

Cross - Jewish Scripts Throughout History

Week 2 Exercise – Understanding Paleo-Hebrew

This week, you will learn how to read the paleo-Hebrew script! You will do this by comparing the paleo script with the standardized printed Hebrew script that we learned last week (which is based on the square script, the topic of Week 3). This will prepare for next week's assignment, where we will consider how the paleo script developed into the square script.

Exercises:

1. Using the transcription given below, **learn the paleo-Hebrew script found on Lachish letter 3**, comparing the typed transcription given below with what you see on the copy of the inscription. On a piece of paper (or two), make a vertical column of the letters of the square script, then draw to the right of each letter an exemplar you can find from Lachish 3. By doing this, you will create a paleography of Lachish 3. If you have tracing paper and you are willing to print this PDF out, you could create an even more accurate paleography.
2. **Create a more general paleography of the paleo-Hebrew script.** Build on what you did in the last exercise! Using the other examples of inscriptions given below, find as many examples of each letter of the Hebrew script as you can, and draw them into the appropriate column on the Lachish 3 paleography you created. Make sure you keep track of which text below your examples come from (by using appropriately labelled vertical columns). If you need to check a transcription of the inscriptions, look in the selection from Ahituv.

Optional exercise:

- **Compare the paleo-Hebrew script with the Phoenician.** At the end of the handout, I have included two paleographies of the Phoenician abjad: one of the earlier phase, from the time before and during the first Hebrew inscriptions, and one from the later phase, representing the continued development of Phoenician

(through the time when the Paleo-Hebrew script died out). Compare your paleography of paleo-Hebrew with the Phoenician paleographies, and see if you can summarize differences you see between the two scripts (for as many individual letters as you can).

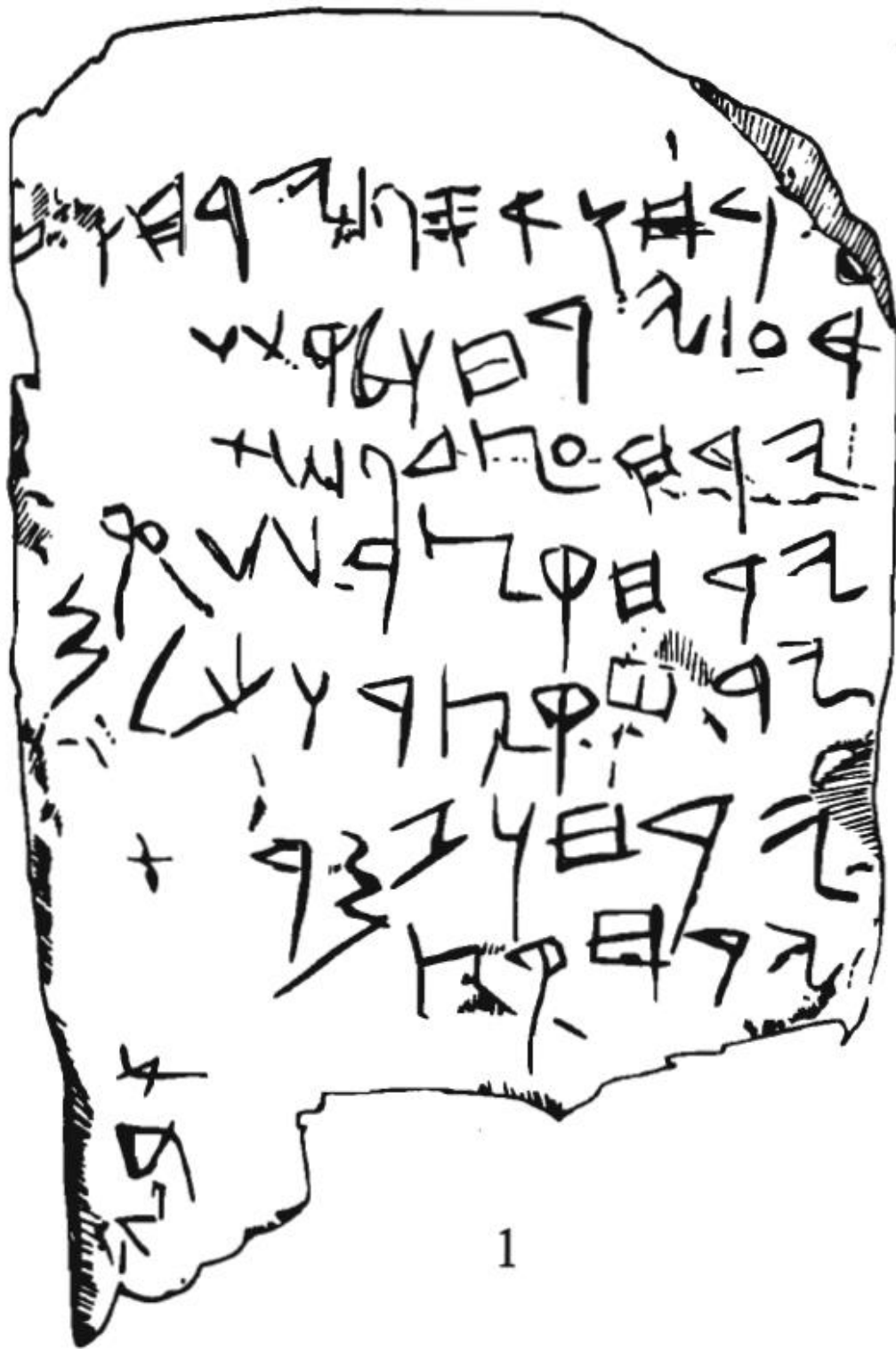
Lachish letter no. 3 – transcription into the square Hebrew script. For a translation see p.63 in the selection from Ahituv (under Modules, Week 2). Note

