– μάννα, "manna" (John 6:31), = *mannā'* (= Hebrew *mān* [popular etymology in Exod 16:15: *mān hû'*, "What is it?"; Manna);
– MAPANAΘA, "Our Lord, come!" (1 Cor 16:22), = *mārānā' tā'* (see 4Q202 1 III, 14);
– ὡσαννά, "Hosanna!" (Mark 11:9), = *hôšá'nā'* ("Save us!" [verb *yš'* now attested in 4Q243 XVI, 2]).

b. Names

– Ἀκελδαμα(χ), "Akeldama" (Acts 1:19), = *ḥăqēl dĕmā'* ("Field of Blood");
– βεελζεβούλ(β), "Beelzebul" (Mark 3:22), = *bĕ'ēl zĕbûl* ("lord of elevation") or "Beelzebub" (ibid., Vg), = *bĕ'ēl zĕbûb* ("lord of flies");
– Βηθσαϊδά, "Bethsaida" (Mark 6:45), = *bêt ṣaydā'* ("house of fishing/hunting");
– Γαββαθᾶ, "Gabbatha" (John 19:13 [said to be Ἑβραϊστί, but the form can only be Aramaic]), = *Gabbatā'* (?; said to mean "pavement" [Λιθόστρωτον]);
– γέεννα, "hell" (Mark 9:45), = *gĕhennā'* (= Hebrew *gê hinnôm*, "Valley of Hinnom");
– Γολγοθᾶ, "Golgotha" (Mark 15:22), = *gulgultā'* ("the skull");
– Καφαρναούμ, "Capernaum" (John 6:17, 24, 59), = *kĕpar Nāḥûm* ("Village of Nahum");
– Σάπφιρα, "Sapphira" (Acts 5:1), = *šappîrāh* ("Beautiful One");
– ταβιθά, "Tabitha" (Acts 9:36, said to mean δορκάς, "gazelle"), = *ṭabyĕtā'* ("gazelle").

2. Grecized Aramaic Words and Names. These are Aramaic words fitted with Greek endings.

– Βαρσαβ(β)ᾶς, "Barsabbas" (Acts 1:23), = *bar sabbā'* ("son of the old man");
– Ἰουδαῖος, "Jew" (John 4:22), = *Yĕhûdāy* ("Judean");
– Κηφᾶς, "Cephas" (Simon Peter's name, John 1:42), = *kēpā'* ("rock, crag");
– μεσσίας, "messiah" (John 1:41), = *mĕšîḥā'* ("anointed one");
– Σατανᾶς, "Satan" (Mark 3:23), = *śāṭānā'* ("the adversary").

3. Aramaic Interference in New Testament Greek. This is found in the meaning of words or a syntactical construction.

– ἵνα εὕρωσιν κατηγορεῖν αὐτοῦ, "that they might be able to accuse him" (Luke 6:7); εὕρωσιν reflects Aramaic *škḥ*, meaning both "find" and "be able."
– ὤφθη αὐτοῖς Ἠλίας, "Elijah appeared to them" (Mark 9:4); literally, "was seen to them," like Aramaic passive of *ḥzy*, "see," with preposition *l-*, "to" (1QapGen XXII, 27: *'itḥăzî 'ĕlāhā' lĕ'abrām*, "God appeared to Abram"); also Luke 1:11; Acts 16:9.
– ὀφειλέται, "sinners" (Luke 13:4); literally, "debtors," reflecting Aramaic *ḥayyāb*, "debtor" (in God's sight).
– ἀπὸ μιᾶς, "at once," which reflects *min ḥădā'*, literally, "from one."
– εἰς + accusative as substitute for a predicate nominative with γίνεσθαι, "become," or ἔσεσθαι, "will be": καὶ ἐγένετο εἰς δένδρον, "and it became a tree," like *wahăwāh lĕ'ā*; also John 16:20; Acts 5:36; examples of this construction in Old Testament quotations (Matt 19:5; 21:42; Luke 3:5) reveal rather Hebraic usage.
– υἱός with the genitive, "son of," not in a genealogical sense ("son of Abraham" [Gal 3:7]), but metaphorically: υἱὲ διαβόλου, "son of the Devil" [Acts 13:10], υἱοὶ Θεοῦ, "sons of God" [Matt 5:9], or υἱοὶ φωτός, "sons of light" [John 12:36]), = bar, "son of" or *bĕnê*, "sons of," especially when the following Greek word is anarthrous. Cf. 4Q246 II, 1: *bĕrēh dî 'ēl*, "son of God"; 4Q548 1 II, 2: *kul bĕnê nĕhôrā'*, "all the sons of light."

