

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 כִּתַּב, 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”)				
שָׂאַל (“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 פְתֵיב = “The king is writing.”

מִלְכָּא פְתֵיבָא = “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 (= אַבְוֵהִי).

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)	חֲלֵם (dream)	בֵּית (house)	עֵין (eye)
const.:	קָרְוֹן	חֲלֵם	בֵּית	עֵין
emph./det.:	קָרְוֹנָא	חֲלֵמָא	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.:	קָרְוִין	חֲלָמִין	*בֵּיתִין	עֵינִין
			*(Note the different base form; the ף is still pronounced like a long /ā/, although it is in an unaccented, closed syllable.)	
const.:	קָרְוִין	חֲלָמִין	בֵּיתִין	עֵינִין
emph./det.:	קָרְוִינָא	חֲלָמִינָא	בֵּיתִינָא	עֵינִינָא

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

singular	fem.	
abs.:	מַלְכוּ	malkū ^w
const.:	מַלְכוּת	malkū ^w t
emph./det.:	מַלְכוּתָא	malkū ^w tā

plural abs.:	fem. 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 “illumination”					
חֻשְׁחוּ “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 (“greatness”)			XXXXXX not attested	XXXXXX not attested	XXXXXX not attested
בְּעוּ (“request”) The _ו = ā.			XXXXXX not attested	XXXXXX not attested	XXXXXX not attested
יָרַח (“moon”)		יָרַחַא			
סָפֵר (“scribe”) The _ו = ā.					
דִּין (“judge”) The _ו = ā.					
אֱלֹהֵי (“God”) The _ו = ā. The הֵ is part of the root and is not replaced by הֵ- in the cstr., etc.		אֱלֹהֵא			
כֹּהֵן (“priest”) The _ו = 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")					
בַּיְתָּה ("window")					

Vocabulary

אַלְהָה = "God" m.

אַמָּה = "nation" f.

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

בַּעֲוָה = "request" f.

בֶּרֶךְ (in the emph./det.: בֶּרְכָּא, in the plural abs. בְּרִינִין) = "son" m.

גְּזֵרָה (in the cnstr.: גְּזֵרְתָּ) = "decree" f.

חֵלֶם = "dream" m.

מַלְיָה = "word" f.

מַלְכוּתָה = "kingdom" f.

סַפְרָה = "scribe" m.

עָתִידָה = "ready"

שָׁנָה = "year" f.

Participles:

אַמַּר = 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.)

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