HISTORY OF WRITING

In the development of civilization, the invention of writing constitutes one of the greatest intellectual achievements of human genius, an achievement of inestimable value and with innumerable consequences.
However, writing was invented not once, but perhaps at six separate times, in different places in the world, like Europe, Mesopotamia (Cuneiforms), Egypt (Hieroglyphs), China, Indus Valley and Central America.
Most of the writing systems originated from simple depictions of objects, so called word signs or pictographs. Thus the head of an ox represented an ox, a circle the sun etc...The next stage of development was the gradual stylization, or simplification of the symbols and a secondary association of the signs, e.g. the picture of the sun also stood for "bright", "white" or "day".
The need to record abstract formulations such as "I'd like to", "We shall.." etc. required a phonetization of the symbols, which meant a restriction of their signification. Each symbol represented a syllable or a group of sounds and finally a single sound.
The climax of writing´s developmental stage came near the end of the Second Millenium B.C. with the emergence of the Phoenecian alphabet. For the first time, all the linguistic sounds of a language could be written down with the help of a very restricted number of symbols (22). Out of this alphabet, almost all of today's writing systems have emanated such as Greek, Roman, Arabic, Cyrillic and the scripts of India and Southeast Asia.

History

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Writing Tools and Materials	89-92
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WRITING SYSTEMS OF THE WORLD (simplified)

Pectographs ,Cave paintings, Rock carvings 15 000 B.C. -

Mesoamerican Writings

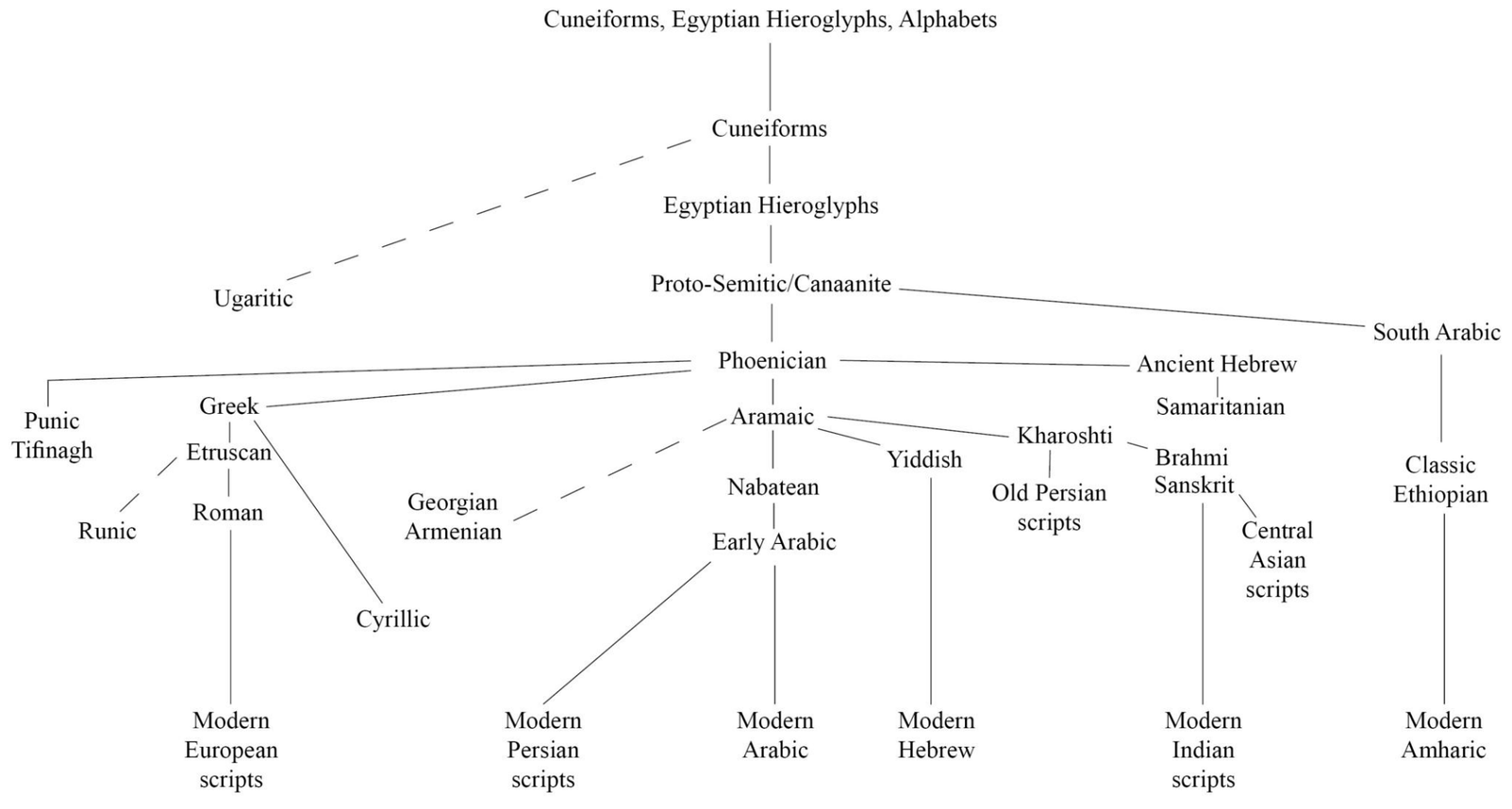
Zapotec
Olmec
Mayan
Aztec
Hieroglyphs

Europe

Old European Script

Aegean Script
Linear A
Linear B
Cretan Hieroglyphs

Cypriotic



India

Indus Script

(Pacific Ocean)

Rongorongo
Easter Island

East Asia

Chinese

Japanese

Hiragana
Katakana

Korean
Hangul

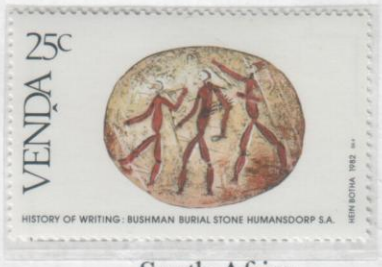
PRE-HISTORY

Thousands of years ago Stone Age hunters started to leave marks, signs and drawings on rocks and in caves, thus giving a pictorial commentary of their daily activities. Such pictures normally had no linguistic form, rather some cultic or decorative purpose. Nevertheless, it was man´s first attempts at expressing his thoughts and feelings in a timeless form.

Rock-paintings, also called petrographs.



France

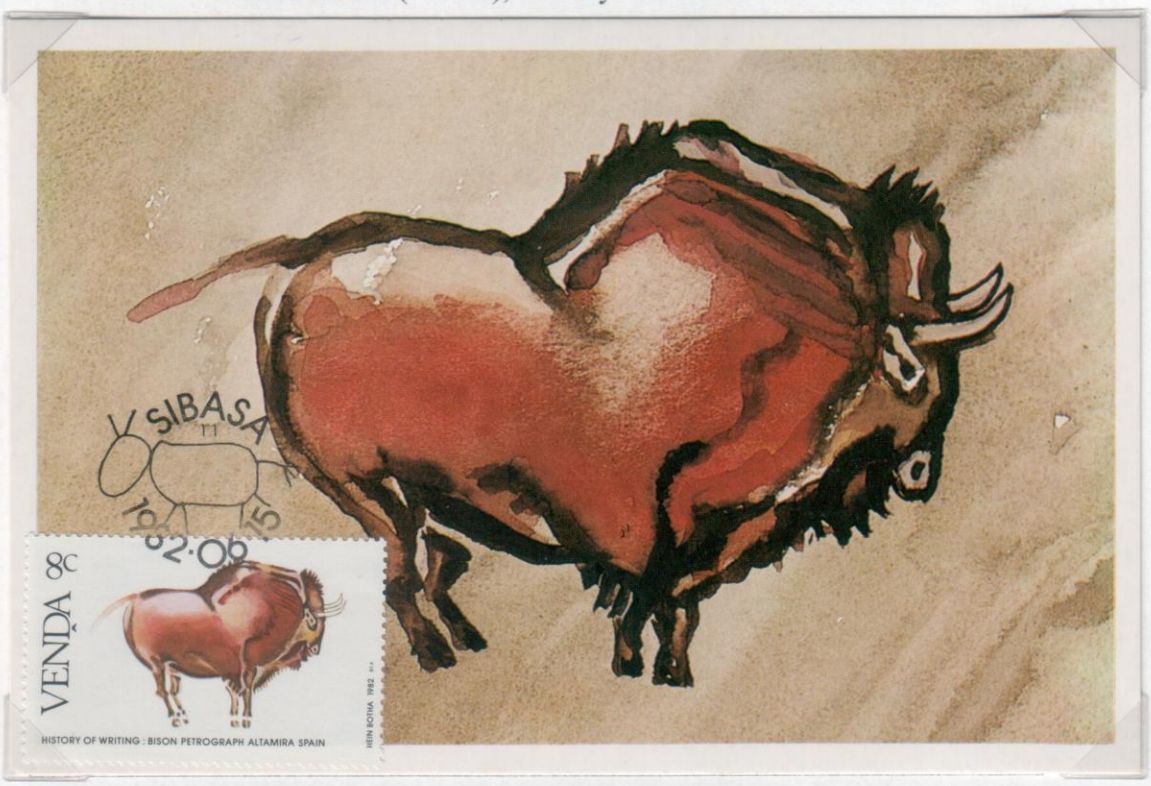


South Africa



Algeria, Tassili Mts.

The most famous pre-historic rock-paintings are those of Altamira (Spain) and Lascaux (France), but they exist in other countries too.



Altamira cave, ab. 15.000 BC.

Rock-carvings, pectoglyphs, from different parts of Europe.



Norway



Sweden

Ireland



Rock-paintings(carvings) dont make up a writing system but they initiate a kind of proto-writing.

OLD EUROPE (DANUBIAN CIVILIZATION)

For long scholars assumed that the art of writing was invented in the 4th mill. B.C, either in Egypt (hieroglyphics) or in Mesopotamia (cuneiforms). This assumption might be challenged today by archeological findings made in Europe along the river Danube and its tributaries, streching deep into the Balkans, the site of the so called Danubian Civilization, between 6th -3rd mill. B.C. Clay tablets and sherds of pottery, bearing different kind of sign symbols, may indicate some kind of an early writing system.

Artifacts from the Danubian Civilization, also called Vinca-Tordos culture



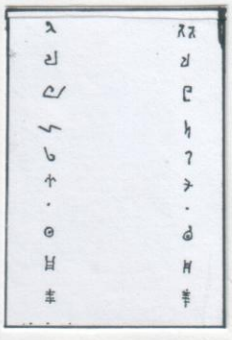


Tartaria tablets, 5500 BC, named after the finding place in Transylvania. The script, a combination of pictographs and symbols, might be the oldest writing system of humanity. However, all scholars don't agree about the status of the signs. Notice; the tablets show startling similarities with Sumerian symbols! (see also Mesopotamia).

The contentious Tartaria tablets.

About 2500 BC, on the island of Crete, in the Aegean Sea, arose a script, today dubbed Linear A. Astonishingly, half of its signs resemble those of the Danubian Civilization. The Cretan Kingdom streched far north, including parts of mainland Greece.

Early European script. Linear A script



AEGEAN WORLD



Crete



Knossos, remnants of the palace.

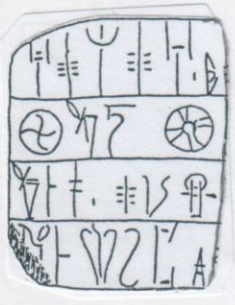


Mural painting from the palace.

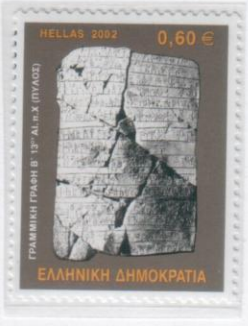
Crete was the center of the Minoan Civilization. In the royal palace of Knossos there was a need of a script to keep the records of the palace burocracy in this highly developed society. Most of the written material comes from the archive of the later destroyed palace. Alongside the Linear scripts an independent hieroglyphic script was also in use on the island.



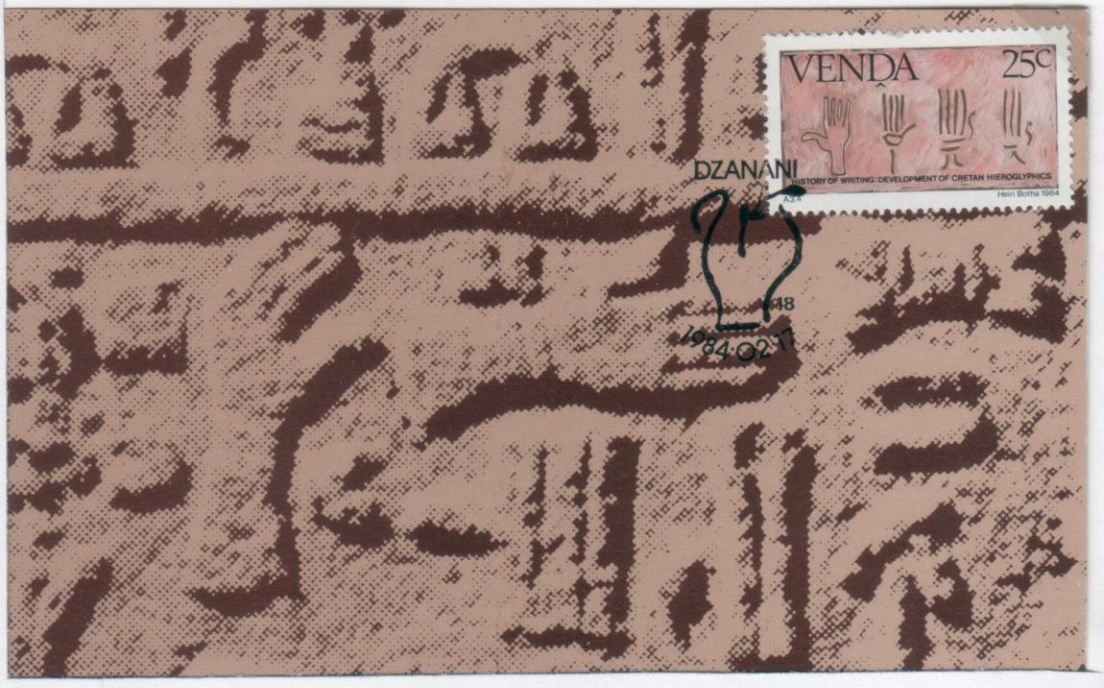
Linear A, 2500-1800 BC undeciphered



← Linear B, 18th-13th BC, deciphered by M.Ventris →



The highly original Cretan hieroglyphs.







Bronze tablet from Idalion. The most important document in Cyprosyllabic script.

Also the island of Cyprus belonged to the realm of literacy and invented own writing systems. The Cyprosyllabic script, 11th-4th BC, consists of 55 symbols,each of them representing a syllable.

MESOPOTAMIA (Cuneiforms)



A trilingual gold plaque of the 6th century B.C.
inscribed in Old Persian, Elamite and Babylonian.

MESOPOTAMIA

The oldest writing system developed in the basin of the Tigris and the Euphrates Rivers (approx. today's Irak). In the urbanized societies that arose, there was an administrative need to record the growing complexities of a developing society such as trade transactions, tax collecting, inventories etc.. Therefore the first word signs stood for personal names, numerals and objects of ownership.

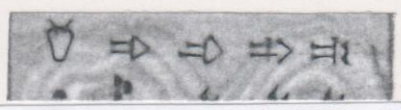


In its earliest stage every sign, pictograph, represented a picture of the object itself that was to be described.



A clay tablet from the town of Uruk, in Sumer, about 3300 - 3100 B.C. The stylized word signs were scrached on to clay tablets. This one indicates the ownership of property and enumerates quantities. The hand, upper left, is the symbol of the owner.





From pictograph to cuneiform sign. The development of the word "ox", first line above on stamp. The word symbols gradually changed to abstract, wedge-like cuneiform signs. At last, it became impossible to recognize the underlying pictorial origin of the word.

Sumerian

MESOPOTAMIA

About 2700 B.C. the Sumerians in Mesopotamia had invented the first complete writing system the so called cuneiform writing, with its characteristic wedge shape ➤due to the natural pressure of the stylus in the clay. Besides the Sumerian 14 other languages where recorded by this script, such as Akkadian, Babylonian, Assyrian, Elamite, Hittite, Canaanite, Ugarit and Old-Persian.





Sumerian cylinder seal.



Assyrian

Sumerian is the first language ever to have been written down.



The cuneiform writing system was in use continuously for more than 3000 years, from 3100 B.C.- 75 A.D.

Old Persian

AROUND MESOPOTAMIA



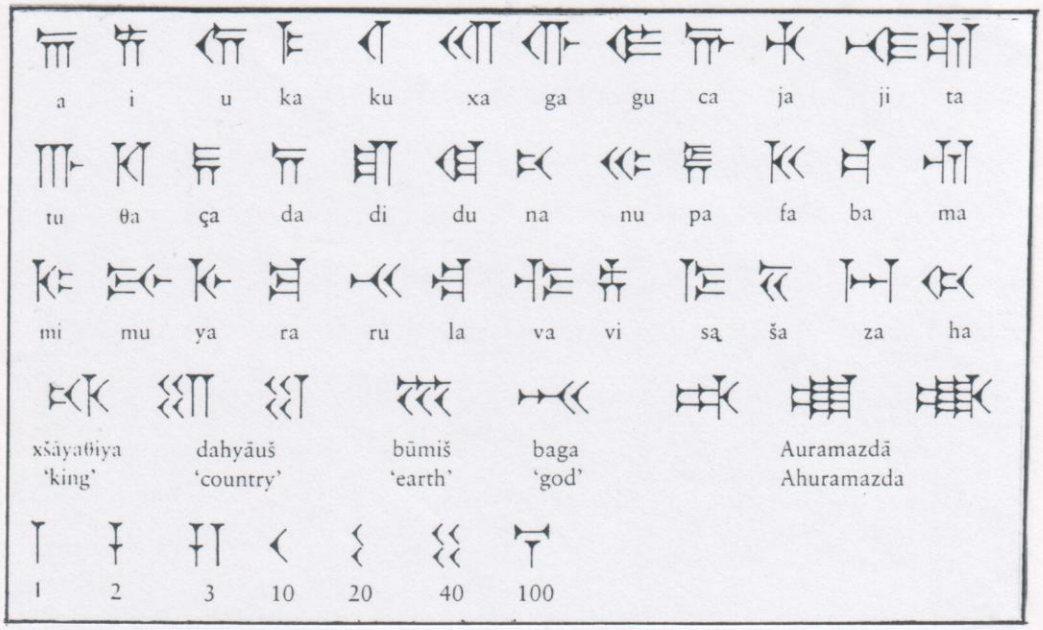
Ugarit

The *Ugarit* script has thirty slightly wedge-like letters. It is the oldest-known ABC (around 15th cent. B.C.) but its origin is still an enigma. The script disappeared completely after the destruction of the city of Ugarit soon after 1200 B.C.

