

Sample Grammar: Northern Nemorian

1 Introduction

This document should give a necessarily detailed introduction to the sound system and grammar of Northern Nemorian. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]; it is a descendant of the Common Nemorian [REDACTED] but has itself be subject to the influence of its new northern neighbours, leading to a series of changes in its structure, most importantly the addition of a length distinction in both vowels and consonants and the expansion of grammatical coding on nouns and adjectives (more on both below).

1.1 The Stop Mutation System

One of the most important features retained from Common Nemorian is the plosive mutation system used to mark distinctions of social prestige between speaker and addressee. As for its development, I thought of something like the following (although that is merely a suggestion from my side, the language itself does in no way depend on you sticking to this):

- ANCIENT NEMORIAN

[REDACTED]
Distinguishes ph-th-kh, p-t-k, and b-d-g.

breuks ‘work’, *badra* ‘eye’, *madrak* ‘sword’

- CLASSICAL NEMORIAN

Over time, the plosives of Ancient Nemorian are softened to p-t-k, b-d-g, bh-dh-gh.

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]. The use of these forms gets associated with respect for the addressee and is generally restricted to communication with [REDACTED].

brùks ‘work’, *vadra* ‘eye’, *madrág* ‘sword’

- COMMON AND VULGAR NEMORIAN

Yet again, the language of the common people changes, softening the series to b-d-g, bh-dh-gh, w-y-y. Aiming to underline their elevated status, the nobility keeps using the classical forms, and over time these differences lexicalize (become a part of the language system rather than just social variation) and are now used to distinguish social statuses. For the last centuries before the immolation, all three forms coexist in Common Nemorian to form a three-level hierarchy. To avoid ambiguity, I will use *Common Nemorian* to refer to the pre-Immolation stage of the language with a three-level register system and *Vulgar Nemorian* to the popular language the low-register forms were taken from.

brigzh ‘work’, *warra* ‘eye’, *marragh* ‘sword’

When the northern dialect splits off Common Nemorian post-Immolation, it adopts the Classical forms as its default, mostly ignoring sound changes from Ancient and to Vulgar (as you can probably see, I have sketched those out only very superficially since they are not really

important at this point—I can look back into that once you need it). This yields a language with words based on Classical Nemorian but that at the same time retains the three registers by including the softened Vulgar forms and (often incorrectly) reconstructing the Ancient forms. Importantly, these changes 1) only affect plosives and associated fricatives and fully ignore other sound changes that have occurred between these different stages of the language and 2) only affect words, the grammar always remains the same. This retroactive organization and the fact that all three registers have to accommodate the same grammatical endings have led to the system being somewhat messy and outright irregular in certain words; to make this as uncomplicated as possible, I give all three forms separately in the lexicon. All grammatical forms given in this introduction are universal, and all examples are given in the neutral (Classical) register.

2 Phonology

This will be a rather brief overview; I have kept things a little simpler than with Akhirene (where the phonology is all we have) and a lot of the concepts I am using here will already be familiar to you from there, so this should not take as long you explain. I started work on Common Nemorian and then evolutionized my way to the language you see before yourself now; I intentionally exclude most information with respect to the changes between Common and Northern Nemorian since these are still quite malleable, and it might be worth revisiting the matter once you need more dialects. For now, Northern Nemorian is functional on its own, and the historical background provides a nice backdrop for the (rather messy—that’s how it happens over time) grammar. If you want to see my notes on Nemorian historical phonology, just let me know and I’ll type them up for you.

2.1 Phoneme Inventory

For the sound of Nemorian, I started in the broader environs of something vaguely Celtic (think Gaulish) and eventually worked myself towards something I would describe as lying between Japanese and Finnish pronounced with a Norwegian accent (and an Amazonian-tasting grammar, but more on that later). I tried to stay as far away from the relatively rigid and open syllables of Akhirene, so this language is rich in consonant clusters and has a slightly longer list of vowel qualities. Additionally (to give it a slightly Uralic flavour, as ordered), contact with neighbouring languages has introduced a distinction between short and long vowels and consonants (long/double consonants are called *geminate*s), making the following contrasting words:

- (1) a. *màr*- ‘to walk’ ↔ *mààr*- ‘to frown’
 b. *sata* ‘tower’ ↔ *satta* ‘yellow’

I have for now stuck to simply doubling long vowels and consonants to keep the orthography as ASCII as possible; if you want a slightly cleaner look, we can use length markers (á, â, ā) on vowels instead.

