

# Kalahim grammar sketch

Stefano Coretta

## 1 Phonology

### 1.1 Consonants

Kalahim has stops, fricatives, nasals, approximants, and a trill. Stops contrast by voicing, while the fricatives are all voiceless.

	labial	dental	palatal	velar	glottal
stop	p b	t d	tʃ dʒ	k ɡ	
fricative	f	s	ʃ		h
nasal	m	n			
approximant	w	l	j		
trill		r			

1. The approximant /w/ is always preceded by a consonant. For example: *amua* /amwa/, *fuanen* /fwanen/. Cf. *\*\*/wana/*. Historical note: Single onset /w/ was lost everywhere, and the eventual resulting vowel combination became a diphthong or simplified to a simple vowel. Examples: *reik*- ‘to turn’ /reik/ < *\*rewik*-, *iel*- ‘to sing’ /jel/ < /jail/ < *\*yawal*-.

### 1.2 Vowels

Kalahim has a five-vowel system, with high, mid, and low heights, front, central, and back backness. Note that the mid vowels are both mid-high.

	front	central	back
high	i		u
mid	e		o
low		a	

There are also the following diphthongs: /ei/, /eu/.

### 1.3 Phonotactics

The basic syllabic structure of Kalahim is C(C)V(C). Onsetless syllables are only permitted in word-initial position. Independent of syllabic affiliation, no more than two consecutive consonants are allowed in any position in the word. Any consonant, except /tʃ/ and /dʒ/, can be word-final.

Allowed onset clusters:

- pr, pl, pw, pj
- tr, tl, tw, tj
- kr, kl, kw, kj, ks, kf
- br, bl, bw, bj
- dr, dl, dw, dj
- gr, gl, gw, gj
- sp, st, sk, sw, sj
- ʃp, ʃt, ʃk, ʃl, ʃw, ʃj
- fl, fr, fw, fj
- hw, hj
- mw, mj
- nw, nj
- rw, rj
- lw, lj

## 1.4 Stress

Stress is intensive and it falls always on the penultimate syllable of the word in plurisyllabic words, and in the only syllable of monosyllabic words.

## 2 Writing system

Consonants:

	labial	dental	palatal	velar	glottal
stop	p b	t d	c j	k g	
fricative	f	s	sh		h
nasal	m	n			
approximant	u	l	i		
trill		r			

Vowels:

	front	central	back
high	i/y		u
mid	e		o
low		a	

- [i] is written as ⟨i⟩ and ⟨y⟩ for historical reasons.
- ⟨ai, æ⟩ /e/, ⟨au, ā⟩, /o/, ⟨oe, öe⟩ /we/.

## 3 Morphosyntax

### 3.1 Word order

The general word order is SVO. Complements follow the noun they refer to, but adjectives precede it.

#### (1) **Blin manai acaroni.**

*blin mainai acaroni*  
strong warrior east-GEN:SG

‘The strong warrior of the East.’

### 3.2 Verbs

*Revision:* Verbs end in vowel (are there C-final verbs? what about nouns?). In the Present, the vowel coalesces with the Present Tense suffix *-u*: a-u > o, e-u > ie, i-u > y, o-u > o, u-u > u. Past and Future are analytic? Past uses *lusho* ‘to go’ as auxiliary (new ‘to go’ is different). Future is just the verb stem plus the Subj suffixes.

Infinitive: *-sh* (< *-tj*). Hypothetical from *-b<sup>w</sup>i*, a form of future?

Passive: it was *-s*, now it has Non-Past form (Present and Future) which is original Gnostic (that takes on future meaning in Active). Passive Past is with auxiliary *dlanti* ‘to come’.

*reika* ‘to turn’

Active	present	past	future	hypothetical
1s	reiko-go	lurgo reika-s	reika-go	lurby-go reika-s
2s	reiko-ni	lurni reika-s	reika-ni	lurby-ni reika-s
3sm	reiko-lo	luelo reika-s	reika-lo	lurby-lo reika-s
3sf	reiko-re	luere reika-s	reika-re	lurby-re reika-s
3sn	reiko-lah	luelah reika-s	reika-lah	lurby-lah reika-s
1pl	reiko-min	lurmin reika-s	reika-min	lurby-min reika-s

