

DSGN122

**Brief introduction to: visual
communication history, the
invention of writing, semiology**

The syllabus

How do you find your way in an airport?

How do you find your way in a city?

How do you read a blueprint?

What is visual communication?

Visual communication is the transmission of information and ideas using symbols and imagery. It is one of three main types of communication, along with verbal communication (speaking) and non-verbal communication (tone, body language, etc.). Visual communication is believed to be the type that people rely on most, and it includes signs, graphic designs, films, typography, and countless other examples.

Where did it start?



**Cueva de las Manos, Perito Moreno,
Argentina**

13,000–9,000 BP



Borneo island, Indonesia

40,000 BP



Cave of beasts, Libyan Desert

7,000 BP



Chauvet Cave, France

30,000 BP

Cave paintings are a primitive form of communication that were drawn or etched into cave walls and ceilings. Though their exact purpose is not clear, these paintings include representations of, among other things, animals, landscapes, and sacred spaces, and act as a kind of prehistoric documentation.











Pictograms are images that represent physical objects and were used to share ideas or ask questions. For example, if I was in a foreign country and wanted to buy a tree, I could use a pictogram of a money sign and a tree to indicate my interest.







Semiotics is the study of sign process (semiosis), which is any form of activity, conduct, or any process that involves signs, including the production of meaning. A sign is anything that communicates a meaning, that is not the sign itself, to the interpreter of the sign.

A successful, understandable form of communication.

SIGNIFIER

Any motion, gesture, image, sound, pattern, or event that conveys meaning and communicates.



CONNOTATION

The feelings, ideas and cultural meanings which are associated with the word or object. Not the literal meaning.



Rose



DENOTATION

The literal or primary meaning of a word, in contrast to the feelings or ideas that the word suggests.

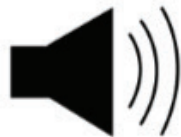


SIGNIFIED

The concept that a signifier refers to, the meaning it conveys.

ICONS

Signs where the signifier resembles the signified.



SYMBOLS

Signs where the relation between signifier and signified is purely conventional and culturally specific.



INDEXES

Signs where the signifier is caused by the signified.



Mesopotamian Visual Identification





Egyptian Hieroglyphs

Hieroglyphic text at the top of the stone slab, consisting of a single horizontal line of approximately 15 characters.