4. Alleged Aramaisms. Since New Testament Greek is influenced at times by the Septuagint, some so-called Aramaisms are really Septuagintisms. The "graphic" participle, as in ἀναστὰς ἠκολούθησεν αὐτῷ, "he got up and followed him" (Mark 2:14) or in ἀποκριθεὶς εἶπεν, "answering, he said" (Mark 11:14), is unneeded in good Greek. ἀναστάς is used already in the Septuagint (Gen 13:17; 19:15; Tob 8:10; 10:10); and ἀποκριθείς too (Gen 18:9; Isa 21:9; Dan 2:5; 7:16). Similarly, εἰ introducing a direct question, as in εἰ ἔξεστιν, "Is it permitted?" (Matt 12:10), is unknown in classical Greek and is said to reflect Aramaic *hēn*; it is found in the Septuagint (Gen 17:17; Amos 3:3).

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See also →Abba

Aramean Concubine

→Aramitess; →Concubinage; →Manasseh (Person)

Arameans

The term Arameans designates a substantial number of linguistically-related peoples who spoke dialects of the West Semitic language known as Aramaic. They emerged into history in the late 2nd millennium BCE and flourished during the 1st millennium BCE, when they formed a number of important kingdoms in Syria and northwestern Mesopotamia. Aramean tribes also migrated into central

and southern Mesopotamia and played an influential role in the development of those regions as well. The Arameans of southern Syria were deeply involved in the political fortunes of biblical Israel during the 1st millennium BCE. The Aramean state of Damascus in particular appears often in the Hebrew Bible, usually as an enemy, but sometimes as an ally, of Israel and Judah. The Aramean kingdoms never developed into a political unity, as the Assyrians and Babylonians did, but they still had a profound cultural influence on the entire Near East as Aramaic, their language, eventually became the *lingua franca* of the Persian Empire and slowly replaced many of the contemporary local languages like Hebrew.

1. Origins. The origins of the Arameans are complex and only partially reconstructable with our current evidence. Most scholars would agree that the center of their culture as it emerged in the late 2nd millennium BCE probably was the Jezirah and the Jebel Bishri regions of northeastern Syria. These are the regions where they are found in the earliest attested references to Arameans in extant texts, those of the Assyrian king Tiglath-Pileser I (1115–1077 BCE). He describes Assyrian conflicts with "Ahlamu-Arameans" over a wide range of the Middle and Upper Euphrates Valley, from Rapiqu in northern Babylonia, through Suhu, south of Mari, to Carchemish, northeast of Aleppo, as well as campaigns against them in the Jebel Bishri area, at Tadmar (later Palmyra) to the west, and in one inscription, even at Mount Lebanon. The wide geographical range of their appearance in these texts indicates that even at this early period, the term "Aramean" must have designated a significant number of widely-dispersed tribal groups, related to one another mostly by language. Evidence also indicates that some tribes that are designated as Aramean in the 1st millennium BCE were already living to the north and east of the Jezirah in the Upper Tigris region in the 13th and 12th centuries BCE, before Tiglath-Pileser I. For example, the tribe of Bet-Zammani, well-known as a significant Aramean tribe in the Tur Abdin area of Turkey in the 1st millennium BCE, is already attested in that region during the early 13th century BCE (see Lipiński: 135–36). Similarly the Ruqaheans, well-known from later texts, already appear as living in the area of Assyria in texts of the 12th century BCE.

