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8 Word-final vowels

8.1 Introduction

The development of word-final short vowels in Hebrew has been the subject of much discussion. In some Semitic languages, original vowels in this position are regularly preserved. This is the case, for instance, in Classical Arabic, where we find word-final short vowels in such frequent forms as the third person masculine singular perfect, *qatāla*, the imperfect of the same person, *yAQ turbulence*, and the second person masculine singular independent pronoun, *ʾanta*. Other languages have undergone apocope, resulting in forms like Biblical Aramaic *qāl*، *yiqtul*، and *ʾant*. When we compare these forms to their Biblical Hebrew cognates, a problem arises: whereas *qatāl* and *yiqtul* have lost their word-final vowel, *ʾattā* appears to preserve it. No phonetic conditioning seems to govern the preservation of these vowels, and consequently, attempts to explain it have involved such problematic concepts as morphologically conditioned sound change or the reconstruction of a separate category of vowels that are somehow both long and short at the same time.

After a review of the literature, we will see that many of these cases of irregularly preserved short vowels have been adequately explained by rethinking reconstructions or recognizing the operation of morphological processes. As the development of word-final vowels in the pronominal system and the closely related perfect endings is still unexplained or debated, the greater part of this chapter will focus on reconstructing those forms and accounting for their Biblical Hebrew reflexes. In chapter 4, we found that the conditioning of tonic lengthening is most easily understood if we posit two separate rounds of apocope in the prehistory of Hebrew, regularly deleting whatever unstressed word-final short vowels were present at that time. This is not contradicted by the data presented in this chapter, and accordingly, it will be maintained as a working hypothesis. Occasionally, these two sound changes will be referred to as the first apocope, preceding the loss of
mimation, and the second apocope, postdating both the loss of mimation and tonic lengthening.

As we shall see, the closed classes of pronouns and verbal endings have undergone a fair amount of non-phonological change. Accordingly, I would like to remind the reader of the difference between analogy and contamination, explored in more detail in the Introduction to this work (section 1.1.2), and point out the conventions used here to indicate different kinds of phonological and morphological change: regular sound change will be marked by single angle brackets (e.g. \(a > b\)), analogical change will be marked by double angle brackets (e.g. \(a >> b\)), and contamination will be marked by arrows (e.g. \(a \rightarrow b\)).

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#### 8.2.1 Anceps vowels

Noting the irregular correspondences between long and short word-final vowels like those mentioned above, Brockelmann (1908: 74–75) proposes that in Proto-Semitic, unstressed word-final vowels were slightly shortened. He calls these vowels “anceps” (anzeps), using a term for a syllable that may be either long or short in poetic metre. These vowels, then, show both long and short reflexes in the different Semitic languages, reflecting their intermediate status in Proto-Semitic. To this phenomenon Brockelmann attributes the preservation of word-final -å in cases like ‘attā ‘you (m.sg.)’ and in the locative ending (he locale) as in ḥūsā ‘outside’, or rather, the fact that this *-ā (in his reconstruction) did not participate in the Canaanite Shift > *-ō. This seems to contradict his statement elsewhere that only stressed *ā > *ō, for which see chapter 3. Brockelmann also sees the result of the anceps rule in the prepositions ‘el ‘to’ and ‘al ‘on’, which he derives from *ēli < *ēlay and *āli < *ālay. The general notion of word-final unstressed long vowels being anceps is shared by Bergsträsser (1918: 115), who speculates about possible conditions under which the vowels were shortened, and by Bauer & Leander (1922: 231), who also note the alternation between short *i in the second person feminine perfect suffix *-ti > -t and long *ī in the same ending with personal suffixes attached, like *natantīhu > nṭattīhu ‘you (f.sg.) gave it’.

The problem with this account is that it does not explain why some vowels stayed long and others became short. Unless conditions can be identified which
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directed the shortening of word-final unstressed long vowels in some cases and not in others, the ances hypothesis amounts to stating that the length of word-final vowels varied at random, which goes against the idea of phonetically conditioned sound change. Nor does it explain why the same word has a long final vowel in some languages and a short one in others: if the shortening was already Proto-Semitic, its effects should be identical in all the Semitic languages. Brockelmann’s derivation of ‘El and ‘al, finally, is incompatible with the usual development of diphthongs in Hebrew (see chapter 5). These forms can more easily be traced back to an alternation between short forms like *ila without suffixes and longer forms like *ilay- before suffixes, a distribution which is attested by many prepositions in Ga’az (e.g. qaddma ‘in front of’ vs. qadmeka < *qidmayka ‘in front of you (m.sg.)’) and can therefore be reconstructed for Proto-West-Semitic. The poetic forms ‘Ela and ‘âle, as well as ‘âde ‘until’ from ‘ad ‘idem’, would then be the result of paradigm levelling, as would the Classical Arabic cognates of these words, ‘ilâ < *ilâ and ‘alâ < *alay.1

8.2.2 Alternative explanations

The majority of the scholarship concerning the loss and preservation of word-final vowels has addressed the ances hypothesis as described above. Two alternative explanations must be mentioned, however, both from the middle of the twentieth century; they differ on most points, but agree that the seemingly preserved word-final vowels are not the authentic, inherited forms.

Birkeland (1940: 12–17) believes that all ances vowels were originally short. Like pretonic lengthening (see chapter 4), he sees the preservation of some of these vowels in Biblical Hebrew as the result of dialect borrowing. The relevant pronominal endings, the he locale, and the cohortative ending -å were borrowed into a dialect that had lost word-final short vowels from a dialect that preserved them; as the former dialect only possessed long vowels in Auslaut, these newly borrowed vowels were interpreted as such. Thus, for instance, *átta ‘you (m.sg.)’

1The Hebrew and Arabic forms do show the result of different prosody. In Hebrew, the prepositions seem to have been unstressed and proclitic, with the final diphthong developing as in the dual and plural construct state: *ala > âle like *yaday > yde ‘hands (construct)’ (Classical Arabic yaday). In Classical Arabic, they behave like the prosodically independent adverb *matay > matâ ‘when’ (Hebrew mâtay). Dr. A. Al-Jallad informs me that in the spoken Arabic dialects, only short forms of *il- like *ilak ‘to you (m.sg.)’, are attested, while the forms of *al- are long, like *alêk ‘on you (m.sg.)’, as in Classical Arabic; this supports the reconstruction of a short form like *ila for the ‘to’ pronoun, at least.
was borrowed as *áttā > *áttä. Unfortunately, this account cannot explain the distribution of the ancesp vowels. Why, for instance, was the second person masculine singular perfect *qatāltä borrowed as *qatāltä > qåtätä, while the third person masculine *qatälä > qåtal did not preserve its final vowel? Birkeland’s account does not have much explanatory power and is accordingly not very attractive.

The second of these alternative explanations, found in Paul Kahle’s *The Cairo Geniza*, summarizes many years of research into non-Tiberian traditions of Biblical Hebrew. In the first edition of this work (Kahle 1947), the second person masculine singular ending -kåá is discussed on pages 95–102. Kahle notes that another form of this suffix, reflecting *-ak rather than *-kā, is normal in the Second Column of the Hexapla (e.g. αμμαχ ‘your people’, Tiberian ‘ammkåá), Jerome’s Hebrew transcriptions (e.g. ammäch ‘idem’), liturgical texts with Palestinian vocalization (e.g. bbetak ‘in your house’, Tiberian bbetåkåá), Samaritan Hebrew (e.g. ‘abdak ‘your servant’, Tiberian ‘abdåkåá), and possibly in Bible manuscripts with Palestinian vocalization. He concludes that *-ak is the authentic Hebrew form of this suffix, and that the Tiberian Masoretes artificially introduced -kåá because they thought this was the more correct form, taking their inspiration from the imposition of a vocalization according to Classical Arabic on the originally non-Classical consonantal text of the Qur‘ān. Similar introductions of word-final vowels took place in the perfect ending -tå and the third person feminine suffix -hå.

It seems doubtful that the Tiberian Masoretes would have changed their Hebrew based on an Islamic example. Additionally, Kahle’s explanation does not account for the distribution of the originally short vowels. As in Birkeland’s account, it is not clear why, for instance, *bêtak ‘your (m.sg.) house’ was replaced by *bêtakåá based on Classical Arabic baytaka, but *bêték ‘your (f.sg.) house’ was not replaced by **bêtékåi based on Classical Arabic baytiki; or why *katabt ‘you (m.sg.) wrote’ was replaced by *katabtä like Classical Arabic katabta, but *katab ‘he wrote’ was not replaced by **katabå like Classical Arabic kataba. Another objection is provided by Brønno (1950), who shows that the Palestinian vocalization is not the precursor of the Tiberian one, as the latter accurately preserves more archaic linguistic features than the former in many cases. This reduces the need to see -kåá as an artificial introduction that was not present in earlier stages of the tradition; it could simply be a variant form that was preserved in the Tiberian tradition, but lost in the Palestinian one.
Kahle refines the argument in the second edition of the book (1959: 171–179), incorporating the material from the Dead Sea Scrolls; this had been impossible for the first edition, as the discovery of the former roughly coincided with the publication of the latter. Taking the frequent spellings of the second person masculine singular suffix like -<kh> found in some of these texts into account, Kahle arrives at a different origin of the Tiberian suffix -kā. He still believes that the Arabic grammarians exerted influence on the Tiberian Masoretes, but he now also ascribes the Masoretic introduction of word-final vowels in some forms to their supposed find of some Qumran documents around the year 800 CE. In fact, such a find is reported in an early ninth-century letter from the Nestorian patriarch Timothy, paraphrased by Kahle. If these documents were similar to the Dead Sea Scrolls found in the twentieth century, they would have contained plene spellings of word-final vowels in the relevant forms. The Tiberian Masoretes were ideologically inclined to value these documents highly, and accordingly, they adapted their reading tradition to reflect these plene spellings.