The *Old Persian* script was invented, according to some scholars, on the instruction of King Darius the Great, in order to give him a distinctive script with which to inscribe his royal monuments.



Old Persian



The complete Old Persian (Achaemenid) cuneiform alphabet. It has thirty-six characters, in addition eight ideograms and numerical symbols. It was in use from 520 - 321 B.C.

Translating Cuneiforms into Arabic. (Must be a difficult task!)

The greatest amount of Cuneiforms, a whole library, some 10 000 clay tablets, from the period 2500 - 2400 B.C. was found at Ebla, near Aleppo, in today's Syria, written mostly (80%) in Sumerian, the rest in a language now called *Eblaite*.



EGYPT



Queen Nefertari presents offerings to the goddess Isis.
Egyptian tomb-painting, 13th cent. B.C.

EGYPT

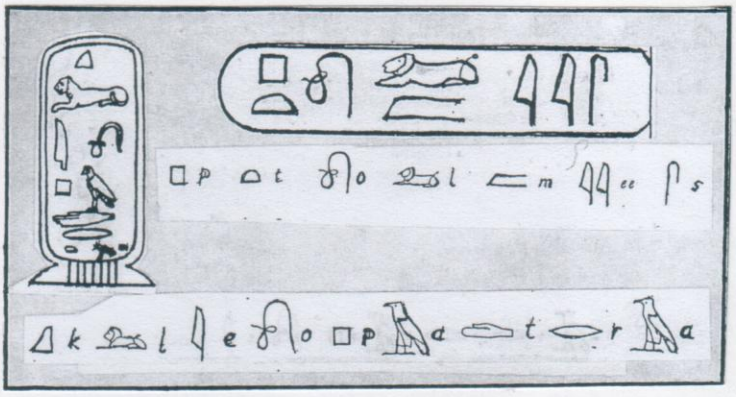
Hieroglyphic writing, a combination of pictures and symbols, was invented in the 31st cent. B.C. The writing is mostly *ideographic*, one symbol one word, but the symbols can also stand for phonetic values, mostly consonants or group of consonants. Thus the picture of a serpent also signifies the sound "f", because in Old Egyptian(Coptic) the word for viper is "fy". There are also *determinatives*, signs without phonetic value. In its earliest stage there were about 700 diff. symbols which finally increased to ab. 5000 in Greco-Roman period.



Thoth, with the-head of an ibis.

According to Egyptian mythology it was the god Thoth, the patron of scribes, who invented writing and gave it to man.





By compairing the royal names Ptolemees and Cleopatra it was possible to establish the exact phonetic value of several hieroglyphic signs, occuring in both names. This knowledge was a breakthrough in the process of deciphering.



The impressive hieroglyphic script was mostly painted or carved on tombs, temples and monuments.

EGYPT

Emperor Napoleon`s military expedition to Egypt, 1798-1799, including a great number of scientists, is the starting point of the studies of modern Egyptology, leading eventually to the deciphering of the hieroglyphic writing.



Part of the famous trilingual Rosetta stone.



Hieroglyphic

Demotic

EGYPT

The enigmatic Egyptian hieroglyphs remained a mystery until the 19th century. With the discovery of the trilingual Rosetta stone, found by members of Napoleon's Egyptian expedition of 1799, the French Egyptologist J.F. Champollion managed to decipher the hieroglyphs. His assuming that the Coptic language was a derivative of the language of Ancient Egypt proved to be true.



Jean-Francois Champollion (1790-1832) and the Rosetta stone.

The Rosetta stone, 114 x 72 cm, found near the town of Rosetta (Rashid), north-west of Cairo, carries one message in three different scripts; in hieroglyphs, Demotic and Greek.
The result of the trilingual translation was published in 1822.



J.F. Champollion was a prodigy. Still a boy he was nicknamed "The Egyptian" for his great interest in that country.



← Hieroglyphs
← Coptic
← Roman letters



Champollion written in hieroglyphs (in the cancellation).

EGYPT



To honour Champollion, its famous scientist, his native town of Figeac, a small medieval town in South-West France, named one of its squares "Place des Ecritures(Writings)," covering it with a plaque, a replica of the Rosetta stone.



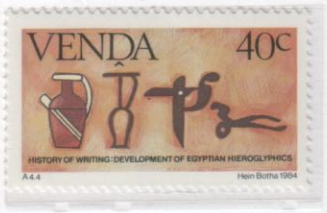




An erroneous bookmark replica in the shape of the Rosetta stone. The script must run horizontally, not vertically.

EGYPT

The pictorial writing of *Hieroglyphs* was very complex and laborious.Very soon, ab. 2900B.C. a more simplified cursive style, called *Hieratic,* was invented and used by the priests. In its latest stage, ab. 900 B.C. an even more cursive style developed, called *Demotic* ("popular"). By now it had no resemblance with the original Hieroglyphs and was mostly used by common people for everyday purposes.



The development of the pictograph "pot", becoming an abstract sign.

Hieroglyphic "alphabet" used as a bookmark, 20th cent.A.D. →



Papyrus Ebers, famous medical script in Hieratic, 1200 B.C.

Royal-divine names are always surrounded by an oval (cartouche) , to protect the bearer of the name from harm.





Today´s modern Egypt proudly uses its ancient symbols; pyramids, pharaos and hieroglyphs.



EGYPT



The first ever stamps depicting hieroglyphic writing, FDC, Apr. 30. 1925.
The cartouche reads " Fuad " , above "Ruler of Upper and Lower Egypt" below "Who lives eternally".



Nefertiti
or
Nofretete

Mini-lesson in Egyptian hieroglyphics.

Name | Pharaonic titularies



Ptolemees (see p.7)

who lives eternally | Ptah | beloved of ..

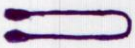
Ptolmes anch djet Ptah mer
which means: Ptolemaios, who lives for ever, beloved of Ptah.



 = nefer = the beautiful

 = t

 = jj = i = come/has come

 = t  = i (at ending of words)

 = denominativ for queen´s name

Nefertiti means: The beautiful woman has come/is coming.

EGYPT

In today's Egypt the Arabic alphabet is in use. It replaced Coptic in the 7th-13th cent. which in its turn put an end to the hieroglyphs, last time used in 395 A.D.



INDUS VALLEY



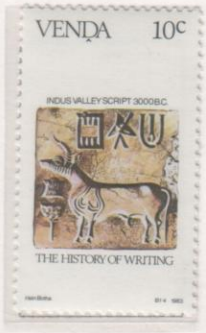
A seal, actual size one inch square, carved from soapstone, found in Moenjo-Daro. The inscription on top edge is still undeciphered.

INDUS VALLEY

Between 2500 B.C. - 1800 B.C. an original writing system developed in the civilizations of the Indus Valley, in present-day Pakistan, around the sites of Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa. The script is not yet deciphered. It has approximately 200 signs, which allows the experts to conclude that it is a mixture of ideograms and phonetic signs.



Inspite of serious attempts, the Indus or the so-called Mohenjo-Daro script still refuses to reveal its meaning.





The few remaning inscriptions were carved on stone seals and monuments.



Three extinct scripts; Indus script, Cuneiform and Egyptian Hieroglyphs and one still in use; Chinese.

Chinese

EAST ASIA

Ranking among the most ancient of scripts, the earliest Chinese signs appeared maybe about 2000 B.C., bearing fully pictographic characters, evolving a couple of hundred years later into increasingly abstract and complex symbols. As the writing never developed into an alphabetic system, there was always a constant need of conceiving new characters. Thus, about 1400 B.C,there were some 2500 diff. characters, but today, there are roughly 50000 (not all in use). To read a daily newspaper, you must master at least 1600 symbols, to pass the Official Chinese Language Test, you must know 2600.



Early pictographic characters, still recognizable for their meaning, carved in bones, tortoise shells and later bronze vessels.



Early characters



The evolution of the pictorial sigh for "pot". The original form has become a highly abstract sign.

Zhou Dynasty
11-8th cent. BC



3rd cent.BC
"Small Seal"



Han Dynasty
2nd cent. AD



Modern text from the Cultural Revolution



Having established a unified China in 221 B.C. the first feudal emperor of China, Qin Shi Huang (right, " him with the Terracotta Army!"), set forth a range of reforms, including a standardization of the script, today called "Small Seal Characters"(ab 3000 signs). Until then, different characters were in use in the different warring states.

Man = 人

Dog = 犬

Tree = 木

Pig = 猪



Number of strokes plays a vital role when writing a sign. Most Chinese characters contain two elements, one semantic and one phonetic.

Plough = 耕



Earth = 土也



Today, Chinese is the oldest writing system in use. Except for a minor "spelling" reform in the 1950´s to simplify the writing of the 2200 most common characters (by using less number of strokes) it´s basically the same as it was more than 3000 years ago.

SOUTH EAST ASIA

Japanese

The first written records date from the early 8th century, using Chinese characters called *Kanji.* Very soon, two different native scripts arose, *Hiragana* and *Katakana.* Modern Japanese writing is a mixture of Chinese characters (ab. 2100 diff. in daily use) and the two kana scripts, which are syllabic and have 95 diff. signs. Contrary to the kanji characters, which are ideograms(logograms), representing words, the kana signs have phonetic values like Roman letters.

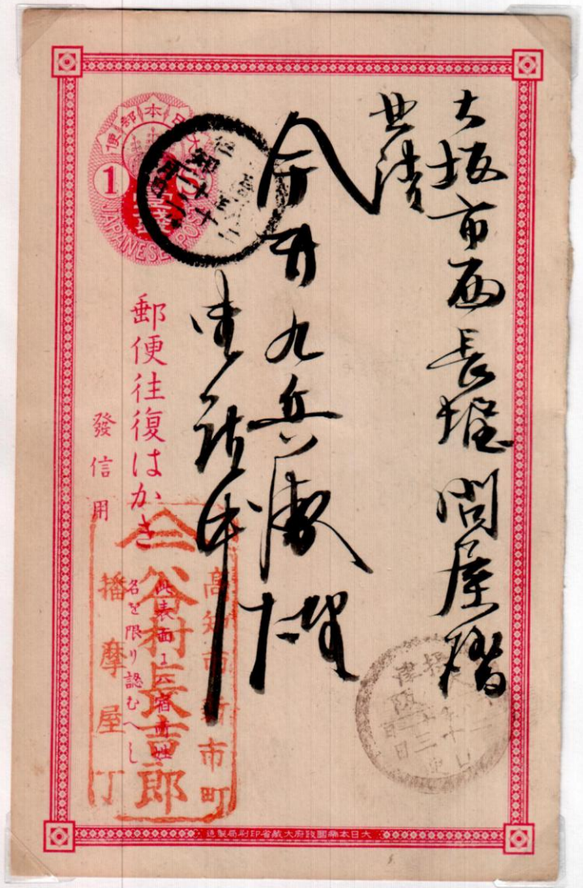
Part of the kana alphabets

	Hiragana					Katakana				
k	か ka	き ki	く ku	け ke	こ ko	K カ ka	キ ki	ク ku	ケ ke	コ ko
s	さ sa	し si	す su	せ se	そ so	S サ sa	シ si	ス su	セ se	ソ so

Hiragana is used together with kanji roots to inflect verbs and adjectives and for various other functions.

Katakana is for the writing of loan words, emphasis, (like italics in English), names of plants, animals, minerals and scientific and technical terms..

Earlier Japanese was written vertically from right to left, Today horizontally writing from left to wright is also common.



Same text in Chinese and Japanese characters.





"Monkey" written calligraphically in 10 different ways, using both kana and kanji characters.

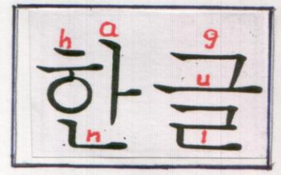
Korean

The oldest Korean literature, from the end of the 11th century, was written in Chinese characters, called *Hanja.* A purely Korean script, *Hangul*, was introduced in 1443 by king Sejong and modern Korean script differs little from it. Original-form Chinese characters are also used for the numerous Chinese loan words.

Hangul, the Korean alphabet.



Each letter consists of two or more elements, a consonant and a vowel, making Korean a unique syllabary in the world.



The word Hangul, written in *Hangul*

The first Korean stamps had Chinese, Korean and Roman texts.



Chinese

Roman

Korean

King Sejong, the originator of Hangul and the book that introduced it.



Today's Korean script is a combination of Hangul and Hanja (Chinese characters,) but Hangul is gaining ground more and more, especially in North Korea.

Books were printed in China, wooden-type, with loose "letters", before the end of the 1st. millenium, much earlier than in Europe. Metallic printing was invented in Korea, first half of the 13th cent., clearly preceding Gutenberg.

Metal print



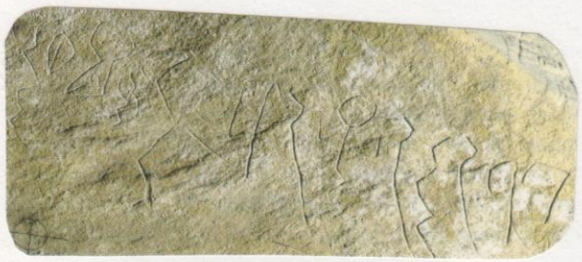
Movable-type metallic printing. The oldest extant book dates back to 1377.



Wooden print

THE MEDITERRANEAN AREA (Phoenician)

At the crossroads of great civilizations with different writing traditions, hieroglyphs from Egypt and cuneiforms from former Mesopotamia, the eastern part of the Mediterranean coast, appr. today´s , Middle East, was a fertile soil for developping new writing systems. There was a need of simpler writing methods to facilitate trade and business activities. However, the idea of a more practical script, one letter one sound, arose among Semitic guest-workers, merchants, soldiers working in Egypt. Finding the hieroglyphic writing too complicated they invented a simpler one, with a restricted number of signs.



This inscription, a kind of graffiti, almost 4000 years old, insized along a trade route in Middle Egypt, may be the forerunner of our alphabetical script.

The new script, also found on the Sinai Peninsula, spread north, inherited by the Canaanites. These Semitic signs remind of their hieroglyphic ancestors, ab. 1700 BC.



alef = ox
sound A



bayit = house
sound B

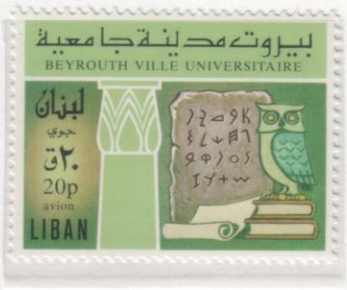


mayim = water
sound M



Proto- Phoenician

Byblos, in today´s Lebanon, is probably the place where the first of several Phoenician alphabets arose, 11th cent BC, based on the Semitic characters. Being a maritime nation the Phoenicians carried and spread their alphabet, and the idea of an easy way of writing, when travelling all over the Mediterranean Sea.



Phoenician



Punic and Greek

Punic, the writing of Carthage, is very close to Phoenician script out of which it originated. It lost its importance when Rome defeated the Carthagians in 146 BC.

Tifinagh





Punic was in use from 10th - 2nd cent.BC

Tifinagh goes back to the old Lybi-co-Berber script,(3rd cent.BC - 3rd cent. AD), assumed to be of Phoenician origin. Today it is used by the nomadic Tuareg tribes.

MEDITERRANEAN AREA



The famous Mesha Stele written in the Phoenician alphabet, also called the Moabite Stone, as the language is Moabite, c. 850 BC. In this period, Phoenician letters were used to write not only the Phoenician language, but also Hebrew, Canaanite and Moabite.

The letter A or aleph used as a motif in the date cancellation .

There exists a great similarity of form and number of signs (22) between the Phoenician, Canaanite(Palestinian) and Aramaic writing systems.



The letter (sound) A presented in different writing systems.

Phoenician



Canaanite



South-Arabic



South-Arabic has 29 letters and can only indirectly be derived from the Phoenician prototype. It has no relationship to today`s Arabic. It became the basis of classical Ethiopian (Ge'ez) and today`s Amharic. (see Ethiopia, p.54).

Ugarit
Phoenician
Korean
Hebrew
Telugu
Devanagari
Egypt.hierogl.



In the background mostly Indian scripts.

THE MEDITERRANIAN ARA (Hebrew)

The independent (old) Hebrew script appeared in the 9th cent. BC, having itrigin in the Phoenician, which in its turn goes back to Protosinaitic pictographs, reminiscent of those of the hieroglyphs. In Biblical times Canaar was the summerized name for Hebrew, Phoenician and other related languages in the land of Canaan.



On the stamps; the complete Hebrew alphabet, comprising 22 consona. On the tabs; their corresponding Proto-sinaitic origins.



Canaanite characters



The Siloam inscription (on the tab), 8th cent. BC, in Ancient Hebrew, engraved on the rock wall of Hezekiah's Tunnel, mentioned in the Bible.



Old Hebrew on seals, about 800-700 BC. In the Old Testament, Hebrew is called the language of Canaan.

Background text (on the right hand stamp the sheet);Tempel scroll from 132-135 A.D. Background text (left hand stamp); Modern Hebr from 1947, the Declaration of Independence(excerpt).



Hebrew script has not changed since the characters turned into square rectangular forms, 2nd cent. BC, influenced by the Aramaic which was spoken by most of the Jews from 500-200 BC.



As vowels are missing in written Hebrew there is the possibility of using dots and other marks to indicate differen vowel sounds. (see tab)





Eliezer Ben-Yehuda 1858-1922, journalist and advocate for the use of Modern Hebrew in everyday life. After 1700 years of silence Hebrew became a spoken language again.

MEDITERRANIAN AREA (Greek 1)

The oldest remnants of the Greek language are the Linear A and B scripts (see Aegean W.) on the island of Crete. However, some time before 850 BC. the Greeks took over and gradually modified the complete 22-letter Phoenician alphabet, adding three own letters ϕ phi, X chi, Ψ psi and later Ω omega.



