

## **Introductory Lessons in Aramaic: Introduction**

### Introduction

The following pages are intended for any individual who is interested in learning the basics of Biblical Aramaic. It is based on lessons I created for an introductory class in Aramaic at the University of Michigan, where I teach. It should be considered a work in progress.

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Although there are many grammars that provide an introduction to Biblical Aramaic, only one of these purports to be an introduction that presumes no prior knowledge of another Semitic language. This grammar, Franz Rosenthal's *A Grammar of Biblical Aramaic*, is useful, especially for the graduate student. However, Rosenthal's grammar depends too much on a reader being familiar with technical phonological and grammatical principles to serve as a helpful introduction to the student or reader who has little familiarity with other languages, especially Semitic languages. (For example, within the first 10 pages of the grammar proper, there are several references to "spirantization," though no description of what this is.) Furthermore, Rosenthal's grammar does not include any exercises. Those grammars that do include exercises for students all presume that the student has a prior knowledge of Biblical Hebrew (see, for example, Andrew E. Steinmann's *Fundamental Biblical Aramaic*, Frederick E. Greenspahn's *An Introduction to Aramaic*, and Alger F. Johns's *A Short Grammar of Biblical Aramaic*).

I have tried to render the sometimes obscure descriptions as comprehensible as possible to readers with little experience with grammar and linguistics. For this reason, the explanations may seem redundant for those with a knowledge of linguistics and/or other languages. This is especially true for the descriptions of the pronunciation of Aramaic. It is hoped that after having gone through the following lessons, the student will, should he or she so desire, move on to more sophisticated grammars, like Rosenthal's, or linguistic summaries like Stuart Creason's in *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of the World's Ancient Languages*.

One other caveat: the last several lessons rely on the student to learn vocabulary on his or her own, by reading passages and looking up words in the glossary. This mimics the situation that one will be faced with when sitting down with the Bible and an Aramaic dictionary.



## Abbreviations

### For Perfect and Imperfect Verbal Forms

3ms third person masculine singular

3fs third person feminine singular

2ms second person masculine singular

2fs second person feminine singular

1cs first person common singular

3mp third person masculine plural

3fp third person feminine plural

2mp second person masculine plural

2fp second person feminine plural

1cp first person common plural

### For Imperatives and Participles

m.s. masculine singular

f.s. feminine singular

m.p. masculine plural

f.p. feminine plural

### For Nouns

sing. singular

pl. plural

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## Lesson 1: Consonants

The consonants of Aramaic are given here, together with their transliterated form, name, and approximate (and conventional) pronunciation:

|   |   |               |   |
|---|---|---------------|---|
| א | ʾ | <i>'aleph</i> | pronounced like the pause between syllables in the Cockney pronunciation of “sweater” or “better”: /sweʾer/, /beʾer/<br>Conventionally it is not pronounced by English speakers.  |
| ב | b | <i>beth</i>   | /b/ (or /v/, see Lesson 3)  |
| ג | g | <i>gimmel</i> | /g/ (or /gh/, but the two sounds are not conventionally distinguished)  |
| ד | d | <i>daleth</i> | /d/ (or /dh/, the sound of <i>th</i> in the pronunciation of the English word “that”)   |
| ה | h | <i>he</i>     | /h/   |
| ו | w | <i>waw</i>    | /w/ or /v/ Some people pronounce this letter like /w/, others like /v/. A student should decide which pronunciation she or he is comfortable with and pronounce every <i>waw</i> in the same way.                                 |
| ז | z | <i>zayin</i>  | /z/   |
| ח | ḥ | <i>het</i>    | /ch/, as in the German pronunciation of “Bach” or as in the pronunciation of the Yiddish word “Chutzpah” (or, “Hutzpah”).   |
| ט | t | <i>tet</i>    | emphatic t, though conventionally no distinction is made in pronunciation between this t and the <i>taw</i> , listed below.   |
| י | y | <i>yodh</i>   | /y/   |
| כ | k | <i>kaph</i>   | /k/ (or /ch/, see Lesson 3)   |
| ל | l | <i>lamed</i>  | /l/   |
| מ | m | <i>mem</i>    | /m/   |
| נ | n | <i>nun</i>    | /n/   |
| ס | s | <i>samekh</i> | /s/   |
| ע | ʿ | <i>'ayin</i>  | no approximate sound in English, some say like the sound just before vomiting, some say like the sound of a camel getting up, both of which seem to reflect a bias against this phoneme.<br>Conventionally, it is not pronounced. |
| פ | p | <i>peh</i>    | /p/ (or /ph/ as in phone, see Lesson 3)   |

|    |   |              |   |
|----|---|--------------|---|
| ז  | s | <i>sadeh</i> | emphatic s: pronounced conventionally like /tz/   |
| ק  | q | <i>qoph</i>  | emphatic k: pronounced conventionally like <i>kaph</i>  |
| ר  | r | <i>resh</i>  | /r/   |
| ש  | ś | <i>sin</i>   | /s/, pronounced conventionally like <i>samekh</i>   |
| שׁ | š | <i>shin</i>  | /sh/ as in the English word shine   |
| ת  | t | <i>taw</i>   | /t/ (or /th/, the sound of <i>th</i> in “these” [compare to the pronunciation of <i>daleth</i> as /dh/ listed above]; see Lesson 3) |

Some of these letters, like *beth*, have two different pronunciations, as will be explained in Lesson 3. Despite this, they are always transliterated with the same Roman letter. Thus, even in cases where ב is pronounced like /v/, ב is still transliterated with the Roman letter b.

In addition to these letter forms, five letters have forms that occur only at the end of a word:

|   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| ך | k | <i>kaph</i> (Note the two dots that are always written with the final <i>kaph</i> .) |
| ם | m | <i>mem</i>   |
| ן | n | <i>nun</i>   |
| ף | p | <i>peh</i>   |
| ץ | s | <i>sadeh</i>   |

Note the similarities between certain forms. The *beth* (ב) and *kaph* (כ) letters look similar. The *sin* (שׁ) and *shin* (שׁ) letters are distinguished by a single dot above them. And, the final *mem* (ם) looks like *samekh* (ס).

### Exercise: 1a.

Practice transliterating the following words. For example, מלך → mlk. (Note that the transliterated word in the Roman alphabet is written and read from left to right [m→l→k], although the Aramaic script is written and read from right to left [ך ← ל ← מ].)

מלכא  
("the king")

תקיף  
תקיפין  
("strong" in the singular and in the plural)

בית  
ביתא  
בתין  
בתיא  
("house," "the house," "houses," and "the houses")

כתב  
כתבת  
("he wrote" and "she wrote")

אמר  
אמרו  
("he said" and "they said")

יכתב  
יכתבון  
("he writes" and "they write")

### **Exercise: 1b.**

Now try putting these transliterated words into Aramaic script. Remember that you must reverse the order of the letters. Thus, rb' is rendered in Aramaic script רבא.

ktb  
ktbt  
("he wrote" and "she wrote")

k'n  
("now")

'l  
("over," "above")

ʾdyn  
 (“then”)

ptgmʾ  
 (“message”)

mdh  
 (“tribute”)

šlm  
 (“peace,” “well-being”)

ʾrʿ  
 ʾrʾʾ  
 (“land” and “the land”)

### **Exercise: 1c.**

Try transliterating this full Aramaic sentence from the book of Ezra (4:20):

מלכין תקיפין הוו על ירושלם

ושליטין בכל עבר נהרא

ומדה בלו והלך מתיהב להון

“Strong kings were over Jerusalem  
and (they had) authority in all Abar-Nahara’  
and tribute, tax, and toll was given to them.”

### **Exercise: 1d.**

Now try transliterating this sentence from Ezra 5:4 (slightly altered for the sake of consistency and coherency):

אדין כנמא אמרו להון

מן אנון שמהת גבריא די דנה בנינא בנין

“Then, accordingly, they said to them,  
‘What are the names of the men who are building this structure (literally: who, this structure, are building)?’”

**Exercise: 1e.**

Now, write in Aramaic script the following transliterated passage from Ezra 5:5 (again slightly altered for consistency):

w‘yn ’lhn hwt ‘l šby yhwdy’

wl’ btlw hmw

“The eye of their God was over the elders of the Judaeans and they (i.e., the elders) did not stop them (i.e., the builders).”

**Exercise: 1f.**

N.B. (*Nota Bene* = Note well):

The doubling of a consonant is indicated through a dot placed in the center of the letter. Thus, ב = b, but בּ = bb; כתב = ktb, but כּתב = kttb.

Transliterate below the following passage from Ezra 5:6 and 5:17, noting where the doubled consonants are:

פרשגן אגרתא די - שלח תתני . . . על דריוש מלכא

“A copy of the letter that Tattenai sent . . . to Darius the king.”

יתבקר בבית גנזיא די מלכא תמה די בבבל

“Let a search be made in the house of records of the king there in Babylon.”

## Lesson 2: Vowels

Vowels are indicated through certain consonants as well as signs that appear above and below the letters. Therefore, some consonants may serve either as a true consonant, or as the marker of a vowel. Usually when consonants are used to mark vowels, the vowels they are marking are “long vowels.” But, not every “long vowel” is represented with such a consonant. Consonants that mark vowels help make the pronunciation of a word more obvious to a reader and these consonants are, therefore, called *matres lectionis*, Latin for “mothers of reading.”

In order to distinguish true consonants from *matres*-consonants, it is helpful to represent the *matres*-consonants as superscript letters in transcription.

Although the vowels are labeled either “long” or “short,” this nomenclature does not describe the length of their pronunciation. The vowels in Biblical Aramaic are not distinguished by the length of time it takes to pronounce them, but rather by their distinct sounds. Thus, we will speak of a “short /a/” and this describes a sound distinct from “long /a/”, but both would have had the same quantity, i.e., length of pronunciation.

Like the Aramaic consonants, the vowels may be transliterated into the Roman alphabet. Long vowels are distinguished from short vowels by a macron, i.e., a line over them (short /a/ = a; long /a/ = ā).

### Part 1:

Below are the vowel signs and the consonants that sometimes accompany them. In this list, the vowel signs are represented beneath or above the letter *beth*; their transliterated forms, and their approximate, conventional pronunciation follow.

- |    |   |   |
|----|---|---|
| 𐤁  | a | marks short /a/, conventionally pronounced like the <i>a</i> in the English word “mat.”   |
| 𐤁̄ | ā | marks long /a/, conventionally pronounced like the <i>a</i> in the English colloquial word “pa,” or “father.” Sometimes, especially at the end of a word, it is also represented as 𐤁̄𐤁 or 𐤁̄𐤁 (bā <sup>h</sup> , bā <sup>’</sup> ). The same symbol also marks a short /o/; see below. |
| 𐤁̇ | e | marks the short /e/ sound, conventionally pronounced like the <i>e</i> in the English name “Ed,” or in the word “less.”   |

- ܐ e, ē marks a short or long /e/ sound. In either case, the vowel is conventionally pronounced like the *ay* in say, or like the *ey* in convey. Sometimes it is also represented as ܐܝ e<sup>y</sup>, ē<sup>y</sup>; ܐܝ̇ e<sup>̇</sup>, ē<sup>̇</sup>, and ܐܝܗ e<sup>h</sup>, ē<sup>h</sup>. Distinguishing between the short and long e is often difficult. For the beginning student, it will be helpful to transliterate this symbol with e universally and subsequently to learn those places where the symbol represents ē.
- ܝ i marks the short /i/ sound, conventionally pronounced like the *i* in “pit.”
- ܝܝ ī<sup>y</sup> marks the long /i/ sound, conventionally pronounced like the *e* in the name “Pete,” or like the *i* in the word “latrine” and “saline”. Note the extra *yodh*. This confirms that the i-vowel is long.
- ܘ o marks the short /o/ vowel, conventionally pronounced like the *aw* of the word “paw.” Note that this vowel is very close to the ā. When these vowel symbols were invented and applied to the consonantal text, there might not have been a distinction between the o and ā sounds. All the same, it is conventional to distinguish two vowels in transliteration and pronunciation. Learning where ܘ represents ā and where it represents o is not easy. I have tried to disambiguate between the two vowels in transliteration.
- ܘܘ ō<sup>w</sup> marks the long /o/ vowel, conventionally pronounced like the *oa* of “coat,” or like the *o* of “rote.” It is sometimes also written without the *waw* complement: ܘ = ō.
- ܘܘ u marks the short /u/ vowel, conventionally pronounced like the *oo* of “cook.”
- ܘܘܘ ū<sup>w</sup> marks the long /u/ vowel, conventionally pronounced like the *oo* of “noon,” or the *u* of “tune.”
- ܘܘ̇ ̇ This is the shewa symbol and marks a murmured vowel, conventionally pronounced like the *a* in “above.” The shewa symbol also marks the absence of a vowel. Determining which of these two alternatives the shewa represents will sometimes prove difficult.

    ä  
    ě  
    ǒ

These three symbols represent ultra-short vowels, essentially like the murmured vowel in nature, but each having a slightly distinct quality. Typically these vowels appear under guttural consonants (i.e., א, ה, ע, and ח; sometimes also before or after ג and ק and sometimes before ל, נ, and ר). Unlike the shewa, which only sometimes should be pronounced, these three symbols always represent the presence of a pronounced vowel.

    ay    Occasionally, one finds a vowel and consonant that are pronounced together. The most common in Biblical Aramaic is the short /a/ + *yodh*, which is pronounced like the English word “eye.” Note that in this case the shewa symbol marks the absence of a vowel.

Note that when a *kaph* appears last in a word it has this form: ק; it is conventional to write this with a shewa symbol (קְ), though this shewa symbol does not represent a vowel sound.

Also important to understanding how Aramaic words were pronounced, is understanding where the stress falls. Usually, it falls on the last syllable of a word. Occasionally it falls on the next-to-last syllable, in which case the stressed syllable is indicated by an accent mark ( ˘ ): כְּתִבְנִי.

### Exercise 2a.

Now, try transliterating the following words including their vowels and translating the words not translated for you. Determining which letters are true consonants and which are *matres*-consonants will become much clearer as you begin to understand the forms of nouns and verbs.

מֶלֶךְ → melek (“king”)

כֶּסֶף (“silver”) (Because the shewa is the first vowel of the word, it is pronounced.)

בֵּית

בְּתִין

כתב  
כתבו

מלכין תקיפין הוּו על ירושלים

ושליטין בכל עבר נהרה

ומרה בלו נהלה מתיהב להון

Part 2:

As mentioned above, distinguishing between the shewa that represents a murmured vowel, and the shewa that represents the absence of a vowel is sometimes rather difficult. In general, when a short vowel (/a/ , /e/ , /i/ , /o/ , /u/ ) comes before a shewa, the shewa represents the absence of a vowel; when a long vowel (/ā/ , /ē/ , /ī/ , /ō/ , /ū/ ) comes before a shewa, the shewa represents a murmured vowel. For example, because <sub>ˆ</sub> denotes a short vowel, the shewa following it in מלכא (“the king”) represents the absence of a vowel. Similarly with the short /i/ in יכתב (“he writes”). On the other hand, in הודעך (“he let you know”) the <sup>ˆ</sup> represents a long vowel and thus the shewa following it is pronounced. (There are exceptions, but this holds true, by-and-large for most words.)

### Exercise 2b.

Distinguish the shewas that represent murmured-vowels from those that represent the absence of vowels by transliterating these words:

כספא (“the silver”)

הודעך (“he let you know” or “he caused you to know”)

אנתון (“you” for masculine plural entities)

אמרין (“those who are saying”) (The <sub>ˆ</sub> symbol represents ā here.)

בנין (“building”)

בניה (“The one who is building”) (The <sub>ˆ</sub> symbol represents ā here, as does ה<sub>ˆ</sub>.)

Remember:

The ultra-short vowels (𐤀 ă, 𐤁 ě, 𐤂 ǒ) are always pronounced.

### Exercise 2c.

This is the beginning of a letter, embedded in the biblical book of Ezra (4:11).

Transcribe it:

דְּנָה פְּרָשְׁגִן אֲגַרְתָּא דִּי שְׁלַחוּ עֲלוּהִי  
עַל אֲרַתְחַשְׁשֶׁתָּא מְלָכָא - עֲבַדְיָךְ אֲנִשׁ עֲבַרְנָהְרָה  
וּבְעֵנַת יָדִיעַ לְהוּא לְמֶלְכָא דִּי יְהוּדָיָא דִּי

“This (is) a copy of the letter that they sent to him:

‘To: Artaxerxes, the king --- (From:) your servants, the people of Avar-Naharah.

Now, let it be known to the king that the Jews/Judaeans who . . . .”

### Part 3: Syllabification and Vowels

Each syllable begins with a consonant. A syllable never begins with a vowel. There are two kinds of syllables, those that have only a consonant + a vowel (called “open” syllables) and those syllables that have a consonant + a vowel + a consonant (called “closed” syllables).

In the word הוֹדְעָךְ (hō<sup>w</sup>-də-‘āk) (“he let you know”) the first syllable is considered “open” because it begins with a consonant, but does not have a consonant at its end, rather it ends with the long ō vowel. The second syllable is also an open syllable. However, the last syllable is a closed syllable because it begins and ends with a consonant.

Short vowels ( ַ , ִ , ֵ , ֶ , ֻ , and ֹ [when it represents o]) typically occur in only two places within a word:

- 1) In a closed syllable,
- or 2) in an accented syllable (either the last syllable of a word or in a syllable with an accent mark ( ָ ): כְּתַבּוּ).

Long vowels ( ָ , ִ , ֵ , ֶ , ֻ , ֹ , and ֺ [when it represents ā]) most often occur in open syllables, but can also occur in closed syllables, no matter the position of the stress. (This, incidentally, distinguishes the vowel patterns in Aramaic from those in Biblical Hebrew, where long vowels appear only in open syllables or in stressed

closed syllables; i.e., in Hebrew, long vowels do NOT occur in closed, unstressed syllables, but they DO in Aramaic.)

Given a form like הוֹדְעָךְ, it is impossible for a beginning student to know whether or not the first syllable is closed or open, whether it should be pronounced as a three-syllable word /hō-də-‘āk/ or as a two syllable word /\*hōd-‘āk/. The correct pronunciation is, in fact, difficult to know with certainty. It is easiest if beginning students simply assume that all long vowels are in open syllables, unless otherwise indicated. This assumption results in the transliteration hō<sup>w</sup>də‘āk.

The words above, מִלְכָא , בְּסַפְּא , אֲנַתוֹן , and בְּנִין , each begin with a closed syllable. Each of these closed syllables contains a short vowel.

The words הוֹדְעָךְ , אֲמַרִין , and בְּנִין begin with an open syllable. Each of these open syllables contains a long vowel. This means that the following shewa in each word represents a murmured vowel.

Another characteristic of Aramaic syllabification is that when two shewas occur side-by-side, such as in the word יְכַתְּבוּן , the first represents the absence of a vowel while the second represents a murmured vowel.

Remember that many Aramaic words have a shewa in their first syllable. In almost every case, the shewa that appears in the first syllable of a word represents a murmured vowel and should be pronounced.

### Exercise 2d.

Transliterate the following passage based on Ezra (5:4):

אֲדִין בְּנָמָא אֲמַרוּ לְהוֹן

מִן אֲנוּן שְׂמָהָת גְּבַרְיָא דִּי דְנָה בְּנִינָא בְּנִין

Then, thus, they asked them:

“What are the names of the men who are building this building (lit., who this building are building).”

## Exercise 2e.

Transcribe the following (from Ezra 5:5) into Aramaic script:

wə‘ē<sup>y</sup>n ’ēlāhāhōn hāwāt ‘al śābē<sup>y</sup> yəhū<sup>w</sup>dāyē<sup>’</sup>

wəlā<sup>’</sup> baṭṭilū<sup>w</sup> himmō<sup>w</sup>

“The eye of their God was over the elders of the Judaeans and they (i.e., the elders) did not stop them (i.e., the builders).”

Vocabulary:

Prepositions:

לְ = “to” or “for”

מִן = “from”

עַל = “to” or “against” or “over” or “according to”

Adverbs:

לֹ = this particle negates verbs

אֲ = “also”

Short words:

אֲתֵּן = “then”

אֵינִי = “there is”

הוּא = “he”

הִיא = “she”

וְ = “and” or “but”

יָדוּעַ = “known”

לְהוּא = “let it be” (Note that the first syllable contains a short /e/ vowel in an open syllable. This is the exception to the rule pointed out above. The ultra-short vowel beneath the *heh* is secondary; the older form of the word would have been /leh-wē’/.)

### Lesson 3: Further Niceties of the Writing System, Pronouns

#### Part 1.

A further distinction is made in the conventional pronunciation of the consonants, such that the *beth*, *gimmel*, *daleth*, *kaph*, *peh*, and *taw* have two pronounced forms: a hard and a soft pronunciation. Thus, *beth* is pronounced like b (בּ), or as v (בְּ). This distinction in pronunciation is marked by a dot in the middle of the Aramaic letter, or a line beneath the Roman letter:

|     |   |
|-----|---|
| בּ  | b   |
| בְּ | <u>b</u> (pronounced like v)  |
| גּ  | g   |
| ג   | <u>g</u> (conventionally, no distinction is made in pronunciation)            |
| דּ  | d   |
| ד   | <u>d</u> (pronounced like the <i>th</i> in “that,” or no distinction is made) |
| כּ  | k   |
| כ   | <u>k</u> (pronounced like the <i>ch</i> in “Chutzpah,” identical to כּ)       |
| פּ  | p   |
| פ   | <u>p</u> (pronounced like <i>ph</i> in “phone”)                               |
| תּ  | t   |
| ת   | <u>t</u> (pronounced like the <i>th</i> in “thick” or “these”)                |

In other words, the letter with the dot is pronounced hard, while the letter without is pronounced soft. This process by which a “hard pronunciation” is turned soft is called spirantization. The “soft consonants” are referred to as fricatives, spirants, or spirantized consonants, while the “hard consonants” can be referred to as stops or unspirantized consonants.

Collectively, the consonants are called *begadkephat* letters or *bgdkpt* letters.

Whether or not a letter is pronounced hard or soft depends, in part, on the place of the letter within a word or within a sentence. In general, if a vowel precedes a *begadkephat* letter it is soft, if a consonant precedes it then it is hard. For example, the word for son is *bar*, or בַּר. However, it may also be pronounced /var/, or בָּר

when it is preceded by a prefix, such as a preposition or in this case a conjunction: וַבַּר (“and-a-son”). Although וַבַּר is pronounced like /ūvar/ it is transliterated by convention ū<sup>w</sup>bar. Sometimes even a preceding word that ends in a vowel can affect the next word’s *begadkephat* consonant, making it soft.

For the sake of consistency, in the vocabulary lists, in the exercises, and when discussing individual words, I have rendered all *begadkephat* consonants that stand first in a word as stops.

Being cognizant of whether a *begadkephat* letter is pronounced hard or soft is important because it will often (but not always) reveal whether a preceding shewa represents the absence of a vowel or a murmured vowel. Thus, in the case of כִּסְפָּה the hard *peh* suggests that the shewa under the *samekh* represents the absence of a vowel, which also means that the word begins with a closed syllable. If the shewa represented a murmured vowel, then that would result in a soft *peh* and the absence of a dot in the *peh*. Another example is provided by אִנְרָתָא ; in this case, the shewa beneath the *resh* must represent the absence of a vowel since a murmured vowel would result in a soft *taw*. Consider also the masculine plural absolute participle בְּתַבִּי ; the shewa must represent a murmured vowel since the *beth* is soft.

## Part 2.

A complication to this system of distinguishing hard from soft *begadkephat* consonants is that the same mark can also indicate that a consonant, any consonant aside from gutturals (א, ה, ח, ע) and r (ר), is doubled. For example, כַּתְּבַב represents this problem well. The first dot, inside the *kaph*, indicates that the consonant is to be pronounced “hard” (since it occurs first in the word), while the second dot, inside the *taw*, indicates that the consonant is doubled (and thus also pronounced “hard”). We would transliterate כַּתְּבַב as *katteḇ*.

Note the two rules:

- 1) Whenever a consonant appears twice in a row, with no intervening vowel, it is always pronounced hard.
- 2) A murmured vowel never occurs before a doubled consonant.

### Exercise 3a.

Transliterate the following passage from Ezra 5:6, 5:17:

פִּרְשָׁגֵן אֲנִירָא דִּי - שְׁלַח תְּתַנִּי ... עַל דְּרִיּוּשׁ מְלָכָא

יִתְבַּקֵּר בְּבֵית גְּנֻזָּא דִּי מְלָכָא תְּמָה דִּי בְּכַבְּל

### Part 3.

The pronouns in Aramaic have the following forms:

| Singular  |        | Plural     |                                       |
|-----------|--------|------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1cs "I"   | אֲנִי  | 1cp "we"   | אֲנַחְנָה                             |
| 2ms "you" | אַתָּה | 2mp "you"  | אַנְתוּן / אַנְתָּם                   |
| 2fs "you" | אַתְּי | 2fp "you"  | אַתְּן                                |
| 3ms "he"  | הוּא   | 3mp "they" | אַנְוּן + (E.: הַמּוֹן / D.: הַמּוֹן) |
| 3fs "she" | הִיא   | 3fp "they" | אַנְיָן                               |

They are used in many respects like English pronouns. Notice, however, that Aramaic, unlike English, distinguishes between masculine and feminine genders in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> persons. These gender distinctions for the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> persons will also be found in the verb forms.

### Exercise 3b.

Based on what you know of Aramaic orthography and syllabification, transliterate the pronouns from the preceding chart:

| Singular  | Plural     |
|---|------------|
| 1cs "I"   | 1cp "we"   |
| 2ms "you"                    'ant<br>(Both shewas in this form represent the absence of a vowel.) | 2mp "you"  |
| 2fs "you"   | 2fp "you"  |
| 3ms "he"  | 3mp "they" |
| 3fs "she"   | 3fp "they" |

#### Part 4.

#### Syntax of Nominal Expressions

In many languages, including Aramaic, one does not always need the verb “to be” when creating sentences of the sort: “The king is good.” In cases of this sort Aramaic simply juxtaposes the noun (מֶלֶךְ) with the adjective (טָב), sometimes with the adjective (a predicate adjective, to be precise) coming before the noun:

טָב מֶלֶךְ

This sentence can be distinguished from the phrase “the good king” by the word order and the state of the adjective (absolute, that is, without the  $\text{־} \text{נָ}$  - ending). In the phrase “the good king” the adjective always follows the noun and agrees with the noun in its gender, number *and state*:

מֶלֶךְ טָב

Sometimes, a sentence will juxtapose two nouns, such as in the sentence “I am the king,” which if translated word-for-word from Aramaic would be “I king.” In these cases, the word that functions as the subject of the clause usually comes first. The word that follows is considered the predicate (even though in Aramaic it is not a verb).

אֲנִי מֶלֶךְ = I am the king.

