The Chief of Miners, Moses (Sinai 346, *c.* 1250 BCE)

by

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No greater problems of ancient Israelite history persist unresolved than the historicity of its quintessential figure, Moses, and the reliability of the historical tradition about him in the Pentateuch. Archaeologists and historians may hold different opinions on these matters, but they do agree on one thing: there is absolutely no primary historical evidence of any kind in any ancient source from Egypt, Sinai and Israel of the existence of a man named Moses resembling in the slightest the Moses of tradition, specifically, the leader of an Israelite community in Sinai in the time of Ramesses II who did extraordinary things perceived as miraculous, such as turning a staff into a snake and making of a snake of bronze which if looked upon saved the life of a person bitten by a poisonous snake. "We must confront several theoretical objections <to the historicity of Moses>," writes archaeologist and Bible scholar W.G. Dever, "(1) There is absolutely no external – that is, extrabiblical – witness to Moses, either textual or archaeological. (2) The portrait of a 'miraculous' Moses who performs stupendous feats and

contends face-to-face with God strains modern readers' credulity."[1] In this same vein, Adele Berlin and Marc Brettler assert that "there is no direct connection between biblical traditions in <the Book of> Exodus and other ancient sources. Egyptian records contain no mention of the major individuals and events of the narrative in Exod(us) Ch(apter)s 1-15: Moses, Aaron . . . are completely absent from the extensive documentation we have for ancient Egypt."[2] Inasmuch as "there are no extant records from Egypt that make any reference to [Moses]," states John Van Seters, a leading authority on the Moses traditions of the Yahwist, "the quest for the historical Moses is a futile exercise. He now belongs only to legend."[3] In other words, the reason no contemporary records of Moses have been discovered is that there are none to discover, no such man ever having existed save in the pages of sacred fiction, the Pentateuch. There is however one difficulty with the claim that there is no historical evidence of a Moses in antiquity matching the description of the Biblical Moses: it is not true. Far from being unattested, a man named Moses fitting the profile of Moses is among the best documented of the major figures of the Late Bronze Age; and the fit is tight. The real reason this "historical" Moses is unknown to archaeologists and historians is not absence of documentation but the failure to translate accurately the many documents in which those who knew him and of him give direct testimony to his life, work and fame.

The existence of the historical Moses was revealed in the winter of 1905-1906. After having cleared the debris at the entrance to the hall of the grotto-shrine of Ptah in the Temple of Hathor on Mt Serabit el-Khadem in SW Sinai, W.M. Flinders Petrie discovered a small cuboid statue of a man whom the dedicatory inscription (Sinai **346**) identifies as the Chief of Miners, Moses (**MŠ,** *Mashe/ Moshe*), the son of Mahub-Baalt of Gath, the leader of a copper and turquoise mining community that flourished *c.* 1300-1250 BCE. Moses the Miner, as he calls himself in Sinai **351**, is well attested in the Serabit inscriptions, which are the personal monuments of the members of his family, his father, Mahub-Baalt, his two brothers, Shubna-Sur and Shesha and Shesha's wife, Arakht, and of course himself.[4] A man of im-

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[1] W.G. DEVER, *Who Were the Early Israelites and Where Did They Come From?*, Grand Rapids, 2003, p. 235.

[2] A. BERLIN and M. BRETTLER, "Historical and Geographical Background to the Bible," in *The Jewish Study Biblical,* Oxford, 2004, p. 2050. The essay is an "adaptation" of an original essay/article not indicated.

[3] J. VAN SETERS, "Moses", in *Encyclopedia of Religion,* Vol. 10, New York, 1987, p. 116.