Although it is contingent on the orthography of unknown texts, this scenario is not very implausible. Still, it is safer to assume that -kā goes back to a variant form that was preserved in the Tiberian tradition in whatever way. Either alternative presents us with a new problem: given the existence of a Tiberian or Qumranic form going back to *-kā, how can we explain the origin of this form? In other words, Kahle’s account does not resolve the anceps problem.

### 8.2.3 Anceps revisited

So far, then, neither the anceps hypothesis nor its alternatives have proved satisfactory. Cantineau (1937) rightly criticizes the anceps approach for its lack of specific conditions in which word-final short vowels were shortened. He notes that in Biblical and Targumic Aramaic, which show two reflexes of several pronominal suffixes, the conditioning factor is the length of the preceding vowel: the vowel of the suffix has the same length as that preceding it, e.g. ḫābūḥi ‘his father’ < *abūhī, but ydēh ‘his hand’ < *yadihi. Citing similar examples from Arabic dialects, Cantineau reconstructs this as the original distribution, arriving at a system of quantitative vowel harmony in the personal suffixes. As Blau (1982) notes, however, Classical Arabic shows the exact opposite distribution in the case of the third person masculine singular suffix -hū, which is short after long vowels, but

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2I thank Dr. C. Stadel for pointing this out to me.
long after short vowels. There is no reason to privilege one of these distributions over the other, so the original distribution of forms with a long vowel and those with a short one remains unclear.

Steiner (1979), in an article on the origin of the Mishnaic Hebrew second person masculine singular suffix -ak and its relation to Biblical Hebrew -kā, sees the preservation of the final vowel in the third person feminine singular suffix -hā as the result of a “conspiracy” (p. 171), in the linguistic sense of the word. He posits that the apocopeation of word-final short vowels only took place in environments like *āCV: thus, for instance, *immah > *immah > immāh ‘her mother’, but *ābīha > ābhā ‘her father’. This sound law cannot be accepted, though, as it is clearly contradicted by the loss of word-final short vowels following a heavy syllable in many nominal and verbal forms, e.g. (*kālbum >) *kalbu > *kalb > k’ilḥ ‘dog’, *heqīma > *heqīm > heqīm ‘he erected’, etc.

Blau (1982) politely disagrees with Steiner. Rather, he attributes the different forms of the third person feminine singular suffix to the elision of *h, which, in his opinion, only took place after short vowels:

Accordingly, mar’ēhā ‘her sight’ with long e preceding the h preserved the h, yet lāhā, with short a preceding the h, has become lā (as in Num 32:42). Yet not only did the ending -ā mark feminine (yaldā being understood as ‘girl’, rather than ‘her boy’), but, because of forms like ābhā, etc., h was considered characteristic of 3fs and therefore again added: lāḥ. (p. 63)

This is an attractive explanation. Besides the distribution of -āh and -hā, it also explains the presence of ā in the former form of this suffix, which cannot be the regular outcome of *-ah, as it should not have undergone tonic lengthening (see chapter 4). Additionally, the elision of *h in this environment is confirmed by the corresponding masculine suffix after *a, which becomes *-ahu > *-au > *-ō > -o, as in *qāṭalahu > qtālo, but preserves its *h after long vowels.

Notwithstanding this useful analysis of the third person feminine singular suffix, Blau’s article cannot be accepted as a whole. The author goes on to discuss the anceps character of word-final long vowels, which he defines a bit differently from earlier scholars; no explicit definition is given in Blau (1982), but he seems to have the same understanding of the term as in Blau (2010: 55), where anceps vowels are defined as “either long or short, depending on context”. This differs from how the term is used by Brockelmann (1908), who means that phonologically long vowels in unstressed, word-final position were slightly shortened. Blau then
describes how paradigm pressure caused some of these vowels to be preserved, while others were lost; for example, the second person masculine singular perfect *qātalā > qātalā preserved its final vowel so as not to merge with the feminine, *qaṭaltī > qaṭalt. This is problematic, as it constitutes non-phonetic conditioning of sound change. It is questionable whether the avoidance of homophony is even an operative principle in language change (Sampson 2013). On page 65, Blau himself gives examples of Arabic dialects which have merged all the first and second person singular perfect forms (Tunis), or where the second person masculine singular has merged with the first person singular (Damascus) or the second person feminine singular (Morocco). This shows that the merger of these forms would not have been problematic enough to force speakers to block a sound change, even if they were able to.

At this point, we may mention Blau (1977), containing a note (pp. 29–30) that is not directly relevant to the discussion of pronominal forms which has dominated the debate over word-final vowels, but which does belong to this chapter in general. It concerns the origin of the cohortative ending -ā, as in ṣmrā ‘let me keep’. Blau sees two possible origins for the cohortative. First, it could continue an old subjunctive *aqtula, in which case its final *-a was preserved due to the frequent postposition of the precative particle nā. For example, in *ašmora-nā ‘oh, let me keep’, *-nā would have formed a phonological unit with the preceding subjunctive verb. The subjunctive ending *-a was thus not word-final, and was not affected by apocope. After apocope had taken place, this form with preserved *-a was extended to other positions, based on analogies like ṣmor-nā ‘oh, keep’ : *smor ‘keep’ = *ašmora-nā ‘oh, let me keep’ : *ašmora > ṣmrā ‘let me keep’. Alternatively, it could be a back formation based on the energetic *aqtulana (in Blau’s reconstruction), which was reanalyzed as a combination of the aforementioned precative particle nā and what must then be a first person modal form: *ašmorana ‘let me keep’ was then reanalyzed as *ašmora-nā, based on the occurrence of *-nā after other modal forms. This second account is problematic, as the energetic should have lost its final *-a, rendering the reanalysis impossible (as *ašmoran would hardly have been mistaken for *ašmora-nā); or, if the reanalysis preceded the first apocope of word-final short vowels, the newly created *aqtula should have lost its *-a and regularly have developed to *cqtol. The first option,
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however, seems plausible, especially given the semantic equivalence between the Hebrew cohortative and Amarna Canaanite subjunctive forms like *yaqtula demonstrated by Moran (1960), supporting an origin of the former in the latter.

The investigation into word-final vowels in pronouns continues with Hasselbach (2004a). After a review of the previously cited literature, she attempts to derive all suffix forms (except the first person singular accusative *-nī) in Akkadian, Gəz, Arabic, Hebrew and Aramaic from forms with short ultimate vowels. Rather than trying to explain everything phonologically, she sees most of the various forms as being the result of analogy or contamination. Many of these analogies are questionable; the individual cases will be discussed below, as a detailed critique would unduly lengthen this section. Hasselbach’s suggestion that the length in the third person masculine singular suffix after long vowels -hu is due to contamination with the independent pronoun hu ‘he’, however, is a good one; again, arguments for accepting this proposal will be given below.

Most recently, Al-Jallad (2014) has provided some modifications to Hasselbach’s account. He agrees with her that most of the pronouns should be reconstructed with an originally short vowel, but also takes issue with some of the proposed analogies. Besides an insightful treatment of the development of word-final vowels in Gəz, he adduces evidence from Arabic which bears on Hebrew forms with word-final vowels like ʾattā ‘you (m.sg.)’. Al-Jallad notes the existence in “many Levantine dialects” (p. 323) of two forms of the second person masculine singular pronoun, e.g. Bišmizzen ʾint besides ʾinti, Ḥorān ʾant besides ʾante. Interestingly, the long forms of these pronouns show reflexes of *-ah in their final syllable. He concludes:

Thus, in the case of Levantine Arabic, we can reconstruct two forms of the 2ms independent pronoun, a short form ʾinta, which following apocope produces ʾant and int in Ḥorān and Bišmizzen, respectively, and ʾintah, which goes into both as ʾante and inti, respectively. The long form, with the final h preserved, is in fact attested in some contemporary West Arabian dialects.

The presence of a previously unexplained *-h at the end of independent pronouns is also noted by Arab grammarians, who see it as a pausal phenomenon, and it is epigraphically attested in the Jabal Usays inscription, where we find ʾanah/ for a topicalized ‘I’, presumably representing /ʾanah/. Al-Jallad then rightly notes that the long form of the second person masculine singular independent pronoun, *ʾantah, should regularly yield ʾattā in Biblical Hebrew. From there, the final -ā
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vowel (or one of its earlier forms, like *-ā) could have spread to the possessive suffix -kā and the perfect suffix -tā, based on analogy with the feminine: `att `you (f.sg.)` : 2f.sg.pf. qāṭalt = `attā `you (m.sg.)` : 2m.sg.pf. qāṭāltā. The third person feminine plural imperfect ending, Biblical Hebrew -nā, also has two reflexes in the Levantine dialects, going back to both *-na and *-nah, and again, the h is preserved in some West Arabian dialects; accordingly, Al-Jallad proposes “h-closing” as the origin of the apparent anceps vowel in this ending, too.

The Arabic evidence for the existence of these forms with *-h is convincing, and the formal correspondence with Hebrew is unproblematic. One might still object that this solution merely changes the problem: whereas the traditional anceps hypothesis supposes the unconditioned alternation of forms with a long or short final vowel, we must now deal with the unconditioned presence of a word-final *-h. As Al-Jallad suggests, however, the forms with *-h may well have been especially used for topicalized pronouns. The existence of a separate series of pronouns used in topic or focus position is cross-linguistically common: for a well-known example, cf. Ancient Greek ἐγώγε vs. ἐγώ ‘I’, or, less well-known, Dutch ikke vs. ik ‘idem’. The presence of h-closing on the second and third person feminine plural imperfect form tiqt.ólnā < *taqtulnah does not fit this explanation, but there, it can easily have originated in the associated third person feminine plural independent pronoun, hénā < *hinnah. Thus, the reconstruction of a separate series of independent pronouns marked as topics solves a part of the anceps problem, as far as Hebrew is concerned.

