A decorative graphic on the left side of the slide, consisting of a network of light blue lines and small circles, resembling a circuit board or a neural network diagram. The lines are vertical and horizontal, with some diagonal connections, and the circles are placed at various points along these lines.

When Is Non-writing Writing? or, When Is Writing Non-writing?

Peter T. Daniels

Independent scholar, Jersey City

AWLL 2020

Chapel Hill

On line 21 October 2021

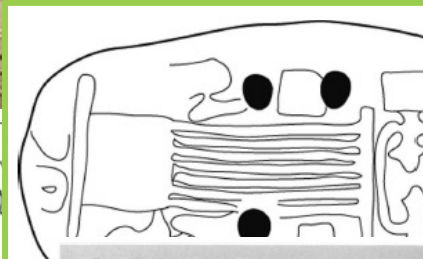
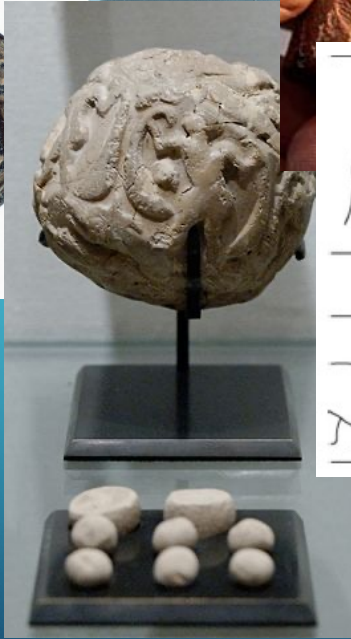
The background is a blue gradient, transitioning from a lighter blue at the top to a darker blue at the bottom. In the four corners, there are white, stylized circuit board traces and nodes, resembling a network or data flow diagram.

Prelude: What is writing?

Grammatogeny: the invention of writing



Development of cuneiform



Development of glyphs





What shall we call non-writing?

Gelb 1952/63	Forerunners of writing	Primitive drawings, Descriptive representational devices, and Identifying-mnemonic devices
Diringer 1948–68	Embryo-writing	Iconography and Sympathetic magic, Mnemonic devices, and Symbolic means of communication
Février 1948/59	<i>Mnémotechnique et synthétique</i>	Knots, Geometric signs, Images, Stylization, Petroglyphs, Pictorial narratives, and Synthetic writing
Cohen 1958	<i>Protoécriture</i>	Non-writing and Pictographic pre-writing
Friedrich 1966	<i>Vorstufen</i>	Object-writing and Pictorial ideography
Jensen 1969		Object-writing and Graphic first stages; then Idea-writing and Pictography

What shall we call non-writing?

Gelb 1952/63 Forerunners of writing

Diringer 1948–68 Embryo-writing

Février 1948/59 *Mnémotechnique et synthétique*

Cohen 1958 *protoécriture*

Friedrich 1966 *Vorstufen*

Jensen 1969

Primitive
representations
Ideographs

Iconic
Mnemonic
of objects

Known
Stylized
names

Non-writing

Object-writing and Pictorial ideography

Object-writing and Graphic first stages;
then Idea-writing and Pictography

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What shall we call true non-writing?

Gelb 1952/63 Forerunner
of writing

Diringer 1948–68 Embryo-
writing

Février 1948/59 *Mnémotechnique et
synthétique*

Cohen 1958 *protoécriture*

Friedrich 1966 *Vorstufen*

Jensen 1969

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then idea-writing and pictography

What shall we call non-writing?

Gelb 1952/63 Forerunners of writing

Primitive direct representation

Diringer 1948–68 Embryo-writing

Iconography Mnemonic of communication

Février 1948/59 *Mnémotechnique et synthétique*

Knots, Geometric Stylization, narratives, etc.

Cohen 1958 *protoécriture*

Non-writing writing

Friedrich 1966 *Vorstufen*

Object-writing

Jensen 1969

Object-writing then Idea-writing

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What shall we call non-writing?

Gelb 1952/63

Forerunners
of writing

Primitive drawing
representation
Identifying-mn

Diringer 1948–68

Embryo-
writing

Iconography and
Mnemonic devices
of communication

Février 1948/59

*Mnémotechnique et
synthétique*

Knots, Geometric
Stylization, Pictographs
narratives, and

Cohen 1958

protoécriture

Non-writing and
writing

Friedrich 1966

Vorstufen

Object-writing

Jensen 1969

Object-writing
then Idea-writing and Pictography

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What shall we call non-writing?

Gelb 1952/63 Forerunners of writing Primitive

Diringer 1948–68 Embryo-writing Iconographic Mnemonic

Février 1948/59 *Mnémotechnique et synthétique* Knots Stylization of narrative

Cohen 1958 *protoécriture* Non-verbal writing

Friedrich 1966 *Vorstufen* Object-writing and Pictography

Jensen 1969 Object-writing and Graphic first stages; then Idea-writing and Pictography

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What shall we call non-writing?

Gelb 1952/63

Forerunners
of writing

Primi
repre
Ident

Diringer 1948–68

Embryo-
writing

Icono
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of co

Février 1948/59

*Mnémotech-
nique et
synthétique*

Knot
Styliz
narra

Cohen 1958

protoécriture

Non-
writin

Friedrich 1966

Vorstufen

Object-writing and Pictorial ideography

Jensen 1969

Object-writing and Graphic first stages;
then Idea-writing and Pictography

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What was writing?

Février 1948/59

« L'écriture est un procédé dont on se sert actuellement pour immobiliser, pour fixer le langage articulé fugitive par son essence même. »

Gelb 1952/63

“A system of intercommunication by means of conventional visible marks.”

Cohen 1958

« une représentation visuelle et durable du langage, qui le rend transportable et conservable »

Diringer 1958

(i) Iconography, (ii) Synthetic or Ideographic, (iii) Transitional or “still better, ... analytic”, (iv) Phonetic (“Syllabic or Alphabetic”), and (v) Alphabetic

Diringer 1962

“the graphic counterpart of speech, the ‘fixing’ of spoken language in a permanent or semi-permanent form ... By means of it, language is made capable of transcending the ordinary conditions of time and space.”

Friedrich 1966

„Der Schrift läßt sich als ein Mittel der Mitteilungen bezeichnen, mit der die Menschen durch ohne weiteres verständliche oder vereinbarte Zeichen räumliche und zeitliche Entfernungen überbrücken wollen.“

Jensen 1969

“The essential characteristics of writing in the true sense [are] twofold, namely: 1. its production by the act of drawing, painting or scratching on a durable writing-material, and 2. the purpose of communicating (to others or, as an aid to the memory, to the writer himself).”

All these primitive devices can be mentioned only in a book such as this chiefly devoted to the history of the alphabet, but the author hopes, as already mentioned, to deal with them more extensively in a further work which will treat of writing as a whole with an examination also of its origins.

* * * * *

The main classes of true writing are the following:

Pictography or Picture-writing

This is the most primitive stage of true writing. A picture or sketch represents the thing shown; thus a circle might represent the sun, a sketch of an animal would represent the animal shown, a sketch of a man would indicate a man. Straight narrative can be thus recorded in a sequence of pictures, drawings or symbols, which yield their meaning to later decipherers with a fair degree of clarity, and can be, by the reader, expressed in speech in every language. It is possible to read, but intrinsic phonetism (the term derives from Greek *phonē*, "voice") is still absent,

What was writing?: Diringer

Diringer
1958
(implicit in
1948)

(i) Iconography, (ii) Synthetic or Ideographic,
(iii) Transitional or “still better, ... analytic”,
(iv) Phonetic (“Syllabic or Alphabetic”), and
(v) Alphabetic.

Diringer
1962

Literally and closely defined, writing is the graphic counterpart of speech, the ‘fixing’ of spoken language in a permanent or semi-permanent form, or, in the words of a French scholar, ‘une représentation visuelle et durable du langage, qui le rend transportable et conservable.’ By means of it, language is made capable of transcending the ordinary conditions of time and space.

What was writing?: Gelb

Writing. A system of intercommunication by means of conventional visible marks. See also *Forerunners of Writing* or *Semasiography* and *Phonography*.

Forerunners of Writing. Various devices, grouped together under *Semasiography*, to achieve intercommunication by means of visible marks, expressing meaning but not necessarily linguistic elements. Opposite of *Phonography*.

Semasiography. Forerunners of *Writing*, including the *Identifying-Mnemonic* and *Descriptive-Representational* devices, to achieve intercommunication by means of visible marks expressing meaning, but not necessarily linguistic elements. Opposite of *Phonography*.

Phonography. A full *Writing*, that is a system of signs expressing linguistic elements by means of visible marks. Opposite of *Semasiography*.

Identifying-Mnemonic Device. A semasiographic device to convey communication by means of pictures or visible marks, which help to identify or to record certain persons or objects. For example, the drawing of a panther on a shield may convey some general meaning as 'this shield belongs to the person who killed the panther'.

Descriptive-Representational Device. A semasiographic device to convey communication by means of pictures drawn and grouped in accordance with conventions of figurative art.

What was writing?

Février 1948/59

« L'écriture est un procédé dont on se sert actuellement pour immobiliser, pour fixer le langage articulé fugitive par son essence même. »

Gelb 1952/63

“A system of intercommunication by means of conventional visible marks.”

Cohen 1958

« une représentation visuelle et durable du langage, qui le rend transportable et conservable »

Diringer 1958

(i) Iconography, (ii) Synthetic or Ideographic, (iii) Transitional or “still better, ... analytic”, (iv) Phonetic (“Syllabic or Alphabetic”), and (v) Alphabetic

Diringer 1962

“the graphic counterpart of speech, the ‘fixing’ of spoken language in a permanent or semi-permanent form ... By means of it, language is made capable of transcending the ordinary conditions of time and space.”

Friedrich 1966

„Der Schrift läßt sich als ein Mittel der Mitteilungen bezeichnen, mit der die Menschen durch ohne weiteres verständliche oder vereinbarte Zeichen räumliche und zeitliche Entfernungen überbrücken wollen.“

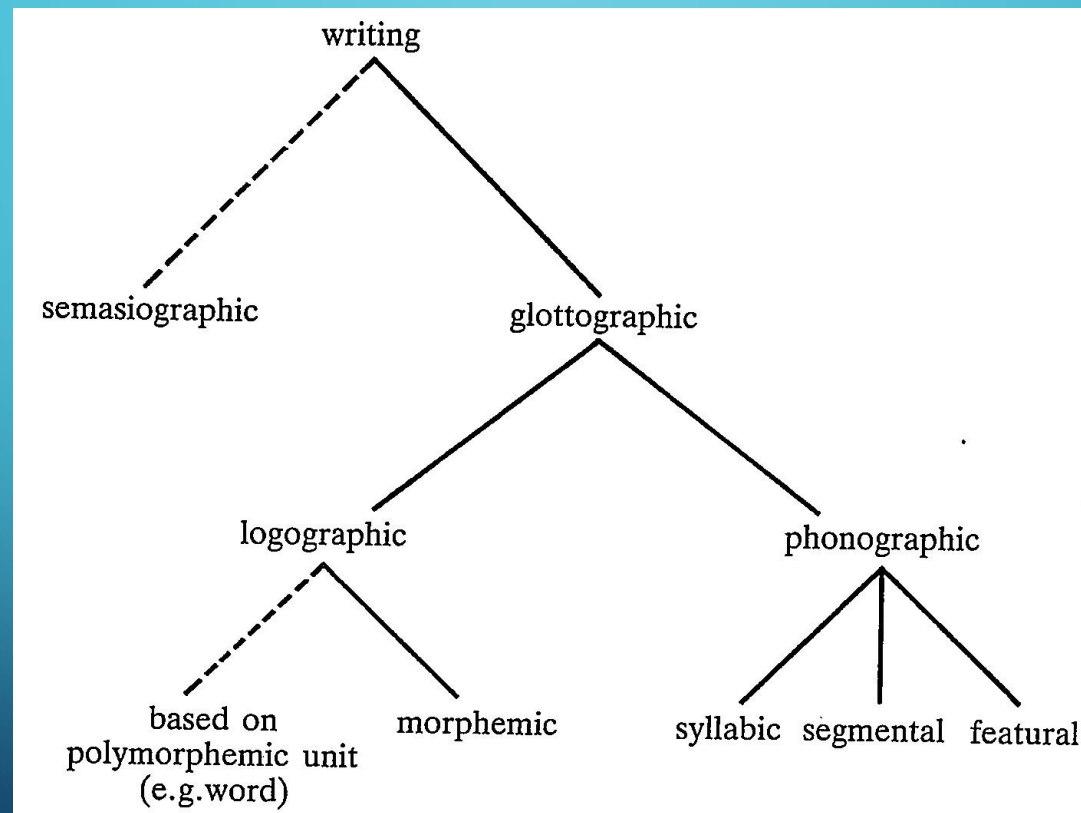
Jensen 1969

“The essential characteristics of writing in the true sense [are] twofold, namely: 1. its production by the act of drawing, painting or scratching on a durable writing-material, and 2. the purpose of communicating (to others or, as an aid to the memory, to the writer himself).”

What is writing?

- Sampson 1985/2015 “script, writing-system, or orthography ... refer to a given set of written marks together with a particular set of conventions for their use [/for using them].” AND To “write” might be defined, at a first approximation, as: to communicate relatively specific ideas by means of permanent, visible marks.”
- Daniels 1988– “A system of more or less permanent marks used to represent an utterance in such a way that it can be recovered more or less exactly without the intervention of the utterer.”
- DeFrancis 1989 “Full writing is a system of graphic symbols that can be used to convey any and all thought.”
- Coulmas 1989 “1 it consists of artificial graphical marks on a durable surface; 2 its purpose is to communicate something; 3 this purpose is achieved by virtue of the marks’ conventional relation to language.”
- Coulmas 1996 “a system of recording language by means of visible or tactile marks which relate in a systematic way to units of speech, for example alphabetic vs logographic writing”
- Coulmas 2003 “a system of recording language by means of visible or tactile marks”
- Coulmas 2013 “The term writing system ... refers to an abstract type of graphic system. There are only a few such systems, distinguished by their basic operational units: word writing systems, syllabic writing systems, and phonetic writing systems. A secondary meaning of the term refers to the specific rules according to which the units of the system are interpreted in a given language. In the latter sense there are hence many writing systems, in the former only very few.”
- Rogers 2005 “the use of graphic marks to represent specific linguistic utterances.”
- Sproat 2010 “Writing is a symbol system that represents language.”
- Meletis 2020 “Writing represents language by graphic means.”

Sampson 1985, 32 = 2015, 24



Marcus 1976, 38–39

A DEFINITION OF WRITING

Because I do not feel that petroglyphs, iconographic motifs, and heraldic symbols qualify as writing, I will begin with a definition of early writing in general and proceed to a discussion of early Mesoamerican texts in particular.

1. Writing is recognizable by its format; even when we are unable to read or interpret certain examples of writing, we are able to infer that a certain text is writing by its organization.
2. More than 90 percent of all early writing has a linear format, either in rows (as in the case of Mesopotamia and Egypt) or columns (as in the case of China and the Maya region).
3. This linear format implies the order of reading, either:
 - a. left to right, or right to left;
 - b. top to bottom, or bottom to top.
4. There is some degree of relationship to the spoken language.
5. There is a limited set of conventionalized signs that combine according to specific rules, i.e. “grammar.”

Marcus 2006, 16

In order to distinguish Mesoamerican writing from its iconographic precursors, we can list four requirements:

1. There must be at least three glyphs, arranged in a row or column.
2. The arrangement must determine reading order.
3. The set of glyphs must show a correspondence to the spoken language.
4. As a consequence, the arrangement must follow grammatical rules.

