A Brief Introduction to Hebrew

אבגדהוזחטיכלמנסעפצקרשת

Why Study Hebrew?

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Simply put, learning Hebrew (even just a little) will give you greater insight into Scripture, and make you more theologically independent. It will give you a stronger sense of connection with the Bible, the land of Israel, and the Jewish people.

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What is Hebrew?

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Ivrit

The Hebrew language is known as Ivrit (עברית), which comes from the root avar (עבר), meaning to cross over.

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I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which thou hast shewed unto thy servant; for with my staff **I passed over (עברתי)** this Jordan; and now I am become two bands.

Genesis 32:10

你向仆人所施的一切慈爱和诚实，我一点也不配得。我先前只拿着我的杖**过**这约旦河，如今我却成了两队了。

创世纪 章 三十二:十

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What is the first use of the word Hebrew in the Bible?

And there came one that had escaped, and told Abram the **Hebrew**; for he dwelt in the plain of Mamre the Amorite, brother of Eshcol, and brother of Aner: and these were confederate with Abram.

Genesis 14:13

有一个逃出来的人告诉**希伯来人**亚伯兰。亚伯兰正住在亚摩利人幔利的橡树那里。幔利和以实各并亚乃都是弟兄，曾与亚伯兰联盟。

创世纪 章十四:三十

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Biblical Hebrew vs. Ancient Hebrew?

While there are some differences between Biblical and Modern Hebrew – in terms of word usage, grammar and pronunciation; these differences are perhaps not as great as might be expected, given that for nearly 2000 years Hebrew was preserved – frozen in time – as a religious language – the Holy Tongue (Lashon HaKadosh) rather than being used for everyday purposes. Thus the ancient and modern language of Israel are fairly well mutually intelligible, which is certainly not the case with English even going back 1000 years. (See the poem Beowulf for reference). Thus in my opinion, it will be possible and indeed helpful to study the Hebrew language across it's historical range, as this will give us a more comprehensive set of materials to work with. We will try to highlight the variations and differences as they crop up.

A note on pronunciation – we shall generally use the modern pronunciation spoken in Israel. There are some differences from Biblical pronunciation, as well as Ashkenazi pronunciation which is used for litergical purposes in many Orthodox synagogues in Europe.

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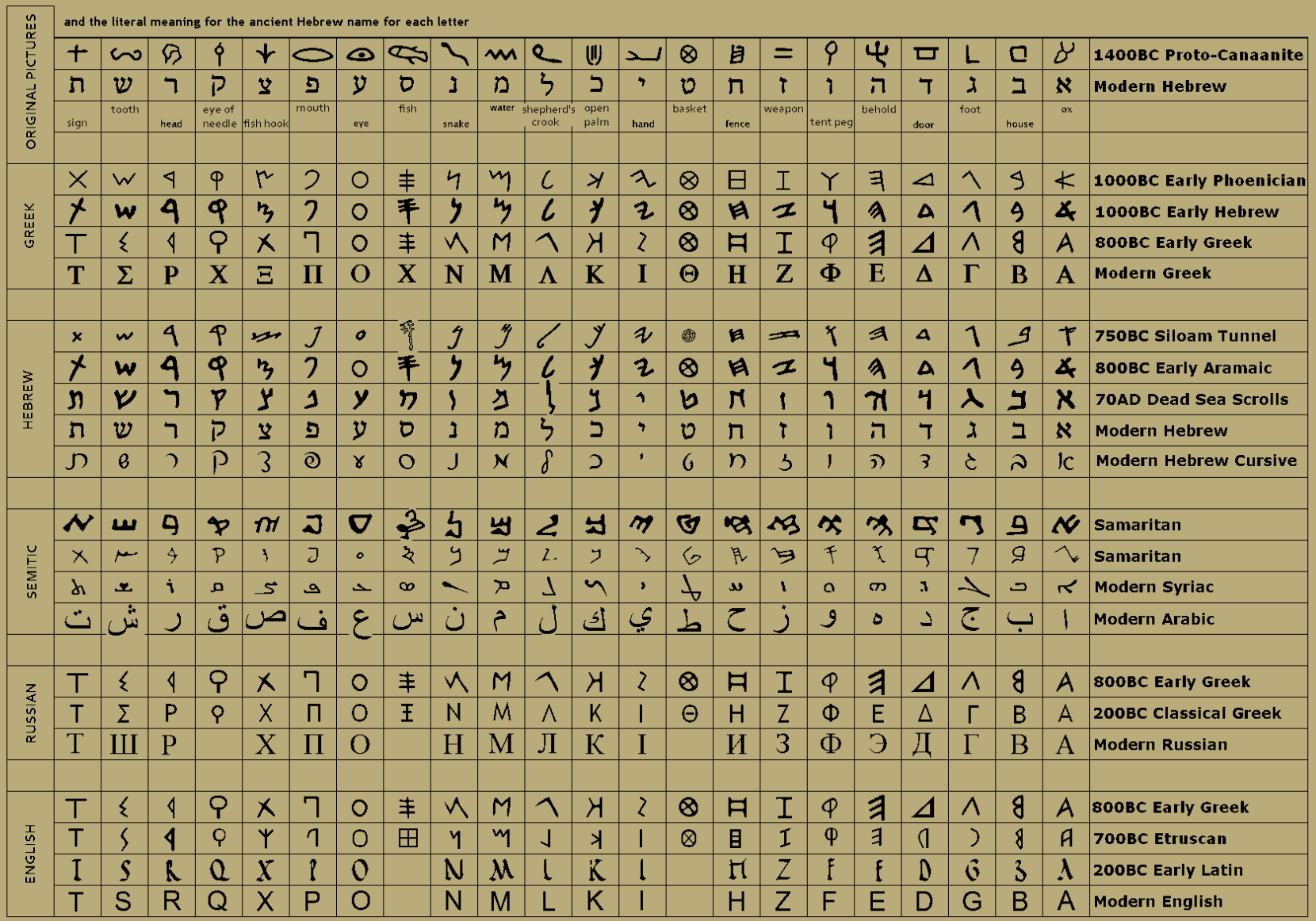
The Origins and Influence of the Hebrew Alphabet



Where to Start?

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1

(No Sound)

Aleph

א

Fun Maths Fact

The Hebrew letter aleph is used in Mathematics to denote infinite cardinals

$$\aleph_0 = \infty$$

Aleph null represents the smallest order of infinity

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2

(b or v)

ב

Bet

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Av

אב

父亲

Father

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Ba

בא

(he) comes, is coming, came

(他) 来(了)

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Abba

אבא

爸爸

Daddy

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Abba ba

אבא בא

爸爸来了

Daddy's coming

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3

(g)

Gimel

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4

(d)

ד

Dalet

אבגדהוזחטיכלמנסעפצקרשת

Dag

דג

鱼

Fish

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Gad

迦得

Gad

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Beged

בגד

衣服,
背叛

Garment, Betrayal

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