2. The Aramean Groups of Northern Syria and Upper Mesopotamia. Our knowledge of the Aramean tribes and states of this region comes substantially from non-Aramaic sources, particularly from Assyrian annal texts, which describe the conflicts between the Assyrians and various Aramean groups between the 12th and 8th centuries BCE. The inscriptions of Tiglath-Pileser I and Ashur-bel-kala (1073–1056 BCE) describe persistent Assyrian conflicts with the Arameans. Tiglath-Pileser states in one of his inscriptions: "I have crossed the Euphrates twenty-eight times, twice in one year, in pursuit of the Ahlamu-Arameans." Although the Assyrian texts do not discuss the strategic reasons for their conflicts here, presumably the primary problem Tiglath-Pileser faced was the practice of Aramean tribes raiding caravans along the principle trade routes. Thus the attacks on the Arameans were almost certainly to stabilize the security of the region. However, it is evident, in view of the number of campaigns described in Tiglath-Pileser's inscriptions, that the sending of troops annually to clear out the raiding parties proved quite ineffective.

A fragmentary section of a Middle Assyrian chronicle has been interpreted as describing a large-scale invasion of Aramean tribes into the center of Assyria during the final years of Tiglath-Pileser I, a period in which a serious drought brought about substantial chaos in the region. Some scholars have reconstructed the text to say that the Arameans actually captured Nineveh during this time. However, the understanding of this text remains uncertain, and the role of the Arameans in the events described is unclear.

The Aramean tribes continued to cause problems during the reign of Tiglath-Pileser's son and second successor, Ashur-bel-kala (1073–1056 BCE), who fought with the same tribes in largely the same regions as his father had. In the "Broken Obelisk" inscription, Ashur-bel-kala lists battle after battle with Arameans in the vicinity of various cities along the Habur and Euphrates valleys, and in one case even near a town on the Tigris. It seems clear from the wording of these passages that the Arameans were not the inhabitants of the towns mentioned, but rather had been creating problems in those regions. The inscriptions of Ashur-bel-kala cease after the king's 5th or 6th year, and for about a century afterward, Assyria falls into eclipse. Whether this decline occurred primarily because of Aramean assaults or whether the tribes simply took advantage of a situation brought about by other circumstances cannot be determined from the surviving sources. It is clear, however, that during this period of weakness, Aramean tribes began to settle into regions that had previously belonged to Assyria.

Ashur-Dan II (934–912 BCE) began the process of pushing them back out of Assyrian lands. In his inscriptions we read of his defeat of troops of the Aramean Yausu tribe that had marched up the Tigris and threatened the center of Assyria. The Assyrians defeated them and went on to plunder several Aramean cities, including Ekal-pi-nari, probably located on the Tigris at the confluence of the Lesser Zab River. In a later campaign, Ashur-Dan also says he fought in "Yahan, the land of the Arameans," in a location that had been conquered

from Assyria in the late 11th century BCE. He claims to have expelled them from that region. The most significant aspect of Ashur-Dan's inscriptions is that they indicate that by the mid-10th century BCE, the Arameans had begun to develop into more centralized political entities that would characterize their status during the following centuries. In Upper Mesopotamia, the most significant Aramean states found in the sources include Bit-Zamani, Bit-Bahiani and Laqu in a north-south line along the Upper Tigris and the Habur River down to its junction with the Euphrates. These states were located on the western boundary of the central Assyrian lands. To the west, the short-lived state of Bit-Adini emerged in the great bend region of the Euphrates and played an important role in opposing Assyrian expansion during the early 9th century BCE. Part of the region where Bit-Adini emerged was also known as Masuwari or Musri, and this name survived after Bit-Adini disappeared from the stage. Further west, on the other side of the Euphrates, was the kingdom of Yahan, later known as Bit-Agusi and Arpad (after its capital). Northwest of the latter kingdom was the small Aramean state of Sam'al, chiefly known from a series of local inscriptions found at its capital (modern Zinjirli).

