

**LAU-Louis Cardahi Foundation**

# **The invention of the alphabet**

**Dr. Marc Abou Abdallah**

# **The invention of the alphabet**

## **Introduction**

**I. The scripture in Byblos during the Bronze Age**

**II. The geopolitical context**

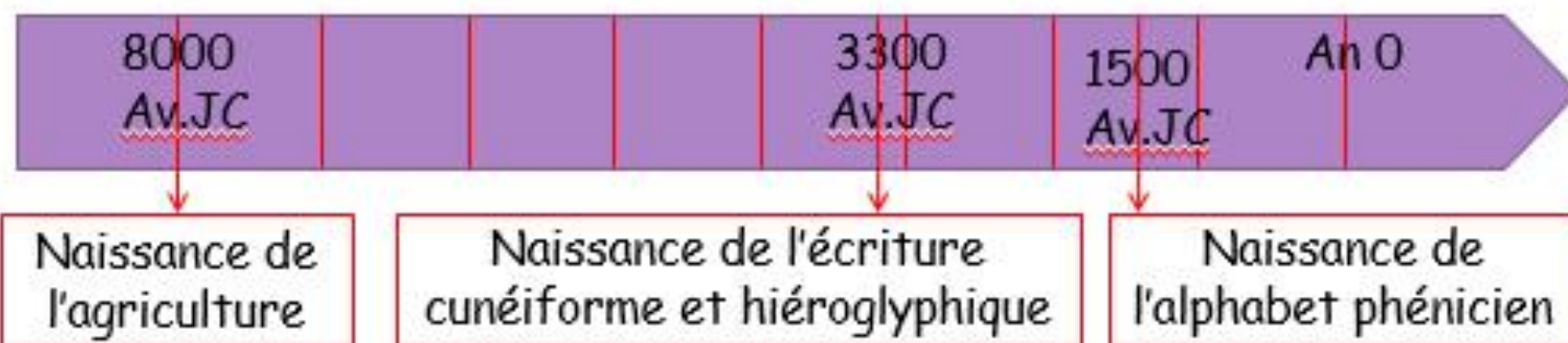
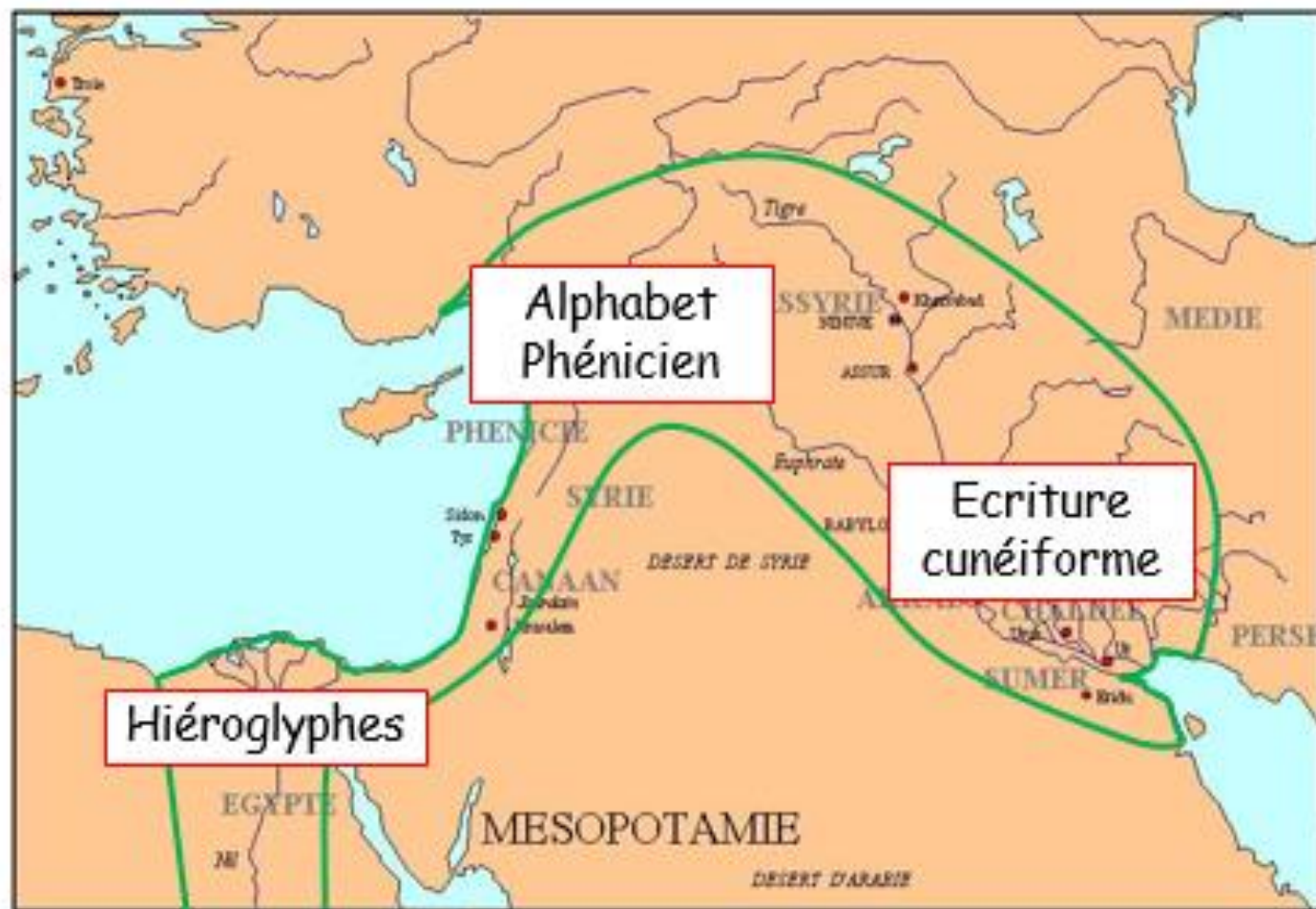
**III. The invention of the alphabet**