Here “the king” is technically the predicate of the phrase and comes second. Sometimes, however the predicate can come first and the subject second and this can lead to confusion. For example, one can imagine a sentence of the type below in which either noun could function as the subject or predicate. In these cases, context is the only guide as to which should be considered the subject and which the predicate.

אֲרִי מֶלֶךְ = A lion is a king or A king is a lion.

In cases where the predicate is a prepositional phrase, the prepositional phrase usually appears second, preceded by the subject.

אֲנִי עִם מֶלֶךְ = I am with the king.

### Exercise 3c.

Translate the following sentences into Aramaic, utilizing the vocabulary that follows the exercise:

1. He is the king.
2. He is in the house.
3. We are in the house.
4. They are before the king.
5. Accordingly, all are there.
6. Before they were there, we were before the king.

Vocabulary:

Prepositions:

ܒ (or ܕ) = “in” or “by”

ܕ (or ܒ) = “as” or “like”

ܩܕܡܐ = before (referring to place)

ܩܕܡܐ / ܩܕܡܐܢ = before (referring to time)

Adverbs:

ܕܝܢܐ, ܕܝܢܐܢܐ “thus” or “accordingly”

ܕܝܢܐܢܐ = “there”

Conjunction:

ܘ, ܘܘ, ܘܘܘ = “and”, “or”, “but”. The single conjunction can be translated in a number of ways based on the context of a passage. Sometimes the conjunction does not need to be translated.

Its pronunciation varies according to a number of variables outlined below:

When it is followed by ܒ/ܕ, ܦ/ܦ, and ܕ it becomes ܘ ;

when it is followed by a consonant+murmured vowel, it also turns to ܘ ;

when it is followed by ܝ the *yodh* loses its shewa and the letters together are written: ܘܝ ;

when it is followed by an ultra-short vowel, the corresponding full vowel replaces it (e.g., -ܘ + ܝ = -ܘܝ and -ܘ + ܝ = -ܘܝ).

Nouns:

ܐܘܪܘܚܐ = “letter” (ܐܘܪܘܚܐܢܐ = “the letter”) f.

ܒܝܬܐ = “house” (ܒܝܬܐܢܐ = “the house”; two syllables bay-tā) m.

כֹּל = “all” (kōl) (also spelled כָּל, kol)  
מֶלֶךְ = “king” (מֶלֶךְ = “the king”) m.  
פִּרְשָׁן = “copy” m.

N.B.

The Aramaic expression “the house,” בֵּיתָא, contains a vowel-consonant combination called a diphthong, in this case –ay– (pronounced like the common word “eye”); this diphthong affects the following *begadkephat* letter as if it were simply a vowel, making the pronunciation of *taw* soft.

## Lesson 4: The Noun

Each Aramaic word is associated with a three consonant root. Due to the fact that most Aramaic words have only three consonants, identifying the root consonants is often rather easy. Thus, e.g., the word מַלְךָ has the root מִלְך. Being able to recognize the root of a word is important because it (usually) allows you to understand the basic semantic field of the word and allows you to predict how the word's pronunciation will change when suffixes are added to it. Additionally it allows you to look the word up in a dictionary, since some dictionaries are organized according to root.

For our purposes we will consider the four most basic types of roots:

1. strong – having three “solid” consonants (i.e., א, ב, ג, ד, ה, ו, ח, ט, כ, ל, מ, נ, ס, ע, פ, צ, ק, ר, ש, שׁ, שׂ, ת).
2. first weak – having a “weak” (א, אׁ, אׂ, א׃) consonant as the first consonant.
3. middle weak – having a “weak” (א, אׁ) consonant as the second consonant.
4. final weak – having a “weak” (א, אׁ, א׃) consonant as the third consonant.

Notice that *'aleph* is relatively stable in the middle of a root, and that, similarly, *nun* is stable in the middle and at the end of a root.

Identifying strong roots will not be difficult. Identifying the weak ones will sometimes prove tricky.

Typically, the weak consonants will disappear and verbs derived from these roots will have slightly different forms than those of the strong roots. Therefore, when we describe the verbs, we will need to describe the morphology of these roots separately.

### Part 1: Simpler Nouns and Adjectives

In many Semitic languages, Aramaic among them, nouns and adjectives are very similar, sometimes overlapping in form and function. So, e.g., adjectives often can be used like nouns and have the same morphological patterns as nouns.

Nouns and adjectives have two genders: male and female.

They have two numbers: singular and plural.

They have three states: absolute (the basic form of the noun/adj.), the construct state (a shortened form, common to the Semitic languages), and the emphatic or determined state. These are best explained through example:

|                      |                    |
|----------------------|--------------------|
| absolute:            | סִפְרָא = book     |
| construct:           | סִפְרָא = book of  |
| emphatic/determined: | סִפְרָא = the book |

The absolute form marks the basic form of the word, the one listed in dictionaries. The construct state marks a connection to a following word. So, e.g., סִפְרָא in the construct state might be followed by the word מְלִיכָא “king” to give the expression סִפְרָא מְלִיכָא = “a book of a king”, or “a king’s book”. Such a connection between words can be called a genitive relationship (based on analogous constructions from Indo-European languages). The emphatic/determined state marks a noun with a degree of specificity, like the English word “the”.

When a word in the construct state precedes another word in the absolute state, both words lack specificity and can be translated with the English “a” or “an”. When a word in the construct state precedes another word in the emphatic/determined state, both words carry this nuance of specificity and both can be translated with the English word “the”. Thus,

|  |
|--|
| סִפְרָא מְלִיכָא = “a book of a king”, or “a king’s book”        |
| סִפְרָא מְלִיכָא = “the book of the king”, or “the king’s book”. |

You will note that in the above list the forms of the absolute and construct state are identical for this word, but this is not always the case. E.g., consider the word מְלִיכָא (queen, a feminine noun):

|                      |                      |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| absolute:            | מְלִיכָא = queen     |
| construct:           | מְלִיכָא = queen of  |
| emphatic/determined: | מְלִיכָא = the queen |

Nouns and adjectives are inflected according to the following paradigm, illustrated here by the adjective עֵתִיד (“ready”, “destined”):

|             |           |  |
|-------------|-----------|--|
| singular    | masc.     | fem.   |
| abs.:       | עֵתִיד    | עֵתִידָה   |
| const.:     | עֵתִיד    | עֵתִידָת   |
| emph./det.: | עֵתִידָא  | עֵתִידָתָא (‘ā-tī <sup>v</sup> d-tā’)<br>(Note the long vowel /ī/ in a closed, unaccented syllable.) |
| plural      | masc.     | fem.   |
| abs.:       | עֵתִידִין | עֵתִידִין  |
| const.:     | עֵתִידִי  | עֵתִידִת   |
| emph./det.: | עֵתִידִיא | עֵתִידִתָא   |

The distinctive features of each of these forms are indicated in the following chart:

|             |           |            |
|-------------|-----------|------------|
| singular    | masc.     | fem.       |
| abs.:       | --        | עֵתִידָה   |
| const.:     | --        | עֵתִידָת   |
| emph./det.: | עֵתִידָא  | עֵתִידָתָא |
| plural      | masc.     | fem.       |
| abs.:       | עֵתִידִין | עֵתִידִין  |
| const.:     | עֵתִידִי  | עֵתִידִת   |
| emph./det.: | עֵתִידִיא | עֵתִידִתָא |

**Exercise 4a:** Fill in the following chart for masculine nouns/adjectives:

| Noun/adj.<br>abs./cstr. sing.                         | emph./det.<br>sing. | plural abs. | pl. cstr. | pl. emph./det. |
|---|---------------------|-------------|-----------|----------------|
| עתיק ("old")  | עתיקא               |             |           |                |
| טב ("good",<br>root: ט ו ב).<br>The <sub>τ</sub> = ā. |                     |             |           |                |
| זעיר zə'ē'r<br>("little")                             |                     |             |           |                |
| דין ("judgment",<br>root: ד י ן)                      |                     |             |           |                |
| טור ("mountain.")                                     |                     |             |           |                |
| חכים ("wise")   |                     |             |           |                |
| לשן ("tongue")<br>The <sub>τ</sub> = ā.               |                     |             |           |                |
| קל ("voice"; root:<br>ק ו ל)<br>The <sub>τ</sub> = ā. |                     |             |           |                |
| שאר ("remnant")<br>The <sub>τ</sub> = ā.              |                     |             |           |                |

Notice that the two words with *waw* as a middle consonant of their root (טב and קל), have similar forms.

**Exercise 4b:**

Fill in the following chart for feminine nouns/adjectives:

| Noun/adj.<br>abs. sing.                     | cstr. sing. | emph./det.<br>sing. | plural abs. | pl. cstr. | pl.<br>emph./det. |
|---|-------------|---------------------|-------------|-----------|-------------------|
| עתיקה<br>("old")                            |             | עתיקהא              |             |           |                   |
| טבה<br>("good",<br>root: ט ו ב)             |             | טבהא                |             |           |                   |
| זעירה<br>zə'ē'rā <sup>h</sup><br>("little") |             | זעירהא              |             |           |                   |
| חבולה<br>("crime")                          |             | חבולהא              |             |           |                   |

|  |  |                       |  |  |  |
|--|--|-----------------------|--|--|--|
| חַיָּוָה<br>("animal";<br>root: ח י א) |  | חַיָּוָה              |  |  |  |
| חַכְמָה<br>("wise")                    |  |                       |  |  |  |
| צְדָקָה<br>("charity")                 |  | צְדָקָה<br>(ṣīdḡatā') |  |  |  |
| תְּקִיפָה<br>("strong")                |  |                       |  |  |  |
| צִפּוּר ṣippar<br>("bird")             |  | צִפּוּר               |  |  |  |

It should be apparent that there are certain consistencies between these words. E.g., the words עֲתִיקָה , חַכְמָה , and תְּקִיפָה all have the same vocalic pattern. Similarly, the words עֲתִידָה , זְעִירָה and חַבּוּלָה have similar forms, though the long middle vowel of each is different. Recognizing these patterns helps to make the acquisition of new words easier.

The exception to these consistencies is that in the emphatic forms when the adjective has a long-ē then the following *taw* has no dot and is pronounced soft, whereas if the vowel is a long-ū, long-ā, or long-ī vowel then the *taw* is pronounced hard.

Note that some feminine words do not bear the characteristic חַ ending, words like צִפּוּר (ṣippar). Their inflection is identical to that of masculine nouns.

Note also that the pronunciation of the feminine adjective in the absolute state is identical to that of the masculine adjective in the emphatic/determined state. The only difference in these forms above are the endings, חַ – on the feminine adjective (the typical marker of femininity) and אַ – on the emphatic/determined masculine noun. Because the pronunciation of these two morphemes is so similar, they were often confused; it is common to find feminine nouns with the ending אַ – and masculine emphatic/determined nouns with the ending חַ – . For the purposes of pedagogy, I will consistently render the feminine absolute ending with *heh*, and the masculine emphatic/determined form with an *'aleph*.

## Part 2: More Complex Nouns and Adjectives

Many nouns and adjectives in Aramaic witness more complex changes in their inflection. A good, basic example of these changes is seen with the masculine word for money or silver, כְּסִיף, and the feminine word for a letter or missive, אֲנִיָּהּ.

|             |                       |            |
|-------------|-----------------------|------------|
| singular    | masc.                 | fem.       |
| abs.:       | כֶּסֶף                | אֲגָרָה    |
| const.:     | כֶּסֶף                | אֲגָרַת    |
| emph./det.: | כֶּסְפָּא (kaspā)     | אֲגָרְתָּא |
| plural      | masc.                 | fem.       |
| abs.:       | כֶּסְפִּין            | אֲגָרִין   |
| const.:     | כֶּסְפִּי             | אֲגָרִת    |
| emph./det.: | כֶּסְפִּיא (kaspayya) | אֲגָרְתָּא |

According to the rules of Aramaic pronunciation, the accent of a word is typically on the last syllable. The vowel of a syllable immediately preceding the accented syllable reduces if it is a short vowel (/a/ , /e/ , /i/ , /o/ , /u/ ) in an open syllable. Thus, although the absolute form for “silver” is כֶּסֶף, we would never expect the absolute form to be \*כֶּסְפָּא, since this would leave a short vowel in an open, unaccented syllable (\*kə-sa-pā). Such a vowel would always reduce. However, a form like \*כֶּסְפָּא in Aramaic is also intolerable; so, the result of these tendencies is that the first syllable sees the emergence of a full vowel. In this case, the /a/ vowel that emerges under the first syllable in the emphatic/determined singular state produces a form that is much closer to the word’s etymological origin: *kaspu*.

The process of vowel reduction might further be illustrated by examining the history of the plural form for “kings”: מַלְכִין. In early Aramaic (in, e.g., the 800s-500s BCE) vowels did not reduce, nor was there spirantization of *begadkephat* consonants. (Both phenomena began later, presumably spirantization taking effect before vowels started reducing.) This means that the plural for “king” was pronounced *malakīn*, with the accent on the final syllable. But, after several hundred years, the word had a much different form: the *kaph* was spirantized and the syllable immediately before the accent reduced. Although there was perhaps a period of transition where the vowel was pronounced as a murmured vowel, eventually it was lost altogether. This hypothetical transformation might be illustrated below:

1. \*malakīn → 2. \*malakīn → 3. \*malakīn → 4. malakīn

One should note that because the *kaph* (כ) no longer is preceded by a vowel, one would expect it to be pronounced “hard”; however, a memory of the original vowel has been preserved in the “soft” pronunciation of the *kaph*. (See also ܕܗܘܒܝܢ “gold” below). Unexpectedly, the pronunciation of the plural of “silver” (ܦܫܦܝܢ) reflects no such memory of a vowel beneath the second root consonant.

A vowel does NOT reduce if it is a long vowel, or if it is in a closed syllable. Thus, the vowel of the adjective ܡܘܒܢ does not reduce because ܘ here represents a long vowel, and similarly the long /i/ vowel in ܘܬܝܕ does not reduce. If the syllable preceding an accented syllable is closed, the vowel also does not reduce. This is seen in words like ܪܒ “great”, which has the emphatic form ܪܒܐ (rabbā’).

This rule of pronunciation can also be used to explain the absolute form of ܘܬܝܩ (‘attīq; “old”). The second syllable of the word is accented, and one might expect for the short vowel in the preceding syllable to reduce. However, this does not happen since the first syllable of ܘܬܝܩ is closed. The same is true for the first syllable in ܐܢܪܐ; the short /i/ vowel does not reduce.

### Exercise 4c.

Many Aramaic nouns follow the pattern of ܦܫܦܝܢ above. Complete the following chart for these words that follow the pattern of ܦܫܦܝܢ.

| sing. abs./cstr. | sing. emph./det. | pl. abs. | pl. cstr. | pl. emph./det. |
|------------------|------------------|----------|-----------|----------------|
| ܘܘܠܐ (“image”)   |                  |          |           |                |
| ܒܥܠ (“master”)   |                  |          |           |                |
| ܚܡܪ (“wine”)     |                  |          |           |                |
| ܥܒܕ (“slave”)    |                  |          |           |                |
| ܦܘܪܥ (“gate”)    |                  |          |           |                |

In all of the above examples, the vowel of the first syllable is /a/, as in the example of ܦܫܦܝܢ. Many nouns, however, have a short /i/ or /e/ (or sometimes a short /u/ or

short /o/) in this position. E.g., סִפְרָ (‘‘book’’) has a short /i/ and גְּבָרָ (‘‘man’’) has a short /u/ in the plural forms:

|             |          |              |
|-------------|----------|--------------|
| singular    |          |              |
| abs.:       | סִפְרָ   | גְּבָרָ      |
| const.:     | סִפְרָ   | גְּבָרָ      |
| emph./det.: | סִפְרָא  | גְּבָרָא (?) |
| plural      |          |              |
| abs.:       | סִפְרִין | גְּבָרִין    |
| const.:     | סִפְרִי  | גְּבָרִי     |
| emph./det.: | סִפְרִיא | גְּבָרִיא    |

As with כְּסָף, the singular emphatic/determined state of סִפְרָ reveals a form very close to the word’s original pronunciation, *sipru*. The etymological base of words is not always important to know, but it sometimes does help explain certain inconsistencies in the printed texts. E.g., the word for gold, דְּהָבָ, would seem to be identical in its form to the word for silver, כְּסָף. And, in its vocalic pattern, it is, in fact similar. However, because the original form of the word in the singular was *dahabu* (NOT \**dahbu*), the *beth* is always ‘‘soft’’ (that is, a fricative, or spirantized), and the second consonant is always followed by a murmured vowel: thus, דְּהָבָא for the emph./det. state, and דְּהָבִין for the plural absolute. (Compare with the corresponding form of כְּסָף: כְּסָפָא where the shewa represents the absence of a vowel and the פ is ‘‘hard’’).

Other nouns exhibit slightly different morphological patterns, but the basic principle of vowel reduction outlined above applies to all of them, making the forms of nouns rather predictable.

#### Vocabulary:

אִגְרָה = ‘‘letter’’ f.

בָּעֵל = ‘‘master’’ m.

דִּין = ‘‘judgment’’ m.

חַבּוּלָּהּ = “crime” f.  
חַיּוּהּ = “animal” f.  
חַכּוּיִם = “wise”  
חַמּוּר = “wine” m.  
חַטָּב = “good”  
חַטוּר = “mountain” m.  
חַטְּשָׁן = “tongue” m.  
חַטְּפֵר = “book” m.  
חַטְּבַד = “slave” m.  
חַטְּיִק = “old”  
חַטְּקָה = “charity” f.  
חַטְּפֵר ṣippar = “bird” f.  
חַטְּלִים = “image” m.  
חַטְּקַל = “voice” m.  
חַטְּשָׂר = “remnant” m.

## Lesson 5: Participle and (more) Noun Patterns

### Part 1:

The participles in Aramaic have forms and inflections similar to those of nouns and adjectives. The participles function as nouns or as verbs; as verbs they indicate continuous actions that take place in the present or in the time frame of a given passage. Thus, if a participle appears in a story about the past, the participle should be translated with the English past tense. To summarize, **כְּתָב** (from the root **כתב**, associated with writing) can be translated as a noun “the one writing” or as a verb (with a pronoun **הוּא כְּתָב**) “he is writing,” or if the context is the past “he was writing,” or if the context is the future “he will be writing”.

The inflection of the participle can be exemplified with the root for writing:

|             |             |                |
|-------------|-------------|----------------|
| singular    | masc.       | fem.           |
| abs.:       | כְּתָב      | כְּתָבָה       |
| const.:     | כְּתָב      | כְּתָבַת       |
| emph./det.: | כְּתָבָא    | כְּתָבַתָּא    |
| plural      | masc.       | fem.           |
| abs.:       | כְּתָבִין   | כְּתָבַתִּין   |
| const.:     | כְּתָבֵי    | כְּתָבַתֵּי    |
| emph./det.: | כְּתָבֵינָא | כְּתָבַתֵּינָא |

Notice that the G-stem active participle always has a long-ā vowel under its first consonant

The most important forms to know are the absolute forms, since these will often be used as verbs in Aramaic.

## Exercise 5a.

Fill out the following chart, which isolates the forms most important for the participle.

| root                             | m. s. abs. | f. s. abs. | m. pl. abs. | f. pl. abs. |
|----------------------------------|------------|------------|-------------|-------------|
| אָבַד ("to perish")              |            |            |             |             |
| שָׁאַל ("to ask for or request") |            |            |             |             |
| נִפְקַ ("to go out")             |            |            |             |             |
| סָלַק ("to come up")             |            |            |             |             |
| עָבַד ("to do, make")            |            |            |             |             |

Vocabulary:

Nouns:

אַרְעָא (in the emph./det.: אַרְעָא) = land

בֵּר (in the emph./det.: בֵּרָא, in the plural abs. בֵּרַיִן) = son

גְּזֵרָה (in the cstr.: גְּזֵרַת) = decree

עָתִיד = "ready"

Participles:

אָמַר = to say (Notice that the second vowel is not *..* but *\_*. This is due to the following *resh* (ר), which typically causes what would otherwise be *..* vowels to become *\_*). (The guttural consonants ע, ח, and ה have a similar effect on /e/ [ *..* ] vowels.)

פָּלַח = "to serve," "pay reverence to"

שָׁלַח = "to send"

יָדַע = "to know"

Note that participles, when they are used as predicates, match the subject noun in gender and number, but NOT in their state. (Unless both are in the absolute state; normally the subject is in the emphatic/determined state and the predicative participle is in the absolute state.) Usually only participles that are used as adjectives match another noun in their state. Thus,

מִלְכָּא פִתְבַּב = “The king is writing.”

מִלְכָּא פִתְבַּב = “The writing king . . .”

### **Exercise 5b.**

Translate these English sentences into Aramaic:

The men of the land are writing to (use עַל for “to”) the king.

The good king is not perishing at the gate.

The king’s son is requesting wine from his father (= אַבְוֵהּ ).

The decree of the king is old.

A son is sending to a king the letter.

The wise son knows.

Part 2:

There are a variety of other noun patterns in Aramaic that can easily be learned. Many nouns are accented on the first syllable, in contrast to the general rule, but otherwise follow the pattern of **כְּסָרָא** and **סִפְרָא** above. There are also some with a middle *yodh*, which effects only their construct state:

|             |                |                 |   |                 |
|-------------|----------------|-----------------|---|-----------------|
| singular    | strong root    |                 | middle-weak   |                 |
| abs.:       | קָרְוֹן (horn) | חֻלְמָא (dream) | בֵּיתָא (house)   | עֵינָא (eye)    |
| const.:     | קָרְוֹן        | חֻלְמָא         | בֵּיתָא   | עֵינָא          |
| emph./det.: | קָרְוֹנָא      | חֻלְמָא         | בֵּיתָא (baytā')  | עֵינָא ('aynā') |
|             |                |                 | (Note the silent shewa followed by a soft tau. The diphthong /ay/ is considered a vowel.)                                     |                 |
| plural      | strong         |                 | middle-weak   |                 |
| abs.:       | קָרְוֵינָא     | חֻלְמֵינָא      | *בֵּיתֵינָא   | עֵינֵינָא       |
|             |                |                 | *(Note the different base form; the ף is still pronounced like a long /ā/, although it is in an unaccented, closed syllable.) |                 |
| const.:     | קָרְוֵינָא     | חֻלְמֵינָא      | בֵּיתֵינָא  | עֵינֵינָא       |
| emph./det.: | קָרְוֵינָא     | חֻלְמֵינָא      | בֵּיתֵינָא  | עֵינֵינָא       |

Some feminine nouns have an absolute form like the word for kingdom, **מַלְכוּ**:

|             |            |                       |
|-------------|------------|-----------------------|
| singular    | fem.       |                       |
| abs.:       | מַלְכוּ    | malkū <sup>w</sup>    |
| const.:     | מַלְכוּתָא | malkū <sup>w</sup> t  |
| emph./det.: | מַלְכוּתָא | malkū <sup>w</sup> tā |

|                 |                   |           |
|-----------------|-------------------|-----------|
| plural<br>abs.: | fem.<br>מְלִכּוֹן | malkəwān  |
| const.:         | מְלִכּוֹת         | malkəwāt  |
| emph./det.:     | מְלִכּוֹתָא       | malkəwātā |

NB: The shewa under the *lamedh* in this word indicates the absence of a vowel, though the *kaph* is pronounced “soft.” How would you be able to predict that this shewa indicates the absence of a vowel and not a murmured vowel?

### Exercise 5c.

Fill out the chart below, according to the pattern of מְלִכּוֹ .

| sing. abs.                 | sing. cstr. | sing. emph./det. | pl. abs. | pl. cstr. | pl. emph./det. |
|----------------------------|-------------|------------------|----------|-----------|----------------|
| נְהִירוּ<br>“illumination” |             |                  |          |           |                |
| חֲשָׁחוּ<br>“need”         |             |                  |          |           |                |

You will notice that, like מְלִכּוֹ, the words listed above are abstract nouns. Most words that have this pattern are abstract nouns.

The word נְהִירוּ is interesting because, the initial short vowel is not reduced. This is because the following ה, is *virtually* doubled. In other words, although the ה is not marked as doubled by a dot, it acts as if it were and this prevents the short /a/ vowel from reducing.

### Exercise 5d.

Many other noun patterns are found with “weak” roots, but these usually are analogous to the patterns of the “strong” roots or to the pattern of the participle. Based on this assumption, and your knowledge of Aramaic vowel reduction, complete the following chart:

| sing. ab.  | sing. cstr. | sing. emph. | pl. abs.               | pl. cstr.              | pl. emph.              |
|--|-------------|-------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| רְבוּ<br>(“greatness”)   |             |             | XXXXXX<br>not attested | XXXXXX<br>not attested | XXXXXX<br>not attested |
| בְּעוּ<br>(“request”)<br>The <sub>ו</sub> = ā.   |             |             | XXXXXX<br>not attested | XXXXXX<br>not attested | XXXXXX<br>not attested |
| יָרַח (“moon”)   |             | יָרַחַא     |                        |                        |                        |
| סָפֵר (“scribe”)<br>The <sub>ו</sub> = ā.  |             |             |                        |                        |                        |
| דִּין<br>(“judge”)<br>The <sub>ו</sub> = ā.  |             |             |                        |                        |                        |
| אֱלֹהֵי (“God”)<br>The <sub>ו</sub> = ā.<br>The הֵ is part<br>of the root and<br>is not replaced<br>by הֵ- in the<br>cstr., etc. |             | אֱלֹהֵא     |                        |                        |                        |
| כֹּהֵן (“priest”)<br>The <sub>ו</sub> = ā.   |             |             |                        |                        |                        |

Some feminine nouns have a typically feminine form in the singular, but pattern like a masculine noun in the plural:

|             |         |
|-------------|---------|
| singular    | fem.    |
| abs.:       | מְלֵה   |
| const.:     | מְלֵת   |
| emph./det.: | מְלֵתַא |

|             |         |
|-------------|---------|
| plural      | fem.    |
| abs.:       | מַלְיָן |
| const.:     | מַלְיָ  |
| emph./det.: | מַלְיָא |

### Exercise 5e.

Complete the following chart based on the paradigm of מַלְיָה.

| sing. abs.         | sing. cstr. | sing. emph. | pl. abs. | pl. cstr. | pl. emph. |
|--------------------|-------------|-------------|----------|-----------|-----------|
| שָׁנָה ("year")    |             | שָׁנָהּ (?) |          |           |           |
| אַמָּה ("nation")  |             |             |          |           |           |
| בִּינָה ("window") |             |             |          |           |           |

#### Vocabulary

אֱלֹהָ = "God" m.

אַמָּה = "nation" f.

אַרְעָה (in the emph./det.: אַרְעָא) = land f.

בְּעוּ = "request" f.

בֵּרָה (in the emph./det.: בֵּרָא, in the plural abs. בְּרִיָּין) = "son" m.

גְּזָרָה (in the cnstr.: גְּזָרְתָּ) = "decree" f.

חֵלֶם = "dream" m.

מַלְיָה = "word" f.