The Assyrian policy of westward expansion from the 9th through 7th centuries BCE led to constant conflicts between the Aramean states and their eastern neighbor. The kingdoms of Bit-Zamani, Bit-Bahiani, and Laqu fell to the Assyrians by the time of Ashur-nasirpal II (883–859 BCE). But the latter was unable to gain control over Bit-Adini, whose king, Ahuni, supported rebellions within the conquered Aramean states and gave refuge to political enemies of the Assyrians. Eventually, however, Shalmaneser III (858–824 BCE) was able to bring down Ahuni and incorporate Bit-Adini into the Assyrian provincial system. This opened the way for Assyrian domination of the rest of northern Syria. Shalmaneser made vassals of several Aramean and Luwian states, including Bit-Agusi, Sam'al and the Luwian Carchemish, Patina, Kummuhu, Gurgum, Que and others. The Assyrian control of these states was temporary, however, for by the end of Shalmaneser's reign, problems in Assyria led the new vassals to pull away from Assyrian control. Shalmaneser's successor Adad-nirari III (810–783 BCE) even had to suppress a revolt as far east as Bit-Bahiani. During the first half of the 8th century BCE, most of northern Syria remained only nominally affiliated with Assyria, but the latter had a decisive resurgence when Tiglath-Pileser III took the throne in 744 BCE. Within seven years the new Assyrian ruler had brought all of northern and central Syria under Assyrian control.

Most of north Syria west of Masuwari (where Bir-Adini briefly existed) was populated primarily by peoples who were culturally related to the Hittite culture (Hittites) of the Late Bronze Age and who maintained the use of the Luwian language and of Hittite artistic and architectural traditions. However, several of these states, including Masuwari/Bit-Adini, Yahan/Bit-Agusi, Sam'al, Patina/Unqi, and Hamath, gained sizable Aramean populations during the early 1st millennium BCE and developed Aramean names (i.e., Bit-Adini, Bit-Agusi, Unqi). In some cases, kings with Aramean names are attested in the 9th and 8th centuries. The western states of northern Syria suffered periodically from Assyrian aggression from the mid-9th century, but also were able to regain their independence for substantial periods during the late 9th and the first half of the 8th centuries. With the rise of Tiglath-Pileser III (744–727 BCE), however, all of the western states came under Assyrian control and suffered a century of domination from the east.

3. The Aramean States of Southern Syria. The presence of Arameans in southern Syria seems to be attested early in the 11th century BCE in the inscriptions of Tiglath-Pileser I, if one can trust his claim that he fought with them at the foot of Mt. Lebanon. Besides this reference, sources for this region clearly identify Arameans here by the 10th century BCE. The primary Aramean polity in southern Syria was Aram-Damascus, which apparently emerged in the 10th century BCE and played a significant role in the international affairs of western Syria until its definitive incorporation into the Assyrian Empire in 732 BCE. Other Aramean states are also attested in this region, primarily in the Hebrew Bible. 2 Sam 8 and 10 describe battles between Israel under King David and a substantial Aramean kingdom called Zobah, along with some smaller Aramean states, including Beth-Rehob and Damascus. Zobah is located by the biblical writers as between Israel to the south and Hamath to the north and is best seen as having been centered in the Beqaʿ Valley of Lebanon. It is portrayed as having played an active role in the political scene of the southern Levant, as an ally of Damascus (2 Sam 8: 5–6) and the Ammonites (Ammon; 2 Sam 10: 6–14), and an enemy of Israel and of Hamath (2 Sam 8 : 9–10). There has been a great deal of uncertainty about the historical value of these stories about the conflicts between Israel and Zobah (even more so about the brief reference to a battle between King Saul and Zobah in 1 Sam 14 : 47), but most scholars accept the existence of Zobah during this early period.

The story of Damascus' rise to prominence between the 10th and 8th centuries BCE comes primarily from texts of the Hebrew Bible and Assyria. To date, only one substantial inscription, the Tel Dan Stela discovered in 1993–94, can be plausibly identified as deriving specifically from a Dama-

scene king. Four small items, discovered in widely scattered parts of the eastern Mediterranean, contain brief inscriptions attributing the ownership of the items to "our lord Hazael," perhaps the king of Aram-Damascus during the latter part of the 9th century BCE. Hazael's son Bir-Hadad (Ben-Hadad in Hebrew) is mentioned in an Aramaic inscription of King Zakkur of Hamath from the early 8th century BCE. But most of the history and chronology of the kingdom come from the extensive descriptions in the biblical text and the annals of the Assyrian kings, who found Aram-Damascus to be one of their most intractable foes.

