Chapter 3: Letters and Sounds



One of the "Tartaria" tablets, c. 5500 B.C.E.

Key Terms

Ideographic	Logographic	Scripts	Systems
Phonograms	Alphabetic	Insular hands	Cuneiform
Rebus Principle	Alphabet	Strokes or minims	Syllabic
Kanji & Kana	Digraphs	Ligatures	Abbreviated
	Trigraphs	Italic	Orthography
	Ligatures		Spelling
	Runes		Heterographic
	Futhorc		
	Þ, æ, ð or đ, 🏻		



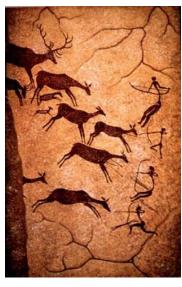




Natures of Writing Systems

•Pictograms: Conveys meaning through pictures: ©





 Ideographic or Logographic: Symbol represents a whole word

- * \$, %, &, @, 1, 7, 9
- * Cuneiform, hieroglyphs
- * Each sign represents a meaningful unit

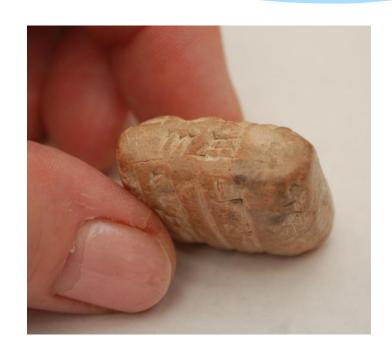
Phonograms:
Each symbol
represents a
phonologic unit
with no
reference to
meaning

- * a, b, c, q
- * カタカナ

Why did writing evolve in the first place?

Basically for record-keeping functions

- * Taxation
- * Business transactions
- * Tithes and temple business
- * Earliest examples



Temple receipt, c. 2300 B.C.E.

A record found at Drehem (Central Mesopotamia) recording the donation to the temple of one sheep and two lambs at the temple. The total of three sheep is written on one edge.

This 1.25" x 1.25" tablet is preserved in the Louise Pettus Archives, Dacus Library, Winthrop University.

Photo taken by Will Folden.

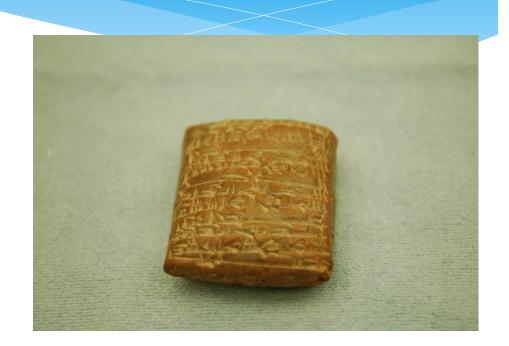


List of Provisions for a Temple Messenger, c. 2300 B.C.E.

Found at Jukha, the ancient city called Umma. This tablet lists the provisions the temple supplied its messenger for the journey. Although the tablet is only approximately 1" square, the writing is the finest on any of the six tablets.

Preserved in the Louise Pettus Archives, Winthrop University.

Photo taken by Will Folden



Temple Offering Cone, c. 2100 B.C.E.

From Warka, the Biblical Erech of Genesis 10:10. This is a prayer for King Sur-ga-shin. It would have been written by the priest and purchased by pilgrims who thrust it into the wall of the temple.







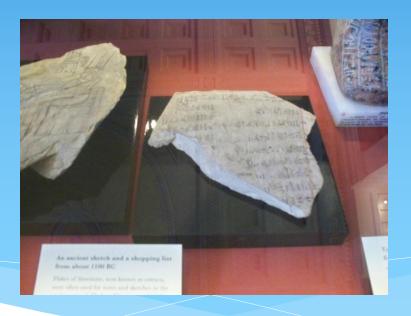
A contract tablet dated 547 B.C.E.

This contract was written in the 8th year of the reign of Nabonidus, King of Babylon, and father of Belshazzar, the last Semitic king of Babylon. It is kept in the Louise Pettus Archives, Winthrop University. Photo courtesy of Will Folden

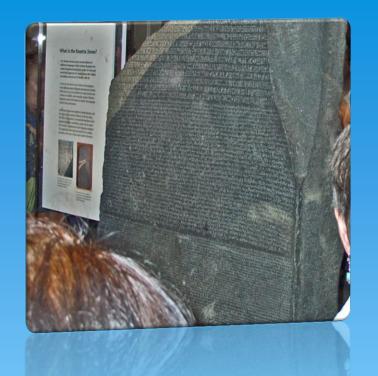


Hieroglyphics can be in informal, calligraphic writing, sometimes called "demotic" scripts, as in the example on the right, a list of groceries delivered to an Egyptian woman c. 1100 B.C.E., or formal pictographs, as in the tombstone of a priest of Horus, c. 1600 B.C.E., on the left.