מַלְכוּתָהּ = "kingdom" f.

סָפֵר = "scribe" m.

עָתִיד = "ready"

שָׁנָהּ = "year" f.

#### Participles:

אָמַר = to say (Notice that the second vowel is not   but  . This is due to the following *resh* (ר), which typically causes what would otherwise be   vowels to become  .) (The guttural consonants ע, ח, and ה have a similar effect on /e/ [   ] vowels.)

פָּלַח = “to serve,” “pay reverence to”)

שָׁלַח = “to send”

יָדַע = “to know”

## Lesson 6: The G Perfect Verb and Nominal Suffixes

### Part 1.

Most Semitic languages attest a number of verbal stems or conjugations that communicate different basic concepts. In Aramaic, there are three basic stems, named either after what the Germans call it, or after the form of the stem in the third person, masculine singular (3ms) perfect form of the root פֿעַל, and/or after its distinctive morphological feature:

The G-stem (i.e., *Grundstamm*) or the Pa'al (פֿעַל) --- The basic stem (used to express both transitive and intransitive actions).

The D-stem (i.e., *Doppelstamm*) or the Pa'el (פֿעֵל) --- The stem used for factitive and fientive meaning, for verbs that convey the causing of a state: “to make broken”, “to make experienced.” These notions can be distinguished from those that are more purely transitive (“to make something break”, “to make someone experience”); the D-stem implies that a subject has been brought into a state of being. (Factitive refers to verbs which are intransitive in the G-stem, but transitive in the D-stem; fientive refers to verbs that are transitive in the G-stem as well as the D-stem). Its distinctive morphological feature is the doubling of the middle root consonant, thus the German name of the root means “Double-stem”.

The H-stem or Haph'el (הֿפֿעֵל). This stem is associated with causation (hence it is sometimes called the Causative Stem). Its distinctive morphological feature is its prefix הֿ.

This stem, associated with causation, can be compared with the D-stem since both describe the transformation of things. While the D-stem describes bringing something into a state, where that something is essentially passive, the H-stem describes that something actively participating in an action.

Waltke and O'Connor's *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (pp. 355-357) offers an English example that helps to distinguish these various nuances of the Hebrew (and Aramaic) verbal system.

“Sarah flies the airplane” G-stem

“Sarah, [by herself,] gets the airplane flown” D-stem

“Sarah makes the airplane fly” H-stem

Because each of these stems is associated with a particular semantic nuance, it is often easy to reason, based on the basic meaning of the root and the associations of

each stem, what the meaning of a given root is in a given stem. It so happens, due to the limited nature of the preserved written Aramaic, few roots appear in all three stems. But, e.g., take the root associated with “perishing” אָבַד:

In the G-stem it means “to perish” (an intransitive verb).

In the D-stem it means “to put something into a state of ruin”.

In the H-stem it means “to cause something to perish”, i.e., “to destroy”.

Verbs of movement are also easy to predict, like נָחַת “to go down”

In the G-stem it means “to go down” (an intransitive verb).

In the D-stem it means “to bring into a state of being lower”.

In the H-stem it means “to deposit” or “to cause something to go down”.

There are also passive stems that correspond to these three basic stems:

The Gp, G-passive, or Pə‘īl (פְּעִיל)

The Dp, D-passive, or Pu‘‘al (פְּעֵל)

The Hp, H-passive, or Huph‘al (הַפְּעֵל)

Of these, the G-passive is the most important, the most commonly used.

In addition, there are three prefix-t stems, each corresponding to one of the three active stems, each usually expressing a reflexive notion or a passive notion. (This means that there are technically two ways to create a passive verbal form, one through the passive stems [Pə‘īl, Pu‘‘al, Huph‘al], the other through the prefix-t stems.)

The tG or Hithpə‘el (הִתְפַּעֵל)

The tD or Hithpa‘‘al (הִתְפַּעֵל)

The tH or Hithhaph‘al (\*הִתְהַפְּעֵל)

Of these, only the tG and tD stems are found in Biblical Aramaic with any frequency.

Each of these stems (G, D, H, Gp, Dp, Hp, tG, tD, [tH]), or conjugations, has a perfect form (expressing actions already completed, finished) and an imperfect form (expressing actions not yet completed), as well as participles, imperatives, and infinitives. We learn first the perfect. The 3ms form is the most important since it is the form of the verb listed in the dictionaries.

The following paradigm isolates the distinctive features of each form of the perfect.

|     |                          |                          |  |
|-----|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| 3ms | כְּתַב                   | --                       |  |
| 3fs | כְּתַבְתְּ               | כְּתַבְתְּ               | (The forms of the 3fs and 1cs perfect are somewhat counter-intuitive, given that their etymological form is <i>*katabat</i> and <i>*katabtu</i> . Based on these forms, we would expect the first vowel to be /a/ not /i/. It is, in fact, /a/ in roots that begin with a guttural consonant. E.g., עִבְדַת "she made" and אָמְרַת "she said", עִבְדַת "I made", etc.) |
| 2ms | כְּתַבְתָּ / כְּתַבְתִּי | כְּתַבְתָּ / כְּתַבְתִּי | (The shewa preceding the suffix in these forms represents the absence of a vowel: kəṭabtā / kəṭabt, kəṭabtī <sup>y</sup> . The final shewa in כְּתַבְתִּי also represents the absence of a vowel.)   |
| 2fs | כְּתַבְתְּי              | כְּתַבְתְּי              |  |
| 1cs | כְּתַבְתִּי              | כְּתַבְתִּי              | (The shewa preceding the suffix in this form represents the absence of a vowel: kitbet.)   |
| 3mp | כְּתַבּוּ                | כְּתַבּוּ                |  |
| 3fp | כְּתַבְהוּ               | כְּתַבְהוּ               |  |
| 2mp | כְּתַבְתֶּינָּה          | כְּתַבְתֶּינָּה          | (The shewa preceding the suffix in these forms represents the absence of a vowel: kəṭabtū <sup>wn</sup> , kəṭabten.)   |
| 2fp | כְּתַבְתֶּינָּה          | כְּתַבְתֶּינָּה          |  |
| 1cp | כְּתַבְנָא               | כְּתַבְנָא               | (The shewa preceding the suffix in this form represents the absence of a vowel: kəṭabnā .)   |

Adding these suffixes to the stem of the D- or H-stem allows you usually to predict the correct form.

Thus, the 2fp suffix כְּתַבְתֶּינָּה + the base of the D-stem כְּתַב = כְּתַבְתֶּינָּה

Or, the 1cp suffix כְּתַבְנָא + the base of the H-stem כְּתַבְנָא = כְּתַבְנָא (Note that while both forms contain the sequence --כְּתַב--, it represents something slightly

different in each case. The dot in the *taw* in the D-stem form indicates that the middle consonant is doubled. In the H-stem form, the dot in the *taw* indicates only that it is pronounced “hard”. The above D-stem form would be transcribed *katteḇten*, while the H-stem form would be transcribed *hakṭeḇnā* .)

### Exercise 6a.

Understanding the suffixes attached to the G-stem perfect and understanding the basic principles of vowel reduction, allows you to predict often what the verbal forms will look like in the D- and H-stems.

Fill out the chart below for the verb כְּתַבְתָּ; consult the Answer Appendix as needed.

|            | G-Perfect                             | D-perfect                 | H-perfect                     |
|------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 3ms<br>3fs | כְּתַב<br>כְּתַבְתְּ                  | כְּתַב                    | חְכַתַּב                      |
| 2ms<br>2fs | כְּתַבְתְּ / כְּתַבְתְּ<br>כְּתַבְתְּ | כְּתַבְתְּ                |                               |
| 1cs        | כְּתַבְתְּ                            |                           |                               |
| 3mp<br>3fp | כְּתַבּוּ<br>כְּתַבְתְּוּ             | כְּתַבּוּ<br>כְּתַבְתְּוּ | חְכַתַּבּוּ<br>חְכַתַּבְתְּוּ |
| 2mp<br>2fp | כְּתַבְתְּוּ<br>כְּתַבְתְּוּ          |                           |                               |
| 1cp        | כְּתַבְתְּוּ                          |                           |                               |

In some cases the G-perfect verbs have a short /i/ vowel, where כְּתַב has a short /a/ vowel. So, e.g., the G-3ms perfect of the verb indicating ability looks like this: יְכַל (‘‘he was able’’). Similarly, with the verb indicating sitting, יְתַב (‘‘he sat’’).

Occasionally verbs will have /e/ ( ֵ ), instead of /i/, or /a/. But, these verbs (like שָׁלַח) are otherwise analogous in their paradigm to יָכַל and יָתַב. Verbs like שָׁלַח even have the same vowel in their 3mp and 3fp forms as יָכַל and יָתַב.

### Exercise 6b.

Parse the following forms (indicating stem, person, gender, number, and root) and fill in the blanks:

סָלַחְךָ (“\_\_\_ came up”)

מָלַחְתָּ (“\_\_\_ salted”)

שָׁלַחְתָּ (“\_\_\_ sent”)

בִּשְׁאַלְתָּ (“\_\_\_ inquired”)

הִשְׁבַּחְתָּ (“\_\_\_ found”)

יָתַבְתָּ (“\_\_\_ sat”)

#### Part 2:

Instead of using independent pronouns to indicate possession (as in English “my”, “your”, “her”), Aramaic uses suffixal pronouns. Because Aramaic distinguishes between masculine and feminine genders and between singular and plural in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> persons, this means that you can have a masculine noun (like “king”) with a 2<sup>nd</sup> person feminine plural possessive pronoun (“your king”). In order to disambiguate the “your” in the translation I include a parenthetical identification of gender and number: “your (fp) king”. (This, of course, does not imply that the king is either feminine or plural.)

The addition of pronominal suffixes to nouns follows the rather simple principles illustrated so far. If you know the suffixes and the absolute, construct, and emphatic/determined forms of the noun, you can usually predict the form of the suffixed noun.

Often, if confused, one can take the emphatic/determined form of the noun and subtract the סָֿ ending (or the סָֿֿ ending for masculine plural nouns) and then supply the appropriate suffix to this form.

“the scribe” סִפְרָא → סִפְרָ\* → סִפְרִי “my scribe”

“the letter” אִנְרִתָּא → אִנְרִתָּ\* → אִנְרִתְךָ “your letter”

This technique does not work for some nouns, especially in relation to the 2mp, 2fp, 3mp, and 3fp suffixes (see the note <sup>o</sup> beneath the chart).

Note that for this and the following charts, the footnotes to the words in the first column apply to the analogous forms in the other columns.

|                     | ms noun<br>סָפֵר         | ms noun<br>לְשׁוֹן | fs noun<br>אַגְרָה     | fs noun<br>מַלְכוּ       |
|---------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|
| const./emph. form   | סָפֵר / סְפָרָא          | לְשׁוֹן / לְשָׁנָא | אַגְרָת<br>/ אַגְרָתָא | מַלְכוּת<br>/ מַלְכוּתָא |
| 1cs “my” אֲנִי      | סְפָרִי <sup>a</sup>     | לְשׁוֹנִי          | אַגְרָתִי              | מַלְכוּתִי               |
| 2ms “you” אַתָּה    | סְפָרְךָ <sup>a</sup>    | לְשׁוֹנְךָ         | אַגְרָתְךָ             | מַלְכוּתְךָ              |
| 2fs “you” אַתְּ     | סְפָרְכִי <sup>a b</sup> | לְשׁוֹנְכִי        | אַגְרָתְכִי            | מַלְכוּתְכִי             |
| 3ms “his” הוּא      | סְפָרָה <sup>a c</sup>   | לְשׁוֹנָה          | אַגְרָתָה              | מַלְכוּתָה               |
| 3fs “her” הִיא      | סְפָרָה <sup>a c</sup>   | לְשׁוֹנָה          | אַגְרָתָה              | מַלְכוּתָה               |
|                     |                          |                    |                        |                          |
| 1cp “our” אֲנַחְנוּ | סְפָרְנָא <sup>a b</sup> | לְשׁוֹנָא          | אַגְרָתְנָא            | מַלְכוּתְנָא             |
| 2mp “your” כֻּם     | סְפָרְכֶם <sup>d e</sup> | לְשׁוֹנְכֶם        | אַגְרָתְכֶם            | מַלְכוּתְכֶם             |
| 2fp “your” כִּן     | סְפָרְכִין <sup>e</sup>  | לְשׁוֹנְכִין       | אַגְרָתְכִין           | מַלְכוּתְכִין            |
| 3mp “their” הֵם     | סְפָרְהֶם <sup>e f</sup> | לְשׁוֹנְהֶם        | אַגְרָתְהֶם            | מַלְכוּתְהֶם             |
| 3fp “their” הֵן     | סְפָרְהֵן <sup>e</sup>   | לְשׁוֹנְהֵן        | אַגְרָתְהֵן            | מַלְכוּתְהֵן             |

<sup>a</sup> The shewa in this form is pronounced.

<sup>b</sup> The accent is over the next-to-last syllable.

<sup>c</sup> Note the dot in the final *heh*, which distinguishes the 3fs pronoun from the marker of the feminine noun.

<sup>d</sup> The suffix could also be כִּין—

<sup>e</sup> The suffix of the 2mp, 2fp, 3mp, and 3fp pronouns includes a shewa that represents the absence of a vowel when the preceding vowel is short (סְפָרְכֶם, מַלְכוּתְכֶם), and a murmured vowel when the preceding vowel is long (אַלְהֶם) or when another shewa that represents the absence of a vowel comes right before it (אַרְעֶכֶם, מַלְכֶכֶם). Whether or not the shewa represents the absence of a vowel, the following *kaph* is always spirantized or pronounced “soft”. Thus, for “your scribe” we have סְפָרְכֶם (sāparkōm), for “your word” מַלְכוּתְכֶם (millatkōm), for “your God” אַלְהֶם (’ēlāhākōm), for “your king” we have מַלְכֶכֶם (malkəkōm), for “your land” אַרְעֶכֶם (’ar’ākōm). Notice that the basic form of the noun before the 2mp, 2fp, 3mp, and 3fp suffix is usually the form of the noun in the construct singular: סָפֵר, מַלְכָּה, אֱלֹהֵהּ, though the form of “your (2mp) king” is similar to the emphatic/determined form of the noun מַלְכָּא (the const. sing. of “king” being מַלְכָּךְ). Similarly, the form of “your (mp) silver” would be כַּסְפְּכֶם (kaspəkōm), not

\*כְּסַפְּכֹם (\*kəsapkōm), and “your (mp) book” would be סִפְרְכֹם (siprəkōm), and “your (mp) servant/slave” would be עֲבַדְכֹם (‘abdəkōm).

<sup>f</sup> The suffix could also be הֵן—

### Exercise 6c.

Transliterate and translate the following forms:

בְּעוֹתָהּ  
 חֶלְמָךְ  
 מַלְתְּכֵם  
 סִפְרָהּ  
 קַלְנָא  
 חֲמֵרָהּ  
 חֵיוֹתֵי  
 צִדְקָתְךָ

Feminine plural nouns take the same suffixes in essentially the same way.

|                     | fp noun<br>אֲגָרָן          | fp noun<br>מַלְכוּן      |
|---------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| const./emph. form   | אֲגָרְתָא / אֲגָרְתָּא      | מַלְכוּתָא / מַלְכוּתָּא |
| 1cs “my” אֲנִי      | אֲגָרְתִּי                  | מַלְכוּתִי               |
| 2ms “you” אַתְּ     | אֲגָרְתְּךָ                 | מַלְכוּתְךָ              |
| 2fs “you” אַתְּ     | אֲגָרְתְּכִי                | מַלְכוּתְכִי             |
| 3ms “his” הוּא      | אֲגָרְתָּהּ                 | מַלְכוּתָּהּ             |
| 3fs “her” הִיא      | אֲגָרְתָּהּ                 | מַלְכוּתָּהּ             |
|                     |                             |                          |
| 1cp “our” אֲנַחְנוּ | אֲגָרְתְּנָא                | מַלְכוּתְנָא             |
| 2mp “your” כֻּם     | אֲגָרְתְּכֵם <sup>a b</sup> | מַלְכוּתְכֵם             |
| 2fp “your” כֻּן     | אֲגָרְתְּכֵן <sup>a</sup>   | מַלְכוּתְכֵן             |
| 3mp “their” הֵם     | אֲגָרְתְּהֵם <sup>a c</sup> | מַלְכוּתְהֵם             |
| 3fp “their” הֵן     | אֲגָרְתְּהֵן <sup>a</sup>   | מַלְכוּתְהֵן             |

<sup>a</sup> The shewa in this word represents a murmured vowel since the preceding vowel is long: E.g., ’iggərātəkōm.

<sup>b</sup> The suffix could also be כֵּן—

<sup>c</sup> The suffix could also be הֵן—

Masculine plural nouns take slightly different suffixes, but in essentially the same way. A *yodh* appears as part of each suffix, except for in the 3ms suffix. This *yodh* is pronounced only in the 1cs suffix as part of the diphthong /ay/; it is not pronounced in the other forms. In an earlier stage of Aramaic it was pronounced, but now it simply helps to graphically differentiate these suffixes from those used on the singular and feminine plural nouns.

|                     | mp noun<br>סְפָרִין         | mp noun<br>לְשָׁנִין  |
|---------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|
| const./emph. form   | סְפָרִי / סְפָרִיאַ         | לְשָׁנִי / לְשָׁנִיאַ |
| 1cs "my" אֲנִי      | סְפָרִי <sup>a</sup>        | לְשָׁנִי              |
| 2ms "you" אַתָּה    | סְפָרִיךָ <sup>a b</sup>    | לְשָׁנֶיךָ            |
| 2fs "you" אַתְּ     | סְפָרִיכִי <sup>a b c</sup> | לְשָׁנֶיכִי           |
| 3ms "his" הוּא      | סְפָרוֹהִי <sup>a c d</sup> | לְשָׁנוֹהִי           |
| 3fs "her" הִיא      | סְפָרִיהָ <sup>a b</sup>    | לְשָׁנֶיהָ            |
|                     |                             |                       |
| 1cp "our" אֲנַחְנוּ | סְפָרִינָא <sup>a b c</sup> | לְשָׁנֵינָא           |
| 2mp "your" אַתְּכֶם | סְפָרִיכֶם <sup>a b</sup>   | לְשָׁנֵיכֶם           |
| 2fp "your" אַתְּכִי | סְפָרִיכִין <sup>a b</sup>  | לְשָׁנֵיכִין          |
| 3mp "their" הֵם     | סְפָרֵיהֶם <sup>a b</sup>   | לְשָׁנֵיהֶם           |
| 3fp "their" הֵנּוּ  | סְפָרֵיהֶן <sup>a b</sup>   | לְשָׁנֵיהֶן           |

- <sup>a</sup> The shewa in this form is pronounced.  
<sup>b</sup> The *yodh* of the suffix is not pronounced.  
<sup>c</sup> The accent is over the next-to-last syllable.  
<sup>d</sup> Note the strange form of the 3ms pronoun.

As might be obvious, feminine nouns that follow a masculine paradigm in the plural, take the suffixal pronouns as if the word were a masculine noun

|                   | fs noun<br>אִמָּה     | fp noun<br>אִמִּין |
|-------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| const./emph. form | אִמָּתַ / אִמָּתֵא    | אִמִּיַ / אִמִּי   |
| 1cs "my" אֲנִי    | אִמָּתִי <sup>a</sup> | אִמִּי             |
| 2ms "you" אַתָּה  | אִמָּתְךָ             | אִמִּיךָ           |
| 2fs "you" אַתְּ   | אִמָּתְכִי            | אִמִּיכִי          |
| 3ms "his" הוּא    | אִמָּתֵהּ             | אִמִּוֵּהּ         |
| 3fs "her" הִיא    | אִמָּתֶהּ             | אִמִּיָּהּ         |
|                   |                       |                    |

|             |            |           |
|-------------|------------|-----------|
| 1cp "our"   | אַמְתָּנָא | אַמְיָנָא |
| 2mp "your"  | אַמְתְּכִם | אַמְיְכִם |
| 2fp "your"  | אַמְתְּכֵן | אַמְיְכֵן |
| 3mp "their" | אַמְתְּהִם | אַמְיְהִם |
| 3fp "their" | אַמְתְּהֵן | אַמְיְהֵן |

<sup>a</sup> Because the *mem* in this word is doubled (as indicated by the dot), the shewa must represent a murmured vowel.

### Exercise 6d.

Consider the following examples and then write the words beneath these in Aramaic:

his slave (עַבְדָּהּ)

her son (בְּרָהּ)

our kings (מְלָכֵינוּ)

their kingdom (מְלְכוּתָהֶם)

his words (מְלוּוָהּ)

my letter (אַגְרָתִי)

your (masc. sing.) nation (אַמְתְּךָ)

your (fem. pl.) crimes (חֲבוּלָתְכֵן).

1. my slaves
2. our sons (remember the unpredictable plural to this word)
3. your (fem. sing.) king
4. their (masc.) kingdoms
5. her word
6. your (masc. sing.) letter
7. our nations (remember the unpredictable plural)
8. my crimes
9. his illumination
10. their (fem.) greatness
11. your (fem. pl.) judges
12. his needs

Part 3:

Syntax of ךְ.

In Aramaic, one can express a genitive relationship between two words through the construct state, as already discussed above. In addition, one can express a genitive relationship through the particle, ךְ, which might be translated “of” in the following cases. Thus, the expression “the son of the king” might be expressed with either

the construct state: בַּר מְלָכָא

or

the particle ךְ: בְּרָא דִּי מְלָכָא

Quite often in Aramaic one encounters an expanded version of this second construction, in which the first word has a 3<sup>rd</sup> person possessive suffix on it, agreeing in number and gender with the word that follows the ךְ. This seems redundant to the English reader, but makes good Aramaic. This allows a third way to express the same phrase “the son of the king”:

בְּרָהּ דִּי מְלָכָא

Here, the 3ms suffix on בַּר agrees in number and gender with the word “king”. Note that although the more literal translation is “his son of the king”, this is not idiomatic in English and so this Aramaic construction should never be translated this way. Rather, your translation should always be in idiomatic, comprehensible English.

Consider the plural forms of the same expression:

a. “the sons/children of the king”:

בְּנֵי מְלָכָא

בְּנֵיא דִּי מְלָכָא

בְּנוּהֵי דִּי מְלָכָא

b. “the sons/children of the kings”

בְּנֵי מְלָכֵי

בְּנֵי דֵי מְלָכֵי

בְּנֵיהֶם דֵי מְלָכֵי

c. “the son of the kings”

בֶּר מְלָכֵי

בְּרֵא דֵי מְלָכֵי

בְּרֵהֶם דֵי מְלָכֵי (?) (This form of son is unattested, but here based on the analogous form in Syriac: *bērhōn*.)

The particle דֵי (and its alternate form דְּ) also functions as a relative pronoun, translated into English either as “who”, “whose”, “whom”, “which”, “that”, “that which”, “where”, depending on the context. E.g., note the following usages from the single verse of Daniel 2:11:

מְלָתָא דֵי מְלָכָה שְׂאֵל יִקְרָה  
וְאִחְרָן לָא אִיתֵי דֵי יְחֻוּנְהָ קְדָם מְלָכָא  
לְהֵן אֵלֵהֵן דֵי מְדַרְהֵוֹן עִם בְּשָׂרָא לָא אִיתְוּהֵי

“The matter (lit. “word”) *that* the king requests (is) hard.  
Another there is not *who* can explain it before the king,  
except gods *whose* dwellings are not among mortals.”

The English word “whose” usually denotes a possessive or genitive relationship. Notice that in Aramaic such a relationship is indicated by דֵי + noun + possessive suffix: הוֹן + דֵי + מְדַרְהֵוֹן.

In addition, דֵי can be used as a conjunction to connect phrases together, especially after verbs of knowing, saying, or perception, like English “that” in “I know that you are buying time,” or “I said that I would find it,” the former of which is a direct quotation from Daniel 2:8:

יִדַע אֲנִי דִּי עֲדָנָא אֲנִתּוֹן זְבָנִין

“I know that you are buying time.”

The extremely versatile particle ׀ can also indicate direct speech, especially when it follows a verb for speaking. In these cases it is not translated. Because it can also mean “that” after verbs of speaking, there is sometimes ambiguity as to whether the particle is indicating direct or indirect speech.

### Exercise 6e.

Write in Aramaic the following phrases using the third manner of expressing the genitive with the suffixed pronoun.

1. the decrees of the kings
2. the servants/slaves of the nation
3. the scribes of the land
4. the needs of the children
5. the crimes of those serving God
6. the request of the one sending the letter

7. The judges of the nation made an image of the old king. They said to their children (use עַל for “to”): “We are writing in our language (for “in” use ב; for “language” use the word for “tongue”).

### Exercise 6f.

Translate the following passage from Ezra 5:11-12, vocalizing the two unpointed forms. For words you do not know, use the vocabulary list that follows the passage.

אֲנִחְנָא הַמּוֹ עֲבֻדוּהִי דִי־אֱלֹהֵי שְׁמַיָּא וְאֶרְעָא ...  
לְהֵן מִן־דִּי הִרְגִּזוּ אֲבָהֵתְנָא אֱלֹהֵי שְׁמַיָּא

יְהֵב הַמּוֹ בְּיַד נְבוּכַדְנֶצַּר מֶלֶךְ-בָּבֶל כְּשָׂדִיָּא

## Vocabulary:

### Nouns:

בֹּא = “father” (Pl. with 1cp suffix: אֲבֹתָנָא = “our fathers” --- see the next lesson for this word and its strange forms.) m.

דִּין = “judge” m.

הֵמָּו = the 3mp independent pronoun “they”. This form is peculiar to the book of Ezra; elsewhere it is אֲנַן and הֵמֹן

יַד = “hand” f.

כְּשָׁדַי = “Chaldaeian” (emph./det.: כְּשָׁדַיָּא = “the Chaldaeian”) --- see the next lesson for the forms of gentilic nouns.

עֲבָד = “slave” or “servant” (emph./det.: עֲבָדָא), m.

שָׁמַיָּן = “heavens” (emph./det.: שָׁמַיָּא) m.

### Verbs (Verbs are always listed in their G-3ms perfect form):

יָהַב = “to give”

יָכַל = “to be able”

יָתַב = “to sit”

סָלַק = “to come up”

רָגַז = In H-stem: “to anger”

### Particles

לָּהּוּן = “but”, “except”

מִן־דִּי = “because”

## Lesson 7: Imperfect, Participles, Prepositions

Part 1:

The imperfect form of the verb indicates actions not yet complete, and so can often be translated with the English present or future. It also expresses modal nuances, which are communicated in English through complementary verbs “should”, “would”, “could”, etc.

Its form is characterized by a combination of prefixes and suffixes (in contrast to the perfect’s exclusive use of suffixes). Again, predicting the correct forms of the verb in the various stems is easy if you know the root, the theme vowel, and the series of prefixes/suffixes for each person/number/gender.

