The Spread of Phoenician Writing
Culture to Ancient Greece
Gary A. Rendsburg
Blanche and Irving Laurie
Chair in Jewish History
Rutgers University
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The Spread of the Alphabet from Phoenicia to Greece
Late Bronze Age (?)
Early Iron Age (?)
8th century (?)

Earliest Phoenician writing on Crete (10th century B.C.E.):
Inscribed bronze bowl from Knossos (Tekke)
(Heraklion 4346, Heraklion Archaeological Museum)

Greek words in the semantic field of writing,
which lack Indo-European etymologies,
but which may be explained by recourse to Phoenician

Palette of Pamerihu, 18th Dynasty scribe
http://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/Y_EA5513

'vessel of Shema' son of L—'

.roll of papyrus
KAI 81 – Dedicatory inscription from Carthage (3rd cent. B.C.E.)

(1) To Lady Astarte and to Tinnitof Lebanon, these new sanctuaries [are dedicated], as well as everything which is in them . . . (2) and the scrolls which are in these sanctuaries, . . .

חֶרֶט χάρτης

χαρτές 'papyrus roll' (LSJ, 2.1980)

KAI 81

Dedicatory inscription from Carthage (3rd cent. B.C.E.), discovered 1898

Beekes, 2.1615–16

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χαρτές 'papyrus roll' (LSJ, 2.1980)
χαράσσω (Attic χαράττω)  
"carve, stamp, engrave"  
(attested as early as Hesiod)  
(LS), 2.1977–78

Northwest Semitic roots:  
ח-ר-ט  "incise, engrave"  
(esp. with metals)  
חֶרֶשׂ  "potsherd, ostraca"

All three roots are attested in Phoenician (Krahmalkov, Dictionary, pp. 198–199), including the word for 'engraver'.

The Etymology of χαράσσω: "Papyrus Roll"  
Gary A. Remsing

As is well known, the Greek lexicon includes numerous words, including common words and basic vocabulary items, which have a Judeo-Diaspora IE etymology, especially when compared to the lexicon of other IE languages. 1

One need only peek at the great etymological dictionaries of Ernout, Charvet, and Fievet in order to see the oft-used words ammone, unabdoma, ambro (e.g., επιμονη, ἀμβροσία, ἀμβούς): pregnant, unslept, with burn, with furrow. From Lat. ambo, scrump, scrump, Greek borrowed the later forms (πανορθομα, πανορθομα), "carved" (attested) 2 to express a document by means.

Beekes, 2.1615–16

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Hebrew–Phoenician. **תַּחַת** (D-stem) ‘write, engrave’

Exodus 28:9. And you shall take two onyx stones, and you shall engrave (upittaḥta) upon them the names of the children of Israel.

Exodus 28:11. The work of the stone craftsman, engravings (pittuḥe) of the seal, you shall engrave (təpattaḥ) two stones with the names of the children of Israel.

Exodus 28:36. And you shall make a frontlet of pure gold, and you shall engrave (upittaḥta) upon it engravings (pittuḥe) of the seal, ‘holy unto YHWH’.

1 Kings 7:36. And he engraved (waypattaḥ) upon the planks (and upon) the stays, and upon the frames, cherubim, lions, and palm-trees.

Zechariah 3:9. And for my Lady Baʿalat of Byblos I made this bronze altar in this her courtyard, and this engraving [WHPTḤ] of gold, which is (5) before this my inscription [PTḤY].”

For behold the stone which I have placed before Joshua . . . behold I will engrave (məpatteaḥ) its inscription (pittuḥah), says YHWH of Hosts.

**PTH III**

[Heb. pittḥa] n.m. INSCRIPTION, ENGRAVING

KAI 10.35 (Ph) wsp. ‘אֲשֶׁר בְּנֵי שְׁמֹת עֲלֵיהֶם וְפִתַּחְתָּ אַבְנֵי‐שֹׁהַם אֶת‐שְׂתֵּי וְלָ֣קַחְתָּ אֶבֶן חָרַשׁ מַעֲשֵׂה ל יַהוָֽה׃ קֹ֖ודֶשׁ חֹתָ֔ם פִּתּוּחֵ֣י עָלָיו וּפִתַּחְתָּ טָה֑וֹר זָהָ֣ב צִ֖יץ וְעָשִׂיתָ And you shall take two onyx stones, and you shall engrave (upittaḥta) upon them the names of the children of Israel. The work of the stone craftsman, engravings (pittuḥe) of the seal, you shall engrave (təpattaḥ) two stones with the names of the children of Israel. And you shall make a frontlet of pure gold, and you shall engrave (upittaḥta) upon it engravings (pittuḥe) of the seal, ‘holy unto YHWH’.

