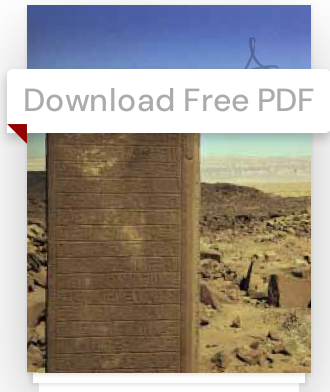


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This article investigates the historical context of the development of the alphabet from ancient Egyptian hieroglyphs, focusing on the interactions at the Serabit el-Khadem site in Sinai. It highlights the importance of the temple dedicated to Hathor and various inscriptions that reveal connections between Egyptians and Asiatic groups, emphasizing how these interactions may have influenced the evolution of writing systems in the region.

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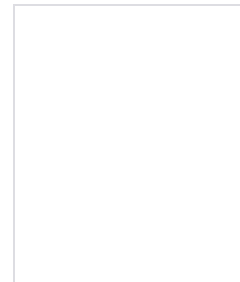
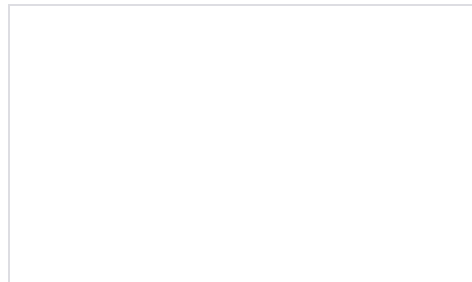
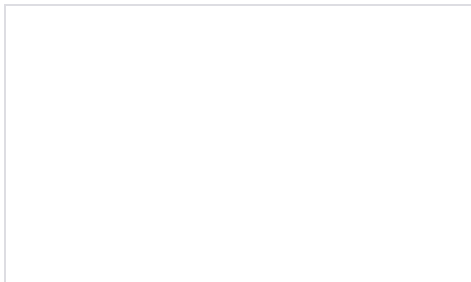
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- 3 No records of slavery exist at Serabit, indicating a different social structure among Canaanite miners.
- 4 The alphabet's creation was influenced by Egyptian hieroglyphs, which served as its foundational pictorial models.
- 5 The invention of the alphabet marked a significant media revolution, altering communication and administrative practices.

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- 2 One example is known from an Egyptian inscription in Tell el-Daba and another from Wadi Gasus.
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- 4 See recently Anson F. Rainey, "Review of The Origins of the West Semitic Alphabet in Egyptian Scripts, by G.J. Hamilton," Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research 354 (2009), p. 85.
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Qubur el-Walaydah fragment (northwest Negev) and the Izbet Sartah ostrakon in Naveh, *Early History of the Alphabet*, pp. 36–37. For a recently discovered mid-tenth-century B.C.E. example, see the Tel Zayit abecedary in Ron Tappy et al., "An Abecedary of the Mid-Tenth Century from the Judaeian Shephelah," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 344 (2006), p. 27. A stratified ostrakon carrying a text (probably a letter) dated to the tenth century B.C.E. was also found recently at Khirbet Qeiyafa near Beit Shemesh by Yossef Garfinkel. He identified the site as a Judean city from the time of King David. See "Newly Discovered: A Fortified City from King David's Time," *BAR*, January/February 2009 and "Prize Find: Oldest Hebrew Inscription Discovered in Israelite Fort on Philistine Border," on p. XX of this issue. For a different, later dating of these inscriptions, see Benjamin Sass, *The Alphabet at the Turn of the Millennium*. The Journal of the Institute of Archeology of Tel Aviv Univ. Occasional Publications No. 4 (2005). However, the dates of these finds is still highly debated. Alphabet continued from page 50

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- What are the key differences between alphabetic and hieroglyphic writing systems? +
- How did Canaanite miners contribute to the invention of the alphabet? +
- What evidence supports the presence of Canaanites in Serabit inscriptions? +
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