The theme vowel is the vowel that appears in the last syllable of the 3ms imperfect form. For the D- and H-stems, every root has the same theme vowel /e/ ( ܐ ), unless it has a guttural ( ܐ, ܗ, ܟ, ܥ ) as a third-consonant (or a *resh*), in which case the /e/ ( ܐ ) shifts to /a/ ( ܐ ) in accordance with the phonological rules of Aramaic (see the above note to **ܐܡܪ** [Les. 5, part 1]).

In the G-stem, the theme vowel is less predictable. The most common is the short /u/ vowel. This is found with roots like **ܟܬܒ** (“to write”). Other roots have a short /a/, like the root connected to speaking (**ܐܡܪ**), or the root that indicates dressing (**ܠܒܫ**), or the root indicating wielding power (**ܫܠܬ**). Usually, roots with a perfect like **ܫܠܬ** with /e/ ( ܐ ) as the second vowel, have imperfects with an /a/ theme vowel.

Considering the following paradigms, wherever **ܟܬܒ** has a /u/, these verbs take /a/. They are otherwise completely analogous to **ܟܬܒ**. A very few roots have a theme vowel of /e/ ( ܐ ), roots like **ܢܦܠ** (“to fall”) and **ܢܬܢ** (“to give”), which will be discussed later.

The following paradigm isolates the distinctive suffixes and prefixes of each form of the imperfect.

|     |              |              |
|-----|--------------|--------------|
| 3ms | יִכְתֹּב     | יִכְתֹּב     |
| 3fs | תִּכְתֹּב    | תִּכְתֹּב    |
| 2ms | תִּכְתֹּב    | תִּכְתֹּב    |
| 2fs | תִּכְתְּבִין | תִּכְתְּבִין |
| 1cs | אֶכְתֹּב     | אֶכְתֹּב     |
| 3mp | יִכְתְּבוּן  | יִכְתְּבוּן  |
| 3fp | יִכְתְּבִין  | יִכְתְּבִין  |
| 2mp | תִּכְתְּבוּן | תִּכְתְּבוּן |
| 2fp | תִּכְתְּבִין | תִּכְתְּבִין |
| 1cp | נִכְתֹּב     | נִכְתֹּב     |

### Exercise 7a.

Understanding the prefixes and suffixes attached to the G-stem imperfect and understanding the basic principles of vowel reduction, allows you to predict what the verbal forms will look like in the D- and H-stems.

Fill out the following chart for the verb כָּתַב, consulting the Answers Appendix as needed.

|            | G-imperfect                  | D-imperfect  | H-imperfect   | Alternative form of the H-stem with no ה |
|------------|------------------------------|--------------|---------------|--|
| 3ms<br>3fs | יְכַתֵּב<br>תְּכַתֵּב        | יִכְתֹּב     | יְהַכְתִּיב   | יְכַתֵּב                                 |
| 2ms<br>2fs | תְּכַתֵּב<br>תְּכַתְּבִין    | תִּכְתְּבוּן |               |  |
| 1cs        | אֲכַתֵּב                     | אִכְתֹּב     | אֲהַכְתִּיב   |  |
| 3mp<br>3fp | יְכַתְּבוּן<br>יְכַתְּבִין   | יִכְתְּבוּן  | יְהַכְתְּבוּן | יְכַתְּבוּן                              |
| 2mp<br>2fp | תְּכַתְּבוּן<br>תְּכַתְּבִין |              |               |  |
| 1cp        | נְכַתֵּב                     |              |               |  |

Note the alternative forms of the H-stem (Haphel), called the A-stem (or, Aphel), since it lacks the distinctive *heh* prefix. The A-stem occurs sporadically in Biblical Aramaic and eventually supplants the older H-stem in later dialects of Aramaic.

### Exercise 7b.

Parse the following forms, describing stem, person, gender, number, and root:

תְּנַתֵּן This has two possible parsings.

תְּנַתְּנִין

תְּמַלְלֵן  
 יְדַחֲלֵן  
 בְּהַלְבֵּשׁ  
 אֲשַׁבַּח

Part 2:

The forms of the D- and H-participles are easy to learn, based on your familiarity with the patterns of the perfect and imperfect verb forms. They are distinct from the G-participle, because they both have a *mem* prefix.

As with the G-participles, the D and H-participles can be used as nouns or as predicates.

Their most common forms are given below:

|      | D-stem      | H-stem (Haphel) and A-stem (Aphel) |             |
|------|-------------|------------------------------------|-------------|
| m.s. | מְכַתֵּב    | מְהַכְתֵּב                         | מְכַתֵּב    |
| f.s. | מְכַתֵּבָה  | מְהַכְתֵּבָה                       | מְכַתֵּבָה  |
| m.p. | מְכַתְּבֵין | מְהַכְתְּבֵין                      | מְכַתְּבֵין |
| f.p. | מְכַתְּבֵין | מְהַכְתְּבֵין                      | מְכַתְּבֵין |

Part 3:

Like nouns, prepositions can take suffixed pronouns. Their paradigm is entirely predictable:

**Exercise 7c.**

In the following chart, the prepositions בְּ and בִּי are like לְ in their form. The prepositions מִן and מִי are similar to each other in that they both actually have a doubled second radical (i.e., minn and ‘imm), something that is only indicated in the orthography by a dot when a suffix follows them. The prepositions עַל and עֲלֵי both take suffixes as if they were masculine plural nouns.

Fill out the blanks in the following chart.

|     | ל   | ב | ב | מן   | עם   | על    | קדם    |
|-----|-----|---|---|------|------|-------|--------|
| 1cs | לי  |   |   | מני  |      |       | קדמי   |
| 2ms | לך  |   |   |      | עמך  |       |        |
| 2fs | לכי |   |   |      |      | עליכי |        |
| 3ms | לה  |   |   |      |      |       | קדמוהי |
| 3fs | לה  |   |   | מנה  |      |       |        |
| 1cp | לנא |   |   | מננא |      |       |        |
| 2mp | לכם |   |   |      |      | עליכם |        |
| 2fp | לכן |   |   |      |      |       |        |
| 3mp | להם |   |   |      | עמהם |       |        |
| 3fp | להן |   |   |      |      |       |        |

Part 4.

A final few nominal patterns can be studied, as they are occasionally found in Aramaic texts.

There are many nouns that have a prefixed *mem* or *taw* at their beginning. Nouns like מַעֲבַד “work” are formed from the basic root עֲבַד “to do” or “make.”

Similarly, מְשַׁבֵּב “bed” from שָׁבַב G = “to lie” and מְדַבֵּחַ (“altar”) from דָּבַח G = “to sacrifice”. The same pattern fits with the *taw*-prefixed words like תְּשֻׁבָּחָה “praise, glory” from שָׁבַח D = “to praise.”

Other, more confusing patterns also exist:

singular

|             | Nouns that end in etymological <i>y</i> |                | gentilics (ending in <i>āy</i> )<br>(These are usually names of ethnic, political, or religious groups. Here, יְהוּדַי can be translated either as Judean or Jew.) |
|-------------|---|----------------|--|
| abs.:       | כְּרִסְא (throne)<br>( ַ = /o/)         | אַרְיָה (lion) | יְהוּדַי   |
| const.:     | כְּרִסְא (?)                            | אַרְיָה        | יְהוּדַי   |
| emph./det.: | כְּרִסְאָא                              | אַרְיָאָא (?)  | יְהוּדַיָא   |

plural

|             |              |           |                           |
|-------------|--------------|-----------|---------------------------|
| abs.:       | כְּרִסְוֵן   | אַרְיֵוֹן | יְהוּדַאֵין / יְהוּדַיֵין |
| const.:     | כְּרִסְוֹת   | אַרְיֹת   | יְהוּדַאֵי / יְהוּדַיֵי   |
| emph./det.: | כְּרִסְוֹתָא | אַרְיֹתָא | יְהוּדַאֵיָא              |

Note in relation to the gentilic nouns that one occasionally finds forms in which the original *yodh* has been replaced by an *'aleph*: יְהוּדַאֵין for יְהוּדַיֵין and יְהוּדַאֵי for יְהוּדַיֵי.

### Exercise 7d.

Fill out the chart below, according to the pattern of יְהוּדָי.

| sing. abs.                 | sing. cstr. | sing. emph./det. | pl. abs. | pl. cstr. | pl. emph./det. |
|----------------------------|-------------|------------------|----------|-----------|----------------|
| בְּבֵלַי<br>("Babylonian") |             |                  |          |           |                |
| כְּשָׁדַי<br>(Chaldaean)   |             |                  |          |           |                |

There are, of course, many more peculiar nouns, but these must be learned individually.

Especially important are the forms of father and brother, both of which are attested only with suffixes, making their other forms a matter of conjecture.

Consider the suffixed forms.

singular

אֲבִי ?

אֲבוּךָ ?

אֲבוּכִי ?

אֲבוּהִי ?

אֲבוּהָ ?

אֲבוּנִי ?

אֲבוּכֶם ?

אֲבוּכֵן ?

אֲבוּהֶם ?

אֲבוּהֵן ?

plural

אֲבָתַי אֲתֵי (?)

אֲבָתְךָ אֲתֵיךָ (This is the only form attested in BA.)

etc.

For the word "father" note that the plural has a feminine ending. For "brother", note that the ך in the plural form is virtually doubled.

### Exercise 7e.

Translate the following passage from Ezra 4:14-15, vocalizing the six forms without vowels. For words you do not know, use the vocabulary list that follows the passage.

בְּעֵין כָּל־קַבֵּל דֵּי־ מַלְח הַיְכָלָא מִלְחָנָא

וְעֵרוֹת מִלְכָא לָא אֲרִיךְ לְנָא לְמַחְזָא

עַל־דְּנָה שְׁלַחְנָא וְהוֹדְעָנָא לְמִלְכָא

דֵּי יִבְקַר בְּסִפְר־דְּכָרְנִיא דֵּי אֲבַתְךָ

וְתַהֲשִׁיב בְּסִפְר־דְּכָרְנִיא וְתִגְדַּע

דֵּי קְרִיָּתָא דְּךָ קְרִיָּה מְרָדָה וּמַהֲנֻזְקַת מְלָכִין

Notice that in line 4, the initial verb is 3ms in form and refers to the Persian king, while the following verbs are 2ms forms, also referring to the Persian king. The initial use of the 3ms is perhaps out of deference to the king's superior status.

#### Vocabulary:

##### Nouns:

דְּכָרְנִין = “record” (dokrān) (pl. emph./det.: אֲדְכָרְנִיא) m.

הַיְכָלָא = “palace” (sing. emph./det.: אֲהַיְכָלָא) m.

מַלְחָא = “salt” (sing. emph./det.: אֲמַלְחָא) m.

עֵרוֹתָא = “dishonor” (sing. cstr.: אֲעֵרוֹתָא) f.

קְרִיָּה = “city” f.

##### Adjectives:

אֲרִיךְ = “proper”

מְרָדָה = “rebellious”

Verbs:

בִּקֹּר = D-stem “to seek”

חִזָּה = G-stem “to see” (G-inf.: חִחִיזָה)

יָדַע = G-stem “to know”, “to understand” (G-impf. יִדְעַע),  
H-stem “to make known” (H-perf. הוֹדַע )

מָלַח = G-stem “to salt” i.e., to donate salt, or to eat salt.

נָזַק = G-stem: “to suffer”

H-stem: “to injure”

שָׁבַח = H-stem “to find”

Particles/Adverbs:

בְּ = “in” --- Note that when a shewa that represents a murmured vowel is prefixed to a word that begins with a murmured vowel, the first murmured vowel becomes short /i/, and the second becomes silent: סִפֵּר + בְּ → \*בִּסְפֵּר → בִּסְפֵּר (bispar).

כָּל-קִבְּלָא = “corresponding to”

כָּל-קִבְּלָא דִּי = “because”

כְּעֵן = “now”

Note the three sets of “near” demonstrative pronouns, all identical in meaning (“this”/“these”):

|            | Sing. (“this”) | Plural (“these”)            |
|------------|----------------|-----------------------------|
| First Set  |                |                             |
| masc.      | דְּנָה         | אַלְיִן (and אֱלָה and אַל) |
| fem.       | דְּנָא         | אַלְיִן                     |
| Second Set |                |                             |
| masc.      | דְּדָ          | אַלְדָּ                     |
| fem.       | דְּדָא         | אַלְדָּא                    |
| Third Set  |                |                             |
| masc.      | דְּכֵן         | XXXXX                       |
| fem.       | דְּכֵנָא       | XXXXX                       |

There is only one set of “far” demonstratives (“that” / “those”), though only the masculine forms are attested:

|       | Sing. (“that”) | Plural (“those”) |
|-------|----------------|------------------|
| masc. | ܐܢܝܢ           | ܐܢܝܢܐ            |
| *fem. | ܐܢܝܢ*          | ܐܢܝܢܐ*           |

## Lesson 8: Imperative, Infinitive, and Numerals

### Part 1:

All the stems and conjugations have imperatives, whose function is largely analogous to the imperative's function in our language, that is, commands.

The forms of the imperatives usually are based on the 2<sup>nd</sup>-person forms of the imperfect verb. Essentially, they are shortened versions of these forms; the prefixes and suffixes are usually truncated. Thus, from the G-2fs imperfect form תִּכְתְּבִי we get the G-f.s. imperative כְּתֹבִי. The *taw* prefix has been eliminated and the final *nun* has also been eliminated. Furthermore, because the stress falls on the second syllable, the original /u/ vowel has been preserved.

|      | G-stem     | D-stem     | H-stem(Haphel) and (Aphel)  |
|------|------------|------------|-----------------------------|
| m.s. | כְּתֹב     | כְּתֹב     | הִכְתֵּב / אִכְתֵּב         |
| f.s. | כְּתֹבִי   | כְּתֹבִי   | הִכְתֵּבִי / אִכְתֵּבִי     |
| m.p. | כְּתֹבוּ   | כְּתֹבוּ   | הִכְתֵּבוּ / אִכְתֵּבוּ     |
| f.p. | כְּתֹבְהוּ | כְּתֹבְהוּ | הִכְתֵּבְהוּ / אִכְתֵּבְהוּ |

Notice that the m.s., m.p., and f.p. imperatives in the D- and H/A-stems are identical to the respective perfect forms of the D- and H/A-stems.

### Part 2.

All the stems and conjugations also have infinitives which function in a manner similar to English infinitives.

Their forms are slightly different. In the G-stem, the infinitives have a *mem* prefix, while in the other stems they do not.

| G-stem   | D-stem   | H-stem / A-stem         |
|----------|----------|-------------------------|
| מִכְתֵּב | כְּתֹבָה | הִכְתֵּבָה / אִכְתֵּבָה |

Notice, now, that the G-stem is the only stem that has a *mem* prefix on the infinitive. Contrast this to the way participles are formed in each of these stems, where the D- and H/A-stems are the ones that carry a *mem* prefix. Thus, if a verbal form has a *mem* prefix it is either a G-stem infinitive or a D-, H/A-stem participle.

Part 3:  
Numbers  
Cardinal Numbers 1-10

|    | Used with masc. nouns  | Used with fem. nouns         |
|----|------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1  | חַד                    | חַדָּה                       |
| 2  | תְּרִין / cstr. תְּרִי | תְּרִתִּין / cstr. תְּרִתִּי |
| 3  | תְּלָתָה               | תְּלָת                       |
| 4  | אַרְבַּעָה             | אַרְבַּע                     |
| 5  | חַמֶּשֶׁה              | חַמֶּשׁ                      |
| 6  | שִׁתָּה                | שִׁתּוֹ or שִׁתָּהּ          |
| 7  | שִׁבְעָה               | שִׁבַּע                      |
| 8  | תְּמַנְיָה             | תְּמַנְיָה                   |
| 9  | תְּשַׁעָה              | תְּשַׁע                      |
| 10 | עֶשְׂרָה               | עֶשֶׂר                       |

One curiosity that Aramaic shares with other Semitic languages is that the numbers 3-10 that are masculine *in form* modify feminine nouns and numbers that are feminine *in form*, modify masculine nouns. Thus, to express “seven kings” one would write: מַלְכִין שִׁבְעָה or שִׁבְעָה מַלְכִין (the numeral can come either before or after the noun it modifies). But, to express “seven queens” one would write: מַלְכִין שִׁבַּע or שִׁבַּע מַלְכִין. Although the cardinal numbers are like adjectives, in that they modify nouns, they do not occur in the emphatic/determined state and only rarely appear in the construct state before the noun.

The “teens” do not occur in Biblical Aramaic, but we may conjecture the following forms, together with the multiples of ten, which have only a single form for both masculine and feminine nouns.

Cardinal Numbers 11-70

|                          | Used with masc. nouns | Used with fem. nouns |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| 11                       | חַד עֶשֶׂר            | חַדַּת עֶשְׂרָה      |
| 12                       | תְּרִי עֶשֶׂר         | תְּרִתִּי עֶשְׂרָה   |
| 13                       | תְּלָתַת עֶשֶׂר       | תְּלָת עֶשְׂרָה      |
| 20                       |                       | עֶשְׂרִין            |
| 23 (literally, 20 and 3) | עֶשְׂרִין וּתְלָתָה   | עֶשְׂרִין וּתְלָת    |
| 30                       |                       | תְּלָתִין            |
| 40                       |                       | אַרְבַּעִין          |
| 50                       |                       | חַמֶּשִׁין           |
| 60                       |                       | שִׁתִּין             |

|                        |                                  |                                  |
|------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 64                     | שְׁתִּין וְאַרְבַּעַה            | שְׁתִּין וְאַרְבַּע              |
| 70                     |                                  | שְׁבַעִין                        |
| 80                     |                                  | תְּמַנִּין                       |
| 90                     |                                  | תְּשַׁעִין                       |
| 100                    |                                  | מֵאָה                            |
| 200                    |                                  | מֵאָתַיִן (This is a dual form.) |
| 277 (200 and 70 and 7) | מֵאָתַיִן וְשִׁבְעִין וְשִׁבְעָה | מֵאָתַיִן וְשִׁבְעִין וְשִׁבַּע  |
| 300                    |                                  | תְּלַת מֵאָה                     |
| 1000                   |                                  | אַלְפִי                          |

To express what corresponds to English “first”, “second”, “third”, “fourth”, “fifth”, etc., one uses ordinal numbers. In Aramaic these have the “gentilic ending” /-āy/, except the word for “second”. Like for the cardinal numbers, there are different forms for masculine and feminine nouns. Usually these appear after the noun they modify, like ordinary adjectives. Also like adjectives, the ordinal numbers appear in an absolute and emphatic/determined state. Furthermore, like other adjectives, these can be used alone as nouns and can appear in plural forms, to mean “the first ones”, “the second ones”, etc. (Due to the lack of evidence, many of these forms are educated guesses.)

#### Ordinal Numbers 1-5

|   | Used with masc. nouns                    | Used with fem. nouns          |
|---|--|-------------------------------|
| 1 | קְדָמִי / קְדָמְיָא / pl det.: קְדָמְיָא | קְדָמְיָהּ / קְדָמִיתָהּ      |
| 2 | תְּנַנִּין / תְּנַנְיָא                  | תְּנַנְיָהּ / תְּנַנִּיתָהּ   |
| 3 | תְּלִיתִי / תְּלִיתְיָא or תְּלִיתִיָּא  | תְּלִיתִיָּהּ / תְּלִיתִיתָהּ |
| 4 | רְבִיעִי / רְבִיעְיָא or רְבִיעִיָּא     | רְבִיעִיָּהּ / רְבִיעִיתָהּ   |
| 5 | חֲמִישִׁי / חֲמִישְיָא or חֲמִישִׁיָּא   | חֲמִישִׁיָּהּ / חֲמִישִׁיתָהּ |

Notice that like gentilic nouns, there are cases where the original *yodh* of the form has been replaced by *'aleph*.

#### Exercise 8a.

Write in Aramaic the following phrases. (Remember that the shorter form of of the numbers 3-10 modifies masculine nouns, the longer form modifies feminine nouns):

one book

two letters from two kings

three records from four scribes

five years in six countries (i.e., lands)  
seven palaces for eight kingdoms  
these nine slaves for ten cities  
eleven men from twelve nations  
thirteen houses

the first son  
the first kingdom  
the second city  
the third man  
the fourth animal

### Exercise 8b.

Read the following augmented version of Daniel 7:1-7. (The text is augmented in several ways. It includes in parentheses words that are not in the original biblical manuscripts, but which help make sense of the Aramaic. Some confusing words have been eliminated, which are indicated with ellipses. Furthermore, graphic inconsistencies in the representation are corrected.) Consult the glossary at the end of the lessons for words you do not know. There you will find verbs listed under the G-3ms perfect form and adjectives listed in the m.s. abs. state.

1.

בְּשָׁנַת חֲדָה לְבַלְאֲשַׁצַּר מֶלֶךְ בָּבֶל דְּנִיֵּאל חֵלֶם חֲזוֹה  
וְחֲזוֹי רֵאשֵׁה עַל־מִשְׁכְּבָהּ (יְדַחֲלָנָה)  
בְּאֲדוֹיִן חֵלְמָא כְּתַב . . .

2.

עָנָה דְּנִיֵּאל וְאָמַר חֲזוֹה הוּיִת בְּחֲזוֹי עַם־לִילְיָא  
וְאָרוּ אַרְבַּע רוּחֵי שָׁמַיָא מְגִיחִין לְיָמָא רַבָּא

3.

וְאַרְבַּע חַיּוֹן רַבְרָבִין סֶלְקִין מִן־יָמָא שְׁגִיִן דָּא מִן־דָּא

4.

קְדָמָתָא כְּאַרְיֵה וְגַפִּיִן דִּי־נִשְׂר לָהּ  
חֲזוֹה הוּיִת עַד דִּי־מָרִיטוּ גַפִּיָּהּ  
וְנִטְוִילַת מִן־אַרְעָא וְעַל־רַגְלֵיִן כְּאַנְשׁ הַקְיִמַת וְלִבְבָא אָנְשׁ יְהִיב לָהּ

5.

וְאָרוּ חֵיוֹה אַחֲרֵי תִנְיָנָה דְמִיָּה לְדָב  
וְלִשְׁטֵר-חַד הַקִּימַת וְתִלַּת עַלְעִין בְּפִמָּה בֵּין שְׁנֵיָה  
וְכֵן אֲמָרִין לָהּ קוּמִי אֲכָלִי בָשָׂר שְׁגִיָּא

6.

בְּאַתֵּר דְּנָה חֲזָה הוּיַת וְאָרוּ אַחֲרֵי בְנִמְר  
וְלָהּ גַּפִּין אַרְבַּע דִּי-עוּף עַל-גַּבִּיָּה  
וְאַרְבַּעָה רֵאשִׁין לְחֵיוֹתָא וְשִׁלְטָן יְהִיב לָהּ

7.

בְּאַתֵּר דְּנָה חֲזָה הוּיַת בְּחֻזִּי לִילְיָא  
וְאָרוּ חֵיוֹה רְבִיעֵיָה דְחִילָהּ וְאִימְתָנִי וְתַקִּיפָא יְתִירָא  
וְשִׁינִין דִּי-פְרוּזִל לָהּ רַבְרָבִין אֲכָלָהּ וּמְדַקָּה  
וְשִׁאָרָא בְּרִגְלֵיָה רַפְסָה וְהִיא מְשַׁנְיָה מִן-כָּל-חֵיוֹתָא  
דִּי קְדָמֶיהָ וְקַרְנִין עֶשֶׂר לָהּ

Consider the following:

In the first line of verse 1, the last word, חֲזָה, is the G-3ms perfect from the root חזזה (“to see”) and is translated “he saw.”

In the second line of verse 1, the last word, (יְדַחֵל לָהּ), is a D-3mp imperfect, from the root דחל (“to frighten”). The final letter is a pronoun suffix, indicating the object of the verb; here it is a 3ms pronoun, “him”, referring to Daniel.

In the first line of verse 2, the predicate is made up of a participle (חֲזָה) and a G-1cs perfect form of “to be” (הוּיַת), resulting in the translation “I saw” or, “I was watching.” This combination of participle plus a perfect form of “to be” is rather common in this passage and indicates a continuous action in the past.

In the second line of verse 2, note the vowel under the *waw* conjunction.

In the first line of verse 4, there are two clauses, both lack a verbal predicate. The predicate is, in each case, a prepositional phrase.

In the second line of verse 4, the verb מְרִיטוּ is a G-stem passive perfect, 3mp.

In the third line of verse 4, the verb נְטִילַת is a G-stem passive perfect, 3fs, while the verb יְהִיב is a G-stem passive perfect, 3ms. The noun רִגְלִין is “dual” in form. In other words, it is not a singular noun, nor a plural, but indicates something that appears as a pair. This form is used with several nouns that come in pairs.

Originally every noun would have had a dual form, though this was no longer the

case by the time the Book of Daniel was written. Only certain nouns had a dual form, mostly body parts.

In the third line of verse 5, the plural form of the active participle ܐܘܡܪܝܢ is here used in an impersonal way, and translated as if it were a passive verb: “It was told . . .” This is a relatively common feature of Biblical Aramaic syntax. When you find a m.p. participle or a 3mp perfect or imperfect verb with no clear subject, then you can assume an impersonal subject, and translate the verb as a passive in English. Often, in these cases, whatever is the grammatical object of the verb in Biblical Aramaic will become the subject in your translation.

In the fifth line of verse 7, the word for “horns,” ܩܪܢܝܢ, is in the dual.

Verbs:

ܓܘܗ = H-stem “to stir up” (H-part., f.s., ܡܘܓܝܗܐ )

ܕܩܩܩ = G-stem: “to be shattered”, H-stem “to crush” (H-part. ܩܩܩܩܐ)

ܗܘܐ = “to be” (“I was” = ܗܘܝܬ)

ܚܘܘܐ = “to see”

Note how a participle is used together with a perfect form of the ܗܘܐ.

ܩܘܡ = G-stem “to arise”, H-stem “to set up,” “to install”, Hp-stem “to be set up”  
(ܩܘܡܝܢ)

Particles:

ܠ = “to”, but also ownership, “belonging to”

## Lesson 9: Passive and Reflexive Constructions

Part 1:

Each of the stems has a corresponding passive perfect and participle (but no imperative, imperfect, or infinitive forms).

