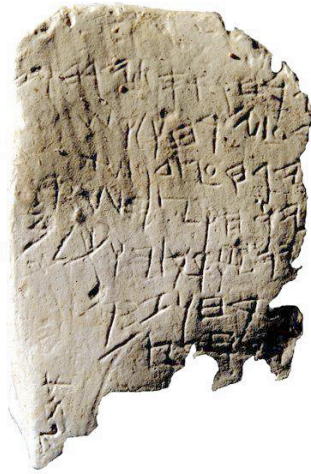


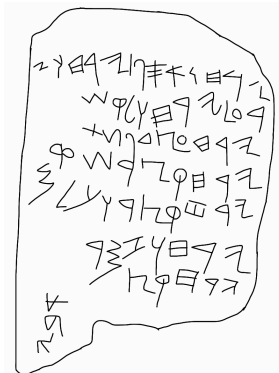
**THE GEZER CALENDAR, WRITING PRACTICE,
AND THE AGRICULTURAL YEAR IN EARLY ISRAEL**



This inscription, called the Gezer Calendar, was found in September 1908 at Gezer, a town west of Jerusalem in the northern Shephelah. Gezer was a town fortified by Solomon in the 10th century B.C.E. and it was likely destroyed by Pharaoh Shishak (Sheshonq) in 918 B.C.E. This places the date of the inscription somewhere between 950–918 B.C.E.

The text might be a calendar of the agricultural year. The inconsistent forms of the letters suggests that the inscription was made during writing practice by a student.

Besides providing us with a window into how someone learning to write early Hebrew might have practiced, the Gezer Calendar also illustrates what the agricultural year in Israel looked like.



ירחו אסף ירחו ז	¹ its two months—ingathering; its two months—
רע ירחו לקש	² sowing; its two months—late planting;
ירח עצר פשת	³ (its) month—“working” flax;
ירח קצר שארם	⁴ (its) month—barley harvest;
ירחו קצר וגל	⁵ its two months—harvest and celebration;
ירחו זמר	⁶ its two months—vine cutting;
ירח קץ	⁷ (its) month—summer fruit harvest
אבי	⁸ Abiya(hu)

- In the early fall (the first double month mentioned in the calendar) was the olive harvest, which fell among our months of late September, October, and early November.
- The second double month, from late November to early January, was the period of the fall grain planting, while the third double month (January–February) was the period of late planting, followed by working the flax in early March.
- The grain (e.g., wheat, barley) harvest would begin in the spring, from late March through April, culminating in the final harvest and celebrations of Pentecost and the Feast of Weeks in May–June.
- Grapes were harvested in the middle of the summer, from July to August, followed by the summer fruit harvest in late August and early September.

	<i>Name(s) of Months</i>	<i>Modern Equivalent</i>	<i>Festivals</i>	<i>Agriculture</i>
Rainy	1 Abib/Nisan	Mar-Apr	14th – Passover (Exod 12:18; Lev 23:5) 15th-21st – Unleavened Bread (Lev 23:6) 16th – Firstfruits (Lev 23:10)	Grain Harvest
	2 Ziv/Iyyar	Apr-May		
Dry	3 Sivan	May-June	6th – Feast of Weeks/Pentecost (Lev 23:15)	Grape Harvest
	4 Tammuz	June-July		
	5 Ab	July-Aug		
	6 Elul	Aug-Sept		Dates and Summer Fig Harvest
	7 Ethanim/Tishri	Sept-Oct	1st – Trumpets (Num 29:1; Lev 23:24-25) 10th – Day of Atonement (Lev 16:29; 23:27) 15th-21st – Tabernacles/Booths (Lev 23:34) 22nd – Solemn Assembly (Lev 23:36)	Olive Harvest
Rainy	8 Bul/Marchesvan	Oct-Nov		
	9 Chislev	Nov-Dec	25th – Hannukah (1 Macc 4:52; John 10:22)	Fall Grain Planting
	10 Tebeth	Dec-Jan		
Cold	11 Shebat	Jan-Feb		Late Planting
Rainy	12 Adar	Feb-Mar		Working Flax