

## 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](http://www.houseofdauid.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

Text of the Siloam Inscription <http://www.houseofdauid.ca/siloam.pdf>

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

Vocalization of the Siloam Inscription Based on Beyer  
<http://www.houseofdauid.ca/siloam1.PDF>

Biblical Hebrew Poetry and Word Play - Reconstructing the Original Oral, Aural and Visual Experience [http://www.houseofdauid.ca/anc\\_heb.htm](http://www.houseofdauid.ca/anc_heb.htm)

	Reconstructed Vocalization [EBHP]		My own very literal translation
Line	<u>Transposed into</u> <u>Tiberian Graphemes</u> <sup>i</sup>	Latin Characters	
1	<p>..[תמה] הנקבה  וזה היה דבר-הנקבה  בעוד[החצבם  מנפם את- ]</p>	<p>... <u>tam'ma</u>: hannaqa'ba:  wa'ze: ha'ya: da,bar  hinnaqi'<u>ba:(h)</u> ba,<sup>c</sup>wd  [ha<u>h</u>o:ši'bi:m meni:'pi:m <u>'et</u></p>	<p>... the tunneling was completed. And this how the breakthrough<sup>ii</sup> was made. While the masons were still wielding</p>
2	<p>הגרזן אש אל-רעו ובעוד  שלש אמות להנקב  [נשמע] קל-אש ק</p>	<p>haggar'<u>ze:n</u> 'i:š 'el-ri'co:  waba,<sup>c</sup>wd <u>ša'lōš</u> 'am'mo:t  lahinna'<u>qe:b</u> [niš'ma<sup>c</sup>], qo:l  'i:š qo:</p>	<p>pick (the gangs digging) toward one another; while there still remained 3 cubits to be tunneled; a man shouting to his fellow was heard.</p>
3	<p>[ר] א אל-רעו כי הית זדה<sup>iii</sup>  בצר מימן [ועדהשמאל]  ובים ה</p>	<p>'<u>ri</u>' 'el-ri'co: 'ki <u>ha'ya:t</u> zid'da:  baš'<u>su:r</u> miyya'mi:n [wa,<sup>c</sup>ad  haš-ša'm'o:l] waba,yo:m hi</p>	<p>as there was a crack in the rock running from south (to north or right to left). So on the day the break</p>
4	<p>נקבה הכו החצבם  אש לקרת-רעו גרזן על-  [ג]רזן וילכו</p>	<p>hinnaqi'<u>ba:(h)</u> hik'ku:  ha<u>h</u>o:ši'bi:m "i:š laq,ra:t  ri<sup>c</sup>ew garze:n <sup>c</sup>al-garze:n  wayye'liku:</p>	<p>through was accomplished, the masons struck, one gang towards the other, pick against pick; and</p>
5	<p>המים מן-המוצא  אל-הברכה במאתי  [ס ו] אלף אמה ומ[א]</p>	<p>ham'<u>maym</u> min-hamm<u>aw</u>'ša:  'el- hab-bare'ka:  bami'a'<u>taym</u> wa''<u>alp</u> 'am'ma:  wami,'a</p>	<p>the water flowed [n.b. <i>waw consecutive</i>] from the source to the pool, a distance of 1,200 cubits. A hundred</p>
6	<p>ת אמה היה גבה-הצר  על-ראש-החצב[ם]</p>	<p>t 'am'ma: ha'ya: ,<u>gubh</u> haš-  'su:r <sup>c</sup>al-,ro:š ha<u>h</u>o:ši'bi:m</p>	<p>cubits was the hight of the rock over the head of the masons.</p>

i The purpose of this column is to give the Hebrew reader an approximation of the [\[EBHP\]](#) in familiar pointed characters. For the purpose of this column only -

**Adaptation of Tiberian Hebrew Vowel Points to Express EBHP**

Vowel Sign	<i>Half-Vowel</i>	<i>Short Vowel</i>	<i>Long Vowel</i>	<i>Diphthong</i>
כִּי		i		
כִּיִּי			i:	
כִּיִּיִּי				iw/i:w
כִּיְ	ə			
כִּיִּ		e		
כִּיִּי			e:	
כִּיִּיִּי				ey
כִּיִּ		a		
כִּיִּה				
כִּיִּי				ay
כִּיִּ			a:	
כִּיִּה				
כִּיִּיִּי				a:w
כִּיִּ		o, כּ		
כִּיִּי			o:	
כִּיִּיִּי				
כִּיִּ		u		
כִּיִּי				
כִּיִּיִּי			u:	
כִּיִּיִּיִּי				uw

- Vowel length [see this link](#)
- Vowel quality [see this link](#)

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- Since the ת בגדכפ letters were always hard (i.e. *b, g, d, k, p, t*) during this period, I use the *dageš* exclusively to indicate gemination.
  - Word-final א = /' [ʔ]; and, ה = [h] (equivalent to MT ה).
  - ע = [ǰ]; ח = [x]
  - I have marked construct relationships with -

ii I am assuming that *naqabā* = “*tunnel*” see Gibson (Textbook of Syrian Semitic Inscriptions vol. 1, Clarendon 1971 p. 23 while *hinnaqibāh* is the *niphal* infinitive construct *hinnaqib* = “was pierced” plus the suffix *āh* = “her” referring back to *hannaqabā*.

iii Gibson (p. 23) writes “זדה probably = [ziddā] from ZND not elsewhere extant in Hebr.... ‘narrow, straightened place’.”