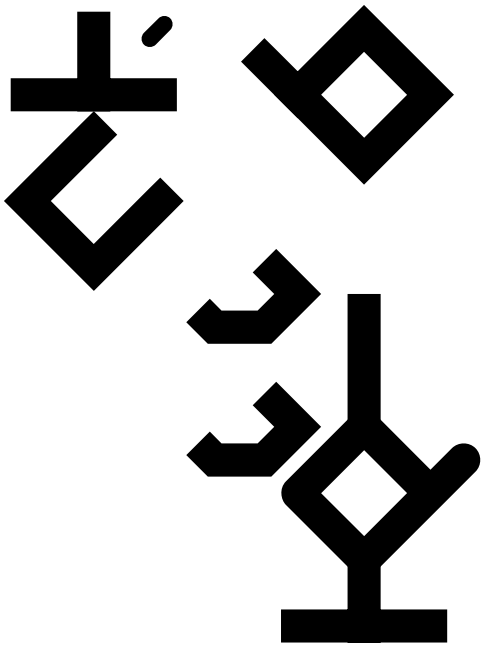
Chapter 1

The Flavan Language

Reference Grammar and Lexicon



"If I could speak light..."

1.1 Introduction

The language that Flavans speak in does not seem to have any discernible relationship with any ever spoken on Earth. It is thought therefore that most of the basic structure of the Flavan language has indipendently developed on the planet. As a result, it includes a combination of alien and unfamiliar constructions and more usual features that might have the character of linguistic universals of all humans. It is hard however to make this kind of generalizing statements with confidence since Flavus has likely only ever hosted **one language** at any given time: the constant rearrangement of population, and an army of travelling merchants perennially jumping from village to village, has guaranteed that differences in all aspects of culture, language in particular, are smoothed out and always remain somewhat modest. Thus Flavan enjoys limited regional variations, almost entirely in pronunciation, and remains mutually intelligible from the left-most of Bymarog villages to the antipodal dialect of the Demorog settlements in the far-right.

As per the origins of this language, little is known about Flavans in general before around 1500 years ago. Villages at this time likely only occupied a smaller area in the central region, and the small population used a strongly agglutinative language which is known as **classical Flavan**, written in a rune-like alphabetic script meant for carving. Classical Flavan's pronunciation is unknown but has been tentatively reconstructed as having the unusual four-vowel inventory /a e o ɨ/.

Between 900 and 800 years ago the population increased dramatically as technological advances allowed Flavans to explore and colonize the entire survivable Northern cap, resulting in the branching of the Bymarog[1] culture in the somewhat isolated left region. It's only after the opening of the School of Karobet, which introduced new writing tools and the **modern Flavan script**, an abugida, that one begins to find an immense amount of written documents, most importantly maps and village registries, which testify that strong changes have already begun in the spoken language, mostly moving it into slightly fusional territory.

In the remaining years, Flavan has evolved significantly in syntax/grammar (developing a very strict word order for example) and phonology (the Classical Flavan phoneme /ɨ/ was unstable and underwent fragmentation into significantly different sounds in the various dialects). The cultural and linguistic divide between **Demorog** ("square-writers") and **Bymarog** ("flame-writers") was born. However, the aforementioned continuous cross-cultural contact has kept Flavan relatively very similar to itself as it changed in time. The current situation is known as **Modern Flavan**, and is the language this chapter will try to introduce.

Every respectable reference grammar on a language should at least present the language's own name for itself before anything else; however, this is simply impossible in our case: Flavans know one culture, with one language, and one script - granted, with modest variations in customs, manner of speaking, and writing styles. They do not conceive of a boundary between themselves and an outside - they don't need a word to mark this border. Therefore, there is no Flavan word for *the Flavan language*, or *the Flavan people*. To them, it's just speaking, and just people.

[1] the name **bymarog** (flame-writer) is used here anacronistically, since the modern script has not been introduced yet at this point.

1.2 Phonology and phonotactics

The phonetic inventory of Flavan is most conveniently presented by means of their own organization in terms of an "alphabet", which is a list of allowable consonant clusters and single vowels. Curiosly, they arbitrarily separate consonantal sounds into "common" and "uncommon", crudely reflecting the frequency of those phonemes in spoken language. The following chart lists the Flavan names for the phonemes, their average Demorog and Bymarog pronunciations, their romanization, and also introduces the corresponding glyphs in the Flavan abugida, which will be better explained later.

The "Males" (common consonant clusters)

Glyph	Rom.	Pron. (Dem./Bym.)		Name
	None	//[2]	[]	pode
	m	/m/	[m]	ma
	p	/p/	[p]	pa
	b	/b/	[b]	ba
	n	/n/	[n]	na
	t	/t/	[t]	ta
	d	/d/	[d]	da
	ng	/ŋ/	[ŋ]	nga
	tt	/tː/	[tː]	kotta
	dd	/dː/	[dː]	kodda
	shl	/ʃl/	[ɕl]	shla
	k	/k/ (or [x])	[ʔ]	ka
	g	/g/	[g]	garyn
	dh	/ð/	[z]	dhe
	dhl	/ðl/	[zl]	dhla
	s	/s/	[s]	syk
	sh	/ʃ/	[ɕ]	shyk
	f	/f/ (or [v])	[v]	fa
	r	/r/	[l]	ra
	rd	/rd/	[rd]	rda
	rk	/rk/	[rk]	rka
	rb	/rb/	[rb]	rba

The "Females" (rare consonant clusters)

Glyph	Rom.	Pron. (Dem./Bym.)		Name
	bl	/bl/	[bl]	bla
	ttf	/tːf/	[tːf]	kottfa
	ttl	/tːl/	[tːl]	kottla
	ttk	/tːk/	[tːʔ]	kottka
	ttg	/tːg/	[tːg]	kottga
	rg	/rg/	[rg]	rga
	sg	/zg/ (or [ðg])	[zg]	zga
	gm	/gm/	[gm]	agme
	rm	/rm/	[lm]	rma
	pd	/pd/	[pd]	pda

The "Children": Vowels

Glyph	Rom.	Pron. (Dem./Bym.)		Name
None	**a**	/a/	[a]	atta
	e	/e/ (or [ɛ])	[e] (or [i])	etta
	y	/ɨ/ (or [i], [ɯ])	[u], [y]	ytta
	o	/o/ (or [ɔ])	[ɔ]	ordar

(see section 1.2)

A flavan word is just an alternating sequence of consonant clusters and vowels (with at least one vowel). So, if C is a cluster and V is a vowel, words can be V, CV, VC, CVC, VCV, CVCV, *etc.* Any clusters can be at the beginning, middle or end of a word.

It is occasionally possible for two vowels to be consecutive (VV) as a consequence of affixing. In that case, if the vowels are different they form a diphthong.

As a final note, it is possible for the cluster /kt/ (actually pronounced [xt]) to appear exclusively in word-final position. This is not understood by Flavans as a distinct "letter" as it arises from a vowel elision in some genitive suffixes. Notation for /kt/ is explained in the section for the script.

Pronunciation rules I

- **ytta assimilation:** when not before another vowel, /ɨr/, /ɨm/, /ɨn/ become a syllabic consonant [r̩], [m̩], [n̩]. Example: **yrk** /r̩k/, *and*, **kym** /km̩/, *while*. Some speaker also assimilate /ɨŋ/ →[ŋ̩], but this is fairly rare. Assimilation does not happen if the **y** is preceded by the same consonant that would become syllabic; e.g. **ryrga** /ˈrɨrga/, meaning, and not /ˈrr̩ga/.
- **mid opening:** /e/ and /o/ when stressed open up to [ɛ] and [ɔ] respectively. Example: **rgodha** /ˈrgɔ.dhːa/, *long*,

[2] The **pode** (//) is not an actual phoneme, but simply a vowel carrier necessary to represent a vowel without a preceding cluster in the Flavan script.

and **egord** /ˈɛgord/, *examination*

- **syllabic l:** word-final /l/ after a consonant becomes syllabic [l̩] (this creates a new syllable). Example: **moshl**  /ˈmɔ.ʃl̩/, *mother*. (Some speakers do the same with word-final /gm/ to make it [gm̩], others insert a schwa: [gmə]).
- **nasalization:** a vowel following /ŋ/ will become nasal. Example: **ngon** /ŋõn/, *I (ergative)*
- word-final /ð/, or /ð/ between two vowels becomes geminated: [ðː]. Example: **my agaredh**  /mjɨaga'reðː/ *goodbye*
- /r/ alone between two vowels with at least the first unstressed becomes a flap: [ɾ]. Example: **pottarat**  /potːa'ɾat/, *sew*.