Yeḥawmilk Stele (KAI 10), discovered 1860, at Byblos, dated to 5th century B.C.E., published as CIS I.1 (1881) (Corpus Inscriptionum Semiticarum, ed. Ernst Renan)

https://collections.louvre.fr/en/ark:/53355/cl010120347

CAT 5.14 Ugaritic – Akkadian abecedary, with Ugaritic letter no. 9 = Akkadian ku
pîttak-iôn > πίνακι
‘writing tablet, written document’
(Debeek, 2.1198)

πἶνᾱκ / πίναξ
‘writing tablet’ (and derivatives), including Iliad, 6.169, when Bellerophontes carries his ‘death notice’ with him to the king of Lycia (Antieia’s father)

and yet the word has no etymology (Debeek, 2.1192-93)

Could the word derive from ‘Phoenicians’?
(Egyptian fnkh, etc.)
through a different path which delivered the term φοίνῐκες

Egyptian fnkh attested from the Pyramid Texts (Pepi I, no. 764) onward, that is, from c. 2400 B.C.E.
First proposed by Kurt Sethe (1916)
δέλτος ‘writing tablet’
(Beekes, 1.313)

Herodotus, Histories, 8.135
(with reference to Carian writing)

Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Roman Antiquities, 2.27
(with reference to the Roman Twelve Tables)

Iklaina Linear B tablet fragment, c. 1400 B.C.E.
(Iklaina, 45 km west of Kalamata)

Jeremiah 36:23

כִּקְרוֹא וַיְהִי דְלָתּוֹת יִוְּ אַרְבָּעָה וְהַשְׁ הַסֹּפֵר בְּתַעַר קְרָעֶה לֵךְ עַכָּל־הַמְּגִלָּה עַד־תֹּם אֶל־הָאָח אֲשֶׁ֣ר עַל־הָאָֽש׃ אֶל־הָאֵשׁ אֲשֶׁר ל־הָאֵשׁ

And it was, as Yehudi read three or four columns (dəlatot), he would tear them with the scribe's razor, and he would cast (them) into the fire which was in the hearth – until the completion of the entire scroll into the fire which was in the hearth.

KAI 43 / RES 1211
Larnax tes Lapethou (Cyprus)
Ptolemaic Period

https://collections.louvre.fr/en/ark:/53355/cl010134280

12. in accordance with the bronze plaque (vext) according to all
13. which I wrote and nailed upon the wall, on which
14. (are recorded) my gracious benefaction.

Krahmalkov, Dictionary, p. 149
Hannobaʿal of MQNY has signed himself into the employ of his master Eshmunḥaloṣ, . . . gratis, without silver, as recorded in the document (ost), which he has sealed for his household.

epad

KAI 37 B
Kition (Cyprus), c. 400 B.C.E., ledger of payments made to temple personnel

top line reads:
‘tablet [D<L>T] verso’

https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/W_1880-0710-44

CAT 5.7 – Ugaritic dlt ‘tablet’

r. n. l. a r. n. l. a
m’n answer
alnr alnr (Hurrian)
sdq šlm sdq šlm (Semitic)
dlt tablet

https://escholarship.org/uc/item/2db4-8t7z-01v4-x504226

Dedicatory Inscription to Baal-hamon by ŠPṬ scribe of the tablets (wqwt), son of m---

Krahmalkov, Dictionary, p. 149

δέλτος ‘writing tablet’ (Beekes, 1.313)

Herodotus, Histories, 8.135 (with reference to Carian writing)

Shrine Linear B tablet fragment, c. 1400 B.C.E. (Kionia, 45 km west of Matala)
Two Semitic words:

PS – PS :: PS – PS

with a range of meanings,
known from Hebrew, Phoenician, and Aramaic/Syriac

And in honor of his deeds, his family has magnified his memory month upon month in the temple of Isis, and (about) his fathers they have written in [this?] inscription (PS).