### Exercise 9a.

Fill out the following chart for the verb כְּתַב, consulting the paradigms in the Answer Appendix as needed.

|            | G-pass. Perfect                          | D-pass. Perf. | H-pass. Perfect         |
|------------|--|---------------|-------------------------|
| 3ms<br>3fs | כְּתִיב<br>כְּתִיבַת                     | כְּתִב        | הִכְתֵּב / הִכְתֵּבַת   |
| 2ms<br>2fs | כְּתִיבְתָּ / כְּתִיבְתִי<br>כְּתִיבְתִי | כְּתִבְתָּ    |                         |
| 1cs        | כְּתִיבַת                                |               |                         |
| 3mp<br>3fp | כְּתִיבוּ<br>כְּתִיבֵי                   | כְּתִבוּ      | הִכְתִּבוּ / הִכְתִּבוּ |
| 2mp<br>2fp | כְּתִיבְתוּן<br>כְּתִיבְתִין             |               |                         |
| 1cp        | כְּתִיבְנָא                              |               |                         |

Note that the second vowel of the D- and H-stems is not the /e/ like in the active form, but a short /a/. This pattern is also found in the passive participles:

|      | G-passive part. | D-passive part. | H-passive part. and A-pass. part. |             |
|------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------------------------|-------------|
| m.s. | כְּתִיב         | מְכַתֵּב        | מְהַכְתֵּב                        | מְכַתֵּב    |
| f.s. | כְּתִיבָה       | מְכַתֵּבָה      | מְהַכְתֵּבָה                      | מְכַתֵּבָה  |
| m.p. | כְּתִיבִין      | מְכַתֵּבִין     | מְהַכְתֵּבִין                     | מְכַתֵּבִין |
| f.p. | כְּתִיבַן       | מְכַתֵּבַן      | מְהַכְתֵּבַן                      | מְכַתֵּבַן  |

It should be obvious that these forms produce many ambiguities. For example, the G-f.s. passive participle is identical to the G-3fp passive perfect. Similarly, the f.s., m.p., and f.p., passive participles in the D- and H-stems are identical in form to their active counterparts. Only context can distinguish these forms.

Now, notice some of the salient characteristics of the passive forms in relation to their active counterparts. While the G- active perfect has an a-vowel after the second root-consonant ( כְּתִיב ), the G-passive perfect and participle have an i-vowel after the second root-consonant (specifically a long-ī vowel). Just the opposite pattern is observed between the D-, H/A-active forms and the D-, H/A-passive forms. Thus, while the D- and H/A-active perfect and imperfect have an e-vowel after the second root-consonant ( כְּתִיב, יְכַתֵּב and כְּתִיב, הַכְתֵּב, יְהַכְתֵּב ), the D-, H/A-passive perfect and participles always have an a-vowel.

#### Part 2:

Each of the stems has a corresponding reflexive stem, which, as its name suggests, can connote reflexivity, or sometimes habitual, repeated action. More often, however, it represents passivity. Thus, this is yet another way to represent passivity in Aramaic.

The tG or Hithpə‘el (הִתְפַּעֵל)

The tD or Hithpa‘‘al (הִתְפַּעֵל)

The tH or Hithhaph‘al (\*הִתְהַפַּעֵל)

However, only the tG and tD stems are attested for BA and therefore merit our attention.

These reflexive stems are characterized by their hit- (or, in the imperfect, yiṭ-, tit-, ’it-, niṭ-) prefixes.

The stems have perfect, imperfect, imperative, participle, and infinitive forms, though not all of these are attested in Biblical Aramaic.

### Exercise 9b.

Fill out the spaces left blank in the following chart and answer the following questions.

|            | tG-Perfect           | tD-Perfect      | tG-Imperfect | tD-Imperfect |
|------------|----------------------|-----------------|--------------|--------------|
| 3ms<br>3fs | התכתב<br>התכתבת      | התכתב<br>התכתבת | יִתְכַתֵּב   | יִתְכַתֵּב   |
| 2ms<br>2fs | התכתבת<br>התכתבתו    | התכתבת          |              |              |
| 1cs        | התכתבת               |                 |              |              |
| 3mp<br>3fp | התכתבו<br>התכתבה     | התכתבו          |              |              |
| 2mp<br>2fp | התכתבתון<br>התכתבתון |                 |              |              |
| 1cp        | התכתבנא              |                 |              |              |

1. What are the distinctions in the vowel patterns between the tG-perfect and those of the G-perfect?
2. In an unvocalized text, how many different forms could התכתבת represent? What are they?
3. There are no tG- or tD-imperatives in Biblical Aramaic. But, given the imperfect forms you've written down in the above chart, what would the imperative forms of the tG and tD look like, if they did occur?
4. There are tG- or tD- participles in Biblical Aramaic. If the masc. sing. forms are, respectively מתכתב and מתכתב, what do the other forms look like?

One wrinkle to this rather straightforward paradigm is found with roots that have a sibilant as a first-consonant (ס, ז, צ, ש, שׁ). If the first consonant is a ס, ז, ש, or שׁ the sibilant and the prefix ת switch places: משתכל is the m.s. tD-participle from

שכל (“to consider”). If the first root consonant is a **צ**, then the consonants switch places, but the **ת** becomes a **ט** : הַצְמַטְע is the m.s. tD-participle from **צבע** (“to be wet”).

### Exercise 9c.

Translate this slightly simplified version of Daniel 7:8-10:

8.

מִשְׁתַּבֵּל הָיִית בְּקַרְנֵיָא נְאֵלוּ קַרְנֵי אַחֲרֵי זַעֲיָרָה סְלִקַת בִּינֵיהֶן  
וַתִּלֵּת מִן-קַרְנֵיָא קַדְמֵיתָא הַתְּעַקְרָה מִן-קַדְמֵיהָ  
אֵלוּ עֵינִין בְּעֵינֵי אַנְשָׁא בְּקַרְנָא-דָּא וּפְסִי מְמַלְל רַבְרָבִין

9.

חֲזָה הָיִית עַד דֵּי כְּרִסּוֹן רַמְיֹו וְעַתִּיק יוֹמִין יִתַּב  
לְבוּשָׁה בַתְּלַג חוּר וּשְׁעַר רַאשָׁה כַּעֲמַר נְקָא  
כְּרִסְיָה שְׁבִיבִין דֵּי נוֹר גְּלִגְלוּהִי נוֹר דְּלִק

10.

נְהַר דֵּי-נוֹר נְגַד וְנִפְק מִן-קַדְמוּהִי  
אֵלֶּף אֵלֶּף פִּין יִשְׁמִשׁוּנָה וְרַבּוּ רַבּוֹן קַדְמוּהִי יְקוּמוּן  
דִּינָא יִתַּב וְסַפְרִין פְּתִיחוּ

Consider the following:

In the first line to verse 8, notice that the feminine word “horn” (קַרְנֵי) is modified by two feminine adjectives.

In the second line to verse 8, notice the two distinct, but similar, words: the adjective/cardinal number קַדְמֵי and the preposition מִן.

In the third line to verse 8, notice the last word is a generic word for “great things.”

In the first line to verse 9, notice that the verb is רַמְיֹו, a 3mp G-passive perfect of רָמָה (“to throw, set up”). The subject is “thrones.” Also, the phrase עַתִּיק יוֹמִין is usually translated “Ancient of Days,” and indicates a single divine individual. The verb יִתַּב is not a G-passive perfect, but a simple G-perfect, with an /i/ vowel, instead of an /a/ vowel in its second syllable.

In the second line of verse 9, both clauses contain a non-verbal predicate.

In the third line of verse 9, both clauses contain a non-verbal predicate.

In the second line of verse 10, notice the two similar expressions “thousand of thousands” and “ten-thousand of ten-thousands,” idioms expressing great numbers. Also, note the object suffix (3ms) on the imperfect verb ܘܡܫܘܢ in verse 10. In the third line of verse 10, notice that the word for justice and judgment, ܟܘܢܝܢܐ, seems to indicate the court itself. (Unless, this is a misreading of ܟܘܢܝܢܐ, the word for judge.)

## Lesson 10: Weak Verbs I: First-*nun*, First-'*aleph*, First-*yodh*

There are three basic varieties of weak verbs, those having a weak first, second, or third consonant. There are mainly two weak consonants, *waw* and *yodh*. When '*aleph* appears at the beginning or end of a root it is considered weak and can create unpredictable forms. Only when *nun* appears at the beginning of a root can it be considered weak, especially in the conjugated forms of the verbs.

### Part 1.

#### First-*nun* verbs

The simplest of these weak verbs is the last, first-*nun* verbs. In fact, not all first-*nun* verbs behave strangely at all, some have patterns identical to the strong verbs. These include verbs like נזק H = “to injure”, נתן G = “to give”.

Those that do show “weak” characteristics include: נחה G = “to descend”, נפל G = “to fall”, נפק G = “to come forth”, נצל H = “to rescue”, נשא G = “to carry”.

We have already learned some of these in an earlier lesson, but because we only learned them in their participial forms, they did not exhibit their “weak” characteristics. In fact, the weak characteristics are not even apparent in the perfect of any stem. But, in the G- and H-imperfect the weak first-*nun* verbs behave somewhat unpredictably (but are normal in the D-imperfect). In essence, whenever a prefix is applied to the root and this results in *nun* as the final consonant of a syllable, the *nun* blends in with the following consonant; it assimilates. Thus, in the perfect, without a prefix, we have נפל, the expected form, analogous to the form of verbs with strong roots. But in the imperfect, with the addition of the prefix *yi-* the *nun* becomes a syllable-final consonant \**yin-pel*, and it subsequently blends or assimilates with the following *peh*, resulting in *yippel*. (Notice that the theme vowel of this root, as indicated earlier, is /e/ [ .. ]. The theme vowels of first-*nun* verbs differ.)

Assimilation is a common linguistic phenomenon. What is described here is similar to the kind of assimilation that has taken place in Latin in the very word *assimilate*, from *ad + similis* → *assimilāre* = “to assimilate”.

(Note that due to difficulties with my word-processing program, the dot that should appear in the *sadeh* in the following forms does not appear.)

|            | G-Imperfect                     | G-Imperative     | H-Perfect                          | H-Imperfect                           | H-Imperative           |
|------------|---------------------------------|------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------|
| 3ms<br>3fs | יִפֵּל <i>yippel</i><br>תִּפֵּל |                  | הִצֵּל <i>hassel</i><br>הִצֵּלְתָּ | יִהַצֵּל <i>yahassel</i><br>תִּהַצֵּל |                        |
| 2ms<br>2fs | תִּפֵּל<br>תִּפְּלִי            | פֵּל<br>פְּלִי   | הִצֵּלְתָּ<br>הִצֵּלְתִּי          | תִּהַצֵּל<br>תִּהַצֵּלִי              | הִצֵּל<br>הִצֵּלִי     |
| 1cs        | אִפֵּל                          |                  | הִצֵּלְתָּ                         | אִהַצֵּל                              |                        |
| 3mp<br>3fp | יִפְּלוּ<br>יִפְּלִי            |                  | הִצֵּלוּ<br>הִצֵּלְהוּ             | יִהַצְּלוּ<br>יִהַצְּלִי              |                        |
| 2mp<br>2fp | תִּפְּלוּ<br>תִּפְּלִי          | פְּלוּ<br>פְּלִי | הִצֵּלְתֶּם<br>הִצֵּלְתִּי         | תִּהַצְּלוּ<br>תִּהַצְּלִי            | הִצֵּלוּ<br>הִצֵּלְהוּ |
| 1cp        | נִפֵּל                          |                  | הִצֵּלְנָא                         | נִהַצֵּל                              |                        |

Note that the imperatives also attest unexpected forms, based on the fact that they are influenced by the form of the imperfect.

The H-stem participle and G- and H-stem infinitives are quite predictable, given the pattern above.

H-Participle: מְהַצֵּל or מִצֵּל, מְהַצֵּלְהּ or מִצֵּלְהּ, etc.

G-Infinitive: מִפֵּל

H-Infinitive: הִצֵּלְהּ

As observed above, in each of these forms the *nun* has assimilated into the following consonant, resulting in a doubled consonant. Thus, *\*yinpel* → *yippel*. This is a relatively simple transformation, and deriving the root from these forms is relatively straightforward. Identifying these forms becomes problematic when one considers the other weak verbs that have forms similar to these.

Part 2.

First- 'aleph verbs.

Roots with an **𐤀** as their first consonant have verbal forms that are only slightly distinct from those of the strong verb.

As with first-*nun* roots, the differences appear primarily when prefixes are added to the root. For the G-stem, the result is that the regular short /i/ of the prefix transforms into /ē/ (..).

So the 3ms form of **𐤀𐤌𐤓** in the perfect is **𐤀𐤌𐤓**, but in the imperfect it is **𐤀𐤌𐤓**.

The 2mp form in the perfect is **𐤀𐤌𐤓𐤕**, but in the imperfect it is **𐤀𐤌𐤓𐤕**.

Notice that the 'aleph in the prefixed forms does not have a shewa or any vowel beneath it.

**Exercise 10a.**

Based on the two examples above, you should be able to predict the following forms. Fill in the blanks of the chart ( **𐤀𐤌𐤓** for the G-Imperfect and **𐤀𐤌𐤓**):

|     | G-Imperfect | G-Imperative |
|-----|-------------|--------------|
| 3ms | 𐤀𐤌𐤓         | XXXXXXXXX    |
| 3fs |             | XXXXXXXXX    |
| 2ms |             | 𐤀𐤌𐤓          |
| 2fs |             | 𐤀𐤌𐤓          |
| 1cs | 𐤀𐤌𐤓         | XXXXXXXXX    |
| 3mp |             | XXXXXXXXX    |
| 3fp |             | XXXXXXXXX    |
| 2mp |             | 𐤀𐤌𐤓          |
| 2fp |             | 𐤀𐤌𐤓          |
| 1cp |             | XXXXXXXXX    |

Notice that the 1cs form would have been \*אמר , but because of the redundancy of two 'alephs, this shortens to the form אמר.

The D-stem shows no major inconsistencies with the basic paradigm (e.g., \*אמר and \*אמר --- the /a/ theme vowel is due to the influence of the *resh*), but the H-stem does show significant deviation from the basic paradigm. The forms of first-'aleph roots in the H-stem must be learned individually for each root.

### Part 3.

#### First-yodh verbs.

Roots with a ' as the first root-consonant are like the other verbal patterns studied in this lesson, in that peculiarities in their forms emerge only with the application of prefixes to their root. The G- and D-stem perfect to these verbs are, therefore, analogous to strong verbs.

For the G-imperfect, there are two basic patterns, depending on the specific verb/root; for the H-imperfect, there is a single pattern. These are illustrated in the chart below. (D-stem imperfects are too rare to warrant discussion.)

|     | G-Imperf. ידע | G-Imperf. יתב | G-Imvs.   | H-Perf. | H-Impef. |
|-----|---------------|---------------|-----------|---------|----------|
| 3ms | ינדע          | יתב           |           | הודע    | יהודע    |
| 3fs | תנדע          | תתב           |           | הודעת   | תהודע    |
| 2ms | תנדע          | תתב           | תב / דע   | הודעת   | תהודע    |
| 2fs | תנדעין        | תתבין         | תבי / דעי | הודעתי  | תהודעין  |
| 1cs | אנדע          | אתב           |           | הודעת   | אהודע    |
| 3mp | ינדעון        | יתבון         |           | הודעו   | יהודעון  |
| 3fp | ינדען         | יתבן          |           | הודעה   | יהודען   |
| 2mp | תנדעון        | תתבון         | תבו / דעו | הודעתון | תהודעון  |
| 2fp | תנדען         | תתבן          | תבה / דעה | הודעתן  | תהודען   |
| 1cp | ננדע          | נתב           |           | הודענא  | נהודע    |

The G-stem imperfect of ידע mimics the pattern of a root whose first root consonant is a *nun*, one that does not assimilate. The G-stem imperfect of יתב mimics the pattern of a root whose first root consonant is a *nun* that does assimilate.

The H-stem of ידע shows an /a/ vowel where we expect /e/ ( ..); this is due to the influence of the guttural 'ayin. Thus we have הודע instead of הודע. One root

deviates from this and makes the H-stem with a prefixed הִי-, the root יבל, which appears in the H-3ms perfect as הִיבַל.

One of the side effects of these similarities between roots is that it is sometimes difficult, when reading Biblical Aramaic, to recognize the root from which a given verb form derives. This, in turn, makes it difficult to look up the meaning of the verb.

### Exercise 10b.

List the possible roots from which these verbal forms might derive and look up the correct root in the Answers Appendix.

1. שׂא
2. הב
3. פקו
4. דע
5. תהוּבד

### Exercise 10c.

Translate this slightly simplified version of Daniel 7:11-14

11.

חַזָּה הַגּוֹיִת בְּאַדְוִין מִן־קָל מְלִיָּא רַבְרַבְתָּא דִּי קַרְנָא מְמַלְלָה  
חַזָּה הַגּוֹיִת עַד דִּי קְטִילַת חַיּוֹתָא  
וְהוּבַד גְּשָׁמָה וַיְהִיבַת לִיקְדַת אֲשָׁה

12.

וְשָׂאָר חַיּוֹתָא הַעֲדִיו שְׁלִטְנָהוֹן  
וְאַרְכָּה בְּחַיִּין יְהִיבַת לְהוּם עַד־זְמַן וְעַד־

13.

חַזָּה הַגּוֹיִת בְּחַזּוּי לִיָּא  
וְאָרוּ עַם־עַנְנֵי שְׁמַיָּא כְּבַר אֲנָשׁ אַתָּה הוּא  
וְעַד־עַתִּיק יוֹמִיָּא מְטָה וְקַדְמוּהִי הַקְרַבּוּהִי

14.

וְלָהּ יְהִיב שְׁלִטָּן וַיְקַר וּמְלָכוּ  
וְכָל עַמְמִיָּא אֲמִיָּא וְלִשְׁנַיָּא לָהּ יַפְלָחוּן

שְׁלִיטְנָה שְׁלִטְן עֲלֵם דִּי-לָא יְעֲדָה  
וּמְלִכּוּתָהּ דִּי-לָא תִתְחַבֵּל

Consider the following:

In the third line of verse 11, note the forms of אֲבַד = G-stem “to perish”, in the H-stem “to destroy”, in the Hp-stem “to be destroyed” (Hp-perf. הוּבַד)

In the first line of verse 12, the verb הֶעֱדִי is an H-3mp perfect of עָדָה: “to take away.” The /e/ vowel under the *heh* (instead of an /a/ vowel) is the result of the following guttural consonant. Instead of translating, “the rest of the beasts took away their dominion,” it is likely that this verb is intended to have an impersonal subject, and should therefore be translated into the English passive. The first noun phrase is marking the topic of the sentence, best translated “As for the rest of the beasts, their dominion was taken away.”

In the second line of verse 12, note the curious phrases to mark time at the end.

In the second line of verse 13, note the phrase “like a son of man,” meaning like a human being. We might expect a ׀ to precede this phrase, to make “one like a human being”.

In the third line of verse 13, note the object suffix (3ms) on the H-3mp perfect of קָרַב. The addition of the suffix results in the reduction of the short /i/ beneath the *resh* in the regular form of the H-3mp perfect: הֶקְרַבּוּ. Notice that here there is no clear subject, and so one must assume an impersonal subject, and translate with an English passive: “He was brought near” (instead of “they brought him near”).

In the third line of verse 14, the verb יְעֲדָה is a G-3ms imperfect of עָדָה “to pass away.” Compare the H-stem of this verb, as it appears in verse 12.

## Lesson 11: Weak Verbs II: Second and Third-Weak Roots

Part 1.

Second-*yodh* and -*waw* verbs.

Originally, *yodh* and *waw* functioned as discrepant root consonants, independent of each other. However, as Aramaic developed, the two consonants, especially as they appeared in the middle or at the end of a root, merged together, so that now it is often difficult to discern whether a root had a *waw* as its original second consonant, or a *yodh*. In general, the G-perfect of these roots has a long /ā/ in the first syllable (קָמַת), while the G-imperfect has a murmured vowel after the prefixed y- or t- and a long /ū/ in the second syllable (יְקוּמַת). It is a consistent feature of verbs of this type to carry a murmured vowel or half-vowel beneath any prefixed element.

The D-stem has usually a *yodh* as the second consonant, which never disappears. The form of these verbs in the D-stem is identical to that of the strong verb.

The H-stem prefix to the perfect is הִקְמַת. The vowel of the second syllable is either /ī/ or /ē/ ( .. ) (הִקְמַת or הִקְמַת). The prefix element to the H-stem imperfect usually carries just a murmured vowel, as in the G-stem. The H-imperfect is distinguished from the G-imperfect through the vowel of the second syllable, which is /ī/ (יְקוּמַת). Occasionally, other forms of the H-imperfect appear, having the pattern of יְהִקְמַת and its Aphel variant יְהִקְמַת.

Because the verbal forms of this type of root are characterized by long vowels, the paradigms are somewhat predictable. Note that the next-to-last syllable often carries the stress in these forms.

|     | G-Perfect          | G-Imperfect  | H-Perfect    | H-Imperfect                       |
|-----|--------------------|--------------|--------------|-----------------------------------|
| 3ms | קָמַת              | יְקוּמַת     | הִקְמַת      | יְהִקְמַת / יְהִקְמַת / יְהִקְמַת |
| 3fs | קָמַתָּ            | תְּקוּמַת    | הִקְמַתָּ    | תְּהִקְמַת / etc.                 |
| 2ms | קָמַתְּ (qāmtā)    | תְּקוּמַת    | הִקְמַתְּ    | תְּהִקְמַת / etc.                 |
| 2fs | קָמַתִּי (qāmtī)   | תְּקוּמַתִּי | הִקְמַתִּי   | תְּהִקְמַתִּי / etc.              |
| 1cs | קָמַתְתִּי         | אֶקְמַת      | הִקְמַתְתִּי | אֶהִקְמַת / etc.                  |
| 3mp | קָמוּ              | יְקוּמוּ     | הִקְמוּ      | יְהִקְמוּ / etc.                  |
| 3fp | קָמְהוּ            | יְקוּמְהוּ   | הִקְמְהוּ    | יְהִקְמְהוּ / etc.                |
| 2mp | קָמַתוּן (qomtūn)  | תְּקוּמוּן   | הִקְמַתוּן   | תְּהִקְמוּן / etc.                |
| 2fp | קָמַתְנָן (qomtēn) | תְּקוּמוּנָן | הִקְמַתְנָן  | תְּהִקְמוּנָן / etc.              |
| 1cp | קָמַנְתִּי         | נִקְמוּ      | הִקְמַנְתִּי | נִהִקְמוּ / etc.                  |

The G-participles sometimes have *yodh*, sometimes *'aleph* as the middle consonant:

|      | G-stem   | G-stem passive | H-stem (Haphel)            |
|------|----------|----------------|----------------------------|
| m.s. | קָאֵם    | קִים           | מְקִים / מְהִקִים / מְקִים |
| f.s. | קְיָמָה  | קִימָה         | מְקִימָה                   |
| m.p. | קְיָמִין | קִימִין        | מְקִימִין                  |
| f.p. | קְיָמַן  | קִימַן         | מְקִימַן                   |

The imperatives, based on the imperfect forms, are not that surprising, nor are the infinitives:

|            | G-stem inv. | H-stem inv. (Haphel) |
|------------|-------------|----------------------|
| m.s.       | קֹום        | הִקִים               |
| f.s.       | קְיָמִי     | הִקִימִי             |
| m.p.       | קְיָמוּ     | הִקִימוּ             |
| f.p.       | קְיָמַה     | הִקִימַה             |
| Infinitive | מְקָם       | הִקְמָה              |

Other Idiosyncracies:

Some second-*yodh/waw*, roots (like שִׁים “to set”) have G-perfect forms like those listed above (שָׁם, שָׁמַת, etc.) but have G-imperfects with a long /ī/ (יִשִׁים), which, of course, look for all the world like H-imperfects. Further confusing things is that the G-3ms passive perfect would look identical to the G-m.s. passive participle: שִׁים.

The tG and tD forms of these roots typically have a doubled t-prefix. Thus, in the imperfect יִתְשָׁם (yittəšām).

## Exercise 11a

Translate this slightly simplified version of Ezra 5:6-10; the first verse you have already seen before.

6.

פִּרְשֵׁגִן אֲגֵרְתָּא דִּי־שְׁלַח תִּתְּנִי פִּחַת עֵבֶר־נְהָרָא  
... וּבְנֹתָהּ אֲפִרְסְכֵיָא דִּי בְעֵבֶר־נְהָרָא עַל דְּרִיּוֹשׁ מְלָכָא

7.

פִּתְגָמָא שְׁלַחוּ עֲלוּהִי  
וּבְדָנָה פְּתִיב בְּגִוְהָ  
לְדְרִיּוֹשׁ מְלָכָא שְׁלָמָא כֻּלָּא

8.

יָדִיעַ לְהוּא לְמִלְכָּא דִּי־אֲזִלְנָא לִיהוּד מְדִינְתָּא  
לְבֵית אֱלֹהָא רַבָּא  
וְהוּא מִתְּבַנָּא אֲבַן גָּלִל ...  
וְעִבְדִּתָּא דָּךְ אֲסַפְרָנָא מִתְּעַבְדָּה וּמִהַצְלִיחָה בְּיַדְהֶם

9.

אֲדִין שְׁאַלְנָא לְשַׁבְיָא אֵלְךְ בְּנֹמָא  
אֲמַרְנָא לְהֶם  
מִן־שָׁם לְכֶם טַעַם בֵּיתָא דְנָה לְמִבְנָא  
וְאֲשַׁרְנָא דְנָה לְשַׁכְלָלָה

10.

וְאֵרַף שְׁמֵהֶתְהֶם שְׁאַלְנָא לְהֶם לְהוֹדְעוֹתְךָ  
דִּי נִכְתָּב שְׁם־גְּבַרְיָא דִּי בְּרֵאשִׁיָּהֶם

Consider the following:

In the first line of verse 6, the name of the governor is תִּתְּנִי .

In the second line of verse 6, the word אֲפִרְסְכֵיָא appears to be a gentilic word, due to the characteristic plural emphatic/determined ending for this type of word. However, it is understood as a common word, meaning “officials”.

In the the second line of verse 7, the object of the verb שְׁלַח precedes the verb. This word order (Object + Verb + Subject) is typical of Biblical Aramaic. The phrase בְּדָנָה is made up of a preposition (בְּ) plus the demonstrative pronoun

(ܗܢܗ= “this”). The phrase is translated variously “as follows” in the NRSV and New Jerusalem Bible, and as “thus” in the KJV. The phrase implies that what follows (in the third line of verse 7) is a quotation of the letter itself. In the third line of verse 7, the closing two words are the salutation to Darius.

In the first line of verse 8, ܠܝܗܘܕܐ is the preposition ܠ plus the place name ܝܗܘܕܐ. In the third line of verse 8, the phrase ܐܘܢ ܗܘܢܐ ܗܘܐ is a noun phrase that indicates the material “out of” which the temple was built.

In the fourth line of verse 9, the phrase ܠܫܫܟܠܗ is made up of the preposition ܠ plus the Shaphel infinitive of ܠܠܐ. The Shaphel is a rare conjugation in Biblical Aramaic, essentially like the Haphel (or, Aphel), indicating causation.

In the first line of verse 10, the phrase ܠܗܘܕܥܘܬܗ is made up of the preposition ܠ plus the Haphel infinitive of ܕܥܐ plus the 2ms object suffix, “you”. When an infinitive is in construct with a following word or when it is followed by a suffix it takes the ܗܐ- ending.