8.2.4 Summary

The anceps hypothesis, namely that (some) word-final, unstressed, long vowels could be realized as short under certain conditions, was proposed to account for several different categories of unexpected word-final vowels in Hebrew. Of these, the cohortative ending -ā has convincingly been explained by Blau (1977) as originating in the old subjunctive ending *-a, which was protected from apocope by the enclitic precative particle *-nā. The locative ending -ā, or he locale, has not featured prominently in the discussion since Birkeland (1940), but the discovery of Ugaritic, with its locative ending -<h>, has shown that the Hebrew form, too, must go back to *-ah; thus, for instance, Blau (2010: 269). This leaves us with the various forms of the independent and suffixed pronouns, many of which show seemingly irregular behaviour. Important contributions to an improved
understanding of the history of these forms were recently made by Hasselbach (2004a) and Al-Jallad (2014). In the following section, then, we will review their suggestions in more detail, see how they relate to other sound changes discussed in this work, and attempt to explain those pronominal forms that remain without an adequate explanation.

8.3 Word-final vowels on pronominal suffixes and verbal endings

In the previous section, we concluded that the only seemingly irregular reflexes of originally word-final short vowels in Hebrew are to be found in the pronominal suffixes and some closely associated verbal endings. In this section, we will examine these endings person by person and attempt to reconstruct them and describe their development into Biblical Hebrew. The reconstruction will mainly be based on a comparison with Akkadian, Classical Arabic, various Aramaic dialects, and Gǝz, as other Semitic languages are either written in an unvocalized script, or, in the case of the modern languages, have had much more time to undergo various secondary processes, obscuring the original forms. Of course, data from other languages will be adduced when relevant and useful.

Since the question whether Akkadian lost all word-final short vowels is hotly debated, as is the resulting question whether attested word-final vowels in Akkadian are long or short, these vowels will be marked with both a macron and a breve in this section, e.g. /ā/. This simply indicates that the length is uncertain and should not be taken as a statement that these vowels were in any way anceps, both long and short, or anything similar.

8.3.1 First person singular

An overview of the forms of the first person singular endings are given in table 8.1.

It should be noted that while the Arabic independent pronoun is spelled <n> and customarily transcribed as ʿanā, evidence from poetic metre shows that the second vowel was actually short, as in /a/ (Brockelmann 1908: 297). Like the Gǝz form, then, it goes back to *a, although forms with a long final vowel are attested in various Arabic dialects. We also find the reflex of a long vowel in Biblical Aramaic ʿănā and Syriac ʿenā. Contrary to what these forms may suggest
8.3 Word-final vowels on pronouns and verbs

Table 8.1: First person singular pronominal and perfect endings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>form</th>
<th>BH</th>
<th>Akk.</th>
<th>Arab.</th>
<th>BA</th>
<th>G₃ₒ²Z</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>indep.</td>
<td>ʾānoki, ʾāni</td>
<td>/anākū/</td>
<td>ʾanā</td>
<td>ʾānā</td>
<td>ʾāna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gen. suff.</td>
<td>-ī, -āy</td>
<td>/-ī/, /-yā/</td>
<td>-ī, -ya</td>
<td>-ī, -āy</td>
<td>-ya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>acc. suff.</td>
<td>-nī</td>
<td>/-nī/</td>
<td>-nī</td>
<td>-nī</td>
<td>-nī</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pf. suff.</td>
<td>-tī</td>
<td>/-kū/</td>
<td>-tū</td>
<td>-ēt</td>
<td>-ku</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

at first glance, they cannot go back to a form like *ʾānā; like Hebrew, Aramaic did not originally stress word-final vowels (see chapter 4), and unlike Hebrew, it did not later shift the stress to these vowels, so *ʾānā should have yielded Biblical Aramaic **ʾānā, Syriac **ʾan, like *ʾābī ‘my father’ > Biblical Aramaic ʾābī, Syriac ʾāḇ, or the third person feminine plural perfect *qattâlā > Biblical Aramaic qṭâlā, Syriac qṭal. Rather, they reflect *ʾānāh, the presumably topicalized form with h-closing also attested in the Arabic of the Jabal Usays inscription (Al-Jallad 2014), as Aramaic stressed word-final CVCVC sequences on the ultimate syllable (Birkeland 1940: 3). The second vowel of the short Biblical Hebrew form ʾāni, on the other hand, must be secondary, given its quality. We can therefore reconstruct *ʾāna, with short *a in both syllables, as the original short form of this pronoun, while an h-closed form *ʾānah is attested in some forms of Arabic and Aramaic.

The long form of the first person singular independent pronoun, Biblical Hebrew ʾānoki, is usually seen as the origin of the -i in many parts of the paradigm in Hebrew and broader Canaanite. Hasselbach (2004a: 14), too, posits the traditional development of *ʾānākū (based on Akkadian /anākū/; again, the length of the final vowel is uncertain) > *ʾānōkū (Canaanite Shift, see chapter 3) > *ʾānōkī with dissimilation of *ū > *ī due to the preceding *ō > ʾānoki. This derivation is problematic, however. Other Canaanite languages attest the absence of *-ī in this pronoun, while it is present in other parts of the paradigm, meaning that the independent pronoun cannot possibly be the source of the *-ī vowel. Thus, in the Moabite of the Mesha stele, ‘I’ is <ʾnk>, without a final yod and thus probably representing /ʾānōk/, while the verbal ending is -<ty>, representing /-tī/; similarly, in the Punic of Poenulus, we find the independent pronoun <anec(h)>, while the verbal ending -<thi> is attested on <corathi> /qarōtī/ ‘I called’. The Amarna Canaanite form a-nu-ki (EA 287:6′, 9′) does not tell us anything about the length of the final vowel, and while it seems to showcase the traditionally assumed
dissimilation, the final vowel could also be the result of contamination, as will presently be proposed for the Biblical Hebrew form. The long form of this pronoun should then be reconstructed as *-anāku, with a short vowel; if the final vowel were long, all forms of Canaanite should have preserved it.

Unusually (for West Semitic), the first person singular has multiple different forms of the pronominal suffix. The accusative suffix, used after verbs, shows regular reflexes of *-nī everywhere and is unproblematic. The genitive suffix, used after nouns and prepositions, has two separate forms in many languages. Based on the distribution in Akkadian and Arabic, it seems that the form *-ya was used following a long vowel or diphthong, while *-ī replaced the case vowel in words ending in a consonant: cf. Classical Arabic yad-ī ‘my hand’ from yad-un, but yad-ā-ya ‘my hands (dual)’ from yad-ā-nī. Gςως has almost completely generalized -ya, while Syriac uniformly shows -(y) as the reflex of *-ī; Biblical Aramaic still shows reflexes of both forms, as can be seen from the different position of the stress in ʿābi ‘my father’ < *-ab-ī vs. ydī ‘my hand’ < *yad-ī-ya. Similarly, the position of the stress shows that the Biblical Hebrew form of the suffix, -i, comes from *-īya > *-ēy (loss of word-final short vowels) > *-ī. The suffix on plural nouns is unproblematically derived from *-āyya > *-āyy > -āy. Interestingly, the possessive suffix is always stressed in Hebrew: this may be contrasted with the behaviour of the independent pronouns, which have the pausal forms ʿanī and ʿanōkī. Based on these pausal forms, the direct precursors of the Hebrew pronouns should be reconstructed as *-ānī and *-anōkī, respectively. This suggests that they acquired their unstressed final *-ī due to contamination with that form of the possessive suffix (thus Bauer & Leander 1922: 248), which was later lost in Hebrew, or through contamination with the accusative suffix *-nī, or both.

As Al-Jallad (2014) shows, the Gςως form of the perfect suffix, -ku, can go back to *-ku as well as *-kū. The reconstruction with a short *-u is confirmed by Classical Arabic -tu and the lost short vowel in Biblical Aramaic -et, with an anaptyctic -e- (Aristar 1987: 179); thus, we can reconstruct the ending as *-tu for Proto-Northwest-Semitic. Like the -i in the independent personal pronouns, then, the final vowel in the Hebrew perfect suffix -tī must be due to contamination with one or both of the other suffixes, *-ī or *-nī. Again, some varieties of Canaanite showcase perfect suffix forms from *-tī but no forms of the long independent

*Contrary to the rules given in chapter 5, the triphthong *-iya (>*-eya) did not contract to *-ā; or rather, it presumably did, but the suffix was analogically restored based on forms where *-ya had been preserved following a diphthong or long vowel.
8.3 Word-final vowels on pronouns and verbs

An overview of the first person plural forms can be found in table 8.2.

Based on the Akkadian, G๑ז, and Arabic forms, the Proto-Semitic form of the independent pronoun can be reconstructed as *nih. n. The short final vowel in Arabic makes *ni h. nu the more likely option. G๑ז is the only language to have -na, with a short -a, as the final syllable in this pronoun, corresponding to the suffixes in that language. This may well be due to contamination with the first person singular independent pronoun, ʼana. -na then spread to the suffixes through contamination.

The Central Semitic languages all share the innovation of having *a instead of *i in the initial syllable of the independent pronoun, which can accordingly be reconstructed for Proto-Central-Semitic as *nahnu (Huehnergard 2005a). This

### Table 8.2: First person plural pronominal and perfect forms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>form</th>
<th>BH</th>
<th>Akk.</th>
<th>Arab.</th>
<th>BA</th>
<th>G๑ז</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>indep.</td>
<td>ʼanáhnu, náhnu</td>
<td>/nīnu/</td>
<td>nahnu</td>
<td>ʼanáhnu</td>
<td>nõhna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>suff.</td>
<td>-nu</td>
<td>/-nī/</td>
<td>-nā</td>
<td>-nā</td>
<td>-na</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pf. suff.</td>
<td>-nu</td>
<td>/-nū/</td>
<td>-nā</td>
<td>-nā</td>
<td>-na</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

pronoun from *ʼanókī, so the final vowel of the former cannot be derived from that of the latter. This leads us to reconstruct the following development of the first person singular forms:

- independent pronoun (short form): *anā → *anī (contamination with *-(n)i) > ʼāni
- independent pronoun (long form): *anāku > *anōku → *anōkī (contamination with *-(n)i) > *ānōkī > ʼānōkī (contamination with ʼāni)
- accusative suffix: *-nī > -nī
- genitive suffix: *-iya > -ī (after singular nouns), *-ayya > -áy (after plural nouns)
- perfect ending: *-tu → *-tī (contamination with *-(n)i) > -tī
form was preserved in Classical Arabic. Hebrew (except in a few cases) and Biblical Aramaic both added ʾā- to the pronoun due to contamination with the short form of the first person singular, Hebrew ʾāni / Aramaic ʾānā. Some other Aramaic dialects show very different forms of the independent pronoun, which have undergone heavy secondary restructuring, like Syriac hnan.