Middle Formative Period Iconography & Writing



Tlapacoya



Tlatilco Seal



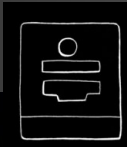
Tlatenco Celt



Oxtotitlán Cave



Chalcatzingo Vase



Tres Zapotes



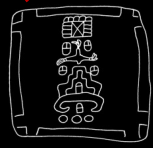
La Venta,



Mon. 13, La Venta



San Andrés Seal



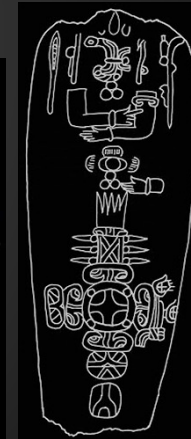
Ahuelicán Plaque



Mon. 30, San Lorenzo,



Cantón Corralito



Humboldt Celt



U.Penn. Celt

Courtesy of Michael Carrasco

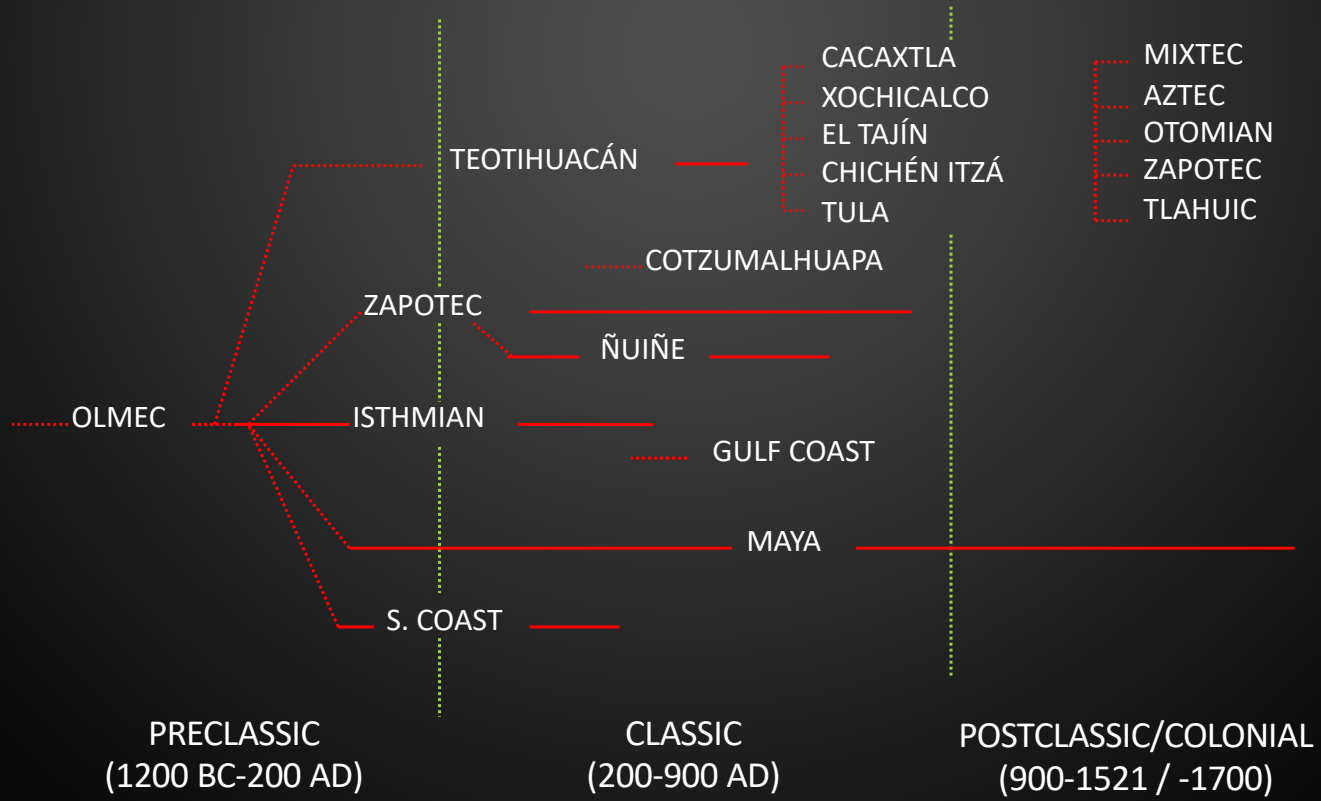
Mesoamerican Scripts

The map shows the following script regions and their associated artifacts:

- TEOTIHUACÁN**: Teotihuacán, Tepantitla (mural); Lápida T. Mayor (stone tablet)
- AZTEC**: M. Tributos (manuscript)
- MIXTEC**: Codex Nuttall (manuscript)
- ZAPOTEC**: S.J. Mogote Mon. 3 (stone fragment); M. Albán St. 12-13 (stone tablet)
- OLMEC**: Cascajal Block (stone tablet); Tuxtla Stat. (stone statue); San Andrés Roller Stamp (stone stamp)
- ISTHMIAN**: De C. sherd (stone fragment)
- IZAPA-SOUTH COAST**: Izapa Mon. 64 (stone tablet); T. Abaj St. 5 (stone tablet); Kaminaljuyú St. 10 (stone fragments); Copán Altar Q (stone altar)
- MAYA**: Madrid Codex (manuscript); S. B. mural (mural); Tikal, St. 31 (stone tablet)

Courtesy of Michael Carrasco

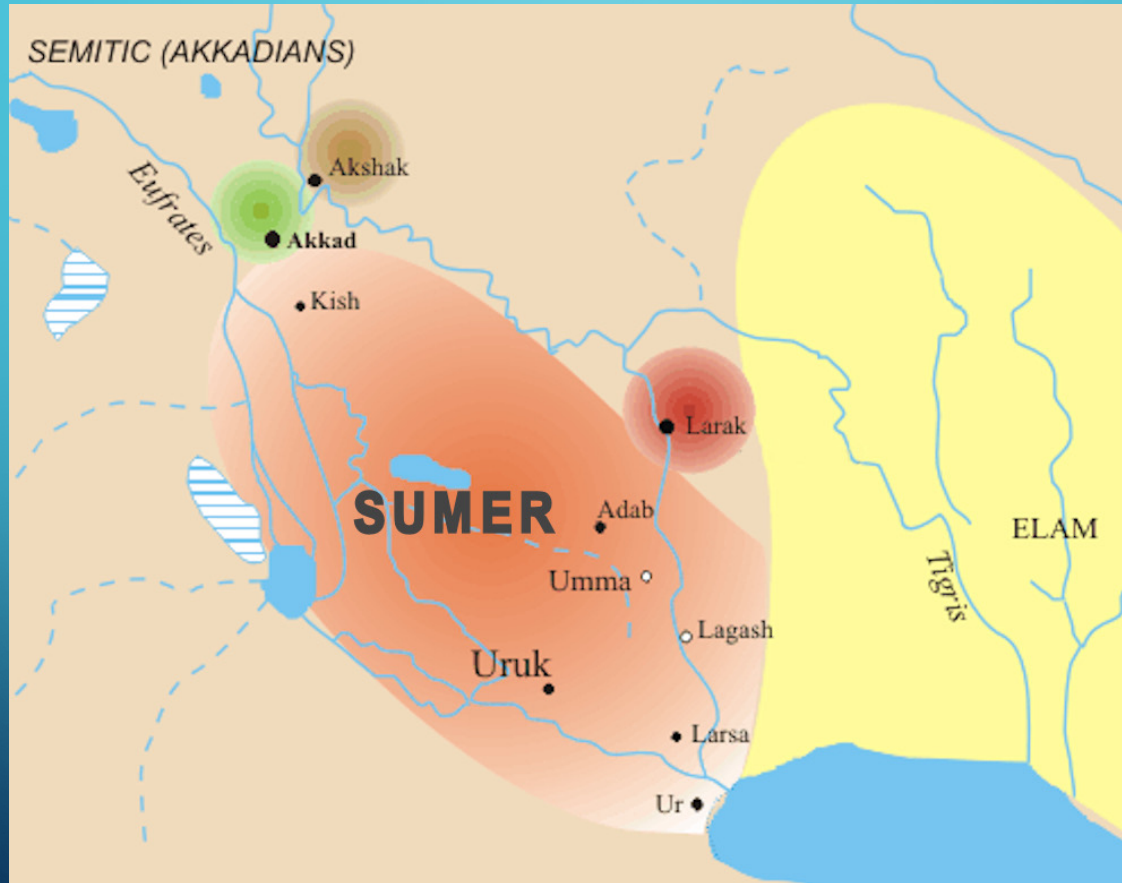
Mesoamerican Writing Systems



Courtesy of Michael Carrasco

After A. Lacadena

4th–3rd millennium Southern Mesopotamia



Central American Languages

(C) Jost Gippert, 1993-2004



Chronology of Mesoamerican pre-literacy and literacy

	Dates	Language (language family)
Olmec	(1250)–300 BCE (La Venta)	(Mixe-Zoque??)
Zapotec	500 BCE – 900 CE	Zapotec (Oto-Manguean)
Teotihuacan	100 BCE – 550 CE	several? esp. Nahuatl??
Epi-Olmec/Isthmian	142 CE, 156 CE (La Mojarra)	(Mixe-Zoque?)
Maya	before 292 – after 909 CE	Ch'olan (Mayan)
Mixtec	1000–1600 CE	Mixtec (Oto-Manguean)
Aztec	colonial?	Nahuatl (Uto-Aztecan)

Marcus 1992, 2020; Taube 2000; M. Jensen 1992; Whittaker 1992, 2021



I. Mesopotamia



FIG. 28.—EARLIEST PICTOGRAPHIC TABLETS FROM
URUK

From A. Falkenstein, *Archaische Texte aus Uruk* (Berlin, 1936),
pl. 1

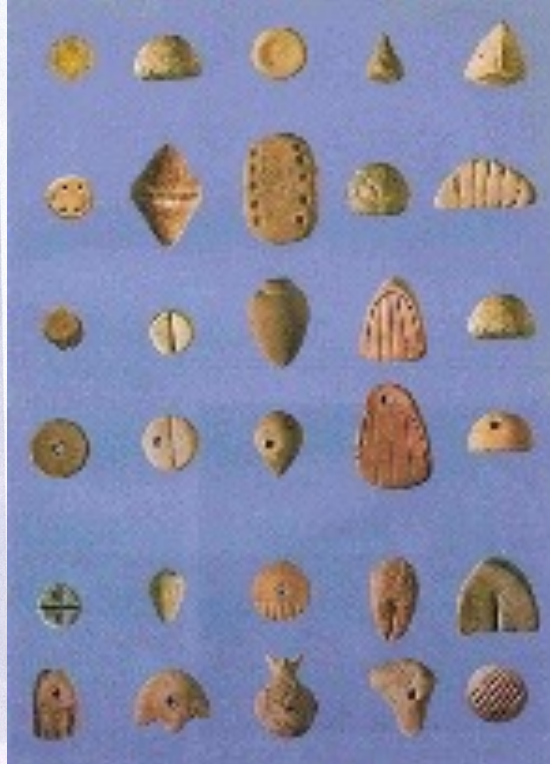
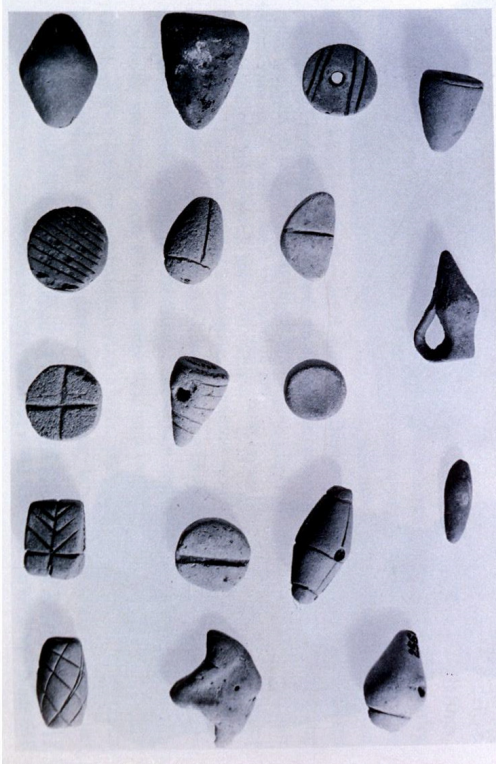
Gelb 1952

6th–5th millennium stamp seal



Ubaid Period, N Syria or SE Anatolia – Metropolitan Museum

“Tokens” from the ancient Near East

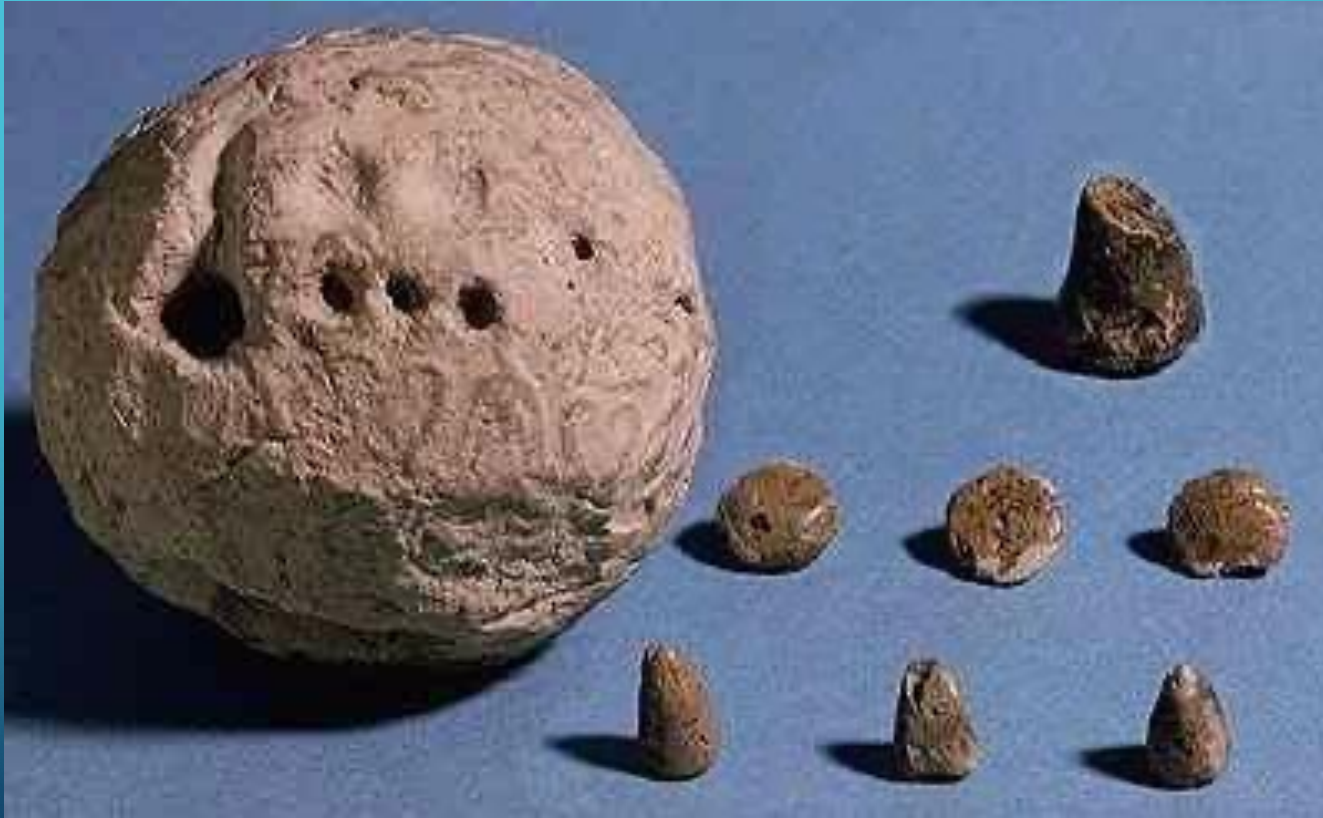


Tokens	Sumerian Pictographs	Tokens	Sumerian Pictographs	Tokens	Sumerian Pictographs
	 Numeral 1		 Bread		 Seat
	 Numeral 10		 Wool		 Place
	 Numeral 600		 Sheep		 Legal Decision
	 Numeral 36000		 Metal		 Cloth

Schmand-Besserat's interpretations

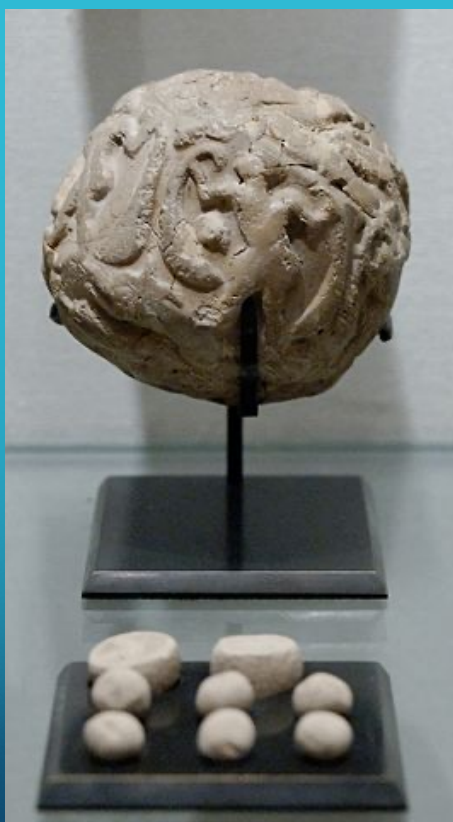
Zimansky's review (*J Field Archaeology*, 1993)

Accountancy device



Bulla with the tokens it contained

Accountancy device



Bulla with the tokens it contained
(Louvre display)

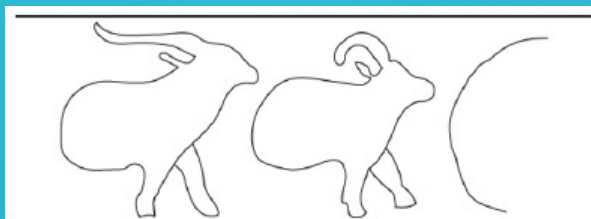


Figure 5: Reconstructed seal impression from a bulla, from Uruk. Animals. After Boehmer 1999: Taf. 81, Nr. 30.