# **The invention of the alphabet**

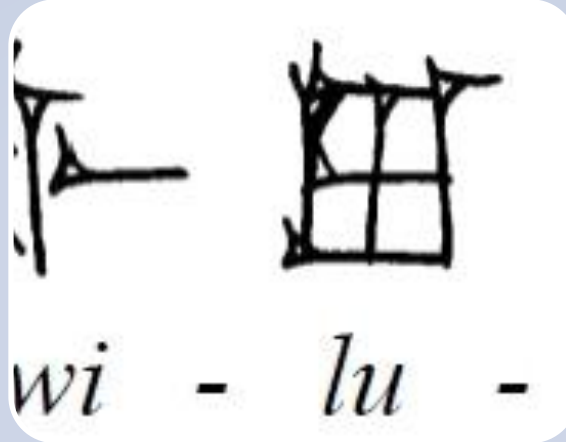
## **Introduction**





Le  
croissant  
fertile



# Introduction



hieroglyph	Proto-Sinaitic	IPA value	reconstructed name	Phoenician	Paleo-Hebrew	Aramaic	Greek/Ital.
		/ʔ/	'alp "ox"				Α ΑΑΑ
		/b/	bet "house"				Β ΒΒΒ
		/h/	hll "jubilation" > he "window"				Ε ΕΕΕ
		/k/	kaf "palm of hand"				Κ ΚΚΚ
		/m/	mem "water"				Μ ΜΜΜ
		/n/	nahš "snake" > nun "fish"				Ν ΝΝΝ
		/ʕ/	en "eye"				Ο ΟΟΟ
		/r/	roš "head"				Ρ ΡΡΡ
		/ʃ/	šimš "sun" > šin "tooth"				Σ ΣΣΣ
		/t/	taw "mark"				Τ ΤΤΤ

Egyptian  
Louvite  
Etc.

Assyrian  
Hittite  
Elamite  
Etc.

Phoenician  
Hebrew  
Aramean  
Greek  
Arabic  
Etc.

# The invention of the alphabet

## I. The scripture in Byblos during the Bronze Age

# I. The scripture in Byblos during the Bronze Age

Period	Scripture	Language
II <sup>nd</sup> millennium	Cuneiform	Akkadian
<i>C</i> 14 <sup>th</sup> – 13 <sup>th</sup> century	Pseudo-hieroglyph	Semitic
11 <sup>th</sup> century	Hieroglyph	Egyptian
Starting from 11 <sup>th</sup> century	Alphabet	Phoenician