Prince Kadmos

Myth says it was the Phoenician prince Kadmos, who brought the alphabet to the Greeks.



Early Greek from 720 BC. The Phoenician characters are clearly recognizable.





Archaic Greek, 5th cent. BC.

As the Phoenician script only marked the consonants, five of them, representing sounds not existing in Greek, were turned into vowels to comply with the Greek sound system. The concept of one letter one sound was completed, which meant the birth of the first modern phonetic alphabet, having both vowels and consonants.



Classical Greek

MEDITERRANIAN AREA (Greek II)

There were great regional differences in writing archaic Greek. By adopting the local alphabet of Ionia, in 403 BC, the state of Athens standardized the writing of the 24 Greek capital letters, which was to be known as Classical Greek and was to influence all future Western civilizations.



The oldest forms of Classical Greek letters are majuscule forms, upright and straight capitals often carved in stone.

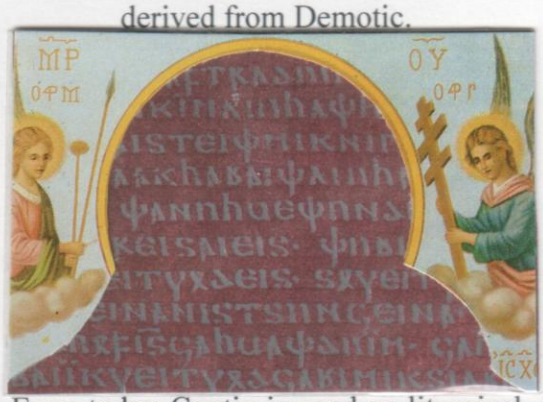
On soft materials a less formalized writing style developed. Greek script on papyrus, 1-2 nd cent. AD.



Since the 2nd cent. AD Coptic uses the Greek alphabet, adding 8 own letters derived from Demotic.



Through the military conquests of Alexander the Great, 336-323 B.C, from Egypt to the Indus Valley, Greek became a world language and the pillar of the Hellenistic culture. It became also the ancestor of numerous other scripts such as Etruscan, Roman, Armenian,Georgian, Glagolitic, Cyrillic, Coptic and others too.



Even today Coptic is used as liturgical script by Egyptian Christians.



Greek on coin from Ethiopia, 4 th cent. AD.



First book printed in Greek, from 1476.



In the Middle Ages the so called uncial writing developed, rounded block letters of about equal size, used for literary and religious manuscripts. These evolved later on into minusculs.

Greek uncials, 11th cent.



Handwritten Greek,19th cent.

Modern Greek differs very little from ancient Greek.

WESTERN EUROPE (Roman)

Based on the Greek and Etruscan alphabets, the Roman (Latin) one had developed in the 3rd cent. B.C. into having 21 letters. Two more, X and Y , were added a bit later, about 100 B.C. This 23-letter alphabet then gradually spread all over the western part of the Roman Empire. In the eastern part, Greek persevered. Today, with some additional modifications, all Western as well as many non- European languages too, make use of this script.

Etruscan



The Etruscans were the dominating people before the Roman ascendant. Their script, borrowed from the Greek in the 8th cent. BC, became an intermediary link between Roman and Greek.

Our word "alphabet" is derived from the first two letters of the Greek alphabet, *alpha* and *beta.*

Classical Roman



Here is the historical background of our two first letters A and B. (se also Medit. Area)

	Proto-Semitic (Canaanite)	Phoenician	Archaic Greek	Classical Greek	Latin
A	= alef (means *ox)*	= alep (sound a)	= alpha		A
B	= bayit (means *house*)	= bet (sound b)	= beta		B



Classical Roman letters, also called "capitalis quadrata" were used primarily on monuments. The letters show great elegance and dignity and have served ever since as models for letter forms.



For everyday use the Romans had a simpler and less formalized handwriting, today called *rustica.*



WESTERN EUROPE

In the Middle Ages there was no uniform writing system dominating in Europe. Literacy was more or less restricted to the realm of the monasteries, monks being the only literate class. Under the reign of Charlemagne, 742-814, a standardized handwriting, the so-called *Caroline minuscule*, was promoted.



A somewhat modernized version of the Caroline minuscule, named after Emperor Charlemagne.



Handwriting 9th cent. "Lustenau"



10th cent.



The oldest written document in the Castilian language from 977.



The Irish monks had an important role in promoting literacy and Christianity. They even invented a script of their own, *Gaelic*, 8th cent., having 18 characters, based on Roman letters.

Gaelic



WESTERN EUROPE

A further development of the Caroline minuscule was the so-called *Gothic* script, around the 11th and 15th centuries. There are many variations of it, but in general the strokes became straighter, bolder and more pointed. It became the earliest model for printer´s type in Germany.



Danish royal hand-script in Latin, 11th century.



In the Middle Ages all books were written by hand.



Gothic style, 13th cent.

Gothic scripts



14th cent.



14th cent.



15th cent.



J. Gutenberg
1390's - 1468

Thanks to the invention of book printing, the mid-15th cent. by the German Johannes Gutenberg, writing became gradually more standardized and more available for a greater part of the population.



Gutenberg's movable metal types.

History Of Writing

WESTERN EUROPE

Page from an **INCUNABLE**
(book printed 1500 or earlier)

des herrē treū das ers dem mañ stete lassen will er enbreche es jm mit seiner vnschuld das můß er wol thůn & mā můg jn dann überzeügen das er es jm vor gericht gesetzt hab. was aber der herr menlich leyhet das steet auff des mannes treū ob er es laß oder in thů nach seinem gelübt der herr enmůg jn des überzeügē daz er es bey lehenrecht gelobt habe. dē gůt alsō gelassen wirt der ist nit pflichtig daz gůt auff zů lassen vmb losung wider des herren sin noch nyemand an den es gehört nach seines vaters tod er hab es jm gelobt zelassen. wer sich gůt zů saget vō satzunge daz jm gelihen sey der spricht vnrecht. weñ satzung mag keiner leihen soll man gůt setzen alsō es helffend sey das soll geschehen vor des landes richter alsō daz man die dingpflichtigē zů gezeügē habe. sol aber lehnung geschehen alsō daz es helffend sey das soll geschehē vor des herrē mānen das mans gezeüg habe. Gelihene satzunge ist weder lehen noch satzunge was der herr menlichen leihet das ist recht lehen oder erb lehen oder bürglehē oder gedinge an eines benanten mannes gůtt oder wartunge an eines vnbenanten mannes gůt wo es dē herren ledig wurde.

¶ Glosa.

HJe vor ist gesprochen wie ein herr seinen schilte nyderet mit manschafft vñ damitt seiner mañ lehen verleüst. Jn disem gegenwertigē capitel will vns dz recht entscheiden von einer sunderlichen weise lehenrechtes. vñ ist ein sach die die satzunge antrifft. das ist zeuernemen das gar vil dinges dauon kompt jm rechten beyde zů lehenrecht vnnd auch zů lantrecht. Seid dañ soviel verwortes auff die sach geet darumb sölt jr ansehen diß gegenwertig capitel. weñ damit seind bekorzet alle leůt darumb ist not zů entscheyden was vnderscheyd sey zwischen satzunge vnd lehen vnd verkanffung vnd můtunge. ¶ Zum ersten von der satzunge. satzung mag geschehē in dreyerley dingen. Zů dem ersten an eigen vnd an erben. Zů dem andern mal an farender hab. Zů dem dritten mal an zinsen vnd an geschossen vnd an anderley gülte. An eygen vnd an erbe soll so gethan satzung geschehē die soll geschehen vor dem richter vor den schöppen vnd vor andern dingpflichtigē. vt. C. de pignō. l. creditores. ¶ Que. Nů möcht einer hier auff fragen vnd sprechen. Nach dem mal das man eygen vñ erbe on erben gelübte mit gelassen mag möcht man dañ eygen vnd erbe on erben vrlaube mit versetzen. ¶ Solutio. diß verantwurten etlich vnd sprechen sy mügen es nit versetzen noch verkümern noch in keinerley weise auß jren gewerē lassen vnd beweisen das alsō wölich mā ein gůt in gewelten vnd gewer en hat vnd damit besitzt on allerley widersprache jar vnd tag der hat ein gewere daran. vt insti. de vsuca. et longi. temporis prescrip. §. j. Vnd gewůne yener ein gewere darmit möchtē sich die erben verschweigen an jrem gůte. weñ wölich man ein vrteil vindē höret vñ wölich gabe er sinnet vnd widerspricht er sey nit zů der zeyt seyd mag er sy nicht widersprechen. vt insti. de longi. temporis prescrip. et possessio. §. et cū hac. Alsō wurd dañ das gůtt verweret gegen den erben daz wär vnrecht Jtem nach dē mal das der sun sein erbe noch sein eygē on der erben vrlaube mag nit gelassen er es dañ nit gelassen mag er es nicht versetzen. vt in authenticis de mandatis principū. §. oportet col. iij. ¶ Cōtra. diß ist vnrecht weñ es ist nicht natürlichē weñ das einer ein ding last des eygen es ist. vt insti.



AUGSBURG: Johann Schönsperger 1499.

EYKE VON REPGOW: Remissorium.

WESTERN EUROPE

Gutenbergs' movable types (letters) were very close to the book hand of the mid 15th cent., i.e. the late Gothic style. With some modifications, such as artistically more elaborated capital letters, these Gothic or Old German types were to dominate book printing in great part of Europe in the centuries to follow. In Sweden it was abandonned in the middle of the 19th cent, in Germany as late as in the 1930´s.



William Caxton (1420-1491), the first book printer in England. Gothic style is also known as *black letter* type. The text is from 1493.



In Germany, Gothic script was widely used until the 1930's.

First printed books.



Holland, 1477



Sweden, 1483



"Biblia på Svensko" in Gothic characters (cancellation). The Bible or other religious literature was the most common book to be printed as famous " first ".

typefaces

WESTERN EUROPE

As a consequence of the humanistic revival in 15th century Italy, Renaissance was in full blossom, the art of writing there took an other course of development than in Germany. The ambition of the scolars to return to ancient Latin sources made them devise an alternative to Gothic writing, called *Antiqua* or Humanistic writing, only slightly different from the types you are reading right now.



Divina Comedia printed in 1472.

Antiqua is much brighter and more spacious compared to the dark, straight and pointed types of Gothic. It first appeared in Venice in 1470. Today it has superseded Gothic in all parts of the Roman-letter-writing world.



↑ ↑

Gothic and Antiqua

Antiqua became the basis for Roman letters in printing. Famous printers such as Garamond (France) 16th cent, and Bodoni (Italy) 18th cent, have greatly influenced the shaping of the letterforms.

Helvetica





G.Bodoni



Antiqua by Garamond



New-Antiqua by Bodoni

Helvetica, from 1957, is a very popular typeface with straight, neutral lines. It stands for modernity.

Today`s most common typeface is "Times New Roman", exactly what you are reading at this moment. It was devised by Stanley Morrison and introduced for the English magazine "The Times" in 1932, adopted in due time by Microsoft as standard writing for computers.

An immense number of typefaces are available today, new ones are added constantly, which makes any classification an impossible task

A small sample of modern typefaces, their names given in their originality



Fancyful and spectacular typefaces are common in entertainment and advertising.







handwriting

WESTERN EUROPE

Gutenberg`s handprinting was replaced during the centuries by printing machines. Today, with the help of computer keyboards and laser setting of types, printing procedures have been revolutionized once again. Every PC-user is able to make his own printings and publications, choosing between a multitude of fonts and typefaces.



Electronic word processing.



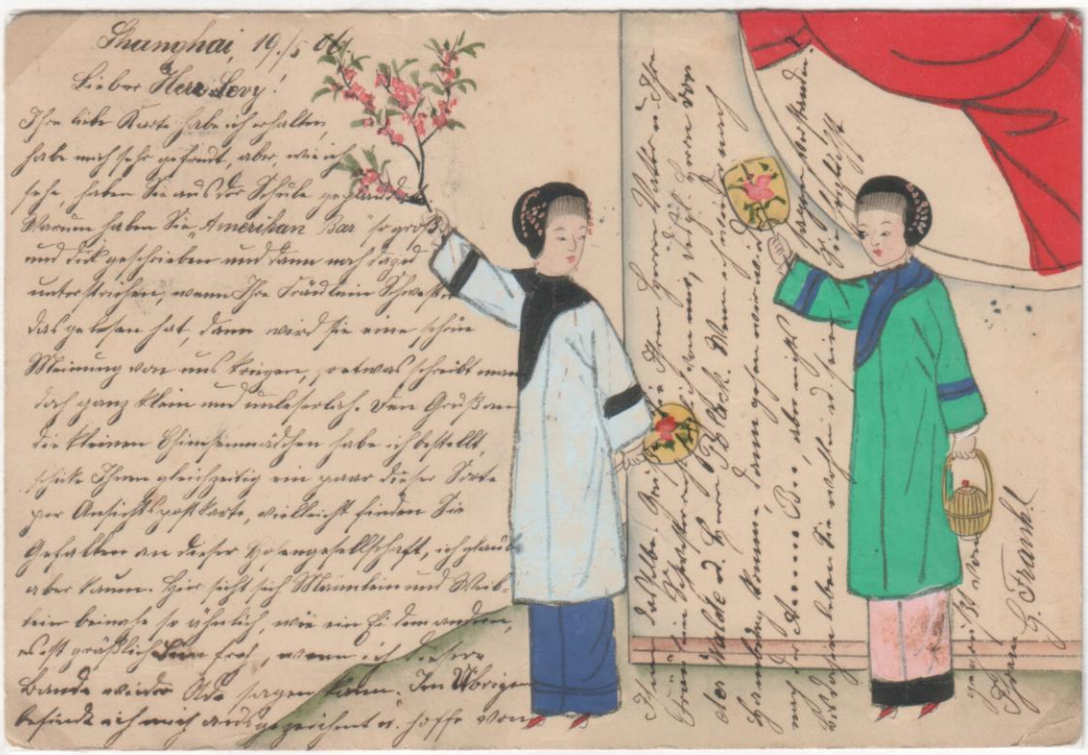
Laser setting of types.



PC alphabet (Roman) with additional characters.

Handwriting

Handwriting was the most common way of communicating at distance before the advent of technical means like typewriters, personal computers, smartphones etc... . The characteristics of your handwriting could relate to your identity and disclose something of your character.



A handwritten postcard(in German) from 1905, sent from Shanghai to Hamburg.

Most people have, and always had, a fluent, cursive style, slanting mostly to the right. Can modern technology become a threat to the survival of handwriting, or ....?







CENTRAL AMERICA



Two pages from the Dresden Codex, a sacred almanach written in Mayan hieroglyphs.

CENTRAL AMERICA

Far from Euroasia, independently from any outer influence, writing was invented in the New World as well. Five or six different scripts have been documented so far. It was the Olmec people, not the Mayas, who devised the first writing system, a kind if pictographic symbols, not unlike the first attempts in the Old World.

Part of the Cascajal bloc.



Olmec script

OLMEC

This stone block from 900 BC, found in 1999 in Cascajal, near San Lorenzo, south Mexico, in the Olmec heartland, contains 62 glyphs (symbols), arranged in horizontal rows. It might be the oldest script on American soil. The Olmec civilization flourished from 1200 - 400 BC.





Zapotec writing, still undeciphered.

ZAPOTEC

The Zapotecs, in south-western Mexico, built an empire around the old city of Monte Albán and invented their own writing system, earlier considered as the oldest one in Mesoamerica, ab. 500-600 BC Its a kind of pictographic drawings, representing deities, rulers, animals, real and mythological objects.



The earliest Mayan text from 230 BC, found in a pyramid in Guatemala.

MAYA

The best documented and deciphered pre-Columbian writing system is the classic Maya script. The cradle of ancient Mayan culture comprises south Mexico, the Yucatan Peninsula, present-day Guatemala and Belize. A hieroglyphic script was invented having about 350 main symbols, logograms,that could be combined with equally numerous subsidiary symbols, which marked the phonetic (syllabic) values, thus a non-alphabetic script.The Maya script was in cotinuous use from 230 BC until the arrival of the conquistadors, begin.16th cent AD.

Most of the written Maya documents, treating religious and astronomical themes, were destroyed by the Europeans or the Aztecs, who subdued the Mayas. Only few of the codicis (books) remain, named after the cities where they now repose.



Dresden Codex



Madrid Codex

Maya calender

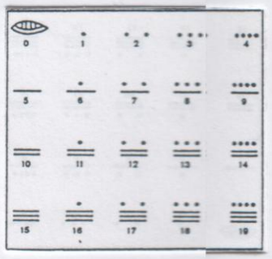


In Astronomy the Mayans attained their highest scientific achievment.Their sophisticated observations enabled them to elaborate a calendar of much greater exactitude than the Gregorian one.

Names and symbols of the months



Mayan numerals from zero to nineteen, a vigisimall system, using base 20. Notice the symbol for zero, which made it possible to calculate with high numbers.





Quetzalcóatl (feathered serpent) was worshipped as the highest deity in the Mesoamerican mythology. He was the source of all civilization, including writing. Among the Mayas he was called Kukulkan and Gukumatz.



The Russian linguist Yuri Knorozov, (1922-1999) played a major role in the decipherment of the Maya script.







Aztec rulers with their royal emblems or glyphs. The Aztecs had their own pictographic writing, derived mainly from the Zapotec script. Today´s Nahuatl language was that of he Aztecs.

Modernized versions of Mayan glyphs (pictographs).



Modernized Aztec glyphs



PERSIA

Situated between Mesopotamia and the Indus Valley, the area has witnessed the development of a multitude of scripts and cultures, such as: Elam (with own hieroglyphic script), the Aryans, the Old Persian Kingdom, the Parthians and the Sassanians. All the dynasties developed their own scripts and most often several scripts were in use at the same time. As for the cuneiform period see Mesopot. Since the Islamic conquest in the middle of the 7th century, the Arabic alphabet is in use in today's Iran.



Aramaic

Aramaic replaced Cuneiform in the Old Persian Empire for everyday purposes in court and administration. It was also widely used beyond Persia's borders.

Aryan scripts were in use from 10th cent. B.C.-3rd cent. B.C. alongside with other scripts.



Aryan

Avestan



Avestan was the sacred language of the Zoroastrianism, 6th cent. B.C., the desciples of Zoroastra (559-522 B.C.)

