

## Other Considerations

One reason for my wanting to gather information on which letter combinations form verb roots in Hebrew and other Semitic languages is that, when such information is available electronically, it can be used to analyze patterns. These patterns can be phonological or morphological in nature.

Each letter in the listings is simply a number so far as the database is concerned. Once the basic number combinations are established in a table, any alphabet can be fed into a lookup table to produce additional listings.

These number combinations can be associated, not only with letter forms, but also with phonological features. In this way the effects associated with, for example, guttural letters, emphatic letters, and other sound categories can be investigated efficiently.

What I personally find interesting are cases where the phonology of Hebrew informs its morphology, as for example, where the nature of emphatic consonants conspire to make certain letter combinations impossible in verb roots.

Some letter combinations never occur in verb roots. For example, the first two radicals of a verb root are never the same. (Hebrew *\*ddh* "move slowly" is the only exception to this rule in the lexicon.) Incidentally, it took moments to find this exception in the database. In a printed lexicon the same information would of course be there, and much more besides, but it would take days of tedious effort to find it.

Another interest that I've wanted to investigate for years now is how the various verb conjugations of Hebrew relate to phonological and morphological facts and to each other. That part is complete for Biblical Aramaic, but not for Hebrew. The only reason it's complete for Biblical Aramaic is that there is so little of it, which makes the information gleaned in this way of comparatively little value. One would have to go through Jastrow's lexicon of the Mishnah and Talmud to flesh this out to a meaningful degree. In the case of Hebrew the biblical corpus is a sufficient object of study. But there we're not through yet.

So yes, if we only wanted to know what letter combinations occur in the lexicon, the way to find that information would be to look in a lexicon. But to take the investigation to the next level it really helps to have information available in a convenient electronic format.