# I. The scripture in Byblos during the Bronze Age

## II<sup>nd</sup> millennium

- Akkadian was the diplomatic language used throughout the Near East

Tell Amarna letters

The Ugarit archives

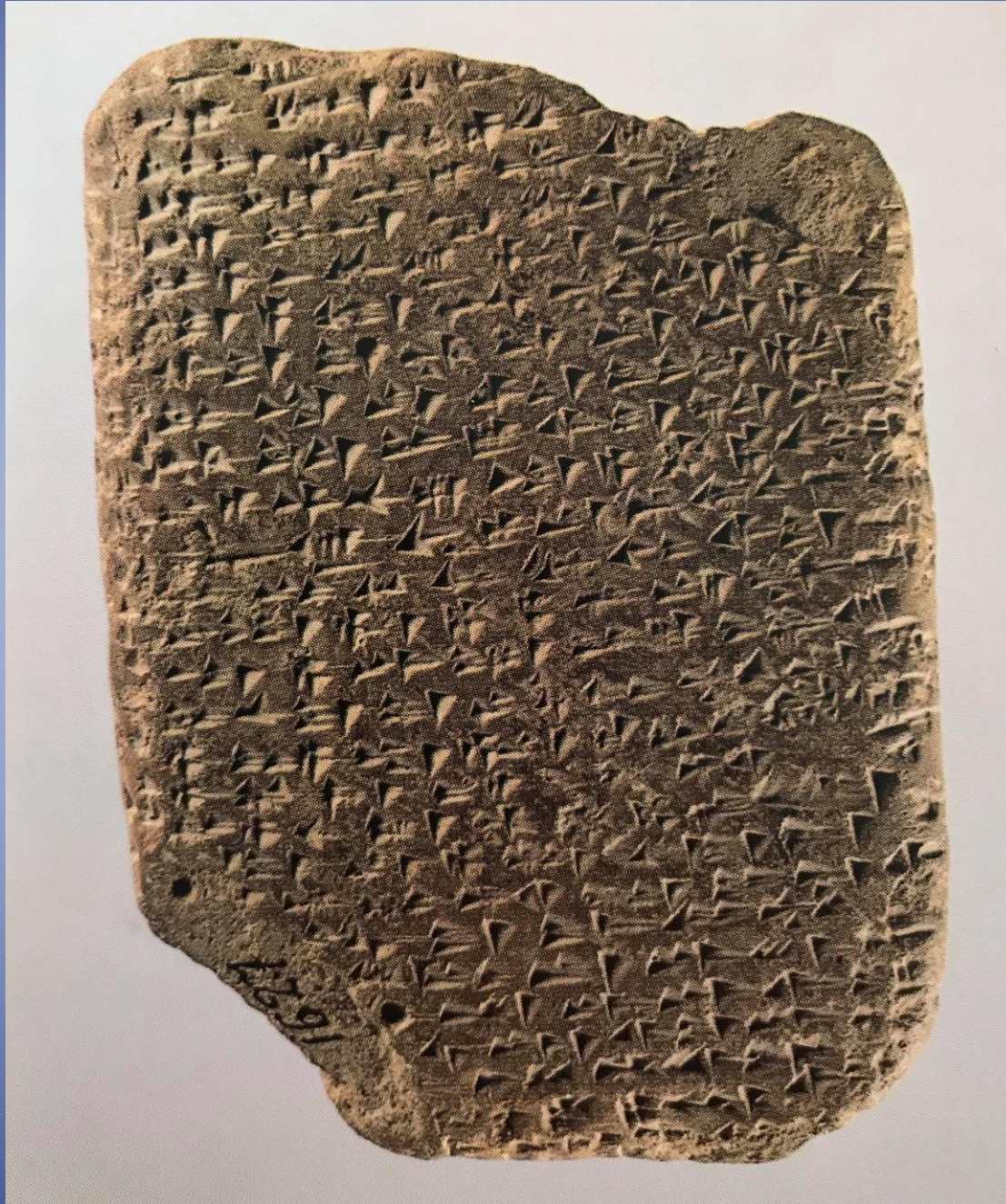


# **I. The scripture in Byblos during the Bronze Age**

## **Tell Amarna letters:**

The king of Byblos sent 65 letters to the pharaoh of  
Egypt

# I. The scripture in Byblos during the Bronze Age

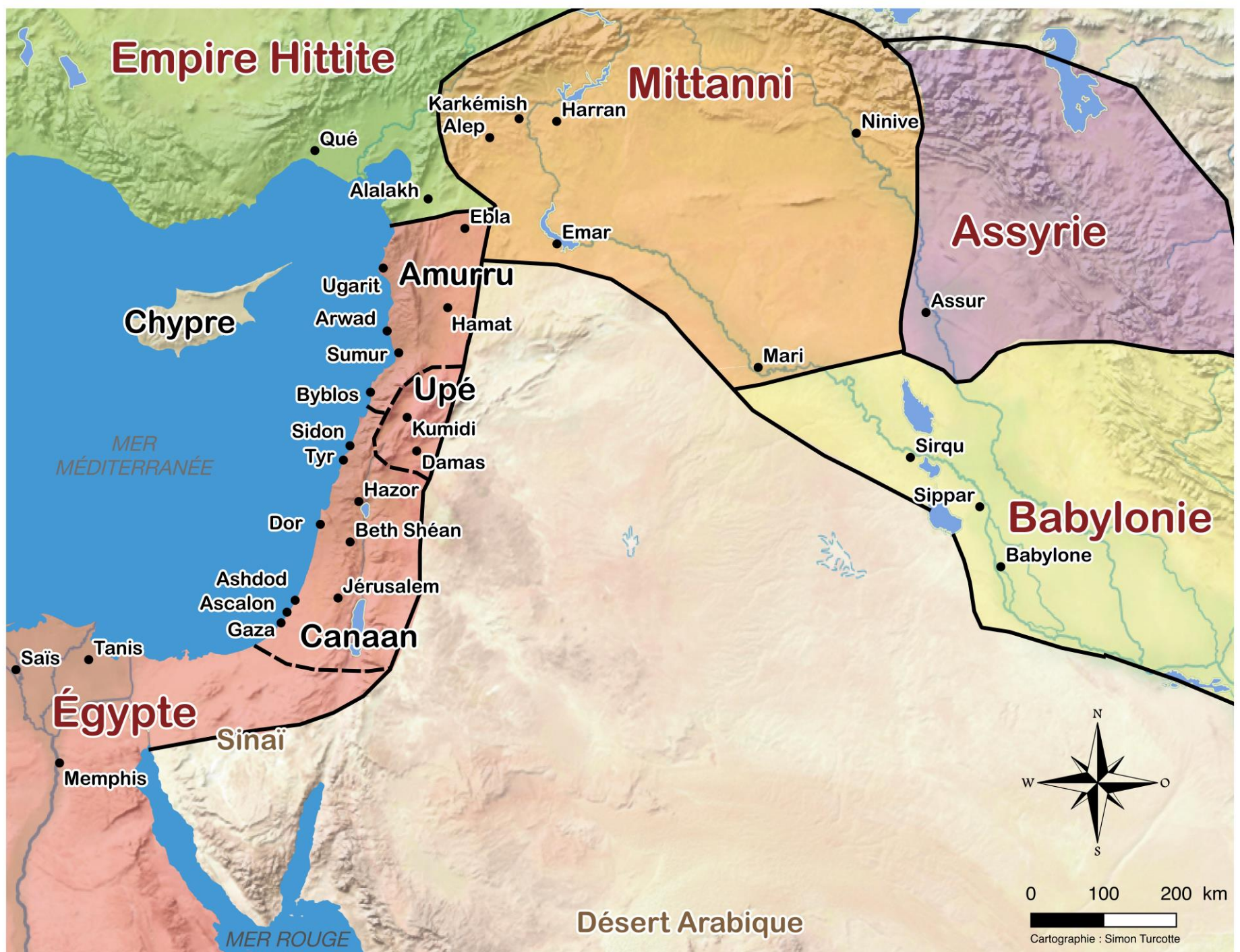




