

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 אַרְמִיִּתַּי (‘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 ‘ăyīn 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	'	silent
ב		בית bêt	b	ball
ב		bêt	v (b)	vine
ג		גימל gimēl	g	gift
ג		gimēl	gh (g)	ghost
ד		דלת dalēt	d	debt
ד		dalēt	th (d)	the
ה		הא hē'	h	his
ו		וו vāv (or wāv) ¹⁰	v or w	vine or way
ז		זין zāyīn	z	Zion
ח		חית hêt	ch (h)	Bach
ט		טית têt	t (t)	tall
י		יוד yôd	y	yes
כ	ך	כף kăf	k	king
כ	ך	kăf	ch (k)	peach
ל		למד lāmēd	l	lion
מ	ם	מם mēm	m	man
נ	ן	נון nûn	n	no
ס		סמך sāmēk	s	sin
ש		עין 'ăyīn	'	silent
פ	ף	פא pē'	p	pet
פ	ף	pē'	ph (or f)	fat
צ	ץ	צדי tsādê	ts (ç)	nets
ק		קוף qôf	q	king
ר		ריש rêš	r	run
ש		שין sîn	s	sin
ש		שין shîn	sh (š)	shine
ת		תו tāv (tāw)	t	toy
ת		tāv (tāw)	th (t)	throne

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., תּ). 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 בּ, גּ, דּ, כּ, פּ, תּ. 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
כּ	ך
מּ	ם
נּ	ן
פּ	ף
צּ	ץ

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

Certain letters sound alike

As you can tell some of the letter sound alike.

- ס, ש - S, as in See
- כּ, ק - K, as in keep
- ט, תּ - T, as in Tom
- בּ, ו - V, as in Vine
- ח, כּ - 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	י̣	אֵי	e, as in they	בֵּית house
	S ^e ghol	·	אֶ	e, as in met	שֶׁקֶל shekel
i	Hireq-Yod	י̣	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	ו̣	אֹו	o, as in row	אוֹר light
	Qamets-Hatuf	·	אָ	o, as in cost	כָּל all
u	Shureq	ו̣	אֹו	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		
אָ	qameṣ	אָבִין	ā	אָב	'av	father
אֵ	ṣere	אֵלִין	ē	אֵל	'el	God
אֹ	holem	אֹרִין	ō	אֹר	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		
אֵי	ṣere yod	אֵיִן	ê	בֵּית	beyth	house of
אִי	hireq yod	אִיִן	î	הִיא	hiy'	she
אֹו	holem vav	אֹוִין	ô	אוֹר	'or	light
אֹו	šureq	אֹוִין	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		
ֿ	paṭah	פתח	ă	א, as in bat	בת	daughter
ֿ	s [°] gol	סגול	ě	e, as in met	שקל	shekel
ֿ	hireq	חירק	ĩ	i, as in sit	עם	with
ֿ	qameṣ hâtuṫ	קמץ חטוף	ö	o, as in cost	כל	all
ֿ	qibbuṣ	קבוצ	ũ	u, as in rule	שולחן	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* (שׁוּא). 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
ֿ	ֿ	ֿֿ	ḥatef - pathah	hurried Pathach	אֲנִי 'aniy “I”
ֿ	ֿ	ֿֿֿ	ḥatef- s [°] ghol	hurried S [°] ghol	אָנוֹשׁ 'enoš “man”
ֿ	ֿ	ֿֿֿֿ	ḥatef- qamets	hurried Qamets	חֹלִי 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 ך for ī and ē. Final ē, which occurs very rarely, is indicated by ךֿ.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, חַבְבֵּן (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 שׁ. 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	טור	mountain

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

Hebrew	Aramaic	Translation
אָרֶץ	אַרְעָה	land, earth
עֵץ	אַע	tree

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

Hebrew	Aramaic	Translation
שור	תור	bull
יָשַׁב	יָתַב	to dwell

5. The Aramaic consonants are interchangeable¹³.

			Aramaic option	Aramaic option	Translation
א	and	ה	לָא	לָה	not
			נְהָרָא	נְהָרְהָ	river
ש	and	ס	אַרְתַּחְשַׁשְׁתָּא	אַרְתַּחְשִׁתָּא	Artaxerxes
			שְׁבַכָּא	סְבַכָּא	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	שְׁלָם	peace
אָנוּשׁ	אַנְשׁ	man
דּוֹר	דָּר	generation
טוֹב	טָב	good

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

Hebrew	Aramaic	Trnanslation
הַמֶּלֶךְ	מְלָכָא	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	יָרָא
to see	חזה	רָאָה
to speak	מלל	דָּבַר אָמַר
to go down	נחת	יָרַד

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	הגדה	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	אֲנַחְנָה	we
2ms	אַתָּה אַתָּה	you	2mp	אַתְּוִן	you
2fs	-	you	2fp	-	you
3ms	הוּא	he/it	3mp	הֵמוּ דְהִמוּן אַמְוִן	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	דְּנָה	this
fs	דְּא	this
cp	אַלִּין אֵלֵהָ אֵל	these

2. *Far demonstratives.*

	Aramaic	Translation
ms	דְּךָ	that
fs	דְּךָ	that
cp	אַלְךָ	those

	Aramaic	Translation
m/fs	דְּכֵן	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 ܘܢ “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
ܘܢܐ	What?
ܘܢܗ	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	ܘܢܐ	my/me
2ms	ܘܢܐܘ	your/you
2fs	-	your/you
3ms	ܘܢܗܘ	his/him
3fs	ܘܢܗܘܐ	her