## Part 2.

Third-*yodh*, *waw*, and *'aleph* verbs.

Roots that originally ended with either *yodh*, *waw*, or *'aleph* have a variety of forms due to the fact that the original *yodh*, *waw*, or *'aleph* was no longer pronounced. Typically, in the G-3ms perfect, the verb forms from roots with an original *yodh* or *waw* end in ܗ in Biblical Aramaic and later dialects, or sometimes ܚ (since the two consonants were often used interchangeably). And for this reason, the roots are often listed in dictionaries with ܗ as their final consonant, and are sometimes referred to as “third-*heh* roots”; nevertheless, imperfect forms that lack suffix typically end with an ܚ: ܚܒܢܐ. Roots that originally ended with an *'aleph* are listed with this root consonant in the dictionaries and this consonant often does appear in the G-3ms perfect and imperfect forms. All the same, many forms of these verbs do not attest a ܗ or an ܚ. The result is that learning the paradigm of these weak verbs is essential.

The typical root used to illustrate this paradigm is the one indicating “building”: ܒܢܐ. In the G-stem, the perfect, imperfect, imperative, and passive perfect have the following forms.

|     | G-Perfect            | G-Imperfect | G-Imperative | G-Passive Perfect |
|-----|----------------------|-------------|--------------|-------------------|
| 3ms | בְּנָה               | יִבְנֵא     |              | בְּנִי            |
| 3fs | בְּנַת               | תִּבְנֵא    |              | ?                 |
| 2ms | בְּנֵיתָ (bənaytā)   | תִּבְנֵא    | בְּנִי       | ?                 |
| 2fs | בְּנֵיתִי (bənaytīʾ) | תִּבְנֵין * | ?            | ?                 |
| 1cs | בְּנִית              | אִבְנֵא     |              | ?                 |
| 3mp | בְּנוּ               | יִבְנוּן    |              | בְּנִין           |
| 3fp | בְּנָה *             | יִבְנֵין    |              | ?                 |
| 2mp | בְּנֵיתוּן           | תִּבְנוּן   | בְּנוּ       | ?                 |
| 2fp | בְּנֵיתִן            | תִּבְנֵין   | ?            | ?                 |
| 1cp | בְּנֵיא              | נִבְנֵא     |              | ?                 |

Because the corpus of Biblical Aramaic is so small, many forms do not occur. But, the above chart illustrates some of the peculiarities of this type of verb. The *yodh/waw* that has disappeared in the G-3ms perfect form appears uniformly as a *yodh* in the G-2ms, 2fs perfect forms, as well as in the G-3fp, 2fp imperfect forms.

The masculine plural forms in the perfect, imperfect, and imperative are all characterized by the final ךְ- (or, ךְּ-) ending. This will help you to distinguish roots with an original *yodh/waw* as a third root-consonant and roots with a *yodh/waw* as a second root-consonant; compare קָמַךְ (G-3mp perf.), יִקְוֵמוּן (G-3mp imperf.), קְוֵמוּ (G-m.s. imperative).

For the G-passive perfect, note that there are only two forms attested. The 3ms form is identical to the G-m.s. imperative. As will be seen in the following chart, the ending of this form, ךְּ , bears a similarity to the ending of D-3ms perfect and the D-m.s. imperative. The G-passive 3mp perfect also bears an ending, ךְּ , that is similar to the ending on the D- and H-3mp perfects.

|     | D-Perfect              | D-Imperfect | D-Imperative |
|-----|------------------------|-------------|--------------|
| 3ms | בְּנִי                 | יִבְנֵא     |              |
| 3fs | בְּנִית *<br>בְּנִיתָ  | תִּבְנֵא    |              |
| 2ms | בְּנִיתָ               | תִּבְנֵא    | בְּנִי       |
| 2fs | בְּנִיתִי              | תִּבְנִין * | ?            |
| 1cs | בְּנִיתָ               | אִבְנֵא     |              |
| 3mp | בְּנִיו                | יִבְנִין    |              |
| 3fp | בְּנֵיהָ *<br>בְּנֵיהָ | יִבְנִין    |              |
| 2mp | בְּנִיתוֹן             | תִּבְנִין   | בְּנוּ       |
| 2fp | בְּנִיתֶן              | תִּבְנִין   | ?            |
| 1cp | בְּנִינֵא              | נִבְנֵא     |              |

Notice that although the D-3mp perfect ends in יוֹ -, the D-m.p. imperative ends in וּ -, and the D-3mp, 2mp imperfect end in ין -.

|     | H-Perfect                | H-Imperfect           | H-Imperative | H-Pass. Perfect, from the root אָתָה |
|-----|--------------------------|-----------------------|--------------|--------------------------------------|
| 3ms | הִבְנִי                  | יִהְבֵּא or יִבְנֵא   |              | ?                                    |
| 3fs | הִבְנִית *<br>הִבְנִיתָ  | תִּהְבֵּא or תִּבְנֵא |              | הִתְבִּית                            |
| 2ms | הִבְנִיתָ                | תִּהְבֵּא etc.        | הִבְנִי      | ?                                    |
| 2fs | הִבְנִיתִי               | תִּהְבֵּין *          | ?            | ?                                    |
| 1cs | הִבְנִיתָ                | אִהְבֵּא              |              | ?                                    |
| 3mp | הִבְנִיו                 | יִהְבֵּין             |              | הִתְבִּיו                            |
| 3fp | הִבְנֵיהָ *<br>הִבְנֵיהָ | יִהְבֵּין             |              | ?                                    |
| 2mp | הִבְנִיתוֹן              | תִּהְבֵּין            | הִבְנוּ      | ?                                    |
| 2fp | הִבְנִיתֶן               | תִּהְבֵּין            | ?            | ?                                    |
| 1cp | הִבְנִינֵא               | נִהְבֵּא              |              | ?                                    |

The H-stem has many of the same endings as the D-stem.

The participles, especially for the G-stem, also offer problems due to their idiosyncracies.

|      | G-Participle | G-Passive Part. | D-Part./Pass. Part.   | H-Part./Pass. Part.       |
|------|--------------|-----------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| m.s. | בְּנֵה       | בְּנֵה          | מְבַנֵּי / מְבַנֵּא * | מְהַבְּנֵי / מְהַבְּנֵא * |
| f.s. | בְּנֵיהָ     | בְּנֵיהָ        | מְבַנֵּיהָ            | מְהַבְּנֵיהָ              |
| m.p. | בְּנֵין      | בְּנֵין         | מְבַנֵּין             | מְהַבְּנֵין               |
| f.p. | בְּנֵין      | בְּנֵין         | מְבַנֵּין             | מְהַבְּנֵין               |

The only distinction between G-f.s., f.p. participles and the G-f.s., f.p. passive participles appears in the first vowel,  $\text{ָ}$  versus  $\text{ֹ}$ .

The only distinction between the D-participles and the D-passive participle would appear in the m.s. form, though the D-m.s. passive participle does not occur. As in the paradigm for the regular root **כתב** the other forms of the D-participle are identical. The same holds true for the distinction between the H-participles and the H-passive participles. The H-participles may also appear without the *heh*, i.e., as A-participles (Aphel-participles): **מבנא**, etc.

The infinitives are somewhat more predictable.

G-stem infinitive

**מבנא**

D-stem infinitive

**בנא**

H-stem infinitive

**הבנא**

### Exercise 11b

Translate this slightly simplified version of Ezra 5:11-13; several of the verses you have already seen before.

11.

וכנמא פתגמא התיבונא למאמר  
אנחנא המו עבדוהי דייאלה שמיא וארעא  
ובנין ביתא דיייהוה בנה מקדמת דנה שנין שניאן...

12.

להן מן-די הרגזו אבהתנא אלה שמיא  
יהב המו ביר נבוכדנצר מלך-בבל כשדיא  
וביתה דנה סתרה ועמה הגלי לבבל

13.

ברם בשנת חדה לכורש מלכא די בבל  
כורש מלכא שם טעם ביתאלהא דנה למבנא

Consider the following:

In the first line of verse 11, the word **התיבונא** is the H-3mp perfect of **תוב**, with a 1cp object suffix, “to us”.

In the third line of verse 12, the word סַתְרָהּ is the G-3ms perfect of סַתַּר plus the 3ms object suffix, “it”.

### Part 3.

Verbs whose second and third root-consonants are the same consonant.

Some roots, like עַלַּל (“to enter”), have the same letter for their second and third consonants. This produces verbal forms that one would not expect, especially for the G- and H-stems. (The D-stem for these types of roots is regular.)

|     | G-Perfect   | G-Imperfect    | H-Perfect               | H-Imperfect      |
|-----|-------------|----------------|-------------------------|------------------|
| 3ms | עַל         | יַעַל (ye‘‘ōl) | הַעַל / הִנְעַל         | יַהַעַל / יַעַל  |
| 3fs | עַלְתָּ     | תַעַל          | תַּהַעַל / תִּנְעַלְתְּ | תַּהַעַל / תַעַל |
| 2ms | עַלְלִיתָ   | תַעַל          | תַּהַעַלְתָּ / etc.     | תַּהַעַל / etc.  |
| 2fs | עַלְלִיתִי  | תַעַלִּין      | תַּהַעַלְתִּי           | תַּהַעַלִּין     |
| 1cs | עַלְתָּ     | אֶעַל          | תַּהַעַלְתָּ            | אֶהַעַל          |
| 3mp | עַלּוּ      | יַעַלּוּן      | הַעַלּוּ                | יַהַעַלּוּן      |
| 3fp | עַלְהֵן     | יַעַלְנָן      | תַּהַעַלְהֵן            | יַהַעַלְנָן      |
| 2mp | עַלְלִיתוּן | תַעַלּוּן      | תַּהַעַלְתוּן           | תַּהַעַלּוּן     |
| 2fp | עַלְלִיתֵן  | תַעַלְנָן      | תַּהַעַלְתֵן            | תַּהַעַלְנָן     |
| 1cp | עַלְלִנָּא  | נַעַל          | הַעַלְנָא               | נַהַעַל          |

The characteristic feature of this type of root is that when a prefix is added, the first of the two identical consonants assimilates to the first consonant of the root. In other words, in the case of עַלַּל, the first *lamed* is assimilated into the preceding ‘*ayin*; we could represent the G-3ms imperfect in transliteration: ye‘‘ol. This form is derived from an earlier form \*ye‘lol or \*יַעַלְלִי\*. Similarly, the H-3ms perfect could be represented ha‘‘el and the H-3ms imperfect yəha‘‘el, though in an earlier stage of Aramaic they would have been, respectively, \*ha‘lel and \*yəha‘lel (הַעַלְלִי\* and יַהַעַלְלִי\*).

Sometimes, the doubling of a consonant, as in the double ‘*ayin* of ha‘‘el, is replaced by the sequence *nun*+consonant, so that we have han‘el, instead of ha‘‘el. Scholars dispute amongst themselves whether or not this *nun* was actually pronounced, and, if so, why it appears in some forms and not others. For the beginning student, it is easiest to assume that it was pronounced and so to pronounce the *nun* when he or she comes across such a form.

Based on what you have just learned, the imperatives, participles, and infinitives are not difficult to understand.

### Participles

|      | G-stem | G-stem passive | H-stem (Haphel) | H-passive |
|------|--------|----------------|-----------------|-----------|
| m.s. | עָלַל  | עָלִיל         | מְהַעֵל         | מְהַעֵל   |
| f.s. | עָלָה  | עָלִילָה       | מְהַעֵלָה       | מְהַעֵלָה |
| m.p. | עָלִין | עָלִילִין      | מְהַעֵלִין      | etc.      |
| f.p. | עָלָן  | עָלִילָן       | מְהַעֵלָן       |           |

### Imperatives

|      | G-stem | H-stem (Haphel) |
|------|--------|-----------------|
| m.s. | עַל    | הַעֵל           |
| f.s. | עָלִי  | הַעֵלִי         |
| m.p. | עֲלוּ  | הַעֲלוּ         |
| f.p. | עֲלֵה  | הַעֲלֵה         |

|            |       |         |
|------------|-------|---------|
| Infinitive | מַעֵל | הַעֲלָה |
|------------|-------|---------|

### Exercise 11c.

Given what you have learned about the verbal forms, vocalize the following two-consonant verbal form according to the various parsings. Check your list against the one in the Answers Appendix:

דַּן

1. as a G-3mp perfect from דָּן (G: “to judge”)
2. as a G-3mp perfect from the imaginary root \*דָּנָה
3. as a G-m.p. imperative from the imaginary root \*דָּנָה
4. as a G-m.p. imperative from the imaginary root \*דָּן (G-3ms imperfect: \*דָּן).
5. as a G-m.p. imperative from the imaginary root \*דָּן (G-3ms

imperfect: \*יִדְּוּן\*).

6. as a G-3mp perfect from the imaginary root \*דִּנְנָ\*

7. as a G-m.p. imperative from the imaginary root \*דִּנְנָ\* (G-3ms

imperfect: \*יִדְּוּן\*.)

### Exercise 11d.

Translate this slightly simplified version of Ezra 5:14-17; the last verse you have already seen before.

14.

וְאִרְיָ מְאֲנִיָּא דִּי-בֵית־אֱלֹהָא דִּי דְהָבָא וְכִסְפָּא  
דִּי נְבוּכַדְנֶצַּר הִנְפִיק מִן-הֵיכְלָא דִּי בִירוּשָׁלַם  
וְהֵיבֵל הַמּוֹ לְהֵיכְלָא דִּי בָבֶל  
הִנְפִיק הַמּוֹ פּוֹרֶשׁ מִלְכָּא מִן-הֵיכְלָא דִּי בָבֶל  
וַיְהִיבוּ לְשִׁשְׁבַּצָר... דִּי פָחַה שְׁמָה

15.

וְאִמְרֵ-לָהּ אֵל מְאֲנִיָּא שְׂא אֶזְל־חַחַת הַמּוֹ בְּהֵיכְלָא דִּי בִירוּשָׁלַם  
וּבֵית אֱלֹהָא יִתְבַּנָּא עַל-אַחֲרָהּ

16.

אֲדִין שִׁשְׁבַּצָר דִּךְ אַתְהָ יְהֵב אֲשִׁיָּא דִּי-בֵית אֱלֹהָא דִּי בִירוּשָׁלַם  
וּמִן-אֲדִין וְעַד-כֶּעַן מִתְבַּנָּא וְלֹא שְׁלִים

17.

וּכְעַן הֵן עַל-מִלְכָּא טָב  
יִתְבַּקֵּר בְּבֵית גִּנְנִיָּא דִּי מִלְכָּא תְמָה דִּי בְּבָבֶל  
הֵן אִיתִי דִּי-מִן-פּוֹרֶשׁ מִלְכָּא שִׁים טַעַם לְמִבְנֵי בֵית אֱלֹהָא דִּי בִירוּשָׁלַם  
וְרַעוּת מִלְכָּא עַל-דְּנָה  
יִשְׁלַח עַל יָנָא

Consider the following:

In the fifth line of verse 14, the last word, שְׁמָה, is the G-3ms perfect of שִׁים with the 3ms object suffix, “him” (i.e., Sheshbazzar). (The subject of שִׁים is Coresh.)

This means that in order to create an idiomatic English translation one must translate ܘܚܝܘܢ with the English word “whom”.

In the first line of verse 15, the word ܘܗܝܠ is the near demonstrative, “these”. In this same line, the three words ܘܗܝܠ-ܘܗܝܠ-ܘܗܝܠ are three imperatives. The first imperative goes with the words that precede it. The other two are understood together and go with the words that follow. The last of these imperatives, ܘܗܝܠ, is from the root ܢܗܠ “to go down” and is here in the H-stem.

In the fifth line of verse 17, the verb ܘܫܠܗ expresses the hope of the writer, and may be translated “May he . . .”

## A Last Note: Verbs with Object Suffixes

The verbal forms you have learned can also carry suffixes that represent the object of the verb. In Biblical Aramaic there are only a few verbal forms that are attested with such suffixes. The application of suffixes in general follows the expected rules of vowel reduction, so that when a 3ms suffix  $\text{ה} \text{---}$  is added to a G-3ms perfect verb, e.g.  $\text{סָתַר}$ , the result is  $\text{סָתַרְהוּ}$ . This form recalls the earlier form of the G-3ms perfect, \*satara. The same applies to other forms of the verb as well.

With the imperfect one commonly finds between the verbal form and the suffix an extra syllable: --inn--. So, e.g., when the 3ms suffix  $\text{ה} \text{---}$  is added to an H-1cs imperfect,  $\text{אֶהְיֶה־וְנָדַע}$ , we find  $\text{אֶהְיֶה־וְנָדַע־נָה}$ .

When suffixes are applied to the infinitives in the D-, H-, tG, and tD-stems, the final  $\text{ה} \text{---}$  ending is replaced with an  $\text{וְה} \text{---}$  ending. Thus, when the 2ms suffix  $\text{ךָ} \text{---}$  is appended to the H-infinitive,  $\text{הוֹדַעְה}$ , we find the form  $\text{הוֹדַעְוְהָךְ}$ .

## Glossary

אב = “father”, m. (Pl. with 1cp suffix: אבֹּהֵינָא = “our fathers” --- see Lesson 7 for this word and its strange forms.)

אבד = G-stem “to perish”; H-stem “to destroy”; Hp-stem “to be destroyed”  
(הובד)

אבן = “stone”, f.

אגרה = “letter” f. (sing. emphatic אגרה )

אין = “then”

אושה = “wall” (pl. emphatic אושיא)

אול = G-stem “to go”

אחר = f. sing. (adj.) “another” (’ohōrī)

אימתני = “terrifying” (adj.)

איתי = “there is” or “it is”

אכל = “to eat”

אלה = “God” m.

אלך = “these”, m.p. demonstrative pronoun

אלף = “thousand”, m. (pl. אלפין)

אמה = “nation” f. (pl. אמין)

אמר = G-stem “to say”

אנחנא = “we”, independent pronoun

אנש = “person” or “human”, m.

אספרנא = “thoroughly”, “diligently”, (adv.)

אפי = “also”

אפרסכי = “official”, m.

ארבע = “four”, used with feminine nouns

ארו = “lo” or “behold”, though often it may be left untranslated. It functions to draw attention to a shift in topic.

אריה = “lion”, m.

אריך = “proper” (adj.)

ארקה = “lengthening”, f.

ארע = land (in the emph./det.: ארעא)

אשה = “fire”, f.

\*אשרן = “wall”, m. (determined/emphatic form: אשרנא)

אתה = G-stem “to come”

אַתָּר = “place”, m. (sing. emph./det.: אַתָּרֵא )

בְּ “in” or “by”

בְּאַתָּר = “then” (made up of אַתָּרֵא [“then”] + בְּ [“in”] )

בְּאַתָּר = “after” (made up of אַתָּר [“place”] + בְּ [“in”] )

בְּבָבֶל = “Babylon”

בֵּין = “between”

בֵּית = “house”, m. (בֵּיתָא = “the house”; two syllables bay-tā')

בָּנָה = G-stem “to build”; Gp-stem “to be built”; tG-stem “to be built”

בְּעוּ = “request” f.

בַּעַל = “master” m.

בְּקַר = D-stem “to seek”

בֵּר = “son”, m. (in the emph./det.: בְּרֵא , in the plural abs. בְּרֵינֵי)

בְּרַם = “nevertheless” (adv.)

בְּשָׂר = “flesh”, m.

גְּב = “back”, m. (pl. גְּבֵינֵי)

גְּבַר = “man”, m. (pl. גְּבַרֵינֵי)

גְּו = “middle”, “midst”, m.

גִּוַח = H-stem “to stir up” (H-part., f.s., מְגִיחָה )

גְּזָרָה = “decree”, f. (in the cnstr.: גְּזָרְתָא)

גְּלָגַל = “wheel”, m.

גָּלָה = H-stem “to take into exile”

גָּלַל = “rolled” (adj.)

גְּזָז = “treasure”, m. (pl. גְּזָזֵינֵי) In its context, in Ezra, the royal “house of treasures” seems to be referring to where records and documents were filed and kept.

גְּרָ = “wing”, f. (pl. גְּרֵינֵי)

גְּשָׂם = “body”, m. (with suffix: גְּשָׂמָה)

דָּ = “this”, f.s. demonstrative pronoun

דָּב = “bear”, m.

דָּהָב = “gold”, m. (sing. emph./det.: דָּהָבֵא )

דִּ = “of”, “who”, “whose”, “whom”, “which”, “that”, an indicator that what follows is a quotation

דִּין = “judgment”, “court”, m.

דִּינָא = “judge”, m.  
 דִּחַל = “to fear”; (G-f.s. pass. part. דִּחַלְיָהּ = “frightful”)  
 דִּךְ = “this” f.s. demonstrative pronoun  
 דִּכְרָן = “record”, m. (dokrān) (pl. emph./det.: דִּכְרָנֵי)  
 דִּלַּק = G-stem “to burn”  
 דִּמָּה = G-stem “to be like”  
 דִּנָּה = “this” m.s. demonstrative pronoun  
 דִּרְקַן = G-stem: “to be shattered”, H-stem “to crush” (H-part. מְדִרְקַן)

הוּא = “he”  
 הוּהָ = “to be” (“I was” = הוּיִיתָ)  
 הִיא = “she”  
 הַיְכָל = “palace”, “temple” m. (sing. emph./det.: הַיְכָלֵא)  
 הֵמוּ = “them”, independent pronoun  
 הֵן = “if”

׀ = “and”, “or”, “but” Sometimes the conjunction does not need to be translated.  
 When it is followed by ב/בּ, פ/פּ, and מ it becomes ׀ ;  
 when it is followed by a consonant+murmured vowel, it also turns to ׀ ;  
 when it is followed by ׀ the *yodh* loses its shewa and the letters  
 together are written: ׀׀ ;  
 when it is followed by an ultra-short vowel, the corresponding full  
 vowel replaces it (e.g., - ׀ + ׀ becomes - ׀׀ and - ׀ + ׀  
 becomes - ׀׀).

זִמְן = “time”, m.  
 חֲבוּלָהּ = “crime”, f.  
 חֲבַל = D-stem “to destroy”, tD-stem “to be destroyed”  
 חֲדָא = “one”, used with masculine nouns  
 חֲדָהּ = “one”, used with feminine nouns  
 חֲוּרָא = “white” (adj.)  
 חֲזָהּ = G-stem “to see” (G-inf.: מְחֲזָהּ)  
 חֲזוּן = “vision”, m. (emph./det.: חֲזוּנֵא)  
 חֲיָא = “living” (adj.) (m.p. חֲיָיִא = “life”)

חַיָּוְיָהּ = “animal”, “beast”, f.

חַיָּוְיָהּ = see חַיָּוְיָהּ

חַכְמַיִם = “wise” (adj.)

חֲלֵם = “dream”, m.

הֵמוּ = the 3mp independent pronoun “they” This form is peculiar to the book of  
Ezra; elsewhere it is אֲנַנְיָן and הֵמוֹן

חַמְרָא = “wine”, m.

חֲשָׁחוּ = “needs”, f.

טָב = “good” (adj.)

טוֹר = “mountain”, m.

טַעֲמָא = “decree”

יָבַל = H-stem “to carry”

יָד = “hand”, f.

יָדַע = G-stem “to know”, “to understand” (G-impf. יִדְעַע), Gp-stem part. “known”  
(יָדִיעַ)

H-stem “to make known” (H-perf. הוֹדַעַת)

יָהַב = G-stem “to give”, Gp-stem “to be given” (יָהִיב)

יּוֹם = “day”, m.

יָכַל = G-stem “to be able”

יָם = “sea”, m. (emph./det.: יָמָא)

יָקַדַּח = “burning” (cstr. יָקַדַּחַת), f.

יָקָר = “honor”, m.

יָרַח = “moon”, m.

יָתַב = G-stem “to sit”

יָתִיר = “very much” (adv.); “surpassing” (adj.)

כְּ “as” or “like”

כְּבִדְנָהּ = “as follows” (made up of כְּ = כְּ, בִדְנָהּ = כְּ)

כְּבִינָהּ = “window”, f.

כְּהֵן = “priest”, m.

כֹּל = “all” (kōl) (also spelled כֹּל, kol)

כֹּל-קֹבֵל = “corresponding to” kol-qōbel

כֹּל-קֹבֵל דִּי = “because”

כִּלְל = Shaphel-stem “to finish”  
 בִּן , בְּנִמָּא “thus” or “accordingly”  
 בְּנִתְהַה = “colleague”, m. (pl. + suffix בְּנִתְהַה )  
 בְּסַרְפָּא = “silver”, m. (sing. emph./det.: בְּסַרְפָּא )  
 כְּעֵין = “now”  
 כְּרִסְוֹן = “throne”, m. (korse’) (pl. כְּרִסְוֹן )  
 כְּשַׁדְיָא = “Chaldaean” (emph./det.: כְּשַׁדְיָא = “the Chaldaean”) --- see the next  
 lesson for the forms of gentilic nouns.  
 כְּתַב = G-stem “to write”; Gp-stem “to be written”

לְ = “to” or “for”, also ownershop: “belonging to”  
 לֹא = this particle negates verbs and when used alone means “no”  
 לֵבַב = “heart”, m.  
 לְבוּשׁ = “garment”, “robe”, m.  
 לְהוּוּא = “let it be” This is the G-3ms imperfect of הוּוּה.  
 לְהֵין = “but”, “except”  
 לַיְלָא = “night”, m. (emph./det.: לַיְלָא )  
 לְשׁוֹן = “tongue”, m.

מֶאֱנָא = “vessel”, m. (pl. determined/emphatic מֶאֱנָא )  
 מְדִינָה = “province”, f.  
 מְטָה = G-stem “to arrive”  
 מְלָה = “word”, f. (pl. מְלֵין )  
 מְלַח = “salt”, m (sing. emph./det.: מְלַחָא )  
 מְלַח = G-stem “to salt” i.e., to donate salt, or to eat salt.  
 מְלִיָּךְ = “king”, m. (מְלִיָּכָא = “the king”)  
 מְלִיכּוּ = “kingdom”, “kingship”, f.  
 מֵן = “from”, “because”  
 מֵן־דִּי = “because”  
 מֵן = “who?”, an interrogative pronoun  
 מְרַד = “rebellious” (adj.)  
 מְרַט = G-stem “to pluck”; Gp “to be plucked”  
 מְשַׁכְּבָא = “couch, bed”, m.

נְגַד = G-stem “to flow”

נְהִירוּ = “illumination”, f.

נְהַר = “river”, m.

נֹר = “fire”, sometimes m., sometimes f.

נִזַּק = G-stem “to suffer”

H-stem “to injure”

נָחַת = G-stem “to go down”; H-stem “to deposit”

נָטַל = G-stem “to lift”; Gp-stem “to be lifted”

נִמְר = “leopard”, m.

נִפַּק = G-stem “to go out”; H-stem “to bring out”, “to remove”

נִקָּא = “pure”, “pristine” (adj.)