# I. The scripture in Byblos during the Bronze Age

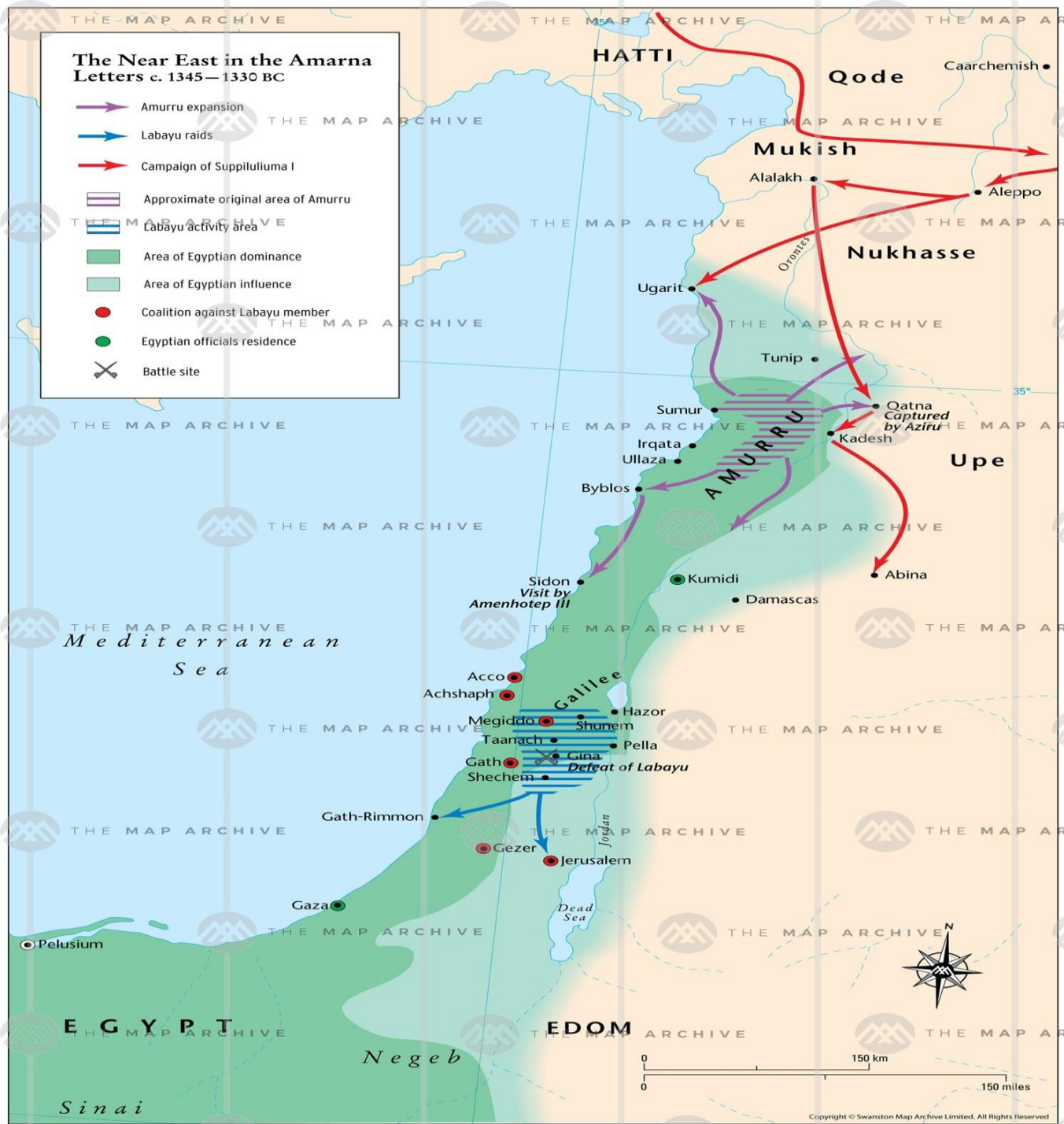






# **The Near East in the Amarna Letters c. 1345–1330 BC**

- Amurru expansion
- Labayu raids
- Campaign of Suppiluliuma I
- Approximate original area of Amurru
- Labayu activity area
- Area of Egyptian dominance
- Area of Egyptian influence
- Coalition against Labayu member
- Egyptian officials residence
- Battle site