Both Hebrew and Aramaic show a different outcome of the second syllable than the expected *-nu > **-n. Interestingly, as in Gǝqɔz, this second syllable is identical to the pronominal and perfect suffixes in each language, -nu in Hebrew and -nā in Aramaic. It seems most plausible that this form of the independent pronoun is due to contamination with these suffixes. The explanation given by Hasselbach (2004a: 14), namely that the long *-ū in Hebrew is due to contamination with the second and third person plural ending *-ū, seems unlikely; as a second person suffix, this second form only occurs in the imperfect, tiqṭlu, yet the first person plural, niqtol, does not have *-ū here. As the first person plural imperfect, niqtol, and the second person plural perfect, qtaltēm (m.) / -tēn (f.), both do not end in *-ū, one can hardly say that “the -ū was reanalysed as a plural marker for all persons.” Additionally, Hasselbach’s explanation does not account for the long *-ā reflected in both Aramaic and Arabic; it is unlikely that it originated in the first person singular independent pronoun, as she suggests for Arabic (p. 13), since we have seen that this should be reconstructed as *āna, not *ānā. Moreover, it seems strange that the first person singular independent pronoun ʾānā would contaminate the first person plural suffixes (-nā) but not the associated independent pronoun (nahnu).

Only Akkadian shows a difference between the pronominal suffix and the perfect ending (stative ending in Akkadian). It is not clear whether this preserves an original distinction; alternatively, the pronominal suffix /-nī/ could have taken its vowel from the first syllable of the independent pronoun /nīnū/ through contamination. Either way, we see that Gǝqɔz has most likely extended the final syllable of the independent pronoun to the suffixes through contamination, possibly masking an original distinction between these forms. At first glance, it seems appealing to connect Hebrew -nu with the Akkadian stative ending /-nū/, but given the correspondence between Aramaic and Arabic, the suffixes should probably both be reconstructed as *-nā for Proto-Central-Semitic and Proto-Northwest-Semitic. Arabic and Aramaic then maintained this form of the suffixes unchanged, while in Canaanite (compare Amarna Canaanite ru-šū-nu ‘our head’, EA 264:5), the Canaanite Shift changed *-nā > *-nō and, in this unstressed, non-word-initial syllable, > *-nū (see chapter 3).
Unexpectedly, the Hebrew suffixes are always joined to their base by a historically long, stressed vowel, as in *qtālānu; the length of the connecting vowel in the imperfect, as in *yiqtālēnu, and in nouns, as in *laḥmēnu ‘our food’, is shown by the failure of the accent to be moved forward to the long ultimate syllable, which would have resulted in *yiqtālnū and *laḥmnū, respectively. The length of this vowel is probably not due to tonic lengthening, as this did not generally operate in syllables preceding long vowels, cf. *qaṭāλū > qāṭlu, *yaqṭolū > yiqtlu, both without lengthening (see chapter 4). Instead, the suffixes may have been formed through analogy with III-wy verbs and nouns, where the long connecting vowel is regular: *ašayānū > *ašānū > ṣāšān ‘he made us’, *yašeyēnū > *yašēnū > ya-ašēnu ‘he will make us’, *ošeyēnū > *ošēnū > ošēnu ‘our maker’ (see chapter 5 for the contraction of triphthongs). The forms with long connecting vowels could then be extended through analogies like *ašūnu ‘they made us’ : *ašānu ‘he made us’ = qtālūnū : qtālānū. This analogy may have been motivated by the desire to match the position of the accent in the suffixes to that in the independent pronoun, ṣānāhnu, where it always fell on the penultimate syllable, based on the fact that other persons also stressed the pronoun and the suffixes on the same syllable. Admittedly, this is not a very compelling motivation. Especially the different behavior of this suffix when attached to the second and third person masculine singular perfect (*qtāltānū, qtālānū) as compared to that of the first person singular suffix (qtaltānī, qtālānī) is puzzling.

Tentatively accepting this explanation for the connecting vowel, then, we may describe the development of the first person forms as follows:

- independent pronoun: *nīḥnu >> *naḥnu (morphological change of unknown origin) → *naḥnā (contamination with *-nā) > *naḥnū (Canaanite Shift) → *naḥnānū (contamination with *-nāni; later than pretonic lengthening; *naḥnū also rarely preserved) > ṣānāhnu

- pronominal suffix and personal ending: both *-nā (in West or Central Semitic, if not Proto-Semitic) > *-nū (Canaanite Shift) > -nu; connecting vowel of pronominal suffix analogically introduced from III-wy roots

### 8.3.3 Second person singular

For an overview of the forms, see table 8.3.
Table 8.3: Second person singular pronominal and perfect forms

| form    | BH      | Akk. | Arab. | BA | Gαγαγ
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>masculine</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>indep.</td>
<td>ʾattā /ʾattā/</td>
<td>ʾanta</td>
<td>ʾant</td>
<td>ʾanta</td>
<td>ʾanta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>suff.</td>
<td>-kā /-kā/</td>
<td>-ka</td>
<td>-(a)k</td>
<td>-ka</td>
<td>-ka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pf. suff.</td>
<td>-tā /-tā/</td>
<td>-ta</td>
<td>-(tā)</td>
<td>-ka</td>
<td>-ka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>feminine</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>indep.</td>
<td>ʾatt</td>
<td>ʾattī/</td>
<td>ʾanti</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>ʾanti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>suff.</td>
<td>-k</td>
<td>-kī/</td>
<td>-kī</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>-kī</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pf. suff.</td>
<td>-t</td>
<td>-tī/</td>
<td>-tī</td>
<td>-tī</td>
<td>-kī</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of the masculine forms of the independent pronoun listed in table 8.3, all but Hebrew reflect *ʾanta, with a short final vowel. Biblical Aramaic also attests a form spelled as <ʾnth>, presumably reflecting /ʾattā/, but read as ʾant. Occasionally, Hebrew also shows the reflex of the form with an original short final vowel, ʾatt, as in Num 11:15; a similar form ʾī also occurs once in the Secunda, which normally has ʾīḥa (Brønno 1943: 190–191), and there is a possible attestation of ʾt in Epigraphic Hebrew (Renz & Röllig 2003: 4). As was mentioned above, Al-Jallad (2014) shows that two forms of this pronoun, *ʾanta and *ʾantah, should be reconstructed based on Arabic dialects. It seems, then, that Biblical Hebrew overwhelmingly attest the reflex of *ʾantah > *ʾattā, while the other languages predominantly show reflexes of *ʾanta. The origin of the final vowel of ʾattā in *-ah explains why it did not participate in the Canaanite Shift: it did not become *-ā until after that sound law was operative.

For the masculine pronominal suffix, Arabic, Aramaic, and Gαγαγ all show forms that must reflect *-ka. In fact, the reflex of this form is also widely attested in non-Tiberian traditions of Biblical Hebrew, as Kahle (1947, 1959) discusses; the clearest examples are found in the Secunda, which has -ʾah after nouns and prepositions and -ʾah after verbs (only imperfect forms are attested; Brønno 1943: 195 ff.). The short form of the suffix is still preserved in Biblical Hebrew as the pausal form with prepositions, like ʾāk ‘to you (m.sg.)’ < *laka. Additionally, this suffix is almost exclusively spelled as -<k> in Biblical Hebrew, versus expected **-<kh> if the final vowel were long; this may be contrasted with the spelling of ʾattā, virtually always <ʾth>. Combined, these facts show that the original Hebrew
form goes back to *-ka, like its cognates. As Al-Jallad suggests, the Biblical Hebrew vocalized form -kâ is best seen as an analogical extension of the ending found on the independent pronoun: *•att ‘you (f.sg.)’: 2f.sg. suffix *-k = *•att ‘you (m.sg.)’: 2m.sg. suffix *-kâ. This late addition of *-â, which originated in *-ah, also explains why the vowel preceding the suffix did not undergo tonic lengthening, contrary to vowels preceding the locative ending *-ah. As *˙gaḏzâṭah develops to *˙gaḏzâṭah > ‘azzâṭah ‘to Gaza’, we should expect forms like *yâdêkah > *yâdêkah > **yâdêkâ ‘your (m.sg.) hand’ in context, and not just in pausa, if the *-ah had been present on the second person masculine singular suffix from an early date. Instead, *-ah > *-â was attached to the suffix only after the operation of tonic lengthening (and after the fixing of the consonantal text of the Hebrew Bible, as the lack of indication of a final vowel shows), giving us the regular development of *yâdâkâ > *yâdâk (first apocope) >> *yâdêkâ (analogical extension of *-â only after tonic lengthening) > yâdêkâ. The pronunciation with *-â is reflected by the frequent spelling of this suffix as -<kh> in the Dead Sea Scrolls (Qimron 1986a: 58–59), indicating that the analogical extension of this vowel was already underway in some dialects or reading traditions by the time those documents were written.