Nestorian script



The writing of Nestorianism, a variety of Christianism, used mostly in Persia, by the followers of Patriarch Nestorius of Constantinopel, 5th cent. A.D.





Parthian

The Parthian script, a descendant of the Aramaic script was used in the Parthian Empire (227 B.C.-224 A.D.).



Pahlavik

The Pahlavik script, also a descendant of Aramaic, followed in the Sassanian Empire (226-651 A.D.).

PERSIA



The earliest Persian scripts comprised mostly Cuneiform characters.



A rich multitude of scripts (alongside and after the Cuneiform period).

INDIA (Brahmi, Sanskrit, Devanagari, Bengali)

Today´s India can be regarded as a real treasure box of writing. At least eleven different alphabets are in use, almost all of them emanating from Sanskrit, which is based on the old Brahmi script. The origin of Brahmi is debated, but most Western scolars agree on the probable influence of the Aramaic and Kharoshti scripts in neighbouring Persian Empire.



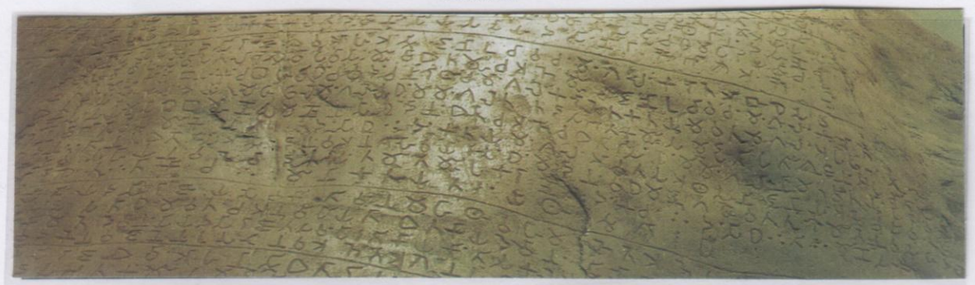
Aramaic

From Middle East the Aramaic script spread through Persia, giving rise to Kharoshti and other scripts, which then extended to Central Asia and India.



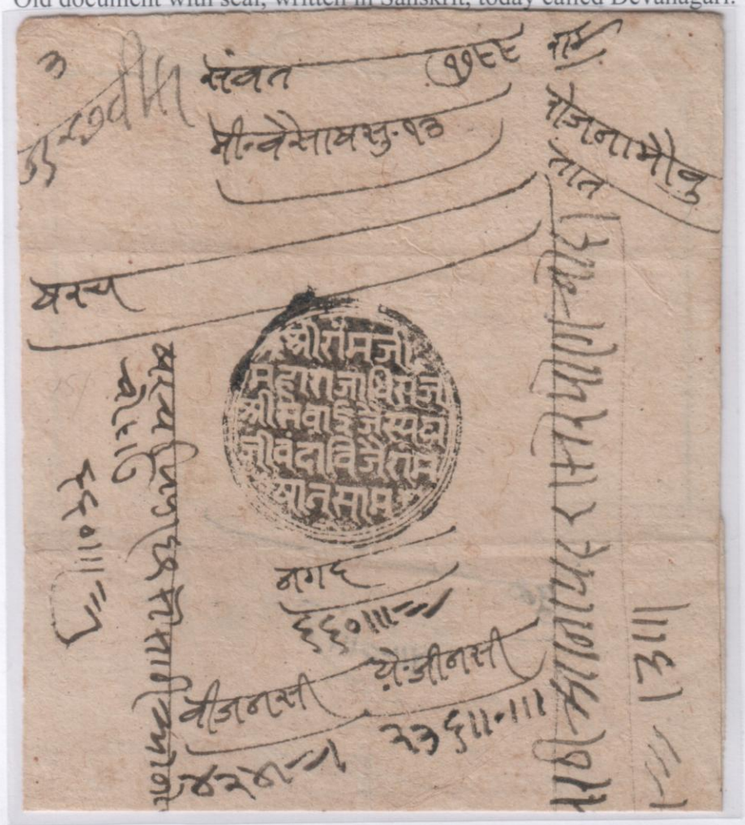
Kharoshti

Brahmi



The best known Brahmi inscriptions are the 14 Rock Edits of Emperor Ashoka, 250-232 BC. The texts proclaim Ashokas conversion to Buddhism and the moral precepts of the new religion.

Old document with seal, written in Sanskrit, today called Devanagari.



Out of various Brahmi scripts arose Sanskrit, a literary language, standardized by Panini, ab. 5th-4th cent. BC, for the correct reading of the Veda texts, widely used, even today, as the primary liturgical and philosophical language of Hinduism and partly Buddhism. The golden age of Classical Sanskrit goes back to the 3rd - 8th cent. AD. All modern Indian scripts (except Urdu), are derived from Sanskrit.

Brahmi numerals



Panini, "the first grammarian", who standardized Sanskrit which means "cultivated language" or "refined speech".

There are fifteen official languages in India. This Indian paper money shows "one rupee" written in these fifteen languages, using eleven different alphabets. From the top: Assamese (in *Bengali* script), Bengali (in *Bengali* script), Gujarati (in *Gujarati* script), Kannada (in *Kannada* or *Kanarese* script), Kashmiri (in *Urdu* or Arabic script), Malayalam (in *Malayalam* script), Marathi (in *Devanagari* script), Oriya (in *Oriya* script), Punjabi (in *Gurmukhi* script), Sanskrit (in *Devanagari* script), Tamil (in *Tamil* script), Telugu (in *Telugu* script), Urdu (in *Urdu* or Arabic script), Hindi *(Devanagari* script, large letters at the lower left), and English (in *Roman* or *Latin* script, large letters at the lower right).





"Vande Mataram", the national song of India until 1946, written by Bankim Chatterjee, who started to simplify Sanskrit to meet the demands of modern times.



Calligraphically written Sanskrit (Hindi).

Hindi



Nepali



Hindi is the most important language written i Devanagari. Also Marathi and other Indian languages use it, as well as Nepali in Nepal.

Bengali



Bengali resembles Devanagari script, though it is generally more slender and sharp. It is used to write, besides the Bengali language, also Assamese, Munda and other minor East Indian languages.

INDIA (Urdu, Devanagari, Oriya)

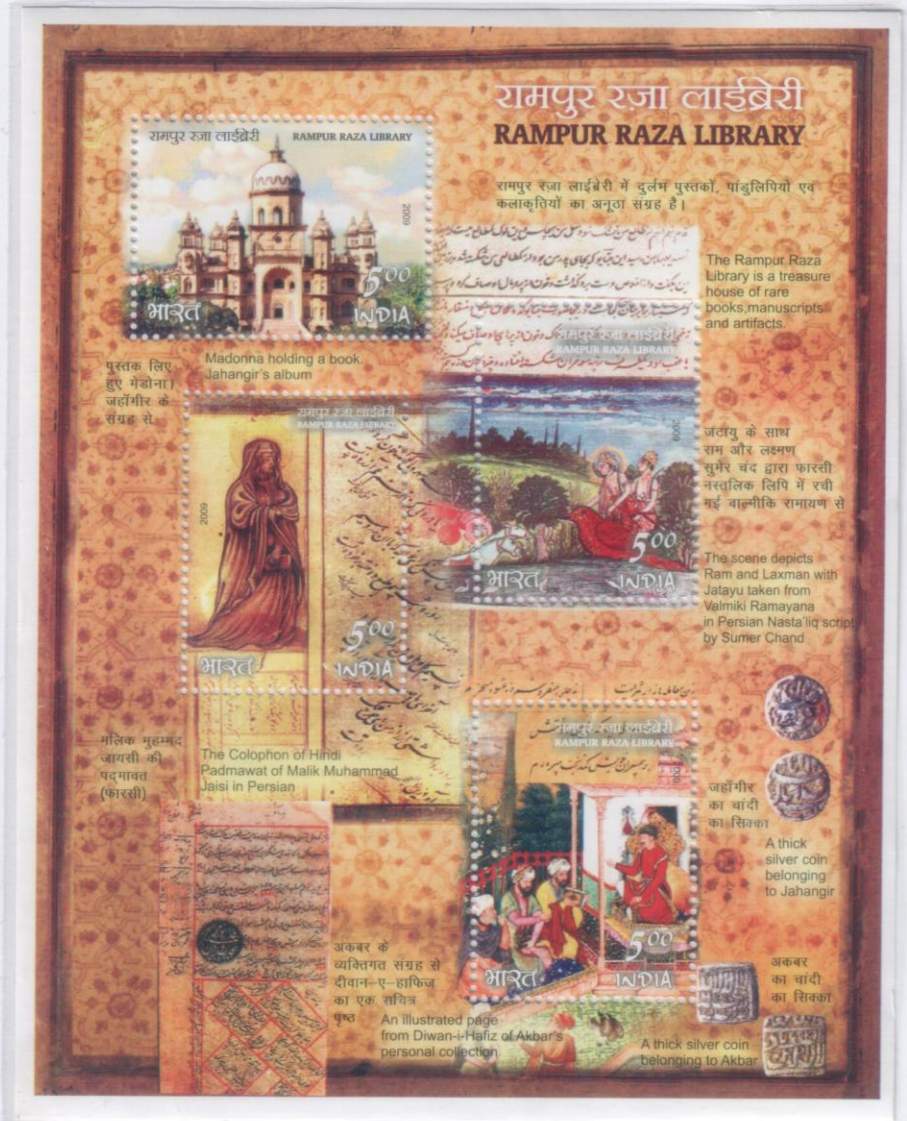
Urdu is basically an Arabic script, with additional letters for Persian and Urdu, used by the Moslem population of India. Urdu is the official language (script) of Pakistan as well (see also "Arab World").

Linguistically, *Hindi* and *Urdu* are the same *language*. Hindi is written in Devanagari script and uses more Sanscrit words, whereas Urdu is written in Perso-Arabic script and uses more Arabic and Persian words.



Mirza Ghalib, famous poet in Persian and Urdu.

The Rampur Raza Library is a treasure house of old Persian and Urdu literature.



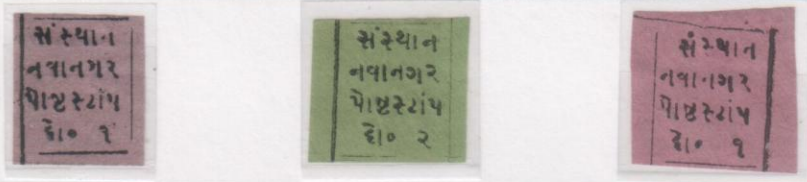
Oriya is in use in the state of Orissa

Oriya resembles the Northern-Indian scripts in structure but instead of a straight line on top, it has a semi-circular line, like a "parade of bald heads".

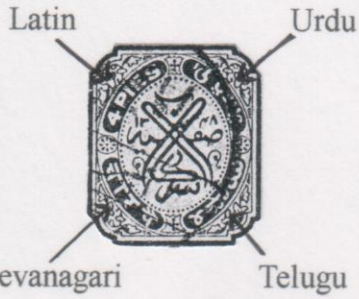


INDIA (Gujarati, Urdu, Kannada)

Gujarati belongs to the Northern Indian scripts.
It resembles Devanagari but its letters have no bars on top.

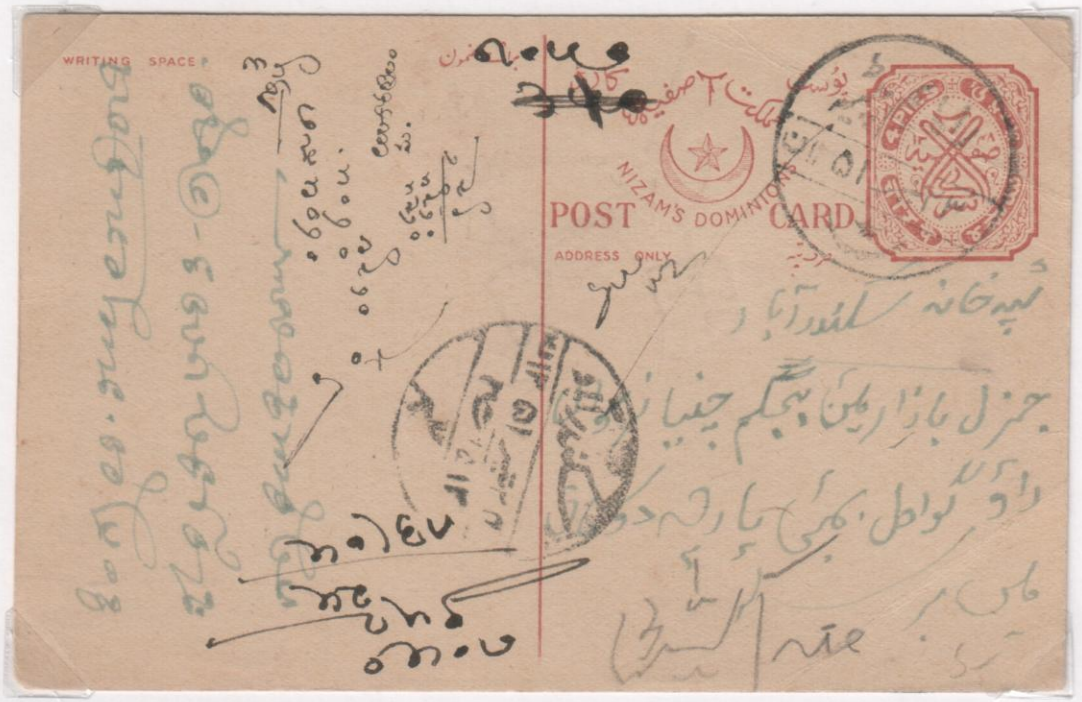


Ordinary stamps with *Gujarati* inscription from the Feudal State of Nawanagar, emitted 1875/88.



Multilingual printed stamp
in four different alphabets.

Old Telugu



Urdu

Kannada

Under colonial time in India, most postal stationaries had their denominations given in four different alphabets.

INDIA (Kannada, Telugu, Malayalam)



All three belong to the Southern Indian scripts, including also Tamil. They are all derived from Sanskrit, having generally a rounded form as a common mark.

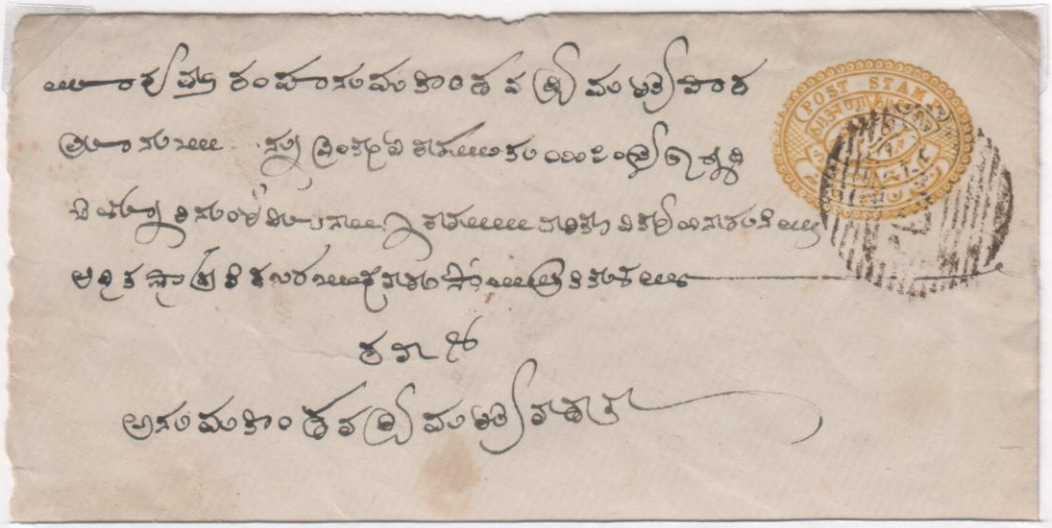
Kannada script (in cancellation) is also called Kanarese.



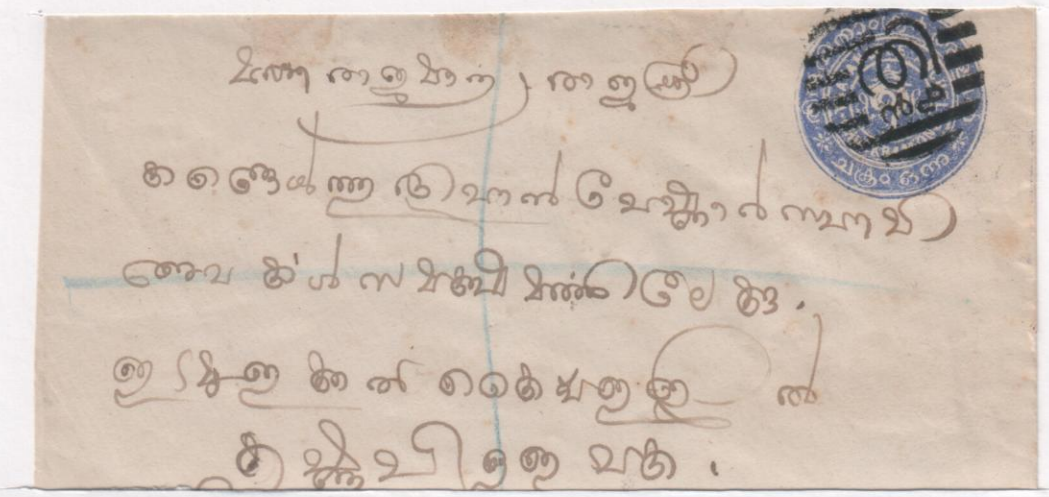
← *Malayalam* is in use in the State of Kerala (former Cochin State). It has all the typical rounded characteristics of the Southern Indian scripts. ←



Telugu



Handwritten *Telugu* script. Telugu resembles Kannada except for its slimmer shapes and hat-forms above the letters.



Malayalam, handwritten and printed (in the printed stamp).

Pali Sinhalese Tibetan

AROUND INDIA

All the countries surrounding the Indian subcontinent use scripts, which have been influenced by the Indian writing systems. On Sri Lanka, *Pali* was the original script to write down the teaching of the Buddha, 139 - 127 B.C. Today it is still used as the canonical language of the Buddhists in many countries.



Pali



Religious texts in Pali, the Tripitaka, written on palm leaves (enlarged).