Hieroglyphs: Ideographic Writing



The Rosetta Stone, 196 B.C.E.



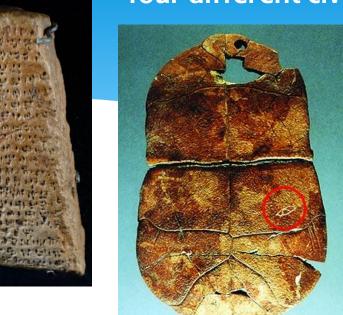
This important landmark in writing history is an 1100-pound granite document discovered in Egypt in 1799. The inscription is a proclamation relaxing taxes on the priesthood. Because it contains the same text in three languages—hieroglyphs, demotic Egyptian, and classical Greek, linguists were able to decipher the earlier languages based on their knowledge of the more modern forms.

The Fenton Vase, Guatamala, c. 600-800 C.E.





Alphabetic writing developed independently in four different civilizations









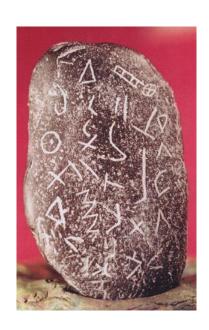


Phonecian: One symbol for each sound

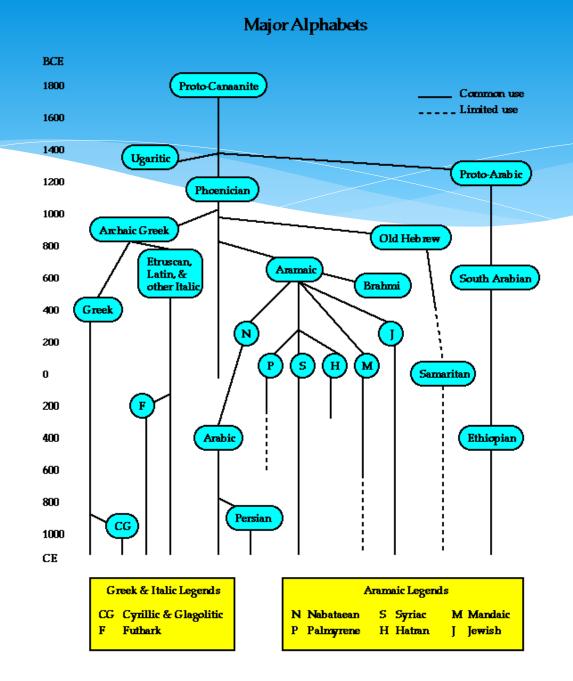


Proto-Canaanite, 11th c. B.C.E.

Phoenician, 7th c. B.C.E.



Evolution of major alphabetic systemshappened early in the Bronze Age, from about 1600 B.C.E. (or maybe earlier): mostly on the northern and eastern sides of the Mediterranean



Ogham: S.W. Ireland

Drumconwell Stone, c. 600 C.E.

Decoding Ogham



Courtesy of Diocese of Armagh.



Book of Ballymote, 1390. Courtesy of Royal Irish Academy.

Runes or Futhorc





Franks Casket, British Museum

Runes on the Ruthwell Cross

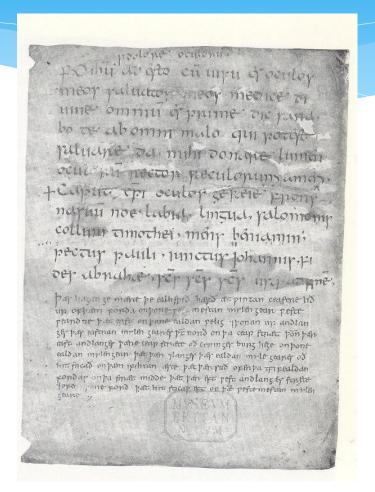
Anglo Saxon

Moore Bede - fol. 128v (top half)