עבדך הושעיהו שלח ל
הגד לאדני יאוש ישמע
יהוה את אדני שמעת שלם
ושמעת טב ועת הפקה
נה את און עבדך לספר אשר
שלחתה אל עבדך אמש כי לב
עבדך דוה מאז שלחך אל עבד
ך וכיאמר אדני לא ידעתה
קרא ספר חיהוה אם נסה א
יש לקרא לי ספר לנצח וגם
כל ספר אשר יבא אלי אם
קראתי אתה ועוד אתננה
אל מאומה ולעבדך הגד
לאמר ירד שר הצבא
כניהו בן אלנתן לבא
מצרימה וא

Obverse

Handwritten text in Lachish script, consisting of approximately 15 lines of cuneiform characters on a fragment of pottery.

Lachish letter no. 3



The Gezer Calendar

אֶת־הַמַּיִם אֲשֶׁר־נִקְרָא בְּיַד־הַמֶּלֶךְ
 הַיְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְהַמַּיִם אֲשֶׁר־נִקְרָא
 בְּיַד־הַמֶּלֶךְ הַיְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְהַמַּיִם
 אֲשֶׁר־נִקְרָא בְּיַד־הַמֶּלֶךְ הַיְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ
 וְהַמַּיִם אֲשֶׁר־נִקְרָא בְּיַד־הַמֶּלֶךְ
 הַיְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְהַמַּיִם אֲשֶׁר־נִקְרָא
 בְּיַד־הַמֶּלֶךְ הַיְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְהַמַּיִם
 אֲשֶׁר־נִקְרָא בְּיַד־הַמֶּלֶךְ הַיְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ

The Siloam Tunnel inscription (oriented 90 degrees counter clockwise here)

qwa 2y9 + 05w
 y490 3490 99w +
 49 y490 3 2 9 1 4
 y490 9 1 4 2 9 y 8 + 9 1 4
 9 w 2 9 1 4 y 2 9 y 8 + 9 1 4
 * 9 1 4 2 9 w 4 1 * 9 2 9 y 2 9 3 9
 7 w 2 9 1 4 2 9 w 4 1 * 9 2 9 y 2 9 3 9
 x 4 9 w + y 4 9 0 4 1 9 x + 1 4 2 9 1 4
 y 4 9 0 4 1 9 x + 1 4 2 9 1 4 2 9 1 4 2 9 1 4
 y 4 9 1 4 2 9 1 4 2 9 1 4 2 9 1 4 2 9 1 4
 * 2 9 1 4 2 9 1 4 2 9 1 4 2 9 1 4 2 9 1 4
 w 4 9 1 4 2 9 1 4 2 9 1 4 2 9 1 4 2 9 1 4
 4 9 1 4 2 9 1 4 2 9 1 4 2 9 1 4 2 9 1 4
 4 9 1 4 2 9 1 4 2 9 1 4 2 9 1 4 2 9 1 4



Mesad Hashavyahu ostracon

Handwritten text in a cursive script, possibly a fragment of a letter or document. The text is arranged in approximately 8 lines within an irregular, hand-drawn boundary. The characters are dense and difficult to decipher due to the cursive style.

