

Biblical Aramaic

**Basic Grammar
of the
Aramaic of the
Old Testament**

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by

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Preface

The basic idea of any introductory language text is to keep it simple! While keeping it simple, I have tried to also keep the complexity inherent with Aramaic and Hebrew grammatical terms simple and uniform. This simplification is often a hard thing to accomplish since the student also needs to get acquainted with all the technical terms involved yet at the same time not be lost with too many terms which mean the same thing.

I must thank my Aramaic teacher, David Austin at Tyndale Seminary, Fort Worth, for his encouragement with both Hebrew and Aramaic. Also, my doctrinal advisor and mentor Dr. Mal Couch who spent countless hours discussing language, theology, and life issues. These long discussions instilled in me the “keep it simple,” philosophy that I, in turn, emphasize to my students. It is my hope that the student of this Aramaic grammar will find the complex made simple, while expanding in knowledge and understanding of the original author’s meaning. It is not possible to interpret completely the thoughts of the original author without going to the original author’s language. That means going back to the often obscure Aramaic text.

The Method

The method used for learning the Aramaic of the Old Testament is based on the internet video Bible Aramaic VPOD produced by the author. This program is based on the three fundamentals:

- Chapter reading of the grammar book
- Video instruction using the Aramaic video lessons
- Then, back to the book for practice, exercises, and translations

This method is simple, straight to the point, and proven. It is the purpose of this method and program that the student will gain a quick understanding and confidence working with the language while the love and value of it grows.

Working the practice exercises is extremely valuable. There is no substitute for memorizing the vocabulary and translating the verses. The volume of words to memorize for each lesson is manageable, and the translation work limited to five or six verses. Use a Bible, in fact several versions of the Bible when translating so as to get acquainted with variations.

May your time be spent in the Word and may the richness and depth of His Word working together with the Holy Spirit bless and mature you greatly.

Chapter One

The Story of Aramaic

Aramaic has been traditionally classified as a Northwest Semitic language, this group includes the Aramaic and Canaanite dialects. The South Semitic group includes the Arabic group and the East Semitic group includes the Akkadian language.

	East Semitic	South Semitic	Northwest Semitic ¹	
Primary	Akkadian	Arabic	Canaanite	Aramaic
Dialects	Babylonian	North Arabic	Eblaic	Old Aramaic
	Assyrian	South Arabic	Ugaritic	Biblical Aramaic
		Minean	Phoenician	Imperial Aramaic
		Hadramautian	Hebrew	Nabataean
		Qatabanean	Ammonite	Syriac
		Ethiopic	Moabite	
		Amharic		

The name Aramaic is found in Ezra 4:7 as אַרְמִיִּת (‘aramiyth) which is the feminine of Aramaean, and translated Aramaic, but the older translations say the “Syrian language.” In Genesis 10:22, Aram, the youngest son of Shem, is mentioned as the founder of the Aramaean nation, and thus the country is rightly called “Aram” (Num. 23:7); but the same Hebrew word is rendered “Mesopotamia” (Judge 3:10)². Syria is an abbreviated form of Assyria and came into common use after the conquests of Alexander the Great.

The Aramaic found in Daniel’s day is referred to in Daniel 2:4 as כַּשְׁדִּימָה (kasdiymah), or the shortened form כַּשְׁדִּי (kasdiy) from Kasdites the descendents of Kesed and has come to be known as the Chaldean language common to the region of Babylonia. The dating of Daniel can be found in the fact that Chaldea was a country that existed between the late 10th to early 9th and the mid-6th centuries BC, after which it was absorbed into Babylonia. They existed in the marshy land of the far southern corner of Mesopotamia located chiefly on the left bank of the Euphrates and were identified as both Suteans and Arameans. The Chaldeans originally spoke a West Semitic dialect distinct from Aramaic and it was during the Assyrian Empire of king Tiglath-Pileser II that the Eastern Aramaic dialect known as the lingua franca dominated the area. Dr. Larry Walker says, “Although the Aramaeans never possessed a mighty empire, they enjoyed the

¹ Gleason Archer, *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction* (Chicago:Moody, 1994), p. 18

² Merrill Unger, *The New Unger’s Bible Dictionary* (Chicago:Moody, 1988), p. 1232

privilege of imposing their language on the whole Near East. This is undoubtedly partly due to the fact that they used the alphabetic system of writing in contrast to the cumbersome cuneiform (syllabic) system used in writing Akkadian. As early as the 8th century B.C., the Aramaic language competed with Akkadian and thereafter gradually spread throughout the Near East. When the Achaemenian³ monarchs looked for a tongue which could be understood by all their subjects, they chose Aramaic which became the lingua franca of their vast empire. Aramaic attained its maximum diplomatic prestige during the Achaemenian Empire of Persia, where it was used as the interprovincial language from India to Egypt between the 6th and 4th centuries B.C.”⁴

It is during the time of Abraham that the Chaldean dialect moves into the Biblical story as Abraham originated from Ur of the Chaldees (c. 2000 B.C.; Gen. 11:28-31). As Abraham moved into the land of Canaan, one finds a unique Hebrew dialect established as a distinct branch. Aramaic is sometimes referred to as a Northern dialect of the Semitic branch of languages and Hebrew is specifically designated as a Northwestern dialect. All indications are that in the 8th century B.C. Aramaic’s alphabetic system won over the more cumbersome cuneiform of the dominant Akkadian that ruled the day.

The earliest Aramaic inscriptions discovered so far come from the ninth century B.C.⁵

Aramaic in the Bible

As Dr. Franz Rosenthal observed, “Official Aramaic, when written by people whose native language was not Aramaic, showed considerable divergences in a number of aspects, especially in the syntax and the vocabulary.... The Aramaic of the Bible as written has preserved the Official Aramaic character. This is what makes it nearly uniform in linguistic appearance. It also makes it largely identical with the language used in Official Aramaic texts. Most numerous among these are the Aramaic documents of the Achaemenid period (550-330 BC) discovered in Egypt which are invaluable for the understanding of Biblical Aramaic.”⁶

The letters of Biblical Aramaic are the same used in Hebrew. “The so-called Hebrew or square script is, in fact, a Jewish specialization of the older Official (Imperial) Aramaic script adopted by the Jews in the course of their acceptance of Aramaic as the Aramaic spoken among them.”⁷

The extent of the Aramaic found in the Bible is identified by the following:

- I. Old Testament
 - 1. Genesis 31:47 (two words)
 - 2. Ezra 4:8-6:18 and 7:12-26.
 - 3. Jeremiah 10:11.
 - 4. Daniel 2:4-7:28
- II. New Testament

³ Achaemenian dynasty ruled Persia from Cyrus I to Darius III (553-330 BC).

⁴ Merrill Tenney, gen. ed., *The Zondervan Encyclopedia of the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976) vol.1, p.249

⁵ Franz Rosenthal, *A Grammar of Biblical Aramaic* (Wiesbaden: CIP, 1995), p. 9

⁶ Ibid, p. 10

⁷ Ibid, p.12

1. Matthew 5:22 (one word, “Raca” “fool”); 27:46 (“Eli Eli lema sabachthani” “My God, my God, why have you forsaken Me?”)
2. Mark 5:41; 7:34; 11:9; 14:36 (simple expressions. i.e. “Abba,” “Father”)
3. John 20:16 (one word, “Rabbouni” “teacher”)
4. 1 Cor. 16:22 (one word, “Maranatha” “our Lord come”)

Some of the more notable differences between Aramaic and Hebrew is summarized as follows:⁸

1. Consonantal changes.
 - a. The original “th” shifted to “sh” in Hebrew, “t” in Aramaic.
 - b. The original “d” shifted to “ts” in Hebrew, silent ‘ăyîn or occasionally “q” in Aramaic.
 - c. The original “z” shifted to “ts” in Hebrew, “t” in Aramaic
 - d. The original “dh” became to “z” in Hebrew, “d” in Aramaic.
2. Vowel changes
 - a. Aramaic preserves the original long “a,” whereas the Canaanite shifted to “o.”
 - b. Aramaic preserves the original “i,” whereas the Hebrew shifted to long “e.”
 - c. Aramaic preserves the original “u,” whereas the Hebrew shifted to long “o.”
 - d. “a” under accent does not lengthen as it does in Hebrew.

Important Related Documents

Together with the Bible are found several important Aramaic related works. These Aramaic works are found in the works of their period. Around the time of Christ, Aramaic split into two main branches, East and West. There are two important early manuscripts to note, the Jerusalem Targum of the Western branch and the Babylonian Targum representing the Eastern branch (c. 1st century).

The Christian Aramaic speaking community created the Peshitta, the Aramaic Bible (c. 2nd-3rd century).

⁸ G.L. Archer in Merrill Tenney, gen. ed., *The Zondervan Encyclopedia of the Bible* (Grand Rapids:Zondervan, 1976) vol.1, pp.251-252

Chapter Two

The Aramaic Alphabet

The Aramaic and Hebrew alphabets are the same.

Letter	Final form	Name	Transliteration ⁹	Pronunciation
א		אלף 'alēf	ʾ	silent
ב		בֵּת bêt	b	<u>b</u> all
ב		bêt	v (<u>b</u>)	<u>v</u> ine
ג		גִּמְלֵל gimēl	g	<u>g</u> ift
ג		gimēl	gh (<u>g</u>)	<u>gh</u> ost
ד		דַּלֶּת dalēt	d	<u>d</u> ebt
ד		dalēt	th (<u>d</u>)	<u>th</u> e
ה		הֵ' hē'	h	<u>h</u> is
ו		וָו vāv (or wāv) ¹⁰	v or w	<u>v</u> ine or <u>w</u> ay
ז		זַיִן zāyīn	z	<u>Z</u> ion
ח		חֵת hêt	ch (ḥ)	Ba <u>ch</u>
ט		טֵת têt	t (ṭ)	<u>t</u> all
י		יֹד yôd	y	<u>y</u> es
כ	ך	כַּף kăf	k	<u>k</u> ing
כ	ך	kăf	ch (<u>k</u>)	pea <u>ch</u>
ל		לַמֶּד lāmēd	l	<u>l</u> ion
מ	ם	מֵם mēm	m	<u>m</u> an
נ	ן	נֹון nûn	n	<u>n</u> o
ס		סַמֶּךְ sāmēk	s	<u>s</u> in
ע		עַיִן 'ăyīn	ʿ	silent
פ	ף	פֵּ' pē'	p	<u>p</u> et
פ	ף	pē'	ph (or f)	<u>f</u> at
צ	ץ	צַדֵּי tsādê	ts (ṣ)	ne <u>ts</u>
ק		קוֹף qôf	q	<u>k</u> ing
ר		רֵשׁ rêš	r	<u>r</u> un
ש		שִׁין sîn	s	<u>s</u> in
ש		shîn	sh (š)	<u>sh</u> ine
ת		תָּו tāv (tāw)	t	<u>t</u> oy
ת		tāv (tāw)	th (ṭ)	<u>th</u> rone

⁹ Transliteration is the process of assigning an English equivalent to the Hebrew letter.

¹⁰ I prefer vav over waw. That is how I learned it so I will continue with that heritage.

Notice the five groupings. These are organized in four or five letters per group in order to help in the memorization process. It is far easier to memorize a group of four or five letters, then, once the group is memorized, move on to the next group. Memorize the letter, saying the name and writing the letter many times. Do this until the whole alphabet can be written without hesitation.

BeGaD KeFaT

Notice there are some letters that are repeated and contain a dot (·) within it (e.g., ט). This dot is called a Daghesh Lene and indicates a hard pronunciation. These letters are called begadkephat (a composite built on the names of the six letters בגדכפת) as a way to remember them. These letters are ב, ג, ד, כ, פ, ט. As you can see, Aramaic, like Hebrew is written from right to left.

Final Form

There are five letters that contain a final form. A final form letter should be used when that letter is in the last position of the word.

letter	final form
כ	ך
מ	ם
נ	ן
פ	ף
צ	ץ

Final kaf ף has two special forms that come up a lot. Final kaf ף is written with a silent sheva (ְ) when it lacks a vowel and looks like ף. Likewise final kaf has the final qamets (ֻ) placed inside it and looks like ף.

Certain letters sound alike

As you can tell some of the letter sound alike.