The tell-tale *ytta* and regional variation

The phoneme /ɨ/ represented by the letter **ytta** (**y**) requires clarification; this will actually expand to a discussion about vowels in general. (We have already considered the merge /ɨr/ →[r̩] and similar, so we exclude this case here). It should be noted first of all that [ɨ] is only an average sound over all dialects, and that the essential characteristic that sets it apart from /e/ and /o/ is only its being closed. Therefore all closed vowels, rounded and unrounded, and closed→closed dipthongs are allophones for /ɨ/. Different dialects and accents of Flavan however employ different subsets of allophones with different pronunciation schemes. This allows a Flavan speaker to identify the origin of a speaker from his pronunciation of **ytta**s and his choice of closed vowels, a phenomenon known as the **tell-tale ytta** (**ytta robordam**).

The "standard" pronunciation (**Central Demorog**, **CDR**) has only *unrounded* closed vowels accompained by approximants, and no diphthongs. The idea is that the three different positions of unrounded closed vowels (/i ɨ ɯ/) are employed when the ytta is between consonants of similar place of articulation, and a "slide" from one to another is made if the consonants are differently articulated. More simply: the consonant before is the row and the one after the column, the depicted sound is that of **y** when sandwiched between them.

	/mpbtfnlt/	/kgrsʃ/	/ŋ/
/mpbtfnlt/	[i]	[ji]	[jɯ]
/kgrsʃ/	[ɨj]	[ɨ]	[jɯ]
/ŋ/	[ɯĩ]	[ɯ̃]	[ɯ̃]

Having no consonant is equivalent to the second group.

Another interesting system is that of the Bymarog (**BR**). For them, **y** is always rounded: [u] or [y], but with a strong predominance of [u]. They follow the scheme:

	/mpbtfnlt/	/kgrsʃ/	/ŋ/
/mpbtfnlt/	[y]	[u]	[u]
/kgrsʃ/	[y]	[u]	[u]
/ŋ/	[u]	[u]	[u]

Because the Bymarog **ytta** is shifted towards the back and rounded, their **e** actually moves to [i], and **o** becomes always [ɔ] to be distinguishable.

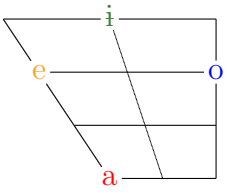
In completely opposite fashion, far Demorog (**FDR**) do tend to pronounce **y** as [i] almost always, but by contrast push **o** to [u] and **e** to [ɛ].

To give a rough idea of how the different dialects sound, here are a few words with their local pronunciations:

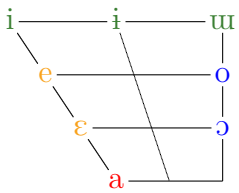
Romanization	Central Demorog	Bymarog	Far Demorog
gydda	[gɨjˈdːa]	[guˈdːa]	[giˈdːa]
mydhlark	[mjɨðː'lark]	[muzˈlalk]	[miθˈrark]
kagmenyr	[kagˈmɛnr̩]	[kagˈminul]	[kagˈmɛnr̩]

The following diagrams present the Flavan abstract vowel inventory and the range of phones the dialects use to implement them. The colour encodes which phonemes that sound is allophonic for.

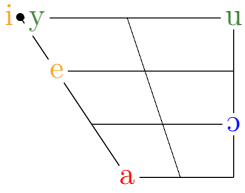
Flavan Phonemes



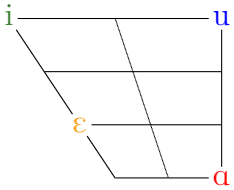
Central Demorog



Bymarog



Far Demorog



It should be stressed that all current variants of Flavan are mutually intelligible, and to most speakers these differences in vowel pronunciation are nothing more than a weird curiosity. We will not comment further on these technicalities of pronunciation and will focus of the grammar of the language, employing the Central Demorog pronunciation as the standard phonology.

Pronunciation Rules II

A couple other consonantal sound changes happened only in CDR depending on the specific pronunciation of the **ytta**:

- **palatalization:** /n/, /k/ before [e], [i] or [j] become palatal [ɲ], [c]

Consonantal inventory

The final array of consonantal sounds of CDR Flavan, including those only appearing as allophones, is depicted here:

	Bilabial	Labiodental	Dental	Alveolar	Postalveolar	Palatal	Velar
Plosive	p b		t d			c	k g
Nasal	m			n		ɲ	ŋ
Trill				r			
Flap				ɾ			
Fricative		f v	ð	s z	ʃ		x
Approximant						j	ɯ̯
Lateral Appr.				l			

In the end, the size of the inventory of distinct consonant phonemes is surprisingly modest, at **14** consonants.

Phonetic Romanization

The romanization scheme implicitly specified above has the advantage of mapping unambiguously with the Flavans' own orthography and only employs ASCII characters. A different choice is sometimes employed that reflects the actual pronunciation more directly, **phonetic romanization**. There is a one-to-one correspondence between letters and sounds:

a	b	d	đ	ð	e	è	f	g	i	ì	ï	ǐ	ȷ	k	x	l
[a]	[b]	[d]	[dː]	[ð]	[e]	[ɛː]	[f]	[g]	[i]	[iː]	[ɨ]	[ɨː]	[j]	[k]	[x]	[l]
ḷ	ɬ	m	ṃ	n	ṇ	ñ	o	ò	p	r	ṛ	s	š	t	ŧ	ɯ
[l̩]	[lː]	[m]	[m̩]	[n]	[n̩]	[ɲ]	[o]	[ɔː]	[p]	[r/ɾ]	[r̩]	[s]	[ʃ]	[t]	[tː]	[ɯ]

(The ː symbol on vowels in this chart is a shorthand to mean that the vowel is stressed).

The following is a short text in standard and phonetic romanization. The former is more useful in the study of grammar, while the latter is more suitable for pronunciation.

sha osab dengonak rda mydhlark
yrk sha rdan pottarat
kym sha dhlapottarat

ša osàb deñonàk rda mj̈ðlark
ṛk ša rdan poɒ̄aràt
kṃ ša ðlapoɒ̄aràt

In the end, the romanization scheme is completely arbitrary and carries no information at all about the language and culture of Flavans. Our conventional choice for this grammar will be the standard romanization.

1.3 Stress and intonation

Absolute vowel lengths are not distinguished phonemically in Flavan; however there is a notion of the longest and loudest (**stressed**) syllable in a word as compared with all the others (**unstressed**). Stress, or accent, in each word is applied according to precise rules, thus it cannot help distinguishing single words lexically; however it helps in communicating word boundaries, which can often help disambuguating. Stress is (very optionally) marked with a grave accent: à è ò ỳ in romanization (an accented l is not necessary since it is impossible for [l̩] to be stressed). The rules for stressing a word with at least two syllables are as follows, to be applied in order:

1. Stress is placed on penultimate syllable[3].
2. If last syllable's nucleus is **a**, stress moves to the last syllable.
3. If there is gemination in the cluster between penultimate and last syllable nucleus, stress moves to penultimate syllable.
4. If the word ends in a cluster with gemination, stress moves to last syllable.

An example: **kottla**  (the cardinal numeral 4096) starts as **kòttla** according to rule 1. Rule 2 changes to **kottlà**, but rule 3 changes back to **kòttla** because of the geminated t. Rule 4 does not apply, as there is no final cluster. Thus **kòttla** is the final stress, and pronunciation is /ˈkɔtːla/.

intonation

[3] the syllabic liquids are counted here. So **mashl** has two syllables, with nuclei **a** and **l̩**.

1.4 General Syntax

Verb phrases and morphosyntactic alignment

Flavan could be briefly described as a SOV language, meaning sentences follow the order subject-object-verb. For example, *Shlem eats a dhlorg* could be translated as

Shlem dhlarg rbam
Shlem.SUBJECT dhlorg.OBJECT
eats

However, this is not strictly correct and potentially confusing because Flavan has ergative-absolutive alignment. This means that the distinction between subject and object is not well-defined, while entities involved in an actions are instead classified as **agents** (subjects of transitive actions) or **patients** (objects of transitive actions or subjects of intransitive actions). In fact, Flavan is unusual in being more "thorough" in its ergativity than most earthly ergative languages. The word order is thus better described as agent-patient-verb, or APV.

The nouns/pronouns that represent the agent/patient are declensed respectively in the **ergative**/**absolutive** cases. This means for example:

ngon nar rbap - *I ate it*
me.ERG it.ABS ate

ngan bodark - *I slept*
me.ABS slept

The sleeper (actor of an intransitive action) is treated like the eaten (object of a transitive action).

