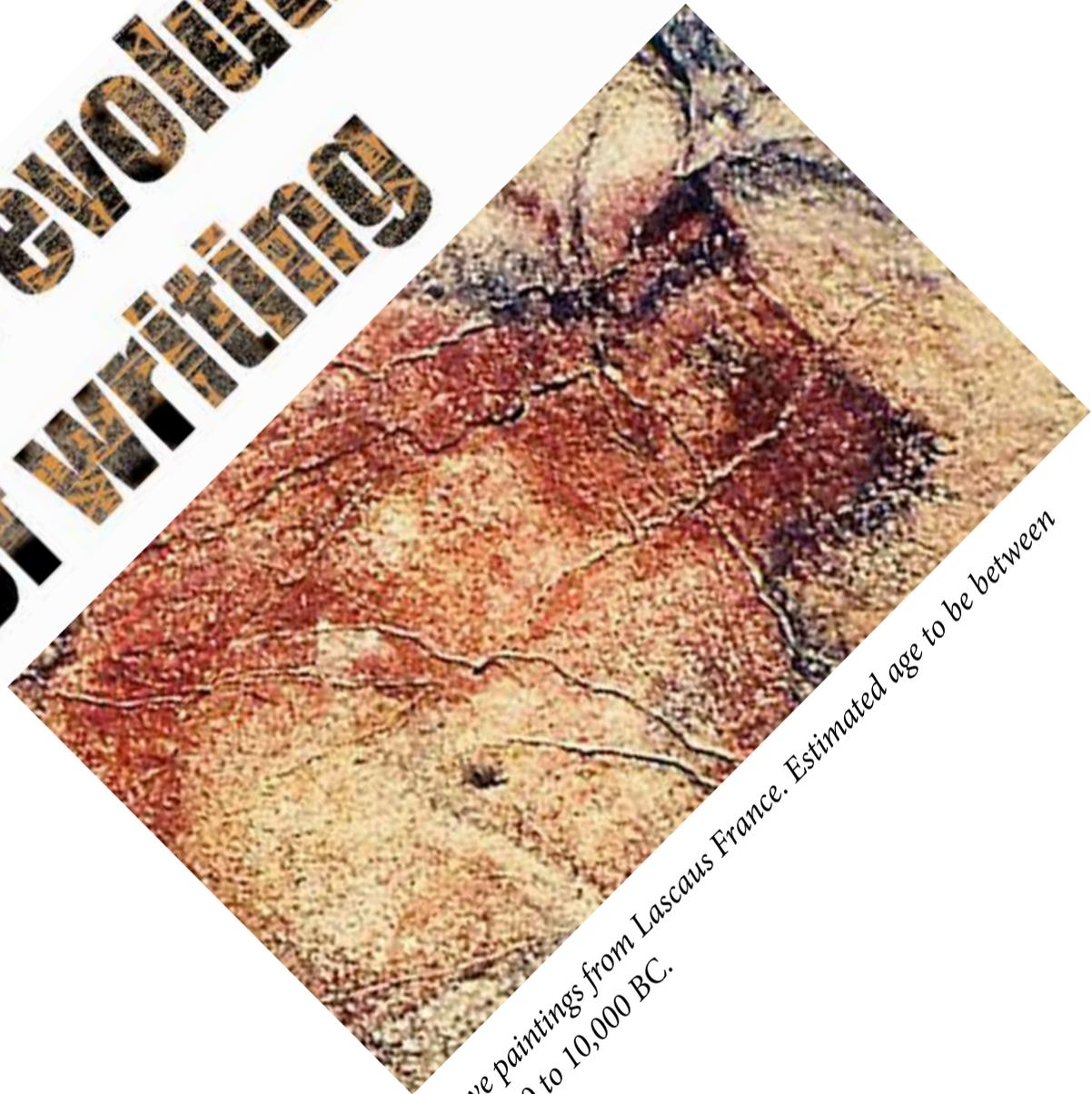


**INTRODUCTION TO
TYPOGRAPHY
AND DESIGN**

The Evolution Of Writing

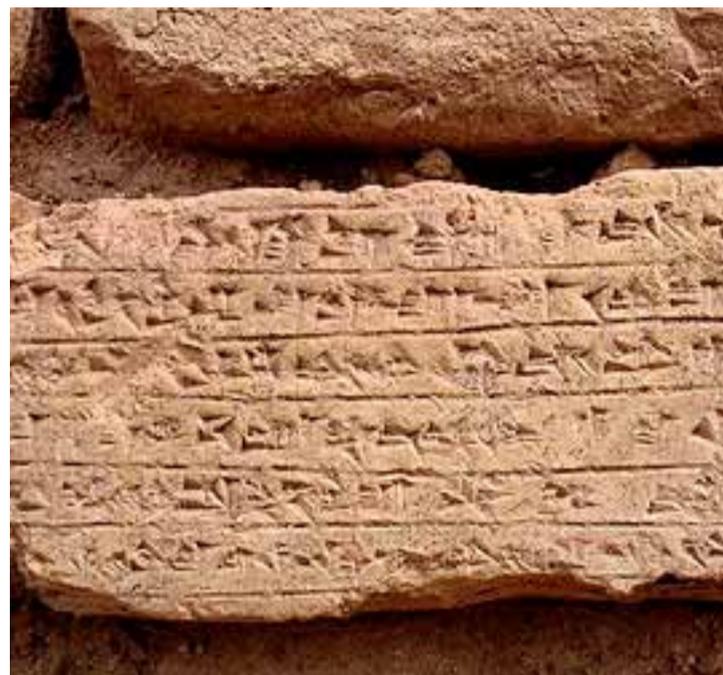


Cave paintings from Lascaux France. Estimated age to be between 15,000 to 10,000 BC.

Pre-historic cave paintings are the beginning of written communication, even before letters were invented, or even in some cases languages. The origins of type began when people started to use pictographs to describe something. This was a codified system of symbols representing something, and were influenced by the culture that made them. The detail in these was depended on the culture's tools, raw materials, spare time, mechanical developments, aesthetic receptivity etc. Due to this they could only be used by the society that created them.

Around 3000BC the first writing systems appeared in Sumeria in the Middle East, Egypt and China. These allowed societies to change rapidly as they could record historical and cultural events. Writing replaced word of mouth communication, which distorted and lost the original meanings due to its inaccuracy.

Early writing consisted of combining two or more pictographs to communicate a concept. This is called an ideogram or ideograph. An example of this would be the symbol of a hand combined with another symbol representing to greet, to give or to offer. A hand no longer only represents the hand itself. Ideograms allowed writing to become faster but other societies needed these languages to be decoded, therefore starting a new industry requiring interpreters and translators.



