VERBS

Aramaic has
- 3 stem groups: Ground, Doubled, Causative.
- 3 stems per group: Active (G, D, H), Internal Passive (Gp, Dp, Hp), External Passive / Reciprocal (tG, tD, tH).
- 4 moods: Indicative, Jussive, Imperative, Energic.
- 2 aspects: Perfect, Imperfect.

THE VERB

	GROUND			DOUBLED			CAUSATIVE		
	G	Gp	tG	D	Dp	tD	H	Hp	tH
PERF	כְּתַב kətab	כְּתִיב kətīb	אִתְכְּתֶב itkəteb	כַּתֵּב katteb	כֻּתַּב kuttab	אִתְכַּתַּב itkattab	הַכְתֵּב hakteb (אַכְתֶּב) (akteb)	הֻכְתַּב huktab	אִתַּכְתַּב ittaktab
IMPERF	יִכְתֻּב yiktub (יִכְתְּבוּן P3M) (yiktəbun)	יִכְתַּב yuktab?	יִתְכְּתֶב yitkəteb	יְכַתֵּב yəkatteb		יִתְכַּתַּב yitkattab	יְהַכְתֵּב yəhakteb (יַכְתֵּב) (yakteb)		יִתַּכְתַּב yittaktab
JUSSIV	יִכְתֻּב yiktub (יִכְתְּבוּ P3M) (yiktəbu)								
ENERG	יִכְתֻּבַן yiktubanna ?								
IMPER	כְּתֻב kətub		אִתְכְּתֶב itkəteb	כַּתֵּב katteb		אִתְכַּתַּב itkattab	הַכְתֵּב hakteb (אַכְתֶּב) (akteb)		
PART	כָּתֵב kāteb	כְּתִיב kətīb	מִתְכְּתֶב mitkəteb	מְכַתֵּב məkatteb (מְכַתַּב P.) (məkattab)		מִתְכַּתַּב mitkattab	מְהַכְתֵּב məhakteb (מְהַכְתַּב P.) (məhaktab)		
INF	מִכְתַּב miktab		אִתְכְּתָבָה itkətābā	כַּתָּבָה kattābā		אִתְכַּתָּבָה itkattābā	הַכְתָּבָה haktābā (אַכְתָּבָה) (aktābā)		

NB. 1. The S3M verbal forms are the simplest 'unmarked' forms. Dictionaries cite the S3M perfect forms.
2. Semitic verbs are thus usually listed in the order 3rd person, 2nd person, 1st person (not 1, 2, 3).
3. The vocalisation provided above is often highly speculative, and draws strongly on BA!
4. Several of these forms are actually very rare (see below).
5. In sentences the normal word order is VSO (Verb – Subject – Object), but SVO is also common.

STEM GROUPS:
1. G Ground form
2. D Doubled 2nd radical form. Intensive / iterative in origin. Many verbs only have G or D forms. In a consonantal text, it is not always easy to identify D forms.
3. H Causative form. (e.g. *hakteb lan*, 'he caused us to write'.)

(There is disagreement amongst linguists about the most appropriate terminology for these stem groups, or forms, or schemata, and for the stems themselves. For the latter Muraoka/Porten use the modern Hebrew term *binyan*, pl. *binyanim*, 'building' / 'Bildung'.)

STEMS:

The stems are often referred to by their traditional descriptive names (cf. the paradigm פעל√): Pəʿal (G), Pəʿīl (Gp), Itpəʿel (tG); Paʿʿel (D), Puʿʿal (Dp), Ithpaʿʿal (tD); Hapʿel (H), Hupʿal (Hp), Ittapʿal (tH).

The internal passives, with the exception of the Gp perfect and participle, are very rare.

In addition to the Hapʿel form of the H stem, there is also a small minority of Apʿel forms (45 examples).

The forms prefixed ʾit- were in origin a reciprocal / reflexive form, but by EA they have become the standard passive formation. (In BA the prefix is often hit- rather than ʾit-.)

When the first root letter in an external passive form is a sibillant (ז, ס, צ, ש), metathesis takes place:

ʾit- + s	>	ʾist-	e.g.	יסתבלון	<	יתסבלון*	(סבל√)
ʾit- + š	>	ʾišt-	e.g.	אשתאר	<	אתשאר*	(שאר√)
ʾit- + z	>	ʾizd-	e.g.	אזדהר	<	אתזהר*	(זהר√)
ʾit- + ṣ	>	ʾiṣt-	e.g.	יצטבע	<	יתצבע*	(צבע√)

MOODS:

1. Indicative   Factual statements, positive beliefs etc.
2. Jussive   Exhortation, and commands (latter usually 1st/3rd person), cf. subjunctive; 'Let him write', 'you should know', etc. A form that looks identical to the imperfect, except in S2F and P2/3M forms, where final -n is dropped.
   Negative commands are always expressed by ʾal (אל) + jussive (e.g. אל תקטלני 'do not kill me'), and never lā (לא) + imperative.
3. Imperative   (Positive) commands (addressed to S/P2).
4. Energic   Expression of strongly held beliefs, or for emphasis. Has an extra final –n (= –anna ?) where imperfect ends in a consonant. A fossil in EA. It no longer has energic force, and is very rare. There are only 4 free-standing examples in all EA.