- ס, ש - S, as in See
- כ, ק - K, as in keep
- ט, ת - T, as in Tom
- ב, ו - V, as in Vine
- ח, כ - CH, as in Bach
- א, ע - Silent

The Vowels

Our ancient Hebrew and Aramaic text had no written vowels. The written vowels were added around AD 500 by the Masoretes who added them in order to preserve the

language. It is not that the language did not use vowels; it is just that there was no written form until later. The speaker would add the vowel as necessary. For example, all verbs (with exception) use the “a” sound in the first syllable while its noun equivalent will use the “e” sound in the first vowel position. The system they developed is called the pointing system whose intention is not to alter the established written form. The pointing added small *dots* and *symbols* below and above the character.

Aramaic has the “a,” “e,” “i,” “o,” and “u” vowel sounds as shown below.

Table of Full-Vowels

Group	Name	Sign	Position	Sound	Example
a	Qamets ¹¹	◌ֿ	אָ	a, as in car	אָב father
	Pathach	◌ֿ	אֲ	a, as in bat	בַּת daughter
e	Tsere	◌ֿ	אֵ	e, as in they	אֵל God
	Tsere-Yod	◌ֿי	אֵי	e, as in they	בֵּית house
	S°ghol	◌ֿ	אֶ	e, as in met	שֶׁקֶל shekel
i	Hireq-Yod	◌ֿי	אִי	i, as in marine	הִיא she
	Hireq	◌ֿ	אִ	i, as in sit	עִם with
o	Holem	◌ֿ	אֹ	o, as in row	לֹא not
	Holem-Vav	◌ֿו	אֹו	o, as in row	אוֹר light
	Qamets-Hatuf	◌ֿ	אָ	o, as in cost	כָּל all
u	Shureq	◌ֿוּ	אִו	u, as in rule	הוּא he
	Qibbutz	◌ֿ	אֻ	u, as in rule	שֻׁלְחָן table

Long Vowels. The following table lists the Aramaic/Hebrew long vowels.

Sign	Name		Transliteration	Example		
ֿ	qamets	קָמֶץ	ā	אָב	'av	father
ֿֿ	šere	שֶׁרֶי	ē	אֵל	'el	God
ֿ	holem	חֹלֶם	ō	לֹא	lo'	not

Naturally long vowels. The following table lists the Aramaic/Hebrew naturally long vowels. Naturally long vowels are formed using either a *vav* (ו) or a *yod* (י).

Sign	Name		Transliteration	Example		
ֿֿֿ	šere yod	שֶׁרֶי יוֹד	ê	בֵּית	beyth	house of
ֿֿֿֿ	hireq yod	הִירֶק יוֹד	î	הִיא	hiy'	she
ֿֿֿ	holem vav	חֹלֶם וָו	ô	אוֹר	'or	light
ֿֿֿֿ	šureq	שֻׁרֶק	û	הוּא	hu'	he

¹¹ The older authors use qāmēs, pātāh, etc. The spelling is often different depending on the author. One thing the beginning student of Aramaic needs to know is that nothing is consistent between different authors.

Short Vowels. The following table lists the Aramaic/Hebrew short vowels.

Sign	Name		Transliteration	Sound	Example	
ֿ	patah	פַּתַּח	ă	a, as in bat	בַּת	daughter
ֿֿ	s ^e gol	סְגוֹל	ě	e, as in met	שֶׁקֶל	shekel
ֿֿֿ	hireq	חִירֶק	ĩ	i, as in sit	עִם	with
ֿֿֿֿ	qameṣ hâtuṭ	קָמֶץ חָטוּף	ö	o, as in cost	כָּל	all
ֿֿֿֿֿ	qibbuṣ	קִבּוּץ	ũ	u, as in rule	שֻׁלְחָן	table

The Half-Vowels

In addition to vowels, Aramaic, like Hebrew, makes use of semi-vowels or half-vowels. These half vowels make use of the *sheva* or *shewa* (שְׁוָא). There are two classes of *sheva*, the first is the vocal *sheva* which stands alone and is pronounced like an “e” as in בְּרִית (b^erit) pronounced “breet.” It is transliterated as a superscript e as in b^erit. The other class is a silent *sheva* which is a *sheva* placed beneath a consonant that ends a syllable and sometimes placed in the final kaf (ךְ).

The other *sheva* is used as a compound with other vowels and makes a hurried vowel sound. The compound *shevas* are as follows:

First	Second	Compound	Name	Sounds like	Example
ֿ	ֿ	ֿֿ	hatef - pathah	hurried Pathach	אֲנִי ’aniy “I”
ֿֿ	ֿ	ֿֿֿ	hatef- s ^e ghol	hurried S ^e ghol	אֲנוֹשׁ ’enoš “man”
ֿֿֿ	ֿ	ֿֿֿֿ	hatef- qamets	hurried Qamets	חֲלִי holi “sickness”

Consonants Used as Vowels

The consonants אהוּ may be used as vowel letters. א and ה are used for final ā or ē, ו for ō or ū, and י for ī and ē. Final ē, which occurs very rarely, is indicated by ם.¹²

Daghesh Forte

The *Daghesh forte* is a dot in the letter which indicated one is to double the consonant in which it occurs. It is the same mark as the *daghesh lene* placed in the six consonants. For example in, חֲבֵן (habben) the *bet* is doubled.

The rules for a *daghesh forte* are as follows:

1. A dot in any letter other than a BaGad KeFaT letter is a *daghesh forte*.
2. A *daghesh forte* is always found immediately after a vowel, whereas a *daghesh lene* is never found after a vowel.

¹² Franz Rosenthal, *A Grammar of Biblical Aramaic* (Wiesbaden: Die Deutsche, 2002), p. 12

Gutturals

The gutturals are: א, ע, ה, ח, and sometimes ר. They are gutturals because they are pronounced from the back of the throat.

Sibilants

The sibilants are: ס, צ, ש, and ז. They are classified as sibilants because of their “s” sounds.

Labials

The labials are: ב, מ, and פ.

Furtive Pathach

When a word ends with one of the gutturals or and a Pathach is beneath the final guttural it is called a Furtive Pathach and the Pathach is pronounced before the final guttural. An example is רוּחַ (ruach), “spirit, wind.”

Syllables

The word syllable comes to the English from the Greek *syllabē* meaning, “that which holds together,” and applies to how a word is pronounced. A word or part of a word pronounced with a single, uninterrupted sound of the voice is a syllable. Aramaic words have as many syllables as they have separate consonants. In general, words are broken up into syllables using the following rules:

- All syllables in a word must begin with a consonant.
- A syllable must include one full vowel or a half vowel.
- There are as many syllables as there are full vowels.
- A syllable will split the doubled letter of a *daghesh forte*.

Aramaic syllables are either open or closed. An open syllable is one that ends in a vowel and is normally a long vowel. A closed syllable is one that ends in a consonant and the vowel will normally be short.

Aramaic Differences

There are a few things to point out concerning the differences between Aramaic and Hebrew. These differences are summarized as follows:

1. Hebrew words with zayin (ז) may be changed to dalet (ד) in Aramaic.

Hebrew	Aramaic	Translation
זָהָב	דָּהָב	gold
זָבַח	דָּבַח	to sacrifice

2. Hebrew words with tsade (צ) may be changed to tet (ט) in Aramaic.

Hebrew	Aramaic	Translation
צור	ܡܘܪ	mountain

3. Hebrew words with tsade (צ) may be changed to ayin (ע) in Aramaic.

Hebrew	Aramaic	Translation
אֶרֶץ	אַרְעָה	land, earth
עֵץ	אַע	tree

4. Hebrew words with shin (ש) may be changed to tav (ת) in Aramaic.

Hebrew	Aramaic	Translation
שׁוֹר	ܬܘܪ	bull
יָשַׁב	ܝܬܒ	to dwell

5. The Aramaic consonants are interchangeable¹³.

			Aramaic option	Aramaic option	Translation
א	and	ה	ܠܐ	ܠܗ	not
			ܢܗܪܐ	ܢܗܪܗ	river
ש	and	ס	ܐܪܬܝܫܫܬܐ	ܐܪܬܝܫܫܬܐ	Artaxerxes
			ܫܒܟܐ	ܫܒܟܐ	harp

6. Hebrew words normally spelled with the long o-class vowel, Holem Vav, may be spelled with the long a-class vowel, Qamets, in Aramaic. This is referred to as the Canaanite shift.¹⁴

Hebrew	Aramaic	Trnanslation
שָׁלוֹם	ܫܠܡ	peace
אָנוּשׁ	ܐܢܫ	man
דּוֹר	ܕܪ	generation
טוֹב	ܬܒ	good

7. The determinate state. The definite article is moved to the end of the word and changes to Qamets with alef (א,).

Hebrew	Aramaic	Trnanslation
הַמֶּלֶךְ	ܡܠܟܐ	the king

¹³ Miles Van Pelt, *Basics of Biblical Aramaic* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011), p. 4

¹⁴ Miles Van Pelt, *Basics of Biblical Aramaic* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011), p. 10

8. Fewer uses of the vav conjunction (ו) in Aramaic than in Hebrew.
9. Greater use of the word וְ. The word may be used as a subordinate conjunction (“that, so that, when, after”), a genitive (“that of, which belongs to”), and a relative pronoun (“who, which, that”).
10. Common words. Some common words are noticeably different.

Common word	Aramaic	Hebrew
to come	אתה	בוא
to fear	דחל	ירא
to see	חזה	רא
to speak	מלל	דבר אמר
to go down	נחת	ירד

Practice

- A. Memorize the consonants.
- B. Memorize the vowels.
- C. Memorize the half-vowels.
- D. Memorize the 9 major differences between Hebrew and Aramaic.

Chapter Three

Pronouns

Vocabulary

אב	father	היכל	palace, temple
אבן	stone	חיל	strength, army
אלה	God, god	חכים	wise, wise man
אלהין	gods, God	חכמה	wisdom
אמה	cubit	חלם	dream
אריה	lion	הנקה	dedication
בית	house, temple	טל	dew
גבר	man	יד	hand, power
דין	judgment, justice	יום	day
דת	law, command, decree	כהן	priest

The Pronoun

Like English pronouns, Aramaic pronouns replace a noun. The noun that it replaces is called the antecedent. In the statement, יהוה הוא האלהים “The LORD, he [is] God” the pronoun “he” refers back to the nearest antecedent “LORD.” The word pronoun comes from the Latin *pro* meaning, “before, for,” and *nomen* meaning, “a name.” Aramaic pronouns are classified as personal, demonstrative, relative, and interrogative.

Independent Personal Pronouns

Independent personal pronouns are used to reduce repetition. Independent personal pronouns may be used as the subject of the verb but not the object of the verb. They may also appear as subjects of a verbless clause. Personal pronouns function as follows:

1. First person pronouns “I” and “we” refer to the person speaking.
2. Second person pronoun “you” refers to the person being spoken to.
3. Third person pronouns “he,” “she,” and “it,” refer to the person or thing spoken of.

	Aramaic	Translation		Aramaic	Translation
1cs ¹⁵	אֲנִי	I	1cp	אֲנִיחֵנָּה	we
2ms	אַתָּה	you	2mp	אַתְּמוֹן	you
2fs	-	you	2fp	-	you
3ms	הוּא	he/it	3mp	הֵמוֹן הֵמוֹן אֲמוֹן	they
3fs	הִיא	she/it	3fp	אֲמִין	they

Demonstrative Pronouns

Demonstrative pronouns serve to point out someone or something being singled out for attention. For example, “this man” points out this specific man. Demonstrative pronouns may be either near, “this,” or far, “that.”

1. *Near demonstratives.*

	Aramaic	Translation
ms	הַזֶּה	this
fs	הַזֵּאת	this
cp	אֵלֶּין אֵלֶּה אֵל	these

2. *Far demonstratives.*

	Aramaic	Translation
ms	הַהוּ	that
fs	הַהִיא	that
cp	אֵלֶּה	those

	Aramaic	Translation
m/fs	הַכֵּן	that

¹⁵ cs and cp are common singular and common plural respectively. Common refers to gender covering both masculine and feminine subjects.

Relative Pronoun

The Aramaic relative pronoun ܐܝܢ “who, which, that,” introduces a relative clause and the noun it modifies. The relative pronoun does not possess gender or number; it simply stands alone following the noun it modifies or is attached to the noun with the *maqfef*.

Interrogative Pronouns

An interrogative pronoun serves to ask a question. The Aramaic interrogative pronouns do not possess gender or number and includes the following:

Aramaic	Translation
ܡܐ	What?
ܡܢ	Who?

