Aramaic Text of Ezra (4.8 - 6.18; 7.12 - 26)

[Arabic words within parentheses are the Qere forms, ‘Read’,
following the unvocalised Kethib forms, ‘it is written’.
In manuscripts and printed texts the vowels of the former are placed on the latter.]

Ezra Chapter 4

{HEBREW} 7 And in the days of Artaxerxes wrote Bishlam, Mithredath, Tabeel, and the rest of his companions, unto Artaxerxes king of Persia; and the writing of the letter was written in the Aramaic character, and set forth in the Aramaic tongue.

{ARAMAIC} 8 Rehum the commander and Shimshai the scribe wrote a letter against Jerusalem to Artaxerxes the king in this sort

9 then wrote Rehum the commander, and Shimshai the scribe, and the rest of their companions; the Dinites, and the Apharesattchites, the Tarpelites, the Apharesites, the Arechites, the Babyloniens, the Shushanchites, the Dehitens, the Elamites,

10 and the rest of the nations whom the great and noble Asenappar brought over, and set in the city of Samantha, and the rest that are in the country beyond the River: ‘And now

11 this is the copy of the letter that they sent unto him, even unto Artaxerxes the king thy servants the men beyond the River and now

12 be it known unto the king, that the Jews that came up from thee are come to us unto Jerusalem; they are building the rebellious and the bad city, and have finished the walls, and are digging out the foundations.

13 Be it known now unto the king, that, if this city be builded, and the walls finished, they will not pay tribute, impost, or toll, and so thou wilt endamage the revenue of the kings.
14 Now because we eat the salt of the palace, and it is not meet for us to see the king's dishonour, therefore have we sent and announced to the king,

15 that search may be made in the book of the records of thy fathers; so shalt thou find in the book of the records, and know that this city is a rebellious city, and hurtful unto kings and provinces, and that they have moved sedition within the same of old time; for which cause was this city laid waste.

16 We announce to the king that, if this city be builded, and the walls finished, by this means thou shalt have no portion beyond the River.'

17 Then sent the king an answer unto Rehum the commander, and to Shimshai the scribe, and to the rest of their companions that dwell in Samaria, and unto the rest beyond the River: 'Peace, and now

18 the letter which ye sent unto us hath been plainly read before me.

19 And I decreed, and search hath been made, and it is found that this city of old time hath made insurrection against kings, and that rebellion and sedition have been made therein.

20 There have been mighty kings also over Jerusalem, who have ruled over all the country beyond the River; and tribute, impost, and toll, was paid unto them.

21 Make ye now a decree to cause these men to cease, and that this city be not builded, until a decree shall be made by me.

22 And take heed that ye be not slack herein; why should damage grow to the hurt of the kings?"
Then when the copy of king Artaxerxes' letter was read before Rehum, and Shimshai the scribe, and their companions, they went in haste to Jerusalem unto the Jews, and made them to cease by force and power.

Then ceased the work of the house of God which is at Jerusalem; and it ceased unto the second year of the reign of Darius king of Persia.

1 Now the prophets, Haggai the prophet, and Zechariah the son of Iddo, prophesied unto the Jews that were in Judah and Jerusalem; in the name of the God of Israel prophesied they unto them.

2 Then rose up Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Jeshua the son of Jozadak, and began to build the house of God which is at Jerusalem; and with them were the prophets of God, helping them.

3 At the same time came to them Tattenai, the governor beyond the River, and Shetharbozenai, and their companions, and said thus unto them: 'Who gave you a decree to build this house, and to finish this structure?'

4 'Then spoke we unto them after this manner [, wrote they]: What are the names of the men that build this building?'

5 But the eye of their God was upon the elders of the Jews, and they did not make them cease, till the matter should come to Darius, and then answer should be returned by letter concerning it.

6 The copy of the letter that Tattenai, the governor beyond the River, and Shetharbozenai, and his companions the Apharesachites, who were beyond the River,
sent unto Darius the king;

7 they sent a letter unto him, wherein was written thus: 'Unto Darius the king, all peace.

8 Be it known unto the king, that we went into the province of Judah, to the house of the great God, which is builded with great stones, and timber is laid in the walls, and this work goeth on with diligence and prospereth in their hands.

9 Then asked we those elders, and said unto them thus: Who gave you a decree to build this house, and to finish this wall?

10 We asked them their names also, to announce to thee, that we might write the names of the men that were at the head of them.

11 And thus they returned us answer, saying: We are the servants of the God of heaven and earth, and build the house that was builded these many years ago, which a great king of Israel builded and finished.

12 But because that our fathers had provoked the God of heaven, He gave them into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, the Chaldean, who destroyed this house, and carried the people away into Babylon.

13 But in the first year of Cyrus king of Babylon, Cyrus the king made a decree to build this house of God.

14 And the gold and silver vessels also of the house of God, which Nebuchadnezzar took out of the temple that was in Jerusalem, and brought them into the temple of Babylon, those did Cyrus the king take out of the temple of Babylon, and they were delivered unto one whose name was Sheshbazzar, whom he had made governor;
15 and he said unto him: Take these vessels, go, put them in the temple that is in Jerusalem, and let the house of God be builded in its place.

16 Then came the same Sheshbazzar, and laid the foundations of the house of God which is in Jerusalem; and since that time even until now hath it been in building, and yet it is not completed.

17 Now therefore, if it seem good to the king, let search be made in the king's treasure-house there, which is at Babylon, whether it be so, that a decree was made of Cyrus the king to build this house of God at Jerusalem, and let the king send his pleasure to us concerning this matter.'