ASPECT:

1. Perfect   (suffix conjugation)   completed action.
2. Imperfect   (prefix conjugation)   incomplete action – whether in the future or (rarely) in the present.

Uses of the perfect:
a. Simple past   (he did)
b. Present perfect   (he has done)
c. Past perfect   (he had done)
d. Future perfect   (he will have done)
e. Present of verbs of mental attitude
   (he knows, desires, hates etc.)

Uses of the imperfect:
a. Simple future   (he will do)
b. Durative   (he will be doing)
c. Possibility   (he might do)
d. After כזי, purpose (so that he will do)
e. Present (rare)   (he is doing / he does)

Inflexional markers:

	PERFECT		IMPERFECT	
S3M	–	–	◌ֵי	y —
S3F	◌ַת	– at	◌ֵת	t —
S2M	◌ְתָ / ◌ְתָּ	– t / – tā	◌ֵת	t —
S2F	◌ְתִי	– tī	◌ֵ◌ִין*	t — īn
S1	◌ֵת	– ēt	◌ֵא	ʾ —
P3M	◌וּ	– ū	◌ֵיוּן	y — ūn
P3F	◌ָה	– ā	◌ֵיָן	y — ān
P2M	◌תוּן	– tūn	◌ֵתוּן	t — ūn
P2F	◌ְתֵן	– tēn	◌ֵתָן	t — ān
P1	◌ְנָא	– nā	◌ֵנ	n —

G stem:

	PERFECT		IMPERFECT	
S3M	כְּתַב	kəṯaḇ	יִכְתֻּב	yiḵtuḇ
S3F	כִּתְבַת	kiṯəḇat	תִּכְתֻּב	tiḵtuḇ
S2M	כְּתַבְתְּ (־תָ, ־תָה)	kəṯabt, kəṯabtā	תִּכְתֻּב	tiḵtuḇ
S2F	כְּתַבְתִּי	kəṯabtī	תִּכְתְּבִין	tiḵtəḇīn
S1	כִּתְבֵת	kiṯəḇēt	אֶכְתֻּב	'eḵtuḇ
P3M	כְּתַבוּ	kəṯabū	יִכְתְּבוּן	yiḵtəḇūn
P3F	כְּתָבָה	kəṯabā	יִכְתְּבָן	yiḵtəḇān
P2M	כְּתַבְתּוּן	kəṯabtūn	תִּכְתְּבוּן	tiḵtəḇūn
P2F	כְּתַבְתֵּן	kəṯabtēn	תִּכְתְּבָן	tiḵtəḇān
P1	כְּתַבְנָא	kəṯabnā	נִכְתֻּב	niḵtuḇ

The same perfect suffixes and imperfect prefixes/suffixes will be found in all other stems, and so the G stem forms should be memorised!

The pointing / vocalisation of the above is heavily dependent on BA, which was itself influenced by later Jewish Aramaic. In later Jewish Aramaic the normal S3F form is כְּתַבַת, and this is also sometimes found in BA. (And even אֲמֶרֶת.)

In BA only (not EA), the verb הֲוָה, 'he was', uses forms of the imperfect with a preformative לְ– instead of יְ–, as also in Babylonian Aramaic (Talmud) and Hatran. e.g. לֶהֱוֵה, לֶהֱוֹן. (This *may* be the remains of the Old Aramaic precative form, and *may* have given rise to the נְ– preformative in Syriac.)

THE PARTICIPLE:

	Endings		G		Gp		tG		D	
SM	—	—	כָּתֵב	kāṯēḇ	כְּתִיב	kəṯīḇ	מִתְכְּתֵב	miṯkəṯēḇ	מְכַתֵּב	məkattēḇ
SF	־ָה	– ā	כָּתְבָה	kāṯəḇā	כְּתִיבָה	kəṯīḇā	מִתְכַּתְּבָה	miṯkatəḇā	מְכַתְּבָה	məkattēḇā
PM	־ִין	– īn	כָּתְבִין	kāṯəḇīn	כְּתִיבִין	kəṯīḇīn	מִתְכַּתְּבִין	miṯkatəḇīn	מְכַתְּבִין	məkattēḇīn
PF	־ָן	– ān	כָּתְבָן	kāṯəḇān	כְּתִיבָן	kəṯīḇān	מִתְכַּתְּבָן	miṯkatəḇān	מְכַתְּבָן	məkattēḇān

The participle agrees in number and gender with the subject.