Cuneiform tablet.



Egyptians hieroglyphics.

Middle East

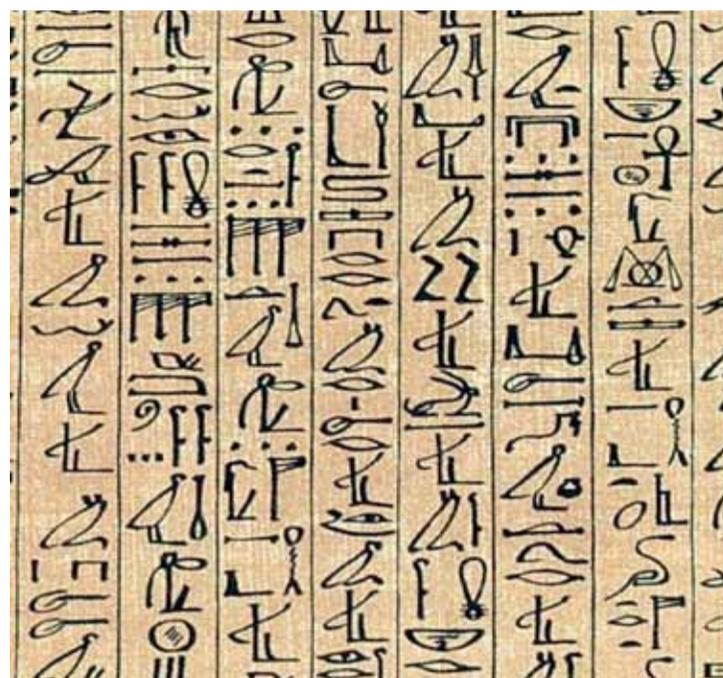


Cuneiform script.

Sumeria was found between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers in Mesopotamia, today this is part of Iraq. As the riverbeds had plenty of clay the Sumerians formed clay tablets to write on. To write on the clay tablets a pointed stylus was used which could be dragged through the wet clay leaving an impression. The clay tablet was then left to dry in the sun before it could be distributed. Sumerians invented what is considered to be the oldest writing system called Cuneiform. They wrote from top to bottom and then from right to left on the tablets, which were turned sideways, to ensure they did not smudge the writing. It is assumed that the scribe was right-handed. Pictographs slowly started to be placed together to create new words, like foot and ball - football, and these are known as rebuses.

The Minoans in Crete had a writing system, which has yet to be deciphered. The Minoans are believed to have been annihilated by a tidal wave caused by a volcanic eruption on a nearby island. All that is left of their civilisation are a few clay disks with symbols that spiral into the centre in the same way as a vinyl record or CD.