[4] Of these inscriptions, M. NOTH, *The History of Israel,* New York, 1960, p. 130, wrote: "The celebrated Sinai inscriptions from the district of the tur-

portance during his life, evident from the placement of his statue in the inner sanctum of the Hathor temple, this Moses was a revered and venerated figure in Israel soon after his death. Linking him to the Biblical Moses are two historical inscriptions posted on the Serabit plateau *c.* 1200-1180 BCE to mark sites associated with memorable incidents in his life, "the sign that Moses Mahub-Baalt performed with the snake" (Sinai **360**) and "the snake of bronze that Moses Mahub-Baalt made" (Sinai **361**), both of which have exact parallels in stories of Moses in Exodus 4 and Numbers 21. Archaeologists and historians are unaware of this information because none of the translations of Sinai **346** even acknowledge the occurrence of the name Moses in it, and the one translator of Sinai **360** and **361** who did see the presence of the name misidentified the Moses mentioned as the official in charge of the sleeping-camp of the Semitic miners and placed him in the wrong historical period, the Egyptian Middle Kingdom and, for this reason, firmly rejected his identification with the Biblical Moses on the grounds that he had lived centuries earlier.[5] The present paper is a critical study of Sinai **346** that seeks to provide historians of ancient Israel and the Hebrew Bible a reliable translation of this and other inscriptions from Serabit el-Khadem that relate to the Chief of Miners, Moses, and thereby establish his historical existence.

1.   *The Statue and its Inscription*

The statue of Moses itself measures *c.* 11.75 inches in height x 8.5 inches x 6.75 inches at the base. The inscription consists of four lexical segments which, for the sake of reference, are designated by number as follows: on the front, two parallel columns, (1) a right column and (2) a left column, and beneath them, (3) a horizontal line; on the right side, (4) a single column. Like most of the Sinai inscriptions, it is written in the LB IIB dialect of Gath, Moses's native tongue, a language belonging to the Phoinic (Phoenician) subfamily of Canaanite languages.[6]

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quoise mines of *serabit el-khadem* … discovered by Flinders Petrie in 1905 … must be completely excluded from the 'Sinai' problem [the historical Moses's connection with Sinai in the Penateuch] … [They] have nothing at all to do with the Israelites. They derive from the 15th century B.C. … and they are to be traced to Canaanite mine-workers in the service of the Egyptians."

[5] R.F. BUTIN, "The Serabit Inscriptions II: The Decipherment and Significance of the Inscriptions," *Harvard Theological Review* 21 (1928), p. 47: "It is needless to point out that if the reading 'Mosheh' <of the name M-SH> is preferred, the official in question has nothing except the name in common with the great Lawgiver of Israel; the M-SH of the inscriptions antedates the Old Testament Moses by several hundred years. "

[6] Gittite is linked to other dialects of this family by its use of the distinctive Phoenician suffix pronoun –**M** ("their, them") of the third feminine plu-

Translators of the inscription disagree about the proper sequencing of these four segments, with the inevitable result that their translations differ substantially from one another.[7] Nor do any of the proposed translations, in my considered professional opinion, make particularly good sense. There is however an entirely objective means by which the sequencing of the lexical segments can be determined with confidence, and that is the literary form of the inscription. In the highly conservative Phoenician literary tradition, two forms predominate: (A) *(This is) the object that John made for William* and (B) *John made this (*or, *the/this object*) *for William*. Sinai **346** is written in the latter, which is well-attested in the Sinai inscriptions, exhibiting the fixed word-order **O (“this”) + V + S + Pred** or **S + V + O (“this”) + Pred:**

345 MʔHBʕLT NT(ʔ)N Z LBʕLT

346 Z NSʔṬ MRʕT LBʕLT ʕL NʕM MṬ ʕL NʕM RB NQBN MŠ

351 ZT BŠN MŠ NQB [BN] MʔHBBʕLT

353a ZT BŠN ŠŠ MHBʕLT GNT

353b ZT NŠʔ <ʔ>RḤT ZGT ŠŠ MŠʔT LBʕLT

365 Z ŠM ʔRḤT LŠŠ BN MʔHBʕLT

345 Mahub-Baalt gave this to Baalt.

346 His (Moses's) wife presented this to Baalt on behalf of her husband, on behalf of the Chief of Miners, Moses.

351 Moses the Miner, the son of Mahub-Baalt, made this.

353a Shesha <son of> Mahub-Baalt of Gath made this.

353b Arakht, Shesha's wife, presented this as a gift to Baalt.