Active	present	past	future	hypothetical
2pl	reiko-ty	lusty reika-s	reika-ty	lurby-ty reika-s
3plm	reiko-su	luesu reika-s	reika-su	lurby-su reika-s
3plf	reiko-shi	lueshi reika-s	reika-shi	lurby-shi reika-s
3pln	reiko-sah	luesah reika-s	reika-sah	lurby-sah reika-s

Passive	non-past	past
1s	reika-gos	lango reika-s
2s	reika-nis	leni reika-s
3sm	reika-los	lelo reika-s
3sf	reika-res	lere reika-s
3sn	reika-les	lelah reika-s
1pl	reika-meis	lamin reika-s
2pl	reika-tys	lanty reika-s
3plm	reika-sus	lesu reika-s
3plf	reika-shis	leshi reika-s
3pln	reika-ses	lesah reika-s

(2) **Lango (done)ganiis nide.**

*lan-go (done)gani-s ni-de*  
PST:PASS-1sg save-PASS.PRT 2s-ABL:SG

‘I was saved by you.’

Present participles are formed with the suffix *-m* which is attached to the verb root and they can be declined according to the to consonant declination.

(3) **Catieni shonamen**

*catie-ni shona-m-en*  
person-GEN:SG think-PTCP-GEN:SG

‘Of the thinking person.’

### 3.2.1 Copula

There are two copulas in Kalahim, *aum-* and *ash-*. The first is used with the predicative case and refers to a permanent or substantial feature of the subject. For example, *om-a-go ned-es* ‘I am (a) man’. *ash-* is used with temporary states and feelings, like in *ash-a-lah cul* ‘it is sweet’.

aum-	past	present	future	hypothetical
1s	aum-i-go	om-a-go	aum-u-go	aum-yl-go
2s	aum-i-ni	om-a-ni	aum-u-ni	aum-yl-ni
3sm	aum-ie-lo	om-a-lo	aum-uo-lo	aum-yl-lo
3sf	aum-ie-re	om-a-re	aum-uo-re	aum-yl-re
3sn	aum-ie-lah	om-a-lah	aum-uo-lah	aum-yl-lah
1pl	aum-e-min	om-a-min	aum-o-min	aum-yl-min
2pl	aum-e-ty	om-a-ty	aum-o-ty	aum-yl-ty
3plm	aum-ei-su	om-a-su	aum-ou-su	aum-yl-su
3plf	aum-ei-shi	om-a-shi	aum-ou-shi	aum-yl-shi
3pln	aum-ei-sah	om-a-sah	aum-ou-sah	aum-yl-sah

ash-	past	present	future	hypothetical
1s	ash-e-go	ash-a-go	ash-o-go	ash-ily-go
2s	ash-e-ni	ash-a-ni	ash-o-ni	ash-ily-ni
3sm	ash-e-lo	ash-a-lo	ash-o-lo	ash-ily-lo
3sf	ash-e-re	ash-a-re	ash-o-re	ash-ily-re
3sn	ash-e-lah	ash-a-lah	ash-o-lah	ash-ily-lah
1pl	ash-e-min	ash-a-min	ash-o-min	ash-ily-min
2pl	ash-e-ty	ash-a-ty	ash-o-ty	ash-ily-ty
3plm	ash-e-su	ash-a-su	ash-o-su	ash-ily-su
3plf	ash-e-shi	ash-a-shi	ash-o-shi	ash-ily-shi
3pln	ash-e-sah	ash-a-sah	ash-o-sah	ash-ily-sah

The verb *om-* which means ‘to be (locative)’ derives from *aum-* although it does not have allomorphy. It is also used at the neuter to mean ‘There is/are’ (expletive), in which case it is used with the predicative case. *om-* follows the standard verbal conjugation.

(4) **Omago Limlin’ija.**

*om-a-go*                      *Limlin’-ija*  
be.PRED-PRS-1s   Limlin-LOC:SG

‘I am in Limlin.’

(5) **Omielah jekines.**

*om-ie-lah*                      *jeki-nes*  
be.STA-PST-3sn   monkey-PRED:PL

‘There were (some) monkeys.’

### 3.2.2 Negation

A verb is negated by placing the negative adverb *an* after the verb.

(6) **Dluntuogo an fladriba.**

*dlunt-uo-go*   *an*   *fladri-ba*  
come-FUT-1s   NEG   forest-ALL:SG

‘I will not come to the forest.’