Person/ Gender/ Number	Pronominal Suffix	Translation Possessive/Objective
1cp	ܘܢܐܘܢ	our/us
2mp	ܘܢܐܘܢܐ	your/you
2fp	-	your/you
3mp	ܘܢܗܘܢ	their/them
3fp	ܘܢܗܘܢܐ	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 לֵבָב	heart	עֵבֶר	opposite, beyond
מְדִינָה	province, city	עֵין	eye
מִלָּה	word, matter	עֶלְמָם	eternity, forever
מֶלֶךְ	king	עַם	people, nation
מִשְׁכָּב	bed	עֵשֶׂב	plant, grass
נְבִיא	prophet	פָּקֹחַ	governor
נָהָר	stream, river	צֵלֶם	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
Pi'el	Pa'el	Intensive/Active
Pu'al		Intensive/Passive
Hithpa'el	Hithpa'al (Ithpa'al)	Intensive/Reflexive/Passive

c. *Causative*

Hebrew	Aramaic	Voice/Action
Hiph'il	Haph'el/'Aph'el/Shaph'el	Causative/Simple
Hoph'al	Hoph'al	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	ܓ + xxx
3fs	ܓܘ + xxx	3fp	ܓܘ + xxx
2ms	ܓܘ / ܓܘܘ + xxx	2mp	ܓܘܘܘ + xxx
2fs		2fp	
1cs	ܓܘܘ + xxx	1cp	ܘܘܘ + 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 + ܘ	3mp	ܘܘ + xxx + ܘ
3fs	xxx + ܘܘ	3fp	ܘܘ + xxx + ܘ
2ms	xxx + ܘܘ	2mp	ܘܘ + xxx + ܘܘ
2fs		2fp	
1cs	xxx + ܘܘܘ	1cp	xxx + ܘܘܘ

- 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	ן + 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 : יִאָבְדוּן “they will perish”
 - Jussive: יִאָבְדוּ “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: מִכְתָּב “to write.”
- VI. *Participle*. The participle is a verbal adjective: כְּתֹב “writing.”
- a. The participle has a multi-purpose sense.
1. Continuous and habitual action.
 וּבִקְרָוֹ וְהִשְׁפַּחוּ דֵּי קְרִיטָא דְּךָ מִן-יּוֹמָת עָלְמָא עַל-מַלְכִין מִתְּנַשְׂאָה
 “and it was found that this city in former times has revolted against kings” (Ezra 4:19)
 2. Immediate present.
 מְהוֹדְעִין אֲנַחְנָה לְמַלְכָּא דֵּי
 “we inform the king that...” (Ezra 4:16)
 3. Simultaneous with the main verb, often translated as a past tense.
 בַּה-שְׁעָתָה נִפְקוּ אֲצַבְעֵן דֵּי יַד-אַנְשׁ וְכָתְבוּן לְקַבֵּל גְּבַרְשֵׁתָא
 “at this very moment a finger came out and wrote” (Dan. 5:5)
 4. 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 הֶמוּ, הֶמוּן are used.

	Suffix	Word ¹⁶	Conjugation	Root	Translation
1cs	נִי	הוֹדַעְתַּנִּי	Aph Perf 2ms + p.s. 1cs	יָדַע	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)	בָּנְהִי	Peal Perf 3ms + p.s. 3ms	בָּנָה	he built him
3fs	הָ	הִשְׁלֵמְהָ	Aph Perf 3ms + p.s. 3fs	שָׁלַם	he completed her
2mp	כוֹן	יִשְׁאַלְכֶם	Peal Imp 3ms + p.s. 2mp	שָׁאַל	he asked you
1cp	נָא	הוֹדַעְתַּנָּא	Aph Perf 2ms + P.s. 1cp	יָדַע	you knew us

Practice

- A. Memorize the vocabulary.
- B. Memorize the Perfect and Imperfect conjugations.
- C. 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

אָנִישׁ	man, mankind	קָרְן	horn
אֶע	wood, tree	רֵאשׁ	head, chief
אָרְע	earth, land	רֵגֵל	foot
בֵּר	son	רוּחַ	wind, spirit
גָּלוּ	exile, deportation	שָׁאֵר	rest, remains
דָּהָב	gold	שְׁלָמ	peace, welfare
דָּר	generation	שֵׁם	name
חֲזוֹן	vision	שָׁמַיִן	heaven, sky (pl)
לַיְלִי	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	כְּתַב	he wrote	3mp	כְּתְבוּ	they wrote
3fs	כְּתַבְתְּ	she wrote	3fp	כְּתַבְהוּ	they wrote
2ms	כְּתַבְתָּ	you wrote	2mp	כְּתַבְתֶּם	you wrote
2fs	כְּתַבְתְּי	you wrote	2fp	כְּתַבְתֶּי	you wrote
1cs	כְּתַבְתִּי	I wrote	1cp	כְּתַבְנָא	we wrote

וּבּוּכְדִנְצָר מְלָכָא עֲבַד צֵלָם דִּי־דָהַב

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

וּבּוּכְדִנְצָר מְלָכָא שְׁלַח לְמַכְנֹשׁ לְאַחְשָׁדְרָפְנִיא

“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 save form.