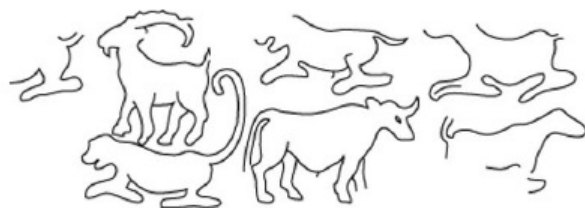


Figure 6: W 6883, a (see Fig. 3b) and other numerical tablets, reconstructed seal impression, from Uruk. After Boehmer 1999: Abb. 51.



Figure 7: Reconstructed seal impression from Uruk. People, plants, and animals. After Boehmer 1999: Abb. 93.

Impressions of cylinder seals used on bullae (Ross 2014)

Cylinder seals before writing

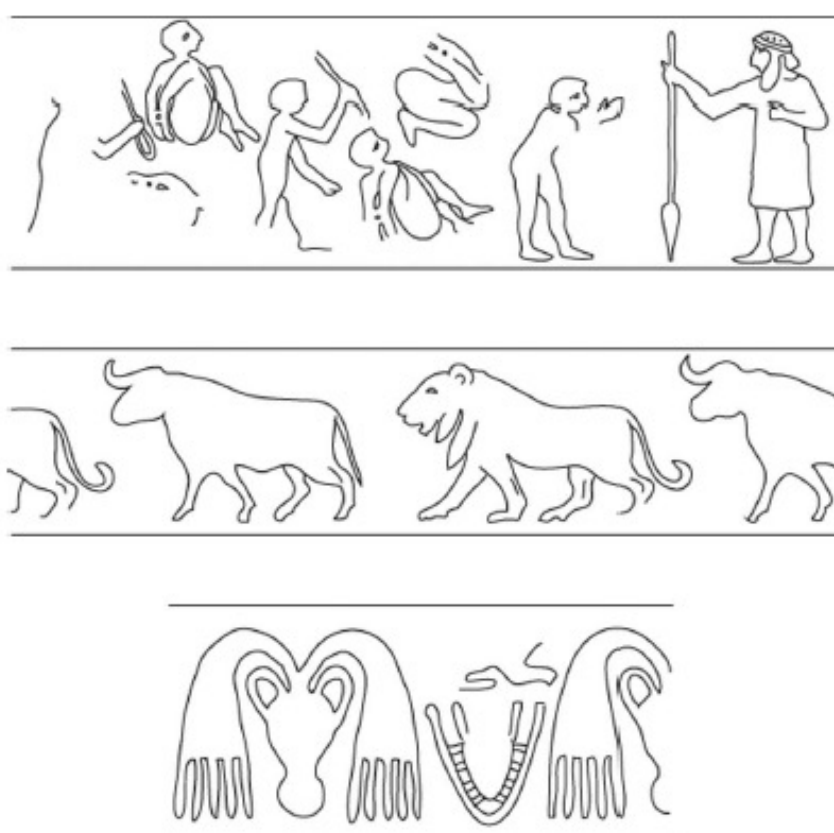


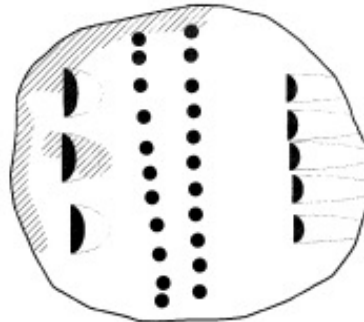
Figure 4a, Figure 4b and Figure 4c: (4a) Reconstructed seal impression from Uruk. Prisoners. After Boehmer 1999: Taf. 17. (4b) Reconstructed seal impression from Uruk. Animals. After Boehmer 1999: Taf. 75. (4c) Reconstructed seal impression from Uruk. Vessels and an animal. After Boehmer 1999: Taf. 77, Nr. 25.

Impressions of cylinder seals used on clay door sealings (Ross 2014)

Forerunners of cuneiform



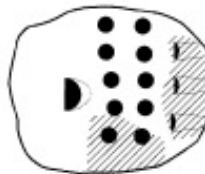
Fs Kraus 012-025, no. 06



$$3 \times 60 + 22 \times 10 + 5 \times 1 \\ = 405$$



Fs Kraus 012-025, no. 02



$$1 \times 60 + 10 \times 10 + 3 \times 1 \\ = 163$$

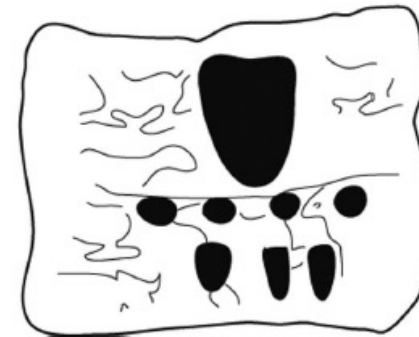
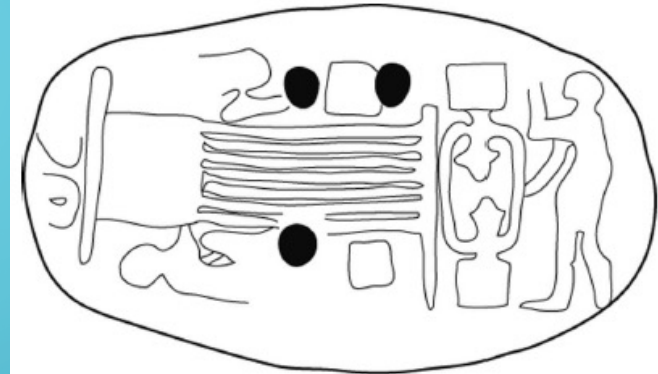


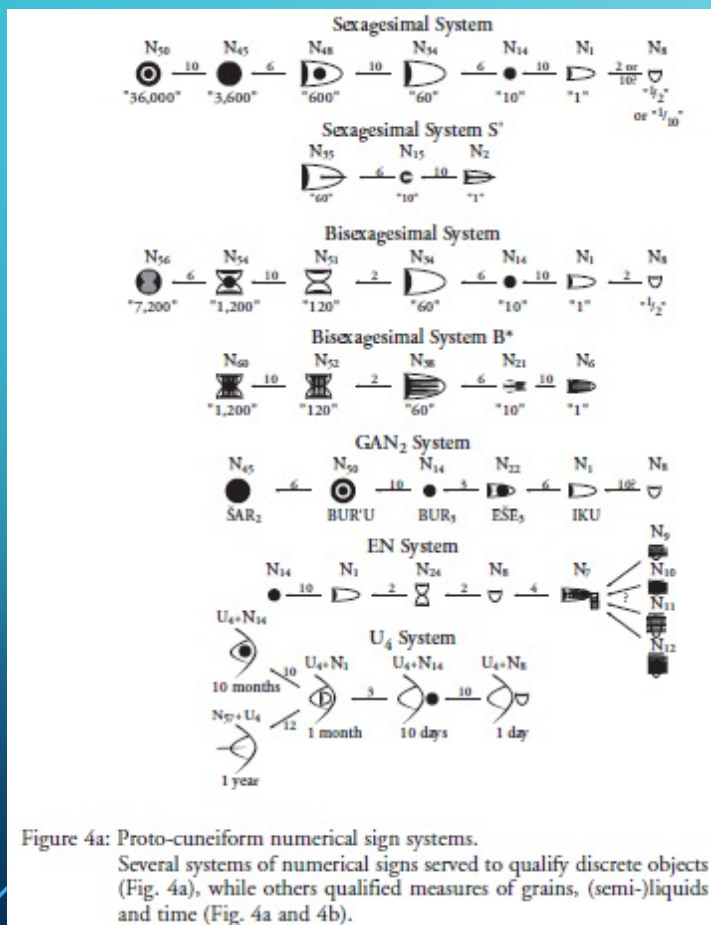
Figure 3a and Figure 3b: (3a) Sb 1944bis. Numerical tablet from Susa. After Amiet 1972: no. 673. (3b) W 6883,a. Numerical tablet from Uruk. After Boehmer 1999: Abb. 51E.

Englund 2004

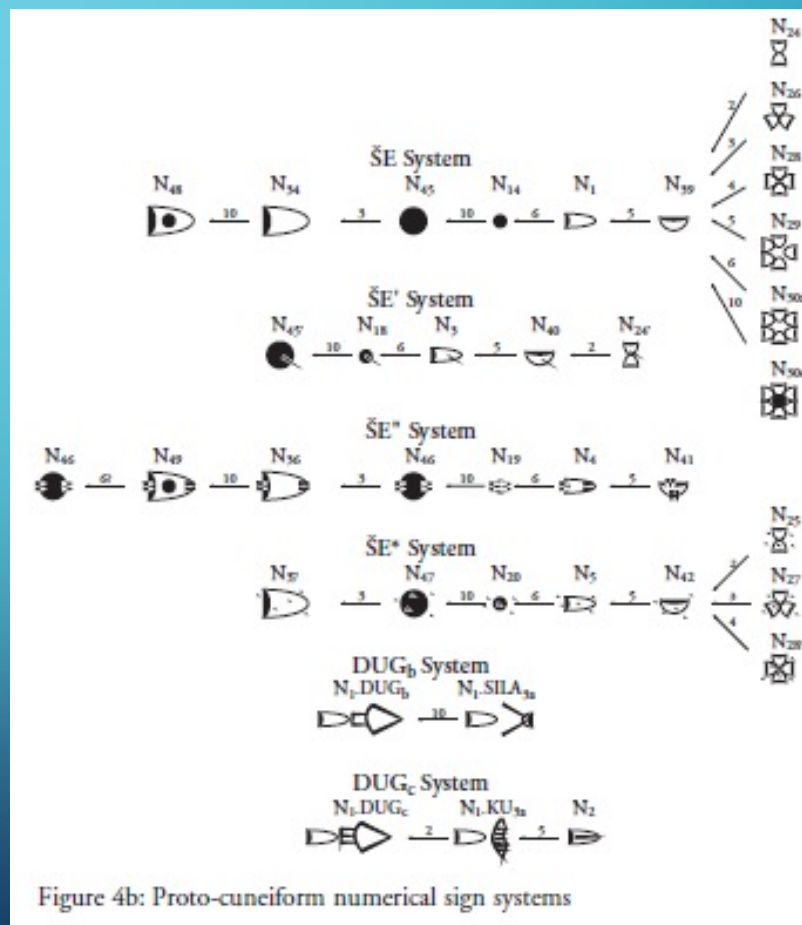
Numerical tablets

Ross 2014

Different numerals for different commodities



Englund 1998



Scale and technique of cylinder seals



Ca. 2200 BCE – Morgan Library

Sealed numerical tablet

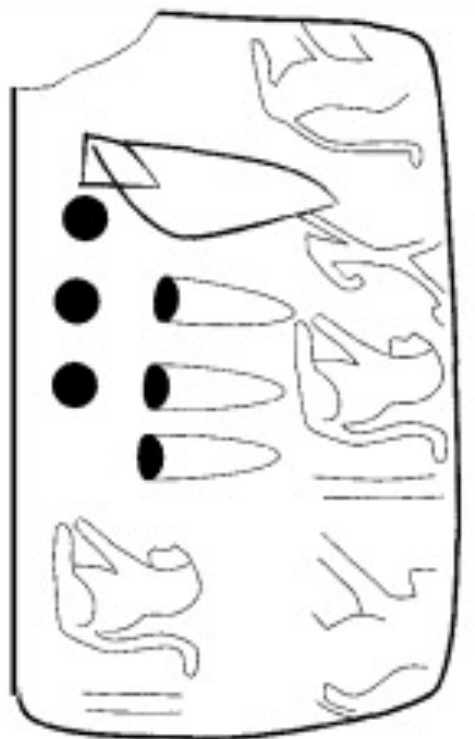


Englund 2004

Forerunners of cuneiform

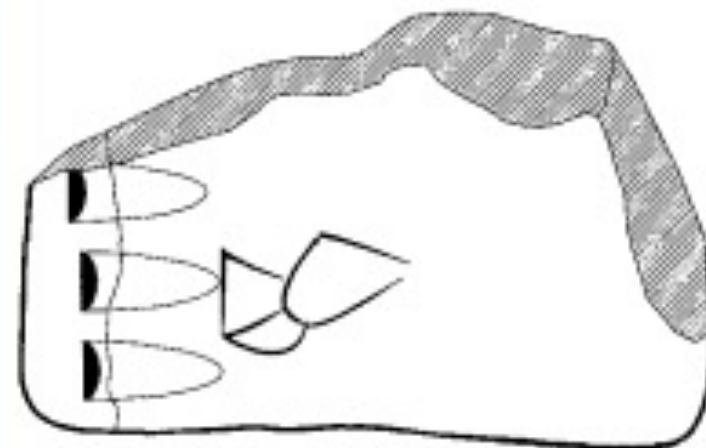


3 x 10 + 1 x 3
DUG
= 33 jars



Iran 13, 9:2 (Godin Tepe)

“Numero-ideographic” tablets (Englund 2004)



W 6881, d

3 x 1 DUG

Symbols not neatly arranged



Obverse W 20274,34 Reverse

cm

(40)(3+)	2	20 5	an pirig	e ₂
mud	nun	du		
40	5	20 5	buzur ₅	nunuzx3
en	dug			
an	kur	5	sig ₂	nim
inanna		musen	bar	
10	dug	nu ₁₁		ga
bu		10	en pa	
10	gal	lu ₂	ba	

