle, and end; and there are strict rules as to what each can contain:

Onset The onset can contain any one consonant (C) from the inventory; there can never be more than one consonant, hence the absence of clusters like /br/ or /st/ in Akhirene. This component is optional, i.e. a syllable does not have to have an initial consonant.

Peak The peak is the only obligatory part of the syllable. It can contain any vowel (V) from the inventory.

Coda The coda is like the onset optional, but unlike the onset, this slot remains empty in most words. If filled, it can contain a single consonant, but only the phonemes /s, n, m, l/, and if the peak contains a diphthong /ɑi̯, ɛɪ̯, ɛʊ̯/, it must be empty (nominally, the second part of the diphthong will take up this slot).



Syllables with an empty coda (and no diphthong) are called LIGHT, syllables with a non-empty coda HEAVY SYLLABLES. These terms come into play when we think about vowels: The vowel in a light syllable will always be pronounced tense, the vowel in a heavy syllable lax (this distinction is actually not reflected in writing in the high variety, so knowing the difference only becomes important in the vernacular, where tense and lax vowels have very different qualities). Also note than we generally care more about the onset than the coda, so if a syllable with an empty onset follows a syllable with a consonant in its coda, we will 'move' that consonant into the following onset (and the vowel will accordingly be pronounced tense since the coda is now empty)—this is called the *Maximum Onset Principle*, and it probably won't come up often, but I think it is good to know about it when it does.

Stress is relatively easy to predict and hence not marked in the orthography, although it differs between standard and vernacular. High Akhirene always stresses the penultimate syllable of a word; in the vernacular, stress lies preferably on word-final nasals (m, n) and heavy syllables, or otherwise on the penultimate syllable.

3.2.3 Phonological rules

In this section, I will explain all the phonological rules that govern differences in pronunciation between different phonological environments for both the standard and the vernacular.

The Overview contains the same lists just in phonological notation, without explanations; this notation contains three main parts: first, the phoneme we are looking at, then, following an arrow, the phone it will be pronounced as, and finally, following a slash, the environment in which this pronunciation is found. V represents any vowel, C any consonant; hashes mark word boundaries, sigmas syllable boundaries. Occasionally, you will also see a phonological feature in square brackets; I wouldn't worry too much about those, as all rules are explained and most features are either quite accessible or noted in the inventory tables in the Phonology Overview.

3.2.3.1 High Akhirene

/l/ → [ɬ] <lh> #_

At the beginning of words, /l/ turns into <lh> (see above for the pronunciation).

/s/ → [r] <r> V_V

/s/ between vowels is pronounced as trilled [r] and written as <r>. This is something that actually happened in the history of Latin (albeit with a slightly different r-sound)!

/f/ → [v] <v> V_V

/f/ between vowels is pronounced as [v] and written as <v>.

V → [+tense] _$

A vowel is pronounced tense if it immediately precedes a syllable boundary (i.e. the coda is empty).

V → [−tense] _C$

A vowel is pronounced lax when it is followed by a consonant and a syllable boundary (i.e. a non-empty coda).

/i$i → [ɛɪ̯]

If a syllable ends in /i/ and is followed by a syllable beginning in /i/, they will be merged into one syllable with the vowel [ɛɪ̯].

/h/ → [s] <s> [+nas]_

/h/ becomes [s] if it immediately follows a nasal (m, n).

/h/ → [j] <i> V_V

/h/ between vowels is pronounced as [j], like the <y> in English yet, and written simply as <i>. If the /h/ follows /o/, we will get the diphthong <ai>, if it follows /i/, we will get <ei>.