2.1.1 Consonants

Northern Nemorian distinguishes 29 different consonants, including those used exclusively in high/low-register vocabulary. Notably, the language knows six series of labial-coronal-dorsal triplets, the three plosive series ph-th-kh, p-t-k, and b-d-g (the first exclusive to high register), the fricative series v-dh-gh (<v> is used in Northern Nemorian for Classical <bh>, pronunciation is the same), and the two double-articulated series ps-ts-ks and bz-dz-gz.

ph	/p ^h /	<p> in <i>pot</i> (high register only)
th	/t ^h /	<t> in <i>top</i> (high register only)
kh	/k ^h /	<c> in <i>cod</i> (high register only)
p	/p/	<p> in <i>spot</i>
t	/t/	<t> in <i>stop</i>
k	/k/	<c> in <i>scot</i>
b	/b/	 in <i>ball</i>
d	/d/	<d> in <i>dole</i>
g	/g/	<g> in <i>goal</i>
v	/v/	<v> in <i>vast</i>
dh	/ð/	<th> in <i>whether</i>
gh	/ɣ/	'grinding g', <g> in European Spanish <i>hogar</i> [hear it]
m	/m/	<m> in <i>map</i>
n	/n/	<n> in <i>nap</i>
ng	/ŋ/	<ng> in <i>ring</i>
l	/l/	<l> in <i>lost</i>
r	/r/	<r> in Spanish <i>pero</i> , <t> in General American <i>city</i>
w	/w/	<w> in <i>water</i>
y	/j/	<y> in <i>yet</i>
s	/s/	<s> in <i>same</i>
z	/z/	<z> in <i>zoo</i>
sh	/ʃ/	<sh> in <i>ship</i>
zh	/ʒ/	<s> in <i>leisure</i>
ps	/ps̃/	<ps> in <i>laps</i>
ts	/ts̃/	<zz> in <i>pizza</i>

ks /k͡s/ <x> in *fox*

bz /b͡z/ <bs> in *clubs*

dz /d͡z/ <ds> in *lids*

gz /g͡z/ <gs> in *rugs*

2.1.2 Vowels

Northern Nemorian distinguishes seven vowel qualities (plus one diphthong) and two vowel qualities (long /a:/ and short /a/). The actually articulated quality differs for most vowel between long and short (similar to how tense and lax differed in Akhirene). To keep non-ASCII characters to a minimum, I have for now doubled long vowels; we can also use length-marking diacritics (a ↔ ā) if you prefer that. The only additional symbols I have been using for now are the graves on à and ù; if you don't like them, we could e.g. get rid of à and use <y> for ù, or find any from a number of other solutions.

ii /i:/ [i:] <ee> in English *bead*

i /i/ [ɪ] <i> in *bid*

ee /e:/ [e:] like <ai> in *hair* (Australia, NZ)

e /e/ [ɛ] <e> in *then*

àà /a:/ [a: ~ æ:] <a> in *bad* (Southern England)

à /a/ [a] <a> in *rattle* (Southern England)

aa /ɑ:/ [ɑ: ~ ɐ:] <a> in *calm*

a /ɑ/ [ɐ] like <a> in *calm*, but short

oo /o:/ [o:] like <o> in *wrote* (Scotland, Ireland)

o /o/ [ɔ] <o> in *rot* (England)