CIS I 6000, lines 7-8

(Lidzbarski, Ephemeris, vol. 1, pp. 164-169)
KAI 74 (CIS 1.167) line 11
Carthage, 3rd cent. a.C.

KAI 74 (CIS 1.167) line 11
Carthage, 3rd cent. a.C.

KAI 69 (CIS 1.165) Marseille Tariff Inscription

KAI 165 Latin – Neo-Punic bilingual
from Qalat Abis-Siba = Guelaat bou Sba (Algeria)

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Hebrew and Jewish Aramaic: פס pos 'tax'

Phonetic transcription: פ (ff) "tax" (Arabic)

Jastrow, Dictionary, 1191

Tosefta Pe'ah 4.9

Jeremiah 36:23

וְאַרבַע פַצִין תְלָת יְהוּדִי קְרֵי כַד וַהֲוָה

"And it was, as Yehudi read three of four columns (paṣin)"

Jewish Aramaic: Targum Jonathan to Jeremiah 36:23

Syriac (Christian Aramaic): Peshitta to Jeremiah 36:23

Two Semitic words:

Phoenician: 'inscription'

Hebrew: 'city tax'

Aramaic: 'column of text'

Syriac: 'lot, column, page'

πεσσός 'token', 'oval stone', 'game board', 'tally, ticket'

with a range of meanings:

Phoenician: 'inscription'

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κάννα 'reed (Arundo donax)'
κάννα 'reed' (Arundo donax)

Hebrew: קָנֶה qanɛ (c. 60x in the Bible)

construction of the Tabernacle, plant in the garden in Song of Songs, hiding place for the hippopotamus in Job, etc.

Ugaritic: qn
4.91.9-10 ḫmš ḫr qnm 'fifty talents of reeds'
4.158.12 ḫr qnm 'five talents of reeds'
4.247.29 ḫr ḫr qnm 'fifteen (bundles?) of fine reeds'

Krahmalkov, Dictionary, 427

κάννα 'reed' (Arundo donax)

Latin canna

Italian cannoli

LSJ, 1.245 | Beekes, 1.136

(mentioned by Hippocrates, Strabo, Galen, Pliny)

Right: Colocasia antiquorum, as illustrated by Pietro Andrea Matthioli, Commentarii in libros sex Pedacii Dioscoridis (1544)
Erman, Wörterbuch, 1.208
masc.: ʿr 'rush, reed, cane'
fem.: ʿrt 'stem, stalk'

Egyptian > Hebrew / Phoenician > Greek

LSJ, 1.333

Beekes, pp. 246 – 247

Early Greek labiovelar consonants shifted to labials, hence:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mycenaean</th>
<th>transcription</th>
<th>gloss</th>
<th>Classical</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>qa-asi-re-u</td>
<td>g=asileus</td>
<td>'leader'</td>
<td>basileus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>qa-u-ko-ro</td>
<td>g=oukolos</td>
<td>'cowherd'</td>
<td>boukolos</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Semitic transcription gloss  Classical

gbubla 'Byblos'

Gublia  'Byblos'  'Byblos'
Iṣobaʿal son of Aḥiram, king of Byblos (GBL), made this coffin for his father Aḥiram.

Beirut National Museum

Yeḥimilk, king of Byblos (GBL), built this temple

Yeḥimilk, king of Byblos (GBL), built this temple

Yeḥimilk, king of Byblos (GBL), son of Yhbarbaʿal, grandson of ʾArmilk, king of Byblos (GBL)
βύβλος ‘papyrus’ (and derived meanings) — though the derivation of the word πάπυρος ‘papyrus’ remains elusive —

Spensithios inscription (Crete, c. 500 B.C.E.) – side A
https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/G_1969-0402-1

φοινικάζειν ‘act as a Phoenician’ > ‘be a scribe’

Spensithios inscription (Crete, c. 500 B.C.E.) – side B
https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/G_1969-0402-1
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תודה
ב canadian