/h/ → ∅<’> s_

/h/ is deleted if it immediately follows /s/. This deletion occurs after we have decided how to pronounce our vowels, so it won’t affect tenseness: The vowel preceding /s/ will still be pronounced lax. To mark this irregularity, I represent the omitted /h/ as an apostrophe in the romanization; but I imagine that this is not reflected in native Akhirene spelling, and since tenseness works a bit different in the vernacular, this would be a rather difficult distinction for speakers from the lower classes. It could be a marker of education and prestige to know when a vowel that would be expected tense is to be pronounced lax, and many lower-class speakers might try to guess the ‘correct’ pronunciation and seem educated, but they would easily hypercorrect, i.e. pronounce vowels as lax where they are actually just supposed to be tense. I will leave it up to you whether to include the apostrophes in the text as it is finally printed.

[fric] → ∅<’> _[+nas]

/f/ and /s/ are deleted if they occur directly before /m, n/. Again, the resulting gap is represented by an apostrophe, and the same pronunciation rules apply as above.

$\alpha \rightarrow \varnothing$<’> $\alpha\_$

If the same sound appears twice in a row, the second instance is deleted.

V → [−tense] _C’

A vowel is pronounced lax if it is followed by two consonants, even if one of them is deleted (i.e. an apostrophe in writing). This is the formal notation of the rule explained above.

/f/ → [p] <p> [−vow]_

/f/ is pronounced and written as /p/ if it follows a consonant.

$$/+\text{nas}/ \rightarrow [+\text{bil}] \_ \begin{bmatrix} -\text{vow} \\ +\text{lab} \end{bmatrix}$$

/n/ becomes [m] if it is followed by a labial (a consonant pronounced at the lips, like /p/).

$$/+\text{nas}/ \rightarrow [+\text{alv}] \_ \begin{bmatrix} -\text{vow} \\ -\text{lab} \end{bmatrix}$$

/m/ becomes [n] if it is followed by any non-labial consonant. Note that, apart from the above rule, /n/ is always pronounced the same, irrespective of what sound follows, unlike in English, where the <n> in *rant* is quite different from the <n> in *rank*—in High Akhirene, it would have to be pronounced as *ran-k*. This might have also been the case for Classical Latin.

3.2.3.2 Vernacular Pronunciation

The following rules explain the pronunciation of the vernacular, where it differs from the standard, and how I suggest these differences might be represented in writing; this is especially important for tense vowels, which are pronounced very differently from their lax counterparts. I also give suggestions as to the kinds of mistakes vernacular speakers might make when trying to use standard pronunciation.

/l/ → [l] <l> #_

/l/ at the beginning of words is pronounced just as [l], unlike in the standard. Some vernacular speakers might hypercorrect by using <lh> not just word-initially, but in random positions, or even for every instance of /l/.

/s/ → [ɾ] <r> [+vow]_[+vow / −front]

/s/ is pronounced as [ɾ] between back vowels[1]. This is fairly similar to standard [r], but while the latter is trilled, this one is a single tap of the tongue against the teeth (like the <t> in American English *city*).

/s/ → [ʒ] <zh> [+vow]_[+vow / +front]

/s/ between vowels, of which at least the second one is a front vowel, is pronounced as [ʒ], like the <s> in *leisure*, and spelled <zh>.

/f/ → [v] <v> V_V

/f/ between vowels is pronounced as [v], like in the standard.

/e/ → [i] <i> _$

When tense, /e/ is pronounced as [i], like <ee> in *feel*, and spelled <i>.

/a/ → [ɛ] <e> _$

When tense, /a/ is pronounced as [ɛ], like <e> in *then*, and spelled <e>.

/o/ → [u] <u> _$

When tense, /o/ is pronounced as [u], like <oo> in root, and spelled <u>.

/ɛɪ̯/ → [i] <i>

/ɛɪ̯/ is always pronounced as [i].

/ɛʊ̯/ → [u] <u>

/ɛʊ̯/ is always pronounced as [u].

[1]In High Akhirene, the back vowels are /o/ and lax /a/, all other vowels are considered front. When dealing with diphthongs, we count the relevant end, so /ɑi̯/ is back if it follows the sound we are examining, /ɛʊ̯/ if it precedes.

/e$i/, /i$i/ → [ɛɪ̯] → [i] <i>

Following from the above rules, whenever /e/ and /i/ or two instances of /i/ meet, they will be merged and pronounced as one [i].