uu /u:/ [u:] <oo> in *zoo*

u /u/ [ʊ] <u> in *put*

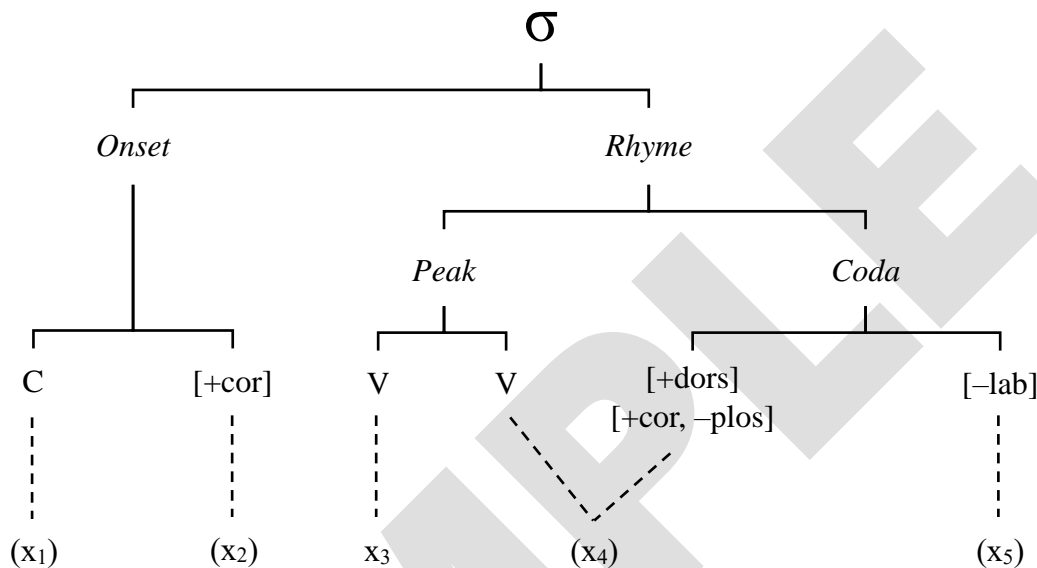
ùù /ɯ:/ [ɯ: ~ ʊ:]
between *i* and *u* [\[hear it\]](#)

ù /ɯ/ [ɯ ~ ə]

au /ɑʊ/ [ɑʊ] <ow> in *allow*

2.2 Syllable Structure

Nemorian syllables are slightly more complex than Akhirene syllables. They can accommodate up to five x-slots (metric units with space for exactly one segment): Two consonants are allowed in the onset (x_1 , x_2), as long as the second is a coronal (articulated by the front of the tongue); likewise, two consonants are allowed in the coda (x_4 , x_5), provided the first is either a dorsal (articulated by the back of the tongue) or a non-plosive coronal, and the second is not a labial (articulated by the lips)—if you have trouble with any of the phonological terms, please just let me know and I can provide a more thorough explanation, or just a table of all sounds with their features.



Like in Akhirene, the second segment of a diphthong shares an x-slot (x_4) with the first possible coda consonant, with the result that only either can appear in a word, making words like ***nault* impossible (that's what the asterisks mean)—both *u* and *l* would compete for x_4 . The same principle applies to long vowels, which are always presumed to take up both x_3 and x_4 : ***naalt* would be likewise impossible, since here the second *a* and the *l* compete for x_4 .

Geminates occupy x_5 in their first syllable and x_1 in the following syllable. So, returning to the example from above, *satta* 'yellow' would be syllabified as *sat.ta*, with the syllable split between the *t*'s. As a consequence, the following syllable can only have one other consonant in its onset, and only one that can be accommodated in x_2 ; so *sattra* would be a possible word (*sat.tra*), ***sattba* would not (*sat.tba*). Geminates can, however, coexist with either a long vowel (*saatta* would be fine) or a consonant in x_4 (*santta*). Gemination is also the only case where a labial would be allowed in x_5 (e.g. *sappa*).

Note here that not everything spelled as two letters in the orthography necessarily consist of two segments—<ph, th, kh, dh, gh, ng, sh, zh> are all single sounds that will only take up one x-slot, so words like *brigzh* are perfectly fine. Likewise, <ps, ts, ks, bz, dz, gz> are coarticulations, each comprising of two sounds appearing together in one segment and therefore also only one x-slot long, making words like Ancient Nemorian *breuks* possible (*e* in x_3 , *u* in x_4 and *ks* in x_5).