The history of the masculine perfect ending is similar to that of the pronominal suffix. Based on cognate evidence, as well as the usual Hebrew spelling as -<t>, it should be reconstructed as *-ta. Spellings with -<th> are attested, however, and the Secunda shows both -d and -th for this ending, with no clear conditioning (Brønno 1943: 19–21). Together with the occurrence of the longer ending -tâ in Biblical Aramaic, this may indicate that *-â was extended to the perfect ending in more dialects or reading traditions than it was to the pronominal suffix, or perhaps at an earlier date. This is unsurprising, as the occurrence of *t in both the independent pronoun and the perfect ending would have made them more similar to begin with, and thus better candidates for analogy.

The Hebrew, Arabic and Gǝz forms of the feminine independent pronoun can all be unproblematically reconstructed as *ante; the preservation of gemination in word-final position is unique to this word in Hebrew, but can be understood as analogical to the masculine, *attâ, based on the other alternations of masculine -â: feminine zero in the second person singular. The Biblical Aramaic form is not attested, but Syriac *att <nty> must go back to *ante, with a long final vowel; that the Biblical Aramaic form would have been derived from the same form, yielding something like *ânti, is made likely by the attested perfect ending, -ti <
*-tî. A similar Biblical Hebrew form is reflected by the consonantal spelling <ty>, always read *att (Joüon & Muraoka 2009: 110). These forms, which are similar to those found in many Arabic dialects, are probably the result of analogy with the second person feminine singular jussive and imperative ending *-i; this has often been noted, as by Blau (1982: 64) and Hasselbach (2004a: 16), and the posited analogy is unproblematic: *taqtul (2m.sg. jussive) : *ant ‘you (m.sg.)’ (after the loss of *-a) = *taqtuli (2f.sg. jussive) : *antī ‘you (f.sg.)’. As this analogy depends on the loss of *-a in the masculine pronoun, it leads to a falsifiable prediction: the second person feminine should not be marked by *-i outside of the prefix conjugation in Semitic languages that have preserved short word-final vowels. To my knowledge, this prediction holds.5

The other feminine singular forms are to be explained in the same way. They should be reconstructed as *-ki and *-ti; the forms with *-i reflected by the rare Biblical Hebrew forms -ki and -ti (sometimes only in the consonantal spelling and read without the final vowel) and by the Aramaic forms are the result of the same analogy that affected the independent pronoun. The Hebrew form of the perfect ending before suffixes, -tî- < *-tî-, must also go back to such an analogically extended form.

In Hebrew, then, these second person singular forms developed as follows:

- masculine independent pronoun: *standa >> *standah (h-closing) >> *attå
- masculine pronominal suffix: *-ka >> *-k >> *-kā (analogy with the independent pronoun) >> -kā
- masculine perfect ending: *-ta >> *-t >> *-tā (analogy with the independent pronoun) >> -tā
- feminine independent pronoun: *anti >> *att >> *at (word-final degemination) >> *att (analogy with the masculine)
- feminine pronominal suffix: *-ki >> *-k >> -k
- feminine perfect ending: *-ti >> *-t >> -t (preservation without epenthetic vowel in forms like perfect qātalt instead of **qātéláṭ due to analogy with masculine)

5Samaritan Hebrew seemingly provides a counterexample, as the independent pronouns occur there as masculine åttå and feminine åtti (Ben-Hayyim 2000: 225). Like Tiberian Hebrew, however, Samaritan Hebrew does not regularly preserve word-final short vowels. The analogical introduction of *-i could have taken place before *attå < *attah had completely replaced *att < *atta.
Table 8.4: Second person plural pronominal and perfect forms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>form</th>
<th>BH</th>
<th>Akk.</th>
<th>Arab.</th>
<th>BA</th>
<th>Gəøz</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>masculine</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>indep.</td>
<td>ʾattaṃ</td>
<td>ʾattunū/</td>
<td>ʾantum</td>
<td>ʾantun</td>
<td>ʾantumu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>suff.</td>
<td>-kēm</td>
<td>-kunū/</td>
<td>-kum</td>
<td>-kōm</td>
<td>-kōmu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pf. suff.</td>
<td>-tēm</td>
<td>-tunū/</td>
<td>-tum</td>
<td>-tūn</td>
<td>-kōmu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>feminine</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>indep.</td>
<td>ʾattēn(ā)</td>
<td>ʾattinnā/</td>
<td>ʾantunna</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>ʾantōn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>suff.</td>
<td>-kēn</td>
<td>-kinā/</td>
<td>-kunna</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>ʾkon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pf. suff.</td>
<td>-tēn</td>
<td>-tinā/</td>
<td>-tunna</td>
<td>-tēn</td>
<td>-kon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ipf. suff.</td>
<td>-nā</td>
<td>-ā/</td>
<td>-na</td>
<td>-ān</td>
<td>-ā</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8.3.4 Second person plural

An overview of the most important second person plural forms is given in table 8.4.

In the second (and third, see below) person plural, we find different ways of marking the gender in the various languages. In Hebrew and Arabic, the masculine is marked by -m, versus -n(-) in the feminine. Akkadian, on the other hand, has /n/ in both genders, but has different vowels preceding it, /u/ for the masculine and /i/ for the feminine. This distinction is also found in later dialects of Aramaic, cf. Syriac ʾatton ‘you (m.pl.)’ vs. ʾatten ‘you (f.pl.)’. The simplest explanation is that both gender markers originally occurred in the same forms, the masculine being marked by *-um and the feminine by *-in, with the various languages levelling either the vowel or the nasal through contamination. This original double marking is still preserved in the Biblical Aramaic suffix form -kōm, with -o- < *u and -m, vs. the perfect ending -tēn, with -e- < *i and -n.

Of the languages given in table 8.4, only Biblical Aramaic has significant variation in the masculine forms. The independent pronoun ʾantun and the perfect ending -tun must come from *ʾ(an)-tūn(V), a form which is not found elsewhere in Semitic or even in Aramaic. These are secondary formations, analogically formed after the imperfect: 2m.sg. imperfect *taqtul : 2m.pl. imperfect *taqtulūn = 2m.sg. perfect *qaṭal : 2m.pl. perfect *qaṭaltūn. A similar analogical form is found in the Biblical Hebrew form of the perfect ending before suffixes, -tū- < *-tū-, which was formed by analogies like the following: 3m.sg. perfect + 1sg. suffix *qaṭalani :
3m.pl. perfect + 1sg. suffix *qaṭalūnī = 2m.sg. perfect + 1sg. suffix *qaṭaltani : 2m.pl. perfect + 1sg. suffix *qaṭaltūnī.

The original Proto-Aramaic form of the independent pronoun should be reconstructed as *ʔantum(˘V), whence Syriac *ʔatton with -n due to contamination with the feminine. Based on Aramaic and Arabic, then, we may reconstruct *ʔantum as the original form. In Gǝz, we find an additional -u, presumably due to contamination with the second person plural jussive, imperfect and imperative ending, -u < *-ū. A similar form is attested in the Arabic perfect ending before suffixes, as in katabtumīhu ‘you (m.pl.) wrote it’ (Blau 1982: 66). Blau concludes from this that “the original form of -tum, -kum, -hum in Classical Arabic was, no doubt, -tumū, -kumū, -humū” (ibid.), attributing the loss of *-ū in the unsuffixed forms to irregular sound change. He also sees evidence for *-ū in the form of the suffix before word-initial consonant clusters, e.g. in katabtumu l-kitāba ‘you (m.pl.) wrote the book’, with shortening of *ū > u in a closed syllable; but this u might also simply be an epenthetic vowel that was coloured by the preceding labial. As for the irregular loss of *-ū in these suffixes, it is preferable to reconstruct two forms of the suffix, one ending in *-um and one ending in *-umū due to the already mentioned contamination. While it is possible that the same contamination took place separately in Arabic and Gǝz, we might also push the development back to Proto-West-Semitic and reconstruct *ʔantumū as a byform of *ʔantum. The same goes for the other second person masculine plural forms, which also have the added -u in Gǝz. Considering the Akkadian forms in /-ū/, this contamination might even have taken place in Proto-Semitic. The forms ending in *-um should be reconstructed as the more original forms, however. The Biblical Hebrew forms, with the stress on the word-final, closed syllable both in context and in pause, cannot regularly be derived from either form of this suffix. Since they have the same vowel as the feminine forms, they have probably adopted ɛ through contamination with the latter. The alternate masculine forms with a final vowel like <tmh>, found in the Dead Sea Scrolls (Qimron 1986a: 58, 62), are secondary (p. 64); they seem to be continued in the Samaritan Hebrew forms like attimma (Ben-Hayyim 2000: 225).

As Gǝz preserved truly word-final vowels (Al-Jallad 2014), the feminine forms ʔantôn and -kon can only derive from *ʔantin or *ʔantun and *-kin or *-kun, respectively. Based on the evidence from Akkadian and Aramaic, where *u marks the masculine and *i marks the feminine, we can then reconstruct these pronominal forms as *ʔantin and *-kin, as well as a perfect ending *-tin > Biblical Aramaic
-tén, which has become -kn in Gəzəz due to contamination. The final vowel in the Akkadian forms was presumably taken from the second person plural verbal ending /-ā/ or adopted from the third person feminine plural suffix /-šinā/, which, in turn, took it from the associated verbal ending. As the second person plural does not distinguish gender in historical Akkadian, it is more plausible that the contamination took place in the third person. In Arabic, too, the effects of contamination are evident: not only has the originally masculine -u- been extended to the feminine, but we also find an additional -na. Given its absence in most other languages, this was probably introduced from the second person feminine plural imperfect ending; this is part of a broader spread of -na as a marker of the feminine plural in Arabic, cf. the third person feminine plural perfect qaṭalna for older *qaṭalā.