/h/ → ∅

/h/ is deleted in every position. This h-dropping will presumably be connected to strong social stigma, as it is in some varieties of English (and was in Latin). Vernacular speakers might hypercorrect by inserting surplus /h/s at the beginning of words that should just start in a vowel (this is actually something Roman grammarians complained about).

$$\varnothing \rightarrow [\text{j}]\ \langle\text{i}\rangle \left[\ +\text{vow}\ \right]\_\left[\begin{array}{c}+\text{vow}\\ -\text{round}\end{array}\right]$$

If two vowels appear right next to each other (and no other rule intervenes), [j] will be inserted between them, pronounced like <y> in *yet*.

$$\varnothing \rightarrow [\text{w}]\ \langle\text{w}\rangle \left[\ +\text{vow}\ \right]\_\left[\begin{array}{c}+\text{vow}\\ +\text{round}\end{array}\right]$$

If two vowels appear right next to each other and the second one is /o/, the sound inserted will be [w], pronounced like in English.

/f/ → [p] [−vow]_

/f/ is pronounced and written as /p/ if it follows a consonant, like in the standard.

$$\left[\ +\text{nas}\ \right] \rightarrow \left[\ +\text{bil}\ \right] \_\left[\begin{array}{c}-\text{vow}\\ +\text{lab}\end{array}\right]$$

/n/ becomes [m] if it is followed by a labial, like in the standard.

$$\left[\ +\text{nas}\ \right] \rightarrow \left[\ +\text{alv}\ \right] \_\left[\begin{array}{c}-\text{vow}\\ -\text{lab}\end{array}\right]$$

/m/ becomes [n] if it is followed by any non-labial consonant, like in the standard. Note that this is in turn affected by the following rules.

/n/ → [ŋ] _[+vel]

/n/ > [ɴ] / _[+uv]

These rules relate back to what I mentioned about /n/ earlier. While its pronunciation can only change to [m] in the standard, in the vernacular it will assimilate to a greater range of sounds: when followed by /k, k^h/, it will be pronounced like English <ng>, when followed by /q, q^h/ as the uvular equivalent. Neither is reflected in writing, and in spoken language, the difference might merely be perceived as 'sloppy speech'.

V → [+tense] _C'

Unlike in the standard, vowels are pronounced tense if followed by two consonants one of which is deleted.

**[oɪ̯] → [ɑɪ̯]

If by any rule we happen to produce the sequence <oi>, this is changed into <ai>.

**[iɪ̯] → [ɛɪ̯]

If by any rule we happen to produce the sequence <ii>, this is changed into <ei>.

3.2.4 On borrowing and the creation of new words

The 'cleanest' way of creating new Akhirene words from now on would, of course, be to invent a Common Akhirene root, find the appropriate form, derive its dialectal reflexes, choose one of the resulting words, and bring it into a shape suitable for High Akhirene. I will follow this process for your included 150 words and all vocabulary items you order from me thereafter, but if you don't want to go all the way when creating words yourself, you should be completely safe inventing new High Akhirene words based on the phonotactic principles we established for AKhirene 1.0, even more so if you keep an eye on the morphology. You might still end up creating a few 'permitted but impossible' words, i.e. words the phonotactics of High Akhirene would allow but which would have to descend from an ancestor that is impossible in Common Akhirene or one of the dialects—but in such a case we can always blame a historical quirk that emerged through standardization, or a loan from Nemorian, Iqathai, or Avolkai. If you, however, ever want to take a word the whole way, or you need to recover a dialect term from a High Akhirene one, I will briefly describe how High Akhirene deals with the sounds of its source languages.

You will have noticed that the High Akhirene phoneme inventory is significantly smaller than that of Common Akhirene and still quite different from that of some of the dialects. When introducing a dialect word into High Akhirene, all permitted sounds generally stay the same, while all alien sounds and forbidden combinations are substituted with their closest match in the High Akhirene inventory.