In addition, many verbs admit an **indirect object**, generally the person or thing that the action tends to move towards or to which something is given to or provided to or sent towards as a result. The indirect object is in the **dative** case and goes **before** the verb.

There is yet another alien element to Flavan syntax, the **wanter**. This can only appear if the verb is in the deontic mood (which expresses wishes, hopes or orders) and specifies who actually desires the action to happen. The wanter is declensed in the **dative** case too, but comes **after** the verb. Example:

Shlem dhlarg rbem ngof
I want Shlem to eat the dhlorg
Shlem.ERG dhlorg.ABS eat.DEONTIC
me.DAT

Thus to conclude, the order could be simplified as APIVW, or

Agent - Patient - Indirect - Verb - Wanter

Note that while the order is very strict, all elements are actually mandatory, except for the verb.

Adverbs modifying the verb can be introduced, generally between I and V, though they can occasionally be moved to earlier position if it brings meaningful emphasis and does not result in ambiguities with subclauses.

Because the wanter being specified is actually uncommon, Flavan verb phrases are strongly **head-final**.

Focus expulsion

It is almost always possible in a spoken sentence to distinguish the **topic**, the information present for the purpose determining the context or specifying what object is being talked about, and the **focus**, the actual *new* information the sentence communicates about the specified topic. As an example, the following English triplet

Shlem eats the dhlorg
Shlem *eats* the dhlorg
Shlem eats *the dhlorg*

have three different choices for the focus. The first means "it is Shlem, and not someone else, who ate the dhlorg", the second "Shlem ate the dhlorg instead of doing anything else with it" and "Shlem ate the dhlorg, not something else". English marks the focus using prosodic stress (pitch, volume, and vowel length).

Flavan (especially spoken) does *not* necessarily employ prosodic stress to mark focus, but rather breaks the otherwise rigid word order and **expels** the focus at the end of the sentence. The above are translated as

dhlarg rbam Shlem
Shlem dhlarg rbam
Shlem rbam dhlarg

A series of points are in order:

- Marking the verb as the focus is evidently a no-op on an agent-patient-verb phrase. This reflects the fact that the verb is already at least partially the focus by default. If it really needs to be marked ("I didn't *kill* him!") the adverb **meka** /ˈmɛka/, *even, actually* does the job.
- Focus expulsion can get ambiguous if there isn't sufficient pause between neighbouring sentences (i.e. in written Flavan). In these higher-risk situation expulsion is performed by keeping a pronoun in the original position; e.g., the expulsion of **dhlorg** in the third example above would go **Shlem nar rbam dhlarg**.
- In the presence of I or W, expulsion can get tricky. Verb expulsion does move the verb to *after* W, so if both I and W are present they can get confused. Or an I expelled

after a verb in deontic mood can be confused for a W. Generally context clears most ambiguities of this type, but if nothing works, focus can simply be left unmarked.

Noun phrases

By contrast, noun phrases (i.e. phrases that occupy the roles of either A, P, I or W) are strongly **head-initial**. The head noun or pronoun comes first, declensed for number and case. It is then followed by adjectives or adjective phrases. In particular the adjective can include participles, which come with their own still strictly APIVW subclause, with V occupied by the participle and either A/P/I embodied by the head noun; this will be clarified in section 1.8 and section 1.9.

No antipassive voice

Flavan "does not have the antipassive", which means transitive verbs without an object are *still* treated as transitive. So *I ate* is still **ngon rbap**, with "me" in the ergative case, while a language with antipassive voice might shift to the absolutive.

The ak *copula*

The verb **ak**, meaning *to be* in the sense of copula (i.e. "the sky is blue") has two unusual properties that deserve care:

1: It is **transitive**. The complement to the subject is literally treated as an object and thus takes the absolutive, while the subject itself is in the ergative. Example:

Shlem katarotta attk - *Shlem was a woman*
Shlem.ERG woman.ABS was

2: It always disappears in the present indicative, an example of **zero copula**. So *Shlem is a woman* is literally **Shlem katarotta**. It readily reappears when conjugating the verb in any way, for example in the interrogative mood: **Shlem katarotta yk?** - *is Shlem a woman?*. Thus, the specific word **ak** does not actually exist in Flavan.

1.5 Nouns

Nouns are declensed according to number and case.

Number and countability

Three main numbers are always present: **singular**, **dual** and **plural**. These take on different meanings for the two classes of countable and uncountable nouns. countability

Ergative

The ergative case's role was already explained in section 1.4.

The ergative case is *unmarked* and it's the default ("lemma") form for nouns, in stark contrast with the typical situation for ergative languages in which the absolutive is the unmarked form.

The number declension in the ergative case is as follows:

singular	dual	plural
-	-ef	-y

However, there are a few irregularities.

For duals: nouns ending in vowel only take **-f** in the dual.

For plurals:

Nouns whose ending matches with any in the singular column below form the plural by replacing said ending with the corresponding entry in the plural column.

sing	**plur**
-yr	-yr ta
-yn	-yn ta
-ym	-ym ta
-yng	-yng ta
-o	-y
-shl	-shar
-a	-ata
-e	-et

Absolutive

The absolutive case's role was already explained in section 1.4.

The absolutive is marked by **first vowel opening** (FVO), the shift in the *first* vowel of the noun as:

Ergative first vowel	a	e	o	y
Absolutive first vowel	a	a	a	o

and in addition, the number suffix becomes a number *pre*fix:

	singular	dual	plural
doesn't begin in **y-**	-	fe-	y-
begins in **y-**	-	f-	-

Genitive

The genitive signifies possession (alienable or inalienable), and origin.

It is marked by the suffix **-t** on the ergative form (after the number suffix). A few irregular genitives arise for some noun endings:

Ergative	-k	-g	-t	-f
Genitive	-kt	-kt	-tt	-fet

If a noun is not part of these exceptions, and the suffix **-t** were still to create a nonexisting cluster, **-et** is used instead.

Dative / Locative

The dative marks the receiving end of giving or communication. The locative instead signifies the noun represent a place where the action happens or towards which motion is intended.

The dative is built through the prefix **o-** on the ergative form.

Ablative / Instrumental

The ablative indicates motion away from or through, extraction, origin, topic. As the instrumental, it denotes the action happens by means or thanks to the noun.

The ablative is marked by **first syllable reduplication** (FSR) which is the repetition of the first syllable with a vowel shift, namely if the first vowel is **e,o,y** the duplicated vowel is **a**, if it is **a** the duplicated vowel is **y**. To be precise, what is duplicated is only the onset cluster, the (shifted) nucleus, excluding the coda.

If the noun already starts in a vowel, then one only reduplicates the cluster right after it.

A few examples:

Ergative	Ablative
borgoredh	baborgoredh
sodhl	sasodhl
shlarby	shlyshlarby
darg	dydarg
egord	gegord

Example declension

The noun **berb** /bɛrb/, *arm* is declensed as follows:

	ERG	ABS	GEN	DAT	ABL
singular	berb	barb	berbet	oberb	baberb
dual	berbef	febarb	berbefet	oberbef	baberbef
plural	berby	ybarb	berbyt	oberby	baberby

Definiteness

Flavan avoids marking for definiteness unless necessary. For singular and dual countable, indefiniteness is signaled by the adjectives **e** and **ka**, the literal cardinals *one* and *two*, placed after the noun just like normal adjectives. finire

1.6 Adjectives

Adjectives are incredibly simple in Flavan: they are not declensed nor do they align with the nouns they complement. Because of this adjective position is crucial for clarity; adjectives always come right after the noun they refer to.

To be precise, the above construction describes the attributive use of adjectives in which they specify a quality about a noun. Adjectives can also be used *predicatively*, as linked with a noun phrase with a copula: *Shlem is beautiful*. In this case the adjective acts as an object of the **ak** copula, and is placed in the absolutive position, but not declensed.

Intensity

The strength of adjectives can be modulated by a series of constructions.

- **strengthening** (e.g. *very*) is realized through **first syllable reduplication**. For example, **ttla** *good-looking, beautiful* becomes **ttlyttla**, *very beautiful*.
- **inversion** (not to be confused with negation) turns an adjective into its opposite, and it's marked by the prefix **dhla-**. Example: **dhlattla** *ugly*.

Comparison

Comparison is subtle and alien in Flavan. It is expressed by means of *comparison verbs*, most importantly **merak** and **dhlamerak**, very vaguely translatable as *"to be more this than"* and *"to be less this than"*. To express that X is more A than Y, one says that X **meraks** A *to* Y, or said otherwise the object of comparison takes the dative case. For a concrete example:

Shlem ttla o-Rkon merak - *Shlem is more beautiful than Rkon*
Shlem.ERG beautiful Rkon.DAT merak.IND.PR

This verbal form of comparison is preferrable, but if strictly necessary a true comparative adjective can be formed through the agent participle of the comparison verb (see section 1.8).