This leaves us with the Biblical Hebrew feminine forms. The independent pronoun is very rare and its vocalization varies in different manuscripts (Joûon & Muraoka 2009: 110). The suffixes, however, are more common. Contrary to our reconstruction so far, they cannot be the regular reflexes of *-kin and *-tin. The fact that they are stressed, in context as well as in pausa, shows that another, originally word-final syllable has been lost (as Hebrew fixed the stress on the originally penultimate syllable, see chapter 4). The occurrence of sīgol in this position is unusual. In chapter 6, we found a number of words with a very similar ẹ, where it was the reflex of stressed *i before word-final geminate coronals in polysyllabic words, e.g. *barḍzūllum > *barzīl > barzēl ‘iron’. The second person feminine plural suffixes, then, appear to go back to *-kīnV and *-tīnV; based on the parallel forms in Arabic, we may identify the additional syllable as coming from the feminine plural imperfect ending *-na, giving us *-kinna and *-tinna for the pronominal suffix and perfect ending, respectively. The ẹ, which is regular in these forms, then spread to the masculine through contamination.

Leaving the presence of -ā on the feminine imperfect ending for the section on the third person plural, we may thus summarize the development of the second person plural suffixes:

- masculine independent pronoun: *·antum → ·attēm (contamination with the feminine)
- masculine pronominal suffix: *-kum → -kēm (contamination with the feminine)
Table 8.5: Third person singular pronominal forms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>form</th>
<th>BH</th>
<th>Akk.</th>
<th>Arab.</th>
<th>BA</th>
<th>Gəzəz</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>masculine</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>indep.</td>
<td>hu</td>
<td>/šū/</td>
<td>huwa</td>
<td>hu</td>
<td>wətōtu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>suff.</td>
<td>-o, -hu, -w</td>
<td>/-šū/</td>
<td>-hū, -ḥi</td>
<td>-eḥ, -hi</td>
<td>-u, -o, -hu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>feminine</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>indep.</td>
<td>hi</td>
<td>/šī/</td>
<td>hiya</td>
<td>hi</td>
<td>yəti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>suff.</td>
<td>-āḥ, -hā</td>
<td>/-šā/, /-šī/</td>
<td>-hā</td>
<td>-ah</td>
<td>-ā, -hā</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- masculine perfect ending: *-tum → -tém (contamination with the feminine); before suffixes >> *-tū- (analogy with the third person) > -tú-
- feminine independent pronoun: *antin, Biblical Hebrew form textually uncertain
- feminine pronominal suffix: *-kin → *-kinna (contamination with imperfect ending) > -kēn
- feminine perfect ending: *-tin → *-tinna (contamination with imperfect ending) > -tēn

8.3.5 Third person singular

Table 8.5 lists the most important forms of the third person singular pronouns. As the third person perfect endings are quite different from the pronominal suffixes and cause no particular problems for reconstruction, they are not given.

In Biblical Hebrew and some forms of Aramaic, the independent pronouns are spelled with a word-final ʿāleph, as in Biblical Hebrew <hw> (masculine) and <hy> (feminine). This is presumably to be identified with the pronounced راء in the Gəzəz forms, which are otherwise hard to reconcile with their cognates.}

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6Biblical Aramaic uses the same spellings as Biblical Hebrew, but this may be due to shared spelling conventions (H. Gzella, personal communication), as the roughly contemporary Imperial Aramaic spellings are <hw> (m.) and <hy> (f.). In Old Aramaic, both pronouns are spelled <h他就>, without a medial mater lectionis but with a final ʿāleph (Gzella 2015: 115).

7Formally, we may connect the feminine yətī with the Akkadian accusative independent pronoun /šiāti/, also reflected in Ugaritic (<hyt>); a similar use of original oblique forms in non-oblique functions is found in Phoenician (Gzella 2013b: 186–187). The long /ā/ in the second
8.3 Word-final vowels on pronouns and verbs

that found in the Ancient South Arabian forms like Sabaic \(<h(w)>\) (masculine) and \(<h(y)>\) (feminine). The word-final \(-a\) in Arabic must come from \(^*\text{-a}\); as in the second person plural, the Hebrew of the Dead Sea Scrolls attests alternate forms with word-final vowels, \(<h(w)\cdot h>\) and \(<h(y)\cdot h>\), but Qimron (1986a: 64) judges these to be secondary (more recently, strong doubts about the original status of the word-final vowels in these forms have been expressed by Gzella forthcoming b).

The correspondence of West Semitic \(^*\text{h-}\) and Akkadian /š-/ matches Proto-Semitic \(^*\text{s-}\), giving us the reconstructions \(^*\text{sū-a}\) (masculine) and \(^*\text{sī-a}\). The length of the vowel in the first syllable is somewhat controversial. Traditionally, the pronouns have been reconstructed with a long vowel, as by Brockelmann (1908: 303) and most other scholars. On the other hand, Hasselbach, Al-Jallad, and some others follow Huehnergard (e.g. 2004) in reconstructing a short vowel in the first syllable, based on the perceived difficulty from deriving the Arabic and Ethiosemitic forms from reconstructions with a long vowel (J. Huehnergard, personal communication).

In Hebrew, Aramaic, and Akkadian, the pronouns would then have developed from \(^*\text{hu-a}\), \(^*\text{hi-a}\) (Akkadian \(^*\text{su-a}\), \(^*\text{si-a}\) > \(^*\text{hu-}\), \(^*\text{hi-}\) \((^*\text{su-}, \ ^*\text{si-}) > ^{*}\text{hū, hī (}^*\text{sū > }/\text{sū/}, \ ^*\text{sī > }/\text{sī/)\), while the glottal stop turned into a glide in Arabic (and Ugaritic, which has \(<h>\text{w}\) and \(<h\text{y}>\): \(^*\text{hu-a}\), \(^*\text{hi-a}\) > \text{huwa, hiya}. In chapter 5, however, it was argued that the pre-Hebrew change of \(^*\text{u}\) and \(^*\text{i}\) to \(^*\text{o}\) and \(^*\text{e}\), respectively, preceded the first loss of word-final vowels, as can be seen from \(^{*}\text{yabniyu} > \ ^{*}\text{yabneye} > \ ^{*}\text{yabnē} > \text{yibne ‘he will build’ and other III-wy imperfect forms. The regular outcome of \(^*\text{hu-a}\) and \(^*\text{hi-a}\) in Hebrew would therefore be \(^*\text{ho-a} > \ ^*\text{ho-} > \ ^*\text{hō} > \ ^*\text{ho} \) and \(^*\text{he-a} > \ ^*\text{he-} > \ ^*\text{hē} > \ ^*\text{he}\), respectively. The actually attested forms can only be attained by supposing an earlier, ad hoc loss of \(^*\text{-a}\) in these pronouns. On the other hand, \(^*\text{hū-a}\) and \(^*\text{hī-a}\), with a long vowel, regularly yield \text{hu} and \text{hi} in Hebrew and Aramaic. These reconstructions with long vowels necessitate that Arabic, in turn, must have undergone an ad hoc change, but this is necessary anyway, as the development of \(^*\text{r} > \ W, y\) is irregular in Classical Arabic; normally, \(^*\text{r}\) is simply preserved intervocalically, as in \(^*\text{mi-atum}

syllable of the Akkadian word is difficult to reconcile with the \(o\) found there in \(G\text{atāz};\) considering the nominative form of the same pronoun, which will be reconstructed below as Proto-Semitic \(^*\text{si-a}\), perhaps we should reconstruct the oblique as \(^*\text{si-āti}\). The development into \(G\text{atāz}\) would then have been from Proto-West-Semitic \(^*\text{hi-āti} > \ ^*\text{tāti} > \ ^*\text{yāti},\) with breaking of \(^*\text{t} > \ ^*\text{y} (\text{Voigt 1987b});\) the change of \(^*\text{a} > \ ^*\text{o}\) remains unexplained; \text{Voigt compares it to the similar development in \(^*\text{mi-at-} > \ }G\text{atāt ‘one hundred’, but this }G\text{az form may also go back to }^*\text{mi-t-},\) cf. Ugaritic \(<\text{mit} > /\text{mi-t-}/.\) The masculine, deriving from \(^*\text{hū-ātu},\) would then be an analogical form, based on the feminine, with reanalysis of the word-final \(^*\text{i}\) as marking the feminine and consequent replacement by \(^*\text{-ū}\) in the masculine.
> *mi-aton* ‘hundred’. Instead of an ad hoc change of *hu-a > huwa* and *hi-a > hiya*, then, we may suppose the irregular loss of * in these pronouns, with subsequent breaking of the long vowels into short vowels and glides in this now immediately prevocalic position: *hū-a > *hūa > huwa* and *hī-a > *hīa > hiya*. For the Gɔɔz forms, see note 7. In conclusion, the preferable reconstruction is that with a long vowel: Proto-Semitic *sū-a > Proto-West-Semitic *hū-a and PS *sī-a > PWS *hī-a.

The different forms of the pronominal suffixes are conditioned by the shape of the preceding word. In Arabic, the masculine forms with -ı are used after -i- and -ay-, as in ‘alayhi ‘on him’, and the forms with -ū elsewhere; the length of the vowel, which is not usually indicated in the script or in transcription, is opposite to that of the preceding vowel and short if a consonant precedes (Fischer 2002: 126).8 In Biblical Hebrew, -o (and occasionally -w) and -dh are found after originally short vowels; or rather, the original suffix combined with the preceding short vowel, resulting in these forms. -hu and -hā are found in other environments, i.e. after heavy syllables, as Steiner (1979) and Blau (1982) note. Hasselbach (2004a: 4) states that “[i]n Hebrew imperfect forms the connecting vowel /e/ before pronominal suffixes of the 3ms [as in yiqtelu] can only be derived from original short *i”, but there are other options; given the historical length of the linking vowel (demonstrated by its retention of the stress in context), it more likely originated in the III-wy verbs and spread to the strong verb through analogy (Brockelmann 1908: 291). Resulting from a contracted triphthong *-aWe(-hū) > *-ē(-hū) (see chapter 5), this historically long vowel takes the corresponding form of the third person singular suffixes. In Biblical Aramaic, -hi similarly attaches to words ending in a historically long vowel, like ʾābūhi < *abūhī ‘his father’ (the corresponding feminine suffix is not attested), and in Gɔɔz, too, -hu and -hā are used after historically long vowels. As was discussed above, this distribution led Cantineau (1937) to reconstruct a system of quantitative harmony for these suffixes, with the suffix having a long vowel after long vowels and a short vowel after short vowels, but the presence of the opposite system in Classical Arabic makes this reconstruction uncertain. Additionally, it is unclear whether all the allomorphy attested in the various languages must be due to a difference of vowel

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8Fischer formulates this as the vowel being short after closed syllables and long after open syllables, but his examples show that a distinction between heavy and light syllables, respectively, is meant. Cf. sāriq-hu ‘his thief (nom.)’ and sāriq-hi ‘idem (gen.)’ vs. sāriqū-hu ‘his thieves (nom.)’ and sāriqī-hi ‘idem (acc./gen.)’.
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length in the suffixes: besides Arabic, only Aramaic, with -eh < */-i-hV and -hi < */-hi, clearly attests this difference. In the other languages, the allomorphy may be due to the conditioned elision of *h, which only took place after short vowels; this is how Blau (1982: 63) explains the difference in the feminine forms, and the same explanation could hold for the masculine. The ‘short’ Hebrew form would then have developed from *(yad)-a-hū > *-aū > *-ō > (yād)-o ‘his (hand)’, with *h being maintained in other positions as in *(pī)-hū > (pī)-hu ‘his (mouth)’.