Sri Lanka has two indigenous alphabets, *Sinhalese* and *Tamil*. Tamil is also used in the Indian State of Tamil Nadu.



Sinhalese

Tamil

Multi-alphabetical from Ceylon. Sinhalese, Tamil, Arabic (book), Latin.



Maldivian

The Maldives is probably the smallest country having an alphabet of its own. It's a very peculiar script, also called *Taana* whitch has been strongly influenced by Arabic.





Tibetan



Chinese

Tibetan

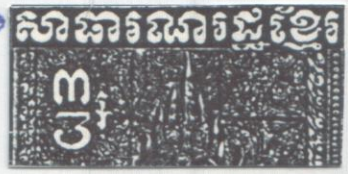
Tibetan is a decendant from the Indian scripts and has changed very little since the 7th century when it was originated. It is also used in Bhutan.

Khmer Thai Burmese
Lao Tagalog

SOUTHEAST ASIA

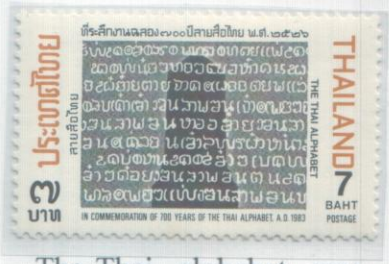
Khmer





The Khmer script, in today`s Cambodia, is the oldest of the Southeast Asian alphabets. It`s earliest inscription goes back to 611, having it`s greatest extension in the 11th - 12th cent. Angkor Vat Kingdom. The origin of the script is traceable to the Indian Brahmi script. Khmer has greatly influenced Thai and Lao writings.

Thai



The Thai alphabet was invented in 1283 by King Ramkanhaeng,having Khmer as a model.

Lao

Modern Lao script was established as late as in the 1960`s. It bears a close resemlance to the Thai and Khmer scripts.



Vietnam



Vietnam is the only country in the area not having an alphabet of its own. The Roman script, Quôc ngu, with additional diacritic symbols, was introduced in the 17th cent. Earlier to the Western influence, different Chinese writing systems were in use.

Burmese



The Burmese letters have a strikingly circular form, influenced by the Southern Indian rounded scripts.

Indonesia



Unknown script
Probably Balinese.

Tagalog





In the Philippines, before the Spanish arrival, Tagalog and other native scripts too, were in use. By time, they were all supplanted by the Roman script.

CENTRAL ASIA (RUNES)



The oldest writng of the pre-Islamic Turkic peoples in Central Asia and northern China is the Kök Turki Runic script, 6th cent. A.D., found near the rivers of Orchon and Yenisei. The origin of these Siberian Runes goes back to Pahlavik (Pehlevi) script (Middle Persian), which is itself derived from Aramaic (see also Persia).

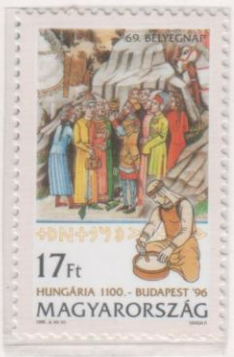




Bilingual inscriptions, Turkic-Chinese, on the commemorative burial stone of Prince Kül Tigin and his brother Bilge Kagan made it possible to decipher the Old Turkish script.



The Old Hungarian Runes bear a great resemblance to the Turkic Runes. The Magyars probably learnt the script in Asia from Turkic peoples and brought it with them, when settling in Central Europe in the 9th cent. A.D. It was mostly used by the Szeklers (Székelyek) in Transylvania.



Uighur Mongolian

CENTRAL ASIA

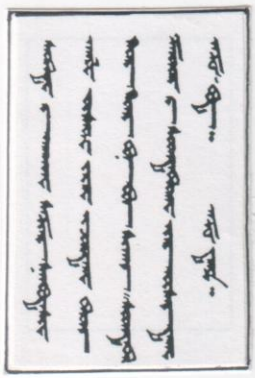
Known mostly for its vast plains and wild conquering nomad tribes, the Central Asian area has given rise to several scripts in the course of history, such as Sogdian, Uighur, Mongolian and Passepa, the script of the Great Mongolian Empire, but also Runic scripts.

Manichaean



Manichaean script was invented in Mesopotamia(Persia) by Mani,216-277 A.D., the founder of the Manichaean religion. The script was widely used in great parts of Central Asia, as a consequence of the Manichaean evangelical activities. It influenced scripts like Sogdian, Uighur and Mongolian.

Old Uighur



Old Uighur was used by the Uighur tribe in Central Asia and western China in the medieval ages. It is written vertically.

Mongolian

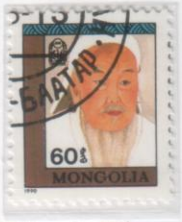


The Mongolian alphabet, adopted from the Uighur, is mostly used in the state of Mongolia. It has an impressive appearance because of the vertical line of each word, just like Uighur.



Passepa

CENTRAL ASIA



Djingis Khan, founder of the Mongolian Empire.



Kubilai Khan, Emperor of China, grandson of Djingis Khan, wanted to replace the Uighur-based Mongolian script by a new one, intended as an official international script of the Chinese Imperial Chancery. He ordered his adviser the Tibetan monk 'P'ags-pa to elaborate it. It was introduced in 1269, based on the Tibetan-Brahmi script. However, the new script, dubbed Passepa, could not receive wide acceptance and waned away after less than a century.

Modern Mongolian around the coin, *Passepa* on the coin.





Various square-formed Mongolian scripts.

CENTRAL ASIA

Chinese Mongolian



Mongolian is used not only in Mongolia, but also in the Chinese province of Inner Mongolia.



In Mongolia the Russian (Cyrillic) alphabet is also widely used, since 1941, to write the Mongolian language.



After converting to Islam (late Middle Age) the Uighurs abandoned their ancient script. Today a modified Arabic alphabet is in use. Eight Arabic letters are omitted, eleven own Uighur letters are added. In the former Soviet Union area Uighur is written in Cyrillic.



Mongolian Tibetan Uighur Chuang

The four Official Minority Scripts of today`s China. Chuang is basically a Latin script with six own letters added.

armenian

CAUCASUS

The Armenian script arose as a consequence of the expansion of Christianity in the Caucasian area. It was the monk Mesrop Mashtotz who invented the script in the fourth century A.D., its model being the Aramaic alphabet.



St Mesrop (361-440), the inventor of the Armenian alphabet.



Armenian script from the 6th century.

Already in the "Cuneiform" period, Armenian belonged to the realm of literacy. On the stamp: Cuneiform writing, incorrectly named "Runic message".





Multilingual cover: addressing in *Cyrillic*, stamp motive *Cuneiforms*, "Armenia" in *Roman* and *Armenian* letters.

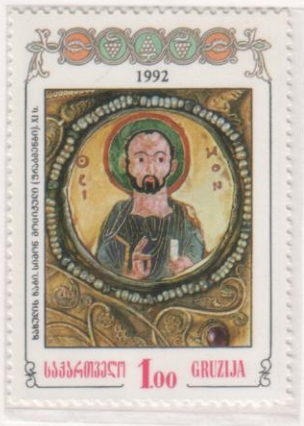
georgian

CAUCASUS

The Georgian script is also a descendant of Aramaic. It arose shortly after the Armenian, its earliest texts dating from the end of the 5th century.



Georgian letters are very rounded, compared to the Armenian ones. In the 11th century, it underwent a significant modification.





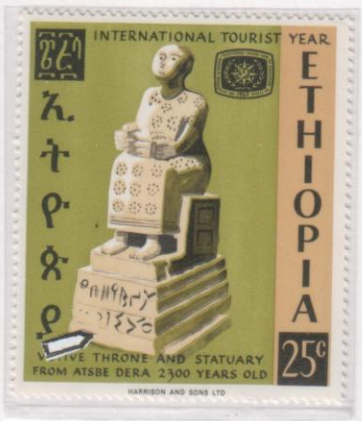
Modern Georgian inflationary cover.

ETHIOPIA

The Amharic script is decended from South Arabic script. It consists of the classical Ethiopian (Ge'ez) alphabet, which is the basis of it, and additional letters adapted to the Amharic language. Other languages in the area also use it such as Oromo, Tigre and Tigrinya.

South Arabic script was used from 7th century B.C. to 6th century A.D. in the kingdom of the Queen of Sheba in Southern Arabia. ⟶





Ge'ez script, the writing of the Ancient Ethiopian Empire.



Modern Ethiopian



A



DDI



S



A



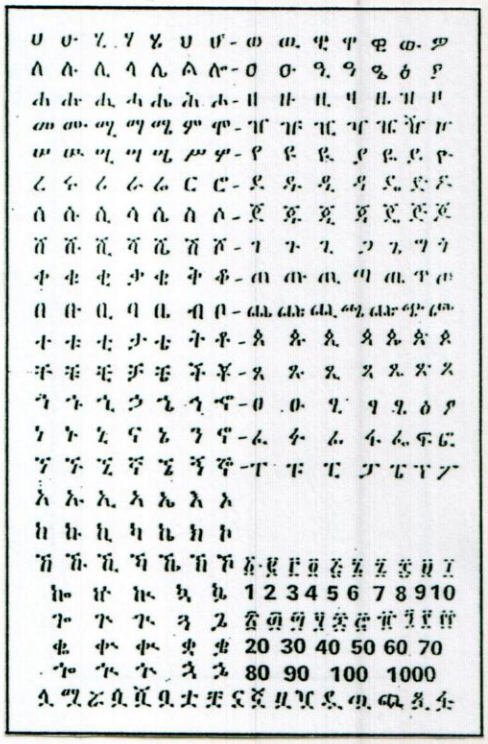
BE



BA

Amharic

AMHARIC (ETHIOPIAN) II



The complete Amharic alphabet.
The script is syllabic.



The new state of Eritrea also uses the Amharic alphabet.





Runic script

NORTH EUROPE

The Runic script is the oldest writing system of the Germanic peoples. It was used from the 3rd - 17th century mainly in Scandinavia and the British Isles, but inscriptions have been found also in Gemany, Poland, Hungary and Russia. The origin of the runes is unknown, but they might be derived from the Latin (or Greek) alphabet, as a result of the close contacts between Roman and Germanic peoples.







Runes from different Nordic countries.



The Jelling Stone, erected about 980 by the famous Danish king Harald Blåtand (Bluetooth).

Runic script

NORTH EUROPE II

Originally the runic alphabet, "futhark", had 24 letters. In the Viking Period, ab.750-1050 AD, it was reduced to 16.

ᚠᚢᚦᚨᚱᚲᚷᚹ ᚺᚾᛁᛃᛇᛈᛉᛊ ᛏᛒᛖᛗᛚᛜᛞᛟ

The older runic alphabet with 24 letters.



The younger "futhark" with 16 letters.



The Rök Stone, first half ot the 9th cent. represents the most comprehensive runic inscription in Europe. The text contains about 800 runes.

Names of old Nordic gods written in runes.

Freja

Heimdal

Tor

Frej

Oden



The Mora Stone.



NORTH EUROPE



Runes and rock carvings.



: Arabic

THE ARAB WORLD

The Arabic script is the most widely spread next to the Latin writing. The area employing it coincides with the area of Moslem influence. It developed out of an Aramaic variety of the Phoenician alphabet with the Nabatean script in northwestern Arabia as a connecting link. The oldest inscriptions are from the beginning of the sixth cent. A.D. The Holy Book, the Koran, was written down about 650.



The Nabatean script.

The Islamic religion was of vital importance for the expansion of the Arabic script. Today it is used at far away places like North Africa, Asia Minor, India, east of China and parts of Central Asia.





Arabic, 11th cent.

Arabic, 12th cent.



: Arabic

THE ARAB WORLD



13th cent.



Part of the Arabic (and Latin) alphabet.



Modern Arabic.



15th cent.



Turkey changed from Arabic to Latin in 1928.



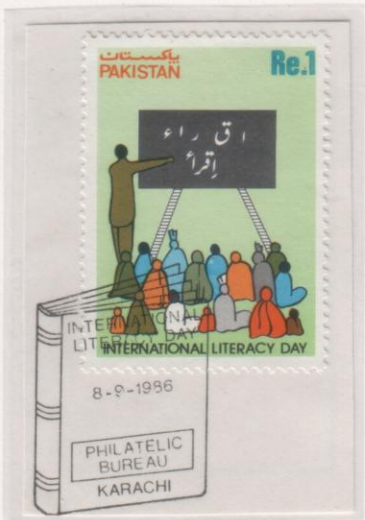
Persian



Urdu



Urdu script in Pakistan and India is the beautiful Nastaliq style of Arabic script. It consists of all the twenty-eight original letters of Arabic, four additional letters for Persian, and four additional letters for Urdu.



It is possible to learn Arabic characters too!

THE SLAVIC WORLD

In order to convert the Slavic peoples to Christianity, two Greek monks and missionairies, Kyrillos(Cyril) and Metodios(Methodius), were sent out from Constantinople by the Byzantine Emperor in 862 A.D. For the translation of liturgical texts, there was a need of a new alphabet, adapted to the Slavic languages.



Cyril and Methodius, and the area of their missionary activities.

The oldest Slavic alphabet is called the *Glagolitic* alphabet. Although popularly attributed to Saints Cyril and Methodius the origin of the script is obscure. It was used for a short period in Moravia and Western Bulgaria, 9th-10th cent, and especially in Croatia, where it was in use as a liturgical script (within the Roman Catholic Church), until the 15th cent.



The Baska tablet, the most important document of early Croatian literacy in Glagolitic script.



The two brothers were later canonized and are called the "Apostels of the Slavs".

THE SLAVIC WORLD

It was in fact not Saint Cyril himself who created the Cyrillic alphabet, but one of his pupils, Kliment of Ohrid and his associates, at the Preslav Literary School in the First Bulgarian Empire. To honor his great master he named the new script *Cyrillic.*



Saint Kliment from Ohrid, the most probable creator of the Cyrillic alphabet.



Monk Kyrillos, source of inspiration of the new alphabet, which is based on the majuscules of the Greek alphabet, with additional signs for the Slavic sounds.

Cyrillic Glagolitic



In most parts of the Slavic world Glagolica was replaced by Cyrillic as a more suitable script for church books. In his struggle for independence from Byzantine influence, Tsar Simeon I of the Bulgarian Empire, replaced Greek by Cyrillic as liturgical script in 893 A.D. That is what later was to become *Old Church Slavonic.*

Tsar Simeon I

Russian

THE SLAVIC WORLD

The Russian language has widely contributed to the extention of the Cyrillic alphabet. Today most Slavic languages use it, as well as non-Slavic languages like Kazakh, Uzbek, Kyrgyz, Tajik and Mongolian. Dozens of minor languages in the former Soviet Union also adopted it.



One of the oldest Russian texts, the Nestor Chronicle from 885 A.D.



Old Church Slavonic texts, 11th-13th cent.



The Russian alphabet. It has been reduced to 33 letters, compared to 43 of the original Cyrillic. The page is taken from Azbuka, the first printed textbook in Russia, 1574.

Ivan Fyodorov, first bookprinter.



Ivan Fyodorov introduced bookprinting in Russia and Ukraina, in 1573.



RUSSIAN ABC

Аа *a*	Бб *b*	Вв *v*	Гг *g*	Дд *d*
Ее *je*	Ёё *jo*	Жж *zj*	Зз *z*	Ии *i*
Йй *j*	Кк *k*	Лл *l*	Мм *m*	Нн *n*
Оо *o*	Пп *p*	Рр *r*	Сс *s*	Тт *t*
Уу *u*	Фф *f*	Хх *ch*	Цц *ts*	Чч *tj*
Шш *sj*	Щщ *sjtj*	Ъъ *hårt tecken*	Ыы *y*	Ьь *mjukt tecken*
Ээ *e*	Юю *ju*	Яя *ja*		

UR UTBILDNINGSRADION

THE SLAVIC WORLD (Cyrillic - Roman)

The extended historical feud between Eastern and Western Christianity, leading eventually to the final break in 1054, implied as well an implicit strife between Roman and Greco-Cyrillic scripts. The liturgical texts of Roman Catholicism were in Latin, while Greek Orthodoxy kept its Greco-Cyrillic letters.

St. Stephan´s Crown



The non-Christian Hungarians were wooed both by Greek and Western missionaries. Hungary´s King Stephan, crowned in 1000 A.D. received his crown as a gift from the Byzantine Emperor, but opted eventually for Roman Catholicism, defining thus the dividing line between Roman and Greco-Cyrillic scripts in Central Europe, roughly in vigour even today.

The enamel-paintings of the Holy Crown have inscriptions in Greek letters, reminding of their Byzantine origin.







In our days the dividing line between Cyrillic and Roman scripts goes right across ex-Yugoslavia and today´s Bosnia.



Romanian changed from Cyrillic to Latin in 1860.



The Serbian alphabet and its founder Vuk S. Karadzic, alongside of several other European national alphabets in Latin script.

EASTER ISLAND

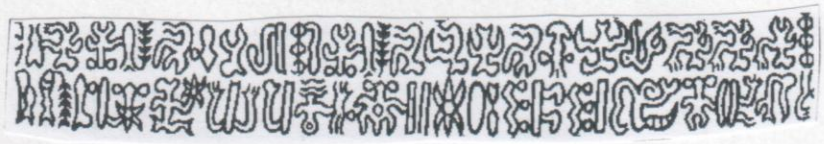
Rongorongo, the hieroglyphic script of Easter Island, has remained a mystery since its discovery. It is Oceania`s only indegenous script, all written on parallel lines, on wooden tablets and staffs, of which only 21 have been preserved.











The script consists of 120 diff. symbols, mainly representing birds, plants, animals, human figures, gods, celestial objects and geometrics.



MULTIALPHABETICALS



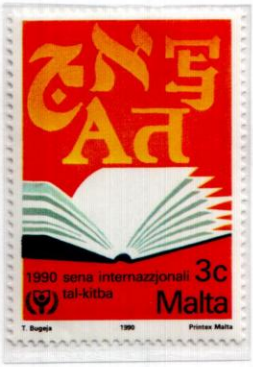
"Red Cross" written in thirty-one different languages, using twelve different writing-systems (alphabets).

Roman

Punic

Greek







The letter, or the sound "a", written in many different ways.