Pronominal Suffixes

Pronominal suffixes may be attached to verbs, nouns, and prepositions. Aramaic pronominal suffixes have person, gender, and number. When attached to nouns, the meaning is normally possessive and translated “my, his, her.” When attached to prepositions or verbs, the normal meaning is objective and translated “to me, to him, to her.”

Person/ Gender/ Number	Pronominal Suffix	Translation Possessive/Objective
1cs	ܐ	my/me
2ms	ܟ	your/you
2fs	ܟ	your/you
3ms	ܗ	his/him
3fs	ܗ	her

Person/ Gender/ Number	Pronominal Suffix	Translation Possessive/Objective
1cp	ܐܢܐ	our/us
2mp	ܟܝܢ	your/you
2fp	ܟܝܢ	your/you
3mp	ܗܝܢ	their/them
3fp	ܗܝܢ	their/them

Practice

- A. Memorize the vocabulary.
- B. Memorize the independent personal pronouns.
- C. Memorize the pronominal suffixes.
- D. Translate Daniel 2:4-11.

Chapter Four

Introduction to Verbs

Vocabulary

כָּל	all, every, whole	סֵפֶר	book
כֶּסֶף	silver	סֹפֵר	scribe
כְּתָב	writing, document	עֶבֶד	servant, slave
לֵב לִבָּב	heart	עֵבֶר	opposite, beyond
מְדִינָה	province, city	עֵין	eye
מִלָּה	word, matter	עָלַם	eternity, forever
מֶלֶךְ	king	עַם	people, nation
מִשְׁכָּב	bed	עֵשֶׂב	plant, grass
נָבִיא	prophet	פָּקִיד	governor
נָחַר	stream, river	צֶלֶם	statue, image

The Verb

Aramaic verb stems mostly follow the form of Hebrew, but the names have changed. Along with the verbal stems listed below, Aramaic verbs have two tenses: Perfect and Imperfect; two moods: Imperative and Jussive; three voices: active, passive and reflexive. Also is found the Infinitive and the Participle.

- I. *Aramaic Stems.* Aramaic stems correspond to the Hebrew stems except the names have changed. The following list gives the technical name which will be simplified for ease of use (e.g. P^eal = Peal, throughout the rest of the book).

a. Simple

Hebrew Stem	Aramaic Stem	Action/Voice
Qal	P ^e al	Simple Active
Niph ^{al}	P ^e il	Simple Passive
	Hithpe ^{el} (Ithpeel)	Simple Reflexive

b. *Intensive*

Hebrew Stem	Aramaic Stem	Action/Voice
Piʿʿel	Paʿʿel	Intensive/Active
Puʿʿal		Intensive/Passive
Hithpaʿʿel	Hithpaʿʿal (Ithpaʿʿal)	Intensive/Reflexive/Passive

c. *Causative*

Hebrew	Aramaic	Voice/Action
Hiphʿil	Haphʿel/ʿAphʿel/Shaphʿel	Causative/Simple
Hophʿal	Hophʿal	Causative/Passive

II. *Tense*. Aramaic has two tenses: perfect and imperfect.

- a. *Perfect*. The perfect tense indicates completed action or a state of being corresponding to the following:

- i) *Present Perfect* “I have written.”
- ii) *Simple Past* “I wrote.”
- iii) *Past Perfect* “I had killed.”
- iv) *Prophetic Perfect*. Perfect as a future.

Perfect Conjugation			
3ms		3mp	ܐ + xxx
3fs	ܐܢܝ + xxx	3fp	ܐܢܝܢ + xxx
2ms	ܐܢܝ / ܐܢܝܢ + xxx	2mp	ܐܢܝܢ + xxx
2fs		2fp	
1cs	ܐܢܝ + xxx	1cp	ܐܢܝܢ + xxx

- b. *Imperfect*. The imperfect tense indicates incomplete action or state of being.

- i) *Present* “I write,” “I am writing.”
- ii) *Future* “I will write.”

Imperfect Conjugation			
3ms	xxx + ܐ	3mp	ܐܢܝܢ + xxx + ܐ
3fs	xxx + ܐܢܝ	3fp	ܐܢܝܢ + xxx + ܐ
2ms	xxx + ܐܢܝ	2mp	ܐܢܝܢ + xxx + ܐܢܝ
2fs		2fp	
1cs	xxx + ܐܢܝ	1cp	xxx + ܐܢܝܢ

- III. *Mood*. Aramaic has two moods: imperative and jussive.
- a. *Imperative*. The imperative only occurs in the second singular and plural. Note that the second person imperfect may also function as an imperative. The imperative is translated as: כְּתֹב “(you) write!”

Imperative Conjugation			
2ms	xxx	2mp	ך + xxx
2fs	׳ + xxx	2fp	

- b. *Jussive*. Like Hebrew, the jussive only occurs in the third person imperfect. There is a difference in spelling for the plural forms, while the imperfect ends in final nun (ן), the jussive omits it.
- Imperfect : יִכְבְּדוּן “they will perish”
 - Jussive: יִכְבְּדוּ “let them perish”
- IV. *Voice*. Aramaic has three voices: active, passive and reflexive.
- a. *Active*. The subject performs the action: “I write.”
- b. *Passive*. An external agent performs the action: “It being written.”
- c. *Reflexive*. The subject performs the action on itself: “I write myself.”
- V. *Infinitive*. The infinitive is a verbal noun: מְכַתֵּב “to write.”
- VI. *Participle*. The participle is a verbal adjective: כְּתֹב “writing.”
- a. The participle has a multi-purpose sense.
- Continuous and habitual action.
וּבְקִרְוֹ וְהִשְׁפִּיחוּ דִּי קְרִיתָא דָּךְ מִן־יּוֹמָתָא עַלְמָא עַל־מַלְכִין מִתְּנַשְׂאָה
“and it was found that this city in former times has revolted against kings” (Ezra 4:19)
 - Immediate present.
מְהוֹדְעִין אֲנַחְנָה לְמַלְכָּא דִּי
“we inform the king that...” (Ezra 4:16)
 - Simultaneous with the main verb, often translated as a past tense.
בְּהִישָׁעְתָּהּ נִפְקוּ אֲצַבְעֵן דִּי יָד־אִנָּשׁ וְכָתְבוּן לְקַבֵּל גְּבֻרַשְׁתָּא
“at this very moment a finger came out and wrote” (Dan. 5:5)
 - Used freely as a narrative tense (Dan. 3:3-4).
- VII. *Verbs with pronominal suffixes*. Suffixes attached to verbs function as accusatives or as direct objects: e.g., “I see *you*.” There is no pronominal suffix for the 3mp and 3fp, instead the independent personal pronouns הֵמוּ, הֵמוּן are used.

	Suffix	Word ¹⁶	Conjugation	Root	Translation
1cs	נִי	הוֹדַעְתִּנִּי	Aph Perf 2ms + p.s. 1cs	יִדַּע	you knew me
2ms	ךָ	הִשְׁלַטְךָ	Aph Perf 3ms + p.s. 2ms	שָׁלַט	he ruled you
3ms	הָ (after a consonant)	סָתַרְהָ	Peal Perf 3ms + p.s. 3ms	סָתַר	he hid him
	הִי (after a vowel)	בָּנָהּ	Peal Perf 3ms + p.s. 3ms	בָּנָה	he built him
3fs	הָ	הִשְׁלֵמָהּ	Aph Perf 3ms + p.s. 3fs	שָׁלַם	he completed her
2mp	כוֹן	יִשְׁאַלְכוֹן	Peal Imp 3ms + p.s. 2mp	שָׁאַל	he asked you
1cp	נָא	הוֹדַעְתֵּנָא	Aph Perf 2ms + P.s. 1cp	יִדַּע	you knew us

Practice

- Memorize the vocabulary.
- Memorize the Perfect and Imperfect conjugations.
- Translate Daniel 2:12-19.

¹⁶ List adapted from Franz Rosenthal, *A Grammar of Biblical Aramaic* (Wiesbaden, 1995), p. 75

Chapter Five

The Simple Verb

Vocabulary

אָנִשׁ	man, mankind	קֶרֶן	horn
אֵץ	wood, tree	רֹאשׁ	head, chief
אָרֶע	earth, land	רֵגֶל	foot
בֶּר	son	רוּחַ	wind, spirit
גָּלוּ	exile, deportation	שָׁאַר	rest, remains
דָּהָב	gold	שָׁלָם	peace, welfare
דֶּר	generation	שֵׁם	name
חֲזוֹן	vision	שָׁמַיִן	heaven, sky (pl)
לַיְלָה	night	שֵׁן	tooth
צִפּוֹר	bird	שָׁנָה	year

The Simple Verb Stems

The Peal, Peil and Hithpeel stems are called the simple verb stems. The Peal is the simple active, the Peil is the simple passive, and the Hithpeel (and the rare Ithpeel) is the simple reflexive stem.

	Perfect	Imperfect	Imperative	Infinitive Construct	Active Participle	Passive ¹⁷ Participle
Peal	כָּתַב	יִכְתֹּב	כָּתַב	מִכְתֵּב	כָּתֹב	כְּתִיב
Peil	כְּתִיב					
Hithpeel	הִתְכַּתֵּב	יִתְכַּתֵּב		הִתְכַּתְּבָה		מִתְכַּתֵּב
Ithpeel	אִתְכַּתֵּב אִתְכַּתֵּב					

¹⁷ Table adapted from *Basics of Biblical Aramaic*, Miles Van Pelt (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011), p.141

Peal Perfect Strong Verb

The simple perfect active verb stem in Aramaic is called the Peal perfect stem and is identified by a vocal sheva (ְ) under the first root consonant and a pathach (ַ) under the second root consonant. The Peal perfect stem has the following conjugations.

Peal Perfect					
3ms	כָּתַב	he wrote	3mp	כָּתְבוּ	they wrote
3fs	כָּתְבָה	she wrote	3fp	כָּתְבֵהּ	they wrote
2ms	כָּתַבְתָּ	you wrote	2mp	כָּתַבְתֶּם	you wrote
2fs	כָּתַבְתִּי	you wrote	2fp	כָּתַבְתֵּי	you wrote
1cs	כָּתַבְתִּי	I wrote	1cp	כָּתַבְנָא	we wrote

נְבוּכַדְנֶצַּר מֶלֶכָּא עֲבַד צֵלָם דִּידְהֵב

“Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold” (Dan. 3:1)

וְנְבוּכַדְנֶצַּר מֶלֶכָּא שְׁלַח לְמַכְנֵשׁ לְאַחְשֹׁדָרְפָּנָא

“Then Nebuchadnezzar the king **sent** to gather together the princes...” (Dan. 3:2)

Peal Imperfect Strong Verbs

The simple active imperfect verb stem in Aramaic is called the Peal imperfect and is identified by the hireq (ִ) under the first root consonant position (or seghol with the 1cs) and a qibbuts (ֻ) under the second root consonant when not reduced. The Peal Imperfect has the following conjugations. Notice the 2fs and 2ms have the same form.

Peal Imperfect					
3ms	יִכְתֹּב	he will write	3mp	יִכְתְּבוּ	they will write
3fs	יִכְתֹּבָהּ	she will write	3fp	יִכְתְּבֵי	they will write
2ms	יִכְתֹּב	you will write	2mp	יִכְתְּבוּ	you will write
2fs	יִכְתְּבֵי	you will write	2fp	יִכְתְּבֵי	you will write
1cs	אִכְתֵּב	I will write	1cp	נִכְתֵּב	we will write

תִּפְּלוּ וְתִסְגְּדוּן לְצֵלָם דְּהֵבָא דִּי חֲקִים נְבוּכַדְנֶצַּר מֶלֶכָּא

You fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king set up (Dan. 3:5b)

Imperfect Notes

1. *Imperfect with Energetic Nun.* An addition of an additional nun (נ) or a doubling of the nun (נ) is common with the Aramaic imperfect. Dr. Schuele notes, “While the

energetic nun is largely insignificant for translation purposes, it is important to analyze it properly in order to avoid mistaking it for one of the root consonants.”¹⁸

חִלְמִי חֲזוֹת וַיִּדְחֻלְנִי וְהַרְחִירִין עַל-מִשְׁכְּבִי וְחֲזוֹי רֵאשִׁי יִבְחֻלְנִי

“I saw a dream *that scared me*, and thoughts on my bed and the visions of my head *troubled me*” (Dan. 4:2)

2. *Negation of the Imperfect Conjugation.* There are two forms of the negative particle attached to the imperfect.
 - a. לֹא is used twenty-three times.
 - b. אֵל is used four times. This form is often identified with the Jussive, though this is not universal.

