

Population terminology

- **Semitic** term derived by European scholars in 18th century (derived from name Shem, son of Noah) to refer to a group of languages (Arabic, Hebrew, Aramaic) not racial, ethnic or cultural group. **Linguistic family** covering an area known as the Levant along Mediterranean
- **Canaanites** inhabitants of the biblical area of ancient Palestine west of the River Jordan
- **Phoenicians** : 1. member of a Semitic people inhabiting ancient Phoenicia 2. the Semitic language of the Phoenicians, written in an alphabet that was the ancestor of the Greek and Roman alphabets.

Chronology of early alphabets: West Semitic

1900 BCE Wadi el-Hol Egyptian Proto-alphabetic

1500 BCE Serabit el-Khadim Proto-Sinaitic

1400-1300 BCE Ras Shamra Ugarit Cuneiform

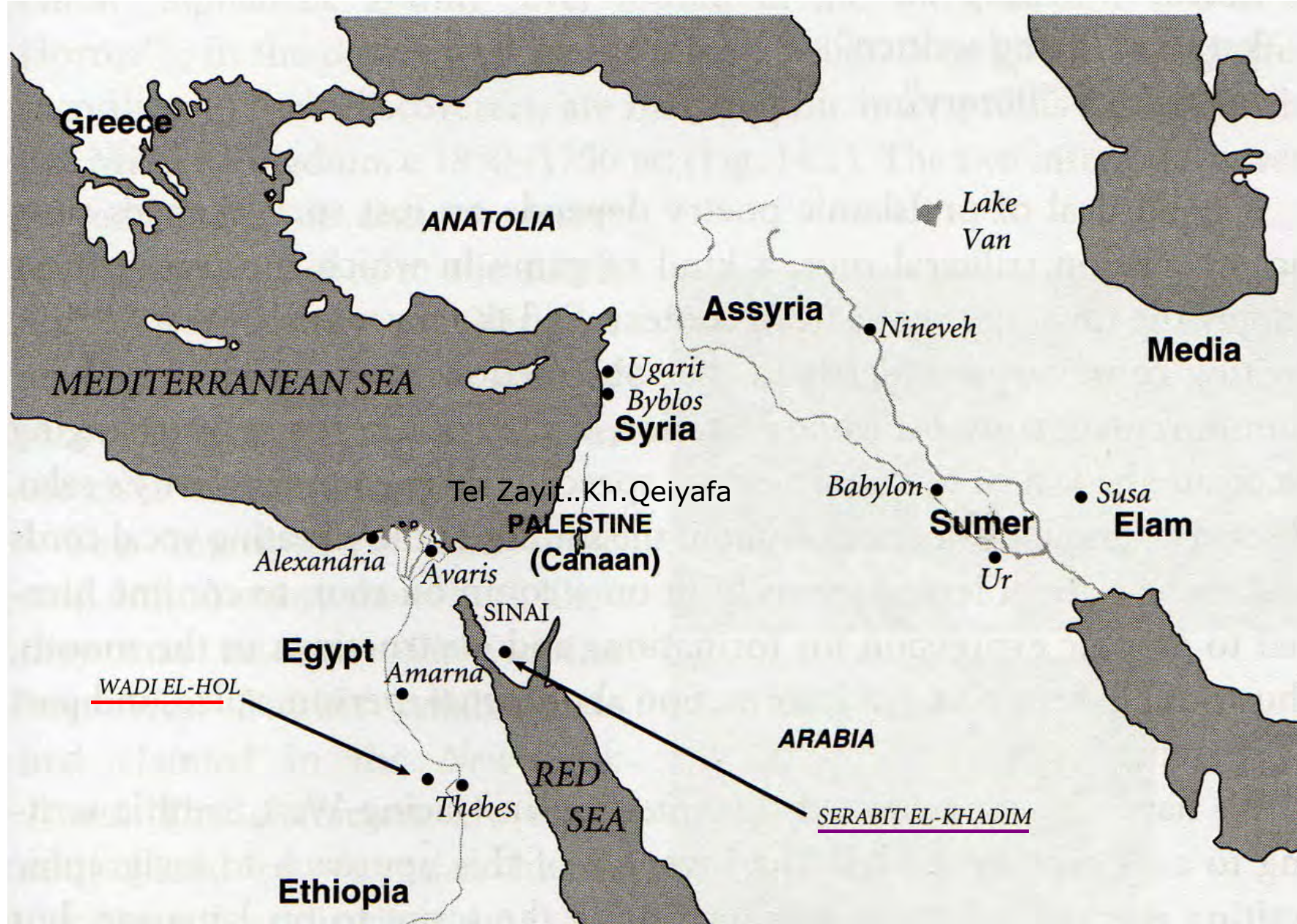
1050-970 BCE Elah Fortress Proto-Canaanite