Chinese

Hebrew

Devanagari

Arabic

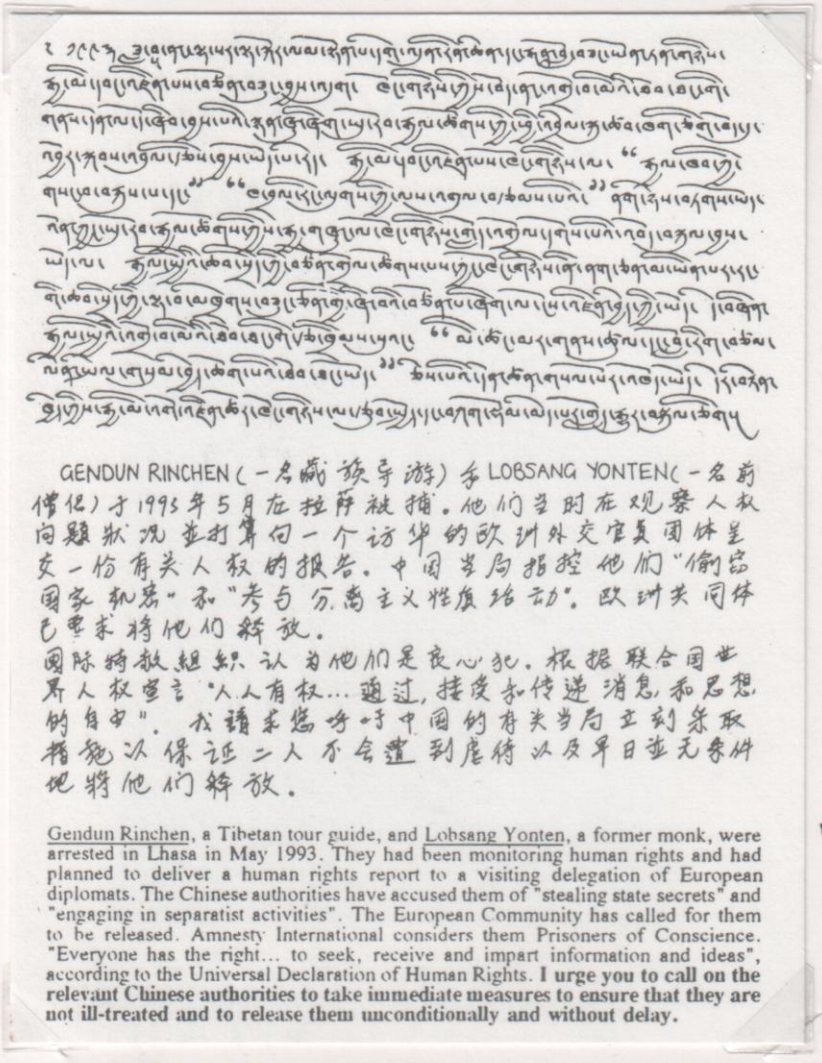


Many people in the world are still unable to read or write.



On FDC stamp: the first letters of several different alphabets.

MULTIALPHABETICALS II



GENDUN RINCHEN (一名藏族导游) 与 LOBSANG YONTEN (一名前僧侣) 于1993年5月在拉萨被捕。他们当时在观察人权问题状况并打算向一个访华的欧洲外交官员团体呈交一份有关人权的报告。中国当局指控他们"偷盗国家机密"和"参与分离主义性质活动"。欧洲共同体已要求将他们释放。
国际特赦组织认为他们是良心犯。根据联合国世界人权宣言"人人有权…通过,接受和传递消息,和思想的自由"。我请求您呼吁中国的有关当局立刻采取措施以保证二人不会遭到虐待以及早日毫无条件地将他们释放。

Gendun Rinchen, a Tibetan tour guide, and Lobsang Yonten, a former monk, were arrested in Lhasa in May 1993. They had been monitoring human rights and had planned to deliver a human rights report to a visiting delegation of European diplomats. The Chinese authorities have accused them of "stealing state secrets" and "engaging in separatist activities". The European Community has called for them to be released. Amnesty International considers them Prisoners of Conscience. "Everyone has the right... to seek, receive and impart information and ideas", according to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. **I urge you to call on the relevant Chinese authorities to take immediate measures to ensure that they are not ill-treated and to release them unconditionally and without delay.**



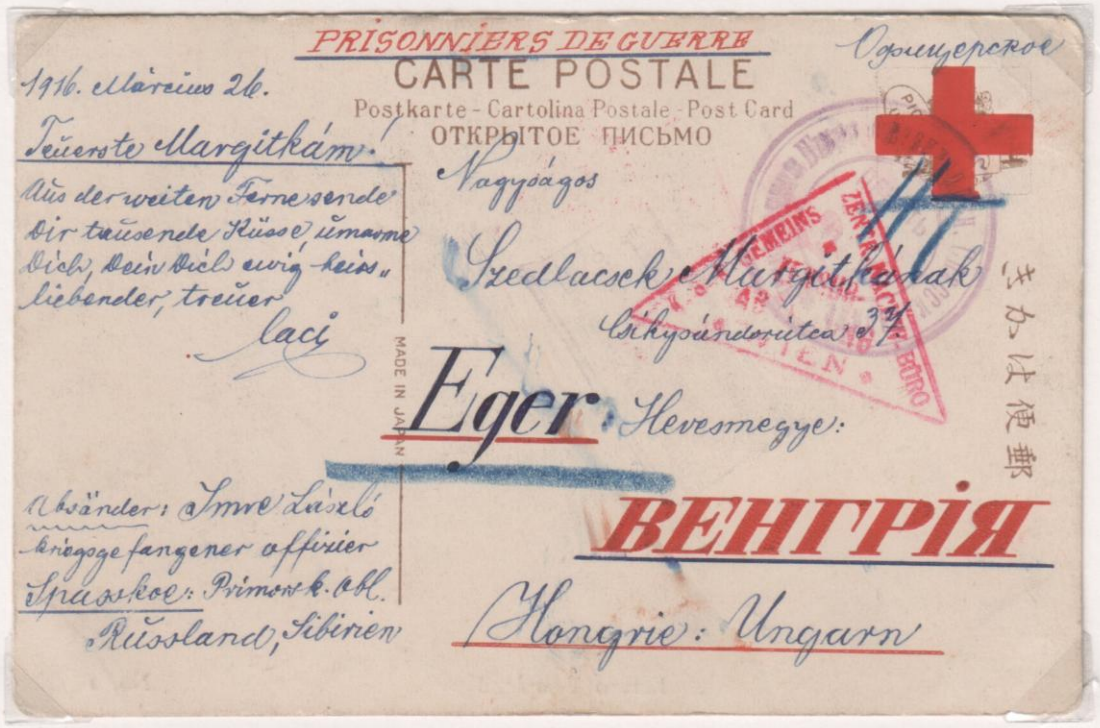
Five different writing-systems: Hebrew, Arabic, Chinese, Cyrillic, Latin.

A multilingual card from Amnesty International written in Tibetan, Chinese and Latin (English) characters.

Latin and Japanese



MULTIALPHABETICALS III

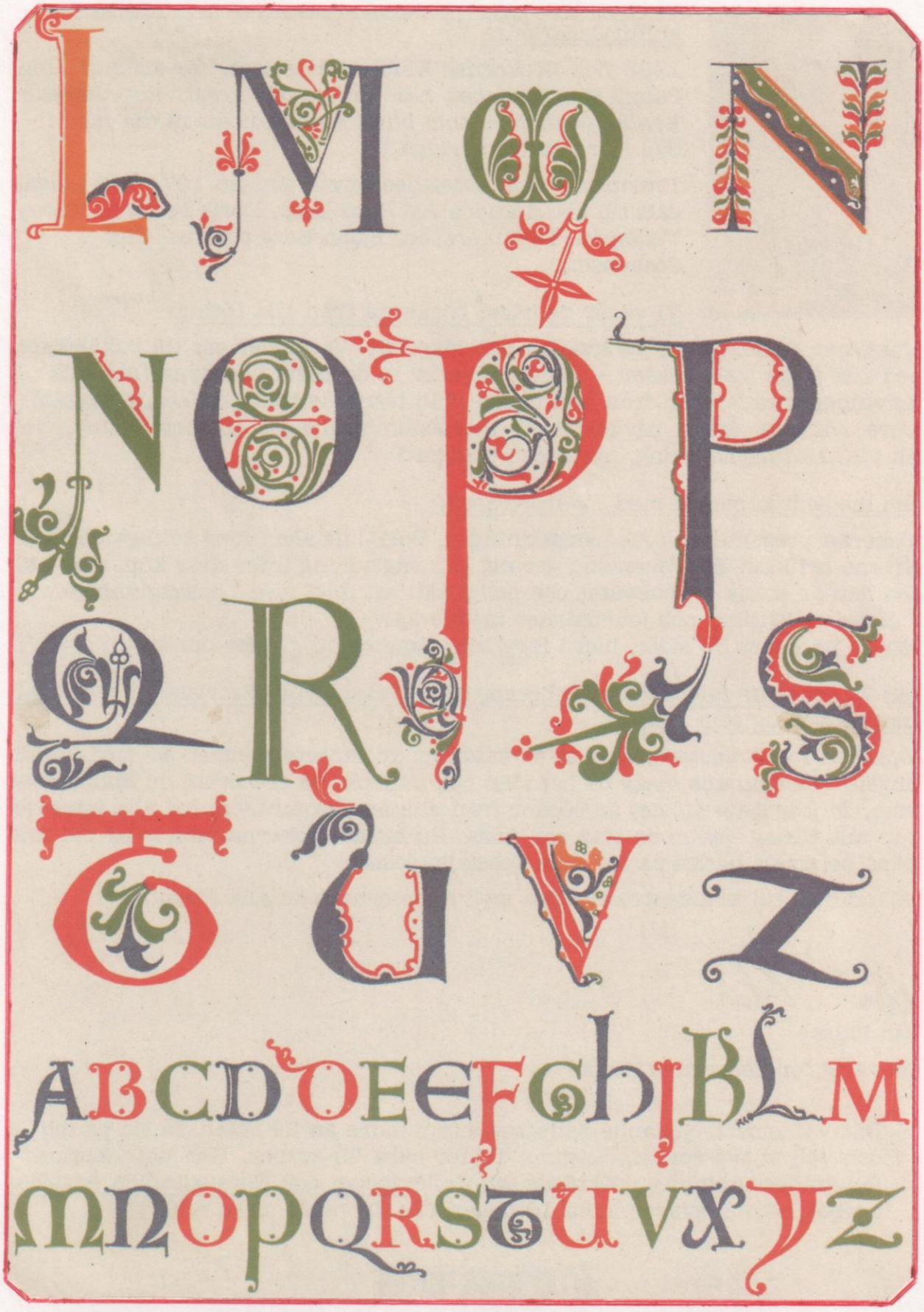


A prisoner of war's multialphabetical postcard in *Cyrillic*, *Roman* and *Japanese* with two censoring cancellations in German and Russian. The text is written in German and Hungarian, sent from Russia to Hungary.



Medieval (Latin) illumination and the letter "A".

LATIN LETTERS



Richly decorated letters, neo-gothic style.

CALLIGRAPHY (ROMAN)

Calligraphy means "beautiful writing". Since ancient times it has been the aim of many scribes to give the writing symbols an aesthetically attractive appearance. These artistic effects were achieved by a combination of factors; good-quality materials, the correct formation of the symbols according to an accepted style of writing, the placing of the symbols in an elegant sequence, and the harmonious layout of the page.

By means of lengthy lines and elegantly prolonged strokes of pen, many of the Medieval documents have acquired a clearly calligraphic touch.



Medieval document



(enlarged)





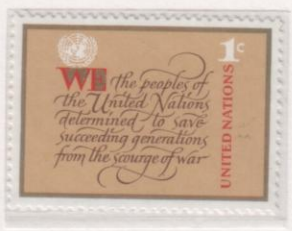
The exuberant baroque style, a stylistic originality.

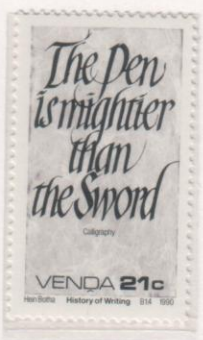
The so-called *baroque style* had a fancy for somptuous and bombastic effects. This was created by delicate penstrokes of twisted and intricate lines with loops and flourishes.

Swedish Calligraphy,



17th cent. 19th cent.





Modern Calligraphy created by the English designer William Morris (1834-1896), who wanted to revitalise the traditional penmanship.

CALLIGRAPHY (ROMAN)

As a mark of reverence, letters were often adressed in a careful and artistical style, close to calligraphical writing.



Nicely adressed and cancelled letter, 19th cent.



Pre-philatelic letter, end of 17th cent.

CALLIGRAPHY (ROMAN)

1830's



1990's



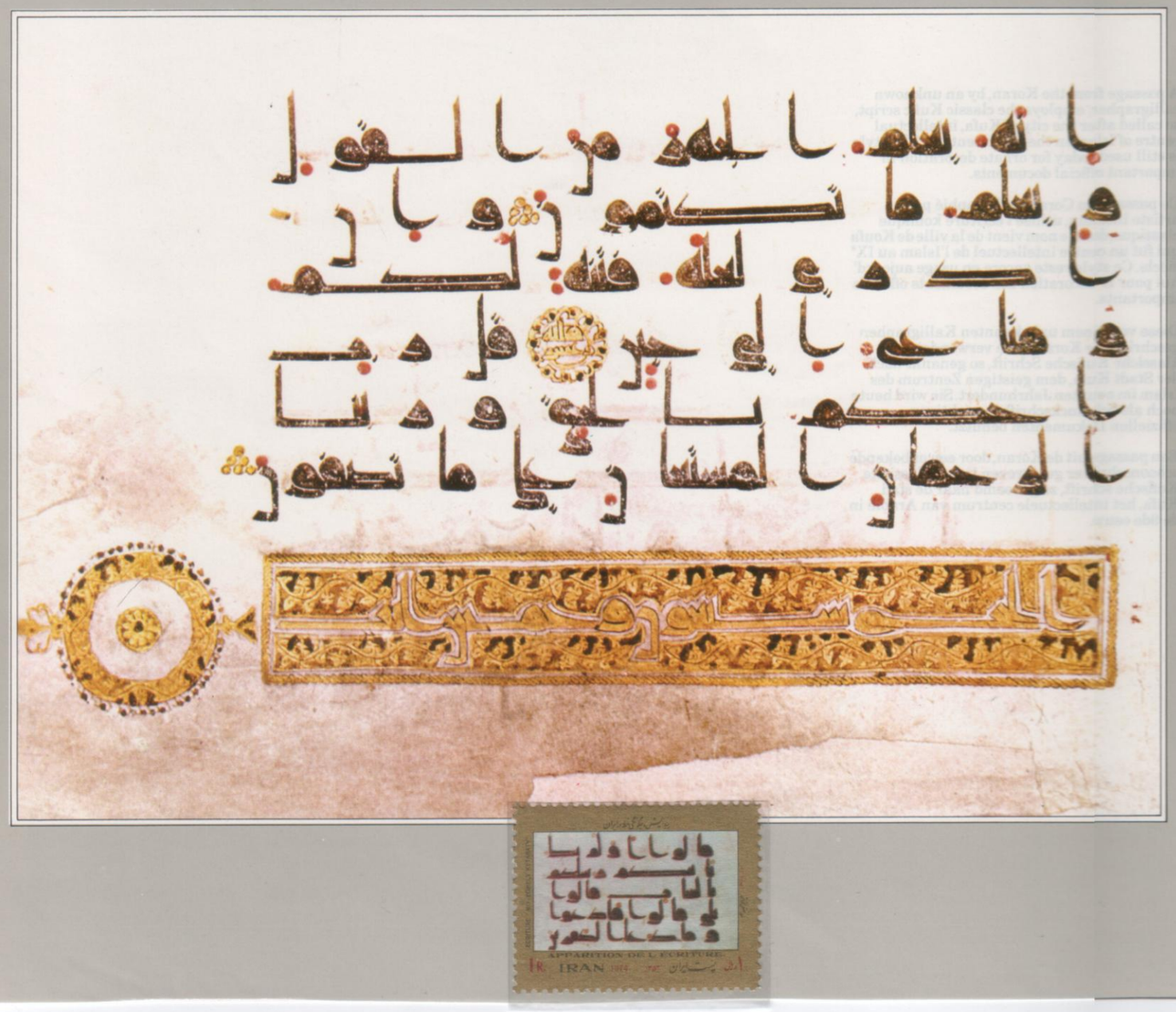
5/4-94

Säker en påsk-
hälsning i Sön
Rom. Hälsn.
Torbjörn
Ros-Marie
Linnéa

Kalman Papp
Heidergatan
283 00 Osby
Sweden

ARABIC CALLIGRAPHY

In Islam, calligraphy has always been regarded as the highest of all art forms, a discipline of its own sake, due to the dislike of the faithfuls creating images of human beings.To honor God, Muslim scribes took special delight in giving the sacred words of Koran a majestic, balanced and graceful style.



Classic Kufic script (excerpt from the Koran)







Circular ornamental style.



Decorativ and architectural calligraphy.







Modern Kufic script. Kufa, in today`s Iraq, was the intellectual center of Islam in the ninth century.





Calligraphy can be graceful, harmonious, rhytmic,delicate or simply very beautiful.



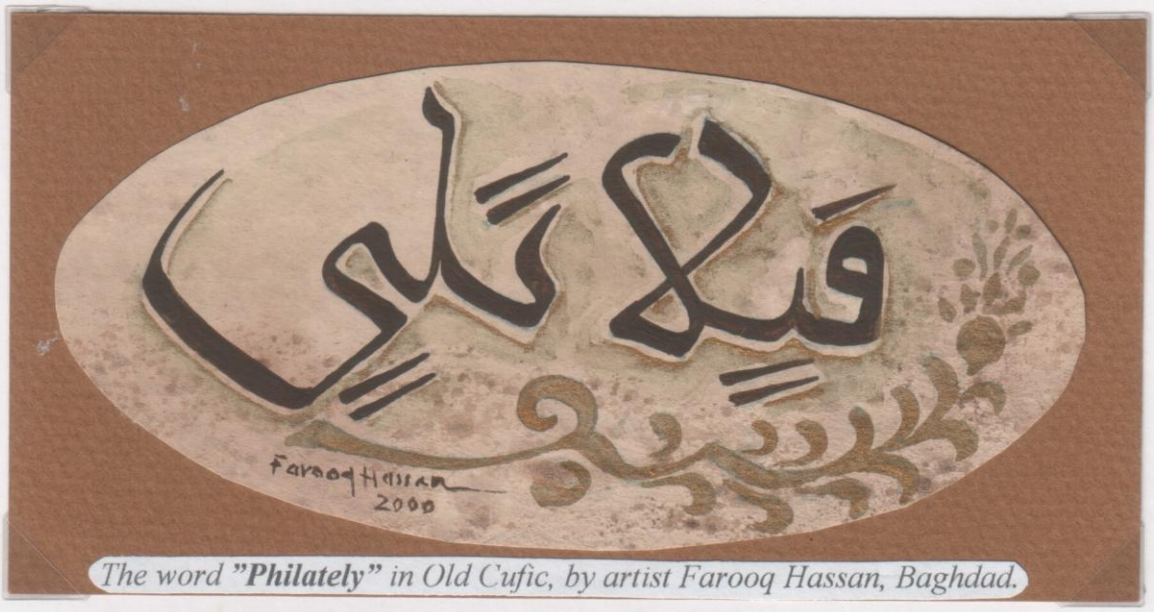
ARABIC CALLIGRAPHY



Baghdad-style calligraphy.