Latin text

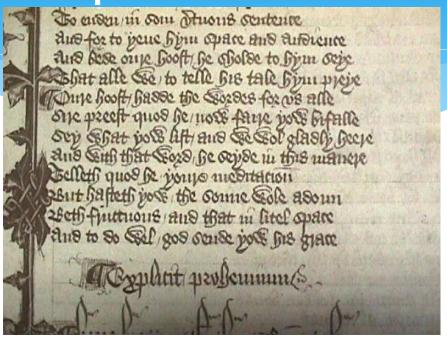
when then happy he property bear which which and property the property of the Old English secultarios of secured activity secured that began or with the consultary formers and activities of Caedmon's Hymn בו מבל בנוח ויי בריב לבל יולב וויבי יו לבים למנוח וויביו וויביו וויבים וויבים וויבים וויבים לבים לבבים ב monagare to come the day or and tagen danner histories are a mine of model ty dandrape i pit ad neath norden hambon sanaopane That artianly pan po unfit of hime thanks wan adda in collection of cooric in timo mald in hurra in acolting rom acomme מיליביות בר פשות הי לות של בי של מילים מושבר וחוצים וחוצים וחווים לביות בל ביות organ or columb ann baparante paulmup and in contriguen מה מה לבינו המולמים המולמים וני של מה לה לו היו למות המלומים ווישול המולמים המולמים ווישול המולמ anceco 1 mm monared in act winner mode an an brim lomon time in in the this incorpat of boice transfute advim and Inbustananceven earns heliderus deconfangumente ficloqueur ouns ferret un gra dibut derman bocomin thilus of the n pepar a report in prencion of proneput un Abneput abneput v adnepat adneput vi crineput a trineper va crineport film derineport film baccount agument dum Topan som propagarium ordinibut dermont ofg, adutemen gradum fof Tolured Kpropinguist offe defiers cam rurful lex marimonis unes

Right: Harley 2965, f. 40v, the Nunnaminster prayerbook with an Old English note about a donation of property from Queen Ealhswith to the convent. Courtesy of the BL



Insular Scripts



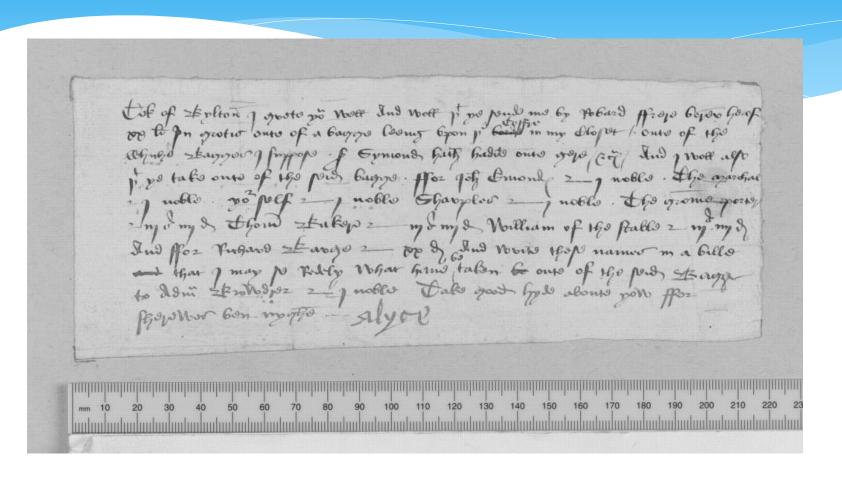


Above, handwriting of Adam Pinkhurst, the Hengwrt MS of the *Canterbury Tales*, by 1403. Courtesy of the National Library of Wales. Left: English bible with annotations, c. 1240. Private owner.

"Secretary"

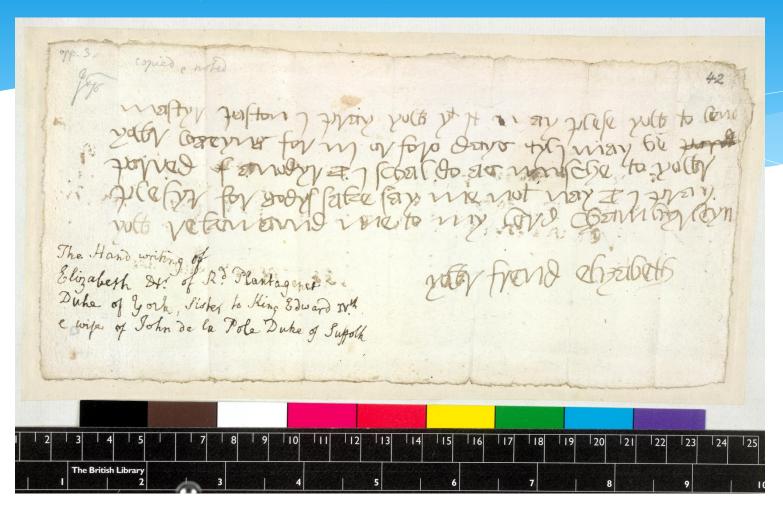
Letter by Alice Chaucer's secretary with her postscript and signature, mid-fifteenth century.