365 Arakht placed this (here) for Shesha, the son of Mahub-Baalt.

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ral (Hebrew –N): *cf.* **349 ʔNT Z-Š[M] RB NQBN MŠ ʕRKM LBʕLT [ʕL] ʔḤN Z-L ʕŠR […] TŠʕ […] ʕŠR ,** "The offerings that the Chief of the Miners, Moses, placed <and> arranged <on the altar> for Baalt [together with] his brothers: Ten [x-animals], nine [y-animals], ten [z-animals]." The pronoun was also used in the dialect of Lachish in which **357** is written: **ʔNT Š-YNSKM LʔBB MLKŠMʕ ʔMR ʔRBʕT,** "The offerings that Malki-shama sacrificed in Abib: Four lambs." It is found in Sinai **375**, which is written in Phenician: **TBʔ ŠLŠ ʔRḤT MY ʔS T[M] MSʕTYNM,** "Maya's (Mashe's) three caravans came home when they had completed their journeys." These are all new examples of the pronoun. See C.R. Krahmalkov, *A Phoenician-Punic Grammar*, Leiden, 2001, pp. 55, 59.

[7] The translations are given in the Addendum to this study.

2. The Text

1. (1) Z NSʔT MRʕT   His (Moses's) wife presented this

3. (2) LBʕLT   to Baalt (Hathor)

2. (3) ʕL NʕM MT   on behalf of her husband,

4. (4) ʕL NʕM RB NQBN MŠ   on behalf of the Chief of Miners, Moses.

3. Comments on the Text

Z: "This," masculine or feminine singular demonstrative pronoun, referring to the statue, the direct object of the verb **NSʔT** ("she presented, brought").

NSʔT: "She presented, brought." The reading of this item is a matter of dispute among translators. The first sign is **N**, the hieratic form of the Egyptian uniliteral sign *n*; because the hieratic form resembles the sign used for **L** in the Sinai inscriptions, it has been read as **L** by most translators. The second sign is **S**, a fish *(samek)*, which appears again in **358 ʔS PʕL MLKŠ[Mʕ],** "What Malki-shama made" and twice in **375 TBʔ ŠLŠ ʔRḤT MY ʔS T[M] MSʕTYNM,** "Maya's (Mashe's) three caravans came home when they had completed their journeys." The third sign is **ʔ** *(aleph)* is the sole example of the cursive form of this letter in the inscriptions from the time of Mashe and, as such, a good indication that Sinai **346** was probably written towards the middle of the thirteenth century BCE, c. 1250 BCE. The final sign is **T**, linked to the *aleph* by means of an oblique stroke. **NSʔT** is the 3fs Qal suffixing form of the verb ***n-s-ʔ***; this verb with the same meaning occurs in 353: **ZT BŠN ŠŠ MHBʕLT GNT ZT NŠʔ <ʔ>RḤT ZGT ŠŠ MŠʔT LBʕLT**, "Shesha <son of> Mahub-Baalt of Gint (Gath) made this; <and> Arakht, Shesha's wife, presented it as a gift to Baalt." The spelling **NSʔT** with **S** is phonetic to indicate the articulation of PWS ś. The morphology of **NSʔT** *(nasaʔat)*, with retention of the original –*at* of the 3fs, is consistent with **376 BRKT** *(barakat)* **ʔSʔ ʕBD WTḤ<S> ʕLW**, "Isis bless him who serves her, and may she will take pity upon him." The later form of the 3fs ending in –*a* is found in somewhat later inscriptions from the time of Mashe's youngest brother, Shesha, and his wife Arakht: **353 ZT NŠʔ** *(nasaʔa)* **<ʔ>RḤT ZGT ŠŠ MŠʔT LBʕLT,** "Arakht, Shesha's wife, brought this as a gift to Baalt;" **365 Z ŠM** *(sama)* **ʔRḤT LŠŠ BN M MHBʕLT,** "Arakht placed this (here) for Shesha son of Mahub-Baalt."