וּמִן-דִּי-לֹא יִפֹּל וְיִסְגֹּד “and whoever does not fall down and worship” (Dan. 3:6)

Peal Imperative

The simple active imperative verb stem in Aramaic is the Peal imperative and is identified by the vocal sheva (ְ) under the first root consonant and a qibbutz (ֻ) under the second root consonant when not reduced. The Peal imperative has the following conjugations.

Peal Imperative					
2ms	כְּתֹב	write!	2mp	כְּתֹבוּ	write!
2fs	כְּתֹבִי	write!	2fp	כְּתֹבְהוּ	write!

וְכַלְדָּיו לֹא-אַנֵּס לָךְ חֲזוֹי חִלְמִי דִי-חֲזוֹת וּפְשָׁרָהּ אֶמַּר

And no secret troubles you, **tell** me the visions of my dream that I have seen and its interpretation (Dan. 4:9)

Peal Infinitive

The simple infinitive verb stem in Aramaic is the Peal infinitive and is identified to the addition of the mem-hireq (ִּ) prefix, and a pathach (ַ) under the second root consonant. The Peal infinitive has the following conjugation.

Peal Infinitive	
מִכְתֹּב	to write

¹⁸ Andreas Schuele, *An Introduction to Biblical Aramaic* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2012), p. 53

לְחַנֵּכַת צִלְמָא דִּי חָקִים נְבוּכַדְנֶצַּר מֶלְכָּא

To come to the dedication of the image which Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up (Dan. 3:2b)

Peal Participle

The simple active participle is called the Peal participle in Aramaic and is identified by the qamets (ָ) under the first root consonant. “Since the participle is grammatically a noun, it has the endings of a noun in the absolute state. On its verbal side, the participle is included in the verbal stem system.”¹⁹ The Peal participle is the simple active participle and has the following conjugations.

Peal Participle			
ms	כָּתֵב	mp	כָּתְבִין
fs	כָּתְבָה	fp	כָּתְבִין

The peal participle is translated, כָּתֵב “the one who writes,” or, “writing.”

עֲנָה דְנִיֵּאל וְאָמַר לְהוּא שְׁמָהּ דִּי־אֱלֹהָא מְבָרַךְ מִן־עַלְמָא וְעַד־עַלְמָא

Daniel answered and said: Blessed be the name of God forever and ever (Dan. 2:20).

Peal Strong Verb Notes

1. The 2ms has an alternate form. The dictionary form is כְּתִיבָה but is also found with the final sheva כְּתִיבָהּ.
2. A vocal sheva is placed under the first root letter because Aramaic prefers a reduced vowel in opn, pretnic syllables. However, a Hireq is used in the 3fs and 1cs due to the fact that two side by side vocal shevas cannot both be. When two vocal shevas occur at the beginning of the word, the first is truned into a Hireq²⁰.
3. The normal vowel placed under the second root consonant is the Pathach (ַ). However, this second root consonant may also be a Hireq (ִ) or a Tsere (ֵ).

¹⁹ ibid, p. 47

²⁰ Miles Van Pelt, p.83

Peil Perfect Strong Verb

The simple perfect passive verb stem in Aramaic is called the Peil perfect and is identified by the hireq yod (י) in the stem vowel position²¹. The Peil perfect has the following conjugations.

Peil Perfect					
3ms	כְּתִיב	it had been written	3mp	כְּתִיבוּ	they were written
3fs	כְּתִיבַת	it had been written	3fp	כְּתִיבְהוּ	they were written
2ms	כְּתִיבְתָּ	you were written	2mp	כְּתִיבְתוּן	you were written
2fs	כְּתִיבְתִי	you were written	2fp	כְּתִיבְתִין	you were written
1cs	כְּתִיבַתְּ	I was written	1cp	כְּתִיבְנָא	we were written

Peil Participle

The Peil Participle is the simple passive participle. The peil participle is translated, כְּתִיב “the one who was written.”

Peil Participle			
ms	כְּתִיב	mp	כְּתִיבִין
fs	כְּתִיבָה	fp	כְּתִיבִין

Hithpeel Perfect Strong Verb

The simple perfect reflexive verb stem in Aramaic is called the Hithpeel perfect and is identified by the he-hireq-tav-sheva (הֵת), however, if the word begins with a sibilant (ט, צ, ש) then the tav (ת) of the hithpeel prefix and sibilant (ט, צ, ש) metathesis (i.e., switch places). The Hithpeel prefix is followed by form of the participle. The Hithpeel perfect has the following conjugations.

Hithpeel Perfect					
3ms	הִתְכַּתֵּב	he wrote himself	3mp	הִתְכַּתְּבוּ	they wrote themselves
3fs	הִתְכַּתְּבַת	she wrote herself	3fp	הִתְכַּתְּבוּ	they wrote themselves
2ms	הִתְכַּתְּבְתָּ	you wrote yourself	2mp	הִתְכַּתְּבְתוּן	you wrote yourselves
2fs			2fp		
1cs	הִתְכַּתְּבַתְּ	I wrote myself	1cp	הִתְכַּתְּבְנָא	we wrote ourselves

²¹ The stem vowel is the vowel between the second and third root consonant.

חזוה תנחית עד די התנחית אבן די-לא בידיו

You beheld while a stone was **cut out** without hands (Dan. 2:34a).

Hithpeel Imperfect Verb

The simple imperfect reflexive verb stem in Aramaic is called the Hithpeel imperfect and is identified by the he-hireq-tav-sheva (הִתְ), however, if the word begins with a sibilant (ש ז ס) then the tav (ת) of the hithpeel prefix and sibilant (ש ז ס) metathesis (i.e., switch places). The Hithpeel prefix is followed by form of the imperfect. The Hithpeel imperfect has the following conjugations.

Hithpeel Imperfect					
3ms	יִתְכַּתֵּב	he writes himself	3mp	יִתְכַּתְּבוּ	they write themselves
3fs	תִּתְכַּתֵּב	she writes herself	3fp	יִתְכַּתְּבוּ	they write themselves
2ms	תִּתְכַּתֵּב	you write yourself	2mp	תִּתְכַּתְּבוּ	you write yourselves
2fs			2fp		
1cs	אֶתְכַּתֵּב	I write myself	1cp	נִתְכַּתֵּב	we write ourselves

Hithpeel Infinitive

The simple reflexive infinitive verb stem in Aramaic is the Hithpeel infinitive and is identified to the addition of the he-hireq-tav-sheva (הִתְ). The Hithpeel infinitive has the following conjugation.

Hithpeel Infinitive	
הִתְכַּתְּבָּה	to itself write

ובעו דניאל וחברוהי להִתְכַּתְּשָׁלָה

And they sought Daniel and his friends in order **to execute** [them] (Dan. 2:13).

Hithpeel Participle

The simple reflexive participle verb stem in Aramaic is the Hithpeel participle and is identified to the addition of the mem-hireq-tav-sheva (מִתְ). The Hithpeel participle has the following conjugations.

Hithpeel Participle			
ms	מִתְכַּתֵּב	mp	מִתְכַּתְּבִין
fs	מִתְכַּתְּבָה	fp	

Ithpeel Verb Stem

The Ithpeel is a minor variation of the Hithpeel stem and has the same meaning. The Ithpeel only occurs four times in the Bible and is identified by the Ithpeel prefix אָתְּ (ה of the Hithpeel is replaced with א in the Ithpeel). Dr. Van Pelt provides the following²²:

	Root	Ithpeel	Translation
3fs	גָּרַז	אֶתְגַּרְזַת	she (it) was cut
3fs	כָּרַא	אֶתְכַרִּית	she (it) was distressed
3mp	עָקַר	אֶתְעַקְרוּ	they were uprooted
3fp	עָקַר	אֶתְעַקְרְהוּ	they were uprooted

Practice

- A. Memorize the vocabulary.
- B. Memorize the Perfect and Imperfect conjugations.
- C. Translate Daniel 2:20-27 conjugating all verbs.

²² Miles Van Pelt, p. 127

Chapter Six

Nouns

Vocabulary

אֵלֶן	tree	זְמַן	time, turn
אַמָּה	nation	חֲבִיטָה	chain
אַסֵּר	prohibition, injunction	חַיָּוָה	animal, beast
אַתָּר	place, location	חֲסָף	moulded clay, pottery
אַתּוּן	furnace	טֵעַם	commad, decree, advice, report
גִּב	pit, den	נוֹר	fire
גּוּא	midst, middle	עֵדֶן	time, moment
גִּשָּׁם	body	פֶּשֶׁר	interpretation
זֵוּ	radiance, brightness, countenance	רִז	secret, mystery
זִמְרָה	string music	שְׁלִטָּה	dominion, powers

The Noun

Aramaic nouns are identified according to three states: absolute, determined or construct. Since a noun identifies a person, place, thing, or idea, Aramaic nouns possess gender (masculine, feminine) and number (singular, dual, plural). As with the Hebrew noun, Aramaic nouns are for the most part composed of three root consonants with a fewer set of two root consonants. Aramaic also has some four root consonants that are all of foreign origin. Some Aramaic nouns possess an odd characteristic that uniquely identifies their function. These functions are defined below.

- a. *Gentilic nouns.* A gentilic noun is one that identifies the resident of a locality or class. Gentilic nouns have a Qamets Yod (ִ) added as a suffix.

Name	Location/Class ²³
כַּשְׁדִּי	Chaldean
יְהוּדִי	Judean, Jew
פַּרְסִי	Persian
בָּבְלִי	Babylonian
לֵוִי	Levite

²³ Miles Van Pelt, *Basics of Biblical Aramaic* (Grand Rapids:Zondervan, 2011), p. 23

- b. *Occupational nouns*. An occupational noun is one that identifies an occupation. Occupational nouns possess a daghesh forte in the second root consonant followed by a Qamets.

Name	Occupation
טָבַח	butcher, executioner
דָּין	judge
זָמַר	musician

- c. *Locality nouns*. Locality nouns are nouns that indicate a place where the action takes place. Locality nouns are prefixed with mem with either a Hireq or a Pathach (מֶ or מַ).

Name	Locality
מִשְׁחָא	banquet hall
מִשְׁכָּב	a bed
מִדְבַּח	altar

- d. *Abstract nouns*. Abstract nouns are nouns that indicate non-physical realities such as idea or concepts²⁴. Abstract nouns have a Shureq suffix.

Name	Idea
זָכוּ	innocence
מַלְכוּ	kingdom
רָבוּ	greatness

I. Gender of Nouns and Adjectives

Both nouns and adjectives follow the same rules.

Masculine nouns. Masculine nouns have no distinct endings and are thus harder to identify with certainty. The only way to determine a masculine noun with certainty is to look it up in the lexicon. The lexical form (dictionary form) is the absolute singular form.

1. Nouns that are naturally male will be masculine. An example is: אָב father (m).

Feminine nouns. Feminine nouns can be identified in the following way:

1. Feminine nouns will normally be augmented with the feminine ending of either Qamets He (הֶ) or Qamets Alef (אֶ).

חַיָּה	animal (f)
קָרְיָא	city (f)

²⁴ Ibid. p. 23

2. Some feminine nouns may end with Shureq (י) or Tav (ת).

מְלָכָה	kingdom (f)
קִצָּת	end (f)

3. Some nouns are naturally feminine and have no unique ending.

אֶרֶץ	ground, earth (f)
יָד	hand (f)

4. Nouns that refer to female persons will be feminine. An example is: אִמָּה mother.

II. Number

Aramaic nouns are either singular, dual, or plural. The rules for identification are as follows.

1. *Singular*. Singular nouns have no special singular additions.
2. *Dual*. There are certain nouns that naturally occur in pairs like eyes and ears. These dual nouns are identified by the dual ending יָן (patah + yod + hireq + final nun). Examples are:

יָדַיִן	hands
רַגְלַיִן	feet
תְּרַסְתַּיִן	two

3. *Plural*. The Aramaic plural noun means three or more. Plural endings generally correspond to their gender but are not always consistent. The singular forms sometimes undergo changes when augmented with their plural endings. These changes have to do with the language's vocalization.

a. Masculine plural endings.