(sig ₂)
120 50 4(+1)
x
e ₂
nunuzx3

Uruk III – Nissen 1989

Arno Poebel's ubiquitous chart of cuneiform development

Here, in Gelb 1952's version









































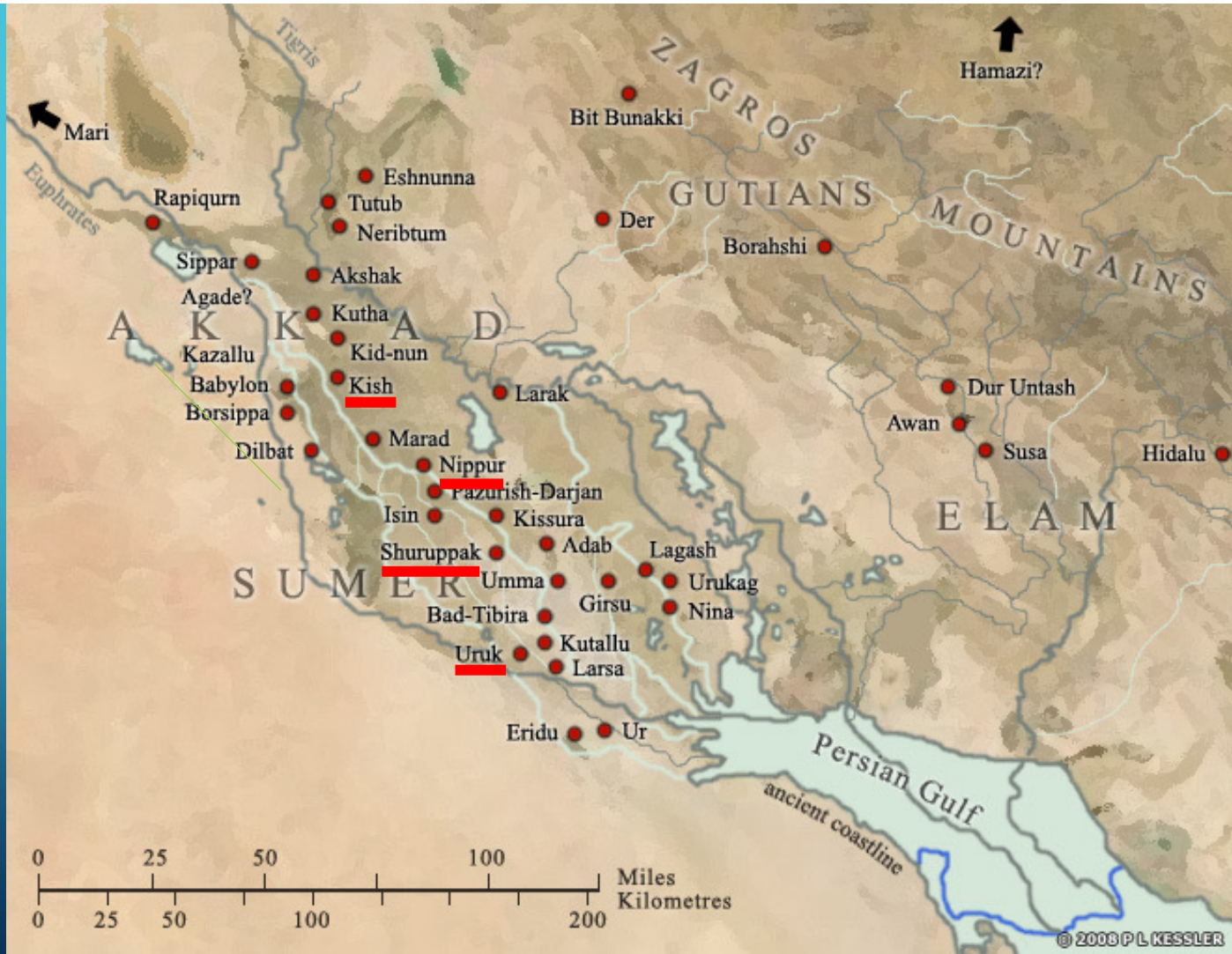
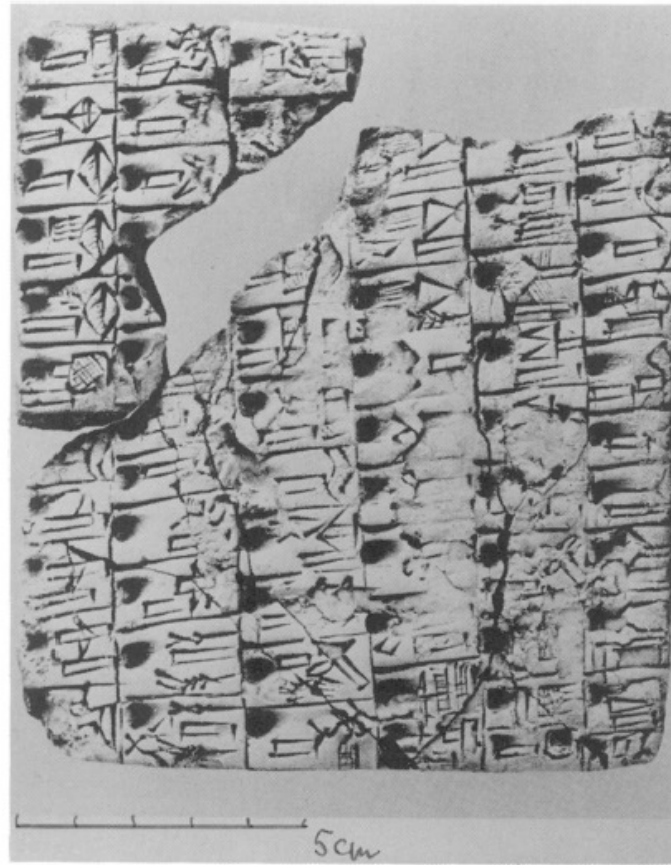
BIRD				
FISH				
DONKEY				
OX				
SUN				
GRAIN				
ORCHARD				
PLOUGH				
BOOMERANG				
FOOT				

FIG. 31.—PICTORIAL ORIGIN OF TEN CUNEIFORM SIGNS
Oriental Institute Photo No. 27875 (after A. Poebel)



List of trees; list of wooden objects



Nissen 1989

Plate 3 Tablet of stage III 2, containing list of tree-names (cases 1–39) and of wooden objects (cases 40–). The oblong sign found in each case stands for 'wood'.

“Standard Professions List”



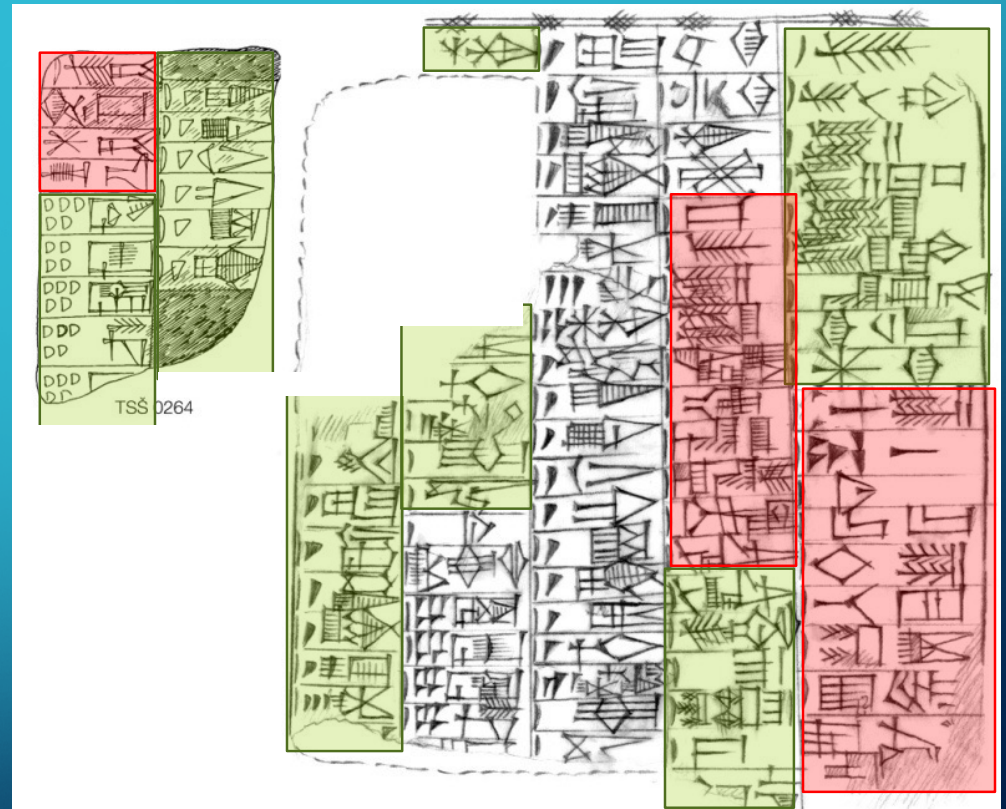
Figure 5 Tablets containing the 'Standard Professions List'; top: composite copy of fragments of stage III 2; bottom: tablet from Fara, dating to c. 2500 B.C.

Nissen 1989

The beginning of prose?



VAT 12547: Tablet in the Vorderasiatisches Museum, Berlin; from Shuruppak (modern Fara, Iraq)



Copy of VAT 12547 by Manfred Krebernik; Inset: another piece of the same tablet, in the Istanbul Museum, copy by Raymond Jestin

Civil 2013

“It is a well-known and generally accepted fact that the Early Dynastic tablets ... frequently omit bound morphemes (morphograms) such as verbal affixes and anaphoric pronouns, and very predictable words in a style that in pre-internet days used to be called “telegraphic,” but they nevertheless normally include explicit predicates, no matter how abbreviated. [I] postulate the existence of a simpler, more archaic stage in the evolution of the cuneiform writing system. When the scribes attempted for the first time to write down narrative texts, they simply enunciated the participants of the narrated event, leaving out the representation of predicates and of the anaphoric pronouns that tie together various textual elements and give continuity to a narrative.”

Civil 2013 (lines 71–78)



EN×ME.ÉŠ

Enmerkar

[ME].ÉŠ.EN.ZI

Enmerkar-zi

DAM.URU×IŠ

town-knowing-wife

TAR.AL

brickwork

TAR.ÉŠ.AL

brick pavement

GI₄.GÚ.ŠÀ

the river bed back to banks

E

irrigation ditches

ŠE.SAR.ZU+ZU.SAR.E

all the irrigation ditches

Which language?

“It is fairly certain that the principle of logographic writing was invented by the non-Sumerian predecessors of those Mesopotamians who wrote the earliest intelligible records on clay in Sumerian.” (Oppenheim 1964)

2.3. Phonetic and semantic indicators; purely phonetic writings

Although the Uruk script is essentially logographic, it also shows unmistakable examples of phonetic indicators. In fact, the number of phonetic indicators that can be culled from Uruk sources is unexpectedly high. Equally significant is the fact that these writings, while more common in the Uruk III writing, are documented already in the sources dating to the Uruk IV period. Among the certain or fairly certain examples of such writings we can list⁶):

a	in BU+BU+NA ₂ +A = ARINA _x (ZATU-58) <u>IV-III</u>
am ₆	in GA ₂ +AN = AMA (ZATU-28) <u>IV-III</u>
bar	in ŠEG ₉ +ŠE+BAR = ŠEGBAR _x (ZATU-72) III
bur	in GA ₂ +BUR+ME(?) = GABURA(?) (ZATU-185) <u>IV-III</u>
en	in EZEN+EN = EZEN _x (ZATU-151) <u>IV</u> in GA ₂ +EN = MEN (ZATU-360) IV-III
ga(r)	in GA ₂ +GAR = GALGA (ZATU-189) III
gi	in NE+GI = GIBIL ₆ (ZATU-215) III

ma	in DARA ₃ +MA = MAŠDA _x (?) (ZATU-26) III
na	in ŠEŠ+NA = NANNA (ZATU-388) III
na ₂	in BU+BU+NA ₂ (+A) (ZATU-58) IV-III
nu _x (NUN)	in (GIŠ+)DARA ₃ +MA+NUN (ZATU-26) III
rum	in EZEN+AŠ = DURUM _x (ZATU-44) III in UR ₂ +AŠ = URUM _x (ZATU-589) <u>IV-III</u>
(s)ug ₆	in PIRIG+SU = UG (ZATU-428) III
še	in ŠEG ₉ +ŠE(+BAR) = ŠEGBAR _x (ZATU-72, 220) <u>IV-III</u>
šeš ₄ /šuš _x	in MUŠ ₃ +ERIN = ŠUŠIN (ZATU-499) III
za	in PIRIG+ZA = AZ (ZATU-38) III

Even if one allows that some of these identifications may not be correct, the evidence in hand is sufficient to demonstrate that the principle of phonetic writing was fully established already in the Uruk IV script. Apart from their importance for the history of cuneiform, these writings also provide an iron-clad proof that the language underlying the Uruk script is in fact Sumerian.

(Steinkeller 1995)

Instructions of Shuruppak

dumu engar *níg na-* *ra* (ca. 2500 BCE)

son farmer thing do.not beat [Early Dynastic]

dumu engar -ra -ra níg nam- mu- ra-ra -an (ca. 1800 BCE)

son farmer -of -to thing do.not (prefix) beat.(repeat) -you [Old Babylonian]

‘Do not beat a farmer’s son’

Cooper 1996



Interlude: Semantography

C. K. Bliss

Semantography

(Blissymbolics)

Second enlarged Edition

A simple system of 100 logical pictorial symbols, which can be operated and read like $1 + 2 = 3$ in all languages. It can be typed and printed, and used in international communication and commerce, industry and science. It contains also a simple semantics, logic, and ethics, which even children can learn to use in their problems.

SEMANTOGRAPHY (BLISSYMBOLICS) PUBLICATIONS

(non-profit)

2 Vicar Street, Coogee, Sydney, Australia

A logical Writing for an illogical World

Prophecy and Fulfillment

"A Universal Symbolism, very popular, very agreeable to the people . . . might be introduced if small figures were employed in the place of words, which would represent visible things by their lines, and the invisible, by the visible, which accompany them.

This would be of service at first for easy communication with distant nations, but if introduced also among us, without however, renouncing ordinary writing . . . would be useful in giving thoughts less absurd and verbal than we now have.

I think these thoughts will some day be carried out, so agreeable and natural appears to me this writing for rendering our conceptions more real."

Gottfried Wilhelm Leibnitz (1679).

"Bliss realized the ambition of the great mathematician Leibnitz."

Prof. Oliver Leslie Reiser (1951).

"Bliss' work provides something of real importance."

Prof. Julian Huxley (1954).

Supporting Bliss' work means "performing an important service to mankind."

"If schools throughout the world (would) clarify the use of words calculated to promote passion, the existing hatred between nations, creeds, and political parties would very rapidly diminish, and the preservation of peace throughout the world would become an easy matter."

Bertrand Russell (1950).

"Ideographic writing will surely achieve the final victory over phonetic writing."

Prof. Basil Hall Chamberlain (1905).

SHORT OUTLINE OF CONTENTS

For the detailed list of chapters see page 67
but watch out for double page numbers
due to the following reasons:

This second edition in one handy volume is a photographically reduced reproduction of the 3 large-sized volumes of the first edition. But more reading matter has been added, and therefore more pages. Hence new page numbers were necessary.

But the page numbers of the first edition had to be retained, because of cross-references in the photographed text, and in other publications. Therefore: old page numbers are shown in brackets below the new page numbers.

Sample page no. 183 shows below in brackets and smaller type thus (51) the page number of the first edition.

SHORT OUTLINE OF CONTENTS

The story of this pioneering work	9
This work led to unbelievable discoveries	13
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First edition 1949, the story of the manuscript	63
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Bibliography and list of quotations	77
Introduction and summary	84
The 100 symbol elements	101
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Catalog list of the semantography series	796
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Index of names and chapters	868
Reader's notes, corrections and suggestions	882

LINE LETTERS AND THE 100 SYMBOL ELEMENTS

We can imagine a simple man, somewhere in the wilderness who speaks a kind of English and has learned a bit of reading. The letter combination HOUSE would mean something to him, but the combinations MANSION, MANOR, COTTAGE, BUNGALOW may mean nothing to him and he wouldn't even know how to pronounce it correctly. But so would a Frenchman or a Spaniard fail to pronounce it correctly, least to get the meaning, although they all use the Latin alphabet, composed of 26 letters.

Now let us compose other letters, "line letters" of a better geometrical ideography.