MRʕT: "His wife *(marʕato)*," *lit.* "his female companion," from the root *r-ʕ-y.* Compare Ethiopic *marʕāt* ("bride"; masc. *marʕāwe*) to Hebrew *raʕya* and *reʕūt* ("female companion") from the same verbal root. This item occupies the position in the literary form where the subject, normally the name of the person, stands. The use here of a term of relationship ("his wife")

rather than the personal name is attested elsewhere in the Phoenician inscriptions: RES 56 (Phoenician) **HBMYS ʔŠ YTNʔ LDMD BNT ʔŠ L,** "The *bōmis* (small altar) that his (DMD's) daughters erected to <their father> DMD;" Tripolitania 39 (Neo-Punic) **MNṢBT Mʔ PꜤLʔ BNYʔ LʔBNʔM NYMRꜤN,** "The stele that his (Nimira's) sons made for their father Nimira." The 3ms possessive pronoun *–o* ("his") is affixed directly to the stem of the substantive **MRꜤT** is as in Classical Hebrew and Phoenician; this is consistent with the affixing of the 3fs possessive pronoun *–a* ("her") in MT *muta* ("her husband") later in this same inscription.

ꜤL NꜤM: "On behalf of, for the sake of" (*Ꜥal noꜤam*), prepositional phrase corresponding to Arabic *naꜤma* ("for the sake of"). In the Phoenician inscriptions of the Iron Age, the expression "on behalf of" is normally expressed by the simple preposition **ꜤL**: CIS I 93.3f **HSMLM HʔL ʔŠ YT̤Nʔ BTŠLM … ꜤL BN BNY ꜤL ʔŠMNʔDN WŠLM WꜤBDRŠP,** "These statues which Bitt-Salom erected … on behalf of her grandsons, on behalf of Esmun-adon, Salom and Abd-Rasop;" FK A 30: **SML ʔZ ʔŠ NDR WYT̤Nʔ ꜤBDʔ ... ꜤL BNY ꜤL KLKLY LʔDNY LʔŠMN**, "This statue that Abdo vowed and erected on behalf of his son, on behalf of KLKLY, to his Lord, to Esmun."

MT: "Her husband" (*muta*). The word is the cognate of Akkadian *mutu* and Ugaritic **MT** ("man, husband"). As observed earlier, the possessive pronoun *–a* ("her") is affixed directly to the stem of the noun; another example of this same morphology is **ꜤBD** (*Ꜥabda*) "her servant": **376 BRKT ʔSʔ ꜤBD WTḤ<S> ꜤLW**, "Isis bless him who serves her, and may she take pity upon him."

ꜤL NꜤM: "On behalf of, for the sake of." The prepositional phrase is repeated here, as is common in Phoenician literary usage; *cf.* FK A 30 from Kition in which two instances of this usage occur: **SML ʔZ ʔŠ NDR WYT̤Nʔ ꜤBDʔ … ꜤL BNY ꜤL KLKLY LʔDNY LʔŠMN**, "This is the statue that Abdo vowed and erected on behalf of his son, on behalf of KLKLY, to his Lord, to Esmun." *Cf.* also CIS I 93.3 **HSMLM HʔL ʔŠ YT̤Nʔ BTŠLM ... ꜤL BN BNY ꜤL ʔŠMNʔDN WŠLM WꜤBDRŠP,** "These are the statues that Bitt-Salom erected … on behalf of her grandsons, on behalf of Esmun-adon, Salom and Abd-Rasap**."** The repetition of the preposition in Phoenician literary usage indicates that lexical segment 3 ("on behalf of the Chief of Miners, Moses") must follow segment 2 ("on behalf of her husband") directly.

RB NQBN MŠ: "The Chief of Miners, Moses (Mashe/Moshe);" *cf.* **349: ʔNT Z-Š[M] RB NQBN MŠ ꜤRKM LBꜤLT [ꜤL] ʔḤN Z-L,** "The offerings that the Chief of Miners, Moses, [and] his brothers placed <and> arranged <on the altar> for Baalt." Moses (Mashe) was himself a miner: **351 ZT BŠN**

MŠ NQB, "Moses the Miner made this." The final **–N** in **NQBN** (*naqqābīna*) is the masculine plural afformative *–īn(a)* in the dialect of Gath: **ʔḤN** ("brothers") in **349** (above) and **[ʔL]HN** ("god") in **375a Z [K]HN [ʔL]HN YHW GNT [M]ʔHBBꜤL{T],** "This is the Priest of the God Yahweh of Gath, Mahub-Baalt."