# **I. The scripture in Byblos during the Bronze Age**

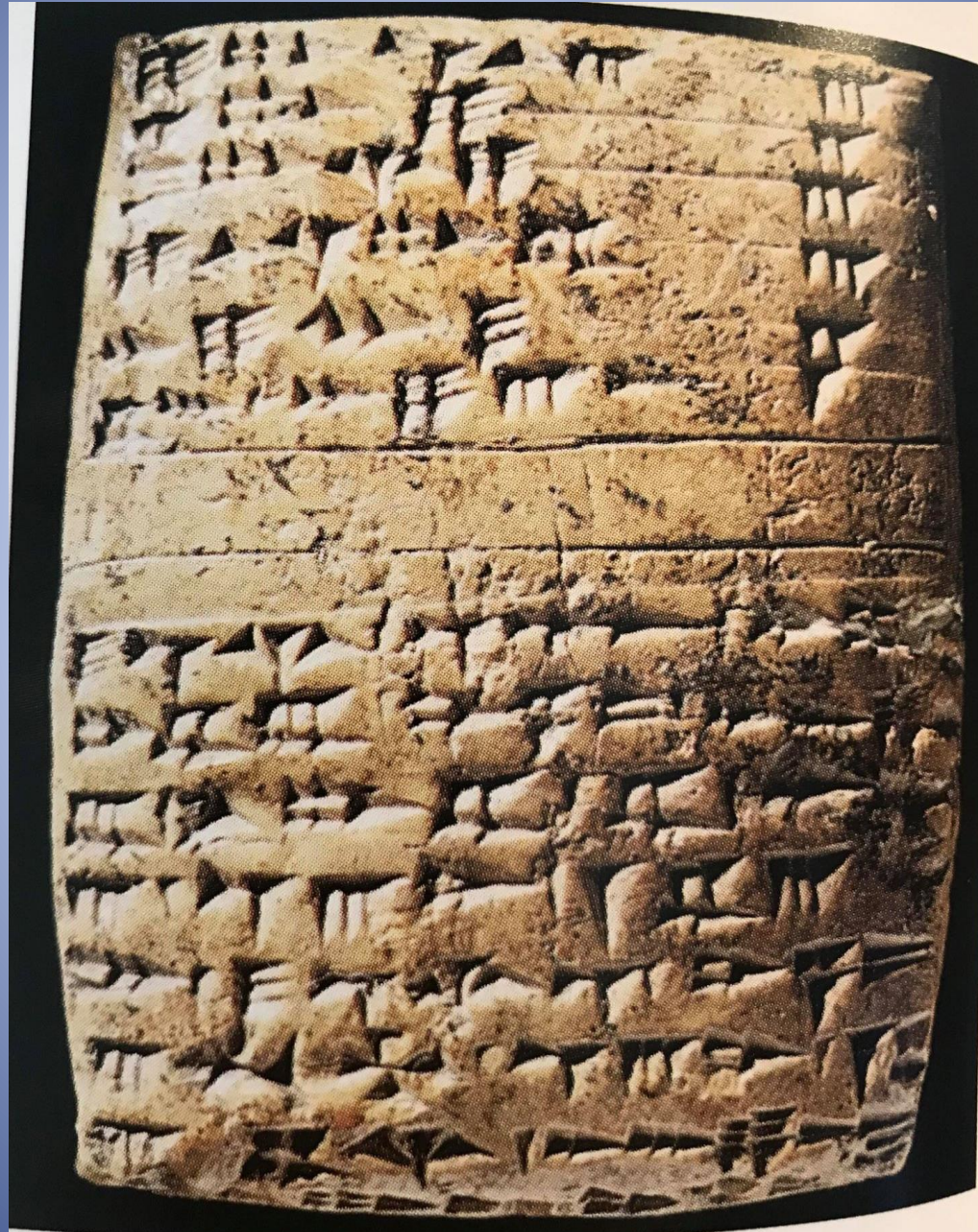
## **The Ugarit archives**

# I. The scripture in Byblos during the Bronze Age





# I. The scripture in Byblos during the Bronze Age



# **I. The scripture in Byblos during the Bronze Age**

This tablet includes the terms of a lease of a boat by  
the King of Byblos to the king of Ugarit