And with these "line letters" we could now write letter combinations, such as for instance



The meaning of this geometrical "word" may be guessed. It may mean a HOUSE, BUILDING, MANSION, COTTAGE, BUNGALOW or in French MAISON, or CASA or any other word in other languages conveying generally the same meaning.

And we can use the above 11 "line letters" to write down thousands of other "words". So, if critics point to the "simplicity" of the 26 letters of the Latin alphabet, we may point to the "simplicity" of the 11 letters of our geometrical "alphabet". We know now, that comparison leads nowhere, because both writings have different advantages. Alphabetical writing is used all over the world, and it will be used in ever increasing editions of books and newspapers. Besides the alphabetical letters, we have already a series of ideographic letters such as 1 2 3 4 5 etc. and now we may add - as an auxiliary tool only - a few other symbols and symbol elements for two purposes:

(1) to write international reports in science, industry, commerce, etc., whenever we need to bridge the language barrier, especially in countries with a multi-lingual population.

(2) to recognize words with relative and vague meanings.

This only is the purpose of semantography, and with this in mind we shall now study the list of the 100 symbol elements, and how they are used. In the column on the right side we shall put in the number of symbol elements and we shall then add up the total.

THE 100 SYMBOL ELEMENTS

The first elements are symbols which are already in use in most parts of the world. Every boy and girl who went through primary school will recognize them.

The mathematical numbers

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	0	10
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----

These well known symbols form the first 10 elements of semantography. Now we know that we may combine these symbols in different ways to get different meanings.

Combination examples: |23 is different from 32| in meaning.

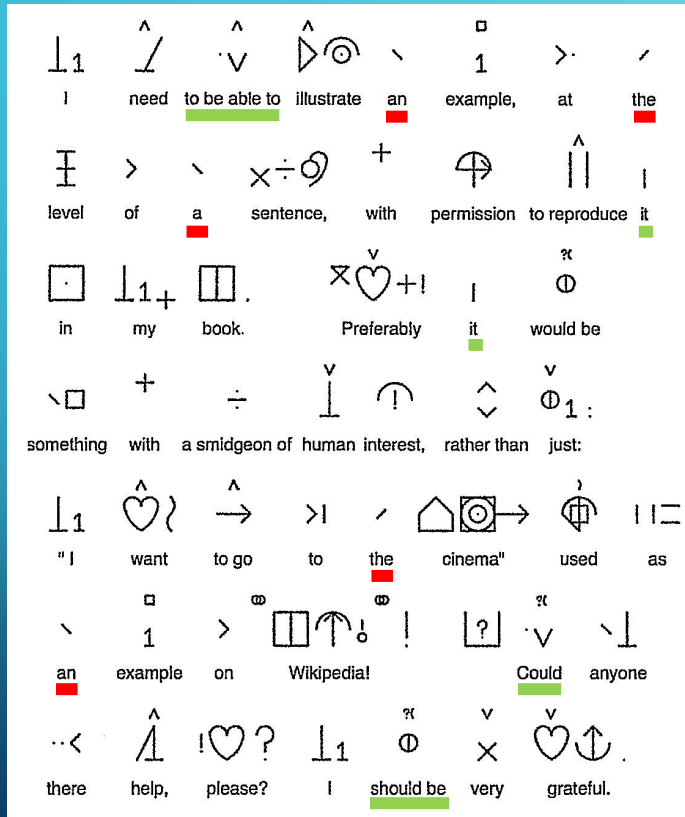
22 is different from 2² in meaning

From these combination examples we learn that different position of the symbol elements, and sometimes different size of the same element will indicate different meanings. We shall use our symbol elements in different position and sometimes in different size to indicate different meanings.

And now we shall add up the total of symbol elements we have learned

Total
10
10

“Blissymbolics” in modern writing-systems books



Sampson 2015, 23

Articles in semantography

position is absent.
So we must accustom ourselves to the fact, that a lot of particles are unnecessary, and now, the English reader is "in" for a heavy shock, because we have to face the assertion that the so-called articles a and the are unnecessary.

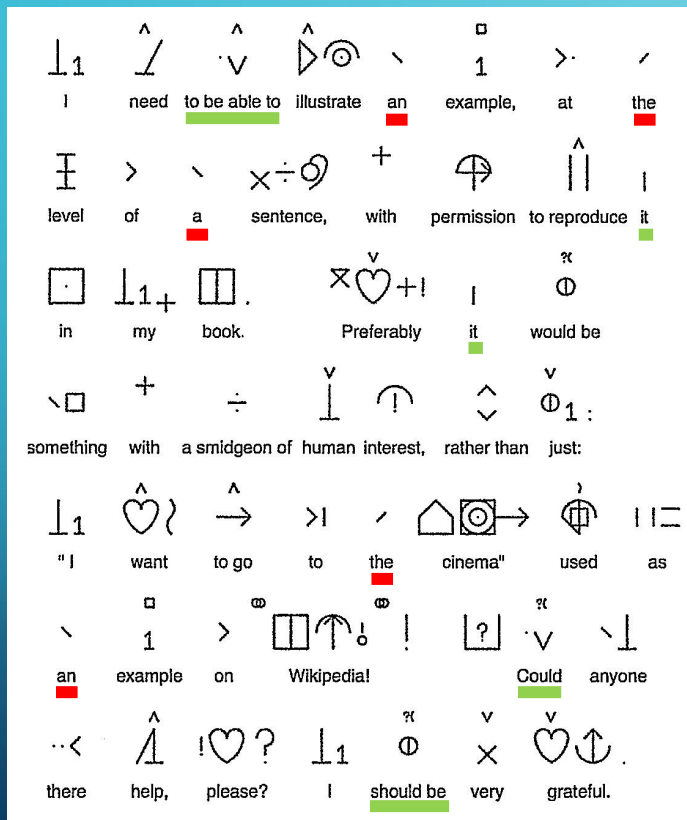
There is even a greater shock for the reader in store: the beloved particles any and some (the nightmare of foreigners) are equally unnecessary.

What is the significance of the article a ? It signifies one with lesser stress.
one house is similar to a house.

What is the significance of the particle the ? It signifies this with lesser stress.
the house is similar to this house.

There is only a slight shade of stress in both meanings, and we should not be surprised that Slav languages have not the particle the ^{and/a}. In those languages, the nouns are used without an article: Father works, house is nice, man is cruel. If these languages contain an article it is this : this father works, this house is nice, this man is cruel.

“Blissymbolics” in modern writing-systems books



I need to be able to illustrate an example, at the level of a sentence, with permission to reproduce it in my book. Preferably it would be something with a smidgeon of human interest, rather than just: "I want to go to the cinema" used as an example on Wikipedia! Could anyone there help, please? I should be very grateful.

Sampson 2015, 23

Is Bliss semantically based or morphologically based? What linguistic units are represented by the symbols? The answer seems clearly to be that it is semantically based. For example, English has a morpheme *taxi*. This morpheme in English has no possible internal division into smaller meaningful units. The Bliss symbol for 'taxi', however, clearly has internal structure. And indeed, we had many cases of single morphemes written with complex, analysable symbols; e.g., ☁ 'cloud', ☮ 'parent', and ○♪ 'song'. The English word 'argument' consists of two morphemes *argu-* and *-ment*, but neither corresponds to any of the parts of the symbol ○↔!

Bliss sometimes makes semantic distinctions which do not exist lexically in English: for example, there are six different ways of writing 'T', explicitly set out in the *Blissymbol Reference Guide* (Wood, Storr, and Reich 1992):


\perp_1	Δ_1	λ_1	♀_1	♂_1	♀_1
T	T	T	T	T	T
(general)	(female)	(male)	(girl)	(boy)	(child)








Clearly, the Bliss symbols correspond to units of meaning, not morphemes, and thus the system is semantically based. In chapter 14, we will examine further how Bliss fits into the general classification of writing systems.








We conclude then that Bliss symbols are semantically based, that anything that can be said in any language can be written down in Bliss symbols, and anything that can be written down in Bliss can be read in any language. Finally, the creation process for symbols used for Bliss uses no devices not otherwise known in creating additional writing systems.






Rogers 2005, 267






A POEM BY WORDSWORTH IN SYMBOLS, ENGLISH, FRENCH, GERMAN 741 (60%)






William Wordsworth
 Poem by William Wordsworth
 Poème par William Wordsworth
 Gedicht von William Wordsworth

+       
 And I have felt a presence that disturbs me
 Et j'ai senti une présence qui me bouleverse
 Und ich fühlte eine Gegenwart die beunruhigte mich







+       
 with the joy of elevated thoughts ; a sense
 avec la joie de pensées élevées ; un sens
 mit dem Glücke erhabener Gedanken ; ein Sinn





    
 sublime of something far more deeply interfused,
 sublime de quelque chose beaucoup plus profondément enfusée,
 sublime von etwas viel mehr tief durchdrungen,





+     
 whose dwelling is the light of setting suns, and
 l'habitation duquel est la lumière des couchants soleils, et
 dessen Heim ist das Licht der sinkenden Sonnen, und

   
 the round ocean and the living air,
 le rond ocean et le vivant air,
 der runde Ozean und die lebende Luft,

CONCLUSION OF THE THREE BOOKS OF SEMANTOGRAPHY

+      
 And in the mind of man ; a motion and
 Et dans l'âme de l'homme ; une motion et
 Und in der Seele des Menschen ; ein Bewegung und

   
 a spirit , that impels all thinking things ;
 un esprit , qui impulse tout pensant chose ;
 ein Geist , der antreibt alle denkenden Dinge ;

   
 all objects of all thought , and rolls through all things .
 tout objet de toutes pensées , et roule entre toute chose .
 alle Objekte , aller Gedanken , und rollt durch alle Dinge .

Here, I shall not give a special explanation of some compound symbols, as I have given following the translation of a Bible text, and the Lord's prayer. Those readers who have followed me through all the 609 foregoing pages know that these symbols can indicate the meanings of the words in Wordsworth poem, and they know too, that some "elusive" meanings are just as vague and elusive when written in the words of ordinary languages, but in the above symbols are indicated by their source, the mind of man, this mysterious tool of the Mind in the Universe.

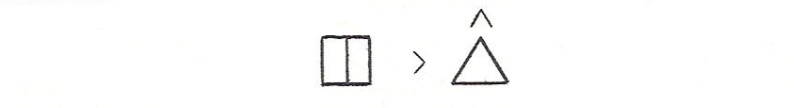
These readers do not need a special explanation, and they might benevolently agree that the symbols above are graceful and meaningful.

For the other readers, who reject the idea of semantography, another thousand pages of special explanations will be wasted. They will not recognize that a symbol writing is already in operation for many thousands of years in East Asia; that it has brought about the oldest culture of man in China, where astronomers scanned the sky at a time, when the stone-age hunter roamed the forests of Europe; that it has united through its supra-linguistic writing the most diversified races, peoples and tribes into one, the greatest nation on Earth; that this symbol writing unites today all the different languages spoken in East Asia in most efficient applications for commerce, industry, science, political unification, and also for the study of the writings and poems, written thousands of years ago.

Readers, who reject the idea of semantography, might not realize that the few international symbols, which we use in writing, mathematics, chemistry, science in general, but also on the highways and the sea lanes, came about only by many conscientious efforts of far-sighted pioneers, men of the same type as those pioneers, who introduced all the great innovations. Of course, at their time, people laughed about a ship without sails, a carriage without a horse, and they will laugh about a symbol writing, which could unite the peoples of this planet, which could be read in all languages spoken on this planet, which could be used for innumerable practical purposes of international co-operation, and also for reading a poem of a poet who wrote it for all the peoples of the Earth to enjoy it.

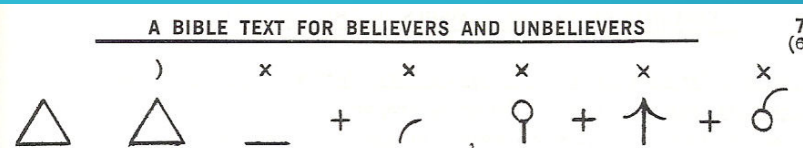
Presently people use ships without sails and ride in horseless carriages - and surely a day will come, when the efforts of all those people, who have joined the movement for semantography will be crowned with success. We shall use a symbol writing for all people. One writing for one world. It will come. Why not? Why not, indeed? C. K. Bliss

Example of a Bible text, readable in any language, and acceptable by believers and unbelievers.


 The Creator (Nature) created heaven and earth, the stars and the sun
 and the moon. The sun gave light. The sun shone (shines)
 at the day and the moon shone at night. The Creator (Nature) divided
 the waters on earth and the waters on the sky
 The waters drew together to the seas and the dry earth appeared.

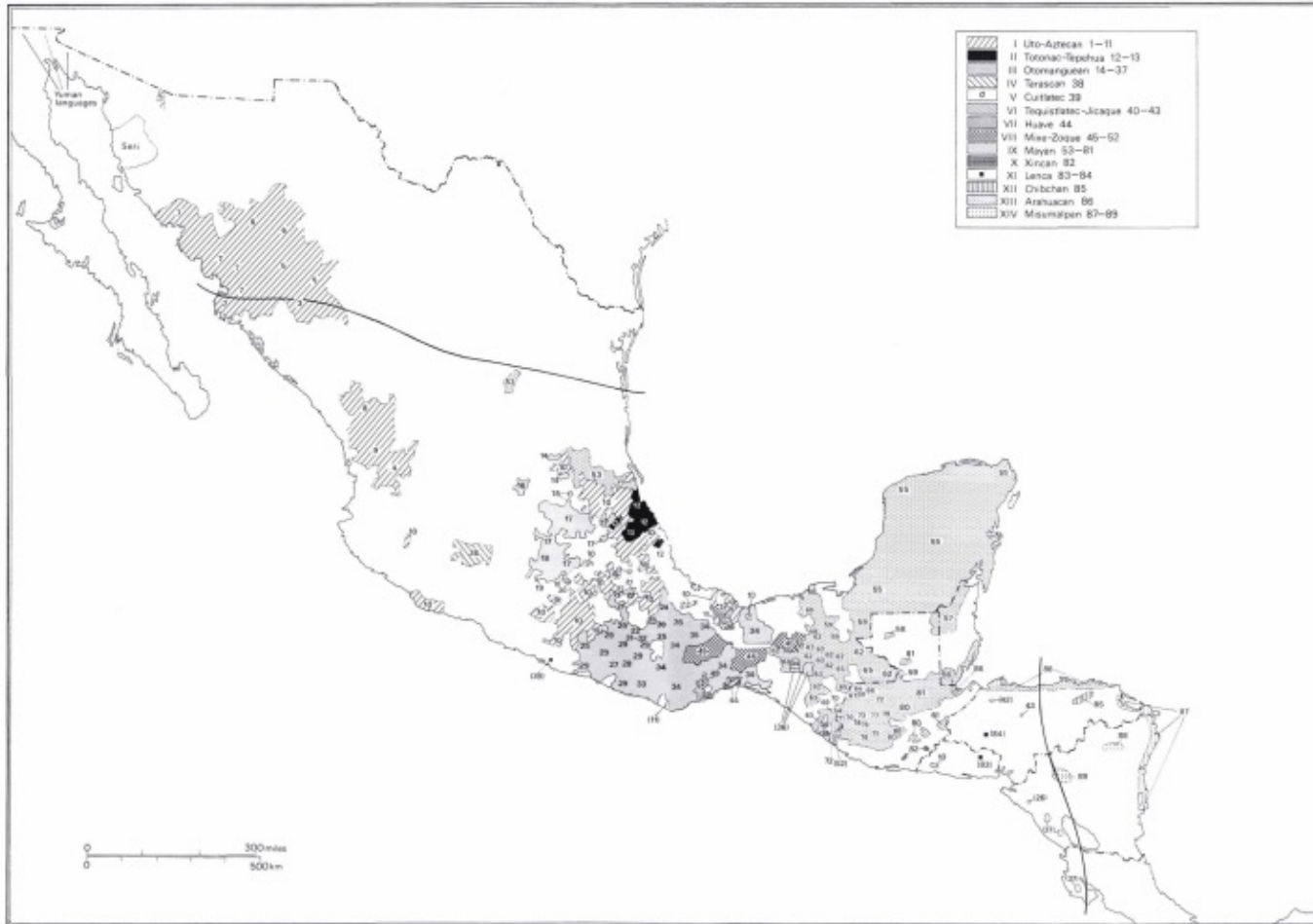
A BIBLE TEXT FOR BELIEVERS AND UNBELIEVERS

733
(601)


 The Creator (Nature) created the seeds and the grass, the flowers and trees and fruits
 the fishes in the waters and the birds in the sky and the animals and
 the insects and all creatures living beneath the sun and
 they multiplied. And the Creator (Nature) created man superior to the
 animals and birds and fishes and the Creator (Nature) gave to
 man the seeds and grains and fruits for food.