- Most masculine plural nouns end with יָן (hireq-yod, followed by final nun).

Singular			Plural
מֶלֶךְ	king	→	מֶלְכֵינָא kings

- Some masculine plural nouns end with יָן (Qamets followed by nun), which is the normal ending for the feminine plural noun.

Singular	Plural
----------	--------

כְּרִסְאָ throne → כְּרִסְוֵן thrones

b. *Feminine plural nouns.*

- Most feminine plural nouns end with a Qamets and nun ןְ.

Singular **Plural**
מִתְּנָה gift → מִתְּנֵין gifts

- A few feminine plural nouns end with ןִ (hireq-yod, followed by final nun), which is the normal ending for the masculine plural noun.

Singular **Plural**
מִלָּה word → מִלִּין words

III.State

Aramaic nouns and adjectives are classified as either absolute, construct or determined state.

- Absolute and Construct State.* As Dr. Schuele says, “The absolute state indicates that a noun is not determined by any other noun, whereas in the construct state it is followed by one or several other nouns (genitive, or construct chain). For example, in the phrase ‘the house of David,’ ‘house’ is the construct noun because it is determined in this case by a proper noun that explains whose house it is.”²⁵
 - The absolute state is the normal word.
 - The construct state is genitive and implies determination.

Absolute state מִלַּת מַלְכָּא Construct state
[the] word of the king

	Absolute			Construct		
	Ending	Paradigm		Ending	Paradigm	
ms		מִלְכָּ	king		מִלְכָּ	king of
fs	ָּ or ָּ	מִלְכָּה	kingdom	ָּ	מִלְכָּת	kingdom of
mp	ִּ	מִלְכִּין	kings	ִּ	מִלְכִּי	kings of
fp	ִּ	מִלְכִּין	kingdoms	ָּ	מִלְכָּת	kingdoms of

²⁵ Andreas Schuele, *An Introduction to Biblical Aramaic* (Louisville: WJK, 2012), p. 20

- c. The determined state is a noun with the definite article (אֲ) attached to the end of the word.

Hebrew	Aramaic	Translation
מֶלֶךְ	מֶלְכָא	the king

	Absolute	Determined	Translation ²⁶
ms	מֶלֶךְ	מֶלְכָא	the king
fs	חַיָּוְהָ	חַיָּוְתָא	the animal
mp	מֶלְכִין	מֶלְכֵיאָ	the kings
fp	חַיָּוִין	חַיָּוְתָא	the animals

IV. The Construct Chain

“A construct chain is a group of contiguous (side by side) nouns that are bound together in order to express the ‘of’ relationship between those nouns.”²⁷ Dr. Miles Van Pelt lists the following rules for construct nouns.

1. The absolute or determined noun is always the last noun in the construct chain.
2. Construct nouns cannot take a definite article.
3. In a construct chain, there is only one absolute or determined noun. There may, however, be two or three construct nouns in a construct chain.

V. The Particle דִּי .

Another way to express the genitive case in Aramaic is to use the particle דִּי.

1. After an absolute noun.

וּנְפִין דִּי-נֶשֶׁר “and the wings of an eagle” (Dan. 7:4)

2. After a determined noun.

בְּחִזְוֵא דִּי-לֵילִיא “in the vision of the night” (Dan. 2:19)

3. After a noun with a pronominal suffix.

אֱלֹהֵה דִּי-דָנִיֵּאל “the God of Daniel” (Dan. 6:26; Heb. 6:27)

²⁶ Table adopted from Miles Van Pelt, *Basics of Biblical Aramaic* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011), p. 27

²⁷ Miles Van Pelt, *Basics of Biblical Aramaic* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011), p. 32

VI. Pronominal Suffixes with Nouns.

Aramaic pronominal suffixes have person, gender, and number. When attached to nouns, the meaning is normally possessive and translated “my, your, his, her, our, their.”

	Singular Noun	Plural Noun	Translation Possessive/Objective
1cs	ִי	ִי	my/me
2ms	ְךָ	ְךָ	your/you
2fs	-	-	your/you
3ms	ֵהּ	ֵהּ	his/him
3fs	ֵהּ	ֵהּ	her
1cp	ִנָּא	ִנָּא	Our/us
2mp	ְכוֹן	ְכוֹן	Your/you
2fp	-	-	Your/you
3mp	ֵהוֹן	ֵהוֹן	Their/them
3fp	ֵהִן	ֵהִן	Their/them

Pronominal Suffix with אֱלֹהֵי

masc. sg

	אֱלֹהֵי	my God
	אֱלֹהֶךָ	your God (m.)
	אֱלֹהֶיךָ	your God (f.)
	אֱלֹהֵהּ	his God
	אֱלֹהֵהּ	her God
	אֱלֹהֵנָּא	our God
(-כוֹן)	אֱלֹהֶכֶם	your God (m.)
	אֱלֹהֶיכֶן	your God (f.)
(-הוֹן)	אֱלֹהֵהֶם	there God (m.)
	אֱלֹהֵהֶן	their God (f.)

Pronominal Suffix with חַיָּוִה

fem. sg.

	חַיָּוִה	my animal
	חַיָּוֶיךָ	your animal (m.)
	חַיָּוֶיךָ	your animal (f.)
	חַיָּוֵהּ	his animal
	חַיָּוֵהּ	her animal
	חַיָּוֵנָּא	our animal
(-כוֹן)	חַיָּוֶיכֶם	your animal (m.)
	חַיָּוֶיכֶן	your animal (f.)
(-הוֹן)	חַיָּוֵהֶם	their animal (m.)
	חַיָּוֵהֶן	their animal (f.)

Pronominal Suffix with אֱלֹהֵיךָ
masc. pl.

	אֱלֹהֵי	my God
	אֱלֹהֶיךָ	your God (m.)
	אֱלֹהֶיךָ	your God (f.)
	אֱלֹהָיו	his God
	אֱלֹהֶיהָ	her God
	אֱלֹהֵינוּ	our God
(כֹּן-)	אֱלֹהֵיכֶם	your God (m.)
	אֱלֹהֵיכֶן	your God (f.)
(הֶן-)	אֱלֹהֵיהֶם	there God (m.)
	אֱלֹהֵיהֶן	their God (f.)

Pronominal Suffix with חַיִּיךָ
fem. pl.

	חַיִּיךָ	my animal
	חַיִּיךָ	your animal (m.)
	חַיִּיךָ	your animal (f.)
	חַיִּיהָ	his animal
	חַיִּיהָ	her animal
	חַיִּינוּ	our animal
(כֹּן-)	חַיִּיכֶם	your animal (m.)
	חַיִּיכֶן	your animal (f.)
(הֶן-)	חַיִּיהֶם	their animal (m.)
	חַיִּיהֶן	their animal (f.)

Practice

- Memorize the vocabulary.
- Memorize the endings for the masculine and feminine noun.
- Translate Daniel 2:28-35 conjugating all verbs.

Chapter Seven

The Intensive Verb

Vocabulary

אתה	to come, bring	מֶרָא	lord
בעא	to seek, request	סוף	end
דור	to live, dwell	ענף	branch
זן	kind, sort	פִּם	entrance, opening, mouth
חזה	to show, make known	פִּתְגָּם	decree, word
חמד	wine	רבו	greatness
יהב	to give	רום	height
יקר	honor	רעיון	thought
מֶאֵן	vessel	שְׁלוּ	negligence
מדור	dwelling, abode	שְׁעָה	moment, a short time

Aramaic Intensive Verbs

The Aramaic intensive active verb stem is called the Pael, and the intensive passive/reflexive verb stem is called the Hithpaal and the rare Ithpaal²⁸.

	Perfect	Imperfect	Imperative	Infinitive Construct	Active Participle	Passive ²⁹ Participle
Pael	כִּתְּבָה	יִכְתֹּב	כִּתְּבָה	כִּתְּבָה	מִכְתֵּב	מִכְתֵּב
Hithpaal	הִתְכַּתֵּב	יִתְכַּתֵּב		הִתְכַּתֵּב		מִתְכַּתֵּב
Ithpaal	אִתְכַּתֵּב אִתְכַּתֵּב					

²⁸ The intensive mode signifies intensive or repeated action.

²⁹ Table adapted from *Basics of Biblical Aramaic*, Miles Van Pelt (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011), p.141

Pael Perfect Strong Verb

The intensive perfect active verb stem in Aramaic is called the Pael perfect and is identified by a Pathach under the first root consonant and a Daghes Forte in the second root consonant (כְּתַב). The Pael perfect has the following conjugations.

Pael Perfect					
3ms	כְּתַב	he intensely wrote	3mp	כְּתְבוּ	they intensely wrote
3fs	כְּתַבְתְּ	she intensely wrote	3fp	כְּתַבְהוּ	they intensely wrote
2ms	כְּתַבְתָּ	you intensely wrote	2mp	כְּתַבְתֶּם	you intensely wrote
2fs	כְּתַבְתְּי	you intensely wrote	2fp	כְּתַבְתֶּן	you intensely wrote
1cs	כְּתַבְתִּי	I intensely wrote	1cp	כְּתַבְנָא	we intensely wrote

אִזְהַּ יְתִירָא גְבִיָּא אֱלֹהֵי דִּי חֲסָקוּ לְשַׁדְרָךְ מִישְׁךְ וְעֵבֶד גִּנּוּ קַטַּל חַמּוֹן שְׂבִיבָא דִּי נוּרָא

The flame of fire **intensely killed** those men that took up Shadrach, Meshah, and Abednego (Dan. 3:22b)

Pael Imperfect Strong Verb

The intensive imperfect active verb stem in Aramaic is called the Pael imperfect and is identified by the vocal Shava under the prefix performative, Pathach under the first root consonant and a Daghes Forte in the second root consonant (יְכַתֵּב). The Pael imperfect has the following conjugations.

Pael Imperfect					
3ms	יְכַתֵּב	he will intensely write	3mp	יְכַתְּבוּ	they will intensely write
3fs	יְכַתְּבְתְּ	she will intensely write	3fp	יְכַתְּבוּ	they will intensely write
2ms	יְכַתְּבָא	you will intensely write	2mp	יְכַתְּבוּ	you will intensely write
2fs			2fp		
1cs	אֶכַתֵּב	I will intensely write	1cp	נִכְתְּבָא	we will intensely write

חֲלֵם חֲזוֹת וַיִּדְחַלֵּנִי וַיַּרְהֲרִין עַל־מִשְׁכְּבִי

I saw a dream and **I was intensely afraid** upon my bed (Dan. 4:5 Heb. 4:2)

Pael Imperative Strong Verb

The intensive active imperative verb stem in Aramaic is called the Pael imperative and is identified by a Pathach under the first root consonant and a Daghesh Forte in the second root consonant. The Pael imperative has the following conjugations.

Pael Imperative					
2ms	כְּתֹב	(you) write!	2mp	כְּתֹבוּ	(you) write!

אַתְרוּ עֲפִיָּה וּבְדַרוּ אֲנֹכָהּ תַּגְד חֵיוֹתָא מִן-תַּחְתּוֹהִי וְצִפְרָיָא מִן-עֲנָפוֹהִי

Strip off its leaves **and intensely scatter** his fruit. Let the beasts get away from under it and the birds from his branches (Dan 4:14, Aram. 4:11b).

Pael Infinitive Strong Verb

The Pael intensive infinitive verb stem is identified by the normal Pael identifiers together with the Qamets He (הֵ) ending.

Pael Infinitive	
כְּתֹבָהּ	to intensely write

Pael Participle

The intensive active participle stem is identified by a vocal Shava under the Mem participle prefix along with a Pathach under the first root consonant and a Daghech Forte in the second root consonant if lengthening is required (מְכַתֵּב). The Pael participle stem has the following conjugations.

Pael Participle					
ms	מְכַתֵּב	intensely writing	mp	מְכַתְּבִין	intensely writing
fs	מְכַתְּבָה	intensely writing	fp	מְכַתְּבִין	intensely writing

הוּא גִלָּא עֲמִיקְתָּא וּמְסִתְרָתָא יָדַע מַה בְּחֹשְׁכָא וְנִהִירָא עִמָּה שְׂרָא

He reveals deep **and intense secret things**; He knows what is in the darkness, and light dwells with Him (Dan 2:22)

Hithpaal Perfect Strong Verb

The intensive passive/reflexive verb stem in Aramaic is called the Hithpaal and has the following identifiers: it has the Hithpaal prefix (הַתְּ), a Pathach under the first root consonant and a Daghesth Forte in the second root consonant (הִתְּכַתֵּב). The Hithpaal has the following conjugations.