Peal Imperfect					
3ms	יְכַתֵּב	he will write	3mp	יְכַתְּבוּ	they will write
3fs	יְכַתְּבְתְּ	she will write	3fp	יְכַתְּבוּ	they will write
2ms	יְכַתְּבְתָּ	you will write	2mp	יְכַתְּבְתֶּם	you will write
2fs	יְכַתְּבְתִּי	you will write	2fp	יְכַתְּבְתֶּי	you will write
1cs	אֶכְתֵּב	I will write	1cp	נְכַתְּב	we will write

תִּפְלוּ וְתִסְגְּדוּן לְצֵלָם דְּהָבָא דִּי חֲקִים וּבּוּכְדִנְצָר מְלָכָא

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 (ננ) 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

חִלְמֵי חֲזוֹן וַיִּדְחַלְנִי וְהַרְחַרְתִּין עַל-מִשְׁכְּבִי וְחֲזוֹן רְאִשֵׁי יִבְחַלְנִי

“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. אַל is used four times. This form is often identified with the Jussive, though this is not universal.

וּמִן-דֵּי לֹא יִפֹּל וַיִּסְגֹּד “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!

וְכַל־רֵז לֹא-אֶנֶס לָךְ חֲזוֹן חִלְמֵי דֵי-חֲזוֹן וּפְשָׁרָה 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	
מִכְּתֹב	to write

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

לְחַנְכַּת צִלְמָא דִּי חֲקִים 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	כָּתַב	mp	כָּתְבִין
fs	כָּתְבָה	fp	כָּתְבִין

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

עֲנָה דְנִינְאֵל וְאָמַר לְהוּא שְׁמַה דִּי-אַלְהָא 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 כָּתְבָתְּ but is also found with the final sheva כָּתְבָתְּ.
2. A vocal sheva is placed under the first root letter because Aramaic prefers a reduced vowel in open, pretonic 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	כְּתִיבָּה	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	הִתְכַתֵּב	he write himself	3mp	הִתְכַתְּבוּ	they wrote themselves
3fs	הִתְכַתְּבַת	she wrote herself	3fp	הִתְכַתְּבוּ	they wrote themselves
2ms	הִתְכַתְּבְתָּ	you wrote yourself	2mp	הִתְכַתְּבְתוּן	you wrote yourselves
2fs			2fp		
1cs	הִתְכַתְּבַתְּ	I wrote myself	1cp	הִתְכַתְּבְנָא	we wrote ourselves

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

תָּזַח תְּנִיתָ עַד דֵּי הַתְּנוּקָתָא אֲבָן דִּי-לֹא בִיחִין

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 (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 imperfect. The Hithpeel imperfect has the following conjugations.

Hithpeel Imperfect					
3ms	יִתְכַתֵּב	he writes himself	3mp	יִתְכַתְּבוּן	they write themselves
3fs	תִּתְכַתֵּב	she writes herself	3fp	יִתְכַתְּבוּן	they write themselves
2ms	תִּתְכַתֵּב	you write yourself	2mp	תִּתְכַתְּבוּן	you write yourselves
2fs			2fp		
1cs	אִתְכַתֵּב	I write myself	1cp	נִתְכַתֵּב	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 (הֵת). The Hithpeel infinitive has the following conjugation.

Hithpeel Infinitive	
הֵתְכַתְּבָה	to itself write

וּבְעוּ דְנִיֵּאל וְחִבְרֵיהּ לְהִתְקַשְׁלָה

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 (מֵת). The Hithpeel participle has the following conjugations.

Hithpeel Participle			
ms	מֵתְכַתֵּב	mp	מֵתְכַתְּבוּן
fs	מֵתְכַתְּבָה	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 (אָ of the Hithpeel is replaced with אָ in the Ithpeel). Dr. Van Pelt provides the following²²:

	Root	Ithpeel	Translation
3fs	גָּרַז	אֶתְּגַזֵּרֶתְּ	she (it) was cut
3fs	כָּרַא	אֶתְּכַרִּיתְּ	she (it) was distressed
3mp	עָקַר	אֶתְּעַקְרוּ	they were uprooted
3fp	עָקַר	אֶתְּעַקְרֶהָ	they were uprooted

Practice

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

²² Miles Van Pelt, p. 127

Chapter Six

Nouns

Vocabulary

אֵילָן	tree	זְמַן	time, turn
אַמְהָ	nation	חֲבִיטָה	chain
אַסָּר	prohibition, injunction	חַיָּוָה	animal, beast
אַתָּר	place, location	חֲסָף	moulded clay, pottery
אַתּוּן	furnace	טֵעָם	commad, decree, advice, report
גַּב	pit, den	נוֹר	fire
גּוּא	midst, middle	עֵדָן	time, moment
גִּשָּׁם	body	פֶּשֶׁר	interpretation
זֵיו	radiance, brightness, countenance	רֵז	secret, mystery
זְמַר	string music	שְׁלֵטָן	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
בַּבְּלִי	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
דָּיָן	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 (מִ 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
גְּבוּ	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: אָבִי 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 (הַ) or Qamets Alef (אֵ).