Ezra Chapter 6

1 Then Darius the king made a decree, and search was made in the house of the archives, where the treasures were laid up, in Babylon.

2 And there was found at Ahmetha, in the palace that is in the province of Media, a roll, and therein was thus written: 'A record.

3 In the first year of Cyrus the king, Cyrus the king made a decree: Concerning the house of God at Jerusalem, let the house be builded, the place where they offer sacrifices, and let the foundations thereof be strongly laid; the height thereof threescore cubits, and the breadth thereof threescore cubits;

4 with three rows of great stones, and a row of new timber, and let the expenses be given out of the king's house;

5 and also let the gold and silver vessels of the house of God, which Nebuchadnezzar took forth out of the temple which is at Jerusalem, and brought unto Babylon, be restored, and brought back unto the temple which is at Jerusalem, every one to its place,
and thou shalt put them in the house of God.'

6 'Now therefore, Tattenai, governor beyond the River, Shethar-bozenai, and your companions the Apharesachites, who are beyond the River, be ye far from thence;

7 let the work of this house of God alone; let the governor of the Jews and the elders of the Jews build this house of God in its place.

8 Moreover I make a decree concerning what ye shall do to these elders of the Jews for the building of this house of God; that of the king's goods, even of the tribute beyond the River, expenses be given with all diligence unto these men, that they be not hindered.

9 And that which they have need of, both young bullocks, and rams, and lambs, for burnt-offerings to the God of heaven, wheat, salt, wine, and oil, according to the word of the priests that are at Jerusalem, let it be given them day by day without fail;

10 that they may offer sacrifices of sweet savour unto the God of heaven, and pray for the life of the king, and of his sons.

11 Also I have made a decree, that whosoever shall alter this word, let a beam be pulled out from his house, and let him be lifted up and fastened thereon; and let his house be made a dunghill for this;

12 and may the God that hath caused His name to dwell thereover overthrow all kings and peoples, that shall put forth their hand to alter the same, to destroy this house of God which is at Jerusalem. I Darius have made a decree; let it be done with all diligence.'

13 Then Tattenai, the governor beyond the River, Shethar-bozenai, and their companions, because that Darius the king had thus sent, acted with all diligence.
14 And the elders of the Jews builded and prospered, through the prophesying of Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the son of Iddo. And they builded and finished it, according to the commandment of the God of Israel, and according to the decree of Cyrus, and Darius, and Artaxerxes king of Persia.

15 And this house was finished on the third day of the month Adar, which was in the sixth year of the reign of Darius the king.

16 And the children of Israel, the priests and the Levites, and the rest of the children of the captivity, kept the dedication of this house of God with joy.

17 And they offered at the dedication of this house of God a hundred bullocks, two hundred rams, four hundred lambs; and for a sin-offering for all Israel, twelve he-goats, according to the number of the tribes of Israel.

18 And they set the priests in their divisions, and the Levites in their courses, for the service of God, which is at Jerusalem; as it is written in the book of Moses.

Ezra Chapter 7

{HEBREW} 11 Now this is the copy of the letter that the king Artaxerxes gave unto Ezra the priest, the scribe, even the scribe of the words of the commandments of the LORD, and of His statutes to Israel:

{ARAMAIC} 12 'Artaxerxes, king of kings, unto Ezra the priest, the scribe of the Law of the God of heaven, and so forth. And now

13 I make a decree, that all they of the people of Israel, and their priests and the Levites, in
my realm, that are minded of their own free
will to go with thee to Jerusalem, go.

14 Forasmuch as thou art sent of the king and
his seven counsellors, to inquire concerning
Judah and Jerusalem, according to the law of
thy God which is in thy hand;

15 and to carry the silver and gold, which the
king and his counsellors have freely offered
unto the God of Israel, whose habitation is in
Jerusalem,

16 and all the silver and gold that thou shalt
find in all the province of Babylon, with the
freewill-offering of the people, and of the
priests, offering willingly for the house of
their God which is in Jerusalem;

17 therefore thou shalt with all diligence buy
with this money bullocks, rams, lambs, with
their meal-offerings and their drink-offerings,
and shalt offer them upon the altar of the
house of your God which is in Jerusalem.

18 And whatsoever shall seem good to thee
and to thy brethren to do with the rest of the
silver and the gold, that do ye after the will of
your God.

19 And the vessels that are given thee for the
service of the house of thy God, deliver thou
before the God of Jerusalem.

20 And whatsoever more shall be needful for
the house of thy God, which thou shalt have
occasion to bestow, bestow it out of the king's
treasure-house.

21 And I, even I Artaxerxes the king, do make
a decree to all the treasurers that are beyond
the River, that whatsoever Ezra the priest, the
scribe of the Law of the God of heaven, shall
require of you, it be done with all diligence,
and salt without prescribing how much.

23 Whatsoever is commanded by the God of heaven, let it be done exactly for the house of the God of heaven; for why should there be wrath against the realm of the king and his sons?

24 Also we announce to you, that touching any of the priests and Levites, the singers, porters, Nethinim, or servants of this house of God, it shall not be lawful to impose tribute, impost, or toll, upon them.

25 And thou, Ezra, after the wisdom of thy God that is in thy hand, appoint magistrates and judges, who may judge all the people that are beyond the River, all such as know the laws of thy God; and teach ye him that knoweth them not.

26 And whosoever will not do the law of thy God, and the law of the king, let judgment be executed upon him with all diligence, whether it be unto death, or to banishment, or to confiscation of goods, or to imprisonment.