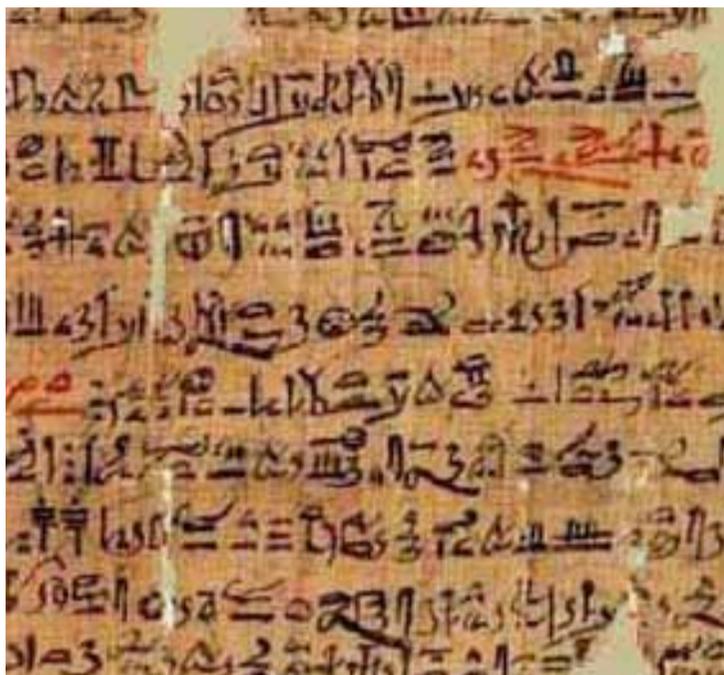
Egyptians are responsible for hieroglyphs, which began as detailed pictographs on the tombs of Pharaohs. They were carved in stone relief with color being added later. Hieroglyphs were written in vertical columns and separated with thin rules and coloured thin horizontal rules across the



Hieroglyphics on papyrus.

top and bottom. The Egyptians used papyrus to write on, rather than clay, as this was common in Egypt. Papyrus comes from a weed known as the Cyprus Papyrus. The substrate was created by wetting and drying strips of papyrus and this development made writing more elegant and flowing in appearance, and hieroglyphs could be written in one continuous brush stroke. Between 2400BC to 500AD papyrus was the principle surface used to write on throughout the ancient western world, as it was accessible, lightweight and smooth.

Around 1500BC hieroglyphics were simplified into a calligraphic style known as Hieratic Script, meaning priestly writing. By 500BC hieratic script had developed into the more widely used Demotic Script of the people. Parchment became popular. Made from calves, goats and sheep skins



Hieratic script.

𐤀	'aleph	[ʾ]	𐤁	lamedh
𐤂	beth	[b]	𐤃	mem
𐤄	gimmel	[g]	𐤅	nun
𐤆	daleth	[d]	𐤇	samekh
𐤈	he	[h]	𐤉	'ayin
𐤊	waw	[w]	𐤋	pe
𐤌	zayin	[z]	𐤍	tsade
𐤎	heth	[h]	𐤏	qoph
𐤐	teth	[t]	𐤑	reš
𐤒	yodh	[y]	𐤓	šin
𐤔	kaph	[k]	𐤕	taw

Phoenician alphabet.

and had the advantage that you could write on both sides, needing less writing material which meant it took less space to store. It can also be folded and stitched together to create books or larger sheets and the surface is very smooth. The only disadvantage was that it was very expensive and time-consuming to produce, therefore it became a symbol of great wealth and power.

Phoenicia developed an alphabet, in 1500BC, consisting of 22 symbols that was phonetically based and contained no vowels. In other words speech was broken down into a succession of sounds. As there were fewer symbols this made learning how to read and write easier for people from different countries and led to Phoenician spreading to other cultures, including ancient Greece, where five of the consonants were changed into vowels. The Greek scribes used an ivory or metal stylus to write their notes and letters, but unlike the Phoenicians the Greeks wrote from left to right. The Greek alphabet became the basis of Cyrillic, Etruscan and Latin alphabets.

China



Early Chinese book.

By 1700BC Chinese characters appeared in North China and were adapted to many Asian languages and cultures. These characters are the only ones to have survived into contemporary use. In 105AD Ts'ai Lun, in China, invented papermaking using various vegetable fibers mixed with water and beaten into a pulp. A wooden frame with a silk screen was placed into the pulp, shaken gently while raising creating even coat of fibres which were then flattened, weighted, pressed and dried. By 270AD they started to use wooden blocks for printing. Sometimes they used different colours and multiple blocks on the same piece of paper. The Chinese were mass-producing printed books at least 1200 years before the west.



Yuan dynasty woodblock print.



Chinese bamboo scroll.

Helganovelli



Illuminated Bible.

In 100AD an everyday script was developed that would eventually become the foundation of our cursive handwriting and our lowercase type design, as only capitals were available at that stage. The letters were transformed from the original capitals by using ascenders and descenders. Christianity used it for their religious texts and lettering became a declaration of faith. Monks would pen a beautiful bible to exalt God and were constantly copying the texts to spread the faith. These were sold for funds used to trade for goods. Copies made in medieval times are the only versions to survive the course of time. The original versions were written on papyrus but these however have not survived.

In 430AD St Patrick took the bible manuscripts to Ireland and this started the complex interlacing of Celtic scrollwork with illustrations of animals and supernatural creatures, which were carefully drawn in minute detail. Illustrations were important to help those who were illiterate to understand the meaning of the text. Gold leafing started to be used to reflect God's life.



Johann Gutenberg.



14th century painting of a scribe.