The possible comparison verbs are

merak	more than
dhlamerak	less than
kobymat	equally as
dhlakobymat	differently from

Nominal Adjectives

It is possible to use adjectives as nouns. (i.e. **ttla** can also mean *the beautiful person*).

If the adjective is to be used in the ergative or absolutive position, one just uses the adjective itself in the expected position. It should *not* be declensed as a noun in the absolutive case.

If instead the adjective needs to be in any other position (dative, ablative, after a preposition…) it should be prepended by a 3rd person pronoun (see section 1.7).

Therefore *the beautiful person* is **ttla**, while *to the beautiful person* is **onorg ttla**.

1.7 Pronouns

Personal Pronouns

	ERG	ABS	GEN	DAT	ABL	VOC
1st singular	**ngon***	**ngan**	**nget**	**ong**	**ngangon**	**-**
2nd	**my***	**me**	**met**	**omy**	**mame**	**my-na(s) / my-nana (d/p)**
3rd singular	**nor**	**nar**	**net**	**onorg**	**nanyr**	**-**
1st plural inclusive	**sho**	**sha**	**shet**	**osh**	**shasho**	**sho-nana**
1st plural exclusive	**nysh**	**nosh**	**neshet**	**onysh**	**nanysh**	**-**
3rd dual/plural	**ney**	**nay**	**neyt**	**one**	**naney**	**-**

***ngon** and **my** are fairly high-register forms; they are often replaced by the contracted forms **n** (/n̩/) and **m** (/m̩/).

Personal pronouns can be supplemented with **specifier particles**, if and only if it is strictly necessary for disambiguation; the particles clarify facts about the person (i.e. gender, number, animacy…). Generally only one specifier particle is allowed, and it is placed *after* the pronoun.

Particle	Meaning
ky	male
fa	female
sy	animate
da	inanimate
foba	older
fen	younger
yk	close to the listener / reflexive
badd	far from the listener
my	2nd p singular
ek	2nd p dual
tta	2nd p plural

So, **nar yk** might mean "this one here, as opposed to that other one far away", or **nysh fa** might mean "us women, excluding all men" when talking to another man. The particles **my**, **ek**, **tta** are only to be used for the 2nd person pronouns when it is necessary to specify the number. So **my my** is "you, and emphatically you alone", or **my ek** is "you two".

yk has a second meaning: it makes the pronoun reflexive, if it's in a non-ergative case. For example: **nor ky nar yk rbodattk** /nɔr kɨ nar ɨk rboˈdatːk/, *he (male) killed himself.*

Demonstrative, indefinite, interrogative

Interrogative Pronouns

Questions whose focus is a noun phrase can be formulated through interrogative pronoun **mat**, whose irregular declension is as follows:

	ERG	ABS	GEN	DAT	ABL
sing	mott	matt	motet	omote	mamot
dual	mottef	fematt	motetef	omotef	mamotef
plur	motty	matty	mottyt	omotty	mamaty

mat is to be placed in the right case and position in the interrogative phrase, and this by itself is sufficient to mark it as a question. However, most speakers also add the interrogative mood to the verb (normally only used for yes/no questions) *if* the verb would have normally taken the indicative - this will be clarified better in section **??**.

The interrogative pronoun, which is always necessarily the focus, can be subject to focus expulsion as explained in section 1.4.

1.8 Verbs

/deŋõˈnak/, *glistening, shimmering*

Prefix modifiers	**Stem**	**Mood Vowel**	**Tense Ending**
mark participles, inversion, etc.	carries root meaning alongside ending	carries mood	carries relative tense
e.g. *de*: marks patient participle	e.g. *ngon_k*: (int.) to shine, to glisten	e.g. *a*: indicative mood	e.g. *-k*: relative present

Tense

Conjugated tense is relative to the absolute tense of the proposition, which is instead established through specific time adverbs or inferred from context (e.g. inherited from the previous sentence). So the three conjugated tenses, **present**, **anterior**, **posterior** mean the action is performed respectively simultaneously, before, or after the current absolute time.

Relative tense is marked by the final consonant cluster; verbs are arranged in classes according to their present tense ending, with the -k class the most populated.

Present	**Anterior**	**Posterior**
-k	-ttk	-dh
-rd	-rk	-r
-t	-tt	-d
-tt	-ttk	-dd
-rg	-rk	-ng
-m	-p	-ng

Mood

The final vowel marks the mood, as follows:

Indicative	-a-	belief and evidentiality
Interrogative	-y-	yes/no question
Deontic	-e-	desire, wish, hope, exhortation, command
Subjunctive	-o-	protasis, doubt or uncertainty
Conditional	-ate-	apodosis

Vowel harmony

When the mood vowel is conjugated to either of -e- or -o- (deontic or subjunctive), and the stem has at least one vowel, the last vowel of the stem is changed to -o- or -e- respectively. For example, **agarak** (*to be well*) when conjugated to the deontic mood becomes **agarak→agarek→agorek**.

Example conjugation

The verb **pyrdak** (tr., *bring/present/introduce*) would thus be conjugated as follows for mood & relative tense:

	Pres	Ant	Post
Ind	pyrdak	pyrdattk	pyrdadh
Int	pyrdyk	pyrdyttk	pyrdydh
Deo	pordek	pordettk	pordedh
Sub	perdok	perdottk	perdodh
Cond	pyrdatek	pyrdatettk	pyrdatedh

Deontic particles

The deontic mood encodes a large array of meanings. It might happen that this is too generic and the nature of the desire or requirement needs to be specified more precisely. In this case a **deontic particle** is placed before the verb. Here are the most common:

Commissive	
dabe	promise
dadabe	threat, promises with negative connotation
Directive	
tyba	polite request
kottela	plead (also used ironically)
rkydh	order, imperative
Volitive	
mao	need
blange	want, desire
shange	pessimistic wish
say	optimistic wish

Participle, gerundive

Participles can be constructed as agents (that is, subjects of transitive verbs) by adding the prefix **ro-**, or patients (subjects of intransitive verbs or objects of transitive verbs) with **de-**. Example: **fattarym ropyrdak**, *the neighbour that is bringing*, **feshlarb depyrdak**, *the water that is being brought.*

But most interestingly, there is also an indirect participle

marking the indirect object (the one that would go in the dative case) of the action, with prefix **do-**. For example, **kad**, *give* has **dokat** /do'kad/ *receiving*

A participle can be used as it is as a noun. The ??? is declensed as a normal noun.

Combining a participle/gerund with mood and tense can yield some interesting constructions. A gerundive can be built with a patient participle of a posterior deontic verb: **ropordedh**, *the one that must be brought.*

Irregular participles and *ak-* verbs

Some verbs, those starting on **ak-** (except **ak** itself) construct one of their participles irregularly. To be exact, the irregular participle itself is the original form, and the verb is derived from it. The remaining two participles are constructed regularly from the verb.

Part.	Translation	Voice	Verb	Translation
rog	writer, writing tool	ag	akrog	write
bot	known	pat	akbat	know
rkygo	newborn	pat	akarkygat	be born

Modifiers

There is another interesting phenomenon in verbs, on the edge between fusion and agglutination: modifier prefixes. These do attach to the original root to produce a new, longer root with modified meaning; therefore they must be applied before conjugation. Modifiers act somewhat irregularly in terms of the resulting change in meaning, and many modified verbs become their own new lexical units and are reported separately in our dictionary; nevertheless Flavan generously applies modifiers on new verbs in speech to create predictable transformations. The usage and parsing of modifiers requires a good dose of common sense, and Flavan speakers tend to avoid them whenever the possibility for ambiguity arises and a different verb already exists to communicate the intended modified meaning.

A few popular modifiers:

dhla-: inversion; the action opposite, inverse, or undoing the original action.e.g.: **pottarat**, *sew, entangle*, **dhlapottarat**, *unsew, disassemble, disentangle*

kyta-: negation; the original action not happening, being stopped or ignored. e.g.: **pat**, *walk*, **kytapat**, *not walk, stand still, wait still*

FSR: strengthening; a strengthened, more intense or faster version of the original action. e.g.: **pat**, *walk*, **papat**, *run*

Modifiers can be composed together, even repeating the same modifier: *to run fast* could be translated as **papapat**, applying FSR twice.

Perfectiveness

do perfectiveness

1.9 Relative Clauses

Flavan doesn't use relative pronouns to form relative clauses in the traditional sense, for relative clauses in the in the position of subject, object, intransitive subject *and* indirect object. Instead, it employs directly its extensive participle system.