According to 2 Sam 8 : 5–6, troops from Damascus came to help Aram-Zobah in its war against David, but the latter defeated the Damascene army and placed Israelite garrisons in Damascus. We read nothing else about Damascus until 1 Kgs 11 : 23–24, which describes how Rezon, son of Eliada, a former officer of Hadadezer of Zobah, gathered together a private army and seized Damascus, where he proclaimed himself king and withdrew from Solomon's empire.

With the collapse of the united Israelite kingdom, Aram-Damascus began a steady rise in political significance. By the early 9th century BCE, Aram, under King Bir-Hadad I could form an alliance with Judah and attack Israel, capturing and destroying a number of its northeastern cities (1 Kgs 15 : 16–22).

By the mid-9th century BCE, Damascus was the leading state of the central and southern Levant. When the Assyrian king Shalmaneser III (858–824 BCE) made his first attempt to conquer central Syria in 853 BCE, he was met by a powerful coalition of 12 Syro-Palestinian states, led by Hadadezer of Damascus, along with Irhulena of Hamath and Ahab of Israel. The armies met at Hamath's northern border, indicating that the coalition had been well-prepared for this invasion. It was able to halt Shalmaneser's forces at the Hamathite royal city of Qarqur on the Orontes River, and Shalmaneser was forced to return to Assyria after a brief sidetrip to the Mediterranean coast. Four years later, Shalmaneser attacked the region a second time, and he was again met by the coalition, still headed by Hadad-ezer. Two additional times the Assyrian king tried to break the coalition (848 and 843 BCE), but Hadad-ezer and his allies kept him at bay.

Hadad-ezer died between 843 and 841 BCE and was succeeded by Hazael, a usurper. In 841 BCE, Shalmaneser III returned to the west to find that the coalition against him had dissolved, so that most of the former opponents submitted to the king without substantial fighting. Only Hazael refused to surrender, and although Shalmaneser besieged Damascus for a while, he was not able to capture it. Hazael held back the Assyrians in 838 and 837 BCE as well, and after the latter campaign, Shalmaneser did not return to Syria. Free of the Assyrian threat, Hazael used the next several years to expand his power into Palestine. He came to dominate Israel and Judah, as well as the Transjordanian kingdoms and Philistia. There may be some evidence that he campaigned also to the north of Damascus. Two bronze horse ornaments found among items in later Greek temples had identical, brief inscriptions that read, "That which Hadad gave to our lord Hazael from *ʿmq* in the year our lord crossed the river." There are many ambiguities about this inscription, including whether the Hazael mentioned here is Hazael of Damascus, whether Hadad is the god or a royal name, whether *ʿmq* is a place name (= Umqi, the Neo-Hittite/Aramean state at the northeastern corner of the Mediterranean, or the Beqaʿ Valley of Lebanon), and which river Hazael crossed (the Euphrates, the Orontes, or another?). But it is possible to read the inscription as suggesting that Hazael fought battles in northwest Syria that may have allowed him to gain some hegemony there. More evidence it necessary, however, to determine the likelihood of this.

Hazael's domination of Israel and Judah in the south lasted for his entire reign of approximately 40 years. He was succeeded around 800 BCE by his son Bir-Hadad II (often called Bir-Hadad III, if one identifies Hadad-ezer with the Ben-Hadad of 1 Kgs 20, 22 and 2 Kings 8 : 7–15) whose reign is known from 1 Kgs 20 (a story misplaced in Ahab's time, but belonging to the early 8th century BCE), 2 Kgs 13 : 24–25, the Assyrian inscriptions of Adad-nirari III (810–783 BCE), and the inscription of King Zakkur of Hamath. All of these inscriptions indicate a precipitous decline in the fortunes of Aram during this king's reign. The empire and political influence that his father had held for decades crumbled as Bir-Hadad was defeated in battle by the allies of Hamath, by Adad-nirari III, who actually entered Damascus in triumph, and by King Joash of Israel (2 Kgs 13 : 24–25). Damascus never regained the power it had enjoyed during the 9th century BCE.