חַיִּיהַ	animal (f)
קָרְיֵא	city (f)

²⁴ Ibid. p. 23

2. Some feminine nouns may end with Shureq (וּ) 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: אִמָּא 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
פְּרַסְיָן	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	→	מְלָכַיִן	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 gift → **Plural**
 מִתְּנָה → מִתְּנָן

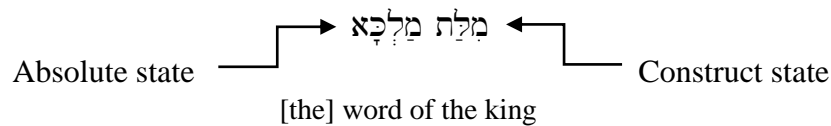
- A few feminine plural nouns end with ןְ (hireq-yod, followed by final nun), which is the normal ending for the masculine plural noun.

Singular word → **Plural**
 מִלָּה → מִלִּין

III.State

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

1. *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
 - a. The absolute state is the normal word.
 - b. The construct state is genitive and implies determination.



	Absolute			Construct		
	Ending	Paradigm		Ending	Paradigm	
ms		מִלְכָּא	king		מִלְכָּא	king of
fs	הְ or אְ	מִלְכָּה	kingdom	תְ	מִלְכָּת	kingdom of
mp	וְ	מִלְכָּין	kings	וְ	מִלְכָּין	kings of
fp	וְ	מִלְכָּן	kingdoms	תְ	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 (א) attached to the end of the word.

Hebrew	Aramaic	Translation
הַמֶּלֶךְ	מֶלְכָא	the king

	Absolute	Determined	Translation ²⁶
ms	מֶלֶךְ	מֶלְכָא	the king
fs	חַיָּוְיָהּ	חַיָּוְיָא	the animal
mp	מֶלְכִין	מֶלְכִיא	the kings
fp	חַיָּוְיָן	חַיָּוְיָא	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 ׀ .

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

1. After an absolute noun.

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

2. After a determined noun.

בְּחִזּוֹן דִּי־לַיְלָא “in the vision of the night” (Dan. 2:19)

3. After a noun with a pronominal suffix.

אֱלֹהֵהּ 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	ִךְ	ִךְ	your/you
2fs	-	-	your/you
3ms	ִהּ	ִהּ	his/him
3fs	ִהּ	ִהּ	her
1cp	ִנָּא	ִנָּא	Our/us
2mp	ִכּוֹן	ִכּוֹן	Your/you
2fp	-	-	Your/you
3mp	ִהוֹן	ִהוֹן	Their/them
3fp	ִהוֹן	ִהוֹן	Their/them

Pronominal Suffix with אֱלֹהֵי

masc. sg

	אֱלֹהֵי	my God
	אֱלֹהֶיךָ	your God (m.)
	אֱלֹהֶיךָ	your God (f.)
	אֱלֹהֵיהּ	his God
	אֱלֹהֵיהּ	her God
	אֱלֹהֵנָּא	our God
(-כוֹן)	אֱלֹהֵיכֻם	your God (m.)
	אֱלֹהֵיכֻן	your God (f.)
(-הוֹן)	אֱלֹהֵיהֶם	there God (m.)
	אֱלֹהֵיהֶן	their God (f.)

Pronominal Suffix with חַיָּוָה

fem. sg.

	חַיָּוָתִי	my animal
	חַיָּוָתֶיךָ	your animal (m.)
	חַיָּוָתֶיךָ	your animal (f.)
	חַיָּוָתֵיהּ	his animal
	חַיָּוָתֵיהּ	her animal
	חַיָּוָתֵנָּא	our animal
(-כוֹן)	חַיָּוָתֵיכֻם	your animal (m.)
	חַיָּוָתֵיכֻן	your animal (f.)
(-הוֹן)	חַיָּוָתֵיהֶם	their animal (m.)
	חַיָּוָתֵיהֶן	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.)
(הוֹן-)	אֱלֹהֵיהֶם	there God (m.)
	אֱלֹהֵיהֶן	their God (f.)

Pronominal Suffix with חַיִּוֵּן
fem. pl.

	חַיִּוֹתֵי	my animal
	חַיִּוֹתֶיךָ	your animal (m.)
	חַיִּוֹתֶיךָ	your animal (f.)
	חַיִּוֹתָיו	his animal
	חַיִּוֹתֶיהָ	her animal
	חַיִּוֹתֵנוּ	our animal
(כֹּן-)	חַיִּוֹתֵכֶם	your animal (m.)
	חַיִּוֹתֵכֶן	your animal (f.)
(הוֹן-)	חַיִּוֹתֵהֶם	their animal (m.)
	חַיִּוֹתֵהֶן	their animal (f.)

Practice

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

Chapter Seven

The Intensive Verb

Vocabulary

אתה	to come, bring	מָרָא	lord
בעא	to seek, request	סוּךְ	end
דוּר	to live, dwell	עֵנְךְ	branch
זֵן	kind, sort	פִּם	entrance, opening, mouth
חוּה	to show, make known	פְּתָגִם	decree, word
חַמְד	wine	רְבוּ	greatness
יָהַב	to give	רוּם	height
יָקַר	honor	רְעִיּוֹן	thought
מָאֵן	vessel	שְׁלוּ	negligence
מְדוּר	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	פָּתַב	יִכְתַּב	פָּתַב	פְּתַבְהַ	מִכְתַּב	מִכְתַּב
Hithpaal	הִתְכַּתַּב	יִתְכַּתַּב		הִתְכַּתְּבַה		מִתְכַּתַּב
Ithpaal	אִתְכַּתַּב אִתְכַּתַּב					

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	כְּתַבְתּוּן	you intensely wrote
2fs	כְּתַבְתְּי	you intensely wrote	2fp	כְּתַבְתְּוּן	you intensely wrote
1cs	כְּתַבְתִּי	I intensely wrote	1cp	כְּתַבְנָא	we intensely wrote