2.3 Stress Assignment

Stress assignment in Common Nemorian was very straightforward—roots were stressed. In Northern Nemorian, this system gets a lot more complicated, with the following preferences:

- Basic stress is initial: The first syllable in a word is stressed (').

sata /'sa.ta/
zhuura /'ʒu:.ra/

- This principle is overridden if a word ends in a nasal: The last syllable is stressed.

breeghan /bre:.'ɣan/

- This in turn is overridden by heavy syllables (syllables with non-empty codas, including syllables ending in a geminate), which attract stress the strongest. If there is more than one heavy syllable (which can happen quite easily in verbs, as you will see below), preference is given to the antepenultimate one, or otherwise the rightmost:

tadzalettaa /ta. d̪za.'lɛt.ta:/ → geminate attracts stress onto penultimate
adwààtte /'ad.wa:t.tɛ/ → two heavy syllables, antepenultimate preferred

3 Morphology

I will go into somewhat more detail here, as you haven't seen this before with Akhirene. This chapter is concerned with the construction of different word forms; in Common Nemorian, this was relatively complicated on verbs and relatively simple on all other words; in Northern Nemorian, contact with neighbouring languages has led to a greater variety of nominal forms, and language change has introduced many irregular (or outright weird) forms. The following breakdown gives an outline of everything regular; all irregulars will be listed as such in the lexicon.

What we should cover before heading out: Northern Nemorian distinguishes three numbers, singular, dual (two), and plural, and two genders, animate (uter) and inanimate (neuter); no cases are marked except for the genitive, the case of possession.

3.1 The Noun

While in Common Nemorian, no specific endings were associated with nouns and only a small number of suffixes was used to code for number and the genitive, influence from neighbouring languages has forced Northern Nemorian nouns into a more rigid paradigm. Nouns are grouped in four classes, depending on their base form ending (any vowel or a vowel and a nasal for Class II and any combination of a geminate and a vowel for Class IV). They take different endings for singular, plural, and the genitive/adjective form in both numbers. Additionally, the dual (number of two) appears with natural pairs, such as *raukele* 'the hands (of one person)' as opposed to *raukeru* 'many hands (of many people)'; these forms will use the singular genitive ending. The following table gives an overview of all endings for all four noun classes, with an example from each class appended at the end of this section.

<i>Class I</i>	-iit	-itsù	-itwe	-itsee	-ille
<i>Class II</i>	-V, -VN	-Vru	-Vwe	-Vroo	-Vle
<i>Class III</i>	-àks	-àkseet	-àkwe	-itsee	-àtte
<i>Class IV</i>	-CCV	-Csu	-Cwe	-Csee	-CCààl
	SG	PL	GEN.SG	GEN.PL	(DUAL)

The genitive form is used for both possessive and adjectival constructions, as in:

(2) *breeghawe korme* ‘the city’s language OR the urban language’

No further cases are morphologically coded for, and there are no articles or obligatory determiners; all other meaningful relations are expressed through prepositions or word order (see section 4 *Syntax* below). Nouns are, however, additionally classed by gender, distinguishing UTER (animate, including humans, animals, and other entities considered alive) and NEUTER (inanimate, containing objects and concepts). No direct distinction of gender is made on nouns themselves, but plural adjectives agree with the gender of their controller noun (see the respective sections below). The gender for all nouns is given in the lexicon.

CLASS I

brüksiit ‘work’
brüksitsù ‘works’
brüksitwe ‘of the work’
brüksitsee ‘of the works’

CLASS II

breeghan ‘city’
breegharu ‘cities’
breeghawe ‘of the city’
breegharoo ‘of the cities’

Class III

madràks ‘sword’
madràkseet ‘swords’
madràkwe ‘of the sword’
madrítsee ‘of the swords’

CLASS IV

<i>sette</i> ‘light’	<i>adessa</i> ‘man’
<i>setsu</i> ‘lights’	<i>adessu</i> ‘men’
<i>setwe</i> ‘of the light’	<i>adeswe</i> ‘of the man’
<i>setsee</i> ‘of the lights’	<i>adessee</i> ‘of the men’

3.2 The Verb

Northern Nemorian verbs have a great variety of forms, coding for person and number of both subject and object and different Tense-Mood-Aspect combinations through a set of pre- and suffixes. Intransitive verbs (verbs with no direct object) only code for one argument (the column AGENT in the table below), agreeing in person and number with the subject of the clause. Transitive verbs (verbs with a direct object) will first agree with their subject and then add a second affix agreeing with their direct object (the column PATIENT). Where there are two forms given in one cell, or one form with part of it in parentheses, the second form/the parts in parentheses are only used when there is a second suffix following (i.e. in transitive verbs):

(3) *vedh-aa* ‘you see’ (4) *te-dzal-aut* ‘we eat’
vedh-om-aut ‘you see me’ *te-dzal-autt-ine (briksù)* ‘we eat (the apples)’

For more examples, fully conjugated verbs are presented below. The endings themselves are organized along person, number, tense, and mood:

Four **persons** are distinguished, with the fourth person used to express a generic or strongly habitual action (see also the examples below).