# I. The scripture in Byblos during the Bronze Age

*C* 14<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> century

Pseudo-hieroglyph

Semitic



# I. The scripture in Byblos during the Bronze Age



A t 3 5 7 9 11 13 15 17 19 21 23 25 27 29 31 33 35 37 39 41 43 45 47 49 51 53 55 57 59 61 63 65 67 69 71 73 75 77 79 81 83 85 87 89 91 93 95 97 99 101 103 105 107 109 111 113 115 117 119 121 123 125 127 129 131 133 135 137 139 141 143 145 147 149 151 153 155 157 159 161 163 165 167 169 171 173 175 177 179 181 183 185 187 189 191 193 195 197 199 201 203 205 207 209 211 213 215 217 219 221 223 225 227 229 231 233 235 237 239 241 243 245 247 249 251 253 255 257 259 261 263 265 267 269 271 273 275 277 279 281 283 285 287 289 291 293 295 297 299 301 303 305 307 309 311 313 315 317 319 321 323 325 327 329 331 333 335 337 339 341 343 345 347 349 351 353 355 357 359 361 363 365 367 369 371 373 375 377 379 381 383 385 387 389 391 393 395 397 399 401 403 405 407 409 411 413 415 417 419 421 423 425 427 429 431 433 435 437 439 441 443 445 447 449 451 453 455 457 459 461 463 465 467 469 471 473 475 477 479 481 483 485 487 489 491 493 495 497 499 501 503 505 507 509 511 513 515 517 519 521 523 525 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# I. The scripture in Byblos during the Bronze Age