Caethai Since Caethai and High Akhirene are so close, there is usually little to change here. HA has adopted the Maspavi system for the voicing of fricatives, so this is a common change that has to be made when borrowing words form Caethai. Caethai still distinguishes <c> and <j>, which both become <c> in HA. <y> has to be removed, usually by forming a diphthong with the preceding vowel, <ai> if <a, o>, <ei> if <e>, and then deleting the following vowel; (83) below demonstrates this for <w> in Maspavi. If <y> appears at the beginning of a word, it merges with the following vowel, forming <i> if <i, e> and <e> if <a, o>.

Maspavi Most importantly for Maspavi, the spelling has to adjusted so <p t k q> is the weaker and <ph th kh qh> the stronger series of plosives. Beyond that, the sound <w> has to be removed, usually by merging it with the preceding vowel to form <eo> and deleting the following vowel. At the beginning of words, it is either dropped or merged with the following vowel into <o>. <ao> is always replaced by <eo>, <z> by <s>.

Ovaitai As with Maspavi, the first thing to consider is adjusting the spelling of plosives. <y> will be treated as in Caethai; <z> as in Maspavi. Nasalized vowels will lose their nasal quality but otherwise remain the same; long vowels are sometimes simply shortened but often diphthongized, as outlined in (84).

Beyond these regular changes, it is also not uncommon for a word to be change simply because an authority figure 'knows' the 'right' form, which just happens not to be present in any of the dialects. One such case is *thai* in (85).

(83) Msp. *nawad* 'to sleep' > HA *neote*

(84) ā > a
ē, ī > ei
ō > eo

(85) *thai* 'to let, support, initiate'. CA *tāyē*. Cth. *thei*. Msp. *taye*. Ovt. *teye*.

In a nutshell, language standardization is always an ideological more than a scientific process, and the only thing you can be sure about is that people will choose the forms they think are 'correct', whatever that means. Sometimes understanding how an authority thinks can tell you more about what forms will be chosen (or created) than knowing gold-standard linguistics.

3.3 Morphosyntax

The morphosyntax of High Akhirene is notably different from that of its predecessors mostly in that it is highly irregular. The following tables give the regular form, or common variants, of each affix, but in reality, many words very much like to ignore these norms. All irregular forms will be listed in the lexicon, so you should always carefully check a words dictionary entry before deriving any inflected form.

3.3.1 Inflection

NUMBER			M	F	(E)N	M/F	N	
			ACTIVE			PASSIVE		
SG	*∅-*	$\sqrt{\text{ROOT}}$	*-∅*			*-(a)n*		HAB
PL	*e-*		*-(a)thel, -(a)tha*	*-(a)mis, -(a)stam*	*-o*	*-(e)thi*	*-(e)ne*	PROG
COLL	*qes-*		*-ithe*			*-i*		PERF

Table 3.1: High Akhirene inflectional morphology

High Akhirene inflection is borrowed in equal parts from Caethai and Maspavi, and sometimes, forms from both dialects will coexist (so *-thel* and *-tha*). Usually, words from each dialect will prefer their 'native' affixes, but this is not a hard rule, and quite a few pick and choose their endings (see irregular forms listed in the lexicon). Unlike in the dialects, the vowels in some suffixes are now inherent and cannot be dropped even when the root already ends in a vowel, resulting in hiatus. Take note of parentheses () to determine which vowels can be dropped and which cannot; where syllable structure allows it, vowels that can be dropped are usually also dropped following the consonants /s, l, n/—note that this can produce forbidden collisions, such as of /s/ with /n/ or /n/ with itself: These collisions are resolved as usual, by dropping the first sound and replacing it with an apostrophe. Also note that the form *-stam* is regularly used for the APPL-A.PROG.F but also appears irregularly on certain words.

But the Akhirene dialects are only 90% of the standard, and another langauage has lefts its mark on High Akhirene inflection: The **Northern Nemorian STATIVE** has been borrowed and is expressed by the **N.PROG.ACT** suffix. In practice, that means: When an animate agent is performing an action not willfully but perhaps on accident (like falling), the 'verb' will agree using neuter *-o* rather than the applicable animate form.