Forms for all three **numbers** are preserved, the dual, however, with a very specific usage: In first person, it codes exclusivity (‘we, but not you’), in second person, it is used for very formal address; these forms only appear in subject coding. In third person, it is a (semi-)true dual, appearing with dual-coded nouns; these forms appear in both subject and object coding. There is no dual in the fourth person.

First and second person singular in the agent paradigm additionally distinguish stative and active endings; this distinction expresses whether an action is carried out wilfully (active) or through happenstance, as in:

(5) *vedhev-a* ‘I happened to see’ ↔ *vedhev-at* ‘I looked and saw’

Transitive verbs always use the active form; to express transitive meaning with the stative, the object will appear in prepositional phrase with the preposition *to* ‘on’ (see also section 4 Syntax).

The following table gives an overview of all agent/patient forms (∅ indicates a null-morpheme, i.e. an empty suffix: nothing is added here; a dash indicates forms that do not exist):

1	-a	-at(t-)	-as-	te- -aut(t-)	-aut	—	—	-o
2	-aa	-aa, -om-	-os-	te- -ot(t-)	-aa	—	—	—
3	-∅	—	-ettel	-et(t-)	-ee	-itti	—	-ine
4	ta-	—	—	ta- -et(t-)	-∅	—	—	-ena
	STATIVE	ACTIVE						
		SG	DUAL	PL	SG	DUAL	PL	
	AGENT				PATIENT			

Tense and **mood** are coded by a separate set of suffixes, which are inserted on the inner edges (i.e. between the root and the agent suffix):

The PRESENT TENSE is zero-coded (-∅-).

(6) *brùks-at* ‘I work’

The AORIST is coded by the suffix *-ev-*. It expresses perfective past actions, i.e. one-time actions that are completed before the next action is brought up.

(7) *brùks-ev-at* ‘I worked’

The PAST IMPERFECT is coded by the suffix *-ad-* (*-aud* if no further suffix is added). It expresses imperfective past actions, i.e. habitual or repeated actions or actions continuing over a period of time and still ongoing when the next action is brought up.

(8) *brùks-ad-at* ‘I was working’

(The distinction between perfective and imperfective can be a bit of a struggle for learners and is one of the main hassles of teaching Romance languages. English simple and progressive tenses are a good approximation to begin with but not quite the same. Let me know if you need more explanation here.)

The PARTICIPLE and the GERUND (the verbal noun) look exactly the same, but behave a little differently, mostly in that the former is a verb and the latter is a noun (more on this in section 4). Both are coded by the suffix *-iit* and prominently used to form the past prior and the imperative.

(9) *brùks-iit* ‘work’

Both of these remaining forms are not coded on the verb directly, but formed with special forms of the verb *wedh-* ‘to do’ and the participle form of the main verb (*wedh-* will take the usual verbal position at the beginning of the clause, the participle will appear after the direct object;

see section 4 *Syntax* below). These are remnants from more complex forms in Common Nemorian.

The PAST PRIOR is formed with *mawedh-* and the participle. It expresses actions lying further in the past than those coded as aorist or imperfect.

- (10) *dzal-ev-om-ee briks* ‘You ate the apple.’
mawedh-om-ee briks dzal-iit ‘You had eaten the apple.’

Similarly, the IMPERATIVE is formed with *wàadh* (sg.) or *tewàadh* (pl.) and the participle, although in colloquial speech, *wàadh/tewàadh* is often dropped.