II. Mesoamerica



Map 1 Present-day distribution of Mesoamerican Indian languages

- | | | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| i Uto-Aztecan 1-11 | v Cuiclatec 39 | ix Mayan 53-81 | xiii Arahuacan 86 |
| ii Totonac-Tephuza 12-13 | vi Tequistlatec-Jicaque 40-43 | x Xincan 82 | xiv Misumalpan 87-89 |
| iii Otomanguan 14-37 | vii Huave 44 | xi Lenca 83-84 | |
| iv Tarascan 38 | viii Mixe-Zoque 45-52 | xii Chibchan 85 | |

Gelb's infamous boo-boo

In whatever light we understand the statement of the Spanish bishop Diego de Landa in his book published in the middle of the sixteenth century, that a Mayan alphabet of twenty-seven signs was used in Yucatan in his time, one thing is clear: nobody has ever succeeded in deciphering the Maya inscriptions on the basis of de Landa's alphabet. (Gelb 1952, 54)

The best proof that the Maya writing is not a phonetic system results from the plain fact that it is still undeciphered. This conclusion is inescapable if we remember the most important principle in the theory of decipherment: *A phonetic writing can and ultimately must be deciphered if the underlying language is known.* Since the languages of the Mayas are still used to-day, and therefore well known, our inability to understand the Maya system means that it does not represent phonetic writing. (Gelb 1952, 56)

Gelb's infamous boo-boo

As far as I can judge the situation, this is true of the more serious attempts made in recent years by the American linguist Benjamin L. Whorf and the Russian ethnologist Yuriy V. Knorozov. Whorf's work was criticized by J. Eric S. Thompson, but favorably received by Archibald A. Hill. Knorozov's work was favorably received by Tor Ulving but criticized by T. S. Barthel and by J. Eric S. Thompson. (Gelb 1963, 276f. n. 39)

39. As far as I can judge the situation, this is true of the more serious attempts made in recent years by the American linguist Benjamin L. Whorf and the Russian ethnologist Yuriy V. Knorozov. Whorf's work, 'Maya Writing and Its Decipherment,' *Maya Research*, ii (1935), 367-382, and 'Decipherment of the Linguistic Portion of the Maya Hieroglyphs,' *Annual Report of the Smithsonian Institution*, 1941, pp. 479-502, was criticized by J. Eric S. Thompson, *Maya Hieroglyphic Writing* (Washington, D.C., 1950), pp. 311 ff., but favorably received by Archibald A. Hill in *International Journal of American Linguistics*, xviii (1952), 184 ff. Knorozov's work, 'Drevnyaya pis'mennost' Centralnoy Ameriki,' *Sovetskaya Etnografiya*, 1952, Part 3, pp. 100-118; 'Pis'mennost' drevnikh Maiya, Opyt rasshifrovki,' *op. cit.*, 1955, Part 1, pp. 94-125; 'The Problem of the Study of the Maya Hieroglyphic Writing,' *American Antiquity*, xxiii (1958), 284-291; and 'New Data on the Maya Written Language,' *Journal de la Société des Américanistes*, n.s. xlv (1956), 209-216 (*Proceedings of the Thirty-second International Congress of Americanists* [Copenhagen, 1958], pp. 467-475), was favorably received by Tor Ulving in 'Russian Decipherment of the Maya Glyphs,' *International Journal of American Linguistics*, xxii (1956), 184 ff., and 'A New Decipherment of the Maya Glyphs,' *Ethnos*, xx (1955), 152-158, but criticized by T. S. Barthel in 'Die gegenwärtige Situation in der Erforschung der Maya-Schrift,' *Journal de la Société des Américanistes*, n.s. xlv (1956), 219-227, and by J. Eric S. Thompson in *Yan*, ii (1953), 174-178, and 'Systems of Hieroglyphic Writing in Middle American and Methods of Deciphering Them,' *American Antiquity*, xxiv (1959), 349-364. The preliminary reports by Evreynov, Kosarev, and Ustinov on the 'Siberian' decipherment of the Maya writing with the help of computer machines are not available to me. For a criticism of their work see Knorozov, 'Mashinnaya deshifrovka pis'ma Maiya,' *Voprosy yazykoznaniya*, xi/1 (1962), 91-99.

Dresden Codex



Dresden Codex



Copán Altar Q



Copán Altar Q



Catherwood 1841

On 5 Kaban 15 Sip, the lineage for
arrived, the lineage for
7 Muwan, he arrived,
Ahaw, 13 K'ayab, he
Pas, Lord White Flint,
stone mountain (Anonymous web page "I Love Maya Glyphs," 2018)



Fash 1991 or 2004



Schele

8 Ahaw 18 Sip, he
ed there, on 5 Kan
on the 17th Katun 6
ommissioned by Yax
Wo, he obtained the

Copán Altar Q

5 Kaban, 15 Sip

u-kan k'awil, Ch'ok te'na

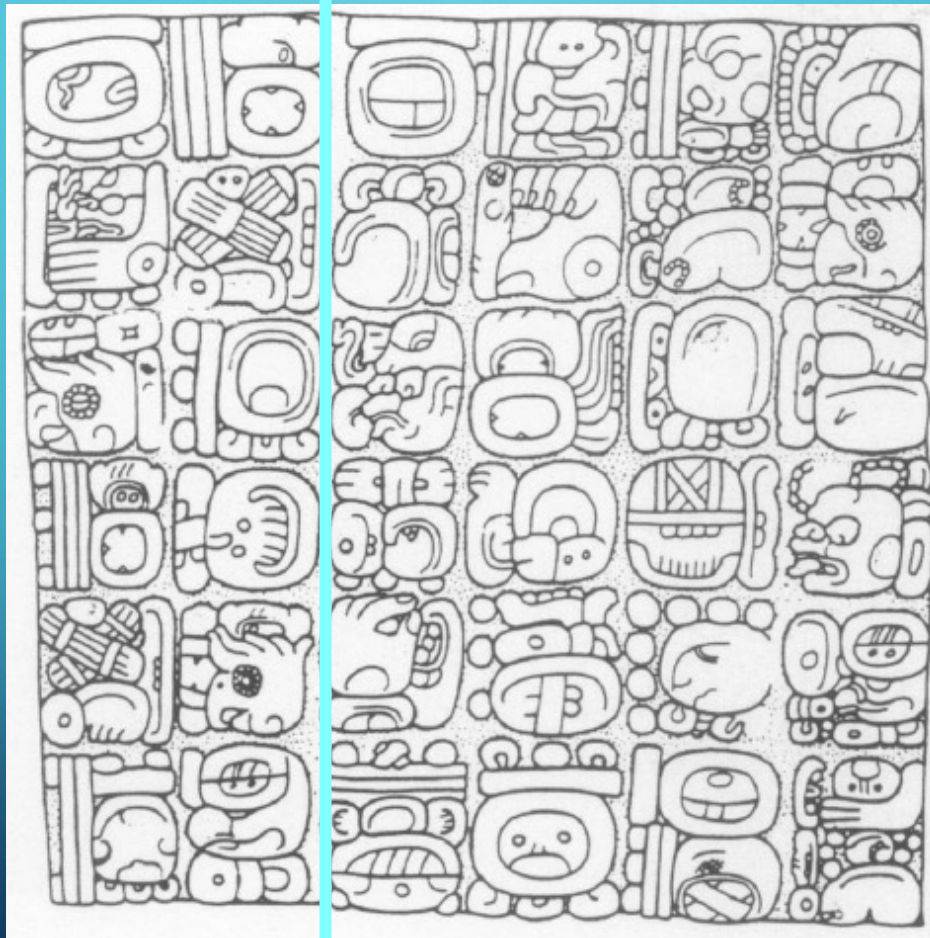
ajaw k'uk-il, 8 ajaw

18 Sip, ta-l(i)

Ch'ok te'na, Yax K'uk Mo.





















12 K'in 7 Winal, ha-i/u-ti (?)




















(Anonymous web page
"I Love Maya Glyphs," 2018)



D. Stuart 1992

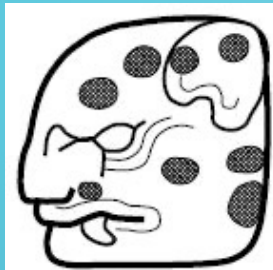
Maya calendar glyphs

Tzolkin Day Names and Glyphs									
Ahau	Imix	Ik	Akbal	Kan	Chicchan	Cimi	Manik	Lamat	Muluc
									
Oc	Chuen	Eb	Ben	Ix	Men	Cib	Caban	Etz'nab	Cauac
									

Haab Month Names and Glyphs									
Pop	Uo	Zip	Zoltz	Tzek	Xul	Yaxk'in	Mol	Ch'en	Yax
									
Zak	Ceh	Mac	K'ank'in	Maun	Pax	K'ayab	Cumku	Uayeb	
									

b'alam 'jaguar'

B'ALAM
(logogram)

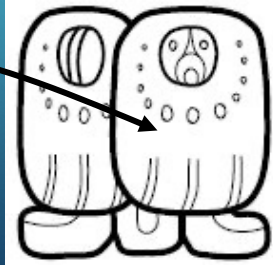


b'a →
B'ALAM
ma →



b'a-la-ma
(syllabograms)

Johnson 2013



usīj 'vulture'



6.2 VARIANT SPELLINGS OF *USIJ* 'VULTURE'

Day & Stuart 2017

Chinese characters for lone consonants in Korean

Full-form sinogram	HK	<i>Kugyŏl</i> graph	Sound value (MK)
去 (<i>qù</i> , 'depart')	<i>kǒ</i> 거	去	/kə/ 거
隱 (<i>yǐn</i> , 'hidden')	<i>ǔn</i> 은	亻	<u>/n/, /ʌn/</u> ㄴ, 은
丁 (<i>dīng</i> , '4th heavenly stem')	<i>chǒng</i> 정 < /tj-/	丁	/tjə/ 더
刀 (<i>dāo</i> , 'knife')	<i>tō</i> 도	刀	/to/ 도
斗 (<i>dǒu</i> , 'ladle')	<i>tū</i> 두	斗	/tu/ 두
羅 (<i>luó</i> , 'net')	<i>rā</i> 라	四	/ra/ 라
彌 (<i>mí</i> , 'extend')	<i>mí</i> 미	分	/mjə/ 며
音 (<i>yīn</i> , 'sound')	<i>ǔm</i> 음	宀	/m/, /im/ ㅁ, 음
邑 (<i>yì</i> , 'town')	<i>ǔp</i> 읍	邑	<u>/p/, /ip/</u> ㅍ, 읍
叱 (<i>chì</i> , 'scold')	<i>chīl</i> 질	七	<u>/s/</u> ㅅ
乙 (<i>yǐ</i> , '2nd heavenly stem')	<i>ǔl</i> 을	乚	<u>/l/, /il/</u> ㄹ, 을

Mayan orthography

(5a)

u ti CH'AHB' ti K'AHK'
 hi B'AAH li ju lu la

u-B'AAH-hi TI-CH'AHB'-li TI K'AHK'-la ju-lu
u-b'aah-Ø ti ch'ahb'-il ti k'ahk'-al jul
 A3-head-B3 PREP penance-vl PREP fire-vl spear
 'His image is in [the act of] *ch'ahb* with a fiery spear.' {Yaxchilan L 24}

(5b)

TZUTZ u K'AB'A u LAKAM
 YAX na CHAN a b'a ni TUUN

YAX-TZUTZ-CHAN-na u-K'AB'A'-b'a-a u-LAKAM-TUUN-ni
Yax Tzut Chan-Ø u-k'ab'a' u-lakam-tuum
 PN-B3 A3-name A3-large-stone
 'Yax Tzut Chan is the name of his stela.' {Copan St F}

Danny Law and David Stuart, "Classic Mayan: An Overview of Language in Ancient Hieroglyphic Script," in *The Mayan Languages*, edited by Judith Aissen, Nora C., England, and Roberto Zavala Maldonado, 128–72. Routledge Language Family Series. Abingdon, Oxon.: Routledge, 2017, @ p. 134.

Chronology of Mesoamerican pre-literacy and literacy

	Dates	Language (language family)
Olmec	(1250)–300 BCE (La Venta)	(Mixe-Zoque??)
Zapotec	500 BCE – 900 CE	Zapotec (Oto-Manguan)
Teotihuacan	100 BCE – 550 CE	several? esp. Nahuatl??
Epi-Olmec/Isthmian	142 CE, 156 CE (La Mojarra)	(Mixe-Zoque?)
Maya	before 292 – after 909 CE	Ch'olan (Mayan)
Mixtec	1000–1600 CE	Mixtec (Oto-Manguan)
Aztec	colonial?	Nahuatl (Uto-Aztecan)

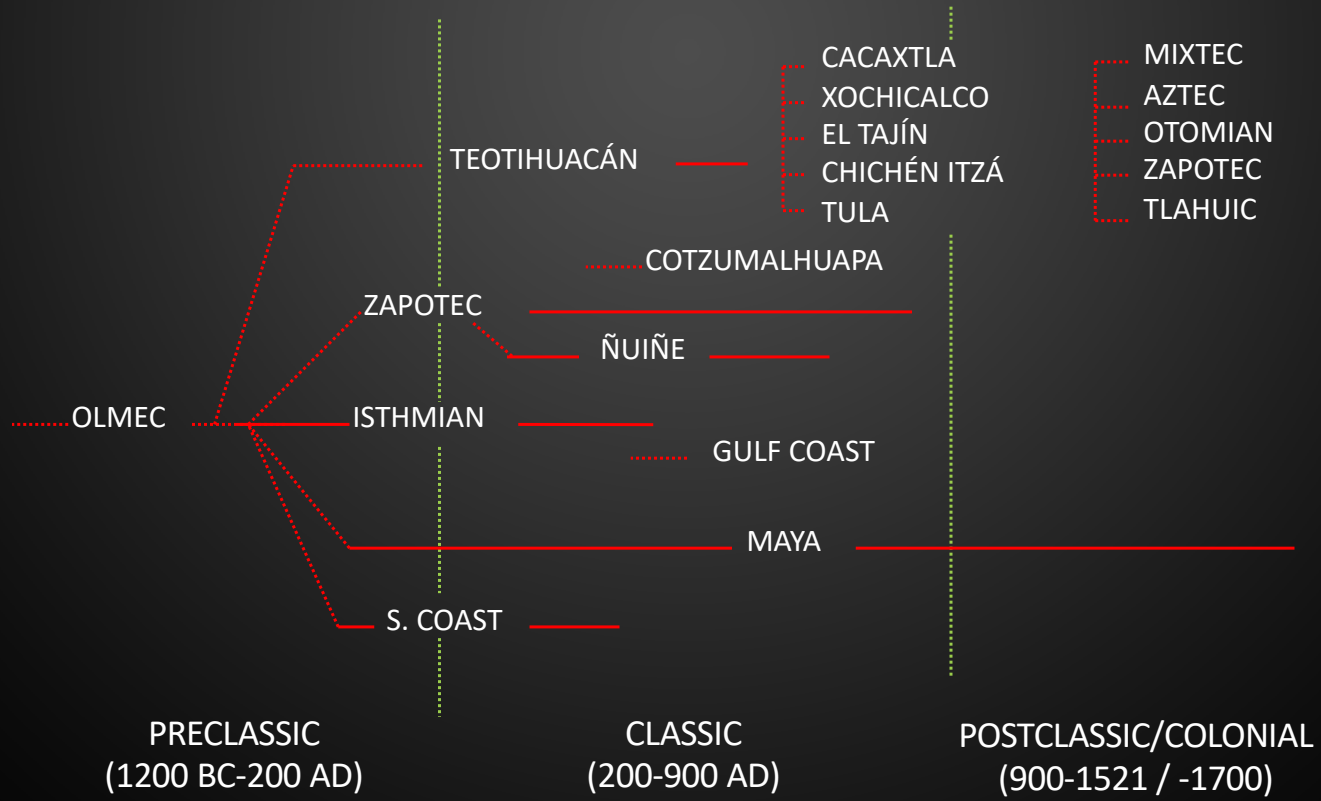
Marcus 1992, 2020; Taube 2000; M. Jensen 1992; Whittaker 1992, 2021

Mesoamerican Scripts

The map shows the geographical distribution of Mesoamerican scripts. Major script groups are labeled in large, colored letters: **TEOTIHUACÁN** (orange), **AZTEC** (green), **MIXTEC** (yellow), **ZAPOTEC** (blue), **OLMEC** (red), **ISTHMIAN** (red), **IZAPA-SOUTH COAST** (white), and **MAYA** (green). Various artifacts are shown with lines pointing to their locations on the map. The artifacts include: **Teotihuacán, Tepantitla** (mural painting); **Cascajal Block** (stone block with Olmec script); **Tuxtla Stat.** (stone statue); **San Andrés Roller Stamp** (stone stamp with bird design); **Madrid Codex** (book of paper); **S. B. mural** (mural painting with Maya script); **Lápida T. Mayor** (stone tablet with Aztec script); **M. Tributos** (mural painting with Mixtec script); **De C. sherd** (shard with Olmec script); **Tikal, St. 31** (stone tablet with Maya script); **Codex Nuttall** (book of paper with Mixtec script); **S.J. Mogote Mon. 3** (stone tablet with Zapotec script); **M. Albán St. 12-13** (stone tablet with Zapotec script); **Izapa Mon. 64** (stone tablet with Isthmian script); **T. Abaj St. 5** (stone tablet with Isthmian script); **Kaminaljuyú St. 10** (stone tablet with Isthmian script); and **Copán Altar Q** (stone tablet with Maya script).