We cannot simply reconstruct these suffixes as */-hū and */-hā, though. For one, the reflex of */-hu with short */-u is clearly attested in Arabic. More seriously, the Biblical Hebrew form -hā cannot come from */-hā, as this form should have undergone the Canaanite Shift. Like the other cases of ‘anceps vowels’, this seemingly irregular reflex may be the result of contamination or analogy.

Hasselbach (2004a: 17) makes an interesting suggestion that explains the occurrence of both long and short vowels in these suffixes. Noting the similarity between the independent and long suffixed forms in Hebrew and Akkadian, she reconstructs the suffixes as originally having a short vowel, the forms with a long vowel arising due to contamination with the independent pronoun. Thus, in Hebrew, */-hu → */-hū due to contamination with the independent pronoun *hū < */hū-a; in Akkadian, */-šū → */-šū due to contamination with independent */šū < */sū-a. In a note on page 17, she connects the invariable shortness of the vowel in the Arabic form of the suffix with the lack of a long vowel in the independent pronoun, huwa; as we have seen, forms with a long vowel do in fact occur in Arabic, but the contamination could have taken place at a time when the independent pronoun still had a long vowel, resulting in */-hu → */-hū due to contamination with */hū(‘)a. In her grammar of Sargonic Akkadian (2005), Hasselbach convincingly shows that in that language, at least, this contamination has taken place in the accusative pronominal suffixes (which are distinguished from the genitive suffixes in Akkadian). Whereas the genitive suffixes are spelled -su (masculine) and -sa (feminine), the accusative suffixes are -su₄ (masculine) and -si (feminine), as in dar-a-mu-su₄ /tar-amūsu/ ‘she loved him’, a-la-ga-si-ma /a-laqqahšīma/ ‘I will take her’ (pp. 155–156; the phonological interpretation is Hasselbach’s). That this is due to contamination with the independent pronouns su₄ /sū/ ‘he’ and *si (attested in later dialects of Akkadian) seems clear. Hasselbach believes that the difference in spelling between -su ‘his’ and -su₄ ‘him’ does not necessarily reflect a difference in pronunciation, in which case this would simply be a scribal convention, but it seems more plausible that it does indicate a different vowel length, presumably
between /-su/ (spelled -su) and /-sū/ (spelled -su₄). This would parallel the case of the feminine accusative suffix -si, where the pronunciation must have been affected by contamination.

Given the occurrence of both long and short forms of these suffixes in Aramaic, Arabic, and Akkadian, then, the contamination that gave rise to some forms with long vowels may already have taken place in Proto-Semitic, in which case we should reconstruct both *-su and *-sū for the masculine suffix. Alternatively, the contamination may have taken place separately in the different languages, in which case Proto-Semitic would only have had the short form, *-su. Either way, it seems likely that an ancestor of Hebrew had both *-hu and *-hū at some point. Perhaps, then, it was the length of the vowel in the suffix that conditioned the elision of *h, not the length of the preceding vowel; this would explain the occasional cases of h-elision after historically long vowels, as in *:abīhu > *:abīu > :ābīw ‘his father’ (besides :ābīhu), *:pīhu > *:pīu > :piw ‘his mouth’ (besides :pīhu). If this is the case, then the suffixes must have been redistributed based on the structure of the preceding syllable, with the short forms predominating after light syllables and the long forms elsewhere. Elision also originally took place in the feminine suffix: modifying the account given by Blau (1982) to reconstruct a short vowel in the suffix, the development may be represented as *(yad)-aha > *(yad)-ā > :yādāh, with word-final -h reintroduced from -hā with unelided *h. The existence of *-ha with a short vowel is confirmed by the Biblical Aramaic form of the suffix, -ah, which must come from *-aha. Whereas the variation in vowel length in the masculine is due to contamination with the independent pronoun *hū-a, this cannot be the case for the feminine, as the feminine independent pronoun, *hī-a, is not marked by an a-vowel; consequently, contamination should have yielded a suffix like **-hi, similar to the Akkadian feminine accusative suffix /-šī/ discussed above. Rather, the alternation was probably established by analogy with that found in the masculine; taking *-hā as the original form of the suffix, as this is the only form reflected in Classical Arabic, the analogy can be formalized as *-hū : *-hu = *-hā : *-ha. Later, a similar analogy worked in reverse to restore the *ā in the long form of the suffix after the Canaanite Shift had ceased operating: *-hu : *-hū = *-ha : *-hā.

The h was not reintroduced in the masculine, because this could not be done without altering the consonantal text. In the feminine, however, the Masoretes merely had to add a mappiq, indicating the consonantal status of the word-final -(h).

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The development of the third person singular pronominal forms may then be summarized:

- masculine independent pronoun: *hū·a > *hū · > *hū > hu
- masculine pronominal suffix: *-hu > *-u (elision of *h before a short, word-final vowel) > -w, or -o when contracted with a preceding *-a-; contamination with *hū·a created an alternate form, *-hū > -hu.
- feminine independent pronoun: *hī·a > *hī · > *hī > hi
- feminine pronominal suffix: *-hā, presumably > *-hō (Canaanite Shift) but >> *-hā afterwards (analogy with the masculine) > -hā; an earlier analogy with the masculine created an alternate form, *-hā > *-ā (elision of *h before a short, word-final vowel and contraction with preceding *-a- at some point after the Canaanite Shift) > *-ā → -āh (contamination with -hā)

8.3.6 Third person plural

The most important third person plural forms are given in table 8.6. Gošaz also has the independent pronouns wō·tomu (masculine) and wō·ton (feminine), which are obvious analogical creations based on the third person masculine singular wō·tu, the final -u having been reinterpreted as a pronominal suffix. Various forms of the independent masculine pronoun are attested in Biblical Aramaic, viz. himmo, himmon, and innin. Like the feminine inni·n and the Syriac forms, masculine hennon and feminine hennen, these are secondary, with various verbal endings added to the original pronominal base still reflected in Old Aramaic <hm>.

Many of the attested third person plural forms look like the second person plural forms discussed above. Based on those forms, we may reconstruct the independent pronouns as Proto-Semitic *sum (masculine) and *sin (feminine), which became *hum and *hin in Proto-West-Semitic. The suffixes seem to have had the same forms as the independent pronouns (as in Akkadian), *-sum (masculine) and *-sin (feminine). As the attested forms show considerable variation in the different languages, let us examine how they can be derived from these reconstructions.

Akkadian has maintained the difference in vocalism, with /-u-/ marking the masculine and /-i-/ marking the feminine, as in the second person. The originally feminine *-n has been extended to the masculine through contamination, while the final vowels are identical to the third person plural stative endings, masculine
8 Word-final vowels

Table 8.6: Third person plural pronominal and perfect forms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>form</th>
<th>BH</th>
<th>Akk.</th>
<th>Arab.</th>
<th>BA</th>
<th>G/Oz</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>masculine</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>indep.</td>
<td>hém(mâ)</td>
<td>/šunû/</td>
<td>hum</td>
<td>(various)</td>
<td>ꞌomuntu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>suff.</td>
<td>-m, -hém</td>
<td>/šunû/</td>
<td>-hum, -him</td>
<td>-hóm, -hón</td>
<td>-(h)omu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>feminine</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>indep.</td>
<td>hênå</td>
<td>/šinâ/</td>
<td>hunna</td>
<td>ῖinnin</td>
<td>ꞌomântu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>suff.</td>
<td>-n, -hên</td>
<td>/šinâ/</td>
<td>-hunna</td>
<td>-hén</td>
<td>-(h)on</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ipf. suff.</td>
<td>-nå</td>
<td>/-ā/</td>
<td>-na</td>
<td>ʾān</td>
<td>-ā</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

/-û/ < *-û and feminine /-ā/ < *-ā; this last ending has also been extended to the prefix conjugation of the verb in Akkadian, which may have contributed to the spread of these vowels to the pronominal forms through contamination.

In Arabic, the masculine forms have largely remained unchanged. The masculine suffix shows the same assimilation of *u > i that we have already seen in the third person masculine singular suffix, -hi, after i and y. The feminine forms have taken on the u vowel of the masculine and added the feminine plural imperfect ending, -na; both of these changes also occurred in the second person feminine plural.

The secondary nature of the Biblical Aramaic independent pronouns has already been noted. In the suffixes, the masculine has adopted the originally feminine -n, although the original form in -m is also still attested.

