

## Vocalization of the Siloam Inscription

by David Steinberg

N.b. The *Guidelines I Have Used in Reconstructing the Pronunciation of First Temple Period Hebrew* are found at [http://www.houseof david.ca/anc\\_heb\\_6.htm#guidelines](http://www.houseof david.ca/anc_heb_6.htm#guidelines)  
In this *Paleo-Hebrew* inscription: (a) the words are separated by dots; (b) there is no division by paragraph or sentence; and, (c) writing is generally continuous with the breaks between lines occurring whenever space runs out i.e. in any place within or between words.

See also

Richter's Transcription (p. 41) [http://www.houseof david.ca/anc\\_heb.htm#richter99\\_inscr](http://www.houseof david.ca/anc_heb.htm#richter99_inscr)

Vocalization of the Siloam Inscription Based on Beyer

[http://www.houseof david.ca/anc\\_heb\\_siloam\\_beyer.pdf](http://www.houseof david.ca/anc_heb_siloam_beyer.pdf)

Biblical Hebrew Poetry and Word Play - Reconstructing the Original Oral, Aural and Visual Experience

[http://www.houseof david.ca/anc\\_heb.htm](http://www.houseof david.ca/anc_heb.htm)

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Line	Reconstructed Vocalization [EBHP] <sup>1</sup>		Reconstructed Vocalization [EBHP] <sup>2</sup>	Original Orthography		My own very literal translation
	Transposed into Tiberian Graphemes	Latin Characters		Modern Script <sup>3</sup>	Judean Script of late 8 <sup>th</sup> century BCE <sup>4</sup>	
1	הַנִּקְבָּה [תְּמָה] הַנִּקְבָּה וְזֶה הָיָה דְבַר הַנִּקְבָּה בְּעוֹד [הַחֲצַבִּים מְנַפְּמִים, אֶת]	[... tɛm'mɛ:] hɛnnɛkʰɛ'be: wɛ'zɛ: hɛ'yɛ: dɛ, bɛr hɪnnɛkʰɪ'be:h bɛ,ʃɔwd [hɛxxo:sʰɪ'bi: m mini:'pi:m ,ʔɛt ]	[... tam'mâ] hannaqa'bâ wa'ze: ha'yâ da,bar hinnaqi'bâ(h) ba,ʕawd [habh ōši'bîm mini:'pîm ,at ]	[תמה] הנקבה וזה היה דבר הנקבה בעוד [החצבים מנפמ את]	·אגפגא[·אג*]... ·גגא·אגא·אגא ·אגפגא ·גגא·אגא·אגא [·אג*]·אג [·אג*]·אג	... the tunnel was completed. And this how its breakthrough <sup>5</sup> was made. While the miners were still wielding the
2	הַגִּרְזֵן אִישׁ אֶל-רֵעוֹ וּבְעוֹד שִׁלֵּשׁ אַמֹּת לְהִנָּקֵב [נְשִׁמָּע קַל אִישׁ קַ]	hɛggɛr'zɛ:n 'i:ʃ ʔɛl-rɛ'ʕo: wɛbɛ,ʃɔwd ʃɛ'lɔʃ ʔɛm'mo:t lɛhɪnnɛ[ 'kʰɛ:b [nɪʃ'mɛ]ʃ ,kʰo:l 'i:ʃ kʰo:	haggar'ze:n 'îš 'il-ri'ʕō waba,ʕawd ša 'lōš 'am'mōt lahinna[ 'qɛ:b [niš'ma]ʕ ,qōl 'i:š qō	אש אל רעו הגזן ובעוד שלש אמת להנ[קב נשמ]ע קל אש ק	·אגפגא ·אגפגא ·אגפגא ·אגפגא ·אגפגא ·אגפגא ·אגפגא ·אגפגא	pick (the gangs digging) toward one another; while there still remained 3 cubits to be tunnelled; a man shouting to his fellow was heard
3	[ר] אֶל-רֵעוֹ כִּי הָיְתָ זָדָה <sup>6</sup> בְּצַר מִימִינִי [וְעַד הַשְּׂמָאל] וּבַיּוֹם הַ	'rɛ:ʔ ʔɛl-rɛ'ʕo: ,ki: hɛ'yɛ:t zɪd'dɛ: bɛsʰɪ'sʰu:r miyyɛ'mi:n [wɛ,ʃɛd hɛl- ʔɛm'ʔo:l]	're:ʔ 'il-ri'ʕō ,ki: ha'ya:t zid'dâ baš'šūr miyya'mîn [waʕad-haš- šam'ōl] waba,yômʔ hi	[ר] א אל רעו כי הית זדה בצר מימיני [ועד השמאל] ובימה	·אגפגא ·אגפגא ·אגפגא ·אגפגא ·אגפגא ·אגפגא ·אגפגא ·אגפגא	as there was a crack in the rock running from south (to north or right to left). So on the day its break