Aram's last period of influence came during the 730s BCE, when Radyan (biblical Rezin) ruled Damascus and formed another anti-Assyrian alliance. During a period of three years between 737 and 735 BCE, Tiglath-Pileser III of Assyria found himself occupied in areas other than the west, so Radyan and the usurper Pekah of Israel gathered a coalition to oppose the ruler, even attempting to overthrow the young King Ahaz of Judah when he refused to join the rebellion (2 Kgs 16: 5–9; Isa 7: 1–9). The rebellion proved to be disastrous for Damascus – Tiglath-Pileser quickly dismantled the coalition, captured Damascus and killed Radyan, converting Damascus into a province of Assyria and bringing an end to the independent state of Aram-Damascus.

4. The Arameans of Southern Mesopotamia. A number of Aramean tribes also migrated into cen-

tral and southern Mesopotamia during the latter part of the 2nd millennium BCE. Texts describe violent raids by Arameans against the cities of Sippar and Nippur during the reign of the Babylonian king Adad-apla-iddina (1068–1047), reflecting the same patterns that occurred in the Middle Euphrates during that period. Evidence also indicates that, unlike their counterparts to the north and west, the Aramean tribes here remained largely pastoral during the 1st millennium BCE. They were joined in this region by the closely related Chaldean tribes (Chaldeans), who went on to play a more significant role in the political realm of Babylonia and by some south Arabian groups as well.

As elsewhere, much of our information about the Arameans of southern Mesopotamia comes from external sources, in this case, Neo-Assyrian texts. During the 9th and 8th centuries BCE, the Assyrians dominated Babylonia, but there were several significant rebellions. Tiglath-Pileser III (744–727 BCE) fought with 36 tribal groups that he identifies as Arameans during his campaigns in the south. Those tribes were also active in rebellions against Sargon II, Sennacherib and Ashurbanipal.

Because they never became politically dominant in Babylonia (eventually the Chaldeans rose to power), the Arameans in this region played a more peripheral role. But their significant population allowed their language gradually to replace Akkadian as the predominant language spoken in the region by ca. 600 BCE. Even prior to that, Aramaic had already influenced Babylonian Akkadian, which exhibits a large number of Aramaic loanwords.

5. Aramaic Culture. The term "Aramean" encompassed a large number of linguistically and culturally related tribes that were spread all across the Near East by the early 1st millennium BCE. So vast is the area covered and so varied are the number of individual population groups so identified that it is impossible to refer to or describe a single "Aramean culture." Some tribes remained pastoralists throughout the Iron Age, while others, particularly in Syria, developed into territorial states with substantial cities and dynastic monarchies. The latter adopted much of their new culture from that of the Neo-Hittite/Luwian states in the region, and could not help but be strongly influenced by their powerful Assyrian neighbor to the east. Their artistic traditions were derived largely from the more established cultures around them, in the north from Luwian and Assyrian models, and in the south from Phoenicia.

Aramaic religion was part of the general West Semitic tradition. The storm-god Hadad (also called Ramman, "the thunderer") appears to have been the preeminent deity in many of the Aramean tribes and states. He played the leading role in Aram-Damascus (cf. the Tell Dan Inscription; 2 Kgs 5 : 18 and Zech 12 : 11, the royal name Bir-Hadad, "son of Hadad"), Sam'al (cf. Panamu I's great statue of Hadad), Gozan (cf. the Tell Fakhariyyeh inscription; Fakhariyah, Tell). Other significant deities in Aramean religion include the moon-god Shahar/Sin, El, Attar, Rakib-el, and Resheph.

The major cultural legacy of the Arameans was their language and script, both of which became dominant influences throughout the Near East during the course of the 1st millennium BCE and into the Common Era. The Syrian Arameans appear to have borrowed the Phoenician alphabet during the 9th century BCE. By the 8th century BCE, distinctive Aramaic characteristics are visible in the script. The Arameans were the first to begin using some of the alphabetic letters to indicate vowel sounds in the writing system (*matres lectionis*), a practice that slowly was adopted by other cultures, including Israel. Eventually, as the Aramaic language became increasingly widespread, the writing system also began to replace the older national scripts such as Hebrew. The script commonly identified as Hebrew today is actually a descendent of the Aramaic, rather than the early Israelite, script.