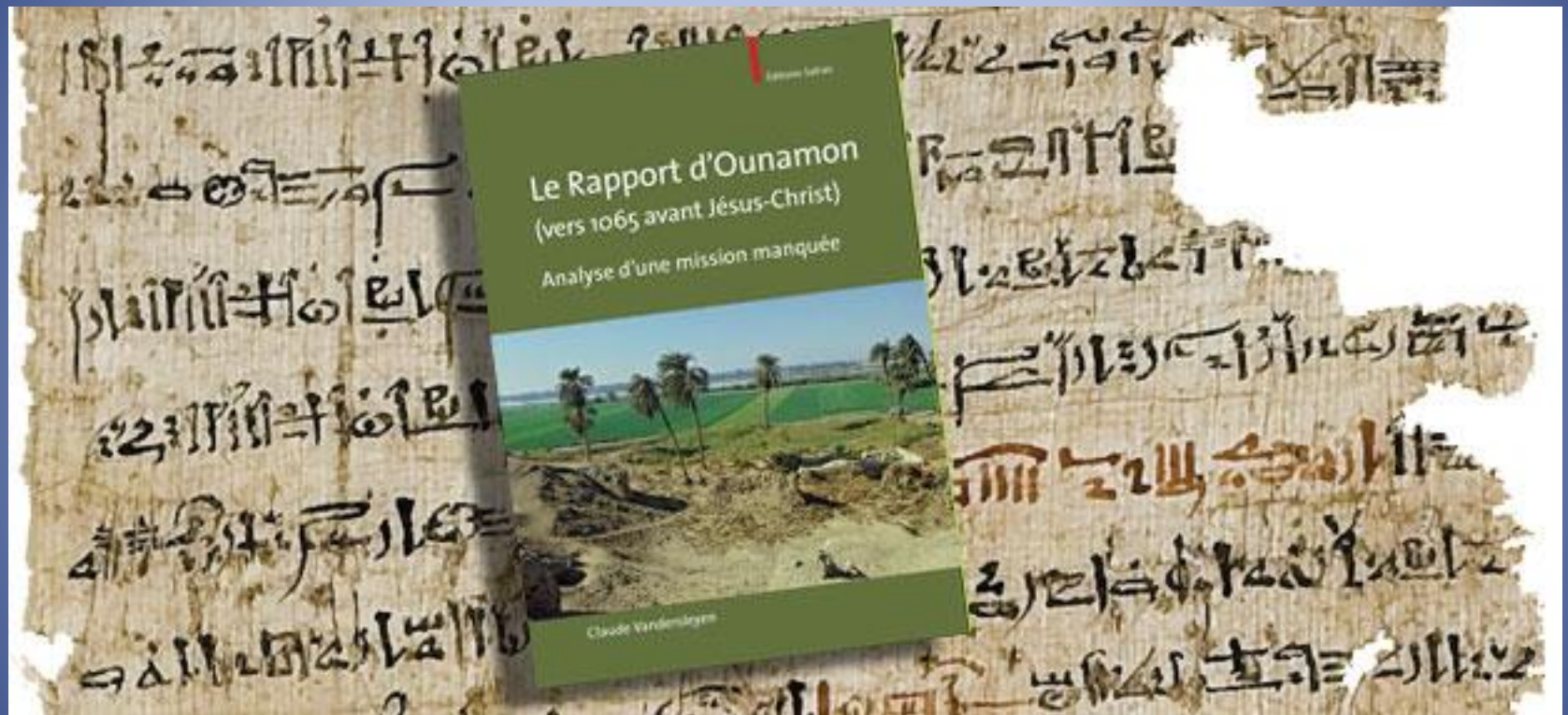
11<sup>th</sup> century

Hieroglyph

Egyptian



# I. The scripture in Byblos during the Bronze Age



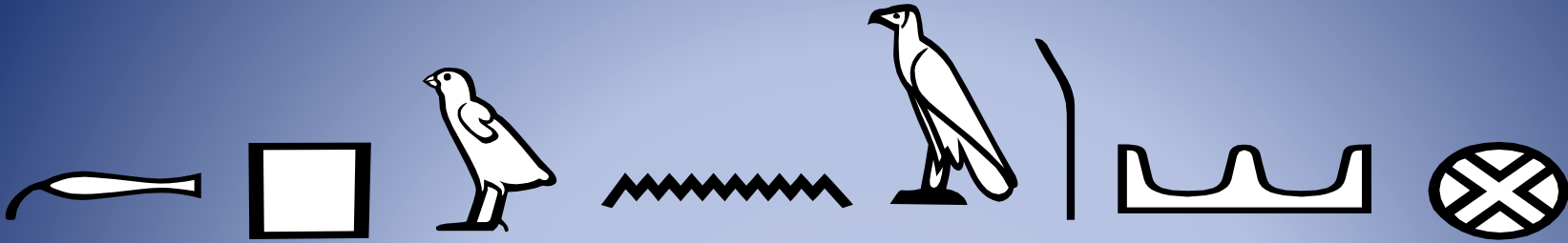


# I. The scripture in Byblos during the Bronze Age

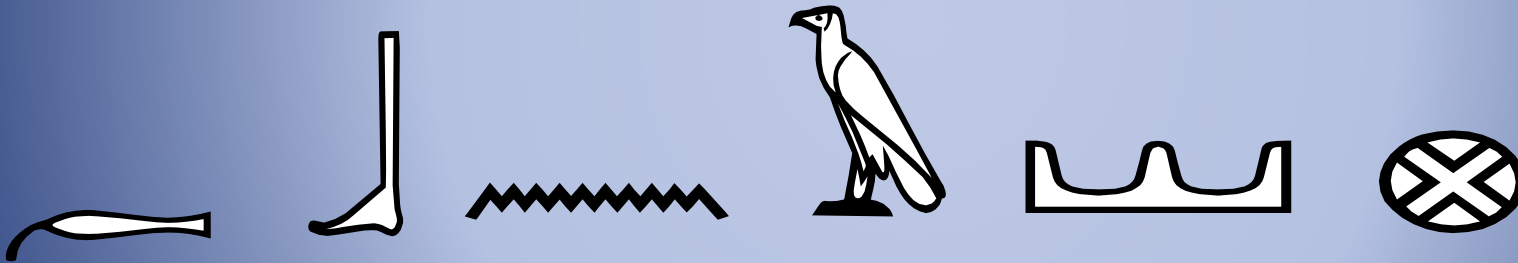
May 25, 1075



# I. The scripture in Byblos during the Bronze Age

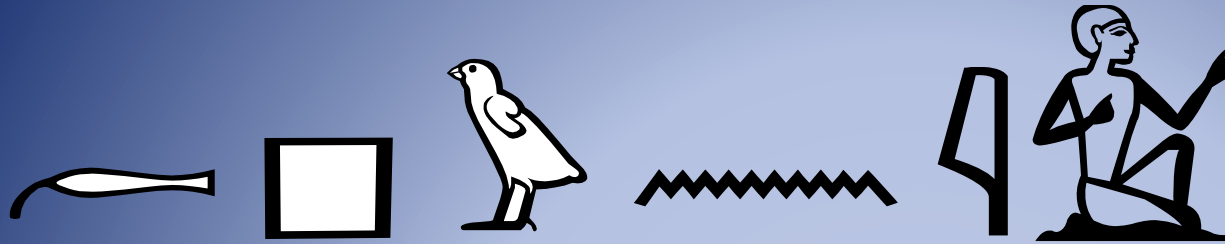


K p-p w-n 3

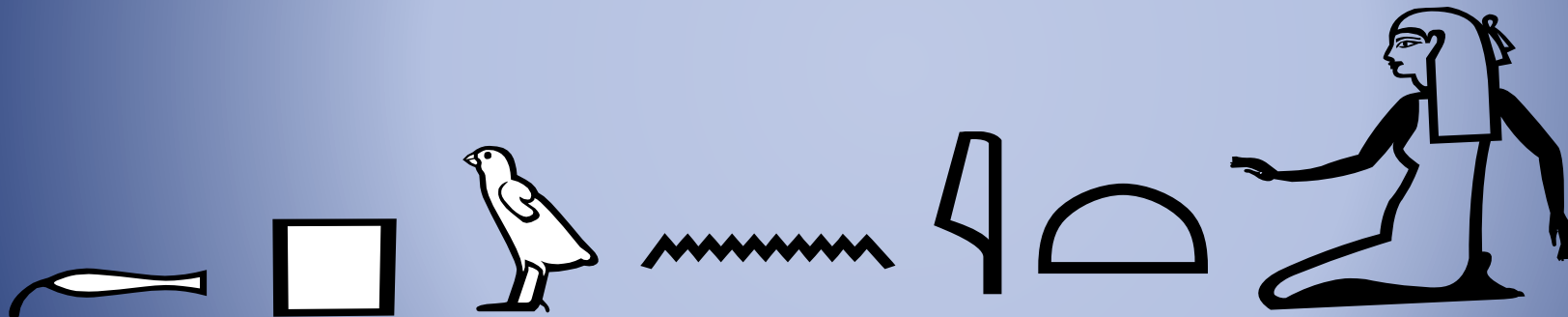


K b-b w -n 3

# I. The scripture in Byblos during the Bronze Age



K p—p w—ni



K p—p w—nit

# The invention of the alphabet

## II. The geopolitical context

## **II. The geopolitical context**

**The invasion of the Sea Peoples in 1204**





## **II. The geopolitical context**

**The invasion of the Sea Peoples of the south of Levant in  
1180**



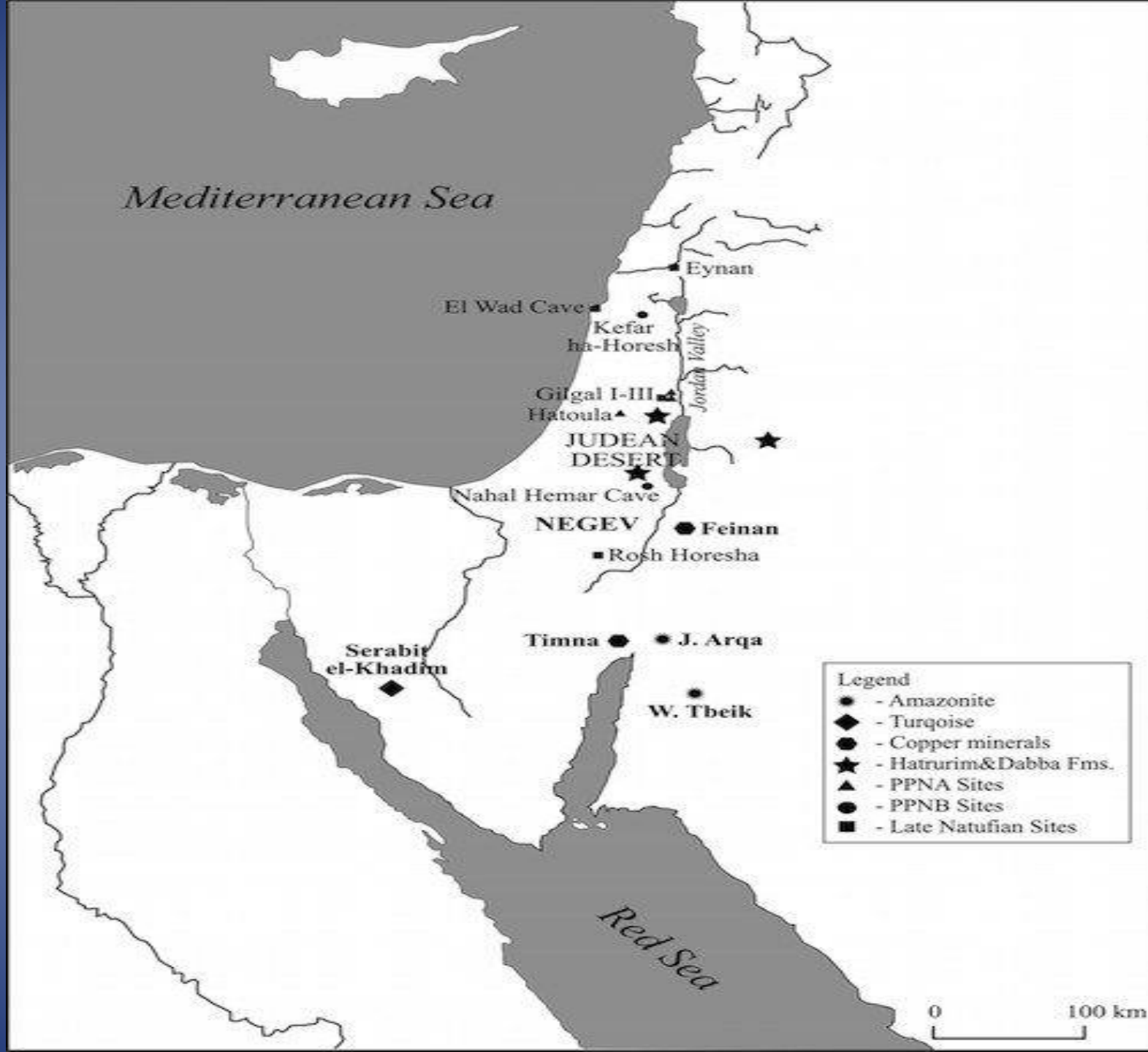






# The invention of the alphabet

## III. The invention of the alphabet





### III. The invention of the alphabet



### III. The invention of the alphabet





### III. The invention of the alphabet











### III. The invention of the alphabet



### III. The invention of the alphabet




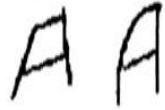



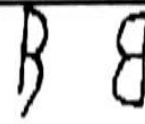


### III. The invention of the alphabet

Egyptian	Proto-Semitic ox's head	Phoenician <i><u>aleph</u></i>	Greek <i><u>Alpha</u></i>	Etruscan A	Roman/Cyrillic A
					



### III. The invention of the alphabet

Égypte Chypre	Phénicien	Grec	Étrusque	Latin
	 Aleph (bœuf)			A
	 Beth (maison)			B

### **III. The invention of the alphabet**

## **The alphabet scripture in Byblos**

### III. The invention of the alphabet





### III. The invention of the alphabet



fig. 2.

### III. The invention of the alphabet





### III. The invention of the alphabet





### III. The invention of the alphabet