MŠ: "Moses (*Mashe*/*Moshe*; spelled **MŠH** in Classical Hebrew)." In some of the early photographs of the inscription, the letters **M** and **Š** are not visible, so many epigraphers did not record them. The **M** was seen and recorded however by Eisler and Bruston although both took it to be the final letter of the preceding word. The **Š** was written immediately below the **M**. However, an attempt was made to erase the name, three parallel rows of gouge marks plainly visible at the bottom of the column, the first obscuring the original **Š; s**ubsequently, the letter was restored, written small to the right of the **M,** immediately below the **N** of **NQBN**.

Moses was the middle son of Mahub-Baalt of Gath.[8] His full birth name was Ṣapōn-mashe (**ṢPNMŠ**), an Egyptian sentence-name consisting of BaꜤal Ṣapōn as its subject and the Egyptian verb *ms* ("he bore <him>"). The full name is attested twice in the Serabit inscriptions: **352 ʔN ŠBNṢR ṢPNMŠ ŠŠ [Š]LŠ{L}T BNN M[ʔHB]BꜤLT [BNN MZB]ḤT,** "We, Shubna-Sur, Sapon-mashe <and> Shesha, the three sons of Mahub-Baalt, [built the alt]ars;"[9] **356 ʔN ṢPNMŠ BN MHBꜤLT [PꜤLT Z],** "I, Sapon-mashe, the son of Mahub-Baalt, [made this]."[10] Ṣapōn is

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[8] The inscriptions identifying Mahub-Baalt as a citizen of Gath (**GNT**, *Gint*) are **374 TNT Z-NTT ʔN MʔHBBꜤLT GNT,** "The gift that I, Mahub-Baalt of Gath, gave;" **353 ZT BŠN ŠŠ MHBꜤLT GNT ZT NŠʔ <ʔ>RḤT ZGT ŠŠ MŠʔT LBꜤLT,** "Shesha <son of> Mahub-Baalt of Gath made this; <and> Arakht, Shesha's wife, presented it as a gift to Baalt;" **375a Z [K]HN [ʔL]HN YHW GNT [M]HBꜤL[T]**, "This is the Priest of the God Yahweh of Gath, Mahub-Baalt."

[9] Each of the members of this family has his own inscriptions at Serabit el-Khadem. The inscriptions of Moses (Mashe/Moshe) are cited in this article; the following are those of his father and two brothers. Mahub-Baalt: **345 MʔHBꜤLT NT(ʔ)N Z LBꜤLT,** "Mahub-Baalt gave this to Baalt;" **374 TNT Z-NTT ʔN MʔHBBꜤLT GNT,** "The gift that I, Mahub-Baalt of Gath, gave;" **375a Z [K]HN [ʔL]HN YHW GNT [M]HBꜤ[LT],** "This is the Priest of the God Yahweh of Gath, Mahub-Baalt;" .**380 [M]HBꜤLT MNF NQB**, "Mahub-Baalt of Memphis, the miner." Shubna-Sur: **364 [Š]BNṢR,** "Shubna-Sur." Shesha: **353 ZT BŠN ŠŠ MHBꜤLT GNT ZT NŠʔ <ʔ>RḤT ZGT ŠŠ MŠʔT LBꜤLT,** "Shesha <son of> Mahub-Baalt of Gath made this; <and> Arakht, Shesha's wife, presented it as a gift to Baalt;" **365 Z ŠM ʔRḤT LŠŠ BN MʔHBꜤLT,** "Arakht placed this (here) for Shesha, the son of Mahub-Baalt." On the reverse is a self-portrait of Arakht with note to her deceased husband: **Z ʔMTK,** "This is your maidservant (This is me)."

[10] In this inscription, the Egyptian verb *mashe* in Ṣapōn-maše is written with the Egyptian hieroglyph *ms*, confirming the Egyptian origin of the name and its meaning; in contrast, in Sinai **356,** the verb is spelled alphabetically.

the shortened form of Baʕal Sapōn used in personal names, which do not permit a divine name of more than one element; *cf.* this same shortened onomastic form in the Phoenician personal names **GRṢPN** (*Ger-Ṣapōn,* "Worshipper of Baal Sapon") in RES 535; CIS I 5789, and **ʕBDṢPN** (*ʕAbd-Ṣapōn,* "Servant of Baal Sapon") in RES 1315; CIS I 255, 832, 1323, 2030, 3360, 4431, 5264.

