

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.houseofdauid.ca/anc_heb_6.htm#guidelines

In Paleo-Hebrew inscriptions: (a) the words are normally separated by dots; (b) there is no division by paragraph or sentence¹; 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. For convenience of students I have generally laid out the poetry as in [JPS Hebrew-English TANAKH](#)

See also

- Richter's Transcription (p. 41) http://www.houseofdauid.ca/anc_heb.htm#richter99_inscr
- Vocalization of the Siloam Inscription Based on Beyer
http://www.houseofdauid.ca/anc_heb_siloam_beyer.pdf

Companion [E-books](#) - [History of the Hebrew Language](#)

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Line	Reconstructed Vocalization [EBHP] ²		Reconstructed Vocalization [EBHP] ³	Original Orthography		My own very literal translation
	<u>Transposed into Tiberian Graphemes</u>	Latin Characters		Modern Script ⁴	<u>Judean Script</u> of late 8 th century BCE ⁵	
	אִישׁ לִקְרַת רֵעוֹ גִּרְזָן עַל- [ג]רְזָן וַיִּלְכוּ	hex.xo:s.ʿi'bi:m ʿi:ʃ lekʿ,ʁe:t ʁe'ʕo: gɛr'zɛ:n ʕel- [g]ɛr'zɛ:n weyyɛ'likuˀ	ʾiš laq,ra:t ri'ʕō gar'ze:n ʕal- [g]ar'ze:n wayyi'likū	גרזן על [ג]רזן וילכו	𐤀𐤓𐤋𐤀𐤁𐤏𐤁𐤏𐤁𐤏𐤁𐤏 [𐤀]𐤁𐤏𐤁𐤏𐤁𐤏	the miners struck, one gang towards the other, pick against pick; and
5	הַמַּיִם מִן־הַמְּוֶצֵא אֶל־הַבְּרֵכָה בְּמֵאֵתַי [מ ו] אֶלֶף אַמָּה [וּמ , א]	hem'məym min- hem.mɔws'ʕe: ʔel- heb.be.ʁɛ'ke: be.mi.ʔe'tey[m w]e'ʔelp ʔem'me: we.mɛ,ʔe	ham'maym min- hammaw'sâ ʾil-habbari'kā bami'a'tay[m w]a''alp 'am'mâ wami,'a	המימ מן המוצא אל הברכה במאתי [מ ו] אלף אמה [וּמ , א]	𐤇𐤌𐤍𐤌𐤌𐤌𐤌 𐤀𐤋𐤁𐤁𐤏𐤁𐤏 𐤁𐤌𐤌𐤌𐤌𐤌𐤌 𐤀𐤋𐤁𐤁𐤏𐤁𐤏 [𐤌𐤎]𐤀𐤋𐤁𐤁𐤏𐤁𐤏 [𐤎𐤌,𐤀]	the water flowed [n.b. <i>waw consecutive</i>] from the source to the pool, a distance of 1,200 cubits. A hundred
6	ת אַמָּה הִיָּה גְבוּהַ הַצֵּר עַל־רֹאשׁ הַחֲצִבִּי [מ]	t ʔem'me: he'yɛ: ,gʊbh hesʿi'sʕu:r ʕel- ,ʁo:ʃ hex.xo:s.ʿi'bi:m	t 'am'ma: ha'yâ .gubh haš'sūr ʕal-,rōš haḥḥōši'bīm	ת אמה הייה גבה הצר על ראש החצב [מ]	𐤀𐤌𐤌𐤌𐤌𐤌 𐤇𐤏𐤁𐤁 [𐤌]𐤇𐤏𐤁𐤁𐤏𐤁𐤏	cubits was the height of the rock over the head of the miners.
		MP3 sound file				

¹ This is clearly evident in e.g. the Samarian Ostraca, Mesha Stele, Siloam Inscription, Arad Ostraca, and 11QpaleoLev.

² Note, in reconstructed [EBHP] transliterations and sound files -

1. there is no spirantization of the *bgdkpt* consonants - http://www.houseofdauid.ca/anc_heb_tequ.htm#bgdpt;

2. vowel qualities are outlined here - http://www.houseofdauid.ca/anc_heb_6.htm#ebhp_vow_qual;

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.

³ See *Phones and Phonemes* - http://www.houseofdauid.ca/anc_heb_6.htm#phone_phonym.

⁴ 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.

⁵ Legible photo and line drawing found at <http://www.katapi.org.uk/BAndS/SiloamInscription.htm> .

⁶ I am assuming that /naqa'bâ/ [naqa'ba:] = "tunnel" see Gibson 1971 p. 23 while *hinnaqi'ba:* is the niph'al infinitive construct (suffixed form) *hinna'qib* = "was pierced" plus the suffix *a:* = "her" referring back to *hannaqa'ba:* "tunnel".

⁷ Gibson (p. 23) writes "זרד probably = [ziddā] from ZND not elsewhere extant in Hebr.... 'narrow, straightened place'."

⁸ Joüon-Muraoka 1991 §98f