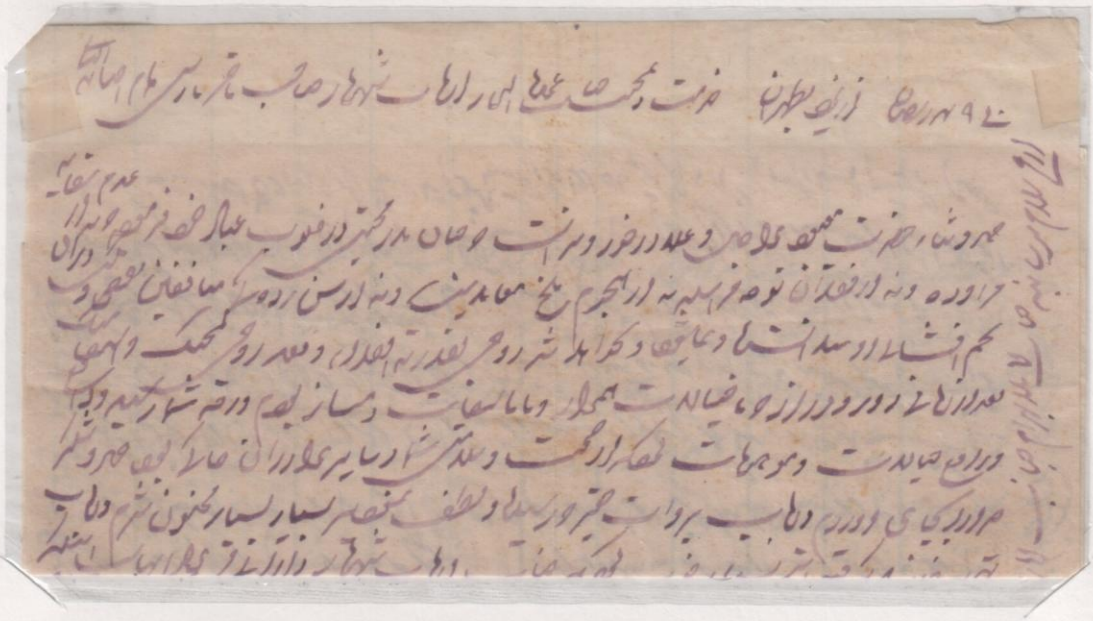
Wedding card decoration: excerpt from the Cora'an.



*The word "**Philately**" in Old Cufic, by artist Farooq Hassan, Baghdad.*

ARABIC CALLIGRAPHY





Calligraphically adressed and written letter.

ARABIC CALLIGRAPHY



Five different calligraphic styles.



Arabesques and calligraphy.

CHINESE CALLIGRAPHY

In China, Korea and Japan calligraphy has since long been regarded as an independent form of art, a method of personal self-expression that went far beyond the meaning of written ideas. The artistic effect depends on an elegant and harmonious sequence of symbols.



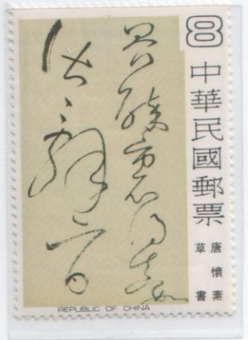
Calligraphical work by Chinese emperor Hui-tsung, 12th cent.

Early calligraphical symbols.

Han Dynasty (206 BC - 220 AD)



The current ancient calligraphical characters in the Eastern Han Dynasty became the official script, *zuoshu*, of the Imperial Chancellery.



A very simplified form of calligraphy called "grass style", can only be read by calligraphers.

A poem by calligrapher Su Shi (1036-1101)



Modern characters

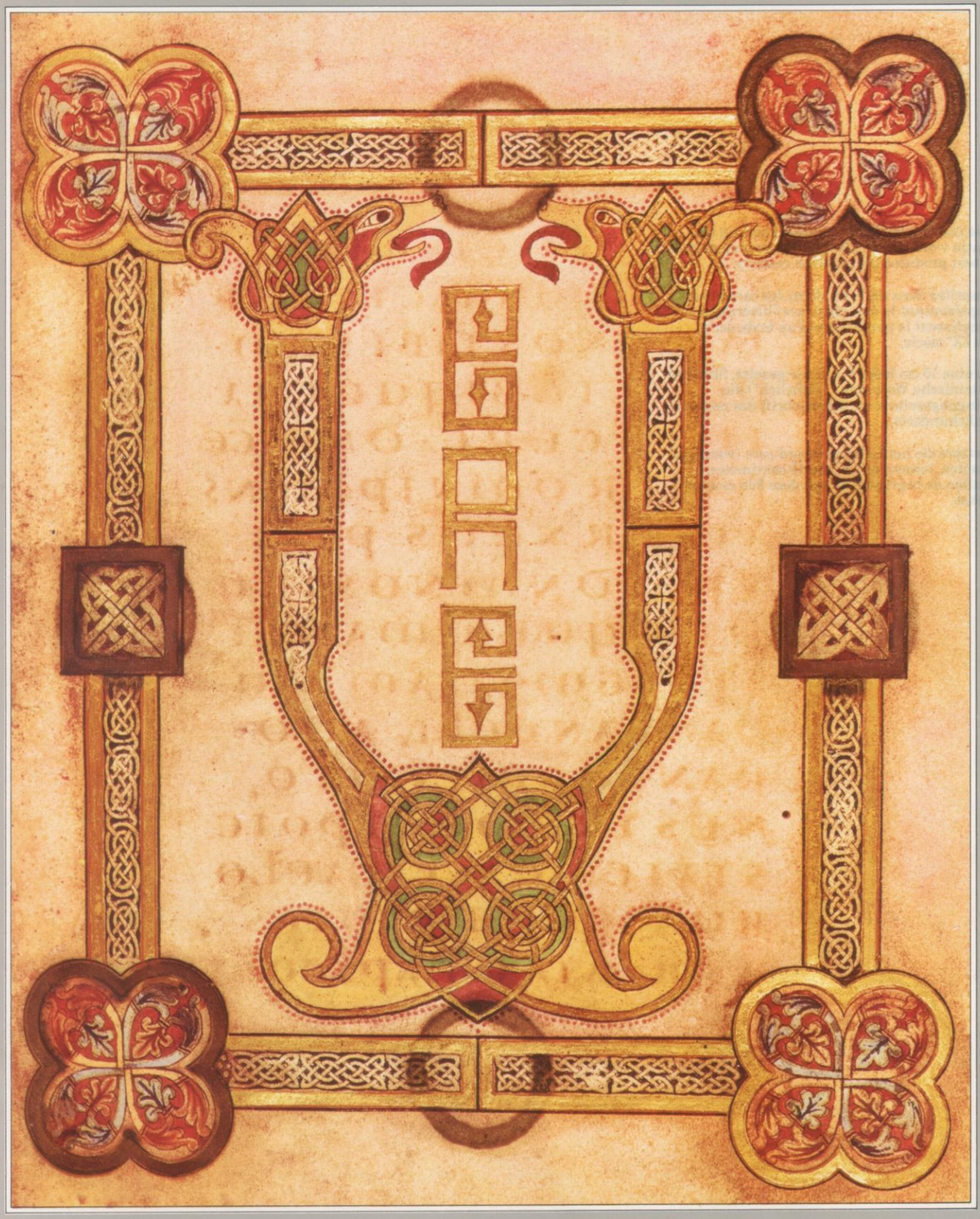


Poetry,painting and free-form calligraphy make up an aesthetic ensemble, enabling the artist´s stylistic originality.



20 th cent.

INITIAL "V"



THE PIERPONT MORGAN LIBRARY

The Latin word *vere* (truly), set inside the initial V, ninth century manuscript.

INITIALS AND ILLUMINATIONS

In the Medieval manuscripts, mostly of religious art, the first letter, the *Initial*, was artistically highly elaborated. In many cases the whole letter was depicting some Biblical scene. Bright colours such as gold and silver were used to lighten up, to illuminate the pages, written usually in black gothic letters, thence the word *Illuminations.*

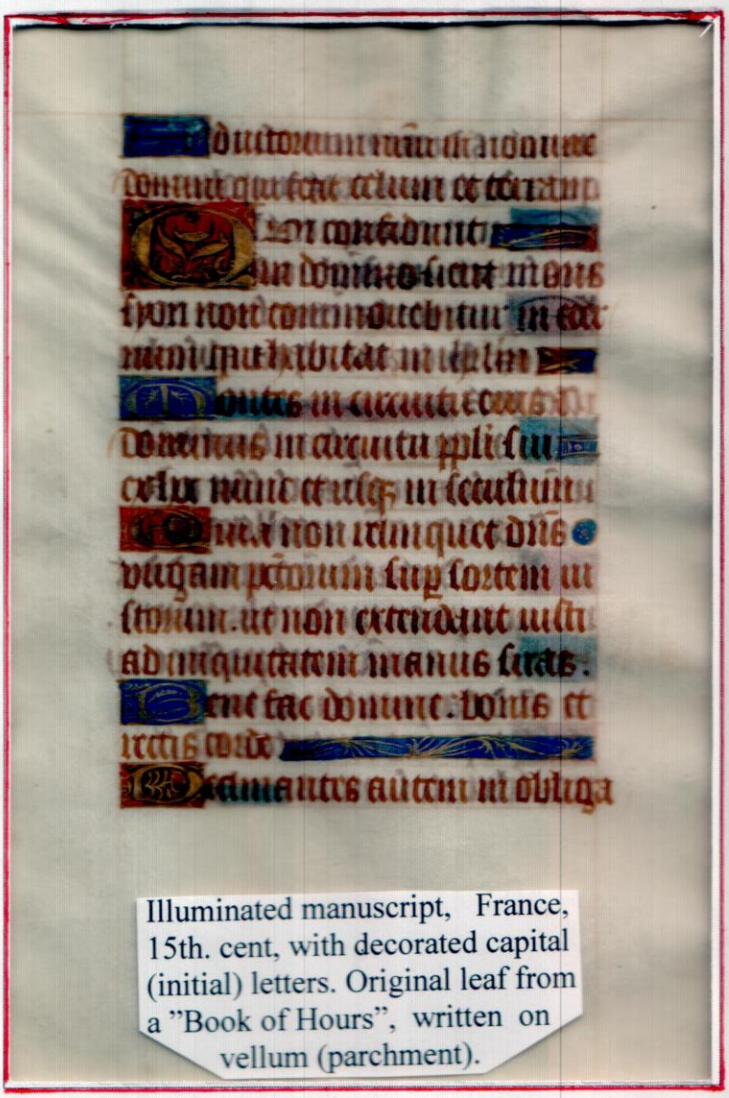
Initials



"B"
11th cent.



"R"
10th cent.



Illuminated manuscript, France, 15th. cent, with decorated capital (initial) letters. Original leaf from a "Book of Hours", written on vellum (parchment).



"S"
11th cent.



15th century

"Q"



"S"



"M"



Golden colours were widely used to brighten up the Initials.
Italy, 13th - 14th cent.

INITIALS AND ILLUMINATIONS



King Matthias

Matthias Corvinus, King of Hungary(1458-1490) a humanistic Renaissance ruler, whose famous collection of books, the so-called *Corvinae,* made his library one of the most renown of his time. The collection was shattered under the Ottoman conquest.





The initials "A" and "N" from a Corvina.

Book-painting reached its highest perfection in the Late Renaissance period. The Gothic black-letter columns, mostly printed and illustrated by a small-scale painting, a Miniature, were surrounded by ornamental decorations. In this way many pages became small masterpieces of art.

Page from a Corvina



Hungarian missal, end of 15th cent., written in Latin with Late Gothic letters. Originally from the library of King Matthias, now in the possession of Bibliothèque Royale in Brussels.

INITIALS (GREEK AND CYRILLIC)

Illuminations and book decorations didn't attain the same artistic splendour in the Greek-and-Cyrillic-writing world as in the Latin-writing parts of Europe. Maybe it's because of the fact that the ideas of the Renaissance never predominated in those parts of the world.



Title page of a prayer book





Greek Initials E and T.







Cyrillic Initials from 11th to 17th centuries.









Greek calligraphy

BRAILLE SCRIPT I

The ability of blind people's use of written language was made possible by the invention of the so called Braille alphabet, devised by the Frenchman Louis Braille (1809- 1852). His writing system was published in 1829.

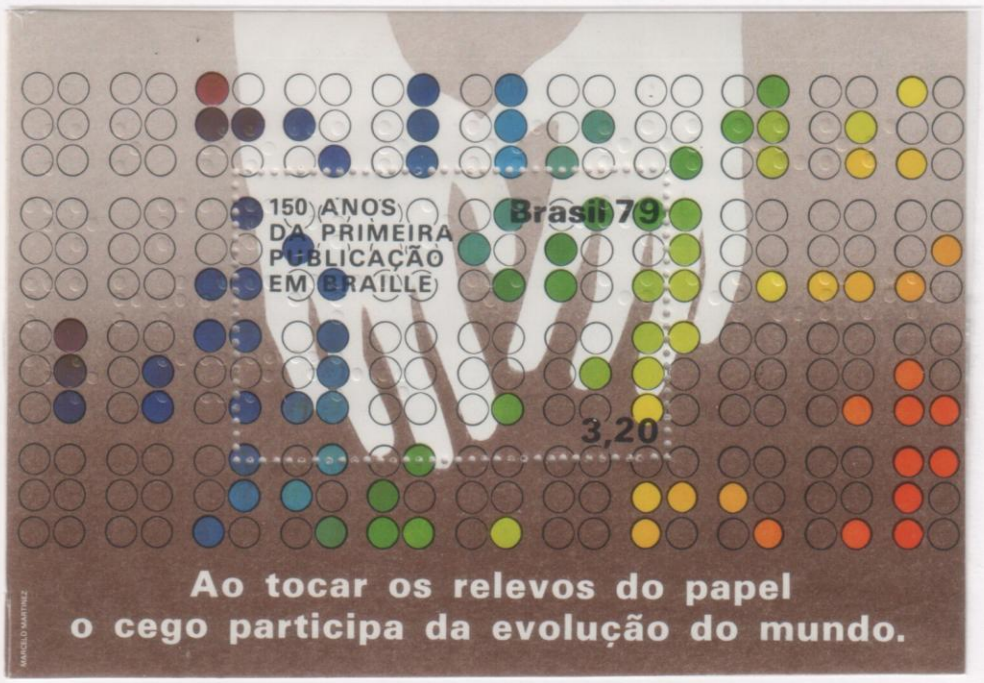


The Frenchman Louis Braille, the inventor of the Braille alphabet. He became blind at the age of 13.



You are able to "see" with the help of your fingers.





Braille consists of a sequence of cells each of which containes a 3 x 2 metrics of endossed dots. With the touch of your fingers you can read the system of dots representing letters, numbers and punctuation marks.



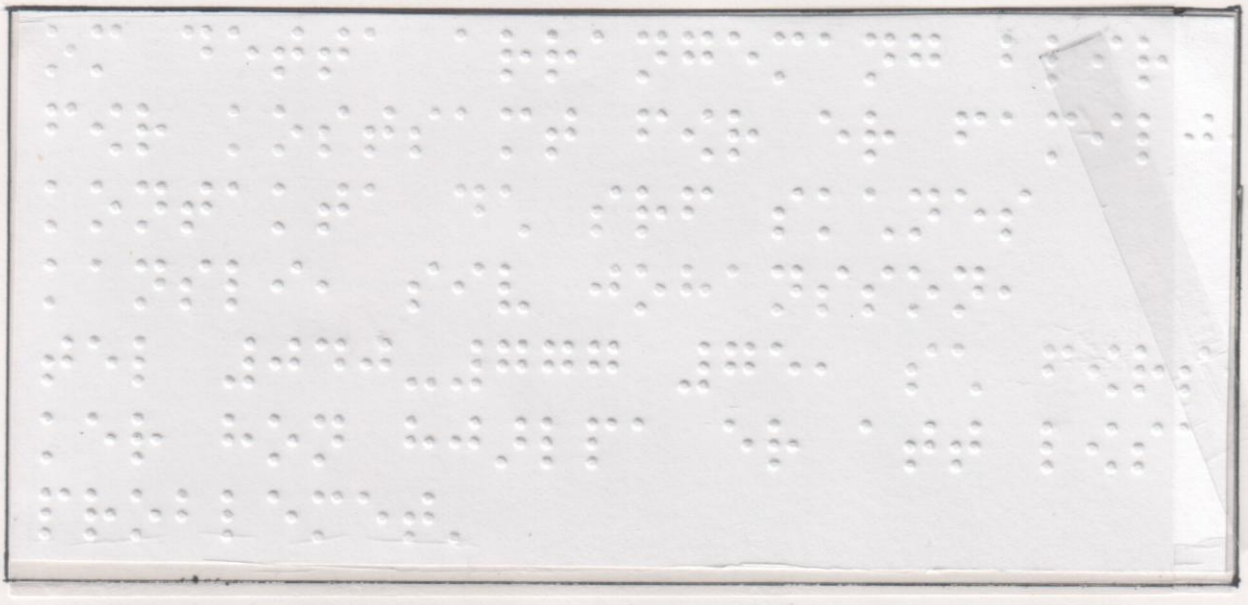
Braille script and a guide dog are of vital importance for a blind person.