Hithpaal Perfect					
3ms	הִתְּכַתֵּב	He was intensely writing He intensely wrote himself	3mp	הִתְּכַתְּבוּ	they were intensely writting
3fs	הִתְּכַתְּבַת	She was intensely writting	3fp	הִתְּכַתְּבוּ	they were intensely writting
2ms	הִתְּכַתְּבָהּ	You were intensely writting	2mp	הִתְּכַתְּבוּן	you were intensely writting
2fs			2fp		
1cs	הִתְּכַתְּבַת	I was intensely writting	1cp	הִתְּכַתְּבָנָא	we were intensely writting

וְהַתְּנַבִּי חַגִּי נְבִיאָהּ וְזַכְרְיָה בֶרֶךְ-עֲדוּא נְבִיאָא עַל-יְהוּדָא דִּי בִיהוּד

Then the prophets Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the son of Iddo **intensely prophesied** unto the Jews (Ezra 5:1a)

Hithpaal Imperfect Strong Verb

The intensive imperfect passive/reflexive verb stem has the imperfect prefix, the Hithpaal prefix minus the He (הַתְּ), a Pathach under the first root consonant and a Daghesth Forte in the second root consonant (יִתְּכַתֵּב). The Hithpaal imperfect has the following conjugations.

Hithpaal Imperfect					
3ms	יִתְּכַתֵּב	He will be intensely writing He intensely writes himself	3mp	יִתְּכַתְּבוּ	they will intensely write
3fs	יִתְּכַתְּבַת	She will intensely write	3fp	יִתְּכַתְּבוּ	they will intensely write
2ms	יִתְּכַתְּבָהּ	you will intensely write	2mp	יִתְּכַתְּבוּן	you will intensely write
2fs			2fp		
1cs	אִתְּכַתֵּב	I will intensely write	1cp	נִתְּכַתֵּב	we will intensely write

וּבִטֵּל שְׁמָיָא יִצְטַבֵּעַ וְעַם-חֲזוּתָא חֲלָקָהּ בְּעֶשֶׂב אֶרֶעָא

And **let it be intensely wet** with the dew of heaven and its portion [be] with the beasts in the grass of the earth (Dan 4:12b).

Hithpaal Participle Strong Verb

The Hithpaal participle stem is formed with the Mem Hireq prefix (מִ), the Hithpaal prefix minus the He (תְּ), a Pathach under the first root consonant and a Daghes Fortis in the second root consonant (מִתְכַּתֵּב) and finished with the personal ending. The Hithpaal participle has the following conjugations.

Hithpaal Participle					
ms	מִתְכַּתֵּב	intensely writing	mp	מִתְכַּתְּבִין	intensely writing
fs	מִתְכַּתְּבָה	intensely writing	fp		

וְרִי חֲזִיתָ פְּרוּלָא מְעָרֵב בְּחֶסֶף טִינָא מִתְעָרְבִין

And that you saw the iron being mixed in clay, **intensely mixing** (Dan. 2:43a)

Hithpaal Infinitive Construct Strong Verb

The Hithpaal infinitive verb stem has the following conjugation.

Hithpaal Infinitive	
הִתְכַּתְּבָה	to be intensely writing

Ithpaal Perfect

The rare Ithpaal is a modification of the Hithpaal, changing the prefix from מִתְ to אִתְ or אִתְ. The Ithpaal only occurs three times and occurs only in the perfect³⁰.

	Root	Ithpaal	Translation ³¹	
3ms	שנה	אִשְׁתַּנִּי	he was changed	Dan. 3:19
3mp	שנה	אִשְׁתַּנּוּ	they were changed	
3mp	יעט	אִתְיעֲטוּ	they consulted together	

Practice

- Memorize the vocabulary.
- Memorize the Pael Perfect forms.
- Translate Daniel 2:36-43 conjugating all verbs.

³⁰ Miles Van Pelt, *Basics of Biblical Aramaic* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011), p. 140

³¹ *ibid*

Chapter Eight

Adjectives, Conjunctions and Prepositions

Vocabulary

אַזְדָּא	certain	עֲלִי	Most High
אַחֲרֵן	other	עֲמִיק	deep
אַיִמָּתָן	terrible	עֲצִיב	troubled
אַרְיֵךְ	fitting	עָתִיד	ready
זָעִיר	small	עָתִיק	ancient
חָוֵר	white	קָדִישׁ	holy
חַי	living	קָיָם	enduring
חָסִיר	lacking	רַב	great
טָב	good	רַחֵיק	distant
יָצִיב	certain	רַעֲנָן	flourishing
יָקִיר	difficult	שָׂגִיא	great, many
יָתִיר	extraordinary	שָׁלֵחַ	calm
מָרֵד	rebellious	שָׁלִיט	mighty
נָקֵא	pure	שָׁפִיר	fair
עֲלִיוֹן	Most High	תָּקִיף	strong

Adjectives

Aramaic adjectives (Latin *adiciċċere* meaning, “to throw to,” or “to add to what has been said”) are formed like the noun and match the noun it modifies in gender, number and state.

1. The Form of the Adjective.

טָב “good”			
	Masc. Sg.	Fem. Sg.	
Absolute	טָב	טָבָה	“good”
Construct	טָב	טָבַת	“good of”
Determined	טָבָא	טָבָתָא	“the good”
	Masc. Pl.	Fem. Pl.	
Absolute	טָבִין	טָבִין	“good men/women”
Construct	טָבִי	טָבַת	“good men/women of”
Determined	טָבִיא	טָבַתָא	“the good men/women”

2. The Aramaic Adjectives.

אַוּדָא	certain	עָלִי	Most High
אַחֲרֵן	other	עֲמִיק	deep
אַיִמָּתָן	terrible	עֲצִיב	troubled
אַרְיֵךְ	fitting	עָתִיד	ready
זָעִיר	small	עָתִיק	ancient
חָוֵר	white	קָדִישׁ	holy
חַי	living	קָיָם	enduring
חָסִיר	lacking	רַב	great
טָב	good	רַחֵיק	distant
יָצִיב	certain	רַעֲנָן	flourishing
יָקִירָר	difficult	שָׂנֵא	great, many
יָתִיר	extraordinary	שָׁלֵחַ	calm
מָרָד	rebellious	שָׁלִיט	mighty
נָקֵא	pure	שָׁפִיר	fair
עָלִיוֹן	Most High	תָּקִיף	strong

3. The Use of the Adjective

- A. *Attributive usage.* When the adjective follows the noun it modifies it is said to be in the attributive position.

מֶלֶךְ רַב “a great king”

- B. *Predicative usage.* When an adjective appears to modify a noun in the absolute state and there is a “to be” verb present, or no verb present, the usage is called predicative and the adjective asserts something about the noun (e.g., “the book is good”)³².

מַלְכוּת רְבִיעִיָּה תְּהוּא תְּקִיפָה “the fourth kingdom **was strong**” (Dan. 2:40)

- C. *Substantive usage.* When the adjective stands alone without the noun, the adjective is called substantive and functions as a noun.

וּפִם מְמַלֵּל רַבְרָבָן and a mouth speaking **great things** (Dan. 7:8)

³² Miles Van Pelt, p. 65

Conjunctions

Aramaic conjunctions (Latin *coniungere* meaning, “to join together”) come in two types, coordinating conjunctions and subordinating conjunctions.

1. Coordinating conjunctions

- a. Waw³³ conjunction (ܐܠܐ). The most common coordinating conjunction is ܐܠܐ “and,” that connects words and sentences and is prefixed to words.

Waw used with...		
particle	ܐܠܐܝܢ	“and if” (Dan. 2:6)
verb	ܐܠܐܢܐܢܐ	“and I know” (Dan. 2:9)
proper noun	ܐܠܐܢܝܐܠ	“and Daniel” (Dan. 2:16)

As usual, changes occur. Dr. Rosenthal summarizes, “If the following word begins with a labial (ܒܡܦ) or has a murmured vowel in the first syllable, ܐܠܐ becomes ܐܠܐ (ū). Followed by ܐ, becomes ܐܠܐ. Followed by a syllable containing an ultra-short vowel, the cooresponding full vowel appears after ܐܠܐ: ܐܠܐܢܐ “and (a kind of) taxes,” ܐܠܐܢܐ “and come!,” etc. However, it is ܐܠܐܢܐ E 6:12, ܐܠܐܢܐ “and he looked” D 6:23, ܐܠܐܢܐ D 7:13.”³⁴

- b. ܐܠܐ. The conjunction ܐܠܐ is normally translated, “also.”

ܐܠܐ ܐܠܐܢܐ ܐܠܐ ܐܠܐܢܐ ܐܠܐ ܐܠܐܢܐ

“and **also** before you, O king, I have done no harm” (Dan. 6:22; Eng. 6:23)

- c. ܐܠܐܢܐ. The conjunction ܐܠܐܢܐ is normally translated, “except, yet, however, but.”

ܐܠܐܢܐ ܐܠܐܢܐ ܐܠܐܢܐ ܐܠܐܢܐ

But there is a God in heaven who reveals secrets (Dan. 2:28a)

- d. ܐܠܐܢܐ. The conjunction ܐܠܐܢܐ is normally translated, “if, whether.”

ܐܠܐܢܐ ܐܠܐܢܐ ܐܠܐܢܐ ܐܠܐܢܐ ܐܠܐܢܐ

And **if** you do not worship, you shall be cast immediately into the midst of the burning fiery furnace (Dan. 3:15c)

- e. ܐܠܐܢܐ. The conjunction ܐܠܐܢܐ is normally translated, “therefore.”

ܐܠܐܢܐ ܐܠܐܢܐ ܐܠܐܢܐ ܐܠܐܢܐ

Therefore tell me the dream and its interpretation (Dan. 2:6b)

³³ Waw more commonly conforms to the Aramaic dialect while Vav is closer to the Hebrew.

³⁴ Franz Rosenthal, *A Grammar of Biblical Aramaic* (Wiesbaden: Porta5, 1995), p. 41

2. Subordinating conjunctions

- The conjunction **כִּי** “that,” introduces subordinate clauses after verbs meaning to know, see, or hear. The conjunction **כִּי** is also used to introduce final clauses (e.g., Ezra 5:10), and causal clauses (e.g., Dan. 2:47).
- The conjunction **כַּדְּ** is temporal and is normally translated “when.”
- The conjunction **הֵן** is normally translated, “if.”

Conjunctions			
Coordinating			
אֲךְ	also	הֵן	if, whether
בְּרָם	except, yet, however, but	לְהֵן	therefore
Subordinating			
כִּי	that	כַּדְּ	when

Prepositions

Aramaic prepositions (Latin *praepōnere* meaning “to put before,” or “place before”) come in two forms, inseparable and independent. Prepositions may function adjectivally when modifying a noun or pronoun (e.g., the man *by the river*), or adverbially when modifying a verb (e.g., he was troubled *in the night*).

- Inseparable*. These include: **בְּ**, **כְּ**, and **לְ**, attached to a word.
 - בְּ** : local and temporal: “in”; instrumental: “through, with.”
 - כְּ** : “like, as.”
 - לְ** : “to, for”; direction: “to”; temporal: “for.”
- Independent*. The list of independent prepositions are as follows:³⁵

Independent Prepositions			
אַחֲרֵי	after	מִן	from, out of
בְּתֵר	after	עַד	until
בֵּין	between	עַל	on, upon, over
גּוֹזֵא	within	עִם	with
דִּי לֹא	without	צֶד	side
לְוֵת	with, at	תַּחְוֹת	underneath
לְקִבֵּל	facing, opposite	קִדָּם	before
לְקִצָּת	at the end of		

Practice

- Memorize the conjunctions and prepositions.
- Memorize and write the form of the adjective **טָב** “good.”
- Translate Daniel 2:44-49 conjugating all verbs.

³⁵ William Holladay, ed., *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids:Eerdmans, 1988)

Chapter Nine

The Causative Verb

Vocabulary

אבד	to perish	יכל	to be able
אכל	to feed	כתב	to write
אמר	to say, speak	נפל	to fall
בנה	to build	נתן	to give, pay
ברך	to bless, praise	ענה	to answer
גלה	to reveal	קום	to rise, stand
הלך	to walk	קרא	to call
חזה	to see, perceive	קרב	to approach, bring near
חיה	to live	רבה	to become great
ידע	to know	רום	to rise up

Aramaic Causative Verbs

The Aramaic causative active verb stem is called the Haphel (and Aphel, Shaphel) and the causative passive verb stem is called the Hophal (and Haphal)³⁶.