Mashe/Moshe is the hypocoristicon of Sapōn-mashe and the name by which he is most often called in the inscriptions and by which he was known after his death (*cf.* Sinai **360** and **361**). The inscriptions from his own time in which the name occurs are **349 ʔNT Z-Š[M] RB NQBN MŠ ʕRKM LBʕLT [ʕL] ʔḤN Z-L ʕŠR […] TŠʕ [...] ʕŠR] ,** "The offerings that the Chief of the Miners, Moses, [and] his brothers placed <and> arranged <on the altar> for Baalt: Ten [x-animals], nine [y-animals], ten [z-animals];"[11] **351 Z BŠN MŠ NQB [BN] M[ʔHBB]ʕLT,** "Moses the Miner, the son of Mahub-Baalt, made this."[12] The name also occurs in two historical inscriptions (Sinai **360** and **361**) which are site-markers discovered along the ancient winding path from the Temple of Hathor to Mine L, the center of turquoise mining activity by the community Moses led; both are in the dialect of Gath but a later form written in the alphabet used in Israel, not that of the Sinai inscriptions. Paleographic and linguistic considerations indicate a date *c.* 1200-1180 BCE or, in historical perspective, the period immediately preceding the Philistine conquest and occupation of Gath and the exodus of its Israelite population into the hill country: **360 Z ŠḤ<ŠḤ> <ʔ>ʔT ZT BŠN MŠ [MHBʕLT] BBŠN**, "This is the location of the sign that Moses Mahub-Baalt performed with the snake."[13] *Cf.* Exod 4: 1-5, 29-31: "[Moses] threw [his staff] on the ground, and it turned into a snake ... He reached out with his hand and grabbed it, and it turned back into a staff in his hand. [Yahweh said to Moses, 'Perform this sign for the people to see] so that they be-

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[11]This inscription has a close parallel in form and subject in **357** (in the dialect of Lachish) which is inscribed on an interior wall of Mine M: **ʔNT Š-YNSKM LʔBB MLKŠMʕ ʔMR ʔRBʕT,** "The offerings that Malki-shama sacrificed in Abib: Four lambs." Abib is a month-name unique to the ancient Israelite calendar, and in Israelite tradition the lamb sacrifice in the month of Abib is the *Pesaḥ* (Passover). Malki-shama is is also the author of **358 ʔS PʕL MLKŠ[Mʕ],** "What Malki-shama made."

[12] Made by Moses is the image of Yahweh which occupies the entire right half of the frame in which the inscription is set. The god is identified as Yahweh (**YHW**) at the foot of the image (at the bottom of column I but not part of it); the name is written with two letters, the first a ligature of **Y+H**, the second a normal **W** in horizontal stance. The verb **BŠN** ("he made, did") in **351**, **353**, **360** and **361**, unique to the dialect of Gath among the Canaanite languages, is the cognate of Akkadian *bašāmu* ("to create, form").

lieve that Yahweh, the God of their ancestors, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, appeared to you.' ... And he (Moses) performed the signs for the people to see, and the people believed."
361 Z ŠḤ<ŠḤ> ʔBŠN Z-NḤ[ŠT] ZT BŠN MŠ MHBʕLT, "This is the location of the snake of bronze that Moses Mahub-Baalt made." *Cf.* Num 21: 6-9; 1 Kings 18: 4: "Yahweh unleashed snakes, vipers, among the people. They bit the people. Many among the Israelites died ... So Moses made a snake of bronze and set it on a pole. If a snake bit a man but he looked at the snake of bronze, he survived ... [Centuries later, Hezekiah] smashed to pieces the snake of bronze that Moses made, because down to his time the Israelites had been burning incense to it. It was called Nehushtan."

Addendum : Translations of Sinai 346

Eisler (1919)[14]	
1. Z LSG MRʕT	Dies zur Schutzwehr (Umzäunung) der Weide (oder, Dies für die Vermehrung der Herde)
2. ʕL N[ʕM ʔ]MT	nach dem Belieben eines Orakels
3. LBʕLT	für die Ba'alat;
4. ʕL NʕM RBN RBNM	nach dem Belieben des Aufsehers der Aufseher.