BRAILLE SCRIPT II



The letters H and K written in Braille. Helen Keller, 1880-1968, american authoress, although blind and deaf since the age of two, she learnt several languages and became a famous literary woman.



A modern letter written with Braille characters.

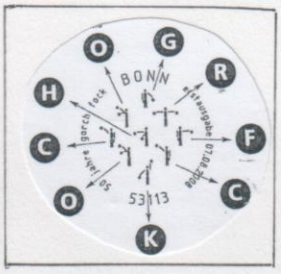
NON-GRAPHIC ALPHABETS

Writing is not the only mean of transmitting information. Earlier to the technical inventions of our IT era, there were several other methods of creating non-graphic alphabets.



The word "deaf" spelled with your fingers.

Sign language is made up of a certain structure of forms and movements. However, there is no standardized international *finger spelling alphabet.* Every language has its own system. English uses two hands, American and Swedish only one.

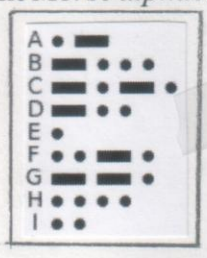


The *Flag alphabet.*

There is an intenational system of maritime signal flags for sending information. By holding a flag in each hand in different positions you can signal the letters of the alphabet.



The beginning of the *Morse alphabet*



The International Morse Code is a method of transmitting text information as a series of on-off tones, lights or clicks. Each letter is represented by a unique sequence of dots and dashes with rules for separating letters and words.

Punched tape.



Punched tape is a form of data storage, consisting of a long strip of paper in which holes are punched to store data. It was widely used during the 20th cent., but today its usefulnes for data storage is more or less non existent.

Barcode



A barcode is a machine-readable optical label that contains information about the item it is attached to. First used commercially in 1974.

QR (quick response) code is a kind of two-dimensional barcode with a much higher storage capacity. You must have a processor to decode the information into text or picture.

QR code



music

radio signals

NON-ALPHABETICAL SYSTEMS

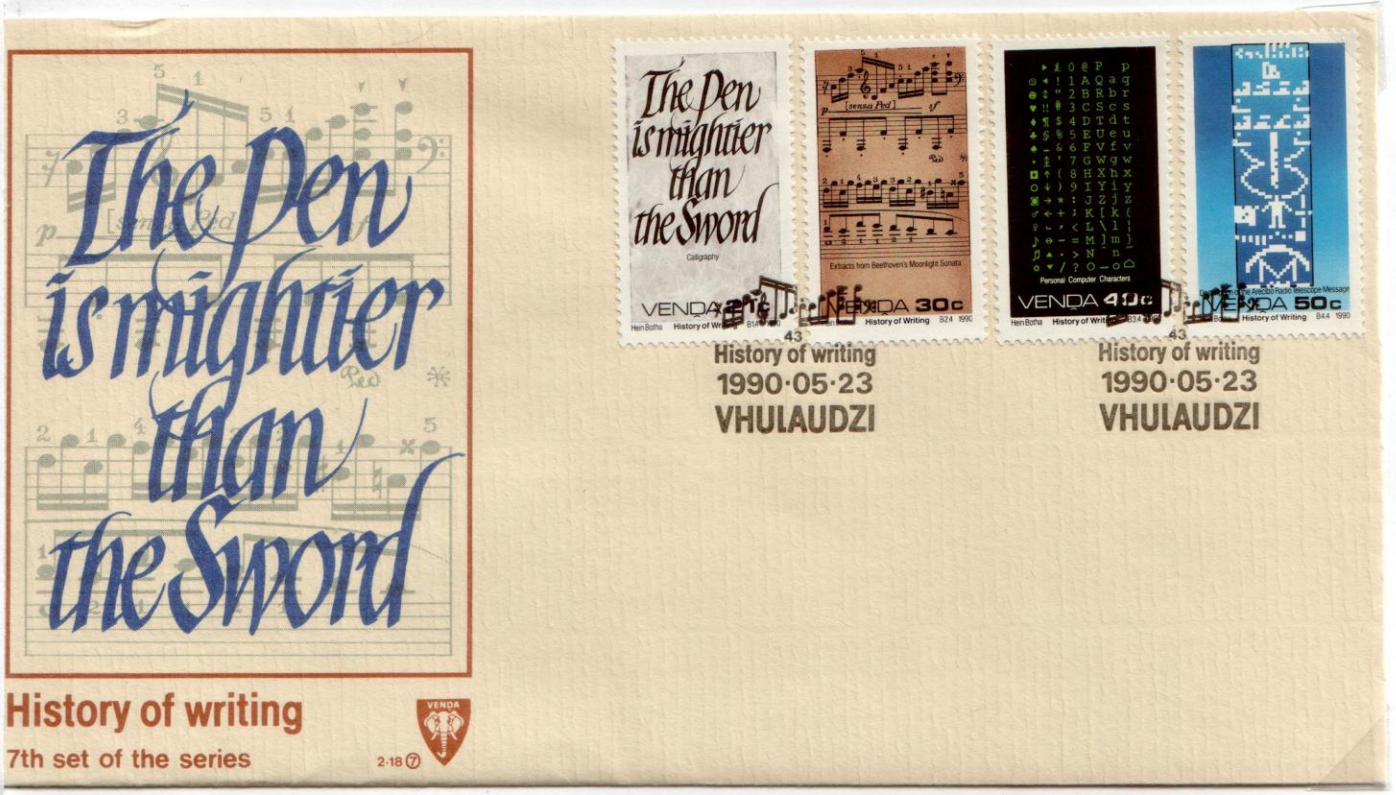
From the early Middle Ages letters were used to designate notes over the words of plainsong. To master the chief elements in musical sound, pitch and rhythm, devices like *bar lines, time signatures*, the *tie* and *black* and *white notes* were introduced, mostly during the 16th and 17th centuries.



Beethoven`s Moonlight Sonata



Radio telescope message sent to Outer Space from Earth.



emojis



The first emoji (smiley) was invented in the 1990´s, in Japan, by Shigetaku Kurita. The word itself means "picture sign" or "pictogram". Originally, it was used as a complementary sign to tell about your feelings, or your state of mind, with one single character "I`m happy... sad ...surprised..." etc.



Today, the number of emojis has accelerated to several thousands and new ones are added continuously, designating not only feelings but all aspects of human life.



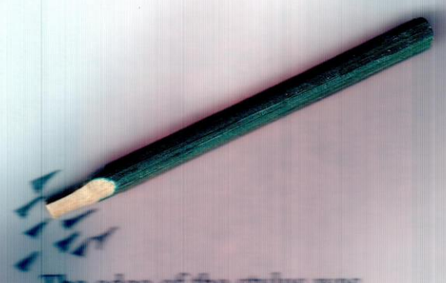
The popularity of an emoji has to do with its ability of conveying shortly, with one sign, without words, parts of your body language and emotions.

WRITING TOOLS AND MATERIALS



Clay tablet

In Mesopotamia, clay was the most common writing material. The Sumerians inscribed their pictures on soft clay tablets with a stylus of reed or wood. Later on, in the Bronze period, objects of bronze were also inscribed.



The edge of the stylus was impressed in the soft clay



Egyptian scribe at work. A scribe could attain a very high social ranking.

Also in Egypt clay tablets and bits of pottery were used, but very soon, papyrus, made from the fibres of the papyrus plant, became the most common writing material.



Papyrus plant alongside the river Nile.

Piece of papyrus.



Turtle shell



Chinese writing brush made of horsehair, used for calligrafical works.

The Chinese used different materials for writing purposes such as turtle shells, bones from animals, wood, bamboo, silk and paper. Papermaking was invented in China in 105 A.D.,for long kept a secret, known in Europe some thousand years later.





Tsai Lun, the inventor of paper.



The complete process of papermaking.



The complete equipment of an Egyptian scribe: papyrus, knife to cut it, palette with writing styluses, ink-well and tablet.



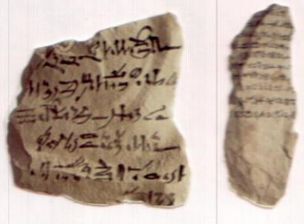
The Nordic runes were mostly carved in stone.



Hieroglyphs on papyrus.

Piece of parchment.

Ostracon

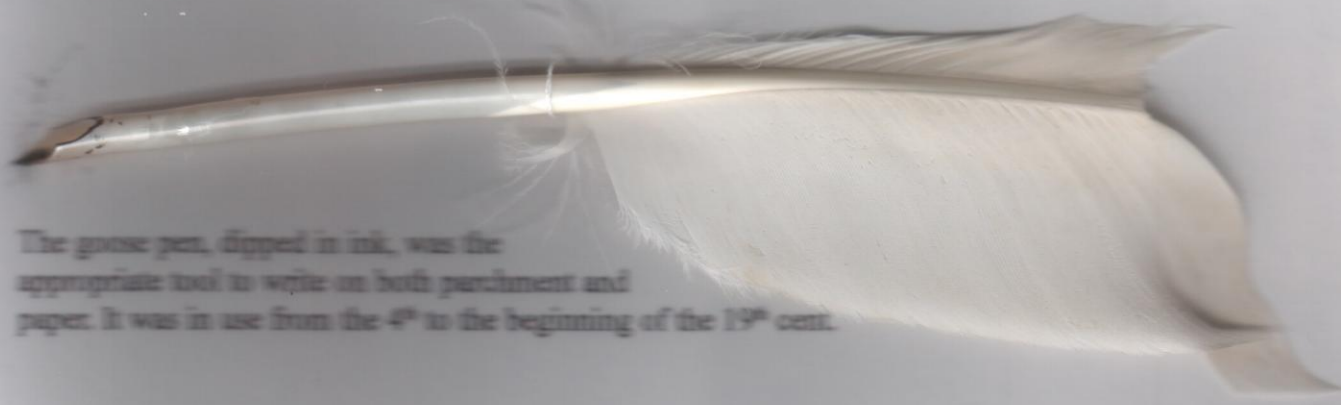


A short text or message, written on potsherds or stones, was called an *ostracon,* widely used in Egypt and in the Greco-Roman World.

WRITING TOOLS AND MATERIALS II

In the Old Greco-Roman World wax tablets, clay (potteries) and papyrus were of common use. When papyrus became rare it was replaced by a new material, the parchment, originating from the town of Pergamon in Minor Asia. It was made of skin of animals; sheep, goat or calf. It had the great advantage of being written upon on both sides. Pages of parchment were bound together and called a codex, out of which arose the notion of a book.





The goose pen, dipped in ink, was the appropriate tool to write on both parchment and paper. It was in use from the 4th to the beginning of the 19th cent.

Steel pen



In 1830 the steel pen was introduced, followed later by the fountain pen before the appearance of the more practical ballpoint pen, invented in 1938 by the Hungarian László Bíró.

Inventor László Bíró



First typewriter from 1860´s



and from 1960´s





The first typewriters were constructed in middle of the 19th century. Today, in the beginning of the 3rd millenium, most written information is produced with computers developed in the end of the 20th century.

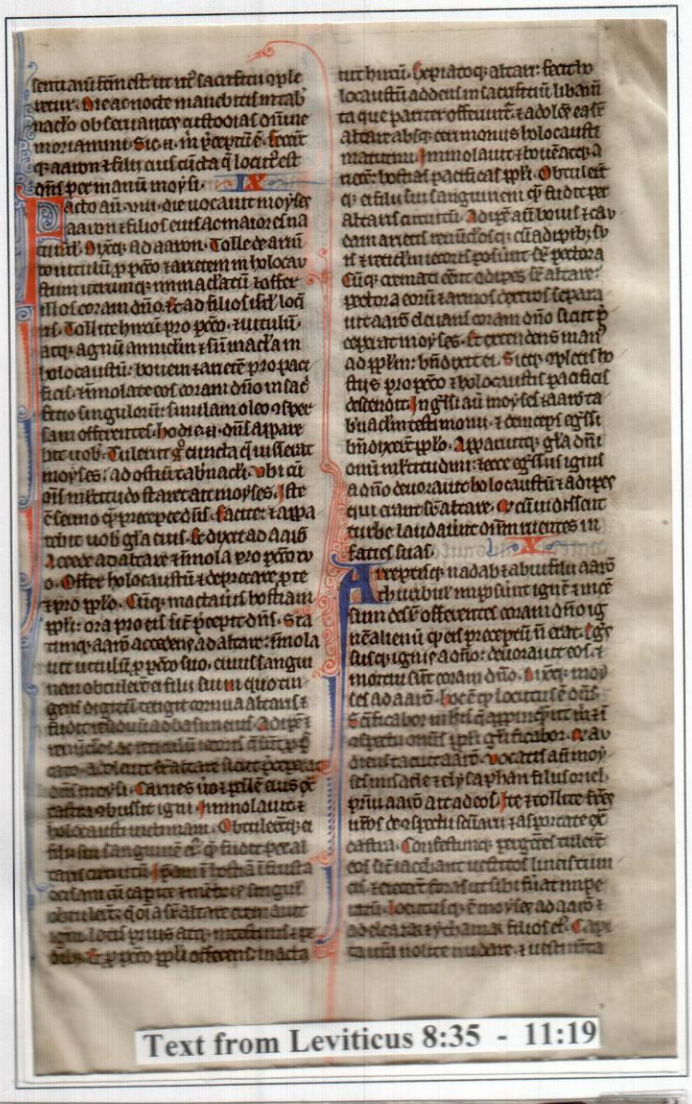


parchment
birch bark

WRITING MATERIALS

Medieval Bible leaf, c. 1260.
on vellum.

Original leaf from a Medieval manuscript pocket Bible, written in Northern France (probably Paris). The text is written in Latin gothic minuscule script on very thin vellum, i.e. animal skin, which is the highest quality of parchment.

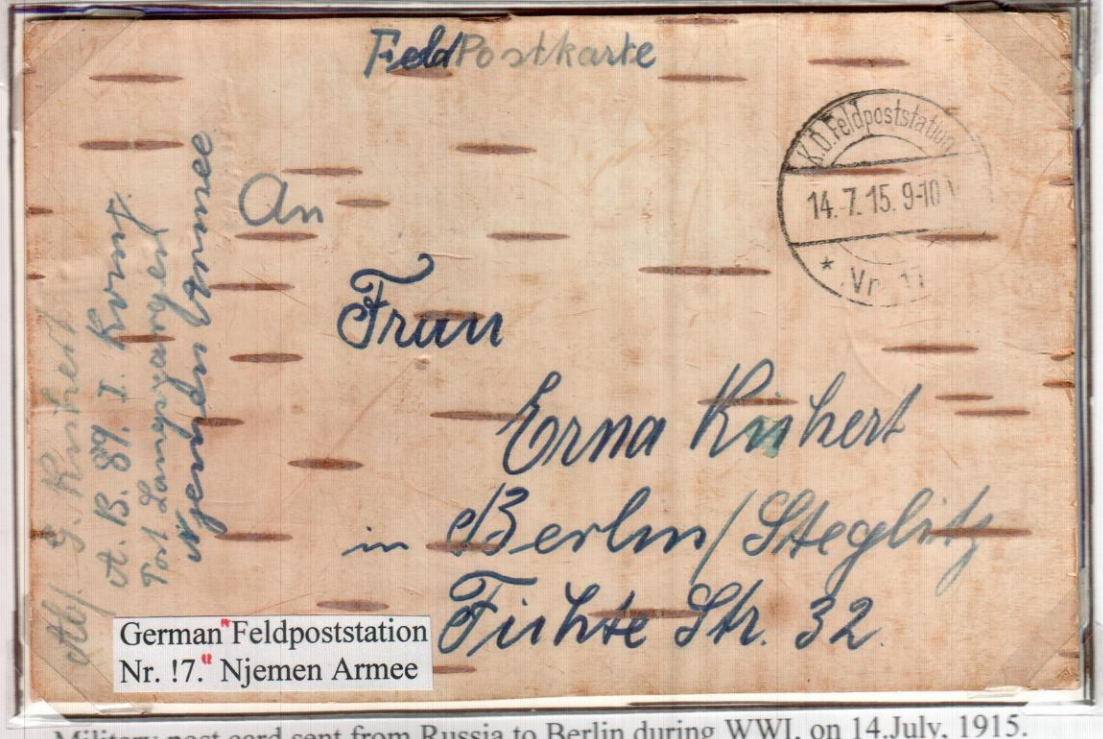


Text from Leviticus 8:35 - 11:19



Letter written on birch bark, 12th c. Russia.

Birch bark for writing was common in various cultures, before the advent and industrial production of paper.



Military post card sent from Russia to Berlin during WWI, on 14.July, 1915.

WORDS, WORDS, WORDS



















Polonius:
...- What do you read, my lord?

Hamlet:
- Words, words, words.

W. Shakespeare
Hamlet
Act II. Scene 2







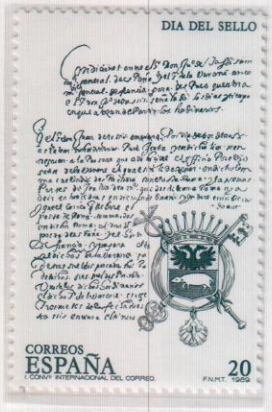


















Appendix

Narrowly seen there are only two kinds of scripts:
ideograms (logograms) and phonetic scripts.

Ideograms: hieroglyphs, pictograms, Chinese characters

An ideogram represents a meaning rather than a sound and has no relation to its pronounciation.
The sign 山 (=mountain) is pronounced *shan* in Chinese but *yama* in Japanese.
Signs like @, &, €, $, £, % , all the numerals 1 2 3 4 .. etc. are ideograms too.
The numeral 3 is pronounced *drei* in German, *trwa*(trois) in French, *tatu* in Swahili and *három* in Hungarian.

Phonetic scripts: all modern scripts in use today (except Chinese !)

Basic rule: one letter - one sound (phoneme), but in many cases two or even three letters can be used to express a vowel or a consonant, according to the spelling rules of the language.

Phonetic scripts can be subdivided in *syllabaries* and *non-syllabaries*.
Basic rule for a syllabary: one letter - one syllable, a syllable is a vowel surrounded by consonants, a rhythmical unit such as ge-ne-ral, tea-cher, vac-ci-na-tion, Hi-ro-shi-ma, To-yo-ta etc....

Syllabic scripts are Hangul(Korea), Kana(Japan), Cypriotic, Linear B, Amharic(Etiopia) and modern Indian scripts (semi-syllabics).