נִשָּׂא = G-stem “to lift”, “to carry”

נִשָּׂר = “eagle”, m.

סָלַק = G-stem “to come up”

סִפְר = “book”, m. (pl. סִפְרִין)

סָפַר = “scribe”, m.

סָתַר = G-stem “to destroy”

עֶבֶד = “slave”, “servant”, m.

עָבַד = G-stem “to make”, “to do”; tG-stem “to be done”

עֵבִידָה = “work”, f.

עֵבֶר נְהָרָא = “Beyond-the-River”, the title of the region of Syria, Judah, Palestine

עַד = “until” (preposition)

עָדָה = G-stem “to pass away”; H-stem “to take away”; “to depose”

עֵדָן = “time”, m.

עוּף = “bird”, m.

עֵינַן = “eye”, f. (pl. עֵינִין)

עַל = “to” or “against” or “over” or “according to”

עֶלְמַם = “perpetuity”, “forever”, m.

עֵלַע = “tusk” or “rib”, f. (pl. עֵלְעִין)

עַם = “people”, m. (sing. emphatic עַמָּא )

עֶמְר = “wool”, m.

עָנָה = G-stem “to answer”

עֵנָן = “cloud”, m.

עֶקַר = tG-stem “to be uprooted”

עָרְוָה = “dishonor”, f. (sing. cstr.: עָרְוֹת)

עֶשֶׂר = “ten” used with feminine nouns

עָתִיד = “ready” (adj.)

עֵתִיק = “old” (adj.)

פָּחָה = “governor”, m.

פָּלַח = G-stem “to serve,” “pay reverence to”

פֶּם = “mouth”, m. (pl. פְּמִין)

פְּרוֹזַל = iron, m.

פְּרִשְׁגִּין = “copy”, m.

פְּתָגֻם = “word”, “command”, “concern”, m.

פָּתַח = G-stem “to open”; Gp-stem “to be opened”

צָדָקָה = “charity”, f.

צָלַח = H-stem “to cause to prosper”, “to prosper”

צִפּוֹר *sippar* = “bird”, f.

צִלָּם = “image”, m.

קָבַל = see under כָּל-קָבַל

קָדָם = “before” (referring to place), qōdām

קָדְמִי = “first” (adj.) (f.s. קָדְמִיָּה)

מִן קָדְמָתָא / מִקְדָּמָתָא = “before” (referring to time)

קוּם = G-stem “to arise”, H-stem “to set up,” “to install”, Hp-stem (קוּמִים) “to be set up”

קָטַל = G-stem “to kill”

קָל = “voice”, “sound”, m.

קָרַב = G-stem “to approach”; H-stem “to bring near”

קָרְיָה = “city”, f.

קָרְיָן = “horn”, f.; קָרְיָנִין = “two horns”, f.; וּקְרָנִין = “horns”, f.

רֵאשׁ = “head”, “leader”, m. (pl. רֵאשִׁין; pl. with suffix רֵאשִׁיהֶם)

רַב = “great” (adj.) (fem.: רַבָּה)

רַבּוּ = “greatness”, f.

רַבּוּ = “myriad”, “ten-thousand”, f. (pl. רַבּוּן)

רַבִּיעִי = “fourth” (f.s.: רַבִּיעִיָּה)

רְבִּירָב = “great” (adj.) (f. pl. abs. רְבִּירָבִין)

רָגַז = H-stem: “to anger”

רִגְלָא = foot, f. (dual: רִגְלָאִין)

רוּחַ = “wind”, f.

רָמַא = G-stem “to throw”; Gp-stem “to be thrown” (Gp-3mp perfect רָמִיּוּ)

רָעוּ = “desire”, f.

רָפַס = G-stem: “to tread, stamp on”

שָׁב = see שִׁיב

שְׂגִיָּא = “much” (adj.)

שְׂמַר = “side”, m.

שִׁיב = G-stem “to be old”; G-stem part. שֹׁב = “elder”

שָׁבַל = tD-stem “to observe”

שְׂעַר = “hair”, m.

שָׂאַל = G-stem “to request”, “to ask”

שְׂאָר = “remnant”, m.

שְׂבִיב = “flame”, m.

שָׁכַח = H-stem “to find”

שָׁלַח = G-stem “to send (a letter)”

שָׁלַם = “peace”, “well-being”, m.

שָׁלַם = G-stem “to be complete”; Gp-stem “to be finished”

שָׁלְטָן = “dominion”, m.

שֵׁם = “name”, m. (with suffix שְׁמֵיהּ)

שְׁמַיִן = “heavens”, m. (emph./det.: שְׁמַיָּא)

שָׁמַשׁ = D-stem “to serve”

שֵׁן = “tooth”, m (dual שְׁנַיִן; pl. שְׁנַיִין)

שָׁנָה = “year”, f.

שָׁנָה = G-stem “to change” or “to be different” (m. pl. part.: שְׁנַיִן)

D-stem “to change” (D-f.s. pass. part.: מְשַׁנָּה = “different”)

תּוּב = G-stem “to go back”; H-stem “to return (something)”

תְּלַג = “snow”, m.

תְּמָה = “there”

תְּנַיִנָּה = “two”, used with feminine nouns

ܦܩܝܢܐ = “strong” (adj.)

## Introductory Lessons in Aramaic: Answers Appendix

### Exercise: 1a.

מלכא      mlk'  
("the king")

תקיף      tqyp  
תקיפין    tqypyn  
("strong" in the singular and in the plural)

בית        byt  
ביתא      byt'  
בתין      btyn  
בתיא      bty'  
("house," "the house," "houses," and "the houses")

כתב        ktb  
כתבת     ktbt  
("he wrote" and "she wrote")

אמר       'mr  
אמרו      'mrw  
("he said" and "they said")

יכתב      yktb  
יכתבון    yktbwn  
("he writes" and "they write")

## Exercise: 1b.

ktb            כתב  
ktbt          כתבת  
(“he wrote” and “she wrote”)

k'n            כען  
(“now”)

'l             על  
(“over,” “above”)

'dyn          אדין  
(“then”)

ptgm'        פתגמא  
(“message”)

mdh          מדה  
(“tribute”)

šlm          שלם  
(“peace,” “well-being”)

'r'            ארע  
'r''          ארעא  
(“land” and “the land”)

### Exercise: 1c.

מלכין תקיפין הוו על ירושלם

ושליטין בכל עבר נהרא

ומדה בלו והלך מתיהב להון

mlkyn tqypyn hww 'l yrwšlm  
wšlytyn bkl 'br nhr'  
wmdh blw whlk mtyhb lhwn

“Strong kings were over Jerusalem  
and (they had) authority in all Abar-Naharah  
and tribute, tax, and toll was given to them.”

### Exercise: 1d.

אדין כנמא אמרו להון

מן אנון שמהת גבריא די דנה בנינא בנין

'dyn knm' 'mrw lhwn  
mn 'nwn šmht gbry' dy dnh bnyn' bnyn

“Then, accordingly, they said to them,  
‘What are the names of the men who are building this structure (literally,  
who, this structure, are building)?’”

**Exercise: 1e.**

w‘yn ’lhn hwt ‘l šby yhwdy’

wl’ btlw hmw

ועין אלההן הות על שבי יהודיא  
ולא בטלו המו

“The eye of their God was over the elders of the Judaeans  
and they (i.e., the elders) did not stop them (i.e., the builders).”

**Exercise: 1f.**

פרשגן אגרתא די - שלח תתני . . . על דריוש מלכא

pršgn ’ggrt’ dy-šlh ttny . . . ‘l drywš mlk’

“A copy of the letter that Tattenai sent . . . to Darius the king.”

יתבקר בבית גנזיא די מלכא תמה די בבבל

ytbqqr bbyt gnzyy’ dy mlk’ tmmh dy bbbl

“Let a search be made in the house of records of the king there in Babylon.”

## Exercise 2a.

מֶלֶךְ → melek (“king”)

כֶּסֶף → kəsap (“silver”) (Because the shewa is the first vowel of the word, it is pronounced.)

בַּיִת → bayit

בַּתֵּינַן → bātī<sup>y</sup>n

כְּתָב → kətab

כְּתָבוֹ → kətabū<sup>w</sup>

מַלְכֵינָא תַקִּיפֵינָא הָוּוּ עַל יְרוּשָׁלַם

וְשַׁלִּיטֵינָא בְּכָל עֵבֶר נַהֲרָא

וּמִדָּה בְּלוּ נַהֲלֵךְ מִתִּיבָב לְהוֹן

malkī<sup>y</sup>n taqqī<sup>y</sup>pī<sup>y</sup>n hāwō<sup>w</sup> ‘al yərū<sup>w</sup>šəlem  
wəšallī<sup>y</sup>tī<sup>y</sup>n bəkōl ‘ābar-nahārā  
ū<sup>w</sup>middā<sup>h</sup> bəlō<sup>w</sup> wahālak mityəheb ləhō<sup>w</sup>n

Note that the first shewa in מִתִּיבָב represents the absence of a vowel and the second represents a murmured vowel.

## Exercise 2b.

Distinguish the shewas that represent murmured-vowels from those that represent the absence of vowels by transliterating these words:

כֶּסֶפָּא (“the silver”): kaspā<sup>’</sup> (The apostrophe is in superscript, indicating it is being used as a *mater-consonant*.)

הוֹדַעְךָ (“he knew you”): hō<sup>w</sup>də‘āk

אַנְתּוּן (“you” for masculine plural entities): ’antūn

אֲמַרְיָן (“those who are saying”) (The א vowel represents ā here.): ’āmərī<sup>y</sup>n

בִּנְיָן (“building”): binyān

בִּנְיָא (“The one who is building”) (The א vowel represents ā here.): bānəyā<sup>’</sup>  
(The apostrophe is in superscript, indicating it is being used as a *mater-consonant*.)

### Exercise 2c.

This is the beginning of a letter, embedded in the biblical book of Ezra (4:11). Transcribe it:

דְּנָה פִּרְשֵׁגֶן אִגְרָתָא דִּי שְׁלַחוּ עֲלוּהִי  
עַל אֲרְתַחְשַׁשְׁתָּא מַלְכָּא - עַבְדֵּיךָ אֲנָשׁ עִבְר־נַהֲרָא  
וּבְעֵנַת יְדֵיעַ לְהוּא לְמַלְכָּא דִּי יְהוּדִיא דִּי

dənā<sup>h</sup> paršegen ’iggartā dī<sup>y</sup> šəlahū<sup>w</sup> ‘ālō<sup>w</sup>hī<sup>y</sup>  
‘al ’artaḥšaštə’ malkā – ‘abdā<sup>y</sup>k ’ēnāš ‘ābar-nahārā<sup>’</sup>  
ū<sup>w</sup>kə‘enet yədī<sup>y</sup>‘ lehēwē lə<sup>w</sup>malkā dī<sup>y</sup> yəhū<sup>w</sup>dāyē dī<sup>y</sup>

Note that in the word עַבְדֵּיךָ the yodh is not pronounced, but is a graphic mark that the word is in the plural.

Note that יְדֵיעַ has an extra a-vowel attached to the *‘ayin*. This represents a relatively recent development in the pronunciation of Aramaic and does not need to be represented in the transliteration.

Note that the word לְהוּא has, in its first syllable, a short vowel and is followed by the ultra-short vowel, ě. This means that technically the first syllable is an open syllable. This is the exception to the rule.

“This (is) a copy of the letter that they sent to him:

‘To: Artaxerxes, the king --- (From:) your servants, the people of Avar-Naharah.

Now, let it be known to the king that the Jews/Judaeans who . . . .’”

### Exercise 2d.

Transliterate the following passage from Ezra (5:4):

אֲדַיִן כְּנִמָּא אָמְרוּ לְהוֹן

מִן אַנּוּן שְׁמָהַת גְּבַרְיָא דִּי דְנָה בְּנִנְא בְּנִין

’ēdayin kənemā’ ’āmarū<sup>w</sup> ləhō<sup>w</sup>n  
man ’innū<sup>w</sup>n šəmāhāt gubrayyā dī<sup>y</sup> dənā<sup>h</sup> binyānā’ bānayin

Note the four examples where stress does not fall on the final syllable. In three cases the stress prevents what is a short vowel from reducing and becoming a murmured vowel.

Then, thus, they asked them:

“What are the names of the men who are building this building (lit., who this building are building).”

### Exercise 2e.

Transcribe the following (from Ezra 5:5) into Aramaic script:

wə‘ē<sup>y</sup>n ’ēlāhāhōn hāwāt ‘al šābē<sup>y</sup> yəhū<sup>w</sup>dāyē’

wəlā’ battilū<sup>w</sup> himmō<sup>w</sup>

וְעַיִן אֱלֹהֵיהֶן הָיְתָה עַל שְׁבֵי יְהוּדָיָא

וְלֹא בִטְלוּ הֵמוּ

But the eye of their God was over the elders of the Jews/Judaeans

and they (the Persian officials) did not stop them (i.e., elders of the Jews/Judaeans who were working on rebuilding Jerusalem).

### Exercise 3a.

Transliterate the following passage from Ezra 5:6, 5:17:

פִּרְשֵׁגֶן אֲגָרְתָּא דִּי - שְׁלַח תַּתְּנִי . . . עַל דְּרִיּוֹשׁ מַלְכָּא

יִתְבַּקֵּר בְּבֵית גִּנְזַיָּא דִּי מַלְכָּא תַּמָּה דִּי בְּבָבֶל

paršēgen 'iggartā dī<sup>y</sup>-šəlah tattənay . . . 'al dāryāweš malkā  
yitbaqqar bəbē<sup>y</sup>t ginzayyā dī<sup>y</sup> malkā' tammā<sup>h</sup> dī<sup>y</sup> bəbābel

#### Part 3.

The pronouns in Aramaic have the following forms:

| Singular  |        | Plural     |                                     |
|-----------|--------|------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1cs "I"   | אֲנָהּ | 1cp "we"   | אֲנַחְנָהּ                          |
| 2ms "you" | אַתָּה | 2mp "you"  | אַתְּוִן / אַנְתְּם                 |
| 2fs "you" | אַתְּי | 2fp "you"  | אַתְּוִן                            |
| 3ms "he"  | הוּא   | 3mp "they" | אַנְוִן + (E.: הַמֹּן / D.: הַמֹּן) |
| 3fs "she" | הִיא   | 3fp "they" | אַנְיִן                             |

They are used in many respects like English pronouns.

### Exercise 3b.

Based on what you know of Aramaic orthography and syllabification, transliterate the pronouns from the preceding chart:

| Singular  |                    | Plural     |  |
|-----------|--------------------|------------|--|
| 1cs "I"   | 'ānā               | 1cp "we"   | 'ānahnā <sup>h</sup>   |
| 2ms "you" | 'ant               | 2mp "you"  | 'antōm / 'antū <sup>w</sup> n                                    |
| 2fs "you" | 'antī <sup>y</sup> | 2fp "you"  | 'antēn   |
| 3ms "he"  | hū <sup>w</sup>    | 3mp "they" | 'innū <sup>w</sup> n / himmō <sup>w</sup> / himmō <sup>w</sup> n |
| 3fs "she" | hī <sup>y</sup>    | 3fp "they" | 'innī <sup>y</sup> n   |

### Exercise 3c.

Translate the following sentences into Aramaic, utilizing the vocabulary that follows the exercise:

1. He is the king.
2. He is in the house.
3. We are in the house.
4. They are before the king.
5. Accordingly, all are there.
6. Before they were there, we were before the king.

1. הוא מלְכָא
2. הוא בְּבֵיתָא
3. אַנְחֵנָּה בְּבֵיתָא
4. אַנְוִין קִדְמֵ מְלְכָא
5. בְּנִמָּא כֹּל תְּמָה
6. מִן קִדְמַת אַנְוִין תְּמָה אַנְחֵנָּה קִדְמֵ מְלְכָא

**Exercise 4a:** Fill in the following chart for masculine nouns/adjectives:

| Noun/adj.<br>abs./cstr. sing.                         | emph./det.<br>sing. | plural abs. | pl. cstr. | pl. emph./det. |
|---|---------------------|-------------|-----------|----------------|
| עתיק ("old")  | עתיקא               | עתיקין      | עתיקי     | עתיקיא         |
| טב ("good",<br>root: ט ו ב)<br>The <sub>τ</sub> = ā.  | טבא                 | טבין        | טבי       | טביא           |
| זעיר ("little")<br>The <sub>τ</sub> = ē.              | זעירא               | זעירין      | זעירי     | זעיריא         |
| דין ("judg-ment",<br>ד י נ)                           | דינא                | דינין       | דיני      | דיניא          |
| טור ("mountain.")                                     | טורא                | טורין       | טורי      | טוריא          |
| חכמים ("wise")  | חכימא               | חכימין      | חכימי     | חכימיא         |
| לשן ("tongue")<br>The <sub>τ</sub> = ā.               | לשנא                | לשנין       | לשני      | לשניא          |
| קל ("voice"; root:<br>ק ו ל)<br>The <sub>τ</sub> = ā. | קלא                 | קלין        | קלי       | קליא           |
| שאר ("remnant")<br>The <sub>τ</sub> = ā.              | שארא                | שארין       | שארי      | שאריא          |

**Exercise 4b:**

Fill in the following chart for feminine nouns/adjectives:

| Noun/adj.<br>abs. sing.           | cstr. sing. | emph./det.<br>sing.                | plural abs. | pl. cstr. | pl.<br>emph./det. |
|-----------------------------------|-------------|------------------------------------|-------------|-----------|-------------------|
| עתיקה<br>("old")                  | עתיקת       | עתיקתא<br>(*attī <sup>y</sup> qtā) | עתיקין      | עתיקת     | עתיקתא            |
| טבה<br>("good",<br>root: ט ו ב)   | טבת         | טבתא<br>(tābtā)                    | טבין        | טבת       | טבתא              |
| זעירה<br>("little")               | זעירת       | זעירתא                             | זעירין      | זעירת     | זעירתא            |
| חבולה<br>("crime")                | חבולת       | חבולתא                             | חבולין      | חבולת     | חבולתא            |
| חיה<br>("animal";<br>root: ח י א) | חיות        | חיותא                              | חיוין       | חיות      | חיותא             |

|                               |           |                        |           |           |             |
|-------------------------------|-----------|------------------------|-----------|-----------|-------------|
| חבִּימָה<br>("wise")          | חבִּימַת  | חבִּימָתָא             | חבִּימָן  | חבִּימַת  | חבִּימָתָא  |
| צִדְקָה<br>("charity")        | צִדְקַת   | צִדְקָתָא<br>(sidqetā) | צִדְקֵן   | צִדְקַת   | צִדְקָתָא   |
| תְּקִיפָה<br>("strong")       | תְּקִיפַת | תְּקִיפָתָא            | תְּקִיפֵן | תְּקִיפַת | תְּקִיפָתָא |
| צִפְר<br>(šippar)<br>("bird") | צִפְר     | צִפְרָא<br>(šippērā)   | צִפְרֵין  | צִפְרִי   | צִפְרָיָא   |

Notice that the ת of the תָּא- ending in the singular emphatic/determined is usually not spirantized (or hard), though it is spirantized (or soft) in the words "little" and "animal". Apparently, when this final ת is preceded by an ē vowel (..) it becomes spirantized.

#### Exercise 4c.

| sing. abs./cstr.  | sing. emph./det. | pl. abs.  | pl. cstr. | pl. emph./det. |
|-------------------|------------------|-----------|-----------|----------------|
| צִלָּם ("image")  | צִלָּמָא         | צִלָּמֵין | צִלָּמִי  | צִלָּמָיָא     |
| בַּעַל ("master") | בַּעַלָּא        | בַּעַלֵין | בַּעַלִי  | בַּעַלָּיָא    |
| חֲמַר ("wine")    | חֲמַרָּא         | חֲמַרֵין  | חֲמַרִי   | חֲמַרָּיָא     |
| עֶבֶד ("slave")   | עֶבְדָּא         | עֶבְדֵין  | עֶבְדִי   | עֶבְדָּיָא     |
| תְּרַע ("gate")   | תְּרַעָּא        | תְּרַעֵין | תְּרַעִי  | תְּרַעָּיָא    |

### Exercise 5a.

| root                          | m. s. abs. | f. s. abs. | m. pl. abs. | f. pl. abs. |
|-------------------------------|------------|------------|-------------|-------------|
| אבד ("to perish")             | אָבַד      | אָבְדָה    | אָבְדִין    | אָבְדִין    |
| שאל ("to ask for or request") | שָׁאַל     | שָׁאַלָה   | שָׁאַלִין   | שָׁאַלִין   |
| נפק ("to go out")             | נָפַק      | נָפַקָה    | נָפַקִין    | נָפַקִין    |
| סלק ("to come up")            | סָלַק      | סָלַקָה    | סָלַקִין    | סָלַקִין    |
| עבד ("to do, make")           | עָבַד      | עָבְדָה    | עָבְדִין    | עָבְדִין    |

### Exercise 5b.

גְּבָרֵי אֲרֻעָא פְּתָבִין עַל מְלָכָא

The men of the land are writing to (use עַל for "to") the king.

מְלָכָא טָבָא לָא אָבַד עַל-תְּרַעָא

The good king is not perishing at the gate.

בֵּר מְלָכָא שָׁאַל חֲמַר מִן אָבוּהִי

The king's son is requesting wine from his father (= אָבוּהִי ).

עֲתִיקָה גְזֵרַת מְלָכָא

The decree of the king is old.

בֵּר שְׁלַח עַל מֶלֶךְ אֲנִרְתָּא

A son is sending to a king the letter.

יָדַע בְּרָא חֲבִימָא

The wise son knows.

NB: In the word מְלָכוּ the shewa under the *lamedh* indicates the absence of a vowel, though the *kaph* is pronounced "soft." How would you be able to predict that this shewa indicates the absence of a vowel and not a murmured vowel?

If the word were pronounced \*maləkū<sup>w</sup>, then that would mean the first syllable contained a short vowel in an open, unaccented syllable (\*ma-lə-kū<sup>w</sup>). This is an intolerable situation in Aramaic. Note also that in the plural form of this word, מַלְכָּוַן, the sequence of two shewas means that only the second represents a murmured vowel, thus maləkəwān.

### Exercise 5c.

| sing. abs.                 | sing. cstr. | sing. emph./det. | pl. abs.  | pl. cstr. | pl. emph./det. |
|----------------------------|-------------|------------------|-----------|-----------|----------------|
| נְהִירוּ<br>“illumination” | נְהִירוֹת   | נְהִירוֹתָא      | נְהִירוֹן | נְהִירוֹת | נְהִירוֹתָא    |
| חֲשׂוּ<br>“needs”          | חֲשׂוֹת     | חֲשׂוֹתָא        | חֲשׂוֹן   | חֲשׂוֹת   | חֲשׂוֹתָא      |

Note that in the plural forms of “illumination” the shewa perhaps represents a murmured vowel, perhaps not.

### Exercise 5d.

| sing. ab.   | sing. cstr. | sing. emph. | pl. abs.               | pl. cstr.              | pl. emph.              |
|---|-------------|-------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| רְבוּ<br>(“greatness”)  | רְבוֹת      | רְבוֹתָא    | XXXXXX<br>not attested | XXXXXX<br>not attested | XXXXXX<br>not attested |
| בְּעוּ<br>(“request”)<br>The <sub>τ</sub> = ā.  | בְּעוֹת     | בְּעוֹתָא   | XXXXXX<br>not attested | XXXXXX<br>not attested | XXXXXX<br>not attested |
| יְרַח<br>(“moon”)   | יְרַח       | יְרַחָא     | יְרַחִין               | יְרַחִי                | יְרַחִיָא              |
| סֹפֵר<br>(“scribe”)<br>The <sub>τ</sub> = ā.  | סֹפֵר       | סֹפֵרָא     | סֹפֵרִין               | סֹפֵרִי                | סֹפֵרִיָא              |
| דִּין<br>(“judge”)<br>The <sub>τ</sub> = ā.   | דִּין       | דִּיןָא     | דִּינִין               | דִּינִי                | דִּינִיָא              |
| אֱלֹהֵי<br>(“God”)<br>The <sub>τ</sub> = ā.<br>The הֵ is part of the root and is not replaced by הֵ- in the cstr., etc. | אֱלֹהֵי     | אֱלֹהֵיָא   | אֱלֹהֵין               | אֱלֹהֵי                | אֱלֹהֵיָא              |
| כֹּהֵן<br>(“priest”)<br>The <sub>τ</sub> = ā.   | כֹּהֵן      | כֹּהֵןָא    | כֹּהֵנִין              | כֹּהֵנִי               | כֹּהֵנִיָא             |

### Exercise 5e.

Complete the following chart based on the paradigm of מְלֵהּ.

| sing. abs.           | sing. cstr. | sing. emph.  | pl. abs. | pl. cstr. | pl. emph. |
|----------------------|-------------|--------------|----------|-----------|-----------|
| שָׁנָה ("year")      | שָׁנָת      | שָׁנָתָא (?) | שָׁנַיִן | שָׁנַי    | שָׁנַיָא  |
| אַמְהָ<br>("nation") | אַמְתָּ     | אַמְתָּא     | אַמְיִן  | אַמְי     | אַמְיָא   |
| כְּנָה<br>("window") | כְּנָת      | כְּנָתָא     | כְּנַיִן | כְּנַי    | כְּנַיָא  |

## Exercise 6a.

|            | G-Perfect  | D-perfect  | H-perfect  |
|------------|--|--|--|
| 3ms<br>3fs | פְּתַב<br>פְּתַבְת                                 | פְּתַב<br>פְּתַבְת                                 | הִכְתַּב<br>הִכְתַּבְת                                     |
| 2ms<br>2fs | פְּתַבְתְּ / פְּתַבְתְּ / פְּתַבְתְּ<br>פְּתַבְתְּ | פְּתַבְתְּ / פְּתַבְתְּ / פְּתַבְתְּ<br>פְּתַבְתְּ | הִכְתַּבְתְּ / הִכְתַּבְתְּ / הִכְתַּבְתְּ<br>הִכְתַּבְתְּ |
| 1cs        | פְּתַבְת   | פְּתַבְת   | הִכְתַּבְת   |
| 3mp<br>3fp | פְּתַבּוּ<br>פְּתַבְהוּ                            | פְּתַבּוּ<br>פְּתַבְהוּ                            | הִכְתַּבּוּ<br>הִכְתַּבְהוּ                                |
| 2mp<br>2fp | פְּתַבְתוּן<br>פְּתַבְתוּן                         | פְּתַבְתוּן<br>פְּתַבְתוּן                         | הִכְתַּבְתוּן<br>הִכְתַּבְתוּן                             |
| 1cp        | פְּתַבְנָא   | פְּתַבְנָא   | הִכְתַּבְנָא   |

## Exercise 6b.

Parse the following forms (indicating stem, person, gender, number, and root) and fill in the blanks:

סִלְקוּ (“they came up”) G-3ms סִלַּק

מִלְּחָנָא (“we salted”) G-1cp מִלַּח

שְׁלַחְתוּן (“you sent”) G-2mp שְׁלַח

בִּקְרָה (“they inquired”) D-3fp בִּקְרַה

הִשְׁבַּחְתוּן (“you found”) H-2fp שִׁבַּח

יְתַב (“I sat”) G-1cs יְתַב

### Exercise 6c.

Transliterate and translate the following forms:

|            |   |
|------------|---|
| בְּעוּתָהּ | bā'ū <sup>w</sup> tah, her request            |
| חֶלְמְךָ   | ħelmāk, your (ms) dream                       |
| מִלַּתְכֶם | millatkōm, your (mp) word                     |
| סִפְרֵהּ   | siprēh, his word                              |
| קָלָנָא    | qālanā, our voice                             |
| חַמְרֵהֶן  | ħamrēhēn, their (fp) wine                     |
| חַיּוֹתַי  | ħē <sup>y</sup> wəṭī <sup>y</sup> , my animal |
| צְדָקָתְךָ | sidqətāk, your (ms) charity                   |

### Exercise 6d.

1. my slaves עֲבָדַי (The plural for “slave” is like the plural for “king”, in that the “soft” pronunciation of the third consonant, *daleth*, recalls the archaic pronunciation of the plural form of this word: \*‘abadīn.)
2. our sons (remember the unpredictable plural to this word) בְּנֵינָא
3. your (fem. sing.) king מְלַכְכִּי
4. their (masc.) kingdoms מְלַכּוּתְהוֹם
5. her word מְלַתָּהּ
6. your (masc. sing.) letter אִגְרָתְךָ
7. our nations (remember the unpredictable plural) אֲמִינָא
8. my crimes חֲבוּלָתַי
9. his illumination נְהִירוּתָהּ
10. their (fem.) greatness רְבוּתָהֶן
11. your (fem. pl.) judges דִּינֵיכֶן
12. his needs חֲשׂוֹתָהּ

### Exercise 6e.

1. the decrees of the kings גְּזֻרָתְהוֹם דִּי מְלַכֵּינָא
2. the servants/slaves of the nation עֲבָדֵיהּ דִּי אֲמָתָא
3. the scribes of the land סִפְרֵייהּ דִּי אֲרֵעָא
4. the needs of the children חֲשׂוֹתְהוֹם דִּי בְנֵינָא
5. the crimes of those serving God חֲבוּלָתְהוֹם דִּי פְּלִחֵי אֱלֹהֵי
6. the request of the one sending the letter בְּעוּתָהּ דִּי שְׁלַח אִגְרָתָא

7. The judges of the nation made the image of the old king. They said to their children (use על for “to”): “We are writing in our language (for “in” use כ; for “language” use the word for “tongue”).