Bruston (1921)[15]	
2. ʕL N[ʕ]MT	A cause de faveurs
3. LBʕLT	à la Dame de
1. ʕTR MNP LZ	l'abondance de la personne de celui-ci;
4. ʕL NʕM RB BNNM	à cause de faveur, du chef de gens intelligents.

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[14] R. EISLER, *Die Kenitischen Weihinschriften der Hyksoszeit*, Freiburg, 1919, p. 46.

[15] C. BRUSTON, "Les plus vieilles inscriptions Canaanéennes", *Revue Archéologique* 14 (1921), p. 51f.

Grimme (1923)[16]	
3. LBʕLT	Für Be'alet;
1. ʕL SGWʔ MRʕTH	für das Wachstum ihrer Weide;
2. ʕL N[ʕM BH]MT	für das Wohlbefinden [der Herden-tiere];
4. ʕL NʕM MNŠH RBN	für das Wohlbefinden des M(?)n(?)-š,
ʔBNM BʔNY	Obersten der Steinarbeiter auf ?-n-j.

Butin (1928)[17]	
1. Z LSG MRʕT	This (statue is set up) for the with-drawal of the raider,
2. ʕL N[ʕM ʔ]MT	according to the wish of the hand-maid
3. LBʕLT	(priestess) of Ba'alat,
4. ʕL NʕM RB NṢBN	(and) according to the wish of the head stone-setter (engraver).

Butin (1932)[18]	
1. Z LSG(T) MRʕT	This for the protection against harm (escaping from evil);
2. ʕL N[ʕM ʔ]MT	in favor of the handmaid
3. LBʕLT	of Ba'alat;
4. ʕL NʕM RB NṢBN	in favor of the head of the stone-setters.

Albright (1966)[19]	
1 D̠ LDY MRʕT	O (thou) in whose care is the meadow (or pasturage)
2. ʕL N[ʕM] MT<N>	on behalf of N[u'[mu], a gift
3. LBʕLT	for Baalath
4. ʕL NʕM RB NQBN[M]	on behalf of Nu'mu, chief of the min-er[s].

[16] H. GRIMME, *Althebräische Inschriften vom Sinai: Alphabet, Textliches, Sprachliches mit Folgerungen*, Darmstadt, 1923, p. 44f.

[17] R.F. BUTIN, "The Serabit Inscriptions II. The Decipherment and Signi-ficance of the Inscriptions," *Harvard Theological Review* 21 (1928), pp. 44-46.

[18] R.F. BUTIN, "The Protosinaitic Inscriptions," *Harvard Theological Re-view* 25 (1932), pp. 164-166.

[19] W.F. ALBRIGHT, *The Proto-Sinaitic Inscriptions and their Decipher-ment*, Cambridge, 1966, pp. 16-17.

Van den Branden (1979)[20]	
4. ʕL NʕM RB NṢBN	A érigé Na'am, chef des statuaires.
2. ʕL N[ʕM ZL]MT	A érigé Na'am la statue pour
3. LBʕLT	Ba'alat.
1. Z LSY MRʕT	Ceci pour la protection des pâturages.

Colless (1990)[21]	
1. Z LSG MRʕT	This is for increase of pasture
2. ʕL [Š]DMT	on the terraces.
3. LBʕLT	For Ba'alat.
4. ʕL NʕM RB NSBN	By courtesy of the chief of the prefects.

Puech (2002)[22]	
1. D̲ LSYM RʕT	Ceci (= cette image, c'est) pour installer une Compagne
2. ʕL NʕM BMT	pour la faveur des hauts-lieux (dédiés)
3. LBʕLT	à la Dame (/Ba'lt)
4. ʕL NʕM RB NQBN	pour la faveur du Maître de la mine/de nos mineurs.

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[20] A. VAN DEN BRANDEN, "Nouvel essai du déchiffrement des inscriptions protosinaitiques," *Bibbia e Oriente*121 (1979), pp. 187-189.

[21] B.E. COLLESS, "The Proto-Alphabetic Inscriptions of Sinai," *Abr-Nahrain* 26 (1988), pp. 15-16.

[22] E. PUECH, "Notes sur quatre inscriptions protosinaitques," *Revue Biblique* 109 (2002), 10-19.

Sinai 351. Front.

Sinai 351. Right Side.