Causative							
		Perfect	Imperfect	Imperative	Infinitive Construct	Active Participle	Passive Participle
Haphel	Active	הִכְתֵּב	יִהְיֶה כְּתִיב		הִכְתְּבָה	מִהְכְּתֵב	מִהְכְּתֵב
Aphel		אִכְתֵּב	יִכְתֵּב	אִכְתֵּב		מִכְתֵּב	
Hophal	Passive	הִכְתֵּב					

³⁶ The reflexive of the haphel is not found in the Bible except possibly in Ezra 4:13, therefore its form is uncertain.

Haphel/Aphel/Shaphel Perfect Strong Verb

The Haphel is identified by the Haphel prefix (ה־). There are two alternate forms called the Aphel whose prefix is א־, and the Shaphel³⁷ whose prefix is ש־. All three forms are causative. The Haphel perfect has the following conjugations:

Haphel Perfect					
3ms	הִכְתִּיב	he caused to write	3mp	הִכְתִּיבוּ	they caused to write
3fs	הִכְתִּיבָהּ	she caused to write	3fp	הִכְתִּיבֶהָ	they caused to write
2ms	הִכְתִּיבְתָּ	you caused to write	2mp	הִכְתִּיבוּן	you caused to write
2fs	הִכְתִּיבְתִּי	you caused to write	2fp	הִכְתִּיבְתֶּן	you caused to write
1cs	הִכְתִּיבְתִּי	I caused to write	1cp	הִכְתִּיבָנָא	we caused to write

בְּאַרְיֹחַ הַגָּבִיר הִתִּיב עִמָּא וְטַעַם לְאַרְיֹחַ רַב־טַבָּחִיא

Then with counsel and wisdom Daniel **caused to return (i.e. replied)** to Arioch, the great guardsman (Dan. 2:14a)

אֶקִּימָהּ בְּבִקְעַת דּוּרָא בְּמִדְיַנַּת בָּבֶל

He set it up in the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon (Aphel, Dan. 3:1)

Haphel Imperfect Strong Verb

The Haphel imperfect is identified by a Haphel prefix (ה־) together with the imperfect performatives. The Haphel imperfect has the following conjugations:

Haphel Imperfect					
3ms	יִהְיֶהכֹתֵב	he will cause to write	3mp	יִהְיֶהכֹתְבוּ	they will cause to write
3fs	יִהְיֶהכֹתֵבָהּ	she will cause to write	3fp	יִהְיֶהכֹתְבֶהָ	they will cause to write
2ms	יִהְיֶהכֹתֵבְתָּ	you will cause to write	2mp	יִהְיֶהכֹתְבוּן	you will cause to write
2fs	יִהְיֶהכֹתְבְתִּי	you will cause to write	2fp	יִהְיֶהכֹתְבְתֶּן	you will cause to write
1cs	אֶהְיֶהכֹתֵב	I will cause to write	1cp	נִהְיֶהכֹתֵב	we will cause to write

כֹּעַן דְּגִיָּאל יִתְקַרֵּי וּפְשָׁרָהּ יִתְחַוֶּה

[N]ow let Daniel be called **and he will cause to declare** the interpretation. (Dan. 5:12c)

³⁷ It is generally recognized the Shaphel is from Akkadian influence.

Haphel Imperative Strong Verb

The Haphel imperative is identified by a Haphel prefix (ה) in addition to the imperative performatives. The Haphel imperative has the following conjugations:

Haphel Imperative					
2ms	הִכְתֵּב	(you) cause to write!	2mp	הִכְתֵּבוּ	(you) cause to write!
2fs	הִכְתֵּבִי	(you) cause to write!	2fp	הִכְתֵּבְהֶן	(you) cause to write!

וְכֵן אָמַר-לָהּ לְחַכְמֵי בָבֶל אַל-תְּהוֹבִיד הָעֵלְוִי קֶדֶם מֶלֶכָּא וּפְשָׂרָא לְמֶלֶכָּא אַחֲוָא

[A]nd thus he said to him, do not destroy the wise men of Babylon; **bring me** before the king and I will show to the king the interpretation. (Dan. 2:24b)

Haphel Participle Strong Verb

The Haphel participle is identified by a Haphel prefix (ה) in addition to the participle performatives. The Haphel participle has the following conjugations:

Haphel Participle					
ms	מְהַכְתֵּב	causing to write (m)	mp	מְהַכְתֵּבִין	causing to write (m)
fs	מְהַכְתֵּבָה	causing to write (f)	fp	מְהַכְתֵּבֹן	causing to write (f)

עַל-מָה דְתָא מְהַחֲצֵפָה מִן-קֶדֶם מֶלֶכָּא

Why is the decree from the king **caused to be urgent**? (Dan. 2:15b)

Haphel Infinitive Strong Verb

The Haphel infinitive is identified by a Haphel prefix (ה) to the infinitive performative.

הִכְתֵּבָה	to write, writing
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וּפְשָׂרָא לְהַחֲוִיָּה לְמֶלֶכָּא

[A]nd **telling** the interpretation to the king. (Dan. 2:16b)

Hophal Perfect Strong Verb

The causative passive verb stem in Aramaic is called the Hophal and is identified by the Hophal prefix (𐤒) with either a Qubbutz (ְ) for u-class, Qamets-Hatuf (ֻ) for o-class, and Tsere (ִ) for irregular verbs. The Hophal only occurs in the Bible in the perfect and only twelve times³⁸.

Practice

- A. Memorize the vocabulary.
- B. Memorize and write the Haphel form.
- C. Translate Daniel 3:1-6 conjugating all verbs.

³⁸ Miles Van Pelt, p. 152

Chapter Ten

Adverbs, Particles and Numbers

Vocabulary

בהל	to frighten, terrify	פלח	to serve
דקק	to break into pieces, crush	צבה	to desire, wish for
הוה	to be, exist	רמה	to throw, place
יקד	to burn	שים	to put, place, set
יתב	to sit, dwell	שאל	to ask, require
כלל	to finish	שכח	to get
משא	to reach to, come upon	שלח	to send, stretch out
נפק	to go out, come forth	שמע	to hear, obey
סגד	to bow down, pay homage	שנה	to be different, change
סלק	to go up, come up	שפל	to humble, humiliate
עבד	to do, make	שתה	to drink
עדה	to go, take away	תוב	to return
עלל	to go in, enter		

Aramaic Adverbs

Adverbs complete the thought of when, how, where, or why the action is performed.

Adverbs			
אֲדִין	then	כֵּן	thus
אֲסִפְרָנָא	exactly, perfectly	כִּנְמָא	thus
אֲף	also	כַּעַן	now
אֲפִתָּם	certainly, finally	כַּעֲנָת	now
כָּה	here	עוּד	still, yet
כַּמָּה	how	תַּמָּה	there

Aramaic Particles

Particles are those catch all words which cannot be categorized as either nominal or verbal. Aramaic particles are either standalone words or the interrogative particle (ܐܢܝ).

Particles			
ܐܝܬܝ	there is, exists	ܐܠ	no, not
ܐܚܪܝܢ	other	ܐܠܐ	no, not
ܟܠ	whole, all		

Interrogative Particle ܐܢܝ

The interrogative particle (ܐܢܝ) may be prefixed to a noun, verb, or another particle and serves to ask a question.

ܥܢܐ ܡܠܟܐ ܐܡܪ ܐܢܝ ܠܐ ܕܐܝܬܝܐ ܒܒܠ ܕܒܬܐ

The king spoke, saying, “**Is this** not great Babylon ...” (Dan. 4:27; Eng. 4:30)

Accusative Particle

The Aramaic Sign of the Direct Object (Accusative particle) only occurs once and is identified as ܐܝܢ (cf. Dan. 3:12). Dr. Miles Van Pelt notes, “it is much more common for the preposition ܠ to mark the verbal object.”³⁹

Interjection Particles

There are three interjection particles all meaning “look! behold!”

ܐܠܝ	Look! Behold!
ܐܠܝܢ	Look! Behold!
ܕܐܠܝܢ	Look! Behold!

³⁹ Miles Van Pelt, p. 72

Numbers

There are two types of numbers in Aramaic, the cardinal and the ordinal numbers. Numbers are adjectives and as such they are inflected like adjectives when used.

1. *Cardinal numbers.* Cardinal numbers are numbers signifying the counting values 1, 2, 3, etc.

Num.	Masc.	Fem.
1	חד	חדָה
2	תרין	תרתינָה
3	תלתָה	תלתָה
4	ארבעָה	ארבעָה
5	חמשָה	חמשָה
6	שתָה	שתָה
7	שבעָה	שבעָה
8	תמנָה	תמנָה
9	תשעָה	תשעָה
10	עשרָה	עשרָה
12	תרי עשר	

20	עשרין	100	מאה
30	תלתין	200	מאתין
40	ארבעין	400	ארבע מאה
50	חמשין	1,000	אלף
60	שתין	10,000	רב
70	שבעין	1,000,000	אלף אלפים
80	תמנין	100,000,000	רב רב
90	תשעין		

2. *Ordinal Numbers.* Ordinal numbers are adjectives and indicate position in a series i.e., קדמי "first, former." The ordinal numbers in Biblical Aramaic only cover the first four.

Number	Masc.	Fem.
first	קדמי (קדמא)	קדמיה (קדמיתא)
second	תנין	תנינה
third	תליתי	תליתיה

fourth	רְבִיעִי (רְבִיעִיא)	רְבִיעִיה (רְבִיעִיתא)
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3. *Multiplication*. Multiplication of numbers is expressed as follows: חֹדֶשׁ-שֶׁבַע “seven times” (cf. Dan. 3:19).

4. *Fractions*. Fractions are expressed by the following:

One-half	פֶּלֶג	Dan. 7:25
One-third	תִּלְתָּא	Dan. 5:16,29

5. *Dates*. Dates are expressed using cardinal numbers following the construct state of שָׁנָה “year” and יוֹם “day.” For example, שֶׁשֶׁת לְמַלְכוּת שָׁנָה is “year six of the reign of...” (Ezra 6:15).

6. *Age*. The age of a person is expressed by the phrase “son of n years”: שְׁתַּיִן וְתַרְתִּין: “as (a son) sixty-two years old” (Dan. 6:1)⁴⁰.

Practice

- Memorize the vocabulary.
- Translate Daniel 3:7-18 conjugating all verbs.

⁴⁰ Franz Rosenthal, p. 37

Chapter Eleven

The Weak Verbs

In contrast to strong verbs whose three root consonants remain relatively stable, weak verbs experience radical changes when augmented. Dr. Rosenthal provides the following summary: “The verbal conjugation follows an identical scheme for all roots. Minor irregularities occur principally in connection with roots that contain a glottal stop; that have *n* as the first consonant; and which consisted originally of two consonants made triconsonantal by the addition of *w/y* or by doubling of the second consonant. These are the ‘weak’ verbs, as opposed to the regular ‘strong’ verb.”⁴¹

Basic Rules for Weak Verbs⁴²

1. Some weak verbs drop the initial consonant of the three root consonants.
2. Some weak verbs assimilate their first or second root consonants to what follows or precedes. This assimilation is typically expressed through a dagesh forte in the consonant that assimilates.
3. Some weak verbs change their first root consonant if it is an א, ה, or ו.
4. Some weak verbs change their third root consonant when they have a final א or ה.