עבדו דניניה די אמתא צלמה די מלכא עתיקא  
 אמרו על בניהם די אנחנה כתבין בלשנא

Notice how the verbs come first in the sentence. Note how some *begadkepat* consonants are spirantized, or soft, due to the influence of a vowel from a preceding word. Also, note how the particle ׀ can mark direct speech.

### Exercise 6f.

Translate the following passage from Ezra 5:11-12, vocalizing the two unpointed forms. For words you do not know, use the vocabulary list that follows the passage.

אנחנא המו עבדוהי די-אלה שמיא וארעא . . .  
 להן מן-די הרגזו אבהתנא אלה שמיא

יהב המו ביד נבוכדנצר מלך-בבל כשדיא

We are the servants of the God of heaven and earth . . .  
 . . . But, because our fathers angered the God of heaven,  
 he gave them into the hand of the Nebuchadnezzar, the Chaldaean king of  
 Babylon.

Notice how the 3mp pronoun can be used as the equivalent of the verb “to be”. Notice also how the adjective “Chaldaean” does not follow the word that it directly modifies, “king”.

### Exercise 7a.

|            | G-imperfect                  | D-imperfect                  | H-imperfect                        | Alternative form of the H-stem with no ה |
|------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------------|--|
| 3ms<br>3fs | יִכְתֹּב<br>תִּכְתֹּב        | יִכְתֹּב<br>תִּכְתֹּב        | יְהַכְתִּיב<br>תְּהַכְתִּיב        | יִכְתֹּב<br>תִּכְתֹּב                    |
| 2ms<br>2fs | תִּכְתֹּב<br>תִּכְתְּבוּן    | תִּכְתֹּב<br>תִּכְתְּבוּן    | תְּהַכְתִּיב<br>תְּהַכְתְּבוּן     | תִּכְתֹּב<br>תִּכְתְּבוּן                |
| 1cs        | אִכְתֹּב                     | אִכְתֹּב                     | אֲהַכְתִּיב                        | אִכְתֹּב                                 |
| 3mp<br>3fp | יִכְתְּבוּן<br>יִכְתְּבִין   | יִכְתְּבוּן<br>יִכְתְּבִין   | יְהַכְתִּיבוּן<br>יְהַכְתִּיבִין   | יִכְתְּבוּן<br>יִכְתְּבִין               |
| 2mp<br>2fp | תִּכְתְּבוּן<br>תִּכְתְּבִין | תִּכְתְּבוּן<br>תִּכְתְּבִין | תְּהַכְתִּיבוּן<br>תְּהַכְתִּיבִין | תִּכְתְּבוּן<br>תִּכְתְּבִין             |
| 1cp        | נִכְתֹּב                     | נִכְתֹּב                     | נְהַכְתִּיב                        | נִכְתֹּב                                 |

### Exercise 7b.

Parse the following forms, describing stem, person, gender, number:

תִּנְתֵּן G 3fs; G 2ms

תִּנְתְּנִין G 2fs

תִּמְלִילֵן D 2mp

יִדְחִלֵן D 3fp

נְהַלִּיבֵשׁ H 1cp

אֲשַׁכֵּחַ H/A 1cs

### Exercise 7c.

In the following chart, the prepositions **ב** and **ב** are like **ל** in their form. The prepositions **מ** and **ע** are similar to each other in that they both actually have a doubled second radical (i.e., *minn* and *'imm*), something that is only indicated in the orthography by a dot when a suffix follows them. The prepositions **ע** and **ק** both take suffixes as if they were plural nouns.

Fill out the blanks in the following chart.

|     | ל     | ב      | ב      | מ       | ע       | ע        | ק          |
|-----|-------|--------|--------|---------|---------|----------|------------|
| 1cs | לִי   | בִּי   | בִּי   | מִנִּי  | עִמִּי  | עֲלַי    | קִדְמִי    |
| 2ms | לְךָ  | בְּךָ  | בְּךָ  | מִנְךָ  | עִמְךָ  | עֲלֶיךָ  | קִדְמֶיךָ  |
| 2fs | לְכִי | בְּכִי | בְּכִי | מִנְכִי | עִמְכִי | עֲלֵיכִי | קִדְמֵיכִי |
| 3ms | לֵה   | בֵּה   | בֵּה   | מִנְהָ  | עִמָּה  | עֲלוּהִי | קִדְמוּהִי |
| 3fs | לֵה   | בֵּה   | בֵּה   | מִנְהָ  | עִמָּה  | עֲלֵיהָ  | קִדְמֶיהָ  |
| 1cp | לָנָא | בְּנָא | בְּנָא | מִנְנָא | עִמְנָא | עֲלֵנָא  | קִדְמֵנָא  |
| 2mp | לְכֻם | בְּכֻם | בְּכֻם | מִנְכֻם | עִמְכֻם | עֲלֵיכֻם | קִדְמֵיכֻם |
| 2fp | לְכִנ | בְּכִנ | בְּכִנ | מִנְכִנ | עִמְכִנ | עֲלֵיכִנ | קִדְמֵיכִנ |
| 3mp | לְהֻם | בְּהֻם | בְּהֻם | מִנְהֻם | עִמְהֻם | עֲלֵיהֻם | קִדְמֵיהֻם |
| 3fp | לְהִנ | בְּהִנ | בְּהִנ | מִנְהִנ | עִמְהִנ | עֲלֵיהִנ | קִדְמֵיהִנ |

### Exercise 7d.

| sing. abs.                 | sing. cstr. | sing. emph./det. | pl. abs.      | pl. cstr.   | pl. emph./det. |
|----------------------------|-------------|------------------|---------------|-------------|----------------|
| בְּבַלְי<br>("Babylonian") | בְּבַלְי    | בְּבַלְיָא       | בְּבַלְיַיִן  | בְּבַלְיַי  | בְּבַלְיָא     |
| בְּשַׁדְי<br>("Chaldaean") | בְּשַׁדְי   | בְּשַׁדְיָא      | בְּשַׁדְיַיִן | בְּשַׁדְיַי | בְּשַׁדְיָא    |

### Exercise 7e.

Translate the following passage from Ezra 4:14-15, vocalizing the six forms without vowels. For words you do not know, use the vocabulary list that follows the passage.

כָּעֵן כָּל־קָבֵל דִּי־ מַלְחָה הִיכְלָא מְלַחְנָא

וְעִרְוֹת מְלַכָּא לָא אַרְיָךְ לְנָא לְמַחְזָא

עַל־דְּנָה שְׁלַחְנָא וְהוֹדְעָנָא לְמַלְכָּא

דִּי יְבַקֵּר בְּסִפְר־דְּכַרְנַיָּא דִּי אֲבָהֶתְךָ

וְתַהֲשִׁיבַח בְּסִפְר־דְּכַרְנַיָּא וְתִגְדַּע

דִּי קְרִיתָא דְךָ קְרִיָּה מְרָדָה וּמַחְזִיקַת מְלַכִּין

Now, because we have donated the salt of the palace (or, eaten the salt of the palace),

it is not proper for us to see the dishonor of the king.

Because of this, we have sent (word) and we have made known to the king

so that he might search in the book of records of your fathers;

you will find (the following) in the book of records and you will understand that this city is a rebellious city, injuring kings.

Notice the following points:

1. The phrase “donate the salt of the palace” might be translated more idiomatically into English as “donate salt to the palace”. Both phrases indicate that what was owed to the Persian king was given to him.
2. The *waw* conjunction at the beginning of the second line, which links the subordinate phrase to the main clause, is not translated.
3. Aramaic often does not specify objects to verbs that are obvious. Thus, in English it is necessary to supply words in parentheses for sense.
4. Notice how the next-to-last word is a participle, acting as an adjective to the word “city”, and the participle is in construct with the following word.

### Exercise 8a.

one book סְפֵר חַד

two letters from two kings תְּרַתֵּין אֲגָרֵן מִן תְּרִין מְלָכִין

or תְּרַתֵּי אֲגָרֵן מִן תְּרֵי מְלָכִין

three records from four scribes תְּלָתָה דְּכַרְגִּין מִן אַרְבַּעַה סְפָרִין

five years in six countries (i.e., lands) חֲמֵשׁ שָׁנִין בְּשֵׁשׁ אַרְעִין

seven palaces for eight kingdoms שְׁבַעַה חֵיכְלִין לְתַמְנֵה מְלָכֻן

these nine slaves for ten cities אֵלִין תַּשְׁעָה עַבְדִּין לְעֶשֶׂר קְרִין

eleven men from twelve nations חַד עֶשֶׂר גְּבָרִין מִן תְּרַתֵּי עֶשְׂרֵה אַמִּין

thirteen houses תְּלָתַת עֶשֶׂר בְּתִין

the first son בְּרָא קְדָמָא

the first kingdom מְלָכוּתָא קְדָמִיתָא

the second city קְרִיתָא תְּנִינְתָא

the third man גְּבָרָא תְּלִיתָא

the fourth animal חַיּוּתָא רְבִיעִיתָא

### Exercise 8b.

Read Daniel 7:1-7.

7:1 In the first year of Belshazzar,<sup>a</sup> King of Babylon, Daniel saw a dream and the visions of his head frightened him over his bed.

Then he wrote the dream (down) . . .

7:2 Daniel answered and said: “I saw<sup>b</sup> in my vision in the night: four<sup>c</sup> winds of the heavens were stirring up the great sea<sup>d</sup> (i.e., the Mediterranean).

7:3 Four great beasts came up from the sea, this one differing from that.<sup>e</sup>

7:4 The first (was) like a lion<sup>f</sup> and it had<sup>g</sup> wings of an eagle. I watched while its wings were plucked out and it was lifted up from the ground and it was made to stand like a human, over (its) feet.<sup>h</sup> A human heart was given to it.

7:5 Then, another animal, a second one, like a bear (came up from the sea). It was raised to one side and three tusks (or, ribs) were in its mouth, between its teeth.<sup>i</sup> It was told:<sup>j</sup> ‘Rise, eat much flesh’.

7:6 After this, I watched and another (beast) was like a leopard. It had four wings of a bird on its back. The beast had four heads. Dominion was given to it.

7:7 After this I watched in the visions of the night. The fourth beast (was) extremely frightful, terrifying, and strong. It had great teeth of iron. It ate, demolished, and the rest it stamped on with its feet. It was different than all the other beasts which (were) before it (since) it had ten pairs<sup>k</sup> of horns.

#### Notes

<sup>a</sup> Observe that the standard way for indicating the year of a king’s reign is to have the word for “year” in construct before a cardinal number. This is followed by the preposition ל plus the name of the king. If we were translating too literally we would get: “In year one belonging to Belshazzar . . .”

<sup>b</sup> The predicate here is made up of a participle (ܦܘܠܟܐ) and a perfect form of “to be” (ܦܘܠܟܐ).

<sup>c</sup> The word ܘܠܐ which is traditionally translated “lo”, does not need to be so translated in every instance. It functions to mark the beginning of a new section or new point.

<sup>d</sup> The ܠ preposition that precedes “sea” indicates that “sea” is the direct object.

<sup>e</sup> Note the idiom ܘܠܐ ܘܠܐ.

<sup>f</sup> This clause has no verb. The predicate is the prepositional phrase “like a lion”.

<sup>g</sup> This clause also does not have a verb. Possession is expressed through the ܠ preposition.

- <sup>h</sup> The word is here a dual form, indicating specifically two legs. The possessive “its” is based on the context of the passage.
- <sup>i</sup> The word for teeth is in the dual, suggesting two sets of teeth or jaws.
- <sup>j</sup> The plural form of the active participle is here used in an impersonal way, and translated as if it were a passive verb.
- <sup>k</sup> The word for horns is in the dual.

### Exercise 9a.

Fill out the following chart for the verb כְּתַב, consulting the paradigms in the Answer Appendix as needed.

|            | G-pass. Perfect                          | D-pass. Perf.              | H-pass. Perfect  |
|------------|--|----------------------------|--|
| 3ms<br>3fs | כְּתִיב<br>כְּתִיבַת                     | כְּתַב<br>כְּתַבַת         | הִכְתַּב / הִכְתַּבַת<br>הִכְתַּבַת / הִכְתַּבַת               |
| 2ms<br>2fs | כְּתִיבְתָּ / כְּתִיבְתִי<br>כְּתִיבְתִי | כְּתַבְתָּ<br>כְּתַבְתִּי  | הִכְתַּבְתָּ / הִכְתַּבְתִּי<br>הִכְתַּבְתִּי / הִכְתַּבְתִּי  |
| 1cs        | כְּתִיבַת                                | כְּתַבַת                   | הִכְתַּבַת / הִכְתַּבַת  |
| 3mp<br>3fp | כְּתִיבוּ<br>כְּתִיבוּהָ                 | כְּתַבוּ<br>כְּתַבְהָ      | הִכְתַּבוּ / הִכְתַּבוּ<br>הִכְתַּבְהָ / הִכְתַּבְהָ           |
| 2mp<br>2fp | כְּתִיבְתוּן<br>כְּתִיבְתוּן             | כְּתַבְתוּן<br>כְּתַבְתוּן | הִכְתַּבְתוּן / הִכְתַּבְתוּן<br>הִכְתַּבְתוּן / הִכְתַּבְתוּן |
| 1cp        | כְּתִיבְנָא                              | כְּתַבְנָא                 | הִכְתַּבְנָא / הִכְתַּבְנָא                                    |

### Exercise 9b.

Fill out the spaces left blank in the following chart and answer the following questions.

|            | tG-Perfect         | tD-Perfect         | tG-Imperfect       | tD-Imperfect       |
|------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| 3ms<br>3fs | התפתב<br>התפתבת    | התפתב<br>התפתבת    | תפתב<br>תתפתב      | תפתב<br>תתפתב      |
| 2ms<br>2fs | התפתב<br>התפתבתי   | התפתב<br>התפתבתי   | תפתב<br>תתפתבין    | תתפתב<br>תתפתבין   |
| 1cs        | התפתבת             | התפתבת             | אתפתב              | אתפתב              |
| 3mp<br>3fp | התפתבו<br>התפתבה   | התפתבו<br>התפתבה   | תפתבון<br>תפתבון   | תתפתבון<br>תתפתבון |
| 2mp<br>2fp | התפתבון<br>התפתבון | התפתבון<br>התפתבון | תתפתבון<br>תתפתבון | תתפתבון<br>תתפתבון |
| 1cp        | התפתבנא            | התפתבנא            | נתפתב              | נתפתב              |

1. What are the distinctions in the vowel patterns between the tG-perfect and those of the G-perfect?

While the G-perfect has an /a/-vowel (פּתב, פּתבו), the tG-perfect has an /e/-vowel (התפתב) or /i/-vowel (התפתבו).

2. In a text lacking vowel markers, how many different forms could התפתבת represent? What are they?

Six different perfect forms: tG-3fs, tG-2ms, tG-1cs; tD-3fs, tD-2ms, tD-1cs

3. There are no tG or tD imperatives in Biblical Aramaic. But, given the imperfect forms you've written down in the above chart, what would the imperative forms of the tG and tD look like, if they did occur?

|      | tG-stem      | tD-stem      |
|------|--------------|--------------|
| m.s. | הֲתַבְתָּב   | הֲתַבְתָּב   |
| f.s. | הֲתַבְתְּבִי | הֲתַבְתְּבִי |
| m.p. | הֲתַבְתְּבוּ | הֲתַבְתְּבוּ |
| f.p. | הֲתַבְתְּבֵה | הֲתַבְתְּבֵה |

4. There are tG- or tD- participles in Biblical Aramaic. If the masc. sing. forms are, respectively מְתַבְתָּב and מְתַבְתָּב, what do the other forms look like?

|      | tG-stem      | tD-stem      |
|------|--------------|--------------|
| m.s. | מְתַבְתָּב   | מְתַבְתָּב   |
| f.s. | מְתַבְתְּבֵה | מְתַבְתְּבֵה |
| m.p. | מְתַבְתְּבוּ | מְתַבְתְּבוּ |
| f.p. | מְתַבְתְּבֵן | מְתַבְתְּבֵן |

### Exercise 9c.

Translate this slightly simplified version of Daniel 7:8-10:

8.

I was considering the horns<sup>a</sup> and another, small horn came up between them, and three of<sup>b</sup> the first horns were rooted up from before it.

Lo, eyes, like the eyes of a human,<sup>c</sup> (were) in this horn and a mouth speaking great things.

9.

I was watching until thrones were set up and the Ancient of Days<sup>d</sup> sat down; his garment (was) white like snow and the hair of his head like pristine wool;

his throne (was) flames of fire, its wheels a burning fire.

10.

A river of fire was flowing and coming forth from before him (or, it);  
a million (i.e., a thousand thousands) served him and one hundred million  
(i.e., ten thousand myriads) stood before him;  
the court sat down and books were opened.

#### Notes

<sup>a</sup> Notice that the verb שכל in the tD-stem takes a *beth*-preposition as a complement. In other words, in Biblical Aramaic, one does not say “I considered x, y, or z”, rather one uses the preposition ב, which would result in the unidiomatic English translation: “I was considering in the horns”.

<sup>b</sup> The preposition מן is here translated as “of”.

<sup>c</sup> Literally, the phrase would be: “like the eyes of *the* human”.

<sup>d</sup> The Ancient of Days is apparently a title, literally meaning “the aged one,” and presumably refers to God.

### Exercise 10a.

Based on the two examples above, you should be able to predict the following forms. Fill in the blanks of the chart ( **אמר** for the G-Imperfect and **אמן**):

|     | G-Imperfect | G-Imperative |
|-----|-------------|--------------|
| 3ms | יאמר        | XXXXXXXXX    |
| 3fs | תאמר        | XXXXXXXXX    |
| 2ms | תאמר        | אמר          |
| 2fs | תאמרי       | אמרי         |
| 1cs | אמר         | XXXXXXXXX    |
| 3mp | יאמרו       | XXXXXXXXX    |
| 3fp | יאמרן       | XXXXXXXXX    |
| 2mp | תאמרו       | אמרו         |
| 2fp | תאמרן       | אמרה         |
| 1cp | נאמר        | XXXXXXXXX    |

### Exercise 10b.

List the possible roots from which these verbal forms might derive and look up the correct root in the Answers Appendix.

1. שׂא      נשא G: “to lift”
2. הב      יחב G: “to give”
3. פקו      נפק G: “to go out”; H: “to take out”
4. דע      ידע G: “to know”
5. תהובד      אבד G: “to perish”; H: “to destroy”

### Exercise 10c.

Translate this slightly simplified version of Daniel 7:11-14.

11.

I was watching then because of<sup>a</sup> the sound of the powerful words that the horn was speaking;

I was watching until the beast was killed,  
and its body was given to a burning<sup>b</sup> fire.

12.

As for the rest of the beasts, their dominion was removed;  
but long life (lit., lengthening in life) was given to them for a time and a season.

13.

I saw in the visions of the night,  
and with the clouds of heaven, (someone) like a human (lit., a son of man)  
was coming,  
and he approached the Ancient of Days and was brought before him.

14.

Dominion, honor, and kingship were given to him,  
and all the peoples, the nations, and cultures (lit., tongues) were serving him;  
his dominion (was) an eternal dominion that would not pass away;  
his kingship one that would not be destroyed.

#### Notes

<sup>a</sup> Notice that the preposition ܘܢܝܢܐ can be translated as “from” and “because of.” The two words in English are also sometimes used interchangeably.

<sup>b</sup> The word ܢܘܪܝܢܐ (the construct of ܢܘܪܝܢܐ) is surprising because one would expect the ܢ to reduce. This has been explained as a Hebrew pronunciation, and the word as a loan-word in Biblical Aramaic, from Biblical Hebrew. It might be, however, that the symbol ܢ represents ē.

## Exercise 11a

Translate this slightly simplified version of Ezra 5:6-10; the first verse you have already seen before.

6.

Copy of the letter that Tattenai, governor of Beyond-the-River, and his colleagues, the officials of Beyond-the-River, sent to Darius, the king.

7.

A letter they sent  
and it is written as follow in its interior:  
“To Darius, King, (May) all (be) well.

8.

Let it be known to the king that we went to Jehud, the province,  
to the great temple of God (or, to the temple of the great God),<sup>a</sup>  
and it is being built (out of) “rolled” stone . . . ;  
this work is being done diligently and is prospering in their hands.

9.

Then we asked these elders thus,  
saying<sup>b</sup> to them:  
“Who gave<sup>c</sup> you a command to build this temple,  
and this wall to finish?”

10.

Also, we asked them their names for the purpose of informing you (of everything),  
so that we might write the name(s) of the men who were their leaders.<sup>d</sup>

### Notes

<sup>a</sup> Because the adjective agrees in number, gender, and state with both nouns, God and temple, it is possible that it modifies either noun.

<sup>b</sup> Literally, “we said to them”.

<sup>c</sup> The verb is ܩܘܘܘܢܐ, usually translated “to set”.

<sup>d</sup> Literally, those “who were among their heads”.

## Exercise 11b

Translate this slightly simplified version of Ezra 5:11-13; several of the verses you have already seen before.

11.

Accordingly, they returned to us a reply saying:

“We are the servants of the God of heaven and earth  
and (we) are building the temple that was built before this, many years (ago)

...

12.

“But, because our fathers angered the God of heaven,  
he gave them into the hand of the Nebuchadnezzar, the Chaldaean king of  
Babylon,  
and this temple he destroyed and the people he exiled to Babylon.

13.

“Nevertheless, in the first year (lit., year one) of Coresh, King of Babylon,  
Coresh, the king, gave an order to build this temple of God.”

## Exercise 11c.

Given what you have learned about the verbal forms. Describe all the possible verbal forms (and the possible roots) for the following verbal form. Check your list against the one in the Answers Appendix:

1. דָּנּוּ                      G-3mp perfect from דָּן (G: “to judge”)
2. דָּנּוּ                      G-3mp perfect from the imaginary root \*דָּנָה
3. דָּנּוּ                      G-m.p. imperative from the imaginary root \*דָּנָה
4. דָּנּוּ                      G-m.p. imperative from the imaginary root \*דָּנָה (G-3ms  
imperfect: \*דָּנָה)
5. דָּנּוּ                      G-m.p. imperative from the imaginary root \*דָּנָה (G-3ms  
imperfect: \*דָּנָה)
6. דָּנּוּ                      G-3mp perfect from the imaginary root \*דָּנָה
7. דָּנּוּ                      G-m.p. imperative from the imaginary root \*דָּנָה (G-3ms  
imperfect: \*דָּנָה)

### Exercise 11d.

Translate this slightly simplified version of Ezra 5:14-17; several of the verses you have already seen before.

14.

“Also, the vessels of the temple of God, of gold and silver, which Nebuchadnezzar had taken out from the temple<sup>a</sup> which (was) in Jerusalem;  
he brought them to the temple that (was) in<sup>b</sup> Babylon;  
Coresh, the king, took them out from the temple that (was) in Babylon and they were given to Sheshbazzar . . . whom he (Coresh) had set up (as) governor.

15.

“He said to him: ‘Take these vessels; go and deposit them in the temple which is in Jerusalem,  
and let the temple of God be built on its place.’

16.

“Then, this Sheshbazzar came and<sup>c</sup> laid (lit., gave) the foundations of the temple of God which (is) in Jerusalem  
and from then until now it has been under construction (lit., it has been being built) and it is not completed.”

17.

“Now,<sup>d</sup> if the king finds it good (lit., if [it is] good to the king),  
let a search be made in the house of records (lit., treasures) of the king there in Babylon;  
if it is (the case) that from Coresh, the king, a command was made to build the temple of God, which (is) in Jerusalem,  
and the will of the (present) king is in accord with this (lit., [is] over this),  
(then) let him send to us (word about this).”

Notes

<sup>a</sup> In Biblical Aramaic there are two words that can be translated “temple,” the first of which ܩܝܘܢܐ, also means “house.” The second, ܩܝܘܢܐ, is a word that goes back to Sumerian.

<sup>b</sup> The Aramaic words might be more literally rendered “the temple which (was) of Babylon” since there is no preposition ܒ, “in”. It so happens,

however, that this preposition is frequently dropped before words that begin with *beth*. Thus, the translation above (“which was in Babylon”) is the correct one.

<sup>c</sup> Notice that there is no conjunction between the two verbs in Aramaic.

<sup>d</sup> This word often functions as a signal that the topic is shifting or changing.