1

Handwritten text in a cursive script, similar to the fragment above. It is arranged in approximately 5 lines within an irregular, hand-drawn boundary. The text is dense and difficult to decipher.

Lachish letter no. 4

א	ב	ג	ד	ה	ו	ז	ח	ט	י	כ	ל	מ	נ	ס	פ	צ	ק	ר	ש	ת
𐤀	𐤁	𐤂	𐤃	𐤄	𐤅	𐤆	𐤇	𐤈	𐤉	𐤊	𐤋	𐤌	𐤍	𐤎	𐤏	𐤐	𐤑	𐤒	𐤓	𐤔
𐤕	𐤖	𐤗	𐤘	𐤙	𐤚	𐤛	𐤜	𐤝	𐤞	𐤟	𐤠	𐤡	𐤢	𐤣	𐤤	𐤥	𐤦	𐤧	𐤨	𐤩
𐤪	𐤫	𐤬	𐤭	𐤮	𐤯	𐤰	𐤱	𐤲	𐤳	𐤴	𐤵	𐤶	𐤷	𐤸	𐤹	𐤺	𐤻	𐤼	𐤽	𐤾
𐤿	𐏀	𐏁	𐏂	𐏃	𐏄	𐏅	𐏆	𐏇	𐏈	𐏉	𐏊	𐏋	𐏌	𐏍	𐏎	𐏏	𐏐	𐏑	𐏒	𐏓
𐏔	𐏕	𐏖	𐏗	𐏘	𐏙	𐏚	𐏛	𐏜	𐏝	𐏞	𐏟	𐏠	𐏡	𐏢	𐏣	𐏤	𐏥	𐏦	𐏧	𐏨
𐏩	𐏪	𐏫	𐏬	𐏭	𐏮	𐏯	𐏰	𐏱	𐏲	𐏳	𐏴	𐏵	𐏶	𐏷	𐏸	𐏹	𐏺	𐏻	𐏼	𐏽
𐏾	𐏿	𐐀	𐐁	𐐂	𐐃	𐐄	𐐅	𐐆	𐐇	𐐈	𐐉	𐐊	𐐋	𐐌	𐐍	𐐎	𐐏	𐐐	𐐑	𐐒
𐐓	𐐔	𐐕	𐐖	𐐗	𐐘	𐐙	𐐚	𐐛	𐐜	𐐝	𐐞	𐐟	𐐠	𐐡	𐐢	𐐣	𐐤	𐐥	𐐦	𐐧
𐐨	𐐩	𐐪	𐐫	𐐬	𐐭	𐐮	𐐯	𐐰	𐐱	𐐲	𐐳	𐐴	𐐵	𐐶	𐐷	𐐸	𐐹	𐐺	𐐻	𐐼
𐐾	𐐿	𐑀	𐑁	𐑂	𐑃	𐑄	𐑅	𐑆	𐑇	𐑈	𐑉	𐑊	𐑋	𐑌	𐑍	𐑎	𐑏	𐑐	𐑑	𐑒
𐑓	𐑔	𐑕	𐑖	𐑗	𐑘	𐑙	𐑚	𐑛	𐑜	𐑝	𐑞	𐑟	𐑠	𐑡	𐑢	𐑣	𐑤	𐑥	𐑦	𐑧
𐑨	𐑩	𐑪	𐑫	𐑬	𐑭	𐑮	𐑯	𐑰	𐑱	𐑲	𐑳	𐑴	𐑵	𐑶	𐑷	𐑸	𐑹	𐑺	𐑻	𐑼
𐑾	𐑿	𐒀	𐒁	𐒂	𐒃	𐒄	𐒅	𐒆	𐒇	𐒈	𐒉	𐒊	𐒋	𐒌	𐒍	𐒎	𐒏	𐒐	𐒑	𐒒