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		wəbɛ, yo:m hɪ				
4	<p>נְקִבָּה הַכּוֹ הַחֲצִיבִים 'אִישׁ לִקְרַת רֵעוֹ גִרְזָן עַל- [ג]רְזָן וַיִּלְכוּ</p>	<p>nnekʰi'be:h hik'ku: hexxo:sʰi'bi:m ʰi:ʃ lekʰ, re:t re'ʕo: gɛr'zɛ:n ʕel- [g]ɛr'zɛ:n weyyɛ'liku'</p>	<p>nnaqi'bâ(h) hik'kū haḥḥōši'bīm ʰiʃ laq,ra:t ri'ʕō gar'ze:n ʕal- [g]ar'ze:n wayyi'likū</p>	<p>נקבה הכו החצבמ אש לקרת רעו גרזנ על [ג]רזנ וילכו</p>	<p>נְקִבָּה הַכּוֹ הַחֲצִיבִים 'אִישׁ לִקְרַת רֵעוֹ גִרְזָן עַל- [ג]רְזָן וַיִּלְכוּ</p>	through was accomplished, the miners struck, one gang towards the other, pick against pick; and
5	<p>הַמַּיִם מִן הַמּוֹצֵא אֶל הַבְּרִכָּה בְּמֵאֵתִי [ מ ו ] אֶלֶף אַמָּה [ ו מ , א ]</p>	<p>hem'mɛym min-hemmɔw 'sʰe: ʔel-heb- berɛ'ke: bemɪʔe'tey[m w]e'ʔelp ʔem'me: wemɛ,ʔe</p>	<p>ham'maym min- hammaw'ʂâ ʰil-hab-bari'kâ bami'a'tay[m w]a'ʔalp ʰam'mâ wami,'a</p>	<p>המים מן המוצא אל הברכה במאתי [ מ ו ] אלף אמה [ ו מ , א ]</p>	<p>הַמַּיִם מִן הַמּוֹצֵא אֶל הַבְּרִכָּה בְּמֵאֵתִי [ מ ו ] אֶלֶף אַמָּה [ ו מ , א ]</p>	the water flowed [n.b. <i>waw consecutive</i> ] from the source to the pool, a distance of 1,200 cubits. A hundred
6	<p>תַּאמָּה הִיא גְבוּהָ הַצֵּר עַל-רֹאשׁ הַחֲצִיבִים [ מ ]</p>	<p>t ʔem'me: he'ye: ,gubh hesʰ'sʰu:r ʕel- ,ro:ʃ hexxo:sʰi'bi:m</p>	<p>t ʰam'ma: ha'yâ ,gubh haʂʰūr ʕal-,rōʂ haḥḥōši'bīm</p>	<p>תאמה היא גבה הצר על ראש החצב [מ]</p>	<p>תַּאמָּה הִיא גְבוּהָ הַצֵּר עַל-רֹאשׁ הַחֲצִיבִים [ מ ]</p>	cubits was the height of the rock over the head of the miners.

<sup>1</sup> Note, in reconstructed [EBHP] transliterations and sound files -

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1. there is no spirantization of the bgdkpt consonants;
  2. vowel qualities are outlined here;
  3. I use the most probable form. Where no one form stands out as most probable, I select the one closest to the MT vocalization.
  4. when multiple forms are possible, the form used is underlined.

<sup>2</sup> See [Phones and Phonemes](#).

<sup>3</sup> In my transcription I have replaced separation dots by spaces and have not used final forms of letters in order to better reflect the original.

<sup>4</sup> Legible photo and line drawing found at <http://www.katapi.org.uk/BAndS/SiloamInscription.htm> .

<sup>5</sup> I am assuming that /naqa'bâ/ [naqa'ba:] = "tunnel" see Gibson (Textbook of Syrian Semitic Inscriptions vol. 1, Clarendon 1971 p. 23 while hinnaqi'ba:(h) is the niphal infinitive construct (suffixed form) hinnaqib = "was pierced" plus the suffix a:(h) = "her" referring back to hannaqa'ba: "tunnel".

<sup>6</sup> Gibson (p. 23) writes "זרד probably = [ziddā] from ZND not elsewhere extant in Hebr.... 'narrow, straightened place'."

<sup>7</sup> [Joüon-Muraoka 1991](#) §98f