All participles have the same set of endings.

Apart from G and Gp, all participles have an *m*– prefix, and the SM participle resembles the S3M imperfect with the *y*– prefix replaced by this *m*–.

D and H have both active and passive participles, although they look identical, and only the SM forms differed in vocalisation (the SM active has an /ē/ in its last syllable, and the passive an /a/).

The forms of the participles for all the remaining stems can be seen in the paradigm table of the strong verb.

Uses of the participle:
1. Indicates the actual present. (Without a following personal pronoun it is presumed that the subject is 3rd person. For 1st and 2nd person subjects the pronoun is written after the participle; e.g. כתב אנה, *kāṯēḇ ănā*, 'I am writing'.)
2. It can indicate an action which is ongoing at the moment of writing/speaking.
3. It can follow a noun and qualify it like an adjective.
4. It can be substantivised, and so be used as a noun, with the usual nominal endings.
5. It can be combined with a preceding form of הוה to indicate past or future action; e.g. כזי הוה אתה, 'as he was coming'; אהוה משלם, 'I shall be repaying'. (Internal passive participles precede הוה.)

THE IMPERATIVE:

	Endings	G	D	H
SM	— —	כְּתֻב kətub	כַּתֵּב kattēb	הַכְתֵּב haktēb
SF	־ִי −ī	כְּתֻבִי kətubī	כַּתִּבִי kattibī	הַכְתִּבִי haktibī
PM	־וּ −ū	כְּתֻבוּ kətubū	כַּתִּבוּ kattibū	הַכְתִּבוּ haktibū
PF	־ָה −ā	כְּתֻבָה kətubā	כַּתִּבָה kattibā	הַכְתִּבָה haktibā

All imperatives have the same set of endings.

The SM form resembles the S2M imperfect (or jussive), without the *t*– prefix. (Though the H stem form, reintroduces its characteristic *h*– prefix, and the external passives their initial '–.)

Negative commands are always expressed by *'al* (אַל) + jussive (e.g. אל תקטלני 'do not kill me'), and never by *lā* (לָא) + imperative.

THE INFINITIVE:

G	tG	D	tD	H
מִכְתַב miktab	אִתְכְּתָבָה itkətābā	כַּתָּבָה kattābā	אִתְכַּתָּבָה itkattābā	הַכְתָּבָה haktābā

Apart from G, all imperatives end in –āCā.

Non-G infinitives (especially D and H) can also sometimes appear with *m*– prefixes.

The infinitive is very often prefixed by the preposition *l*– / –לְ, 'to'.

When object suffixes are added to the non-G infinitives, the final ־ָה is replaced by the construct form, ־וּת (–ūt), (or ־ת , which is probably a defective spelling of this); e.g. לְזַבָּנוּתֵהּ, *lə–zabbānūteh*, 'to sell it' (D). (There is no change to the form of the G infinitive when object suffixes are added.)

STRONG VERB [IDEALISED, WITH GAPS IN ATTESTED FORMS FILLED BY ANALOGY]