אִזְהַּ יִתִּירָא גְבִיאַ אֱלֹהֵי דִי הִסְקוּ לְשַׁדְרָךְ מִישָׁךְ וְעַבְדֵי גִּנּוּ קַטְלֵי הַמּוֹן שְׁבִיבָא דִי נוֹרָא

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	יְכַתְבוּן	they will intensely write
3fs	יְכַתְבְּתְּ	she will intensely write	3fp	יְכַתְבְּוּן	they will intensely write
2ms	יְכַתְבְּתָּ	you will intensely write	2mp	יְכַתְבְּתּוּן	you will intensely write
2fs			2fp		
1cs	אֲכַתְבִּי	I will intensely write	1cp	נְכַתְבִּי	we will intensely write

חִלְמִי חֲזִית וְיִדְחַלְפְּנִי וְהִרְהַרִין 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 Dagheh Forte in the second root consonant. The Pael imperative has the following conjugations.

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

אֲתָרוּ עֲפִיחַ וּבְתָרוּ אֲנֹבָה תְּנֵד חַיֹּתָא מִן־תַּחְתּוּהִי וְצִפְרֵיא מִן־עֲנַפּוּהִי

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	
כְּתֹבָה	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 Dagheh 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	מְכַתֵּבִין	intensely writing
fs	מְכַתֵּבָה	intensely writing	fp	מְכַתֵּבִין	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 Daghesh Forte in the second root consonant (הַתְּכַתֵּב). The Hithpaal has the following conjugations.

Hithpaal Perfect					
3ms	הַתְּכַתֵּב	He was intensely writing He intensely wrote himself	3mp	הַתְּכַתְּבוּ	they were intensely writing
3fs	הַתְּכַתְּבַת	She was intensely writing	3fp	הַתְּכַתְּבוּ	they were intensely writing
2ms	הַתְּכַתְּבֵת	You were intensely writing	2mp	הַתְּכַתְּבוּן	you were intensely writing
2fs			2fp		
1cs	הַתְּכַתְּבַת	I was intensely writing	1cp	הַתְּכַתְּבָנָא	we were intensely writing

וְהַתְּנַבֵּי חַגַי נְבִיאָהּ וְזַכְרְיָא בְרֵ-עִדּוֹ נְבִיאֵי עַל-יְהוּדָיָא 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 (תְּ), a Pathach under the first root consonant and a Daghesh Forte in the second root consonant (תְּכַתֵּב). The Hithpaal imperfect has the following conjugations.

Hithpaal Imperfect					
3ms	תְּכַתֵּב	He will be intensely writing He intensely writes himself	3mp	תְּכַתְּבוּן	they will intensely write
3fs	תְּכַתְּבַת	She will intensely write	3fp	תְּכַתְּבוּן	they will intensely write
2ms	תְּכַתְּבֵת	you will intensely write	2mp	תְּכַתְּבוּן	you will intensely write
2fs			2fp		
1cs	אֲתְּכַתֵּב	I will intensely write	1cp	נִתְּכַתֵּב	we will intensely write

וּבִטְלַ שְׁמַיָא יִצְטַבַּע וְעַם-חִוְתָא חִלְקָהּ בְּעֵשֶׂב אַרְעָא

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 (מְ), the Hithpaal prefix minus the He (תְּ), a Pathach under the first root consonant and a Daghesth Forte in the second root consonant (מְתַכְתֵּב) and finished with the personal ending. The Hithpaal participle has the following conjugations.

Hithpaal Participle					
ms	מְתַכְתֵּב	intensely writing	mp	מְתַכְתְּבִין	intensely writing
fs	מְתַכְתְּבָה	intensely writing	fp		

וְרִי חֲזוּתָּהּ פְּרוּלָא מְעָרַב בְּחֶסֶף טִינָא מְתַעְרְבִין

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	
הִתְכַתְּבָה	to be intensely writing

Ithpaal Perfect

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

	Root	Ithpaal	Translation ³¹	
3ms	שנה	אֶשְׁתַּנִּי	he was changed	Dan. 3:19
3mp	שנה	אֶשְׁתַּנּוּ	they were changed	
3mp	יעט	אֶתְיעֲטוּ	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
אַיִמְתָּן	terrible	עֲצִיב	troubled
אַרְיֵד	fitting	עֲתִיד	ready
זְעִיר	small	עֲתִיק	ancient
חָוֵר	white	קִדִּישׁ	holy
חַי	living	קָיִם	enduring
חֲסִיר	lacking	רַב	great
טָב	good	רַחֵיק	distant
יָצִיב	certain	רַעֲנָן	flourishing
יְקִירָר	difficult	שְׂגִיָּא	great, many
יְתִיר	extraordinary	שְׁלָה	calm
מְרֵד	rebellious	שְׁלִיט	mighty
נָקֵא	pure	שְׁפִיר	fair
עֲלִיוֹן	Most High	תְּקִיף	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	טָבַתָּא	“the good”
	Masc. Pl.	Fem. Pl.	
Absolute	טָבִין	טָבִין	“good men/women”
Construct	טָבִי	טָבַת	“good men/women of”
Determined	טָבִיא	טָבַתָּא	“the good men/women”