As any adjective, the participle goes after the noun it refers to, and the rest of the relative clause is in standard word order with respect to the participle, which is the main verb from the subclause's point of view. Moreover, relative clauses are Flavan relative tense's time to shine: the participle's tense denotes time *relative* to that of the main clause (which is in turn relative to background time).

Examples for each position (with the subclause in square brackets for clarity):

ERGATIVE
"I saw a man that was eating (transitive)"
Ngon toreb [rorbam] moratt /ŋɔ̃n ˈtɔreb roˈrbam moˈratː/
me.ERG man.ABS (eat.IND.PRES).(AG PART) see.IND.ANT

ABSOLUTIVE
"I saw a man that was running"
Ngon toreb [depapat] moratt /ŋɔ̃n ˈtɔreb depaˈpat moˈratː/
me.ERG man.ABS (eat.IND.PRES).(PAT PART) see.IND.ANT

DATIVE
"I saw the man that you gave the book to"
Ngon toreb [my kagmenyr dokatt] moratt /ŋɔ̃n ˈtɔreb depaˈpat moˈratː/
me.ERG man.ABS you.ERG book.ABS (give.IND.PRES).(DAT PART) see.IND.ANT
(note: **dokatt** is in the anterior tense since the giving of the book was certainly anterior to the main action.)

A delicate point is word order. The head noun **toreb** in all of these cases occupies two roles simultaneously: P in the main clause and A/P/I in the subclause. Since the rest of the subclause must come after the head noun, if the participle is of patient or indirect type then it's possible the APIVW order will be broken for the subclause. This is considered one of the few acceptable exceptions. Thus in the last example above the subclause is really in IAPV because the I just cannot be moved forward.

add other positions

Relative clause expulsion

It might be that the rigid order in the above construction of relative clauses is too strict for the expression some concepts; for example, situations in which it is important that the main clause is finished before one can start a relative subclause. In that case it is possible to postpone the relative clause with the **kon** construction, described as follows.

The main clause is stated normally, but the special adjective **kon** is appended to the noun phrase to be referenced. Then the subclause is exposed, with the reference embodied by the relevant personal pronoun, this too accompained by **kon**. This is much clearer with an example:

"I saw a man that was eating"
N toreb kon moratt [nor kon rbam]
me.ERG man.ABS.**kon** see.IND.ANT he.ERG.**kon** eat.IND.PR

In this example the **kon** adjective marks that the man mentioned in the main clause is the same as the "he" that enters as agent in the expelled subclause.

More often than not spoken Flavan will omit the first instance of **kon**, leaving the referenced noun phrase from the main clause to be deduced from context. For example, if we were to make such an omission in the above example, it would still be obvious that the referenced noun is *the man* and not *me*, because the pronoun in the relative clause is in the third person. In general, one would always prefer to add a necessary specifier particle to the prononun to disambiguate, rather than repeat **kon** twice.

It can also happen that the above construction is inverted: the main clause has the pronoun and the subclause the actual noun phrase. Example:

"I saw him, the man that was eating"
Ngon nar kon moratt [tyreb kon rbam]
me.ERG him.ABS.**kon** see.IND.ANT man.ERG.**kon** eat.IND.PR

1.10 Declarative clauses

Declarative subclauses are built by means of a **declarative pronoun**, standing for the subclause in the main clause, while the subclause itself is constructed as a normal declarative clause - with the exception that an irrealis subclause should take the subjunctive mood. The pronoun (and its position with respect to the subclause) is declensed as follows:

	pronoun	position
ERG	bogm	after
ABS	bag	before
DAT	obogm	before
ABL	babogm	before

Here are a couple of example of declarative subclauses in ergative and absolutive positions.

[nor fa ttla] bogm karygma /norˈfatːla bɔgm karɨˈgma/
[she beautiful (is)].ERG fact.ABS (is)
It's a fact that she is beautiful

N bag [nor fa ttla] akbat /n̩ bag norˈfatːla akˈbat/
me.ERG ABS.[she beautiful (is)] know.IND.PRES
I know she is beautiful

1.11 Negation

A negation modifier for verbs has already been introduced,

1.12 Conditionals

cond

1.13 Numerals

Flavan arithmetic terminology has undergone a remarkable number of revisions, most of them artificial, following the strong push for clarity, ease of calculation and mutual intelligibility imposed by the needs of a civilization based on trading and travel. The current situation is a positional base-16 / base-4 system, with the spoken language mostly working in the former while written numerals (described in the reference for the script) employ the latter.

The first cardinal numerals are

base-10	base-16	numeral	pronunc.	etim./alternative mean.
0	0	kydh	/kɨjðː/	nothing
1	1	e	/ɛ/	-
2	2	ka	/ka/	original dual affix
3	3	pok	/pɔk/	triangle
4	4	demo	/ˈdɛmo/	square
5	5	fam	/fam/	hand
6	6	eka	/eˈka/	"one-two" in base four
7	7	rbargar	/rbaˈrgar/	hole[4]
8	8	mom	/mɔm/	sun[5]
9	9	dhlarma	/ðlarma/	"not quite ten" (sort of)
10	A	darma	/darma/	-
11	B	kodany	/koˈdani/	from the old system
12	C	kardeny	/karˈdɛni/	from the old system
13	D	pottke	/ˈpɔtːke/	from quaternary "three one"
14	E	kargar	/kaˈrgar/	two-seven
15	F	dhlarda	/ðlaˈrda/	"not quite sixteen" (sort of)
16	10	garda	/gaˈrda/	[unknown]

To which we can add the powers of sixteen:

base-10	pow of 16	numeral	pronunc.	etim./alternative mean.
16	16^1	garda	/gaˈrda/	[unknown]
256	16^2	dhonga	/ðoˈŋa/	many
4096	16^3	kottla	/ˈkɔtːla/	complete
65536	16^4	gardakottla	/gardaðoˈŋa/	16×16^3
1048576	16^5	dhongakottla	/ðoŋaˈkɔtːla/	$16^2 \times 16^3$
		...		

An arbitrary number can be expressed in the following way. Write the number in base-16, so as a sum of powers of 16, and sort the powers from **smallest to largest**. For example, let's take $12345_{10} = 3039_{16}$, so

$$3039_{16} = 9 \times 16^0 + 3 \times 16 + 0 \times 16^2 + 3 \times 16^3$$

Then reading literally, the word representing the number is

dhlarma-pok-garda-pok-kottla
/ðlarmaˈpɔk gaˈrda pɔkəˈkɔtːla/
nine (plus) three-sixteen (plus) three-4096

This insistence of Flavans on reading from least significant to most significant digit is certainly frustrating especially in light of their most-significant-first written representation of numbers.

There is a possible ambiguity when **e** and **ka** appear consecutive, as in **e ka garda** $= 1 + 2 \times 16$, as they can be confused with **eka**, as in **eka garda** $= 6 \times 16$. In these cases **e** is replaced by **ef**. So $1 + 2 \times 16$ is **ef-ka-garda**.

[5]The etimology of **rbargar** is worthy of explanation: it refers to the seven orifices of the human body according to Flavans: the two ears, the two nostrils, the mouth, the urethra/vagina, and the anus.

[5]It's not known whether this is a coincidence or has some philosophical or religious significance. It is known that the attention to eight as a sacred number of sorts has definitely shifted in later times towards sixteen, and this term is likely to have been inherited from a much older system.

1.14 Possession

In Flavan, there is no verb "to have": possession is described entirely through the genitive.

There is a distinction between **alienable** and **inalienable** possession. Alienable possessors are placed *before* the head noun:

Shlemet tatyr kakoryb /ˈʃlɛmet ˈtatɤ̣ kaˈkɔrɨjb/

Shlem.GEN dagger.ERG (very).expensive (omitted copula) - *Shlem's dagger is very expensive*

While an inalienable relationship uses the opposite order:

forb Shlemet ttlyttla /fɔrb ˈʃlɛmet ətːlɨjtːla/

Brother.ERG Shlem.GEN (very).beautiful (omitted copula) - *Shlem's brother is very beautiful*

There is an exception in genitive expressing geographical or cultural origin, such as the origin village in Flavan names. If Shlem comes from the Karek village, she is **Karek-t Shlem**, even if the possession is inalienable.