- (11) *wàadh briks dzaliit!* ‘Eat the apple!’ (speaking to an individual)
tewàadh briks dzaliit! ‘Eat the apple!’ (speaking to a group)

Taken together, that gives us 271 different forms (not counting past prior and imperative). The following breakdown of the conjugation of the verb *dzal-* ‘to eat’ gives a selection of examples:

<i>dzalat</i> ‘I eat’	<i>dzalomitti</i> ‘you (sg.) eat the two of them’ (e.g. chicken wings)
<i>dzala</i> ‘I happen to eat’ (I swallowed a bug)	<i>tadzalettaa</i> ‘people eat you’ (as is custom here)
<i>dzalaa</i> ‘you (sg.) eat’	<i>tedzalauttine</i> ‘we eat them’
<i>dzal</i> ‘he/she eats’	<i>tedzalottee</i> ‘you eat it’
<i>tadzal</i> ‘someone eats’	<i>dzalettina</i> ‘they eat things’
<i>dzalas</i> ‘we eat (you don’t)’	<i>dzalevattee</i> ‘I ate it’
<i>dzalos</i> ‘you eat (your majesty)’	<i>dzalevine</i> ‘he/she ate them’
<i>tedzalaut</i> ‘we eat (including you)’	<i>tedzaladottine</i> ‘you (pl.) were eating them’
<i>tedzalot</i> ‘you (pl.) eat’	<i>mawedhattee (briks) dzaliit</i> ‘I had eaten (the apple)’
<i>dzalet</i> ‘they eat’	<i>mawedhaa dzaliit to korme</i> ‘you had accidentally swallowed [your] tongue’
<i>tadzalet</i> ‘some people eat’	
<i>dzalattee</i> ‘I eat it’	
<i>dzalaut</i> ‘he/she eats me’	

3.3 The Adjective

Adjectives precede the noun they modify and agree with it in number and gender. Their endings are also organized in classes: Class I represents regularly derived adjectives/genitives ending in *-we* (the Common Nemorian adjective marker); Class II contains only a small number of words that have, in parallel to Class III nouns, taken the *-àks* ending; Class III, finally, includes the majority of root adjectives (adjectives that are not derived from another word) with no particular ending in their base form.

Class I	-we	-wesù	-werù	-wàatte
Class II	-àks	-àkse	-àkseet	àatte
Class III	-Ø		-(u)ru	-(àà)tte
	SG	PL.N	PL.U	ADV

While in the singular, one form is used for both genders, in the plural, adjectives additionally code for the gender of their controller noun:

- (12) *adwe madràks* ‘a long sword’ (13) *adwe adessa* ‘a tall man’
adwesù madràkseet ‘long swords’ *adwerù adessu* ‘tall men’

Dual nouns take adjectives in their singular form. In adverbial position (modifying a verb), adjectives take the forms specified in the last column; this does not apply to certain root adverbs, which always appear in their root form.

Genitives (and presumably relative clauses should you ever upgrade to a full grammar) are fully conflated with adjectives. To form a possessive construction, the adjective corresponding to the possessor is formed and used like a regular attributive. GEN.SG forms are treated as Class I, GEN.PL forms as Class III.

- (14) *naura* ‘mountain’
naurawe dreeghu ‘the summit of the mountain’
naurawesù dreeghuru ‘the summits of the mountain’
naurarooru dreeghuru ‘the summits of the mountains’

4 Syntax

This is probably the conceptually most demanding section (many linguists try to stay as far away from syntax as possible), so I will try to keep this as simple as possible and only include theory where it is really necessary.

4.1 Basic Word Order

All Nemorian matrix (main) clauses have the form VSO, or verb – subject – direct object.

- (15) *dzalee adessa briks*
eats man apple
‘The man eats an apple.’

Indirect objects appear between S and O:

- (16) *bràghee madràtten etta adessa briks*
takes warrior from man apple
‘The warrior takes the apple from the man.’

Adjuncts (constituents providing additional information not required by the verb) follow O:

- (17) *dzalee adessa briks to naura*
eats man apple on mountain
‘The man eats an apple on a mountain.’

- (18) *dzalee adessa briks zhuura madràttewe vadra*
eats man apple under warrior-GEN eye
‘The man eats an apple under observation from the warrior (*lit.* under his eye).’