Paleography of older Phoenician inscriptions

o	𐤍	𐤎	𐤏	𐤐	𐤑	𐤒	𐤓	𐤔	𐤕	𐤖	𐤗	𐤘	𐤙	𐤚	𐤛	𐤜
b	𐤛	𐤜	𐤝	𐤞	𐤟	𐤠	𐤡	𐤢	𐤣	𐤤	𐤥	𐤦	𐤧	𐤨	𐤩	𐤪
g	𐤫	𐤬	𐤭	𐤮	𐤯	𐤰	𐤱	𐤲	𐤳	𐤴	𐤵	𐤶	𐤷	𐤸	𐤹	𐤺
d	𐤻	𐤼	𐤽	𐤾	𐤿	𐥀	𐥁	𐥂	𐥃	𐥄	𐥅	𐥆	𐥇	𐥈	𐥉	𐥊
h	𐥋	𐥌	𐥍	𐥎	𐥏	𐥐	𐥑	𐥒	𐥓	𐥔	𐥕	𐥖	𐥗	𐥘	𐥙	𐥚
w	𐥛	𐥜	𐥝	𐥞	𐥟	𐥠	𐥡	𐥢	𐥣	𐥤	𐥥	𐥦	𐥧	𐥨	𐥩	𐥪
z	𐥫	𐥬	𐥭	𐥮	𐥯	𐥰	𐥱	𐥲	𐥳	𐥴	𐥵	𐥶	𐥷	𐥸	𐥹	𐥺
h	𐥛	𐥜	𐥝	𐥞	𐥟	𐥠	𐥡	𐥢	𐥣	𐥤	𐥥	𐥦	𐥧	𐥨	𐥩	𐥪
t	𐥫	𐥬	𐥭	𐥮	𐥯	𐥰	𐥱	𐥲	𐥳	𐥴	𐥵	𐥶	𐥷	𐥸	𐥹	𐥺
j	𐥛	𐥜	𐥝	𐥞	𐥟	𐥠	𐥡	𐥢	𐥣	𐥤	𐥥	𐥦	𐥧	𐥨	𐥩	𐥪
k	𐥫	𐥬	𐥭	𐥮	𐥯	𐥰	𐥱	𐥲	𐥳	𐥴	𐥵	𐥶	𐥷	𐥸	𐥹	𐥺
l	𐥛	𐥜	𐥝	𐥞	𐥟	𐥠	𐥡	𐥢	𐥣	𐥤	𐥥	𐥦	𐥧	𐥨	𐥩	𐥪
m	𐥫	𐥬	𐥭	𐥮	𐥯	𐥰	𐥱	𐥲	𐥳	𐥴	𐥵	𐥶	𐥷	𐥸	𐥹	𐥺
n	𐥛	𐥜	𐥝	𐥞	𐥟	𐥠	𐥡	𐥢	𐥣	𐥤	𐥥	𐥦	𐥧	𐥨	𐥩	𐥪
s	𐥫	𐥬	𐥭	𐥮	𐥯	𐥰	𐥱	𐥲	𐥳	𐥴	𐥵	𐥶	𐥷	𐥸	𐥹	𐥺
c	𐥛	𐥜	𐥝	𐥞	𐥟	𐥠	𐥡	𐥢	𐥣	𐥤	𐥥	𐥦	𐥧	𐥨	𐥩	𐥪
p	𐥫	𐥬	𐥭	𐥮	𐥯	𐥰	𐥱	𐥲	𐥳	𐥴	𐥵	𐥶	𐥷	𐥸	𐥹	𐥺
q	𐥛	𐥜	𐥝	𐥞	𐥟	𐥠	𐥡	𐥢	𐥣	𐥤	𐥥	𐥦	𐥧	𐥨	𐥩	𐥪
r	𐥫	𐥬	𐥭	𐥮	𐥯	𐥰	𐥱	𐥲	𐥳	𐥴	𐥵	𐥶	𐥷	𐥸	𐥹	𐥺
š	𐥛	𐥜	𐥝	𐥞	𐥟	𐥠	𐥡	𐥢	𐥣	𐥤	𐥥	𐥦	𐥧	𐥨	𐥩	𐥪
t	𐥫	𐥬	𐥭	𐥮	𐥯	𐥰	𐥱	𐥲	𐥳	𐥴	𐥵	𐥶	𐥷	𐥸	𐥹	𐥺

Paleography of later Phoenician inscriptions