		GROUND			DOUBLED			CAUSATIVE		
		G	Gp	tG	D	Dp	tD	H	Hp	tH
PERFECT	S3M	כְּתַב	כְּתִיב	אִתְכְּתֵב	כַּתֵּב	כֻּתַּב	אִתְכַּתַּב	(אַכְתֵּב) הַכְתֵּב	הֻכְתַּב	אִתַּכְתַּב
	S3F	כִּתְבַת	כְּתִיבַת	הִתְכַּתְבַת	כַּתְּבַת	כֻּתְּבַת	הִתְכַּתְּבַת	הַכְתְּבַת	הֻכְתְּבַת	
	S2M	(־תָּ) כְּתַבְתְּ	כְּתִיבְתְּ	(־תָּ) הִתְכַּתֵּבְתְּ	כַּתֵּבְתְּ	כֻּתַּבְתְּ	הִתְכַּתַּבְתְּ	הַכְתֵּבְתְּ	
	S2F	כְּתַבְתִּי	כְּתִיבְתִּי	הִתְכַּתֵּבְתִּי	כַּתֵּבְתִּי	כֻּתַּבְתִּי	הִתְכַּתַּבְתִּי	הַכְתֵּבְתִּי	הֻכְתַּבְתִּי	
	S1	כִּתְבֵת	כְּתִיבֵת	הִתְכַּתְּבֵת	כַּתְּבֵת	כֻּתְּבֵת	הִתְכַּתְּבֵת	הַכְתְּבֵת		
	P3M	כְּתַבוּ	כְּתִיבוּ	הִתְכְּתִבוּ	כַּתִּבוּ	כֻּתִּבוּ	הִתְכַּתַּבוּ	הַכְתִּבוּ	הֻכְתַּבוּ	
	P3F	כְּתַבָה	כְּתִיבָה	הִתְכְּתִבָה	כַּתִּבָה	כֻּתִּבָה	הִתְכַּתַּבָה	הַכְתִּבָה	הֻכְתַּבָה	
	P2M	כְּתַבְתּוּן	כְּתִיבְתּוּן	הִתְכַּתֵּבְתּוּן	כַּתֵּבְתּוּן	כֻּתַּבְתּוּן	הִתְכַּתַּבְתּוּן	הַכְתֵּבְתּוּן	הֻכְתַּבְתּוּן	
	P2F	כְּתַבְתֵּן	כְּתִיבְתֵּן	הִתְכַּתֵּבְתֵּן	כַּתֵּבְתֵּן	כֻּתַּבְתֵּן	הִתְכַּתַּבְתֵּן	הַכְתֵּבְתֵּן	הֻכְתַּבְתֵּן	
	P1	כְּתַבְנָא	כְּתִיבְנָא	הִתְכַּתַּבְנָא	כַּתַּבְנָא	כֻּתַּבְנָא	הִתְכַּתַּבְנָא	הַכְתַּבְנָא	הֻכְתַּבְנָא	
IMPERFECT	S3M	יִכְתֻּב	יִכְתֵּב ?	יִתְכְּתֵב	יְכַתֵּב		יִתְכַּתַּב	(יַכְתֵּב) יְהַכְתֵּב		יִתְכַּתֵּב
	S3F	תִּכְתֻּב		תִּתְכְּתֵב	תְּכַתֵּב		תִּתְכַּתַּב	תְּהַכְתֵּב		
	S2M	תִּכְתֻּב		תִּתְכְּתֵב	תְּכַתֵּב		תִּתְכַּתַּב	תְּהַכְתֵּב		
	S2F	תִּכְתְּבִין		תִּתְכַּתְּבִין	תְּכַתְּבִין		תִּתְכַּתְּבִין	תְּהַכְתְּבִין		
	S1	אֶכְתֻּב		אֶתְכְּתֵב	אֲכַתֵּב		אֶתְכַּתַּב	אֲהַכְתֵּב		
	P3M	יִכְתְּבוּן		יִתְכַּתְּבוּן	יְכַתְּבוּן		יִתְכַּתְּבוּן	יְהַכְתְּבוּן		
	P3F	יִכְתְּבָן		יִתְכַּתְּבָן	יְכַתְּבָן		יִתְכַּתְּבָן	יְהַכְתְּבָן		
	P2M	תִּכְתְּבוּן		תִּתְכַּתְּבוּן	תְּכַתְּבוּן		תִּתְכַּתְּבוּן	תְּהַכְתְּבוּן		
	P2F	תִּכְתְּבָן		תִּתְכַּתְּבָן	תְּכַתְּבָן		תִּתְכַּתְּבָן	תְּהַכְתְּבָן		
	P1	נִכְתֻּב		נִתְכְּתֵב	נְכַתֵּב		נִתְכַּתַּב	נְהַכְתֵּב		
IMPERATIVE	SM	כְּתֻב		אִתְכְּתֵב	כַּתֵּב		אִתְכַּתַּב	(אַכְתֵּב) הַכְתֵּב		
	SF	כְּתֻבִי			כַּתֵּבִי			הַכְתֵּבִי		
	PM	כְּתֻבוּ			כַּתִּבוּ			הַכְתִּבוּ		
	PF	כְּתֻבָה			כַּתִּבָה			הַכְתִּבָה		
PARTICIPLE	SM	כָּתֵב	כְּתִיב	מִתְכְּתֵב	מְכַתַּב · מְכַתֵּב		מִתְכַּתַּב	מְהַכְתַּב · מְהַכְתֵּב		
	SF	כָּתְבָה	כְּתִיבָה	מִתְכַּתְּבָה	מְכַתְּבָה · מְכַתְּבָה		מִתְכַּתְּבָה	מְהַכְתְּבָה · מְהַכְתְּבָה		
	PM	כָּתְבִין	כְּתִיבִין	מִתְכַּתְּבִין	מְכַתְּבִין · מְכַתְּבִין		מִתְכַּתְּבִין	מְהַכְתְּבִין · מְהַכְתְּבִין		
	PF	כָּתְבָן	כְּתִיבָן	מִתְכַּתְּבָן	מְכַתְּבָן · מְכַתְּבָן		מִתְכַּתְּבָן	מְהַכְתְּבָן · מְהַכְתְּבָן		
INF		מִכְתַּב		אִתְכַּתָּבָה	כַּתָּבָה		אִתְכַּתָּבָה	(אַכְתָּבָה) הַכְתָּבָה		