1.15 Kinship and Relationship

1.16 Dictionary

Flavan script transcription is rotated to horizontal for formatting purposes.

adhla [aðlˈa] · in the way of, according to, through, in (smth) way | commonly combined in **adhla matty**, *in which way* or *how*

agarak [agarˈak] *v intr* · feel good, feel well, be well

ak [ak] *v tr* · be (copula)

ame [ˈame] *adv* · here

anyshl [anˈiʃl̩] *adv* · in the far future

arbyd [ˈarbɨd] *n* · river

arkatt [arkˈatː] *v tr* · be disgusted by, be appalled by

babyr [bˈabɤ̣] *n* · suffering, pain

barkag [barkˈag] *n* · number

bemon [bˈɛmon] *n* · rock

berb [bɛrb] *n* · arm

blyshl [blˈɨʃl̩] *n* · sap (of plunts)

bob [bɔb] *n* · head

bodard [bodˈard] *v intr* · sleep

boma [bomˈa] *adj* · young

borag [borˈag] *n* · sulfur

bord [bɔrd] *n* · death

bordam [bordˈam] *v tr* · tell, say, recount

borgoredh [borgorˈɛðː] *n* · discipline

boryg [bˈɔrɨg] *adj* · acidic, yellow, sulfurous

byrma [bɤ̣mˈa] *adj* · heavy

byrmodak [bɤ̣modˈak] *v tr* · weigh (asses weight of something)

da = [da] *response particle* · no

darg [darg] *v intr* · burn

dhlaboma [ðlabomˈa] *adj* · old

dhlattla [ðlˈatːla] *adj* · ugly

dhlekyr [ðlˈɛkɤ̣] *n* · tree-like plunt

dhyn [ðɨn] *conjuction* · but, surprisingly, yet

dhyrg [ðːɤ̣g] *n* · eye

dyp [dɨp] *conjunction* · after

eat [eˈat] *v tr* · see

egorat [egorˈat] *v tr* · examine

egord [ˈɛgord] *n* · examination

fam [fam] *n* · 1. hand 2. five

fattarym [fatːˈarɨm] *n* · neighbour

febodh [febˈɔðː] *n* · pocket

femen [fˈɛmen] *n* · need

fettfok [fˈɛtːfok] *adv* · strangely, weirdly, in an unusual way

forb [fɔrb] *n* · brother

forba [forbˈa] *adv* · about, approximately

formadat [formadˈat] *v intr* · act, behave

fysh [fɨʃ] *n* · single hair

fytta [fˈɨtːa] *adj* · male

fyttfyt [fˈɨtːfɨt] *adv* · immediately, right away

garyk [gˈarɨk] *pronoun* · this (close to listener)

godhl [gˈɔðːl̩] *n* · desire

goma [gomˈa] *n* · skin

gydda [gˈɨdːa] *n* · love | both meaning fraternal or sexual love or affection, also directed towards inanimate entities but only in the sense of caring about, never in the sense of strongly liking. The verb "to love" is gydda kat

gyrb [gɤ̣b] *n* · leg

gysadhl [gɨsˈaðːl̩] *n* · greedy person, someone blinded by desire

kag [kag] *n* · milk

kagmenyr [kagmˈɛnɤ̣] *n* · book, booklet, notepad, diary

kam [kam] *v tr* · talk | object is listener, topic is in ablative

karatto [karˈatːo] *n* · oasis, crater

karb [karb] *v tr* · welcome

karyttfa [karˈɨtːfa] *adj* · old

kashl [kˈaʃl̩] *n* · urine

kat [kat] *v tr* · offer, give, provide

katarotta [katarˈɔtːa] *n* · female

kerb [kɛrb] *adj* · low

ketta [kˈɛtːa] *n* · coin

korb [kɔrb] *n* · child

korbaradem [korbarˈadem] *adv* · all this time, through the whole thing, throughout, this whole time | sets verb to progressive, with the end of the action at the moment in time indicated by the verb.

koreny [korˈɛnɨ] *n* · psychological or mental unbalance, mental illness | plural

koryb [kˈɔrɨb] *adj* · expensive

kym [kɨm] *conjunction* · while, as

kyng [kiŋ] *n* · mouth
kyryd [kˈr̥id] *n* · woman
kyttkat [kˈitːkat] *v tr* · meet
mak [mak] *v tr* · 1. lead, guide, 2. teach, pave the way
mardat [mardˈat] *v intr* · dream | X.ABS Y.ABL (mardat): X dreams Y or of Y
mashl [mˈaʃl̥] *v intr* · go, enter
matty [mˈatːi] *interrogative pronoun* · which, what
medh [mɛðː] *adverb* · behind
megyn [mˈɛgin] *n* · 1. stick, rod 2. tent pole 3. (vulgar) finger
mom [mɔm] *n* · sun
morad [morˈad] *n* · ground, land
morat [morˈat] *v tr* · look
moshl [mˈɔʃl̥] *n* · mother
mydhlark [miðlˈark] *v intr* · lay down, lie
myfo [mˈifo] *adj* · tall, deep
na [na] *response particle* · yes
nadd [nadː] *adverb* · it seems like, it appears like | before a verb in subjunctive, expresses apparence
ngonak [ŋõnˈak] *v intr* · glisten, glimmer, shimmer, shine
ngyard [ŋ̃iˈard] *n* · salt
ngyb [ŋ̃ib] *n* · son (of mother)
nynga [niŋ̃a] *adj* · 1. sweaty 2. sticky
nyngyr [nˈiŋr̥] *n* · sweat
pak [pak] *n* · village
papat [papˈat] *v intr* · run
pat [pat] *v intr* · walk
pdamen [pdˈamen] *n* · sky
pottarat [potːarˈat] *v tr* · sew
pyka [pikˈa] *adj* · small
pyrdak [pr̥dˈak] *v tr* · bring, present, introduce
rbam [rbam] *v tr* · eat
rbargar [rbargˈar] *n* · 1. hole 2. orifice
rbo [rbɔ] *n* · breast
rbodat [rbodˈat] *v tr* · kill
rda [rda] *adverb* · then, in the past
rdak [rdak] *n* · again
rdan [rdan] *adverb* · together
rdonarod [rdonˈarod] *n* · flake
rdonaroda [rdonarodˈa] *adj* · flaky
rgodha [rgoðˈa] *adj* · long
rkygo [rkˈigo] *n* · newborn
rkyng [rkiŋ] *n* · beard
rodan [rodˈan] *n* · day
rog [rɔg] *n* · 1. writer 2. any writing tool
romak [romˈak] *n* · 1. teacher 2. Master
rykashl [rikˈaʃl] *n* · 1. membrane, sac 2. peel 3. placenta 4. water canteen
sab [sab] *n* · sand
sedh [sɛðː] *n* · fear
setta [sˈɛtːa] *n* · regret
shaf [ʃaf] *n* · hospitality
shlarb [ʃlarb] *n* · water
shlaryb [ʃlˈarib] *adj* · wet
shlattky [ʃlˈatːki] *n* · blood
shledd [ʃlɛdː] *n* · daughter
shoryk [ʃˈɔrik] *n* · idea, proposition, suggestion (on how to act)
sodhl [sˈɔðːl̥] *n* · cloud
syng [siŋ] *adj* · safe (as in safety)
syrbattam [sr̥bˈatːam] *n* · room
taryng [tˈariŋ] *n* · tent
tatyr [tˈatr̥] *n* · 1. knife, dagger 2. (vulgar) penis
torkam [torkˈam] *v tr* · take, grab, remove
ttakyba [tːakibˈa] *n* · visit, opposition of the Wanderer, years of age
ttarkaset [tːarkˈaset] *n* · liver
ttfysh [tːfiʃ] *n* · rain, raindrop
ttla [tːla] *n* · beauty, beautiful things
ttlyttla [tːlˈitːla] *adj* · beautiful, stunning
tyreb [tˈr̥eb] *n* · human, person, man, woman
yngap [iŋ̃ˈap] *n* · buttock | the buttocks is dual
yngok [ˈiŋõk] *n* · light
yrk [r̥k] *conjunction* · and

Chapter 2

The Flavan Script

"beauty from discipline."

2.1 Functioning of the abugida

The Flavan script is an abugida: the main series of glyphs (called "the adults") represent consonantal sounds, while secondary glyphs (called "the children") attached to the adults represent vowels following them.

To be more precise, adults mark consonant *clusters*. When writing a word, the entire group of consonants between one vowel and the next is one cluster and maps to one adult. For example, consider the word **syrbattam**, *room*; if it were to be written it would be decomposed as such[1]

$$(\mathrm{s})^{\mathrm{y}}(\mathrm{rb})^{\mathrm{a}}(\mathrm{tt})^{\mathrm{a}}(\mathrm{m})$$

It would therefore be written as the **s** adult with the **y** child attached, the **rb** adult with the **a** child attached, and so on.