But it is the language itself that constitutes the Arameans' most profound impact on the ancient Near East. The wide distribution of Aramean tribes throughout the region, from southern Mesopotamia around the Fertile Crescent to southern Syria, made Aramaic a language spoken everywhere. By the 8th century BCE, it was being used in the Assyrian administration as the primary language of communication with the west, and by the 6th century BCE it was the primary language spoken in all of Mesopotamia, as well as Syria. It became the *lingua franca* of the Persian Empire. The dialect of Aramaic used by the Persian chancellory became popular for communication all across the Near East and was used not just for administrative purposes, but for literary compositions as well. This is the dialect reflected in the biblical works written in Aramaic (Ezra and Daniel), as well as in the numerous Aramaic papyrus documents found in Egypt, such as the Elephantine Archive. Aramaic inscriptions and texts also have been found in Arabia, central Turkey, and as far east as Afghanistan.

By the 3rd century BCE, Aramaic had largely replaced the older local languages of Syria-Palestine, such as Hebrew, Edomite, Ammonite, etc. The replacement of Hebrew with Aramaic led to the translation of the biblical books into the latter. The *targumim*, as they are called, were then read alongside the original Hebrew texts in the synagogues. Aramaic was probably the primary language of Jesus of Nazareth and came to be a primary language for Jewish and Christian literature. The Syriac language, central to eastern Christianity, is an Aramaic dialect, and a few descendent dialects still survive today in Syria and central Turkey.

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See also →Aramaic Inscriptions; →Aramaic Language

Aramitess

Better known as Aramean concubine, *pîlgĕšô hā'ărammiyâ*. The unnamed Aramean concubine is the mother of the sons of Manasseh according to 1 Chr 7:14. The first son, Asriel (but cf. Num 26:30–1, which identifies him as a descendant of Gilead), is presumed to be identified with the Manassite hill country of northern Israel, and the second son, Machir (cf. LXX Gen 46:20, but Josh 17:1 identifies Machir as the first-born), is the father of Gilead and therefore identified with the Trans-Jordanian territory of Manasseh known as Gilead.

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Aram-Maacah

→Maacah (Place)

Aram-Naharaim

Place name for an area of northern Syria, along the great bend of the Euphrates River. The name, without the prefix "Aram," was used during the latter half of the 2nd millennium BCE in Egyptian texts (as Naharina) and in the Amarna Letters (*na-aḫ-ri-ma* or *na-ri-ma)*, and it appears in a 9th-century BCE Luwian inscription from the kingdom of Hamath. Only the Bible places the term Aram before Naharaim. The various texts indicate that Naharaim extended along both banks of the Middle Euphrates, as far east as the Balikh and parts of the Habur River Valleys and perhaps as far west as the Orontes River. The texts refer to the cities of Haran, Nahor, Pethor (northeast of the Euphrates), and Tunip (west) as belonging to this region.

The name appears five times in the Bible, and it is sometimes translated (mistakenly) as "Mesopotamia" in English versions. It is the location of Harran, Abraham's ancestral home in Gen 24:10, of Pethor, Balaam's city in Deut 23:5, and the country over which Cushan-Rishathaim, the first of Israel's oppressors in the book of Judges, ruled (Judg 3:8). Troops from Aram-Naharaim are enlisted by the Ammonites to fight against David in 1 Chr 19:6; cf. Ps 60:2 [MT]). Doubts have been raised over the historicity of identifications of the homelands of both Balaam and Chushan-Rishathaim and the appearance of Naharaim in the Chronicles account of David's war.

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See also →Arameans

Aram-Zobah

→Zobah

Aran

Aran (MT *'Ărān*; LXX Αραν, Αρραν) was one of the sons of Dishan (Gen 36:28; 1 Chr 1:42) and grandson of Seir the Horite. The name is of an uncertain etymology. Being a sub-clan of the Horites, Aran would have been among the cave-dwellers in the southern region of Canaan associated with Edom (cf. Gen 14:6; 36:20; Deut 2:12). The Horites are not to be confused, however, with the Hurrians.

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Ararat

I. Hebrew Bible/Old Testament

In the Old Testament (OT), Ararat (MT *'Ărārāṭ*; LXX Αραρατ) is mentioned as both a region and a range of mountains.