Courtesy of Michael Carrasco

Mesoamerican Writing Systems



Courtesy of Michael Carrasco

After A. Lacadena

Olmec(?) inscriptions

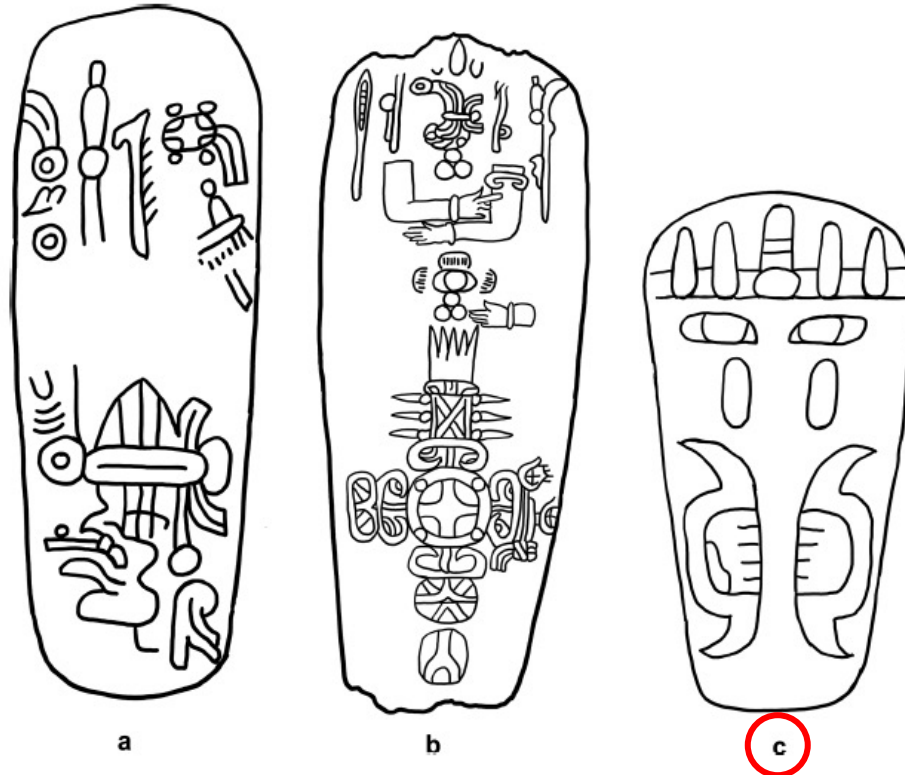


Figure 3. Formative period inscribed stone celts. (a) The Tlatenco Celt; (b) The Humboldt Celt; (c) Stone celt from La Venta Offering 1942-C. (Drawings: M. Carrasco.)

Carrasco & Engelhart 2015, 639

Zapototec inscription

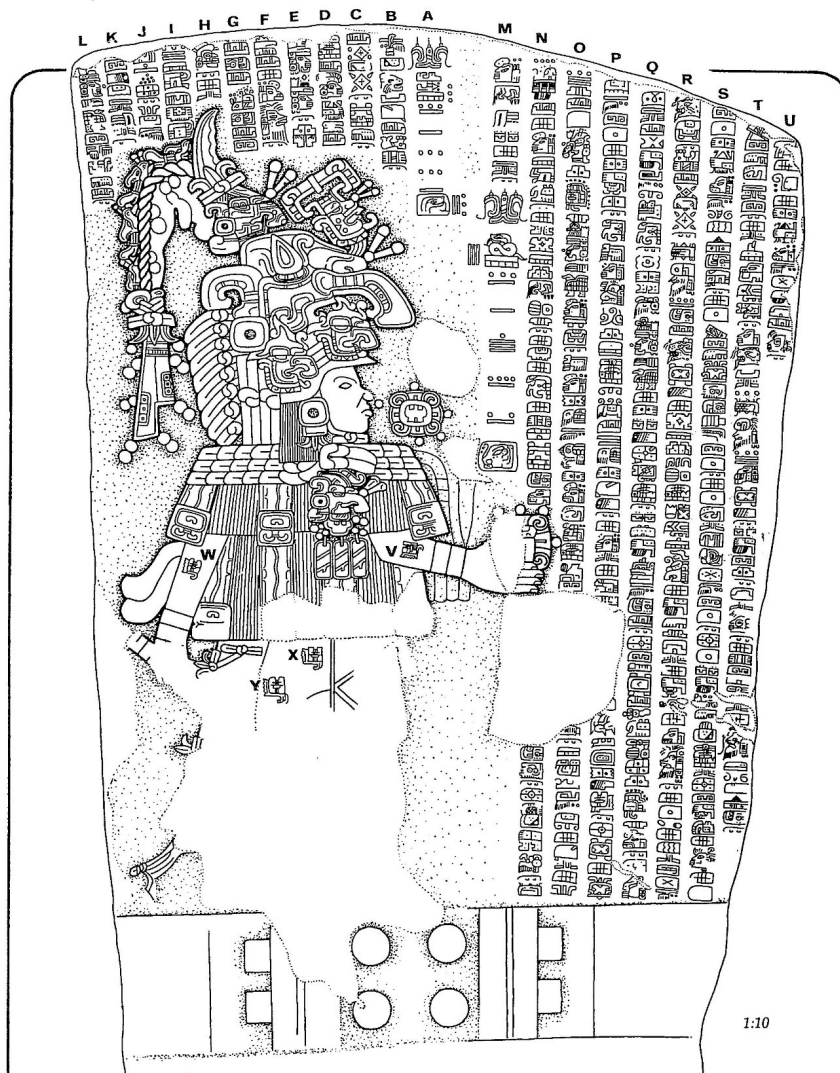


Lintel at Monte Alban

Isthmian inscription

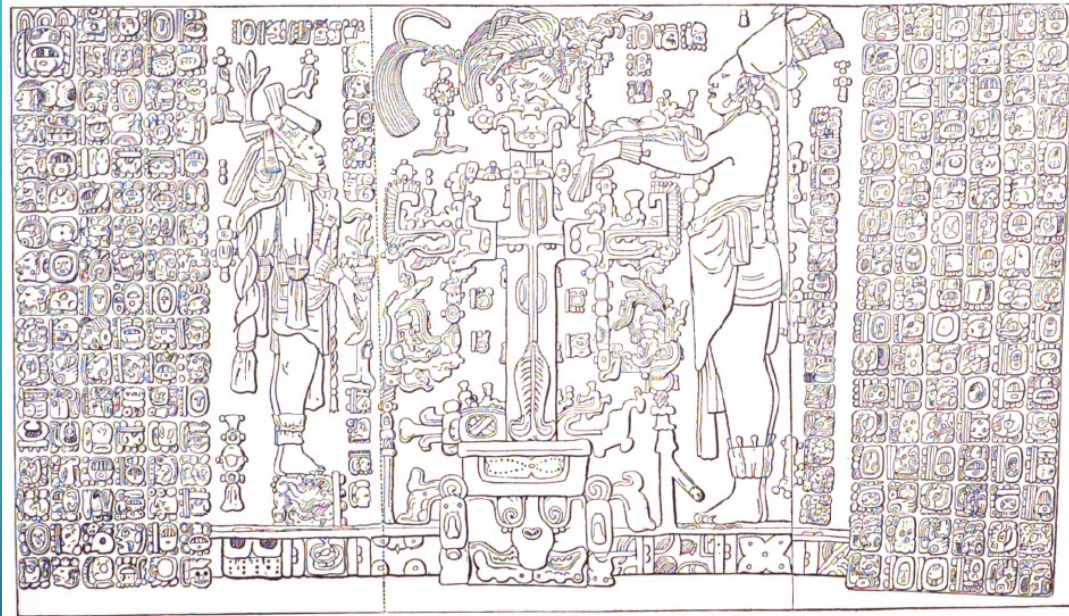


La Mojarra
dated 156 CE



1:10

Mayan inscription and codex



“Tablet of the Cross” at Palenque

Dresden Codex



Mixtec inscription and codex



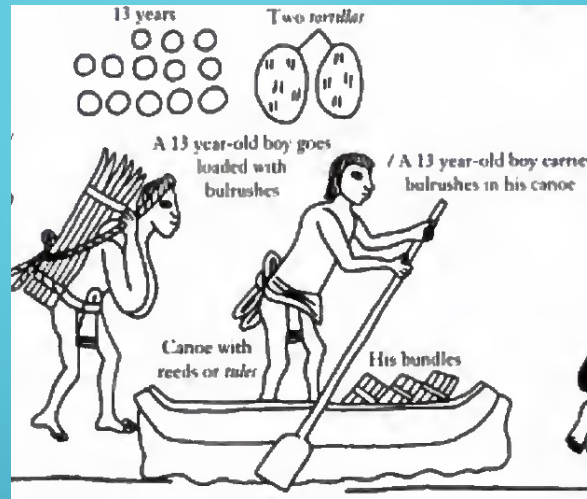
dated 1555 CE



Codex Zouche-Nuttall



Mesoamerican numerals



Codex Mendoza f. 60r

Translation from Berdan and Anawalt 1997, 125

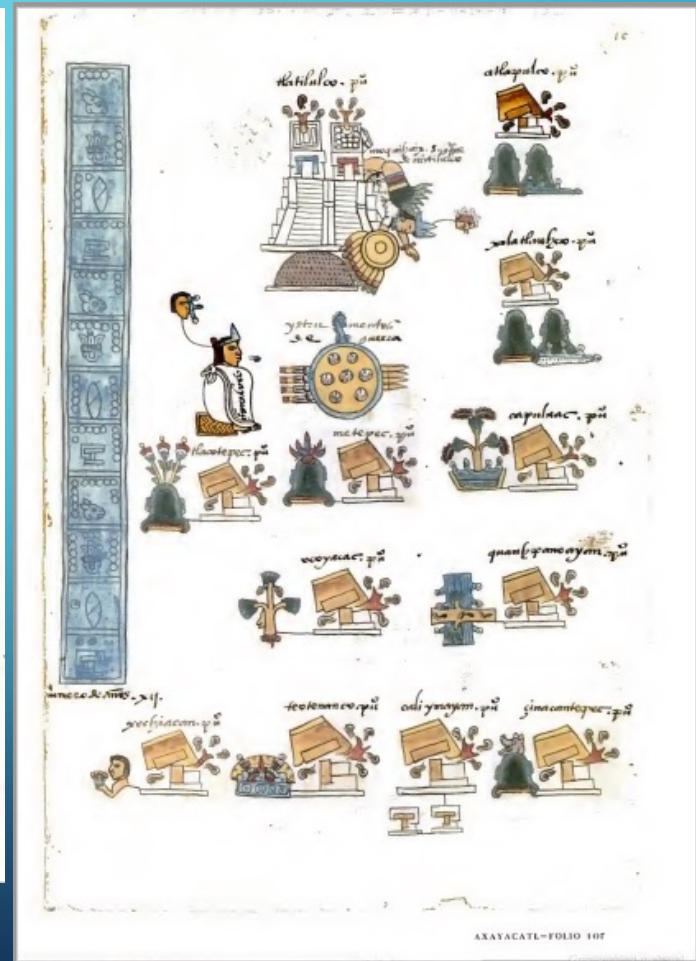
Subject's 260-day calendar name	Birth position	& divination kernels



Aztec inscription and codex

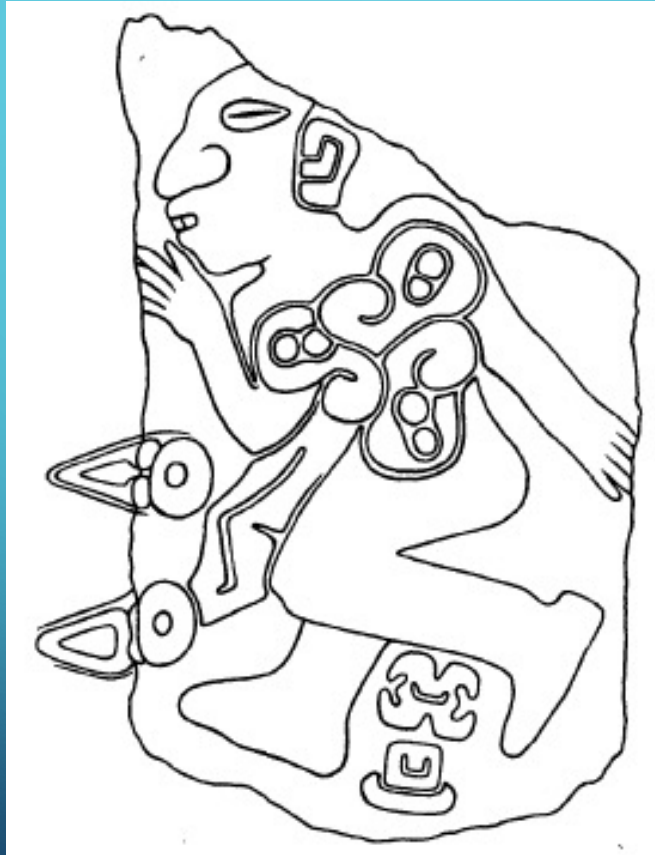


Calendar stone



Codex Mendoza f. 10r

Zapototec captive with day name *1 Eye*



Courtesy of Joyce Marcus

San José Mogote, Valley of Oaxaca, 600–500 BCE

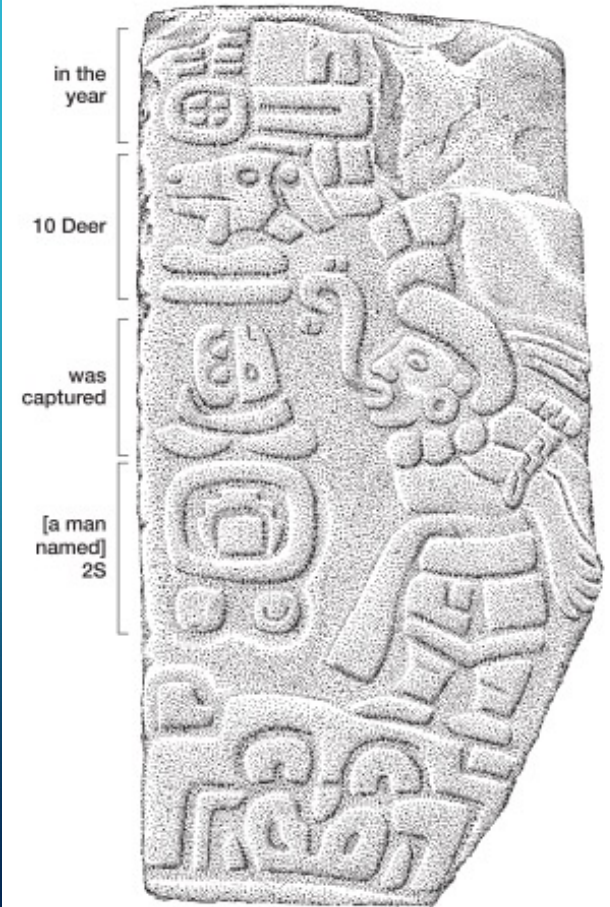
Zapototec grammar

	Date	Verb	Subject's title	Subject's 260-day calendar name	Birth position & divination kernels	Death	"Ascension to the sky" or death date
Year		nicolle					
N	2	was born		12 N			5 N
	In the year 2 N						