2. The Aramaic Adjectives.

אַוּדָא	certain	עָלִי	Most High
אַחֲרֵן	other	עֲמִיק	deep
אַיִמָּתָן	terrible	עֲצִיב	troubled
אַרְיָד	fitting	עֲתִיד	ready
זְעִיר	small	עֲתִיק	ancient
חָוֵר	white	קִדִּישׁ	holy
חַי	living	קָיִם	enduring
חֲסִיר	lacking	רַב	great
טָב	good	רַחֵיק	distant
יָצִיב	certain	רַעֲנָן	flourishing
יִקְרָר	difficult	שְׂגִיָּא	great, many
יִתִּיר	extraordinary	שְׁלָה	calm
מָרְד	rebellious	שְׁלִיט	mighty
נָקֵא	pure	שְׁפִיר	fair
עֲלִיוֹן	Most High	תְּקִיף	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 רְבִיעִיהָ 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 מִמְלַל 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 (ו). The most common coordinating conjunction is ו “and,” that connects words and sentences and is prefixed to words.

Waw used with...		
particle	וְהִן	“and if” (Dan. 2:6)
verb	וְאִנְדַע	“and I know” (Dan. 2:9)
proper noun	וְדָנִיֵּאל	“and Daniel” (Dan. 2:16)

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

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

וְאִי קְדָמָךְ מְלִכָּא חֲבוּלָה לָא עֲבַדְתָּ

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

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

בָּרָם אִתִּי אֱלֹהִים בְּשָׁמַיָא גִלְיָא רְוִין

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

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

וְהִן לָא תִסְגִּין בְּה־שַׁעֲתָה תִתְרַמִּין לְגֹא־אֲתִין נִירָא יְקַדְתָּא

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

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

לָהִן חֲלָמָא וּפְשָׁרָהּ חֲחֻוּבִי

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

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

Conjunctions			
Coordinating			
אֲךְ	also	הִן	if, whether
בְּרַם	except, yet, however, but	לְהִין	therefore
Subordinating			
וְ	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*).

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

Independent Prepositions			
אַחֲרַי	after	מִן	from, out of
בְּתַר	after	עַד	until
בֵּין	between	עַל	on, upon, over
גּוּזָא	within	עִם	with
דֵּי לָא	without	צֶד	side
לְוִת	with, at	תַּחְוֹת	underneath
לְקַבֵּל	facing, opposite	קִדְמָם	before
לְקִצָּת	at the end of		

Practice

- A. Memorize the conjunctions and prepositions.
- B. Memorize and write the form of the adjective **טָב** “good.”
- C. 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	הִכְתִּיב	יִכְתֹּב		הִכְתִּיבָה	מִהִכְתִּיב	מִהִכְתִּיבָה
Aphel		אִכְתִּיב	יִכְתֹּב	אִכְתֹּב		מִכְתִּיב	
Hophal	Passive	הִכְתִּיב					

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 (הִ). There are two alternate forms called the Aphel whose prefix is אֶ, and the Shaphel³⁷ whose prefix is שִׁ. 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	הִכְתִּיבָה	she caused to write	3fp	הִכְתִּיבָהּ	they caused to write
2ms	הִכְתִּיבְתָּ	you caused to write	2mp	הִכְתִּיבוּן	you caused to write
2fs	הִכְתִּיבְתִּי	you caused to write	2fp	הִכְתִּיבְתֵּן	you caused to write
1cs	הִכְתִּיבְתִּי	I caused to write	1cp	הִכְתִּיבְנָא	we caused to write

בְּאֵרוֹן הַנִּיּוֹל הִתִּיב עִמָּא וְטַעַם לְאַרְיוֹךְ רַב־טַבָּחִיא

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

אַקִּימָהּ בְּבִקְעַת דְּוִרָא בְּמַדִּינַת 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 (הִ) together with the imperfect performatives. The Haphel imperfect has the following conjugations:

Haphel Imperfect					
3ms	יִהְיֶהכֹתֵב	he will cause to write	3mp	יִהְיֶהכֹתְבוּן	they will cause to write
3fs	יִהְיֶהכֹתֵבָה	she will cause to write	3fp	יִהְיֶהכֹתְבוּן	they will cause to write
2ms	יִהְיֶהכֹתֵבְתָּ	you will cause to write	2mp	יִהְיֶהכֹתְבוּן	you will cause to write
2fs	יִהְיֶהכֹתְבִי	you will cause to write	2fp	יִהְיֶהכֹתְבֵּן	you will cause to write
1cs	אֶהְיֶהכֹתֵב	I will cause to write	1cp	נִהְיֶהכֹתֵב	we will cause to write

כְּעַן הַנִּיּוֹל 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	הִכְתִּיבוּ	(you) cause to write!
2fs	הִכְתִּיבִי	(you) cause to write!	2fp	הִכְתִּיבְהוּ	(you) cause to write!

וְכֵן אָמַר-לָהּ לְחַכְמֵי בָבֶל אַל-תְּהוֹבֵד הָעֵלְוִי קִדְם מֶלֶכָּא וּפְשָׂרָא לְמֶלֶכָּא אַחֲוֵא
 [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	מְהַכְתִּיבִין	causing to write (m)
fs	מְהַכְתִּיבָה	causing to write (f)	fp	מְהַכְתִּיבִין	causing to write (f)

עַל-מָה דְתָא מְהַחֲצִפָּה מִן-קִדְם 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.