First Root Consonant Rules

- I. Roots beginning with נ
 - 1. The initial נ drops in the imperative (e.g. נִשָּׂא “to take” changes to שִׂא “take!”)
 - 2. The initial נ can assimilate to the following consonant if there is no vowel between the two, hence the second radical is doubled (e.g. יִפֹּל “to fall” changes to יִפֹּל “he will fall”)
- II. Roots beginning with י
 - 1. The initial י drops in the imperative (e.g. יָדַע “to know” changes to דַּע “know!”)
 - 2. The initial י turns into ו when a prefix is added (e.g. יָדַע “to know” changes to הוֹדַע “he informed” in the Haphel)
- III. Roots beginning with א
 - 1. The initial א disappears if it becomes part of the prefix syllable (e.g. אָמַן “to trust” changes to הֵאֱמַן “he trusted” in the Haphel)

⁴¹ Franz Rosenthal, *A Grammar of Biblical Aramaic* (Wiesbaden, 1995), p. 47

⁴² This section largely adapted from Andreas Schuele, *An Introduction to Biblical Aramaic* (Louisville: WJK, 2012), pp. 54-58

Second Root Consonant Rules

Second root position beginning with ך or ך

1. In some roots, ך functions as a consonant (e.g. הָיָה “he was”; חָיַי “he informed”)
2. Long ā is found with the perfect Peal (e.g. קָוַם changes to קָם “he rose”; שָׂים changes to שָׂם “he placed”)
3. The Peal participle has a consonant ך or ך inserted (e.g. קָוַם “to stand up, rise” changes to קָוַםִּי m.sg. part.)
4. The Peil is unpredictable as the perfect has either i or u (e.g. שָׂים “he was put”; שָׂמָה “it was placed”)

Final Root Consonant Rules

I. Roots ending in ך / ך or ך

1. Roots originally ending in ך, ך and ך have merged with some exceptions for those ending in ך. The spelling of these final forms vacillates between ך and ך (e.g. צָבָא changed to צָבָה “I wanted”)

II. Root with Identical Second and Third Root Consonants

1. When there is no vowel between these consonants, the two merges into one (e.g. דָּקַק changes to דָּקַי “they were shattered” in the Peal Perf. Pl.)
2. When no vowel is found between the first and second consonants, the second consonant assimilates to the first (e.g. דָּקַק changes to דָּדָקַי “they broke in pieces” in the Hafei Perf. Pl.)

Verbs with ך, ך, or ך

1. These laryngeals are preceded by a or e rather than i/e or u/o (e.g. אָמַר “saying,” יָדַע “knowing”)

APPENDIX

Answers to Questions

Chapter 2 The alphabet

Transliterate the following proper names:

- | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------|
| 1. בית לחם (Mic. 5:1) | Ans.: Bethlehem |
| 2. בנימין (Gen. 42:4) | Ans.: Benjamin |
| 3. דוד (1 Sam. 16:23) | Ans.: David |

Write the following in Hebrew:

- | | |
|----------|-------------|
| 1. ysr'l | Ans.: ישראל |
| 2. hlk | Ans.: הלך |
| 3. ywntn | Ans.: יונתו |
-

Vocabulary

אב	father
אבד	to perish
אבן	stone
אזדא	certain (adj)
אחרי	after (prep)
אחרן	other (adj)
אילן	tree
אימתן	terrible (adj)
אכל	to feed
אלה	God, god
אלהין	gods, God
אמה	cubit
אמה	nation
אמר	to say, speak
אסר	prohibition, injunction
אף	also (conj)
אריה	lion
אריך	fitting (adj)
אתה	to come, bring
אתר	place, location
אתון	furnace
בהל	to frighten, terrify
בית	house, temple
בין	between (prep)
בנה	to build
בעא	to seek, request
ברך	to bless, praise
ברם	except, yet, however, but (conj)
בתר	after (prep)
גב	pit, den
גבר	man
גוא	midst, middle, within (prep)
גלה	to reveal
גשם	body
די	that
דין	judgment, justice
דור	to live, dwell

דָּקַק	to break into pieces, crush
דָּת	law, command, decree
הוּה	to be, exist
הֵיכַל	palace, temple
הִלָּךְ	to walk
חֲמִנִיךְ	chain
הֵן	if, whether (conj)
זִיו	radiance, brightness, countenance
זָמַן	time, turn
זֶן	kind, sort
זָמַר	string music
זָעִיר	small (adj)
חוּה	to show, make known
חָוֵר	white (adj)
חַי	living (adj)
חִיה	to live
חַיּוּה	animal, beast
חֵיל	strength, army
חוּה	to see, perceive
חֲכִים	wise, wise man
חֲכֻמָּה	wisdom
חֲלֵם	dream
חֲמֹד	wine
חֲנֻכָּה	dedication
חָסֵר	lacking (adj)
חֲסָף	moulded clay, pottery
טָב	good (adj)
טָל	dew
טַעַם	commad, decree, advice, report
יָהַב	to give
יָד	hand, power
יָדַע	to know
יוֹם	day
יָכַל	to be able
יָצִיב	certain (adj)
יָקַד	to burn
יָקִיר	difficult (adj)
יָקָר	honor
יָתַב	to sit, dwell
יָתִיר	extraordinary (adj)

כְּדִי	when (conj)
כֹּהֵן	priest
כָּל	all, every, whole
כָּלֵל	to finish
כֶּסֶף	silver
כָּתַב	to write
כְּתָב	writing, document
לֵב לִבָּב	heart
לְהֵן	therefore (conj)
לִּית	with, at (prep)
לִקְבֹּל	facing, opposite (prep)
לְקֶצֶת	at the end of (prep)
מֵאֵן	vessel
מְדוּרָה	dwelling, abode
מְדִינָה	province, city
מָשָׂא	to reach to, come upon
מִלָּה	word, matter
מֶלֶךְ	king
מִן	from, out of (prep)
מֶרֶא	lord
מֶרֶד	rebellious (adj)
מִשְׁכָּב	bed
נְבִיא	prophet
נָהָר	stream, river
נֹדֶד	fire
נָקִיא	pure (adj)
נָפַל	to fall
נָפַק	to go out, come forth
נָתַן	to give, pay
סָגַד	to bow down, pay homage
סוּף	end
סָלַק	to go up, come up
סֵפֶר	book
סָפַר	scribe
עָבַד	to do, make
עֶבֶד	servant, slave
עֵבֶר	opposite, beyond
עַד	until (prep)
עָדָה	to go, take away

עֵדָן	time, moment
עֵין	eye
עַל	on, upon, over (prep)
עָלִי	Most High (adj)
עָלִיוֹן	Most High (adj)
עָלָל	to go in, enter
עָלָם	eternity, forever
עָם	people, nation
עִם	with (prep)
עֲמִיק	deep (adj)
עֲנָה	to answer
עֲנָף	branch
עֲצִיב	troubled (adj)
עֵשֶׁב	plant, grass
עֵתִיד	ready (adj)
עֲתִיק	ancient (adj)
פָּחָה	governor
פָּלַח	to serve
פֶּם	entrance, opening, mouth
פֶּשֶׁר	interpretation
פֶּתָנָם	decree, word
צָבָה	to desire, wish for
צֶדֶד	side (prep)
צֶלֶם	statue, image
קֹדֶשׁ	holy (adj)
קִדְּם	before (prep)
קוּם	to rise, stand
קָיָם	enduring (adj)
קָרָא	to call
קָרַב	to approach, bring near
רָב	great (adj)
רָבָה	to become great
רָבוֹ	greatness
רוּם	height
רוּם	to rise up
רָז	secret, mystery
רַחֵיק	distant (adj)
רָמָה	to throw, place
רַעְיוֹן	thought
רַעֲנָן	flourishing (adj)

שָׂגִיב	great, many (adj)
שָׁלִיט	mighty (adj)
שִׁים	to put, place, set
שָׁאֵל	to ask, require
שָׁכַח	to get
שָׁלָטָן	dominion, powers
שָׁלוּ	negligence
שָׁלַח	to send, stretch out
שָׁלֵה	calm (adj)
שָׁמַע	to hear, obey
שָׁנָה	to be different, change
שָׁעָה	moment, a short time
שָׁפִיר	fair (adj)
שָׁפַל	to humble, humiliate
שָׁתָה	to drink
תָּוֹב	to return
תַּחַת	underneath (prep)
תָּקִיף	strong (adj)

Verb Charts

	Perfect	Imperfect	Imperative	Infinitive Construct	Active Participle	Passive ⁴³ Participle
Pael	כָּתַב	יִכְתֹּב	כָּתַב	מִכְתֵּב	כָּתֵב	כְּתִיב
Peil	כְּתִיב					
Hithpeel	הִתְכַּתֵּב	יִתְכַּתֵּב		הִתְכַּתֵּבָה		מִתְכַּתֵּב
Ithpeel	אִתְכַּתֵּב אִתְכַּתֵּב					
Pael	כָּתַב	יִכְתֹּב	כָּתַב	כַּתְּבָה	מִכְתֵּב	מִכְתֵּב
Hithpaal	הִתְכַּתְּבָה	יִתְכַּתְּבָה		הִתְכַּתְּבָה		מִתְכַּתְּבָה
Ithpaal	אִתְכַּתְּבָה אִתְכַּתְּבָה					

	Peal	Peil	Hithpeel	Pael	Hithpaal
Perfect					
3ms	כָּתַב	כְּתִיב	הִתְכַּתֵּב	כָּתַב	הִתְכַּתְּבָה
3fs	כָּתְבַת	כְּתִיבַת	הִתְכַּתְּבַת	כָּתְבַת	הִתְכַּתְּבַת
2ms	כָּתַבְתָּ	כְּתִיבְתָּ	הִתְכַּתְּבְתָּ	כָּתַבְתָּ	הִתְכַּתְּבְתָּ
2fs	כָּתְבִיתִי	כְּתִיבִיתִי		כָּתְבִיתִי	
1cs	כָּתַבְתִּי	כְּתִיבְתִּי	הִתְכַּתְּבְתִּי	כָּתַבְתִּי	הִתְכַּתְּבְתִּי
3mp	כָּתְבוּ	כְּתִיבוּ	הִתְכַּתְּבוּ	כָּתְבוּ	הִתְכַּתְּבוּ
3fp	כָּתְבָה	כְּתִיבָה	הִתְכַּתְּבוּ	כָּתְבָה	הִתְכַּתְּבוּ
2mp	כָּתְבִיתוּ	כְּתִיבִיתוּ	הִתְכַּתְּבִיתוּ	כָּתְבִיתוּ	הִתְכַּתְּבִיתוּ
2fp	כָּתְבִיתִי	כְּתִיבִיתִי		כָּתְבִיתִי	
1cp	כָּתְבָנָא	כְּתִיבָנָא	הִתְכַּתְּבָנָא	כָּתְבָנָא	הִתְכַּתְּבָנָא
Imperfect					
3ms	יִכְתֹּב		יִתְכַּתֵּב	יִכְתֹּב	יִתְכַּתֵּב
3fs	תִּכְתֹּב		תִּתְכַּתֵּב	תִּכְתֹּב	תִּתְכַּתֵּב
2ms	תִּכְתֹּב		תִּתְכַּתֵּב	תִּכְתֹּב	תִּתְכַּתֵּב
2fs	תִּכְתְּבִין				
1cs	אִכְתֹּב		אִתְכַּתֵּב	אִכְתֹּב	אִתְכַּתֵּב
3mp	יִכְתְּבוּ		יִתְכַּתְּבוּ	יִכְתְּבוּ	יִתְכַּתְּבוּ
3fp	יִכְתְּבִין		יִתְכַּתְּבִין	יִכְתְּבִין	יִתְכַּתְּבִין
2mp	תִּכְתְּבוּ		תִּתְכַּתְּבוּ	תִּכְתְּבוּ	תִּתְכַּתְּבוּ
2fp	תִּכְתְּבִין				
1cp	נִכְתֹּב		נִתְכַּתֵּב	נִכְתֹּב	נִתְכַּתֵּב

⁴³ Table adapted from *Basics of Biblical Aramaic*, Miles Van Pelt (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011), p.141

	Peal	Peil	Hithpeel	Pael	Hithpaal
2ms	כָּתַב			כָּתַב	
2fs	כָּתְבִי				
2mp	כָּתְבוּ			כָּתְבוּ	
2fp	כָּתְבָה				
Infinitive					
	מִכְתֵּב		הִתְכַּתֵּב	כָּתְבָה	הִתְכַּתְּבָה
Active Participle					
ms	כָּתֵב	כָּתִיב	מִתְכַּתֵּב	מִכְתֵּב	מִתְכַּתֵּב
fs	כּוֹתֶבֶת	כּוֹתִיבָה	מִתְכַּתֶּבֶת	מִכְתֶּבֶת	מִתְכַּתֶּבֶת
mp	כּוֹתְבִין	כּוֹתִיבִין	מִתְכַּתְּבִין	מִכְתְּבִין	מִתְכַּתְּבִין
fp	כּוֹתֵבִין	כּוֹתִיבִין		מִכְתְּבִין	

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