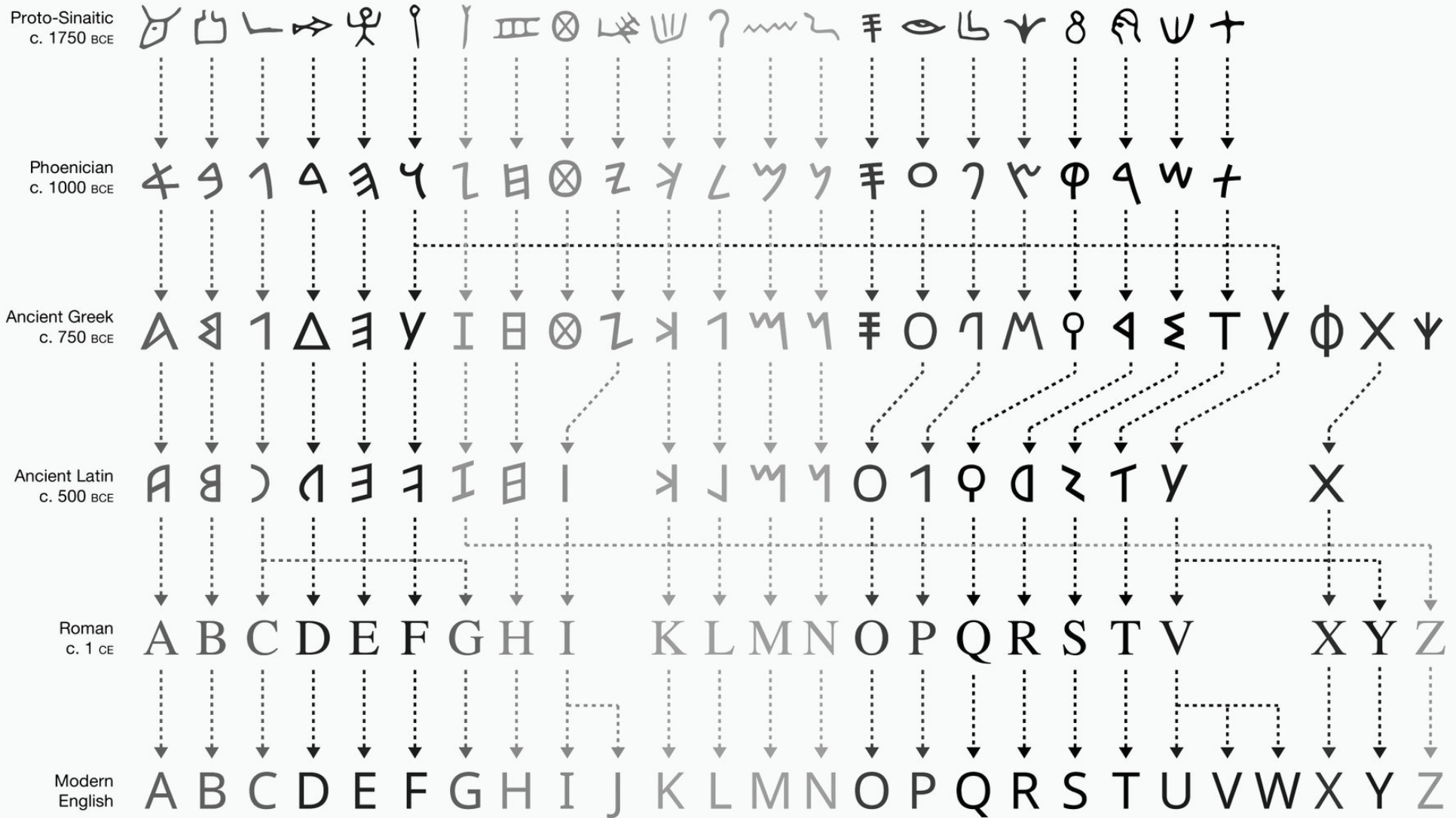


Four vertical columns of hieroglyphic text on the right side of the stone slab. Each column contains approximately 10-12 characters, arranged from top to bottom.



Evolution of the Alphabets

Evolution of the Latin Alphabet



ח
hēth
h

ז
zain
z

ו
waw
v

ה
hē
h

ד
dālath
d

ג
gāmal
g

ב
bēth
b

א
ālaph
a

ע
'ē
'

ס
semkath
s

נ
nun
n

מ/ם
mim
m

ל
lāmadh
l

כ/ך
kāph
k

י
yudh
y

ט
tēth
t

ת
tau
t

ש
shin
sh

ר
rēsh
r

ק
qoph
q

שׁ/שׂ
šādhē
š

פ/ף
pē
p

Modern Roman	A	B	G	D	E	F	Z	H	I	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T		
Early Latin	A	B	<	▷	E	F	Z	H	z	K	L	M	N	O	Γ	Q	P	z	T		
Greek	Α	Β	Γ	Δ	Ε	Ζ	Η	Θ	Κ	Λ	Μ	Ν	Ξ	Ο	Π	Φ	Ρ	Σ	Τ		
Phoenician	𐤀	𐤁	𐤂	𐤃	𐤄	𐤅	𐤆	𐤇	𐤈	𐤉	𐤊	𐤋	𐤌	𐤍	𐤎	𐤏	𐤐	𐤑	𐤒	𐤓	𐤔
Early Aramaic	𐤀	𐤁	𐤂	𐤃	𐤄	𐤅	𐤆	𐤇	𐤈	𐤉	𐤊	𐤋	𐤌	𐤍	𐤎	𐤏	𐤐	𐤑	𐤒	𐤓	𐤔
Nabataean	𐤀	𐤁	𐤂	𐤃	𐤄	𐤅	𐤆	𐤇	𐤈	𐤉	𐤊	𐤋	𐤌	𐤍	𐤎	𐤏	𐤐	𐤑	𐤒	𐤓	𐤔
Arabic	ا	ب	ت	ث	ج	ح	خ	د	ذ	ر	ز	س	ش	ص	ض	ط	ظ	ع	ف	ق	ك























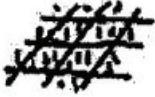

























Picture	Evolution	Modern character	English
	→ 	→ 	→  sun
	→ 	→ 	→  moon
	→ 	→ 	→  tree
	→ 	→ 	→  mountain
	→ 	→ 	→  water
	→ 	→ 	→  field
	→ 	→ 	→  door







Figure 6.1. The evolution of pictographic characters.







					
10 Ahau	7 Ahau	4 Ahau	1 Ik	2 Ik	1 Kan

					
13 Manik	5 Lamat	2 Cib	12 Caban	5 Caban	5 Eznab

					
0 Pop	14 Uo	18 Zip	17 Tzec	6 Xul	4 Yaxkin

					
3 Yaxkin	10 Mol	5 Yax	18 Muan	3 Kayab	8 Cumhu

					
Cycle 9	Cycle 9	Katun 8	Katun 3	Tun 5	Tun 1

					
Uinal 1	Kin 4	Kin 12	Kin 8	Kin 0	Kin 8

For next class:

Pre Industrial Design:

Baroque/Rococo

***Reading might be provided
later in the week**