As a rule of thumb, most prepositional phrases (preposition + noun) you find in Nemorian will be adjuncts; you only have an indirect object when its inclusion is absolutely vital for the verb

to make sense, so mostly with verbs talking about giving (to) or taking (from). Importantly, the ‘direct object’ of a stative verb, which is always a prepositional phrase with *to* ‘on’, is also obligatorily an adjunct (hence the word order in the last example of 2.3, where *to korme* follows *dzaliit*. Again, this is one of the conceptually trickier parts of syntax, so if you want a more detailed explanation of this distinction, please just let me know.

That should settle clauses for now (we will revisit them in the next section); let’s now take a zoom in and look at noun phrases (a noun and all the words dependent from it):

- (19) *adwesù nauraru*
big-PL.N mountain-PL
‘big mountains’
- (20) *madràttewe vadra*
warrior-GEN eye
‘the warrior’s eye’
- (21) *alle madràttewesù vadràle*
two warrior-GEN-PL eye-DUAL
‘the warrior’s two eyes’
- (22) *alle sattaru vadràle*
two yellow-PL eye-DUAL
‘two yellow eyes’

We can see that noun phrases are generally *head-final*; that means, the head of the phrase (the noun) can be found on the right edge, all modifiers (for now, adjectives, genitives, and numerals) appear to its left. I have said before that adjectives and possessives behave similarly, and we can see in (21) and (22) that indeed, *madràttewesù* and *sattaru* function not only alike, but effectively the same. Importantly, this also means that we have only a very limited recursivity in genitives—we could use an adverb to express ‘the city’s warrior’s eyes’, as in (23), but phrases like ‘the man’s city’s warrior’s eye’ are not possible.

- (23) *breeghawàtte madràttewesù vadràle*
city-GEN-ADV warrior-GEN-PL eye-DUAL
‘the city’s warrior’s eyes’

Turning, finally, to prepositional phrases, we find these organized exactly the other way around:

- (24) *to naura*
on mountain
‘on a mountain’
- (25) *zhuura madràttewe vadra*
under warrior-GEN eye
‘under the warrior’s eye’
- (26) *ne adwe breeghan*
to big city
‘to the big city’

Prepositional phrases are *head-initial*, their head (the preposition) is positioned on the left edge of the phrase, and its complement, itself a noun phrase, appears to its right (this very fact actually defines that we are dealing with *prepositions*, rather than *postpositions*).

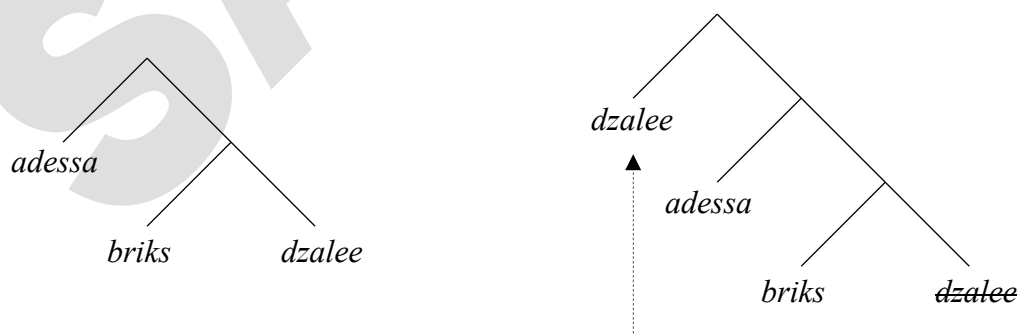
4.2 Periphrastic Verb Forms

So far, so good. Let's now talk about the periphrastic verb forms, that is those forms that aren't coded on the verb itself but need a separate word to be expressed; in Nemorian, for now this category includes the past prior and the imperative, both of which use special forms of 'to be' + the gerund/participle. Now, this should be relatively straightforward, given that we already know basic word order and the place of subjects, objects, and verbs, so we just need to choose a sentence and put them all in place, right? Well, I have mentioned before that in periphrastic constructions, whichever form of *wedh-* we are using takes the usual place of the verb and the gerund of the main verb appears at the end of the clause; that statement is about as correct as saying that Nemorian sentences are simply organized as VSO, so I will now have to correct myself on both accounts. Going by those two rules should get us the first bit of the way, but we will quickly run into trouble once we are dealing with sentences with several objects and adjuncts; so, to comprehensively explain what goes where when, I have to first outline how we (syntacticians) believe VSO word order actually works and how that applies to Nemorian.