## 3.3 Nouns

Nouns end either in a vowel or a consonant and follow their respective class declension. Archaic forms of suffixes are given in square brackets. The predicative plural ending has two forms, *-nes* and *-nesse* which tend to be respectively the standard in the spoken and written language.

The predicative is used with the verb *aum-* ‘to be’, which has an existential meaning (while *ash-* is more generally stative).

vowel	singular	plural
nominative	[varies]	-m
accusative	-l [arc. -lu]	-le [arc.-leo]
predicative	-sse	-nes(se)
dative	-vo	-vi
instrumental	-ru [arc.-kru]	-du [arc.-dru]
genitive	-ni [arc.-nig]	-nek
locative	-ja [arc.-jai]	-ce

vowel	singular	plural
allative	-ba	-pe
ablative	-da [arc.-de]	-te
vocative	-ku	-ho

consonant	singular	plural
nominative	[varies]	-am
accusative	-olu	-elo
predicative	-es [arc.-esse]	-enes
dative	-ol	-ive
instrumental	-ur [arc.-ruk]	-udu [arc.-udru]
genitive	-en	-ek
locative	-ija	-ice
allative	-iba	-ipe
ablative	-ida [arc.-eda]	-ete
vocative	-uk	-oho

### 3.4 Subordination

**Complement clauses** are introduced by the particle *nai*. All complement clauses are finite (they always have a finite verb).

*Kabasiesu nai korashiego.*

kabas-ie-su nai korash-ie-go  
 know-PST-3plm SUB be.happy-PST-1s  
 'They knew I was/have been happy.'

*Tokago nai noirgah-a-go nil.*

tok-a-go nai sibu-a-go ni-l  
 want-PRS-1s SUB meet-PRS-1s 2s-ACC:SG  
 'I want to meet you.'

Subject complement clauses are preceded by an independent clause of the form 'be.PRED + ADJ/PTCP'.

*Omalah pushaitam nai sibuemin.*

om-a-lah pushait-am nai sibu-o-min  
 be.PRED-PRS-3sn scare-PTCP SUB meet-PST-1pl  
 'It scares me that we will meet.'

**Adverbial clauses** are introduced by a variety of adverbial subordinating conjunctions.

**Relative clauses** are introduced by *ki* and a resumptive pronoun is used. The resumptive pronoun in the relative clause is in the case and position it would be if the clause were independent. A nominative resumptive pronoun is generally omitted. If the antecedent is the object of the main clause and the subject of the relative clause, *ki* and the subject pronoun are omitted and the antecedent is in the nominative case.

*Lonum ki voinalo korashalo.*

lonu-m ki voin-a-lo korash-a-lo  
 boy-PL REL play-PRS-3sm be.happy-PRS-3sm  
 'The boy who plays is happy.'

*Nem korashielo mol noirgahielo lonu voinielo.*

nem korash-ie-lo mol noirgah-ie-lo lonu voin-ie-lo  
 yesterday be.happy-PST-3sm GRND see-PST-3sm boy.NOM play-PST-3sm  
 'Yesterday he rejoiced in seeing the boy who was playing.'

Cf. with the object complement clause *Nem korashielo mol noirgahielo nai lonu voinielo* 'Yesterday he rejoiced in seeing that the boy was playing.'

*Firkiniego catieru ki noirgahieni laholu.*

firkin-ie-go    catie-ru                    ki    noirgah-ie-ni    lah-olu  
 speak-PST-1s    person-INST:SG    REL    see-PST-2s            3sn-ACC:SG  
 'I spoke with the person you saw.'

*Noirgahiego catiel ki firkinieni lahur.*

noirgah-ie-go    catie-l                    ki    firkin-ie-ni    lah-ur  
 see-PST-1s            person-ACC:SG    REL    speak-PST-2s    3sn-INST:SG  
 'I saw the person you spoke to.'

## 4 Glossed examples

### (7) Ashani lof namshal gonji shimalah ki mallabalah vinedolu, e Firniluk goniguk!

*ash-a-ni    lof    namsha-l            gonji            shim-a-lah            ki            mallab-a-lah            vined-olu            e*  
 be-PRS-2s    like    star-ACC:SG    so.much    shine-PRS-3sn    CONJ    obscure-PRS-3sn    other-ACC:PL    oh  
*Firnil-uk                    gonig-uk*  
 Firnil-VOC:SG    my-VOC:SG

'You are like a star that is so bright to obscure the others, oh my Firnil!'