Courtesy of the Ewelme Almshouse Trust & the Bodleian Library



Elizabeth Plantagenet, Duchess of Suffolk, c. 1470s

Courtesy of the British Library: The Paston Letters collection



Letter of Elizabeth Tudor (later Queen Elizabeth I of Britain) to her brother, Edward VI, 1553

Courtesy of the British Library

see as a shipman in stormy weather places downe the sailes tannace for bestar winde, to did I, most noble winge, in my valoring chanche a thursday place downe the hie failes of my and do trult one day that as troblefome wanes have rep me bakwarde, lo a gentil Winde wil bringe me farwarde my hunden . Two thief occupions mound me muche and grined me orelly, the one for that I donted your Manight helihe, the other bicanfe for al my longe tarninge ! wente Without that I came for, of the first I am were releved me a parte, bothe that I vaderflore of your helthe and allo that your Muches boomer is far fro my Lorde Marque chamber, of my other grief I am not enfed, but the best is that whatfocuer other folkes wil suspect, I intende not to fence your graces goodwil, wiche as I knowe that I never differend to faint, to of trust wil still take by me For if your graces admis that I hulde retourne who wil is a comandemented had not bine, I would not have made the halfe of my way, the ende of my towency. And thus as one defirous to hire of your Maiches held though unfortunat to je it I that pray God for ever to preferne you . From Hatfilde this prefent Jaterday to commindemente.

Martin Billingsley, The Pens Excellencie, 1618

courtesy of The Library of Congress

Titles of Bookes, and many other vies, which would bee too tedious for me heere to recite.

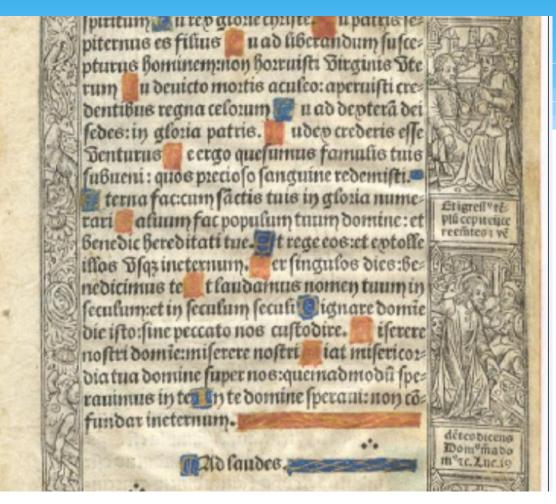
The third is Roman, which hath his denomination from the place 3 Roman, where (it feemes) it was first written, viz: Rome. A hand of great account, and of much vie in this Realme, especially in the Vniuersities: and it is conceived to be the easiest hand that is written with Pen, and to be taught in the shortest time: Therefore it is viually taught to women, for as much as they (having not the patience to take any great paines, besides phantasticall and humorsome) must be taught that which they may instantly learne? otherwise they are uncertaine of their proceedings, because their mindes are (upon light occasion) easily drawne from the first resolution.

The fourth is Italian, a hand in nature not much different from Roman, 4 Italian, but in manner and forme, of much incongruity thereunto. This is a hand which of late is growne very viuall, and is much affected by divers: for indeed, it is a most excellent and curious hand, and to bee written with singular command of hand; else it will appeare but very ragged and vile; and if the Pen be taken off in conjunction of the letters, it is neither approveable, nor Pen-man-like, but meere botching which is detestable.

The fift is Court band; so called, for that it is of great vse in those two 5 Court. famous Courts of the Kings Bench and Common Pleas. It is a band somewhat difficult to write well, and hee that continually writes it, may haply come to perfection in that; but for other hands (if hee could write ne-

Her

Early Print



Modern Fonts

Modern

Allien Alexageng

ALIEN ENCOUNTER

ANDES

Asimov

3737FOU IUD

Babylom

Bauhaus

Bauhaus 93

BLADE RUNNER



DIGNITY OF LABOR

ESP

F*EDERATION*

FEWNAL

Fontovision l fontovision 2

Fontovision 3

Foolovision T

GHWHIN

Impact

LADY STARLIGHT

Layamay

noir

RED FIVE

Westminster.

Scripts as solutions

- * Fonts for syllabic languages such as Native American languages: http://www.languagegeek.com/font/fontdownload.html

The font for people with dyslexia

This font is especially designed for people with dyslexia. When they use it, they make fewer errors whilst they are reading. It makes reading easier for them and it takes less effort. The Dyslexia font is used by several schools, universities, speech therapists and remedial teachers.

The puzzles continue

- * They're getting close to deciphering Proto-Elamite: http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-19964786 (see the note for location of the Wiki for crowdsourcing)
- * Andrew Robinson has a great article, "Decoding Antiquity," in New Scientist—link on the calendar page
- * The Omniglot website has a list of some of the major undeciphered alphabets with information about ongoing projects to decipher them: http://www.omniglot.com/writing/undeciphered.htm.

These systems are continually evolving.....



"How do you expect me to write with this? It doesn't even have a USB port for a keyboard!"