The G/Oz independent pronouns have accrued a lot of secondary material. Both genders end in -ntu, a deictic element that is also found in the long form of the near demonstrative, ꞌontu ‘this’, besides short ꞌo ‘idem’. This morpheme is preceded by ꞌomu- and ꞌomâ-, the regular outcomes of *humû or *himû and *humâ or *himâ, respectively. It seems that the *m of the masculine has spread to the feminine, and that, as in Akkadian, the verbal endings *-û and *-ā were added to the original pronominal base. As *i and *u merge into ꞌ in this position, we cannot be sure whether the pronouns retained their original vowel or underwent some kind of contamination. In the suffixes, we see that the masculine has added the verbal *-û, while the feminine has not, as in the second person plural. Finally, the seemingly irregular reflex of *u in the suffixes -(h)omu and -(h)on has convincingly been explained by Huehnergard (2005b) as resulting from analogy with the singular. Using different examples, the analogy is based on the regular
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forms like *qatalahā > qatalā ‘he killed her’, *qatalūhā > qataluḥā ‘they (m.) killed her’, and *qatalahun > qatalon ‘he killed them (f.)’; the analogical form of the plural suffixes after historically long vowels is, predictably, that as in qataluḥon ‘they (m.) killed them (f.)’.

This leaves us with Hebrew. As in the second person plural, the masculine forms have largely been contaminated by the originally feminine vocalism. The masculine independent pronoun has two forms, hem and hémmå, whereas only hēnnå is attested in the feminine. As no source for the additional -må in the masculine form has probably been created through analogy with the feminine. This suggests that there was a short form of the feminine independent pronoun, too, although this is unattested. The analogy would then have been *hen : hēnnå = hem : hémmå. hēnnå, in turn, can be reconstructed as *hin which has been extended with the verbal ending *-na, as in Arabic; the preservation of the word-final vowel can be attributed to h-closing (Al-Jallad 2014): *hinnah > hēnnå. The fact that the long masculine form hémmå is less frequently used as a demonstrative (as in hâhémmå ‘those (m.pl.)’) than the short form (as in hâhem) supports the possibility that h-closing served to create topicalized byforms of independent pronouns, as the demonstrative usage would call for the non-topicalized form (Joüon & Muraoka 2009: 111). Note that the short masculine form, hem, could go back to either *him, with *i due to contamination with the feminine *hin, or *himma, analogically created after the extended feminine *hinna; in the latter case, the longer masculine form hémmå < *himmah may have been created as an h-closed byform of *himma.

Besides hémmå and hēnnå, the feminine plural imperfect ending -nå also preserves a word-final vowel. This is regular if we reconstruct this ending as *-nah, in which case the h-closing, presumably a feature of the independent pronouns, spread to this form through contamination with the independent feminine pronoun *hinnah. This sequence of events is supported by the frequent defective spelling of the verbal ending as -<n>, contrary to the consistent spelling of the independent pronoun as <hnh>, a situation which may be compared to the second person masculine singular (suffixes usually -<t> and -<k>, independent pronoun almost always <th>).

The feminine suffix, which is similar to that of the second person plural, may be reconstructed as *-hinna, deriving from original *-hin with *-na added through contamination with either the imperfect ending or the independent pronoun (which, in turn, had taken it from the verbal ending), or both. As in the second
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person plural, the vowel of the masculine suffix has been contaminated by that of the feminine, where the invariably stressed ɨ is the regular outcome of *i in this position. When preceded by a vowel, the *h of these suffixes was elided,\(^\text{10}\) resulting in vowel contraction. In Suchard (forthcoming), I attribute the preservation of the vowel preceding *h, rather than that following it, to the openness of the syllable; the third person masculine singular perfect with one of these suffixes, for instance, would then have developed like *qāṭalahumu > *qāṭalamu > qṭālām. As we have seen, however, there is no reason to reconstruct these suffixes as *-humu and *-hina; rather, the feminine should be reconstructed as *-hinna (in Hebrew, from earlier *-hin) and, presumably, the masculine as *-himma. It seems, then, that syllables ending in a geminate consonant counted as open for the operation of this elision rule, since the vowel following the *h was preserved in closed syllables (as in the hiˇp-il participle of the strong verb, *mihaqīl- > *maqīl- > maqīl), while the preceding vowel was preserved if the *h stood in an open syllable (as in the hiˇp-il participle of hollow verbs, *mihaqīm- > *miqīm- > meqīm). That geminates behave differently than clusters of two different consonants is somewhat unexpected, but not unheard of; Philippi’s Law, too, only operated before two different consonants, while leaving vowels preceding a geminate unaffected (see chapter 6). The development of these suffixes should therefore be reconstructed like *qāṭalahimma > *qāṭalamma > qṭālām. The outcome of this vowel contraction seems to have been a short vowel, as can be seen from forms where it is unstressed, like ˘ ak˚ ˚ at’im ‘it consumed them’. The development of *a > å seen in the suffix -˚ am is then due to the assimilation of accented *a > å before m (Blau 1983). The occurrence of å in the feminine suffix -˚ an can be explained as arising from contamination or analogy with the masculine.

Finally, the third person plural suffixes have a few rare byforms. The most important of these is the masculine -mo, -mu, characteristic of archaic and archaizing poetry. With Christian (1953: 40), it seems best to equate this with the old third person dual suffix *-humā, reflected in Classical Arabic as -humā. The rounded vowels in the Hebrew forms are then due to the Canaanite Shift. It is true that the usage of -mo in Biblical Hebrew is not at all restricted to semantically dual antecedents, but it may well be that the form’s obsolescence in the spoken

\(^{10}\)The suffix was analogically restored in forms like lāhem ‘to them (m.pl.)’, bāhem ‘in them (m.pl.)’, and kāhem ‘like them (m.pl.)’, based on analogies like ˚ alek ˚ m on you (m.pl.) : lākem ‘to you (m.pl.)’. The regular form is represented by b˚ am ‘in them (m.pl.)’. In ˚ alehem < *˚ alayhimma, the *h was not originally postvocalic and therefore regularly preserved.
language caused authors to reinterpret the form as simply being an archaic byform of the masculine plural suffix, giving rise to historically incorrect usage with plural antecedents.\(^{11}\) This would not be the only case of dual morphology being extended to the plural, as can be seen from the plural construct ending -\(e\) < the original dual construct ending *-ay. The occasional occurrence of the third person feminine plural suffix as -\(\text{ânå}\) or -\(\text{ênå}\), on the other hand, is best explained as the result of contamination of the regular endings with the imperfect ending -\(nå\) and the independent pronoun hënnå.

In summary, the third person plural forms developed as follows:

- **masculine independent pronoun**: *hum \(\rightarrow\) *him or *himmå (contamination with feminine) > hem; h-closing of *himmå or analogy with the feminine created the longer form *himmah > hëmmå

- **masculine suffix**: *-hum \(\rightarrow\) *-himmå (contamination with feminine) > *-hem after consonants \(\rightarrow\) -\(h\text{êm}\) (contamination with feminine); after vowels, *-himmå contracted to *-må > -m; preceding *-a- was attached to the suffix, yielding *-am > -\(\text{ám}\) (assimilatory rounding before \(m\))

- **feminine independent pronoun**: *hin \(\rightarrow\) *hinna (contamination with imperfect ending) \(\rightarrow\) *hinnah (h-closing) > hënnå

- **feminine suffix**: *-hin \(\rightarrow\) *-hinna (contamination with independent pronoun) > -\(\text{hën}\); after vowels, *-hinna contracted to *-nna > -n; in forms with preceding *-a-, analogy with the masculine created -\(\text{ám}\)

- **feminine imperfect ending**: *-na \(\rightarrow\) *-nah (contamination with independent pronoun) > -\(nå\)

- **old dual suffix**: *-humå > -\(\text{mo}\) and -\(\text{mu}\), reanalyzed as a plural suffix

### 8.4 Conclusion

We have seen that word-final, unstressed short vowels were regularly lost in an earlier stage of Hebrew, whereas long vowels were preserved. No intermediate ancesp category is needed for Proto-Semitic or any ancestor of Hebrew. Apparent cases of

\(^{11}\text{Cf. such pseudo-archaic English creations as \textit{thou maketh}; speakers know that the -\textit{eth} ending is archaic, but have forgotten that it originally marked the third person singular, not the second.}\)
preserved word-final short vowels should either be reconstructed differently or are the result of morphological change, be it analogy or contamination.

Based on the reconstructions arrived at above, the paradigm of the Proto-Northwest-Semitic personal pronouns and perfect endings may be given as in table 8.7. The third person perfect endings have not been discussed in this chapter, as their reconstruction is unproblematic, but they are listed in the table for the sake of completeness. Independent pronouns ending in a vowel could undergo h-closing, a morphological process which added a *-h to form a topicalized independent pronoun (only attested for pronouns ending in *-a).

It is remarkable how much this paradigm looks like those we could reconstruct for Proto-Central-Semitic, Proto-West-Semitic, or even Proto-Semitic, especially when this apparent stability is contrasted with the great diversity of forms we find in the actually attested languages. This effect is an artefact of the methodology used. To illustrate this point, let us consider the case of the third person masculine singular suffix. Hebrew, Aramaic, Arabic, and Akkadian all attest a variant of that suffix with a long vowel, *-hū in the first three languages and *-sū in Akkadian. Yet we cannot reconstruct *-sū as the sole Proto-Semitic form, because the reflexes of *-su are also widely attested. There is a plausible way to derive *-sū (and *-hū) from *-su (and *-hu), namely contamination with the independent pronoun, while there is no apparent mechanism that would derive *-su from *-sū; accordingly, we should reconstruct *-su as the older form. Nevertheless, that does not exclude the possibility that this contamination already took place in Proto-Semitic. Byforms
like *-su and *-sū or *-antum (reflected in Aramaic and Arabic) and *-antumū (reflected in Akkadian and Goʿız) could have existed side by side in different dialects of Proto-Semitic, or even within the same dialect. The reconstructions given in table 8.7, then, represent the reflexes of the oldest surviving forms of these morphemes, but that does not entail that their various byforms were not already present in some proto-language.