If the word starts in a vowel, we use a "carrier" adult called the **pode** (**-**). For example, **arbyd**, *river* would be

$$(\text{-})^{\mathrm{a}}(\mathrm{rb})^{\mathrm{y}}(\mathrm{d})$$

Note you cannot "compose" the **r** and **b** adults to make **rb**. They are separate phonemes and glyphs in Flavan. The Flavan script can only represent words that follow the phonotactical rules, so only those that alternate vowels with allowed consonant clusters. **andra** is not a Flavan word and it cannot be written because there is no **ndr** adult.

Words with consecutive vowels can occasionally appear though. These can easily be written using podes.

The letter "a"

There is **no letter a**. By default, unmarked adults carry an **a** vowel, unless at word end. So really, **syrbattam** should be

$$(\mathrm{s})^{\mathrm{y}}(\mathrm{rb})^{\text{unmarked}}(\mathrm{tt})^{\text{unmarked}}(\mathrm{m})$$

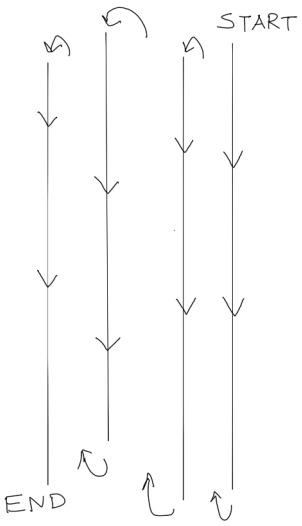
But what if a word ends in **a**? Just add more podes. **gydda**, *love* is

$$(\mathrm{g})^{\mathrm{y}}\ (\mathrm{dd})^{\text{unmarked}}(\text{-})^{\text{unmarked}}$$

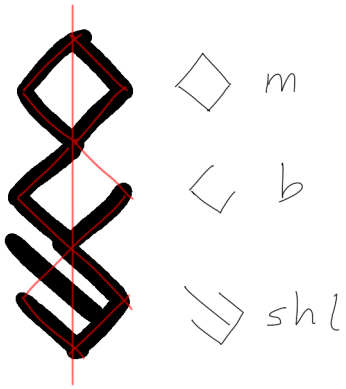
To be exact, what's happening here is that the final (-) makes it so (dd) is not final anymore, and thus does carry **a** being unmarked. The (-) here does not contribute any sound by itself.

2.2 Visual guidelines

Flavan is written top to bottom, right to left. Running through the middle of a single column of text is a (partially imaginary) line, the main stem. The adults are placed one below the other, centered on the stem; the centering is essential for readability. You're always allowed to play around with the distance between stems and also with the height of the beginning of each column of text, for aesthetic purposes; however, the stem should *never* bend or be curved or diagonal (except for some very wild designs), and adults should be correctly centered.
These are valid stem lines. Spacing and starting height are inconsistent, but all stems are perfectly vertical and straight.

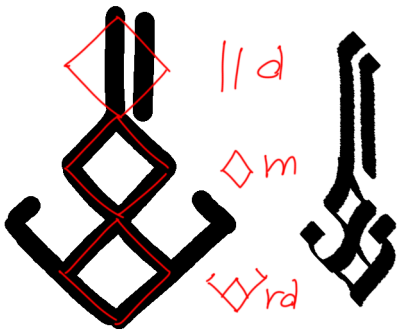


[1] **syrbattam** is actually pronounced [sr̩ˈbatːam] with a syllabic [r], however for the sake of the Flavan script phonological rules such as the contraction /ir/ →[r̩] are ignored.

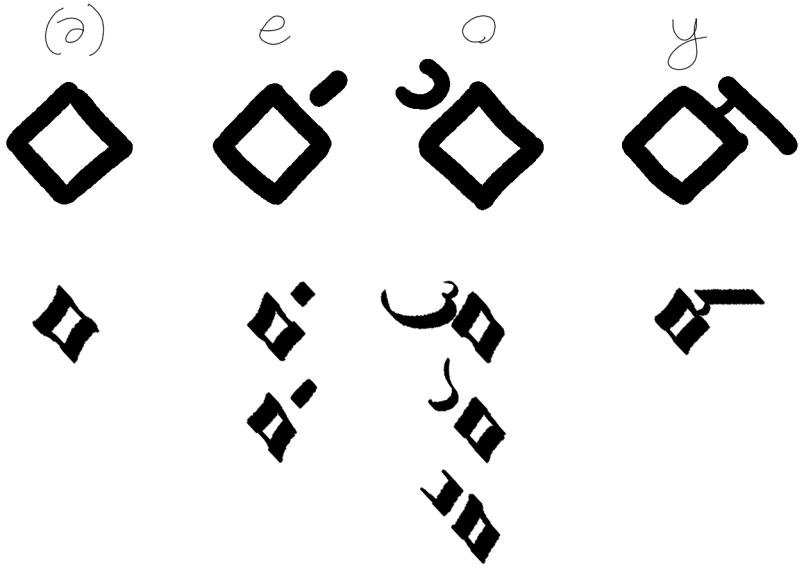


The stem is included literally in some adults, so that words can appear as single connected shapes spanning vertically. Other adults break the stem line, so a disconnected symbol does **not** mean a word boundary.
The adults themselves are all built, fundamentally, on a "template" of a 45°-rotated square, at least in the basic "geometric" style. The resulting visual coherence helps in distinguishing glyphs: each square is an adult. For example, the (imaginary) word **mabashl**, with adults **m**, **b**, **shl** becomes as on the left.

Some rules are meant to be broken. Some really aren't. You can for example break free of the grid's vertical constraints. In the right example, the (again imaginary) word **damard** was stylized by stretching the vertical letter **d**; this is ok because this glyph, while meant to fit in a template square, does not really follow the lines of the square at all. Moreover, the two lower squares have been stretched into rhombi, and some curvature has been added to the lines. However, both rhombi are equal (approximately) in width and height. In general, stylization (at least for the Demorog script) can result in deformation of the fundamental square shape and stretching of non-square elements, but whenever the deformed squares appear, they should be consistent. This is essential for distinguishing adult boundaries (is there a joke here?).