We generally, and perhaps somewhat surprisingly, assume that languages can't actually generate clauses with VSO as their basic order. To get to a sentence like (15) above, we have to start with one of the two orders we can actually generate: SVO and SOV (they together make up for about 90% of languages); in Nemorian, we presume the underlying order is SOV, so we will start with something like:

(27) *adessa briks dzalee*
man apple eats

Notated as a syntax tree, this will give us a two-level structure, with the subject on the higher level and object and verb on the lower level (please note that all trees I will present here are heavily simplified, but I want to avoid this becoming a two-semester intro to syntax). To now get the VSO order we want, we have to take the verb and move it into a special higher branch (we *raise* it) so it comes before the subject, as shown in the tree on the right.



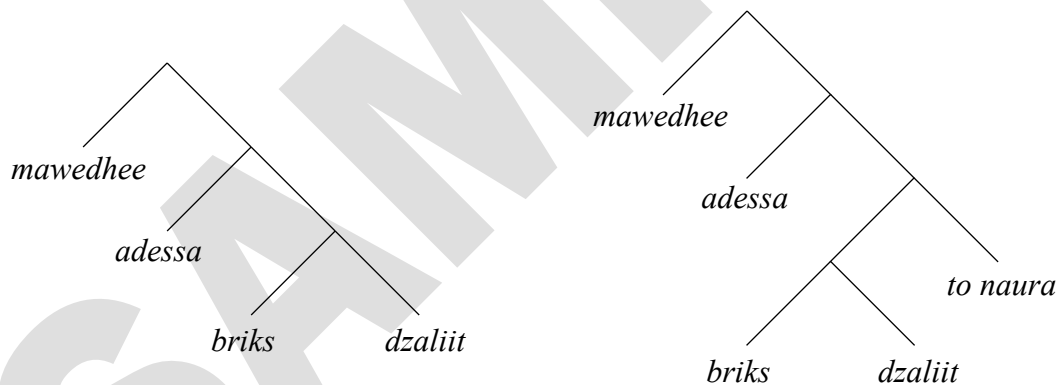
I know this probably seems very weird (it still seems a bit weird to me and I am studying it), and I am happy to explain it in greater detail if you want to know more, but for now it should suffice to say that we can append one, and only one (for reasons that we go beyond this intro), higher level to our structure into which we can raise the verb to yield a VSO clause. Adjuncts also appear on separate branches; these will insert themselves above the node holding together

object and the original position of the verb, as seen in the tree for (17) below. This is consistent with what we have said of adjuncts before: They appear to the right of the direct object, as will be produced by the tree structure. So what? In most sentences, this has exactly zero significance for you as the end user; it does, however, become quite important when we want to produce periphrastic verb forms.

Let's begin by forming the past prior. As I have explained before, this tense uses the special auxiliary verb *mawedh-* and the participle form of the main verb, so for the sentence above the end result will look like this:

- (28) *mawedhee adessa briks dzaliit*
 AUX man apple eat-PART
 'The man had eaten the apple.'

But as we said, we cannot generate this straightaway. As with any other sentence, we have to start out with the underlying SOV clause; this will look the same as the first tree we have looked at, with the only difference that now we already have the auxiliary *mawedhee* on top. The main verb tries to rise up, but can't, since its target position is already taken, and this is a structurally special position, so we also can't just 'skip it' and raise the verb even higher (this I will have to ask you to just believe me). Consequently, the main verb, in its participle form, stays where it started out—on the bottom end of our tree, to the right of the direct object (tree on the left).



Still, you might be thinking, all of this could be explained with the aux-in-verbal-position-verb-end-of-clause rule; and it could. Where we will finally need the trees is when we bring in adjuncts. As we have seen above, they branch off on the level above object/verb—so they will always appear to the right of even the participle, as can be seen in the tree on right. For your notes: The participle will appear to the right of the direct object, but preceding any adjuncts. (And then the imperative is formed in the same way.)

So, this is all we have got so far. The most important things currently missing from this grammar are all kinds of subclauses, passives, potentially more modes (conditional, subjunctive, etc.), questions, and a pronoun/determiner system—you can always let me know if you want to upgrade and I'll add whatever is needed.