	1	2	3
SG	*thaiva*	*thain*	*thaia*
PL	*than*	*thain*	*thal*

Table 3.2: Agreement of *thai*

In the passive, *thai* is used to introduce the original subject; it always follows the main predicate.

3.3.2 Derivation

High Akhirene preserves all of the directional and valency-affecting affixes, with two notable changes: Firstly, APPL is now an ending that closes a word and does not allow

DIRECTION			VALENCY	
UP	*ce-*		*-(e)stai, -(e)st(a)-*	APPL
DOWN	*o-*		*-ok(i)-*	CAUS
MTS	*-meth-*	$\sqrt{\text{ROOT}}$	*-ei*	GER
SEA	*-pes-*		X(e)X	REFL

Table 3.3: High Akhirene derivational morphology

for any further inflectional suffixes (as such, it behaves a bit more like inflection); it will still take clitic pronouns. And secondly, while REFL is still regularly formed by reduplication, this rule is rarely applied in practice, and most words possess their own irregular REFL form (usually dropping at least one syllable from the reduplication). Negation is formed with **NEG *peo***, which now invariably appears between the NUM and DIR prefixes; alienable possession with **POSS *cen***, comparisons with **COMP *hen*** and **SUP *henis***.

3.3.3 Numerals

#	CARDINAL	ORDINAL		
		M	F	N
one (1)	qot	qotha	qotamis	qoto
two (2)	evas	evastha	eva'mis	evaro
three (3)	ale	aletha	alemis	aleo
four (4)	eotha	eotha	eotham	eotho
five (5)	khova	khovatha	khovamis	khoveo
six (6)	pere	perethel	peremis	pereo
seven (7)	simo	sintha	si'mis	simo
eight (8)	nei	nesthel	neimis	nereo
nine (9)	sova	sovatha	sovamis	soveo
ten (10)	aethi	aetha	aetham	aetheo

Table 3.4: High Akhirene numerals

High Akhirene numerals work exactly like they do in Common Akhirene, using the ACT.HAB for cardinal and the ACT.PROG for ordinal numbers, with the usual agreement relations. Table 3.4 gives a full breakdown of all High Akhirene numerals; you will also find these in the lexicon with their respective equivalents in the dialects.

3.3.4 Pronouns

1	*ova*	*nec*	*=va*	*=(n)ec*
2	*cen*	*ecin*	*=(s)iŋ*	*=(s)in*
3	*ai*	*eothe*	V=*as*, C=*is*	C=*el*, V=*lthe*
	SG	PL	SG	PL
	FREE		CLITIC	

Table 3.5: High Akhirene pronouns

Intensive pronouns are formed with **INTS *to*=**, the partitive with **PART *khin*=V**.

3.3.5 Syntax reference

The following is a quick listing of all important syntactic constructions in High Akhirene, intended as a quick reference when translating. Each of these is described in greater detail in chapter 1.

Matrix clause:	SUBJ – OBJ – VERB	
Subordinate clause:	CONJ – SUBJ – VERB – OBJ	
Passive:	PATIENT – VERB – *thai* AGENT	
Noun extension:	DEM – QUANT/NUM – ADJ – NOUN	
Adverbs:	SUBJ, OBJ, ETC. – VERB – ADV	*(ADV is main predicate)*
Comparison:	ADJ	*(positive)*
	ADJ *hen*	*(comparative)*
	ADJ *henis*	*(superlative)*
Possession:	POSSESSION – POSSESSOR	*(inalienable)*
	cen POSSESSOR – POSSESSION	*(alienable)*
Reflexive:	SUBJ – VERBVERB	*(simplex)*
	SUBJ – *do*-PRONOUN – VERBVERB	*(complex)*
Reciprocal:	SUBJ 1 – CONJ – SUBJ 2 – VERBVERB	