Tel Zayit Paleo-Hebrew/ Proto-Phoenician

1000 BCE Byblos Phoenician 22 letter alphabet

950 BCE Gezer calendar Paleo-Hebrew Script

Sites of earliest alphabetic scripts



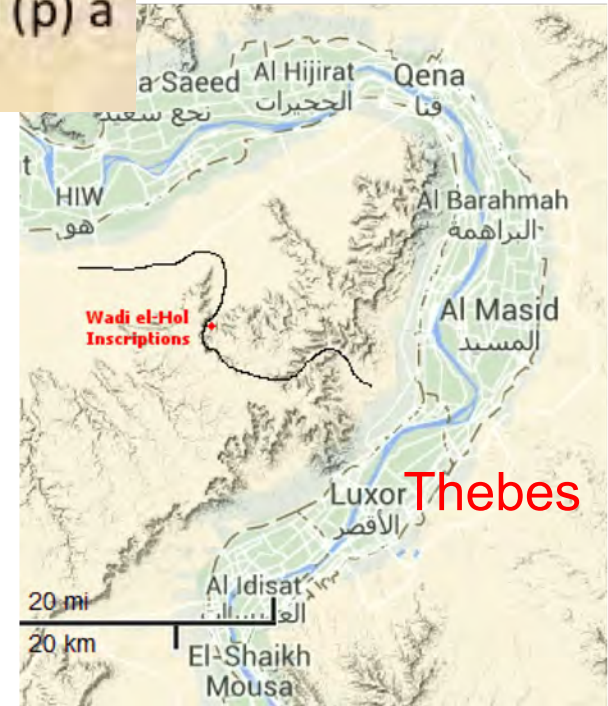
Translation suggested by Brian Colless,
Antiguo Oriente 8 (2010) 91



[Vertical, top to bottom]
m, sh, t, r, ' , h, ' , n, t, g, sg, ' , l
Excellent (R['š]) banquet (mšt) of
the celebration (H[illul]) of `Anat
(`nt). `El ('l) will provide (ygš)

[Horizontal, right to left]
r, b, v, n, m, n, h, n, g, m, h, ' , p, m, ch, r
plenty (rb) of wine (vn) and victuals (mn) for the celebration
(H[illul]). We will sacrifice (ngm_) to her (h) an ox (') and (p) a
prime (R['sh]) fatling (mX).

Wadi el Hol inscript- -ions



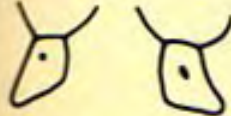

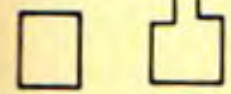
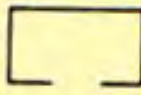


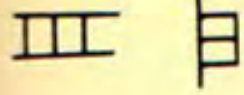

Middle Bronze Age 2000-1500 BCE scripts



- Left: Proto-Sinaitic script (*mt / blt* = to the lady i.e. Hathor Egyptian goddess of fertility and love) in temple at Serabit el-Khadim, Sinai ~1500 BCE
- Right: Cliff inscription, Wadi el Hol, Egypt 1850-1750 BCE

Sphinx at Serabit el-Khadim, Sinai ~1500 BCE



PROTOSINAITIC SIGNS	EGYPTIAN SIGN	SEMITIC NAME
		'aleph (ox)
		beth (house)
		gimel (throwstick)
		daleth (door)

*"God... in mysterious Sinai's cave
To Man the wond'rous art of writing gave."* William Blake
Found in 1905 by Sir Flinders Petrie while excavating old turquoise mines. Sir Alan Gardiner 1916 noted resemblances between Proto-Sinaitic signs and some Egyptian hieroglyphs & some Proto-Canaanite inscriptions



Ugarit (Ras Shamra) tablet

14th cent. B.C.E. Written in a cuneiform script, in an alphabet that is one of the earliest known. The signs , 22-30, were all consonants. The vowels were not written down and were supplied by the reader.

A	B	G	H	D	H	W	Z	H	T
א	ב	ג	ח	ד	ה	ו	ז	ח	ט

Y	K	Š	L	M	D	N	Z	S	U
י	כ	ש	ל	מ	ד	נ	ז	ס	ע

P	S	Q	R	T	G	T	I	U	(S)
פ	ס	ק	ר	ת	ג	ת	י	ו	(ס)

Ugaritic cuneiform lawsuit 14th c. BCE



Found in Ras Shamra, Syria
in ~ 1929 on clay tablet
~13th century BCE lawsuit
against Shamumanu for
stealing 50 shekels of silver
from a social banqueting
club.

Schøyen Collection, Oslo &
London