הִכְתִּיבָה	to write, writing
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וּפְשָׂרָא לְתַחֲוִיָּה 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 Qubbut (ֿ) for u-class, Qamets-Hatuf (ֿ) for o-class, and Tserē (ֿ) 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	פּלח	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	כְּנִמָּא	thus
אֲף	also	כְּעֵן	now
אֲפִתָּם	certainly, finally	כְּעִנָּת	now
כְּה	here	עוּד	still, yet
כְּמָה	how	תְּמָה	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	ܠܐ	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.

ܥܢܗ ܡܠܟܬܐ ܘܐܡܪ ܐܢܝ ܠܐ ܕܐܗܝܐ 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 ܐܘܪܝܢ (cf. Dan. 3:12). Dr. Miles Van Pelt notes, “it is much more common for the preposition ܠܐ to mark the verbal object.”³⁹

Interjection Particles

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

ܐܠܝ Look! Behold!
ܐܪܝ Look! Behold!
ܕܐ 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	תּרין	תּרתין
3	תּלתּה	תּלתּתּ
4	אַרבעּה	אַרבעּתּ
5	חמשה	חמש
6	שתּה	שתּתּ
7	שבעּה	שבעּתּ
8	תּמניה	תּמנתּה
9	תּשעה	תּשעתּ
10	עשרה	עשר
12	תּרי עשר	

20	עשרין	100	מאה
30	תּלתּין	200	מאתּין
40	אַרבעּין	400	אַרבעּ מאה
50	חמשין	1,000	אלף
60	שתּין	10,000	רבּו
70	שבעּין	1,000,000	אלף אלפים
80	תּמנין	100,000,000	רבּו רבּון
90	תּשעין		

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 (קדמתא)
second	תּנין	תּנינה
third	תּליתי	תּליתיה

fourth	רְבִיעִי (רְבִיעִיא)	רְבִיעִיהָ (רְבִיעִיהָא)
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3. *Multiplication*. Multiplication of numbers is expressed as follows: חֲדָשָׁבַעַה “seven times” (cf. Dan. 3:19).

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

One-half	פְּלִג	Dan. 7:25
One-third	תְּלִתָא	Dan. 5:16,29

5. *Dates*. Dates are expressed using cardinal numbers following the construct state of שָׁנָה “year” and יוֹם “day.” For example, שֵׁשׁ 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 וְתַרְתֵּיִן: “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. נשא “to take” changes to שׂא “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. ינפל “to fall” changes to יפֿל “he will fall”)
- II. Roots beginning with י
 - 1. The initial י drops in the imperative (e.g. ידע “to know” changes to דע “know!”)
 - 2. The initial י turns into ו when a prefix is added (e.g. ידע “to know” changes to הודיע “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. אמן “to trust” changes to הימן “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”; שָׂיַם 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. שָׂיַם “he was put”; שָׂמַת “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 דָּדַקַי “they broke in pieces” in the Hafel 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
אזכא	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
בָּרַם	except, yet, however, but (conj)
בָּתַר	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 דָּת	to break into pieces, crush law, command, decree
הוּוּה הֵיכַל הֵלֵךְ הַמְנִיחַ הֵן	to be, exist palace, temple to walk chain if, whether (conj)
זָיו זָמַן זֶן זָמַר זָעִיר	radiance, brightness, countenance time, turn kind, sort string music small (adj)
חוּוּה חָוַר חַי חִיה חַיּוּה חֵיל חוּוּה חָכִים חָכְמָה חֶלֶם חָמֵד חֲנֻכָּה חָסִיר חָסֵף	to show, make known white (adj) living (adj) to live animal, beast strength, army to see, perceive wise, wise man wisdom dream wine dedication lacking (adj) moulded clay, pottery
טָב טָל טָעַם	good (adj) dew command, decree, advice, report
יָהַב יָד יָדַע יוֹם יָכַל יָצִיב יָקַד יָקִיר יָקָר יָתַב יָתִיר	to give hand, power to know day to be able certain (adj) to burn difficult (adj) honor to sit, dwell extraordinary (adj)

כְּדִי	when (conj)
כֹּהֵן	priest
כָּל	all, every, whole
כָּלֵל	to finish
כֶּסֶף	silver
כָּתַב	to write
כְּתָב	writing, document
לֵב לֵב	heart
לְהֵן	therefore (conj)
לִּוְת	with, at (prep)
לְקַבֵּל	facing, opposite (prep)
לְקַצֵּת	at the end of (prep)
מֵאֵן	vessel
מְדוּר	dwelling, abode
מְדִינָה	province, city
מָצָא	to reach to, come upon
מִלָּה	word, matter
מֶלֶךְ	king
מִן	from, out of (prep)
מֶרֶא	lord
מֶרֶד	rebellious (adj)
מִשְׁכָּב	bed
נְבִיא	prophet
נְהַר	stream, river
נֹד	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
סֹפֵר	scribe
עָבַד	to do, make
עֶבֶד	servant, slave
עֵבֶר	opposite, beyond
עַד	until (prep)
עָדָה	to go, take away