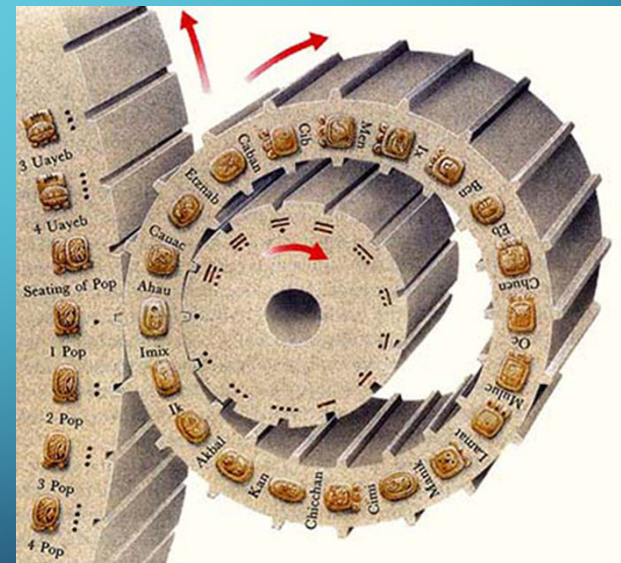
Marcus 2020, 44, 57 (Late Classic, 600–900 CE)

(5a) u ti CH'AHB' ti K'AHK' la
 hi B'AAH li ju lu











u-B'AAH-hi TI-CH'AHB'-li TI K'AHK'-la ju-lu
 u-b'aah-Ø ti ch'ahb'-il ti k'ahk'-al jul
 A3-head-B3 PREP penance-vl PREP fire-vl spear
 'His image is in [the act of] *ch'ahb* with a fiery spear.' {Yaxchilan L 24}













Aztec calendar stone, Maya cycles























Calendar glyph comparison (days)

Tzolkin Day 1				
Ahau	Imix	Ik	Akbal	Kan
				
Oc	Chuen	Eb	Ben	Ix
				

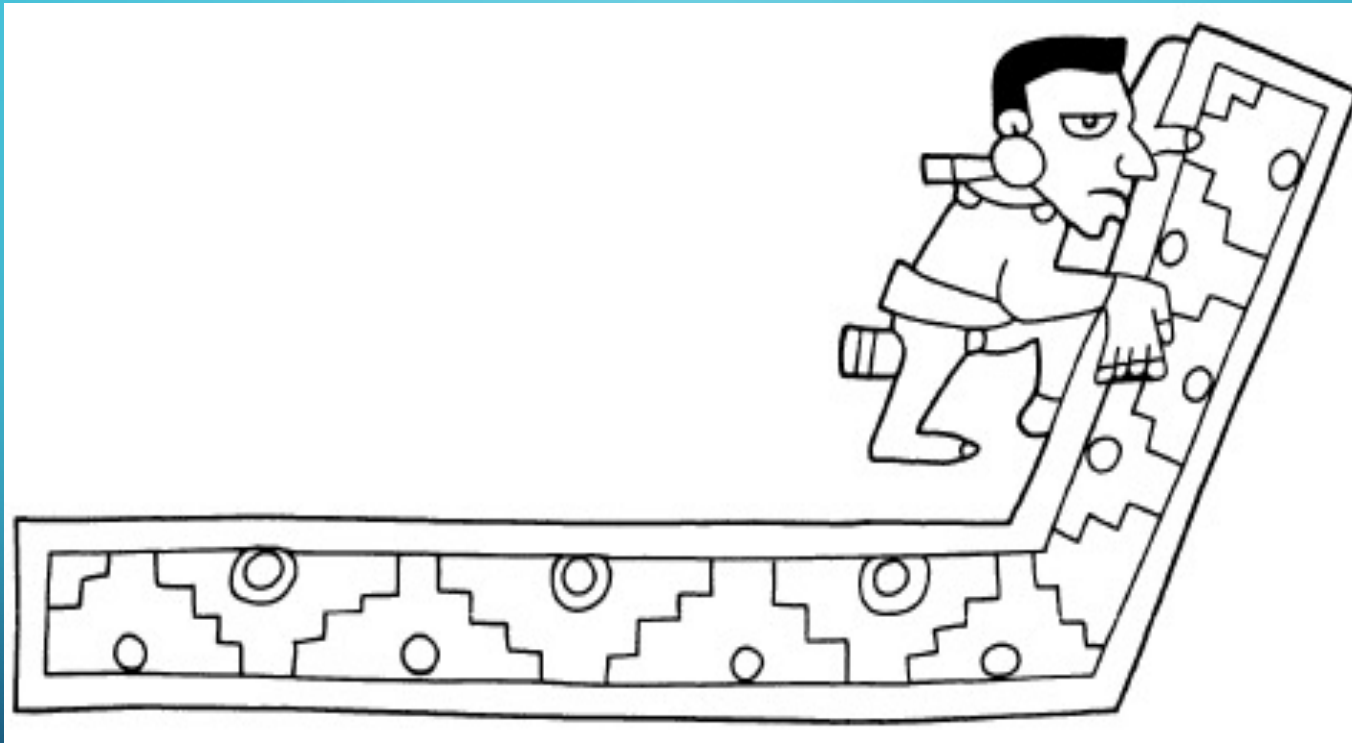
Names and Glyphs				
Chicchan	Cimi	Manik	Lamat	Muluc
				
Men	Cib	Caban	Etz'nab	Cauac
				

Mayan (random internet page)

Days	Zapotec	Mixtec & Aztec		Days	Zapotec	Mixtec & Aztec	
1				11			
2				12			
3				13			
4				14			
5				15			
6				16			
7				17			
8				18			
9				19			
10				20			

Marcus 2020, 30

Mixtec rebus for the place name *Chiyucanu*

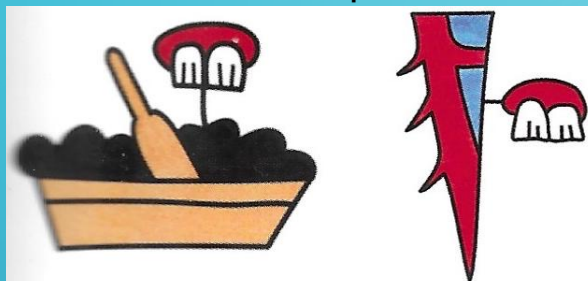


Courtesy of Joyce Marcus

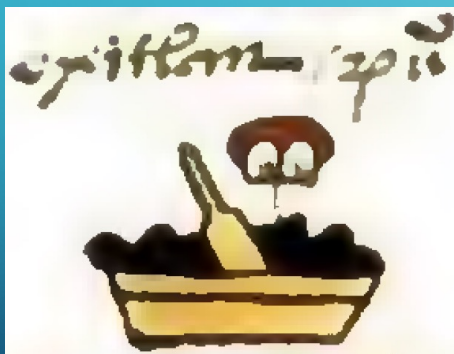
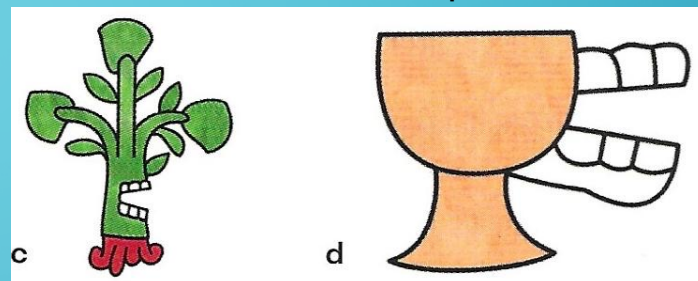
Codex Bodley 15. “The Mixtec place name *Chiyucanu* meant ‘large platform.’ Since the word ‘large’ was difficult to depict, the Mixtec used a homonym for *canu*, which also meant ‘bend’ or ‘break’. Thus, *Chiyucanu* was depicted in painted books as a platform being bent by a small man.” (Marcus 2006, 24)

Aztec place names with *-tlan* 'by' < TLAN 'teeth'

Whittaker p. 67



Whittaker p. 101



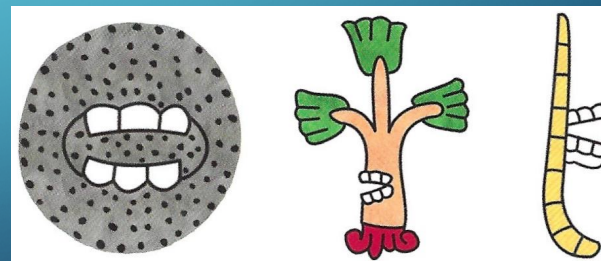
C. Mendoza 46r
OXI-tlan
'By the Unguent'



C. Mendoza 47r
HUITZ-tlan
'By the Thorns'

C. Mendoza 39r
AHUACA-tlan₂
'By the Avocados'

C. Mendoza 40r
CUAUHTECOMA-tlan₂
'By the Wooden Goblets'



C. Mendoza 20v, 5v, 46r
NEX-titlan **CUAUH-titlan** **OTLA-titlan**
'Among the Ashes' '... Trees' '... Bamboo'

Whittaker p. 102

Aztec place-name labels

Whittaker p. 79



C. Mendoza 42r

Teopantlan
'By the Temple'



C. Mendoza 13r

Cozcacuauhtenanco
'At the Walls of the King Vulture'

C. Mendoza 13r

Coyocac
'By the Waterhole'



Whittaker p. 100



Olmec inscription

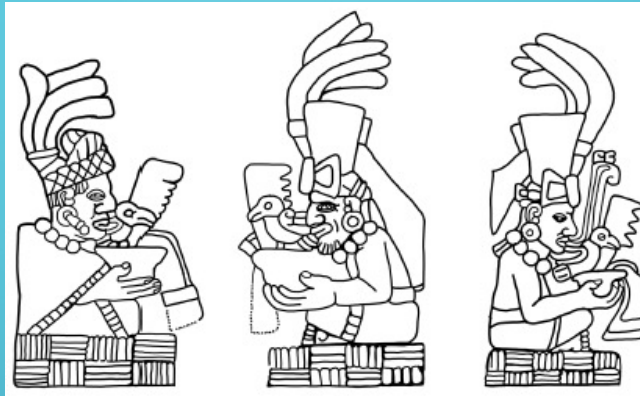


Cascajal block (ca. 900 BCE?)

The throne / reed mat motif through the area



Cascajal block (ca. 900 BCE?)



Zapotec



Mayan
Dresden C.; Palenque



Aztec



Mixtec

all from Carrasco & Engelhardt 2015

The image features a blue gradient background that transitions from a lighter shade at the top to a darker shade at the bottom. In the four corners, there are white, stylized circuit board patterns consisting of lines and small circles, resembling electronic components or traces.

Coda

What was writing?

Février 1948/59

« L'écriture est un procédé dont on se sert actuellement pour immobiliser, pour fixer le langage articulé fugitive par son essence même. »

Gelb 1952/63

“A system of intercommunication by means of conventional visible marks.”

Cohen 1958

« une représentation visuelle et durable du langage, qui le rend transportable et conservable »

Diringer 1958

(i) Iconography, (ii) Synthetic or Ideographic, (iii) Transitional or “still better, ... analytic”, (iv) Phonetic (“Syllabic or Alphabetic”), and (v) Alphabetic

Diringer 1962

“the graphic counterpart of speech, the ‘fixing’ of spoken language in a permanent or semi-permanent form ... By means of it, language is made capable of transcending the ordinary conditions of time and space.”

Friedrich 1966

„Der Schrift läßt sich als ein Mittel der Mitteilungen bezeichnen, mit der die Menschen durch ohne weiteres verständliche oder vereinbarte Zeichen räumliche und zeitliche Entfernungen überbrücken wollen.“

Jensen 1969

“The essential characteristics of writing in the true sense [are] twofold, namely: 1. its production by the act of drawing, painting or scratching on a durable writing-material, and 2. the purpose of communicating (to others or, as an aid to the memory, to the writer himself).”

Sampson
1985/2015

“script, writing-system, or orthography ... refer to a given set of written marks together with a particular set of conventions for their use [/for using them].” AND To “write” might be defined, at a first approximation, as: to communicate relatively specific ideas by means of permanent, visible marks.”

What is writing?

- Daniels 1988– “A system of more or less permanent marks used to represent an utterance in such a way that it can be recovered more or less exactly without the intervention of the utterer.”
- DeFrancis 1989 “Full writing is a system of graphic symbols that can be used to convey any and all thought.”
- Coulmas 1989 “1 it consists of artificial graphical marks on a durable surface; 2 its purpose is to communicate something; 3 this purpose is achieved by virtue of the marks’ conventional relation to language.”
- Coulmas 1996 “a system of recording language by means of visible or tactile marks which relate in a systematic way to units of speech, for example alphabetic vs logographic writing”
- Coulmas 2003 “a system of recording language by means of visible or tactile marks”
- Coulmas 2013 “The term writing system ... refers to an abstract type of graphic system. There are only a few such systems, distinguished by their basic operational units: word writing systems, syllabic writing systems, and phonetic writing systems. A secondary meaning of the term refers to the specific rules according to which the units of the system are interpreted in a given language. In the latter sense there are hence many writing systems, in the former only very few.”
- Rogers 2005 “the use of graphic marks to represent specific linguistic utterances.”
- Sproat 2010 “Writing is a symbol system that represents language.”
- Meletis 2020 “Writing represents language by graphic means.”

Important distinctions

ideogram



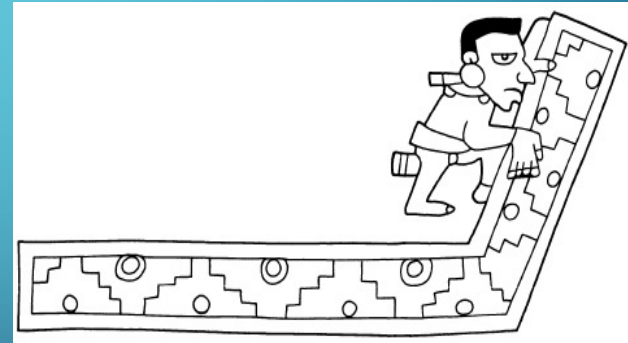
13 Ahau

logogram



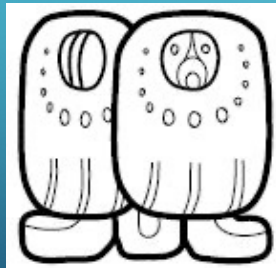
vulture

rebus (pun)



Chiyucanu

phoneticism



ba-la-ma

logography – syllabary – abjad – alphabet – abugida