2.3 Children

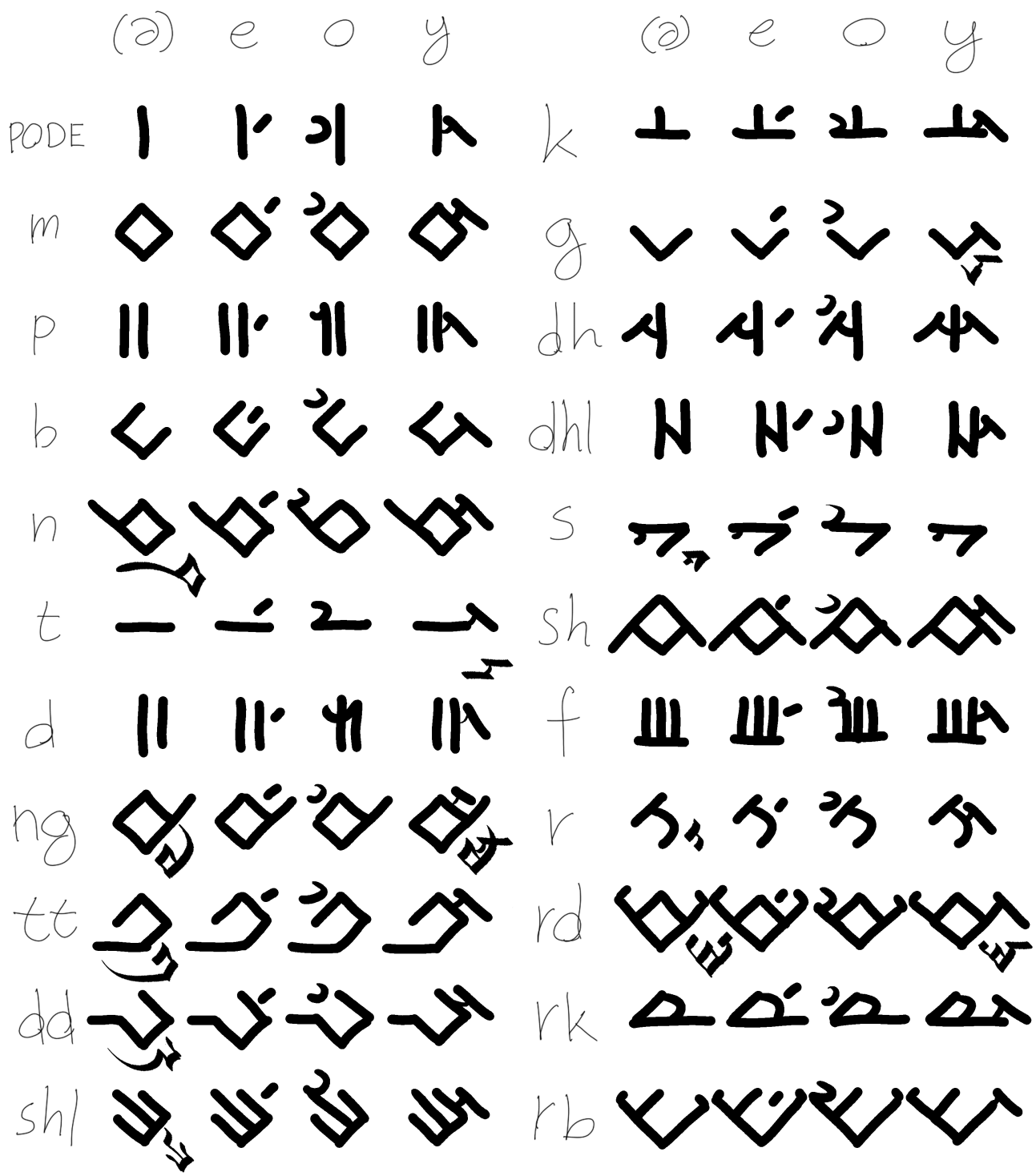


The four children markings (the absence of a marking is also considered a vowel letter by Flavans) are depicted here on the letter **m**. Below, a few variants for the cursive style are presented. There is great freedom in stylization of position and shape of vowel markings, because there is little chance of ambiguity; this freedom should be employed to avoid overlap of the markings with the previous adult. Some guidelines should be however satisfied to guarantee legibility:

- **e** should always be detached from all adults and children on the same column and to the right of its parent adult, **upper** right if the adult includes a guide square. It should be either dot-like or angle upwards going to the right. It should be straight.
- **o** should also be detached from all glyphs of the column and on the left or upper left of its adult. It can take a great variety of shapes, generally c-like curves with the opening to the upper left, and might include one, two, or even three arcs. On many adults, however, the **o** and the adult join to create another form (generally it turns into a "hook" for the adult), the full syllabary table includes all possible combinations.
- **y** is attached by a little stem to its parent adult. Otherwise, it should not attach to anything else in the same column. The point of attachement is specific to each letter (see the full syllabary table) but it's always either right or upper right. The main stroke angles downward in the strict geometric style but is horizontal in handwritten geometric or in cursive.

2.4 Syllabary (Males)

The following are adult-child combination for the "common" adults, the "males", in geometric style. Some non-obvious cursive version of the geometric glyphs are depicted to their lower-right. The combination **ngy** contains in the cursive script the only permissible intersection of strokes. Note that the glyphs **g** and **s** interrupt the stem above, so there is a space between the adult and the one before. Similarly, **k** breaks below, and **t** breaks both above and below.


(ə) e o y
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k
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dh
dhl
s
sh
f
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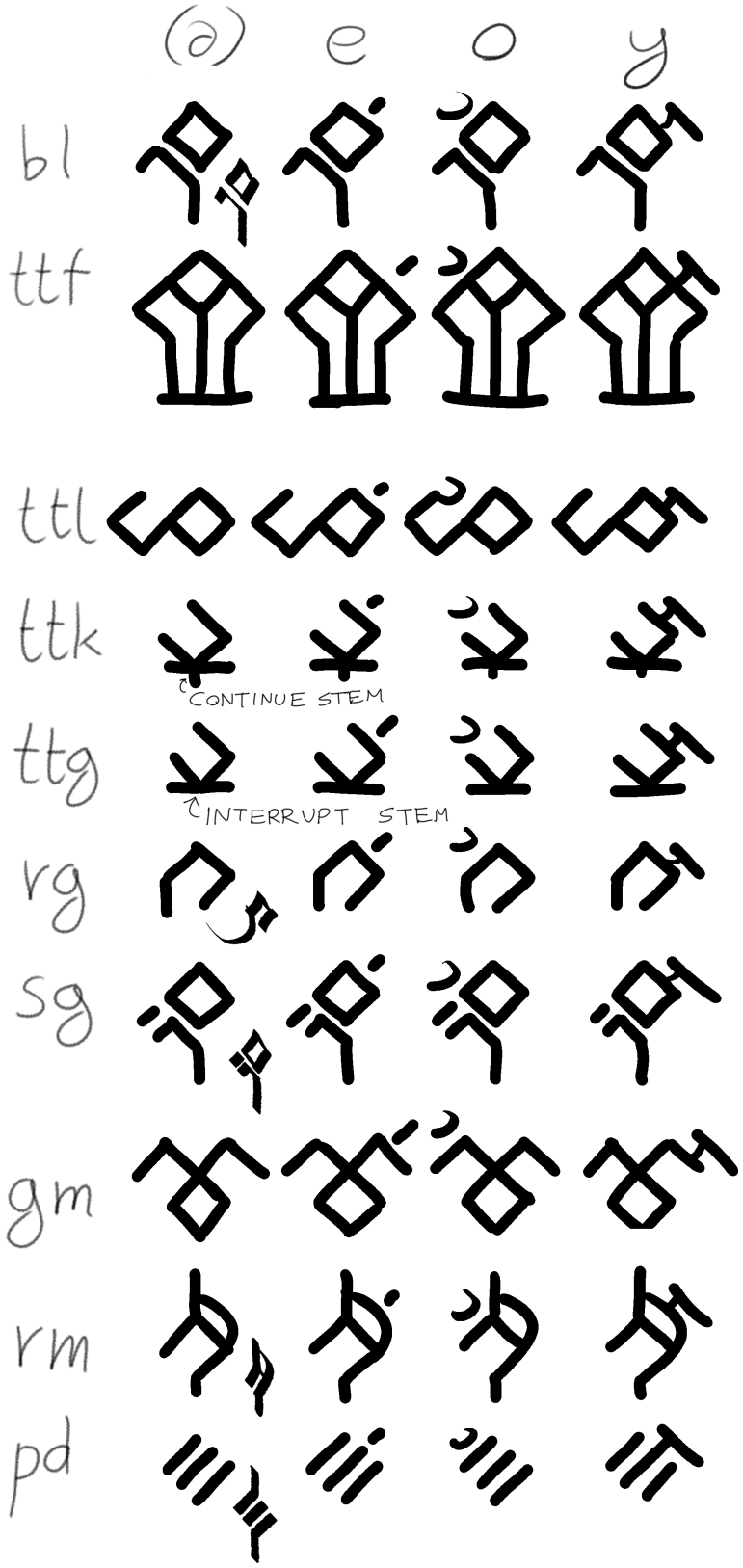
rd
rk
rb

2.5 Syllabary (Females)

And here are the more "uncommon" glyphs, the "females". **ttk** and **ttg** are identical; the only distinguishing feature is that the former does not interrupt the main stem while the latter does (and there's a corresponding space before the next letter). The very rare **pd** glyph must necessarily be drawn bigger than a square in the cursive script for the strokes to be distinct.

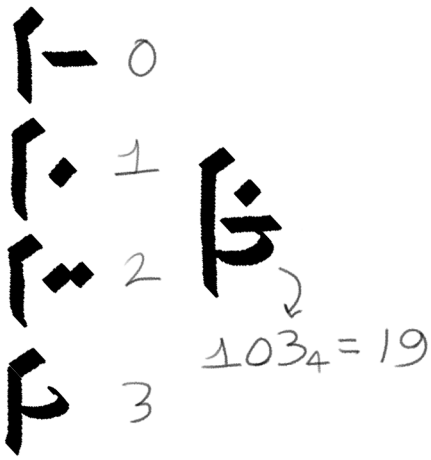


2.6 Orthography and punctuation

There's one last "letter" to add: by reducing the space between consecutive **k** and **t** letters, one obtains a glyph for **kt**, representing the sound [kt]. This can only be word-final and it's generally a consequence of a genitive ending where the last vowel has disappeared. In the rare case that a word does literally end in **kat**, an extra amount of space has to be introduced to clarify this.

Dots (or small strokes) aligned with the stem line separate words. They are identical to the **e** marking except for the positioning, in all styles. Words **never** span multiple columns, and no marking is placed when the column ends.
Note that Flavans might separate words differently than the standard employed romanization, and that there are numerous irregularities and regional variants to this.

Three dots in a triangle mark the beginning of a quote, song, or direct speech. Two dots are sometimes (but not often, and surely not consistently) used to separate long periods or sentences. Three dots in text mark that the following is a name (signature, author, reference).



Flavans, after way more careful deliberation than was honestly necessary, have settled on a positional system for writing numbers, the **Borg system**. To write a number, draw a pode, then draw its digits in base 4 from top to bottom using the scheme to the left.