עֵדָן	time, moment
עַיִן	eye
עַל	on, upon, over (prep)
עָלִי	Most High (adj)
עֲלִיּוֹן	Most High (adj)
עָלָל	to go in, enter
עָלָם	eternity, forever
עַם	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)
פָּקֵדָה	governor
פָּלַח	to serve
פֶּם	entrance, opening, mouth
פֶּשֶׁר	interpretation
פְּרָטָם	decree, word
צָבָה	to desire, wish for
צֶדֶד	side (prep)
צֶלֶם	statue, image
קִדְּוֶשׁ	holy (adj)
קִדְּמֶם	before (prep)
קוּם	to rise, stand
קִיָּם	enduring (adj)
קִרָּא	to call
קִרְבַּ	to approach, bring near
רַב	great (adj)
רַבָּה	to become great
רַבּוּ	greatness
רוּם	height
רוּם	to rise up
רִז	secret, mystery
רַחֵיק	distant (adj)
רַמָּה	to throw, place
רַעְיוֹן	thought
רַעְנָן	flourishing (adj)

שָׂגִיב	great, many (adj)
שָׁלִיט	mighty (adj)
שָׂם	to put, place, set
שָׁאֵל	to ask, require
שָׂכַח	to get
שָׁלְטָן	dominion, powers
שָׁלוּ	negligence
שָׁלַח	to send, stretch out
שָׁלֵחַ	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
שָׁבַח	to return
שָׁחַת	underneath (prep)
שָׁקִיף	strong (adj)

Verb Charts

	Perfect	Imperfect	Imperative	Infinitive Construct	Active Participle	Passive ⁴³ Participle
Pael	כָּתַב	יִכְתֹּב	כָּתַב	מִכְתֹּב	כָּתוּב	כְּתוּב
Peil	כְּתִיב					
Hithpeel	הִתְכַּתֵּב	יִתְכַּתֵּב		הִתְכַּתֵּבָה		מִתְכַּתֵּב
Ithpeel	אִתְכַּתֵּב אִתְכַּתְּבִי					
Pael	כָּתַב	יִכְתֹּב	כָּתַב	כַּתְּבָה	מִכְתֹּב	מִכְתֹּב
Hithpaal	הִתְכַּתְּבִי	יִתְכַּתְּבִי		הִתְכַּתְּבִי		מִתְכַּתְּבִי
Ithpaal	אִתְכַּתְּבִי אִתְכַּתְּבִי					

	Peal	Peil	Hithpeel	Pael	Hithpaal
Perfect					
3ms	כָּתַב	כְּתִיב	הִתְכַּתֵּב	כָּתַב	הִתְכַּתְּבִי
3fs	כָּתְבַת	כְּתִיבַת	הִתְכַּתְּבַת	כָּתְבַת	הִתְכַּתְּבַת
2ms	כָּתַבְתָּ	כְּתִיבְתָּ	הִתְכַּתְּבְתָּ	כָּתַבְתָּ	הִתְכַּתְּבְתָּ
2fs	כָּתַבְתִּי	כְּתִיבְתִי		כָּתַבְתִּי	
1cs	כָּתַבְתִּי	כְּתִיבְתִי	הִתְכַּתְּבְתִּי	כָּתַבְתִּי	הִתְכַּתְּבְתִּי
3mp	כָּתְבוּ	כְּתִיבוּ	הִתְכַּתְּבוּ	כָּתְבוּ	הִתְכַּתְּבוּ
3fp	כָּתְבֵי	כְּתִיבֵי	הִתְכַּתְּבוּ	כָּתְבֵי	הִתְכַּתְּבוּ
2mp	כָּתַבְתֶּם	כְּתִיבְתֶם	הִתְכַּתְּבְתֶם	כָּתַבְתֶּם	הִתְכַּתְּבְתֶם
2fp	כָּתַבְתֶּן	כְּתִיבְתֶן		כָּתַבְתֶּן	
1cp	כָּתַבְנָא	כְּתִיבְנָא	הִתְכַּתְּבְנָא	כָּתַבְנָא	הִתְכַּתְּבְנָא
Imperfect					
3ms	יִכְתֹּב		יִתְכַּתֵּב	יִכְתֹּב	יִתְכַּתֵּב
3fs	תִּכְתֹּב		תִּתְכַּתֵּב	תִּכְתֹּב	תִּתְכַּתֵּב
2ms	תִּכְתֹּב		תִּתְכַּתֵּב	תִּכְתֹּב	תִּתְכַּתֵּב
2fs	תִּכְתְּבִי				
1cs	אִכְתֹּב		אִתְכַּתֵּב	אִכְתֹּב	אִתְכַּתֵּב
3mp	יִכְתְּבוּ		יִתְכַּתְּבוּ	יִכְתְּבוּ	יִתְכַּתְּבוּ
3fp	יִכְתְּבִי		יִתְכַּתְּבִי	יִכְתְּבִי	יִתְכַּתְּבִי
2mp	תִּכְתְּבוּ		תִּתְכַּתְּבוּ	תִּכְתְּבוּ	תִּתְכַּתְּבוּ
2fp	תִּכְתְּבִי				
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	כָּתְבֵה				
Infinitive					
	מִכְתֵּב		הִתְכַּתֵּב	כָּתְבָה	הִתְכַּתְּבָה
Active Participle					
ms	כּוֹתֵב	כּוֹתֵב	מִתְכַּתֵּב	מִכְתֵּב	מִתְכַּתֵּב
fs	כּוֹתֵבָה	כּוֹתֵבָה	מִתְכַּתֵּבָה	מִכְתֵּבָה	מִתְכַּתֵּבָה
mp	כּוֹתְבִין	כּוֹתְבִין	מִתְכַּתְּבִין	מִכְתְּבִין	מִתְכַּתְּבִין
fp	כּוֹתְבֵין	כּוֹתְבֵין		מִכְתְּבֵין	

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